



SURRENDER TO LOVE

Beck & Jeff's Story

AVA MARCÉ

Unexpected Series

Surrender To Love - Book 2

The Encounter

BECK & JEFF

I WAS an hour and three drinks into waiting for my flight. I wouldn't say I was drunk, but I certainly needed to not drink anymore. The bartender must have agreed because he ignored my requests for refills. I looked around the lounge to find a private spot to spend the rest of the time waiting for my flight when my eyes connected with a stranger across the room. I had to do a double take because the man was beautiful. Even from where I am sitting he captivated me. Tall, strikingly blond hair, a chiseled face. I was drawn to him, but I was doing my best to reject the attraction. I

avoided his stares as I walked towards a seat I saw at the opposite end of the lounge. As I am walking to the seat, I could feel his eyes on me, but I continued to ignore him. I flopped onto the available chair, threw my head back, closed my eyes and tried not to think of the argument I had with Jax.

I must have dozed off because when I open my eyes again, the lounge was practically empty, but I was not alone.

Sitting in front of me was the very mesmerizing stranger staring at me earlier. "Hi," He says. I didn't answer. I was about to get up and walk away, but he stopped me. "Don't leave."

"Excuse me?" I asked almost annoyed by the intrusion.

"Let me buy you a cup of coffee."

"Thanks, I can get my own."

"I know you can, but why be rude to a stranger who's simply trying to be nice."

"Look, I don't know who you think I am but . . ."

"I know, you are not interested." He interrupted.

“No, I’m not . . .” I lied.

“You don’t remember me do you?”

A part of me wanted to tell him to go to hell; his tactic was lame. Instead, I turn and respond to his question. “No, I don’t remember you, sorry.” Again I started to walk away, but he held my arm. “Look, I’m sorry to bother you, you don’t remember me, but we met briefly last year.”

“Again, I’m sorry, but I don’t remember you.”

“I know, but I remember you for two reasons. One of which, you saved my brother's life.” Surprised by his admission, I have to admit, as a doctor, I interact with so many patients and their families, its hard to place a face or remember a particular incident

With as much sincerity as I could muster, I turn to the stranger and ask, “What’s your brother’s name?”

“Alex, you saved him last March. He was in a car wreck and had to be cut out of the car.” I remember the incident. His brother came in with a piece of the windshield lodged near his heart. I was in surgery for hours.

“I do remember the incident; your brother was fortunate.”

“I know, thanks to you.” We stood in the middle of the lounge staring at each other. Finally, I asked, “You said there were two reasons, what was the other reason that you remember me?” He smiled before answering, “My brother was nearly killed, but when you came to tell us he was okay, I immediately thought you were gorgeous.” Now I didn’t know what to say, so we just continue to stare at each other until he asks, “Can I buy you that cup of coffee?” Not quite knowing what to say I accepted his offer. We walked to the bar and ordered the coffee. Again we were accessing each other awkwardly as we wait for the coffee. Finally, the bartender delivered the cups then walk down the bar to his next customer. I don’t know what possessed me to say what I did next, but the words came spilling out of my mouth. “I thought you were coming on to me earlier.” He smiled.

“I know,” He said, without moving his eyes from the coffee he was staring at. “I guess that happens a lot,” He also said. I didn’t answer. Instead, I found myself staring at his profile.

I don't know if he purposely didn't look at me, or if he was acting shy. "I'm sure it happens to you a lot too," I said, while still staring at him. "How do you know I'm gay?" He asked, and finally looked up at me. "How do you know I'm gay?" I asked. "Because you thought I was coming on to you." He said smiling. "For the record, I am gay." He chuckled before saying, "Good to know doc."

"So are you?" I asked inquisitively. "Am I what?" I smiled because I liked his playfulness. We continue to sip our coffee in silence before he finally said. "Yes, I'm gay, and for the record, before recognizing you, I was coming on to you." I smiled and shook my head. "Good to know." Our eyes connected then and neither one of us blinked. It's as if we were speaking without words. Suddenly he stands. "I'm going to find the bathroom." He said as he walked away. He was at the entrance of the lounge before he turned to look back at me and I saw passion and need, and I knew that was an invitation. I sat at the bar for a few minutes, debating whether I should take him up on his invite. In all my years,

I've never done this. What this is, I didn't know, but I'm about to find out. I start to walk towards the bathroom; I wanted, no needed to know exactly what the stranger had in mind.

When I walked into the bathroom, he was standing by one of the stalls. We stared at each other; then he walked into the stall. I followed without saying a word. I walk in behind him and lock the door. Leaning against it, we continued to look at each other. "Are you just going to look?" he asked. I reach out and pull him by the waist towards me. I wanted to devour his lips, but I came to my senses. Instead of kissing him I said, "I don't think this is a good idea."

"Do you have a better one?" He asked.

"No, but I have no wish to be arrested, so not a good idea."

He started to respond, but I stopped him with my lips, claiming his in an abrupt but sensual kiss. He pulled away from the kiss as we looked into each other eyes. "Another day, another time, this would definitely happen, but not now, not in an airport bathroom." I stepped away from him

and turned to open the bathroom door. "Maybe next time," I uttered as I start to exit the stall.

Before I could open the latch, he grabbed my arm to stop me from leaving, "What about here and now? Maybe not the airport bathroom but what about a hotel?" I turned to look at him for a long while then grab him by the nape of his neck and covered his lips with mine delivering yet another deep probing kiss. When I pulled away for air, I asked, "Is this something you really want?"

"Yes."

I wanted to ask him again if he was sure, but decided what the hell, he want it, I want it, why not. "There is a hotel a couple of miles down the road. We could take a cab." I said while looking intently at him. He didn't seem to have any second thoughts because he said, "Let's go."

"What's your name by the way?" I asked as we exit the stall. He stopped turned to look at me and said, "No names, I don't remember yours and all I know you as is Doc, let's leave it at that, okay?" I didn't answer his question. Instead, I

said, "Let's go."

A half hour later we reached the hotel. After checking in, we walked silently to the elevator. At the entrance to the room, we didn't even turn on the light; we walked further into the room then he slowly starts to take off his clothes. I just back up against the wall and watched. When he was done, he said, "Your turn," and I obliged. We are standing in the small hallway of the room naked, just staring at each other, but the sexual tension was off the charts. Finally, he decided to make a move, and he slowly moved towards me. I stopped him by placing the palms of my hands on his chest. "Are you sure about this, It's not too late," I said as my eyes peered into his.

"Do you always try and talk your conquest out of being conquered?" He asked. "I don't do this," I whispered in his ear. "Neither do I" He whispered back. As we stood there trying to convince each other, our dicks have swollen to the point that it hurt, at least for me. I reached down and

grabbed hold of our dicks, and massage them back and forth. He fell forward against me lost in the pleasure I was administering. With our cocks still in hand, I start to walk forward towards the bed. We reached the bed, but I didn't want to stop paying attention to our dicks, but his knees were given out, so I put my other hand behind his neck and lowered him onto the bed. He opened his legs wide for me, surrendering his body to me, as I continue with my ministrations.

At this point, our dicks were rock hard and coated in cum. I was ready to enter him, but he wasn't ready for me. I climbed up his body and took his mouth in a searing kiss, "Do you have any protection?" I said in his ear. "Yes, my pants pocket, in my wallet." I got off the bed, walked to our clothes to retrieve the packets then return to the bed. I couldn't help but to stare at him; he was even more gorgeous naked. As I crawled back onto the bed, he says, "Just fuck me." I ignored him and took his left leg and

bought it up to his chest, then used my finger to circles his puckered hole, "Don't worry, I will." He moaned in anticipation as I opened the lube and coated some on my fingers, When I insert my index finger, his hips rise to meet my penetration, I told him not to move because I wanted full access to plunder his hole.

I inserted a second finger, then scissor them to stretch him. Trying not to move his hip he moans and groans with each stretching motion. When I thought he was ready, I removed my fingers, insert the condom on my already aching prick, and apply lube. My head was already spinning with anticipation. I wanted inside of him now. I lined my dick up to his hole and slowly push in. I fought every urge to just thrust in. When he was filled, I waited for him to acclimate. Once I was convinced he was ready, I began to move, at first slowly, then with deep, intense thrust. He tried to wrap his free leg around my waist, but I stopped him. I grabbed hold of his right leg and push it to his chest also. This gave me perfect access to his ass as I ride him until he was

practically screaming and until his cum spilled all over his chest. I rode him more until I filled the condom with my cum.

I fell onto him, spent from our exertion. I was dizzy and breathless. This was the most intense sex I've had in a very long time. I finally opened my eyes, and he is staring up at the ceiling breathing as hard as I am. We didn't say anything, we turned and looked at each other as our breath settled. Then, he raises up onto his elbow, brought his lips to mine and the next thing I knew round two.

Somewhere in the middle of the night I awoke and I my hand instinctively reached for him, but he wasn't there. I knew without looking he was gone.

Chapter One

JEFF

A YEAR Later

“Hi Max, sorry I’m late,” I said, as I sat opposite him. We had a lunch date, and it’s a miracle I didn’t cancel. Since starting in the cardiology unit at NYU, I’ve been so busy I don’t remember eating most of the time. The decision to come back to New York was a good one, but bittersweet. Knowing that Jax is no longer in the city and that I wouldn’t be seeing him is hard to fathom. In one instance, I’m glad I won’t be running into him, In another, I miss seeing him. Thanks to work I barely have time to think about Jax. I hardly have time to find a place to live.

“Why are you letting that hospital drive you ragged?” My uncle asked as I sip on the water in front of me. “I’m the newest doctor there, so naturally I have a lot to prove. Besides, I love my job.”

“Don’t let your love of the job ruin your health; you have to take care of yourself.”

“Thanks for worrying, but things won’t always be this way, It will change in time.”

“I hope so, now how is your apartment hunt going?”

“It’s not. Every place the realtor has shown me was either too large, not enough amenities, or asking too much money.”

“If the realtor you are using isn’t working out then get another.”

“That’s my plan the first chance I get. Anyway, enough about me, how are you? How are you enjoying New York?”

“It’s exactly what I expected, but my presence here is needed for the time being.” I shook my head because I know New York is not what he is used to. While he may

have a hard time adjusting, for me New York is like riding a bike, it all comes back to you. After our lunch, I returned to the hospital. The rest of the day flew by before I knew it it was midnight, and my shift was about to end.

Since arriving two months ago, I've been living in a hotel. I miss my condo in LA and would love to find a place to live that wasn't a hotel. As I am walking into my room, I'm listening to myriads of messages on my phone. Three of them is the current realtor I'm using. In the morning I will give her a call. I'm not expecting anything but the same. I woke up the next morning to my cell ringing in my ear. It was the realtor. "Good morning," I said, in a groggy voice. "Jeff I've been trying to reach you since yesterday, I think I found the perfect apartment for you." I wanted to be sarcastic and say that's what you said the last three times. Instead, I asked "When I can see it?" "I would suggest right now; this condo won't last, everyone wants it, the location is ideal, and I think you will agree it's

what you are looking for.”

“Give me the address; I’ll meet you there in an hour.”

An hour later I’m standing in front of a building that looks nothing like what I’m looking for. I know better than to judge a book by its cover, especially in New York. I greet Mariam, the realtor as she stepped out of her car. “The outside isn’t what I’m expecting,” I said to her as she walks towards me. “Trust me, Jeff, this condo is just what you’ve been looking for. Don’t be fooled by its exterior, let’s go inside so I can show you what I mean.”

As we approach the entrance, a doorman opened the door for us. “I wasn’t expecting that,” I said to Mariam as we walked inside. “I told you, the look is deceiving.” To say that she was right is an understatement. The foyer and the welcome desk was made out of marble; sofas were placed strategically throughout the lobby to complemented the marble. Everything on the first level of the building was magnificently done to make you feel comfortable.

“What floor are we going to?” I asked as we approach the

elevators. “Tenth floor, the apartment I’m showing you is the only one available in the building. It has three bedrooms, and an open space plan, and the usual amenities you would expect for what you are going to pay for it.” On the tenth floor, the hallway was carpeted to match the walls in a beige color. Each door on the floor was painted a very muted red. “What do you think so far?” Mariam asked as we walked down the hall. “I’ll let you know after I see the apartment,” I said to her with a smile.

Not too far from the elevator, Marian used a key card to access the apartment. When I walked in, the first thing I noticed was the immense open space. This apartment had floor to ceiling windows from one end of the apartment to the next. Although it was empty, I immediately saw myself living here. The open space, the size of the rooms, it was exactly what I wanted. I didn’t tell Mariam that though, not right away. I continued to walk the apartment inspecting the bedrooms, the bathrooms, the kitchen. Finally, I turned to her and asked, “What do I need to do to get this place?”

Her lips turn up into a big smile as she did a fist pump.

“This building is privately owned, and the owner's main requirement other than the usual credit and background check is that you can afford to live here. He will want to know more about you and what you do for a living.”

“None of that will be a problem arrange for us to meet. I want to move in as soon as possible; I’m tired of hotel rooms.”

“I’ll go and make the call while you continue to look around.” She said, as she pulled out her phone and walked away. Ten minutes later, I was on the balcony enjoying the view when Mariam returned with one question. “ I’m told to ask you if you are any relations to Maximillian Corbin?”

“Who told you to ask?” I inquired. “Have you ever heard of the Copelands?” Mariam asked. “No, who are they and what do they have to do with me buying this Condo?”

Mariam moved closer to me as she is about to answer. “The Copeland family own’s real estate, I’m told they live in California, but they own a lot of real estates here in the city.

They own this building and many like this in and out of the city. I was talking to his assistant when Richard Copeland came on the phone himself to ask.”

“Call him back and let me speak with him?”

The conversation went longer than I thought it would. As soon as I explained I was the nephew of Max Corbin, the conversation switch from discovery to a practical love fest. I have no doubt he is going to call my uncle. One thing is sure; this apartment is mine. I returned to the hotel after leaving the condo and went back to bed; even though I won't be on call for another forty-eight hour, I need to catch up on sleep.

Two days later I'm back on call, and sure enough, my beeper goes off within a half hour of being on call. The night was long, but it went by fast, before I knew it, it was morning, and I am making the rounds for the end of my shift. As I am standing at the station finalizing my charts something caused me to look up. The moment I did, my

eyes locked onto someone from my past. Suddenly memories of that day at the airport flooded my mind. I stood there staring at him, shocked to see him. I didn't know what to say or do, so I stood there like a fool. What the fuck!

BECK

"Excuse me young man can you reach that bag for me?" my seat companion asked after our flight landed. I reached up to the compartment to remove her hand luggage and mine before asking, "Do you need help carrying it off the plane? I'll be glad to help you?"

"That's very nice of you, I'm meeting my grandson, he will be able to take over," she said as we begin to walk off the plane. We just exited the plane when she says, "You slept through the whole flight, I hope you are not driving, you still look tired." I smiled then said, "I am tired, but don't worry I'm not driving, I'm meeting my brother, he will be doing all

the driving.”

“That’s good to hear, my name is Lucy by the way.”

“Hi, Lucy I’m Beck.”

“Beck, do you live in California?”

“Yes, and no, my family lives here, I live in New York. I’m just detouring, I’m actually here on a business trip. What about you Lucy, where do you live?”

“Right here in LA. I was just visiting my sister in Montana, she is sick, and I wanted to make sure she was okay and back on her feet.”

“I’m guessing since you returned home she is doing better.”

“She is, plus I missed my grandchildren, I needed to come home.” We were almost at the baggage claim when I heard someone calling Lucy’s name. “I think your grandson just found you,” I said as we stopped for him to catch up. After the introductions, I said goodbye to Lucy and went to look for my brother who is probably late.

After circling the baggage claim I realized I was right, Alex

was late as usual. I won't complain though, he is my little brother, and he has his faults. I walked outside and find a seat on one of the benches to wait. Realizing I didn't turn on my cell, I turned it on to see if Alex called. While he didn't call, there were numerous messages from Noah. It's almost a year since we broke up and I still have to deal with his regrets. Unfortunately, I have no regrets about letting the cheater go. What did he expect? That I would understand why he was making love to another man in our bed.

Although I didn't tell him that, I was glad I caught him cheating. Our relationship was not going the way I expected, and it needed to end. Then there is the incident that happened at the airport right after I found him in bed. To this day, I cannot forget the doc. We didn't even exchange names. I can't believe I offered myself to him the way I did. What was I thinking? As much as I am mad at myself for it, it doesn't seem to bother me at night when I am dreaming about him and remembering how he fucked me. I know I will probably never see him again, but for

some reason, my brain won't turn off and tune out his black hair and blue eyes. The feel of his lips, his dick, his hands. My brother finally arrives, he is blowing his horn at me as if I'm some annoying driver in his way. I gave him the finger and started to walk towards his jeep. "You are late as usual," I yelled when I was close enough for him to hear. "I know, I'm sorry, the traffic." I shook my head as I put my luggage in the back and walked to the passenger side to get in. "I don't think traffic has anything to do with it, you probably left home late and don't bother lying, I know you, Alex." Instead of answering he held his hand up defensively. Then grabbed the nape of my neck. "Its good to see you, big brother."

"Its good to see you too," I said while smiling. "So, how long is this detour going to be?" He asked as he is pulling out into traffic. "Just for the weekend, I have a training in LA, I have to be there on Monday."

"Mom and dad are happy as hell you decided to come home even if it's just for a few days." I reached for my ray

bans then said, "I know, they've been worried about me."

"Hell yeah, they've been worried. Ever since you broke up with Noah, you started to conveniently forget your weekly calls, you even claim you forgot to return one of moms calls."

"I really did forget."

"Well, you are going to have to convince them that you are okay before you leave here in a couple days or else they may show up at your doorstep in New York."

Thanks to LA's traffic, our one hour ride turned into two.

We finally arrived at the home I was born and raised in, and the car didn't stop before my mom comes barreling out the door towards us with her arms open wide. "Hey mom, I'm home," I yelled before she even reached me.

"To this day, I don't understand why you choose to live in New York when your family lives here in California." She said as she hugged the living daylights out of me. "You look skinny, have you been eating? And tired, you are not

sleeping are you?" I smiled because as overbearing as my mother is when I'm back in New York, her attentiveness is what I'll miss. "Where is dad? Let me guess at the country club."

"Where else, the man can't play golf for nothing, but he keeps trying to improve his game he said."

"You don't tell him that do you, that he can't play?"

"If I get mad enough at him, yes."

I love the relationship my mom and dad have. It is honest and loving two of the main ingredients of a happy relationship in my opinion. Since she thought I looked tired, it didn't take long for her to mention that I should go and take a nap. I knew I wouldn't sleep, but I used the opportunity to relax and review the training I'm expected to do in a few days. By the time I made it back downstairs my father was home and on the terrace preparing to barbecue. I walked up unbeknownst to him and grab him from the back "Are you trying to scare the living daylights out of me? He asked?" I laughed then jabbed him in the arm and hug him.

“Dad, I know your heart can take it, how are you?”

“That’s a question I should be asking you, how could you forget to return your mothers call.”

“Dad, I was busy at work, and by the time I got home I forgot.” My father looked at me introspectively before saying, “I’m glad you decided to come home, even just for a few days. Your mother and I need to know that you are okay, that means answering our calls and not forgetting.”

“I know dad, that’s why I decided to come home, I know you and mom need to see me and know that I’m ok. “

“Well, she is right, you do look skinny and tired. Why aren’t you eating and sleeping?”

“I eat and sleep, dad, I left work and jumped on a plane to travel six hours. You know I hate flying and I hate airplane food. I’m just jet-lagged.”

“What happened between you and Noah?”

“Dad, I really don’t want to talk about my love life. Just know that it’s been over between Noah and I and there is no going back.” My father shook his head then says, “Okay,

let's change the subject." Just as I was about to thank him, Alex comes walking up with his fiancée. "Hey Georgina, how are you?" I said as I walked up to her and kiss her on the cheek. "I'm good, how about you?" I looked from my brother to her, "Not you too, can we not talk about how I'm doing or if I'm eating." That was the highlight of the three days I spent in Orange County. When my family wasn't fussing over me, I spent time with friends I usually see when I come home. By Sunday night I was on a flight to LA to take care of the real reason I came to the West Coast.

BECK

"Why are we here?" I screamed on top of my lungs. After some prodding Mike, a work colleague managed to persuade me to come with him to a grunge rave in the middle of nowhere. I felt bad saying no to him again because he always asks. The problem is, this is not my

scene. I don't go to clubs, and I certainly don't go to raves. Most of the people here are young kids who snuck out of their parents' homes to come. It's not my scene because I'm way beyond this phase in my life. But Mike is a nice guy, and like me, he is stuck in LA training our client on the new software system they acquired.

"Come on, just relax and get into the music," he yelled in my ear. I decided the moment I walked into the warehouse that I would not be staying. I just need to convince Mike.

"Let's go outside," I yelled while pointing to the door. We made our way to the exit and walk out into the sweltering heat of LA. As hot as it was, I was happy to be out of the warehouse and music that was so loud my ears are ringing.

"Mike, I know you wanted to come to this thing," I said while pointing to the building behind us. "But, this really isn't what I'm into, and if I stay in there another second, I'm going to get a major headache." Mike laughed then said, "Its cool, are you headed back to the hotel?"

"Probably, are you going to stay?"

“Yeah, for a little while, I love this music.” He said while laughing some more. “I’m sorry man, I tried,” I said while backing away. “I’m going to call an Uber to pick me up, I’ll see you in the morning, don’t stay out too late.”

That was the conversation I had with Mike before leaving him at the rave. It’s nine-thirty in the morning, and he still hasn’t shown up at Stark Inc. The client we are supposed to be training to use their new software system. I’m debating whether I should call him. Chances are he is still in bed with a hangover. Lucky for him I’m more than capable of doing the classes by myself. If he hasn’t shown up within the next hour, I will call.

Thirty minutes later Mike walks in just as I was finishing the first training of the morning. “I am so sorry about this,” he said, as he walked up to me. One look at him, and it’s obvious he rolled straight out of bed and busted his ass to get here. I wanted to be angry, but I couldn’t. Now if he did this again, we would have a problem, and I basically said that to him.

After his apology, Mike threw himself into the scheduled training, we didn't have a chance to speak again until lunch.

"So how was last night?" I asked as we sat to eat our lunch.

"It was rocking! You missed a great concert." I snickered then said, "That wasn't a concert."

"What did you do, go back to the hotel? Or did you go somewhere else?" Mike asked me speculatively. "No, I went back to the hotel." Mike looked at me over the rim of the soda he was drinking then asked, "How old are you?

Because you act as if you are old and retiring." I laughed at him for calling me old. "I just don't like clubs and

warehouse packed with teenagers, and really, really loud music." We ate in silence for a few minutes before Mike issued another invitation. "Let's go out again tonight, you pick where we go."

"No thanks," I quickly said, because I really wasn't interested.

Five days later we are back in New York, and I was never more happy to walk into my apartment and into my own

sense of normalcy. I wasn't in the apartment five minutes before my cell rang. It was the office calling me, "Good afternoon," I said in the most spirited voice I could muster. "What are you so cheery about? Patrick, my boss, and best friend asked." Hey Pat, what do you mean? I'm home and you know I hate traveling and dealing with the client side of software development. I much rather sit behind a desk for hours coding, but for some reason, you and the powers that be seem to want to send me to train. Can I ask you to stop? Or is that infringing on our friendship" Patrick laughed before giving the usual speech about how valuable my knowledge is. BTW, did you call me for a reason?" Pat chuckled before answering. "You are not going to like it." "Come on, you are not sending me on another trip." "No, not a trip, but Glen needs you to spend a few weeks at NYU. Some of the residences and nurses are having trouble acclimating to the software on the tablet we recently distributed. You know they are our number one client right now, and we have to make sure they are happy, so no

coding for a few more weeks, tomorrow when you come in, we are meeting with Glen to discuss what needs to happen at NYU and then you are headed over there to begin the assist.”

“Ok, I understand, I’ll be a team player and not complain, but after this, I want back behind a desk, or I’m going to find another job.” Pat laugh before saying, “Stop with the threats, you know you are not going anywhere.”

After hanging up with Patrick, I took a really hot shower then went to bed. I didn’t budge until the next morning. Arriving at QTI, I didn’t bother going to my desk. I walked straight into Pat’s office and sit as he completed a call. “You didn’t say what time Glen wanted to meet,” I said, as he is hanging up his phone. “He said when you get in, let me call his secretary and see if he is available now.”

After my meeting with Patrick and Glen, I had a clear directive as to what was expected from this new assignment they bestowed on me, and I headed over to the hospital to

begin the process. NYU Langone is one of the biggest hospitals in New York City. Somehow, Quantum Technologies Inc, the company I work for landed the contract to convert the hospital from its antiquated technology for handling patients to what they currently use. The conversion was ninety percent successful, and only ten percent of the employee is having difficulty with the new system. My job is to lower that ten percent to zero if possible. I wasn't there a week before realizing why some of the employees are having a hard time. In reality, not everyone acclimates well to change and a lot of those having a hard time has more to do with an adjustment factor than a knowledge factor.

On my second week is when it happened. I was in the middle of walking a nurse through the software for the fourth time when he walked in. I couldn't believe my eyes, the man I've dreamed about and fantasize about just walked by me. At first, he didn't notice me, but when he did, we just stood there and stare at each other while the nurse I was

attempting to help stare at us. Finally, I saw him reach for something on the station then turn and walk away. My mind was in shambles, I didn't know what to think or even what to do. The Nurse finally asked me if I was OK. She had to ask three times before I could find the words to answer. "I'm fine," I mumbled. She smiled and ask, "Do you know Dr. Corbin?" I didn't know how to respond to her. I didn't want to say I knew him and share any of his personal business with his work colleagues. I cross path with him three more times that day. Each time was as unexpected as the first. Each time we just stared at each other as I walk by or as he walked by. Sooner or later one of us is going to have to say something.

Chapter Two

JEFF

AFTER WAKING up to an empty hotel room a year ago, I did my best to put him out of my mind, to not think of the mind-blowing sex we had. I succeeded until now. As I walked into the doctor's lounge to get rid of my scrubs to leave the hospital, he was there talking to one of my colleagues. I quickly grabbed my personal belongings and leave. I'm halfway down the hall when he stopped me.

"Excuse me Doc," He called. At first, I ignored him and kept walking, but he was persistent. "Doc," He called again. I stopped and turned to face him. We didn't say a word; It was clear he was nervous because he was playing with his lower lip and the strap of the bag he had over his shoulder. He looked good, I am as drawn to him now as I was the first

time I saw him. How much I would love a repeat of that night. One of us needed to say something, so I took the initiative, "Why did you leave?" At first, my question didn't register; then he realized what I was asking. "I didn't want awkward; if I had stayed, it would have been." I shook my head as if agreeing, then I did what we should have done, to begin with, "My name is Jeff by the way, what's yours?"

"Beckett, Beck, you can call me — my name is Beck," He said nervously. "Well, Beck, can I ask what you are doing here?"

"Working, I work for QTI, we developed the PERS system the hospital uses, that you probably use."

"I'm very familiar with the system, someone from QTI trained me on its use a few months ago."

"I'm here for the ones who are still having trouble using it."

He said, not looking directly at me. I could tell that he had something he wanted to say, so I waited for him to say it.

After a while, he looked directly at me then said, "That wasn't me, I mean, I don't normally do that, what I did." I

didn't respond right away because a group of people came walking down the hall, so I waited until they pass us. When they were a respectable distance away, I turn to Beck, "I don't either, but if you are worried that I'm going to..." He didn't let me finish, "No I'm not worried about that I just wanted you to know."

"Beck, I hope this won't be awkward, seeing me while you do these training."

"Not if you are okay with it." He said. "Okay, then I should go," I said as I turned to walk away. "I'll see you Doc." He said as he turned to walk in the opposite direction.

I walked to my car not too eager to go back to my hotel. In the car, I connected my phone to the Bluetooth and listened to my missed messages. Two was the realtor. I dialed her number before the voice mail even ended. "Mariam, you have some news for me?" I asked before she had a chance to greet me. "Yes, the keys are yours, Mr. Copeland says he will FedEx the paperwork to the apartment for you to sign." I laugh almost deliriously. "Can we meet tomorrow morning?"

I asked, eager to get myself situated.

The next day, I arrived at the condo before Mariam and decided to wait in the lobby. The doorman must have been told about me already because he welcomed me into the building without question. As I am waiting, I heard the doorman greet a Mr. Copeland. I look up from my phone expecting to see someone around my uncle's age. Instead, I'm looking at Beck. He was busy talking with the doorman and didn't notice me. On his way further into the building, our eyes finally connected and he froze. I stood while asking "Your last name is Copeland?" He didn't answer. Instead, he asked. "What are you doing here?"

I didn't get a chance to answer because Mariam chooses that moment to arrive. "Jeffrey, I'm sorry I'm running late, I hope you didn't have to wait long. Hi Beckett how are you?" Neither of us spoke right away. Finally, Beck turned to Mariam and asked, "Are you showing the unit?" "I already showed it to Jeffrey, in fact, he spoke with your father, and he offered the apartment to him."

“Is that so?” Beck says with a questionable look on his face. “Did you want me to come up with you to the apartment?” Mariam asked. “That won’t be necessary,” I said while holding out my hands for the keys. “Mr. Copeland said he would FedEx the paperwork to me, and I will mail you a check for your fee, thank you for finding this place for me,” I said while holding out my hand to shake hers. Mariam turned and cheerfully left me standing there with Beck who up to this point didn’t say a word. I turn to him and ask, “You live in the building?” He said yes as he motions me towards the elevator. “Not only do I live here, but I also live across from you.”

“Really?” I asked as the elevator doors opens. On the tenth floor we walked side by side in silence until we arrived at the apartment entrance. Finally, he turned to me and say, “Welcome to the building Doc,” As he opened his apartment door and walked in. I stood outside his door staring at it. Of all the apartment building in this city, how did I end up here across from the very man I’ve tried so hard

to forget.

Two days later, I moved into the empty apartment. I decided an empty apartment beats another night in a sterile hotel room anytime. It wasn't hard to get a bed delivered, and since I wasn't on call for the next two days, I took the time to catch up on sleep. I was officially living in the apartment, empty though it may be. Sleeping in that bed was the best sleep I've had since moving back to New York. In the middle of the second day, the intercom system sounded throughout the apartment. I walked to the system to see my uncle standing in the lobby. When I opened the door, he is standing there with take-out food and a smile on his face.

"A little bird told me you had a roof over your head."

"Let me guess; the little bird was Mr. Copeland."

"Are you going to let me in, or are we going to talk in the hall?"

"Sorry Uncle Max, come in, how did you know I was hungry?"

“You’re a lot like your father; he could always eat. This place is nice,” he said, as he walked around. “Now all you need is furniture, and you have yourself a home.”

“You are right; now it’s to find the time to buy furniture.”

“That’s what Interior Designers are for.”

“Do you know one, because I don’t have the time to find one, much less hire one.”

“If you don’t find one, I’ll see what I can do; you can’t live in an empty apartment. Where are we going to sit to eat this?” He said while holding up the bag of food in his hand.

“We are going to have to stand and eat, sorry.” My uncle laughed as he squatted onto the floor and started to empty the content of the bag.

Two days later I was on call again, and as expected I was called within minutes. After handling numerous emergencies, I finally had a chance to catch my breath, so I head towards the doctor’s lounge. I walked in expecting to find other doctors looking for the same solace I was seeking. Instead, I’m greeted with several doctors hovering over Beck

as he explained different facets of the PERS system. I walked to the far end of the lounge to not interrupt the training and laid on the sofa. I must have fallen asleep because when I woke up again, the room was empty except for Beck and a nurse he was finishing up explaining the system to. As soon as the nurse left, he turned to me and tentatively wave.

I stood and walked over to him, "How is the training coming along?" I asked. "It's coming along," He said, then ask hesitantly, "How is the apartment coming along?"

"It's coming along fine, other than the fact that I need to find the time to furnish the place."

"Hey, if you need an Interior Designer, I may know someone who can help."

"Do you? Yes, I need one, how good are they?"

"It a he, his name is Efram and If you want I can set up a meeting, maybe even tonight if you are available. I can invite him by and bring him over to meet you, would that work?"

"That would be great, but I'm not sure how late I will be

here though.” Beck started to pack the things he was using for his training. “That’s fine; he will understand if you don’t mind talking with him late. I have to go, I’ll see you tonight,” He said, as he threw his bag over his shoulders and walked towards the door.

BECK

As I’m walking into the building, I see Jeff in the lobby. Two things happened when I saw him, My heart skipped a beat, and I immediately wanted to know why he was there. With a smile on my face, I greeted him. He responded with a question I wasn’t expecting. Instead of answering him, I asked a question of my own.

Neither of us had a chance to answer because the realtor my father uses walk up to us and greeted Jeff then myself. In an instant, I learned that Jeff was going to be living directly across from me. I wasn’t sure if I should curse fate or thank

it for its intervention. As he discussed the specifics with Mariam, I stood there stunned. Of all the places Jeff could live in this city, he ended up in my building and directly across from me.

I'm not sure what I was, shocked or dismayed. Either way, this moment was awkward. We walked to the elevator, and I shared that we would be living directly across from each other. This time he looked perplexed, I was sure I saw chagrin on his face. When we arrived at the apartment entrance, I welcome him to the building and quickly escaped into my apartment.

I stood against the door for a few minutes to gather my thoughts, and calm my racing heart. I refuse to make a fool of myself, especially after what happened with Noah; I promised myself that it would never happen again. I pulled myself together and wake my computer to FaceTime my brother. He answered the call instantly, and it was good to see him. "Hey bro how are you?" I asked as he told me I was late. "Sorry I'm late, what's going on in Cali? How are

the wedding plans coming along?”

“How do you think? Mom is going overboard even though I’ve told her again, and again that it’s too much.”

“How does Georgina feel about mom going overboard?”

“She loves it, she and mom are like two peas in a pod.”

“Then that’s all that matters, as long as she is happy just relax and enjoy the ride.”

“I guess that’s what I’m going to have to do. You are still planning on being here right?”

“I wouldn’t miss it, Alex, don’t worry I’ll be there, it’s six months away, and I’ve already put in for the time off. Stop worrying about that, tell me how is Dad?”

“Dad is the usual, nothing bothers him and he still trying to perfect his game.”

“He is retired, what else is he going to do with his time?” I asked. “Yeah, I know, you should see him and mom go at it, she says he is spending too much time on the course. He says I don't tell you how long to stay at the beauty salon so don't tell me about my golf game. Then they go back and

forth like two teenagers.” I laughed because I can imagine my parents doing exactly what my brother described. Alex decides to change the subject, “Have you met anyone yet?” “Now you sound like mom and dad, don’t bother me about my love life.”

“You need to have one for me to bother you,” He said laughing.

“If this is going to be what we talk about, this call is over,” I said.

“I should go anyway, I’m meeting Georgie to taste wedding cakes.”

“Remember just relax and go with it. I’ll talk to you next week; I love you.”

“I love you too, and I think you should put yourself out there more often.”

“Bye Alex, I’ll talk to you soon.” I ended the call before he had a chance to say more. I love my brother, but he doesn’t get my life, hell, sometimes I don’t get my life.

After hanging up with Alex, I decided to make another call

to Patrick because I need to talk with someone about my dilemma. Patrick knows all about my prior encounter with Jeff. I dialed his phone, and it rings once before he answered, "If you are calling to complain about QTI you may as well hang up," He said before I even said hello. "I'm not calling about work if you are busy I'll call back."

"You know I'm not busy, what's going on?"

"I'm coming over I'll be there in a half hour."

"Fine, just bring something to eat, I'm starving, and there is nothing in this fridge."

An hour later after stopping to get Chinese, I'm at Patrick's apartment ringing his buzzer. He opens the door, took the food out of my hand, before even inviting me in. "Glad to know you find me useful for something," I said, as I closed the door. "Sorry, I'm starving, I didn't eat at work today because I was so busy."

"So why didn't you stop and pick up something?" He shrugged his shoulders as he is digging in the bag for the

food. “What’s going on with you, why do you look so bewildered?” He asked as he reached for plates. I didn’t answer; instead, I took a plate and helped myself to Kong Pow Chicken. “You are not seeing Guy tonight?” I asked between bites. “Nope, he and I decided to take a break.” I looked at my best friend wide-eyed, “Really, what a shocker.”

“Hey, don’t be an ass, you know I was really into him.”

“What I know is, you have a hard time staying with one man, you go through them like you’re drinking a glass of water.”

“It’s not my fault they don’t get me.” I shook my head. I love my best friend, but he is afraid of commitment or anything that resembles it. It doesn’t help that he is a product of parents who’ve been divorced and married three times. “We shouldn’t talk about me,” He said. Every time we talk about my relationship issues we argue.” He is right, I hate the way he goes through men, and he knows it. “Well let’s talk about my love life then, you won’t believe what

happened to me a few days ago.” Pat stopped eating and gave me his full attention. “Remember what I told you happened last year?” At first, he looked confused by my question. I gave him a minute to catch up. “Ohh! The airport, yeah I remember.” He opened his eyes wide before saying, “Oh my god! Did you run into him at the hospital?” “Yeah, you could say that.” Our food forgotten, Patrick moved closer to me on the couch before saying, “Tell me everything.” I end up spending the night, as we talked into the morning. Too bad our talk provided no solution as to what I should do about the Doc.

The next day, I’m at the hospital doing another training on the PERS system. I would be lying if I said I didn’t notice when he walked in. He immediately walked to the opposite end of the lounge; I tried not to follow his movements, but it was futile. As the training wrapped up, I notice he was asleep on the sofa. I planned to leave before he wakes, but that didn’t happen. Instead, he joined me as I was packing

up to leave. I ended up offering to introduce him to an Interior Designer I knew. I also knew I needed to walk away before I offered this man, my soul. I finished packing my things and made an excuse to leave.

I made my way back to the office and called Efram to see if he was available. The phone rang twice before he answered, "Hell Beck, It's been ages since we've heard from you." I laughed before responding, "It hasn't been that long, how are you? How is Eli?"

"We are great; you know the boring couple that we are."

"I'm sure you two are not that boring. Anyway, I'm calling because I may have a job for you if you're interested."

"Of course I'm interested, do I know the person?"

"I don't think so, he is a doctor, who recently moved to New York. He was hoping to get work done sooner rather than later, so I told him I would invite you over tonight and introduce you. Are you available?"

"I'll make sure, what time?"

"That's the thing, he is working today, and he isn't sure what

time he will be home. Can you and Eli come and hang here for a while until he gets home?"

"Eli is on his way home, let me talk to him, and I will call you back. I don't think it will be a problem though, just let me confirm with him."

I ended the call with Efram and made my way home, a part of me excited that I would see Jeff again.

Chapter Three

JEFF

MY SHIFT at the hospital didn't end until well after midnight. It never occurred to me to get Beck's number to call if I thought I wouldn't make it home at a decent hour. As I am driving, I debated knocking on his door to apologize. I decided as I am opening my door not to wake him, to wait until morning. I just walked into the living room and was about to head for the shower when there is a knock at the door. Surprised, I walked to the door and opened it to find Beck standing there. "Good morning, I thought I would catch you before you go to sleep."

"How did you know I was home?" I asked curiously. "I asked the doorman to let me know when you get home. Are you too tired to meet with Efram?"

“No, is he still here? I thought I came home too late.”

“It is late, but Efram understands, I’ll get him,” Beck said, as he turn to walk back across the hall into his apartment. A few minutes later there was a soft knock on the door, and I called for them to come in. “ Jeffrey Corbin, this is Efram James.” I turned and standing before me is a friend of Jax whom I met once at the Palace. Neither of us said a word or moved to greet each other. Finally, I end the awkward silence, “Hi Efram, it’s nice to see you again,” I said, as I walked over to him with my hand extended. Efram extended his hand, as Beck asked how we knew each other. “Jeff is a friend of a friend,” Efram said uncomfortably.

After more awkward silence, I decided to get straight to the point. “I need furniture and a few things done to this apartment, are you interested?” Efram didn’t answer the question I asked. Instead, he asked one of his own. “How is Jax? It’s been almost a year since anyone has seen, or heard from him.”

“Jax is married and living in London.” Efram shakes his

head. "It's fucked up the way he just disappeared without saying a word."

'Maybe he didn't say anything because he didn't want you to choose between him and Mecca," I said solemnly. He shook his head again, then said," If you still want me to help make your place habitable, I will be glad to take a look.

"Yes, I would appreciate it."

After we passed the awkwardness, Beck excused himself and Efram and I walked the apartment, me telling him what I would like in the apartment, and him offering suggestions. Ninety minutes later, I'm escorting him to the door, and he is going to prepare a contract for me to sign. "Can I live here while you work?" I asked as we walked to the door. "Yes, you can, but I don't recommend it. It would go much faster if you weren't here. I will work with my in-house interior design team and have this place habitable in a matter of weeks."

We walked over to Becks apartment door which was wide open. "Thanks for doing this, I appreciate you staying so

late," I said, as Beck and Efram partner walked towards us.

"Beck I don't know if you remember, but this is my partner, Eli."

"Yes, I remember, hi Eli, its good to see you again."

"Same here," He said with a curious look on his face. The awkwardness returned before Efram said, "Well it's late, we should get going. The two of them walked to the sofa, to get their jackets as Beck offer to walk them downstairs. "That won't be necessary," Eli said. "We know our way, thanks for the hospitality and don't let it be months before we hear from you again," He said as he pats Beck on the back.

As the two of them walked down the hall towards the elevator, I turned to Beck, "Thanks a lot for this."

"It's a small world isn't it?" Beck said. "What do you mean?"

I asked. "What are the chances that you knew Efram and Eli?"

"I actually don't know them. We met once when the man I'm friends with introduced us."

You don't have to use Efram and his firm if you don't want

to." I didn't respond to his comment. Instead, I asked, "Did Efram decorate your place?"

"No, my father commissioned another firm to design a few of the units for display, and they designed this one as well. At least they took my idea's and worked with it."

"Well, this place looks great," I said, as my eyes wander around the apartment which had the same layout as mine. "I hope Efram does as good a job."

"I've seen Efram's work; if you like what my place looks like, then you will be satisfied."

"It's late; I should let you get to bed." Beck laughed before saying, "That's what I should be saying to you." We stood in the middle of his foyer staring at each other before I finally walked towards the door. "Good night Beck, thanks again for arranging this and staying up so late."

"Don't mention it, anytime." After returning to my apartment, I did nothing but turn off lights as I walked towards the bathroom. Two days later I had the contract from Efram in hand to sign. As usual, I was tired because I

had just returned from work. The only thing stopping me from going to bed is the contract in my hand and trying to decide where to live while the work is being done in the apartment. I also received the paperwork for buying the condo a few days earlier and decided to call Mr. Copeland and see if he had another apartment in the building I could rent for the month.

I decided to ask Beck before calling his father. I wasn't sure he would be home when I knocked on his door; after knocking twice, there was no response. As I'm about to return to my apartment, his door suddenly opened. "Hi, sorry, I was on a call, come in, how are you?"

"Are you sure I'm not interrupting."

"No, you are not interrupting, come in. How are things."

"I have a question to ask; I was wondering if your father had another unit in the building that he would consider renting to me for a month while Efram worked on the apartment."

"Honestly, I don't think so, but we can call him, I could be wrong." He started to walk towards his phone when I

stopped him. "Beck, it's okay, if you don't think one is available I will stay at a hotel."

"I think you should let me call my dad, I don't always know what's going on, and if an apartment isn't available here, he may have another one close by."

"Are you sure?" I asked. "Sure, come in while I call."

BECK

Efram and his partner Eli came by around seven. Because the weather is nice outside, I decided to clean the grill and barbecue while waiting for Jeff to get home. "So tell us about this neighbor, you are going out of the way to help," Eli jokingly asked. "There is nothing to tell, he is my neighbor, and I knew Efram did the kind of work he was looking for. He also was the doctor who saved my brother's life." Efram and Eli both turn to look at me with a surprised look on their faces. "That's something to tell, how did the

two of you connect?"

I didn't know how much I wanted to tell them about Jeff, so I decided to refrain from sharing too many details. "He is working at the hospital QTI currently has a contract with, he approached my father about buying the condo across the hall."

"Did he know your brother was a former patient?"

"No, not when he decided to buy the apartment."

"That's a lot of coincidences." Eli Said.

"I agree." Efram echoed.

"Anyway, as I said on the phone I don't know what time he will be home, it could be late, are you two still okay with waiting?"

"Sure, I'm happy to help if I can." It was well after midnight when the doorman called to let me know Jeff was home; during the introductions, I learned they already knew each other. I left them alone to go through the apartment and returned to my apartment to share the news with Eli. "He wants to show the apartment to Efram?" Eli asked.

“Yeah, It seems you may already know him, he is a friend of one of your friends.”

“Seriously, which friend? What’s his name again?”

“Jeff, Dr. Jeffrey Corbin.”

“Oh shit, yeah we’ve met him. You probably don’t remember meeting Jax and Mecca at the holiday party we had three years back, but Jax was with Mecca and Mecca couldn’t stand Jax best friend. That best friend was Jeff.”

“Why didn’t he like him?”

“Mecca swears Jeff was in love with Jax. We met him, and we had to agree with Mecca, it just seems as if he was kind of possessive.”

I don’t know what I felt after hearing this side of the story. I do know there are always two sides and I am not going to jump to any conclusion about any relationship Jeff may or may not have had with someone name Jax. Eli and I hung out for over an hour waiting for Efram and Jeff as they discuss the work. When they were done, the two of them hastily made their exit which I couldn’t blame them, after

all, it was almost two in the morning.

After they left, Jeff and I exchange pleasantries, then we went our separate ways. Two days later I was on a conference call with a client when there is a knock at my door. I opened the door to see Jeff walking away. "Hey, sorry, I was on a call, come in." Jeff wanted to know if there was an empty apartment in the building that he could rent while his apartment was being decorated. I ended up calling my dad to ask, and my father offered Jeff the apartment he and my mom usually stayed in when they are in town. Jeff asked to speak with my dad, but I only heard one side of the conversation, I could tell my father was convincing him that it was entirely okay for him to use the apartment next door. After hanging up with my dad, I walked with him to the apartment. "I appreciate your father doing this; please tell him thanks again for me. I'm just so grateful he is willing to do this, I've developed an aversion to hotels, and I would prefer living in an empty apartment than to staying in one again for a long time." When we

arrived at the apartment, I lingered at the door as Jeff walked around surveying the rooms. "This is great, are you sure you are okay with me using your parent's apartment?" I hesitated before answering, "Yes, I'm glad my parents could help." He shook his head and walked towards me to retrieve the keys. As he reached for them, our hands touched, and I swear his touch was electrifying. I hastily made an excuse that I had an appointment and left him standing there. I wondered if he felt the electricity that passed between us.

The next day, I was scheduled to spend the day at the hospital for more training. I almost made it the whole day without seeing him. I was preparing to walk onto the elevator to exit the building when we cross paths. He was coming off, I was going on. "Hey Doc," I said, casually. "I was wondering if I could talk with you, are you leaving?" He asked. "I am," I said while heading onto the elevator. He held the door before saying, "I wanted to talk to you, can I ride down with you?"

"Sure," I said, as casually as I could muster. As soon as we

walked outside the building, Jeff turned to me. "I wanted to talk about your fathers offer to let me stay at the apartment. Are you sure it's okay with you? I know you said it was, but yesterday I felt as if you may not be ok with it." I was dumbfounded while at the same time caught off guard; I didn't know what to say. On the one hand, I didn't wanted him to feel as if I didn't want him to use my mom and dad's place. On the other, I wish he was staying at a hotel far away from me.

Before I could respond to him, he continues. "I'm not wanting for money Beck; I can afford to stay somewhere else for a month. I don't want you to feel uncomfortable." I held my hands up to stop him. "I'm sorry if I gave you the wrong impression. Whatever you thought you saw in me yesterday, you were mistaken; I am fine with you staying there." He looked at me reflectively then said, "Okay. "Good, if I can help you with anything, let me know." He smiled pushed both hands into his pants pocket then turn to walk away, but not before saying, "Thanks again for this." I

shook my head then walk in the opposite direction.

I must have walked into QTI with a scowl on my face because the moment Patrick saw me he pulled me into his office. "What happened? Why do you look as if your cat died?" I would have laughed if I wasn't on the verge of having a panic attack. "Sit down and tell me what's going on," "Nothing is wrong; I'm just in trouble where Jeff Corbin is concern, and I don't know what to do about it."

Patrick sat next to me then ask, "You saw him again?"

"Patrick, what are you talking about? I've seen him every day. Since the last time we spoke I've been to his apartment, he's been to mine; he is staying in my parent's apartment for a month while his place is being decorated."

Patrick almost laugh before asking, "How the hell did all that happen?"

"I don't know its like faith is playing a cruel joke on me by throwing him in my path every chance it gets." Patrick laughed. "Maybe you are right, and faith is trying to tell you

something.”

“Like what? All that’s happening is I’m being reminded of a time when I was at my weakest. This guy is probably laughing at me.”

“Somehow I doubt that he is probably feeling the same way you are feeling.”

Chapter Four

JEFF

I WASN'T sure what it was, was it the fact that when our hands touched there was a spark of electricity? Or was he entirely against my using his parent's condo? Whatever the reason, he left very quickly. I think I'm going to approach him again to make sure he is ok with me using his parent's place. We need to say more to each other, but I get the impression the last thing he wants is to talk about what happened between us a year ago. In a few hours, I'll be on call again, and hopefully, I'll see him at the hospital.

When I arrived at the hospital who did I see almost immediately? Beck. I was about to start my shift, and it looked as if he was leaving. When I asked him again whether he was okay with my using the apartment, he said

again he was okay with it. I still feel as if he would mind. When I walked away from him, I decided I would get a hotel room after all.

The next time I was off shift, I arrived at the apartment, to find Efram working on the apartment. I took the luggage I packed earlier and the key to the Copeland's condo and left the apartment. On my way out of the building, I put the key under Becks door with a note thanking him but letting him know I made other arrangements. Two things are genuinely bothering me since arriving back in New York. The constant on again off again shift I've been working at the hospital, and my inability to settle anywhere but in a hotel room, which is where I found myself an hour later. I didn't bother unpacking once I checked in, I took a long shower and did what I've been doing a lot lately, which is sleep.

I don't know how long it was that I had fallen asleep when the front desk called and woke me. I answered the phone annoyed because I didn't ask for a wake-up call. "I'm sorry to bother you Mr. Corbin, but there is a gentleman here to

see you, and he insisted that I call your room.”

“What gentleman?” I asked. “I’m not expecting anyone.”

“He said his name is Beckett Copeland, shall I send him away?”

“No, send him up,” I knew the conversation we were about to have needed to happen. Ten minutes later, Beck is banging on the hotel door. I gingerly walked to the door and opened it. “Hi Beck, I guess you got my note.” He snickered held the note up in his hand then ask, “What is this about? What are you doing?”

“Do you want to come in?” I asked instead of answering his questions; I only had my pants on, and I felt uncomfortable. “No, I don’t want to come in, what I want is an answer to my question.”

“All right, I felt as if you really didn’t want me to accept your father’s invitation to stay in his condo, that’s what that is about,” I said while pointing to the note in his hand. Beck didn’t say anything, but I could tell he had a lot to say, he was fuming. “You came to me and asked me if I was okay

with you using the condo. I told you yes, what more did you want me to say?" The fact that I was half naked forgotten, I push both of my hands into my pocket and said exactly what I was thinking. "You could try being honest when I asked you a second time if you were okay with me staying there."

"I was honest with you."

"Really, I disagree, I'm maybe overworked and always tired Beck, but I'm not stupid. I know when someone is lying to me, and I certainly know when you are lying to me." Now he was angry, his face turned a deep shade of red. He turned as if he was about to walk away, then turn back to say, "You don't know a damn thing about me, you don't know me."

"Fine, I don't know you, please tell your father I said thanks again," I said as I was about to close the door. He stopped the door from closing then said, "I'm not a liar, If I told you it was okay to use the condo then it was. Whatever you thought you saw you are wrong."

“What I see is someone who is saying what he thinks I want to hear, not what you are really feeling.” We looked at each other intently then he turned and walked away. I closed the door turn to go back to bed but didn’t make it very far, he knocked on the door again. I opened the door but didn’t say a word because he started to speak before the door was even ajar. “What do you want to hear? That I am having a hard time dealing with the fact that I gave myself to you a year ago during one of the lowest points in my life. That every time I see you, it’s a reminder of what I did? Then there you have it.”

We didn’t speak for at least a full minute after he spoke, we just stood in the doorway staring at each other. Finally, he turned to walk away, that’s when I said, “It wasn’t for me.” He stopped but didn’t turn around, so I continued. “What I remember about that day was that I was in a terrible place too, but being with you pulled me out of that bad place. You saved me that day Beck. I know you don’t understand what I’m talking about, but you have to know that as unexpected

as that day was, you were the best thing that ever happened to me.” He half turned then and looked at me again, but he didn’t respond to what I said. Instead, he said, “Please come and stay in my parent's condo. I really, really don’t mind. What I am is a little daunted by the fact that our lives have basically intertwined. I never thought I would see you again and then here you are. I see you when I go to work, you are next door to me when I get home, and I found out today that my father and your uncle has been talking on the phone lord knows about what. I’m just overwhelmed if that makes any sense.”

“What do you think my uncle and your father is talking about?” I asked curiously. “I haven’t a clue, maybe you can find out,” he said while smiling. “I probably can.” It was pretty obvious both of us was a little less stress than we were a minute ago. I sensed he was about to ask me again to come back to the condo, but before he could ask I told him, “I’m going to get some sleep, and I will think about the condo.” He shook his head then turn to leave. “Beck,” I

called as he is walking down the hall. He turned to look in my direction "I meant what I said." He shook his head then turned and continue.

I returned to bed, but sleep eluded me. I couldn't stop thinking about Beck. It never occurred to me all these months that he would view what happened at the airport so differently than me. All I know is that day, what we did in that hotel room was a good memory for me. What could have happened that he thought us being together was the lowest point of his life? Suddenly, this was a question I wanted an answer to. The only way to get the answer is to get to know Beck Copeland, to spend time with him. I couldn't help but wonder how I can change his mind? Whatever it is I need to do, I can't do it in this hotel room. It starts with my moving into the condo.

After finally falling asleep, I woke up ready and determined to convince Beck that our encounter was not a mistake. First I have to deal with work and this beeper going off by my head. I need to do something about this schedule.

BECK

I walked out of the hotel befuddled. After admitting to Jeff I was ashamed of what we did a year ago, I didn't expect him to say what he did. How did I save him? All I did was threw myself at him. It was early in the evening, and the last thing I wanted to do was to go home and dwell on thoughts of what was. So I hopped into a cab to pay an unexpected visit to Patrick. As my taxi arrived, another pulled up with Patrick. "Hey, what are you doing here?" He asked while walking towards me. "I didn't want to go home, so here I am. Do you have plans because if you do, I can leave." "What kind of friend would I be if you told me you didn't want to be alone and I send you on your way? Come on, come up let's see what I have up there to eat or to get drunk with." We walked into the building and head to the elevator, the door didn't close before I started. "I am a mess, Pat."

“What happened?”

“It’s a long story, the gist of it is, I told Jeff tonight that I regretted what we did a year ago.” Patrick leans against the back of the elevator next to me then said, “Well, it’s not a lie, you do regret the encounter as you call it. As you said, it’s not something you normally do, so it makes sense that there would be some regret. Can I ask what led to the conversation?”

“Remember he is having his place furnished. Well, my father offered him the condo they use when they are in New York, which is next door to me. He asked me if I was okay with him using the condo. I said yes, he didn’t believe me and moved into a hotel. It took me all afternoon to find where he was staying. I visited him to ask why and he said I was lying to him when I said I didn’t mind him staying in the condo.”

“So basically he saw through your bullshit.” The elevator dinged open before I had a chance to answer Patrick. We settled onto his sofa then I ask, “What bullshit? Am I

supposed to tell him, Hey, I hate the fact that I threw myself at you a year ago, now I keep running into you everywhere I turn, and I don't know what to do about it. By the way, that's exactly what I told him tonight."

"You know I want to laugh right now?" Patrick said jokingly

"Don't you dare laugh at me, Pat."

"Ok, I'll be serious, do you want me to tell you what I think?

Don't answer that; I'm going to tell you anyway. This is why I don't do relationships it's way too complicated."

"We are not in a relationship," I practically yelled. "No, you are not, but you may as well be in one. Here is what I think: I think you are into the Doc, and he is into you. I bet he has no regret about what happened last year. I bet, he is trying to figure out a way to get to know you since he and you cross path again. Beck, he likes you, and you like him, so stop fighting it and see where it leads. And for goodness sake stop lying to him."

"You said you have something to drink? Where is it? In the kitchen?" I asked as I got up off the couch and head towards

the kitchen. Patrick, of course, started to laugh. I turned to him gave him an evil look and continued to where I know he keeps his liquor. I reached for his Scotch and two glass and returned to the sofa. We didn't say anything as we sipped on the bitter liquid. Then I decided to change the subject.

"What about you? How are things with your latest fuck buddy Michael?"

"Things are great between Mike and me, in fact, we are meeting up tonight at a club downtown, and I'm sure one thing will lead to another, and we will end up at his place or mine. You see how simple that is?"

"One of these days Patrick you are going to meet someone who is going to rock your world and simple will go out of the window. When it happens just know I will be right here to say, I told you so."

"It will never happen because I won't let it. I'm not looking for complicated."

"What are you saying, that I am?"

“Beck, you are a relationship kind of guy, even though Noah stepped all over you, when you were in a relationship with him, you still wanted the love and circumstance. I don’t want either; I just want sex, the lustful, steamy, passionate kind with no strings attached.”

“Like I said Patrick, one day. Let’s get something to eat then I have to go, I have a training first thing in the morning.”

“How is that coming along by the way?” Patrick said as he walked to the kitchen to get take-out menus. “I’m showing the same three people over and over again how to use the system. I don’t think we can do anything but keep showing them and hope that sooner or later they will be comfortable enough that they won’t need me.”

“I’m going to recommend to Glen that you stay another week then that’s it. We can’t hold their hands any longer. As long as they understand the software, there is nothing else we can do.”

The next morning I was back at the hospital. This time Jeff and I didn’t cross path, not once throughout the day. It was

after five when I arrived home, and there was a note under the door from Jeff. I'm next door, can I have the keys? I smiled. I'm not sure if the smile was because he was back close to me, or if I'm going to take Patrick advice and just relax and see what happens. I walked across the hall and knock on his door. It was opened by one of the workers working in the apartment. "Hi, do you know where —" I didn't get to finish, Jeff walks up behind him and said. "Hi" "Hey, I just got your note, have you been waiting all day?" "No, I came by an hour ago, Efram wanted my input on some things he wanted to do to the apartment. I wasn't sure when you would be home, but I figured I would wait." "I'm glad you waited, are you finish here?" "Yes, I go on shift again in a few hours, and I was hoping to sleep before the dreaded beeper goes off." He said while pointing to his waist. "I'll go and get the keys." He followed me to the apartment but stood at the door, "Can I come in?" I turned to look at him before saying, "Yes, come in." I walked to where I had the keys on the kitchen counter. He

walked through the door, but didn't move very far from it, I could feel his eyes as they follow me around the room. I reached for the keys and was walking back towards him when he asked, "Have you eaten? I haven't eaten all day, and I was hoping to grab something before my nap, are there any good take-out places around here?" I looked at him, and he was suddenly nervous. "I'm actually hungry, there are quite a few places that will deliver, but I have a better idea, can I make you a sandwich? I have all the ingredients, and it will be quicker than waiting for delivery, that way you will have more time to get some sleep. And, I'm rambling, sorry." He put both hands in his pants pocket then smiled. "You are not rambling, and I would love it if you made me a sandwich."

"Then stop standing at the door and come in then," I said while putting the key back on the counter and heading towards the fridge to get the supplies needed to make the sandwiches. Jeff walked around the counter and asked, "Can I help?" I reached for the lettuce, "You can wash and

tear these while I get the bread and meat ready.” He took the lettuce, turned to the sink and started to prepare them.

We worked in a comfortable silence before he said, “The next time you have to let me make you a meal.” I turned to look at him then ask, “You know how to cook Doc?” He chuckled, then ask, “What, doctors don’t cook?”

“It’s not that,” I said. “I just can’t imagine you in a kitchen cooking; you don’t seem like the type.” He snorted then ask, “What type do you think I am?” I shrugged my shoulders then said, “The type that gets take-out a lot.” He grinned then said, “I’m that type too. But you shouldn’t judge a book by its cover and because you said that, I am insisting that you let me cook for you.” I turned and looked at him then said, “It’s a date.”

Chapter Five

JEFF

AS EXPECTED, my shift started the moment the clock hit midnight. I made my way to the hospital intent on having a conversation with Dr. Munch. This schedule is killing me, and I am determined to let him know that and ask for a schedule that doesn't involve this spasmodic scheduling. I arrived at the hospital, and of course, I am thrown into an emergency. By late morning I was able to visit the chief's office, hoping he would be there. Luckily for me, he was there when I knocked on his door, "Jeffrey, come in, good morning how are you?"

"I could be better Dr. Munch, do you have a few minutes to talk with me?"

"Yes, come in and close the door," He said as I walked

further into his office. “Dr. Munch I’m having a hard time with the schedule I’ve been assigned. I was hoping you could help me do something about it.” Dr. Munch gave me a troubled look then said, “You have the schedule you have because you are relatively new to the hospital.” I stopped him before he continued, “Actually, I’m not new to the hospital, I did my residency here, and after my residency, I worked here another full year before accepting another position elsewhere. I’m just asking that I’m given a shift where I can have some semblance of a life. I want to work here at NYU, I’m sure you know that. I’m also a good doctor, a seasoned doctor, and I don’t deserve to have a shift where it’s as if I’m doing my residency again.” Doctor Munch lean back in his chair accessing me, then said: “Let me see what I can do about your schedule Dr. Corbin, I can’t make any promises, but I will try and make some changes.” I stood, then said, “That’s all I want Dr. Munch, I would appreciate anything you can do.”

“Sit back down and tell me how things are going

otherwise," He said while pointing to the seat.

"Other than the schedule, things are good, I have no issues being a part of the emergency unit, my skills are still being used broadly." He shook his head as if understanding, then ask, "And you are also doing a lot of cardiac care?"

"Yes, as you promised, Dr. Epstein, the head of the emergency department has been very accommodating with his expertise and his time."

"I'm glad to hear that, Jeff. I know this specialty is the main reason you decided to return to NYU. Let me see what I can do about your schedule. You are right, you are a good doctor, and we would hate to lose you because of scheduling issues."

I stood again to leave, but not before saying, "Thank you, Dr. Munch, I know you will do your best for me."

I walked out of Dr. Munch's office feeling as if I've accomplished something. I didn't even mind when my beeper went off, even though it was time for my shift to end.

After leaving the hospital, I made my way to my temporary apartment and went straight to bed and didn't move until the next day. When I opened my eyes again, it occurred to me almost instantly that I am supposed to be on-call at the hospital, and the beeper didn't go off. I jumped off the bed, called the hospital and was told by the head nurse I was off the schedule until Monday. I almost laughed at the phone. It seems my conversation with Dr. Munch was very helpful.

Entirely rested and nothing to do, my mind instantly drifted to Beck. I opened my door to walk down the hall and came face to face with Efram. "Good morning," I mumbled.

"Good morning, did we wake you?" He asked. "No, I was actually going to knock on Beck's door."

"You just missed him, he left, but said he would be back."

"Okay, thanks, Efram," I said as I turned to walk back into the apartment. I spent the rest of the morning unpacking some of my clothes. My mind still on Beck, I tried again to see if he was home. This time as I'm walking to his door,

Beck is coming off the elevator. I waited for him to get to his door before starting to speak, "Hey, I know you may be busy today, but do you have plans for tomorrow?" He looked at me probingly then ask "Why?" Rocking back and forth on my feet I said, "I was hoping I could cook that meal I promised you." Stunned, he said, "Oh, sure, Tomorrow?" "Only if you have the time," I said falteringly. "Tomorrow would be great, do you want me to come over or do you want to use my kitchen."

I would love to use your kitchen if that's okay."

"Sure, that's fine, what time did you have in mind?"

"Let's make it a late lunch will that work?"

One thing is clear, my invitation came as a shock to Beck, even though I had initially offered to make a meal for him. I guess he thought I would forget about the offer to cook. I am actually looking forward to making the meal; today I'm going to go out and do some shopping and decide what I'm going to prepare.

Knowing that I didn't have to worry about work again until

Monday helped tremendously with making the day one of the most relaxed I've had in a very long time. I did some grocery shopping, visited the gym in the building, and just relaxed. By the next day, I was up early, went for a run in the park then came home to my uncle waiting for me in the lobby. "What are you doing here?" I asked breathlessly. "Do I need a reason to come and visit my nephew?" He asked. "No, you don't need a reason, but usually you call and let me know you are coming."

"As I recall, I didn't call the last time."

"You are right, you didn't, so does this mean this will be your new habit?" He laughed before asking, "Are you going to invite me up or do you have a guest?"

"No guest uncle, I am staying in the Copeland's apartment temporarily while work is being done on my apartment."

We entered the elevator, and as the door is closing, I saw Beck entering the lobby. I immediately stopped the door from closing and waited for him. My uncle curious as to what I was doing peered at the lobby, when he saw Beck, a

big smile enveloped his face. I didn't get a chance to ask what the smile was about because Beck walked up to the elevator and thanked me for holding the door. I introduced Beck to my uncle, then we rode the elevator in silence before my uncle asked, "Beck, do you have plans for today?" Beck turned to look at me before mumbling, "I think so sir."

"The reason I'm asking is that I just came by to ask my nephew to come and have lunch with me and I was hoping you would join us."

At this point I had to speak up "Uncle Max, I have plans for today."

"Really, what are your plans?" I stammered but said, "I have plans with Beck, I'm making Lunch for him today." My uncle laughed then asked, "Really? Is this true Beck?" Beck bowed his head to answer, then my uncle clapped his hands then said, "That's great, now the two of you can come and have lunch with me, you can make lunch for him another time Jeff." I looked at my uncle as if I wanted to kill him

then asked, "Why can't we have lunch together another time?" My uncle turned, looked at me then call me something I've only heard him call me when he was pissed at me. "Boy, I would like to have lunch with you today because I am headed out of town for a few days, and I thought it would be nice to invite the son of the man who has been extremely gracious to you." Beck at this point decided to speak up. "Mr. Corbin, you don't have to take me to lunch because of my father's graciousness." He turned to Beck, looked at him pointedly then said, "Beck, if I didn't want to take you to lunch as well I would have told my nephew I wanted to just take him to lunch."

The intimidation factor in the elevator was definitely up a few notches. The elevator dinged open, and we walked toward the apartments without saying a word. Finally, my uncle decided to ask, "So, are we going to lunch?" I didn't answer. Instead, I turned to look at Beck then asked, "Do you want to have lunch with us Beck? You don't have to come, I would understand." Beck turned to look at my uncle

then back at me. My uncle must have sensed that he needed to make himself scarce because he asked for the key and asked which door he is going to. I handed him the key then point to the door.

After my uncle disappears inside, I turned to Beck, "You don't have to come if you don't want to. He get's like this sometimes with me, and because I love him, I let him get away with it." Beck laughed before saying, "I like your uncle and if you want me to come to lunch with you, I will, since we were going to have lunch together anyway."

"I would love for you to come to lunch with us, let's find out where he had in mind and what time," I said as I walked towards the apartment door. I opened the door, and he was standing by the windows looking out onto the street.

"Uncle Max, where and what time for lunch?" I asked. He smiled then said, "Wonderful, I'll call and have the plane ready." Beck and I both turned to him and asked simultaneously, "The Plane?" Uncle Max where are we going for lunch? I asked this time spectacularly. "We are

going to Martha's Vineyard in Massachusetts."

"Seriously Uncle, why there?"

"The two of you just go and get ready before our lunch turns into dinner." He said, as he pulled out his phone and began to make preparations.

JEFF

Two hours later, we land at Martha's Vineyard Airport, where a car was waiting to take us to a restaurant called Atlantic. Because of our ostentatious commute to Cape Cod, I expected the restaurant to be as upscale as the plane we rode in on. In fact, the restaurant wasn't on the same grand scale level, but it was beautifully situated overlooking the water.

After we were seated, my uncle excused himself and left us alone for a few minutes. "Are you Ok?" I asked Beck the moment my uncle was out of sight. "I'm fine, how about

you?” Beck asked. “I’m fine; I never fully realize my wealth until I’m around him.” I look to where my uncle disappeared then continued, “He lives so extravagantly, while I do my best not to flaunt what I have.” Beck chuckled then said, “You are failing.” It was obvious I was shocked by his comment. He ignored My reaction and continued “You and I both live alone in apartments that would cost an average New Yorker ten years of an excellent salary. I would say you are failing, for that matter so am I.”

I smiled, then said, “You are right. Still, I don’t travel the way he does, and I would never think to come to Cape Cod just for seafood.” He laughed before saying, “You have to admit though, its a damn good idea.” We were both laughing when Max returned to the table. “What are you two laughing about?” He asked as he took his seat. “Beck and I were just saying your idea to come to Cape Cod for seafood, was a good one.” Max looked back and forth between us then ask, “That’s funny why?” We started to laugh again then I said, “ It just is Uncle Max, it just is.”

Two hours later after each of us ordered the restaurant signature dish called Lobster Copper Pot Pie, we ate until we could barely stand. My uncle announced he had a meeting and would leave us on our own for an hour or so. Since we were near the waterfront, and it was a beautiful day, we decided to take a walk on the boardwalk. We were walking for a few minutes before either of us said a word. As we walked, Beck was staring out at the water; he turned to find me staring at him. "You keep doing that," He said, as we kept walking. "I keep doing what?" I asked. "Every time I look up, you are staring at me." Not sure what to say I whispered, "I'm sorry,"

Beck didn't say anything after I apologized, he then turned to me and said, "You can stare at me, I don't care, just tell me what it is about me that fascinates you so much." At first, I didn't respond, Then I said what he wasn't expecting, "You are so beautiful." He stopped dead in his tracks.

I kept walking, afraid to look back, fearful of what I might see. I didn't mean to blurt out what I was thinking, but when

Beck asked why I was staring, the response just came naturally. I don't regret saying it because he is gorgeous. His tousled hair, the way his eyes light up when he smiles, the man is just stunning. I finally stopped walking. Instead of turning to look at him, I looked out onto the water. He caught up with me, and we stood there just staring out onto the sea. "Do you want to walk further?" He finally asked. I turned and looked at him surprised because I thought he was going to say something more. "Yes, let's walk to the end, I love boardwalks they remind me of when I was younger."

"Where did you grow up in California?"

"I wasn't raised in California, I was born in London and raised in New York."

"Ohh, why did I think you are from California. Where in New York were you raised?"

"I was raised by my grandmother in Westchester. She used to come to the city a lot because she owned an art studio near Coney Island. In the summertime and sometimes even

during winter, she would bring me to the boardwalk because she knew I loved it.”

“I understand your fascination with boardwalks. I was raised in Orange County, and we lived a few miles from the San Clemente Pier. My brother and I spent a lot of time on that pier, some of my best memories happened on and beneath it.”

“Should I even ask what happened beneath the pier?” Beck laughed, “Doc I think you have a one-track mind. My friends and I would have barn fires on the beach when we could get away with it.”

“So no dates then?”

“I didn’t say that, of course, I had a few dates where we made out under the pier.”

“So how is it that I have a one-track mind?” I asked comically.

When we finally reached the end of the boardwalk, we stopped, and Beck climbs onto the railing with his back facing the water. I wasn’t expecting him to say, “I like that

you think I'm beautiful." I didn't respond. Instead, I lean against the rail also with my back facing the water, and we silently watch the comings and goings of the children and their parents.

We stayed in that spot for almost twenty minutes before we started to walk back towards the restaurant. "So Doc, are you permanently working at NYU or is your stay in New York temporary?"

"I'm actually back permanently."

"What made you decide to leave New York?"

I left a year after my residency, I was offered an opportunity in California, and I took the offer because I like it there."

"You don't like New York?"

"I love New York; I just needed a break at the time because of a few things I was going through."

I wasn't ready to delve into my past, so I hoped he wouldn't ask anymore. He must have suspected not to ask further, because he changed the subject and we started to talk about the hospital. When we arrived back at the restaurant, my

uncle was nowhere to be found, so we exited the restaurant and started to browse the shops along Main Street. Over an hour later my uncle called to say he was ready and waiting at the restaurant. When we arrived at the restaurant, he asked if we wanted to come with him to look at a house he was considering buying. "Max, I thought you said you couldn't wait to return to your life in Europe?" I asked. "I am looking forward to going back, but this part of the world is also growing on me. Come on; let's go look at this waterfront property, then I will take the two of you back to New York."

We ended up looking at a beautiful home overlooking the water with a private beach. By the time we left Cape Cod, it was well after dinner, and we had what can only be described as a memorable day. "Thanks for taking me with you today," Beck said, as we ride the elevator to the apartment. "Thanks for coming, I don't think I would have gone otherwise."

"Really, why? Your uncle seems fun."

“He is, but I told you, I'm not used to his lifestyle, I prefer living on the edge of my wealth and not fully immersed in it.” Beck started to laugh, then started to say, “I told you Doc...” I cut him off, “I know, I'm failing.”

The next day my uncle called right after I returned from the gym. “Hey Max, what's going on? Don't tell me you want to take us on another trip for lunch.” He laughed before saying, “No, just touching base with you, reminding you that I'm going out of town. I'm headed to Ireland for a few days.”

“Thanks for letting me know, and by the way, thanks again for the trip to Martha's Vineyard.”

“Don't mention it, I like young Copeland by the way, is there something more between the two of you?”

“Why would you ask that Uncle?”

“I think he likes you — a lot.” I didn't respond to his comment because I didn't know what to say. Instead, I tried unsuccessfully to change the subject. “What are you going to Ireland for?” He laughed before saying, “Don't try and

change the subject. This is the first time I've seen you show interest in someone other than Jackson Brent." I pulled the phone from my ear and looked at it in shock. "What do you mean?" I asked. "Well, I know you liked Jackson a whole lot more than he liked you."

"Uncle a year ago, I would have agreed with you, but today, I can definitively say that my love for Jax wasn't what I thought it was."

"What was it? May I ask?" I thought about it before answering, "I honestly was more jealous than anything else. Before he met Edward, I was his only friend. Then he met someone else to talk and share things with that wasn't me and I didn't handle it well. I don't know if that makes sense. He was like a brother to me, and I thought I lost him."

"I understand. Have you spoken to him since his move to London?"

"You forget, I went to his wedding. And yes, I've spoken to him a few times."

"Good, I'm glad to hear your friendship is intact, but what

about Beck?"

"What about him?"

"Don't pretend you don't know what I'm talking about; you like him."

"Uncle, I can't talk with you about Beck when I don't know where I am with him. Right now, I'm living in his parent condo for a few weeks, that's all there is."

"All right, just don't cut yourself off from the possibility. I have to go; I will talk to you next week when I get back from Ireland."

"Okay, have a safe trip."

Max is right. I do like Beck, a lot. I know the direction I would like for us to take, the problem is I'm having a hard time steering us in that direction. I want to get to know him, and our talk on the pier was a great start. Now I just have to find the time to spend with him. It's the only way I'm going to know more about him, and I want to know everything.

BECK

Yesterday was one of the best days I've had in a long time, followed by the most sleepless night I've had in a long time. I couldn't empty my mind enough to relax. Every time I closed my eyes memories of that night a year ago appear. I keep thinking of the way he made love to me, how deep his prick was inside of me. This is not an unusual dream; I've had them on and off for months. The difference between the dreams in the past and the ones I'm having now is that I believed then that I wouldn't see him again, and now he is right down the hall from me.

At four in the morning, I realized sleep wasn't a possibility, I got up, dressed and head to the office. I was scheduled to work from the office today anyway, so going in earlier than usual won't peak anyone's interest but Patricks'. Sure enough, I arrived at five-thirty, and he is already there. "Why are you here so early?" He asked the moment I walked through the door. "I couldn't sleep, so I decided to come in

early.” Patrick looked at me with concern, “Why couldn’t you sleep? What’s wrong?”

“Nothing is wrong, I was just restless.”

“In my experience, when you are restless, something is on your mind. Are you still thinking about the doctor?” He asked. In fact, before you answer, let’s go back the way we came and go downstairs and get coffee.” I didn’t argue with him because the truth is talking to him is probably a good idea. Starbucks is located in the lobby of the QTI building, so we didn’t have far to go. With our coffees in hand, it didn’t take long for Patrick to delve into my Psyche. “Ok, talk to me, tell me what’s going on, why can’t you sleep?”

“He told me yesterday that I was beautiful.” I just blurted out. If Patrick’s eyes could fall out of his head, it would have happened just now. “You need to back up and start from the beginning,” He says.

“Yesterday, his uncle came to visit and asked if he could take us to lunch. We ended up on his private jet headed to Martha’s Vineyard. Can you please shut your mouth before a

fly falls into it.”

“I’m sorry, but you just told me yesterday you went to Martha’s Vineyard for lunch on a private jet.”

“That’s what I said, anyway, after we ate, his uncle had a business meeting, so he and I took a walk on the boardwalk near the restaurant.”

“What led to him telling you, you are beautiful?”

“He kept staring at me, and I called him on it, and that was his response.”

“So, he is as into you as you are into him? Just like I said.”

“Maybe; maybe not. All I know is that every time I closed my eyes, I see his face. I doubt he is dreaming about me at night; I’m sure my face isn’t popping up every time he closes his eyes.” Patrick started to laugh hysterically, “Are you finish?” I asked annoyed that he is having fun at my expense.

“How do you know he isn’t thinking about you too? How do you know he is not dreaming about you?” Patrick asked.

“I don’t know, I just wish...”

“What do you wish, tell me.”

“I wish I wasn’t attracted to him. This is why I don’t put myself out there, it’s just too damn hard.”

“You need to relax Beck, I keep telling you to take things in stride, just go with the flow. This guy likes you, and you like him, so...”

“I know what you keep saying Patrick, and I’m trying hard to take your advice. I only feel this way when I’m not with him when I’m with him I feel so calm, it so easy to talk with him, but as soon as I’m alone, I panic. Waking up in the middle of the night dreaming about him puts me in a panic, does, that make sense?”

“Yes, it makes sense, you know what I think it means? I think you’ve already fallen hard for this guy and you are having a hard time dealing with it when you are alone.”

After my conversation with Patrick, I was more frazzled than ever. Still, I spent the rest of the day doing what I love to do, I worked with the programming team to debug an app we’ve been working to complete. By the time I left the

office, it was almost six. I wasn't sure if I would see Jeff when I get home. I do know that a large part of me is hoping.

I smelled the food before I even open the door, the most fantastic smell enveloped my senses. Jeff was in my kitchen cooking. At first, he didn't notice me as I stood there watching him move around the kitchen. Suddenly he looked up, and our eyes met. "Hey, you're home. I hope you don't mind that I took over your kitchen."

"How did you get in?" I asked. He stopped stirring the pot and turn to me, I was walking by, and someone by the name of Valentina said she was your housekeeper. I offered her a job, and we became fast friends. I told her I wanted to surprise you, is this a little freaky? I laughed then said, "It could be, but somehow it doesn't feel that way."

"I'm glad to hear that, I promised you a meal, it's just a small roast beef with baked potato. It's almost done, are you hungry?"

"As a matter of fact I am, I haven't eaten since this morning."

“Then wash your hands and come and get some.” He said as he reached for plates to bring to the table. I washed my hands and joined him at the table. “Thank you for this. I really am hungry,”

“Don’t thank me yet, you may not like it.” As I am cutting the succulent roast beef and putting it into my mouth, I said, “I doubt that.” I was right, the food was delicious. “Jeff this really taste good,” I said, between chews. “I’m glad you like it, roast beef is one of my favorite dishes.”

“Who taught you to make it?”

“My grandmother, when I was younger I used to sit in the kitchen and watch her make some amazing meals. Two things she knew how to do well. She knew how to paint some of the most amazing landscape, and she knew how to cook.”

“She sounds like an amazing woman, is she still alive.”

“Yes, she is very much alive, she retired to Florida five years ago. I try to go and see her as often as I can.”

“When was the last time you saw her?”

“Three months ago, I’m due for another visit.”

“Can I ask you a personal question?” I asked tentatively.

“Sure, what is it?” I hesitate before asking because I understand how it feels when strangers delve into your life.

“How is it that you were born in England, but you ended up here in America?” He didn’t respond for a long time, and I was just about to apologize for asking something so personal when he started to speak. “It’s a long story, but my mother met and fell in love with my father who was from England, and she followed him back to England.”

“Look, I’m sorry for being intrusive; I didn’t mean to ask something so personal.”

“Don’t be sorry, I’ll tell you the full story sometime, it’s just a really sensitive subject for me.”

“I understand, you don’t have to say anymore.”

“Can I ask you a personal question?” He asked.

“Sure, ask away.”

“Why are you living here in New York when your family lives in California?”

“I went to school here, and I love it here. After I finished, QTI offered me a job, and New York became my second home. Don’t get me wrong, I love California, but I love it here too. Plus I’m lucky, I get to have the best of both worlds, I have the resources to pack up and go home anytime I want, and because I’m so close to my family, I do go home often, although for my family it’s not often enough.”

“Which part of California were you working before coming back to the states?” I asked.

“LA, I worked at Ronald Regan UCLA after my residency in New York. They offered me a position that I couldn’t refuse.”

“So how did you end up back here?”

“All through Med school and my residency, I couldn’t decide what I wanted to specialize in. Then I realized while working at UCLA; I wanted to work with the heart and NYU is one of the best hospitals in the country for a Cardiothoracic Surgeon. It just so happens the chief of cardiology was visiting Ronald Regan and offered me a

position at NYU. Do you want some more food?" He asked while getting up to help himself with more. "No, I'm good thanks. Since you cooked, I'll clean up okay!"

"I have another personal question to ask you." He said as I'm putting the plates in the sink. "Sure ask me," I said while reaching for a pot on the stove. "Will you go out with me?"

Chapter Six

JEFF

AFTER THE interesting conversation I had with my uncle, I decided to take a nap since I knew I would be on call at midnight. It's one thing to want to sleep; it's another to fall asleep. Every time I closed my eyes, I'm rehashing the talk with my uncle. When I finally did fall asleep, it was to dreams of Beck. It wouldn't be so bad if the dreams were simple, but they were of us laying in bed, of him riding my dick while driving me insane. I have it bad for that man, and I need to do something about it. I decided then that I would ask him out on a date. Maybe if I spend more time with him, I will learn something about him that I don't like and that will end my attraction to him.

I woke up from my restless nap with hours to go before I'm

on-call again. It occurred to me that I haven't eaten, and I remember wanting to make a meal for Beck. I opened my door to walk down the hall and see if he is home. As I'm near his apartment I noticed the door was open, so I called his name, but he didn't answer. I called again, and started to walk inside hesitantly. As I'm walking in a woman came walking out of the bedroom and almost screamed. "You scared the daylights out of me!" She said with a heavy accent. "Sorry, didn't mean to scare you, the door was open, and I was concerned when Beck didn't answer when I called." She pulled earplugs out of her ears and asked, "What did you say?" I wanted to laugh. Instead, I repeated what I said, and she apologized. She walked towards me with her hands extended "Hi I'm Valentina, I clean Beck's apartment, you must be the one staying next door, he told me I didn't need to work over there this week because someone was staying there, is that you?" She asked. "I guess I am, I said, I'm staying there temporarily while my apartment across the hall is worked on." She held her hand

up in surprise “Ohh you are the new tenant.”

“Valentina, I’m going to need someone to clean my condo for me when the work is done are you interested?”

“Of course I am, just a one time clean or regularly?”

“Can you come regularly? I would love for it to be cleaned once or twice per week.”

“Ok, then it’s a lucky thing we met then because I will be happy to clean a few times per week.”

“Do you know where Beck is?”

“I think he is at work.” An idea came to me almost instantly

“Valentina, could I ask you for a favor? You can say no, and I would understand, but I promised Beck I would cook for him and I would like to use his kitchen.”

“You know I could lose my job if Beck is unhappy that I let you in.”

“I know, I promise that won’t happen, I will vouch for you.”

“Ok, I still have a lot to do.”

“That’s great; I have to go to the supermarket so I can’t start cooking for another hour will that work for you?” She

looked at me with concern in her eyes. I could tell she was afraid of letting me into Beck apartment, but she smiled and said, "I'll wait for you."

As I'm walking out of the apartment to head to the grocery store, Efram stopped me to talk about the work he was doing in my apartment; I walked into the condo, and there were boxes everywhere. "Don't let the condition of the place fool you, we are moving along well, we should be finished when I promised."

"That's good to hear, so what's the matter?"

"Well, I wanted to know if you wanted to use the small room next to the master bedroom as a closet. We could put a closeting system in there if you like, and a connecting door to the bathroom. It would give you more space than you currently have in the master. The only downside is you will go from three bedrooms to two."

"That's sound like a great idea, go ahead and do it." After going over my options with Efram, I went grocery shopping. I spent almost an hour in Fairway; I came out with enough

food to make the meal I planned and then some. When I arrived at the apartment, Valentina was there waiting patiently. I told her not to worry and to call when she thinks Beck is home to make sure. I started to cook the roast beef I bought in hopes that Beck would come home just around the time it's done.

Three hours later, just as the food was done cooking, he walked through the door. To say the meal was stressful would be an understatement. The cause of my stress, of course, was my decision to ask Beck out. But then he started to ask me about my past. To this day, I have a hard time talking about my mom and dad. I don't know why it still bothers me, well, that's not true, I do understand why. I still feel the pain my mother experienced because she couldn't be with my dad. I am still saddened that I never had a chance to meet my dad or to get to know my mom. When Beck asked me how I ended up in America and not London, all the feelings came rushing back.

Still, even with the unwanted questions, we managed to

have a great meal. I learned a few things about him, and if what I've learned is any indication, I am screwed, because asking him on a date won't end my attraction to him. After we ate, and he started to clean up, I decided the date needed to happen. So I used the flow of our conversation to ask. At first, he didn't answer, and I fully expected him to turn around and say no. But, after a minute, and without turning to look at me, he said yes.

I didn't know what to say when he said yes, so I didn't say anything. I guess he thought I didn't hear him because he turned around and ask, "Did you hear what I said?" I decided to just be straightforward. "I heard you; I was expecting you to say no." He smiled then ask, "Then why did you ask if you thought I would say no?" I shrugged my shoulders, "I really wanted to go out with you." Beck took a deep breath before saying, "You are an enigma Jeff Corbin, do you know that?" I didn't answer his question, how do I answer that? Instead, I started to talk about our date. "I'm on call for the next twenty-four hours. Afterward, I thought

maybe we could go and catch a movie.” He shook his head and simply said, “Okay.”

Shortly after midnight and right on cue, my beeper goes off. I made my way to the hospital, to begin my shift. I couldn't have been happier by the time morning came. Throughout the shift I've had to force myself to focus, to not think of the man across town and the date I've made with him. When I arrived home I wasn't tired so I visited the gym then ran a few errands, when I was done, I knocked on Beck's door to see if he was home. He opened the door and said, “I was wondering if you were still asleep.”

“No, I was in the gym downstairs, you just came home?” I asked. “Yes, I was actually going out again a little later, I'm meeting some friends at a club downtown, do you want to come?” Efram and Eli? I asked. “Actually no, my best friend, Patrick and his date, why don't you come with me? Unless you are too tired, which I would understand.”

“I'm not too tired, are you sure I won't be...”

“Doc stop, I'm asking remember, if I didn't want you to

come I wouldn't have asked."

"Ok, what time?"

"I'm supposed to meet Patrick at ten-thirty, why don't you come by around ten."

"Ok, I'll see you at ten, where are we going by the way?"

"To The Attic. It's a gay hangout spot Patrick likes to go to. He asked me to meet him there because he doesn't want to go home with the guy he is dating."

"That sound very interesting."

"It really isn't when you have to babysit your best friend."

"Well, at least I'll be there, so hopefully it won't be so bad. I'll let you go, but Beck, I just want you to know that tonight is not our date, okay."

"Okay, I'll see you at ten."

BECK

When he asked me to go out with him, I was speechless; I

couldn't find the words to answer him. I suppose Patrick was right; maybe he is as attracted to me. When I said yes, and he said he expected me to say no, I was baffled. Is it possible Jeff is a little shy? In any case, after we finished our dinner and he helped me clean the kitchen, he had to go, because he will be on-call in a few hours. I honestly didn't want him to leave, I wanted him to stay and tell me more about himself. I want to know more about him.

Right after he left my cell rings and it's Valentina. "Hi Valentina, I bet I know why you are calling?" "I wanted to make sure it was okay that I let your neighbor into your apartment, he seemed nice and —" I stopped her from continuing with her explanation. "Val, its fine thanks for letting him in, but promise me you won't let any stranger into my apartment."

"Oh my god, I shouldn't have let him in, Beck, I'm sorry."

"Val, don't be ridiculous, I just told you it was fine that you let Jeff in. I'm just saying moving forward, call me first,

okay!”

“Okay, he hired me to clean his apartment, did he tell you?”

“Yes, he mentioned it, I think you are going to like working for him too. Like me, he is barely ever home.”

“Thanks, Beck, I’ll see you next week.”

“Bye Val, have a good night.”

It was still relatively early, so I decided to check in with my brother. The moment the phone rings he answers “This is a surprise, how are you, big brother?”

“I’m fine, what do you mean this is a surprise, don’t we usually speak once per week?”

“Yes, but usually we FaceTime after I’ve sent you numerous text messages. But you are calling me on the phone, and I didn’t even have to remind you.”

“I just decided to call you before I become distracted by something else. So tell me what’s going on in Orange County, how are mom and dad?”

“Mom and dad are the same, nothing new is happening here, but something new is happening there, so why don’t

you tell me about it.”

“What makes you think something is happening here because I called out of the blue?”

“I can hear it in your voice Beck; you are excited about something.” I shook my head in disbelief, I want to tell him he was wrong, but he is my brother, and he always had this sixth sense. Instead of lying to him, I decided It was time I tell him about Jeff and how he and I met. Well, I won’t tell him everything about how we met, but I can let him know who Jeff is and how he relates to the man my father has been having conversations with. “Do you remember the last time we spoke, you told me dad has been talking to a Max Corbin?”

“Yes, do you know who this Max Corbin is?”

“Alex, I have something to tell you, that I probably should have told you a long time ago. Do you remember last year when I came to visit on my way to LA?” Alex didn’t say anything, so I continued. “There was a delay in my flight, and I ended up staying at the airport for a few hours. While I

was waiting, I saw the doctor who operated on you when you had the accident. He was in the lounge too. One thing leads to another, and he and I connected.” “What do you mean you connected?”

“I saw him, recognized him, thanked him for saving your life, etc., etc.” Alex was quiet for a while then he asked, “Are you dating him?”

“You are jumping ahead of the story Alex.”

“Oh my god you are dating him.”

“Can I finish telling you the story, or do you have it all figured out?”

“Go ahead finish.”

“Anyway, jump ahead a year and he, his name is Jeff Corbin by the way, he moved to New York from California, and it just so happens the hospital he is working in, is the same hospital QTI has a contract with. Also, it just so happens that the building he chooses to buy a condo in is the same one I’m living in.” Alex started to laugh hysterically. I didn’t say anything more, because if I did, he probably wouldn’t

hear me. "Are you done?" I finally asked after a few minutes. "I don't know why it's so funny, It's all been a coincidence." Alex started to laugh again. "Okay, I'm going to hang up now."

"Don't you dare, he managed to say. Finally, he started to talk coherently, "So what you are telling me is, you met my doctor a year ago, a year later, he moves to New York, the two of you reconnected after fate intervened."

"I don't know what you are talking about fate?"

"Beck, let me ask you a question, and either answer it honestly or not at all, do we have a deal?"

"Ask me your question."

"When you met him a year ago, did something happen between the two of you?"

"Why are you asking me that? What made you think something happened between us?" Alex didn't answer my question, he was waiting for me to answer his, and I wasn't sure how I wanted to answer. He is my brother, and we are close, but I have no interests in delving into my love life

with him. "You said to answer honestly or not at all; I choose not at all."

"Holy shit," He said, then there was silence on the phone again. "So now you are dating him?"

"He asked me out; I said yes, the date hasn't happened yet."

"So is he Max Corbin son?"

"No, Max Corbin is his uncle."

"And, he lives in the same building as you?"

"Right across the hall." Alex started to laugh again, but this time not hysterically. Then he asked, "You are really into him aren't you?"

"I like him, I think he likes me too, we'll see where it goes."

"So when I told you weeks ago that you should put yourself out there Jeff Corbin was already around."

"You could say that."

"Shit I have to go, Georgie is calling me, I really want to talk more about this."

"Go, there is nothing more to talk about, I've told you everything."

“We can talk about the fact that you are into him. Look, it’s been a while since Noah, and this guy must be special if he has your attention.”

“Alex, go, we’ll talk next week, bye”

I hung the phone up before he had a chance to respond. The phone rang almost the moment I hung up on Alex, and I thought he was calling me back. “Why are you calling me back, I thought you had plans with Georgie?”

“This is not Alex,”

“Oh, hey Patrick, I thought my crazy brother was calling me back. I just told him about Jeff, and his curiosity is peaked.”

“You told him about Jeff? Did you tell him everything?”

“Of course not, I don’t talk about my love life with my brother, my straight brother at that.”

“So, I’m calling to ask in advance, I’m meeting Fred at The Attic tomorrow and I want you to come with me.”

“Why? And which one is Fred?”

“I met Fred at Starbucks last week remember? We are still

new, and I'm not ready to sleep with him yet, so you have to come and make sure I keep my virtue." I started to laugh before saying, "No amount of me being there is going keep you from going home with him if you really want to go."

"Well I'm telling you I don't want to, so come with me, help me walk out of there with just you, you can bring the doc with you."

"No, he will probably be tired, what time should I meeting you and where?"

"Meet me at the entrance of the Attic at ten-thirty."

After talking with my brother and Patrick, I was exhausted. It didn't take long for me to turn out all the lights and head for the shower. I lingered in the shower longer than I should have because I couldn't stop thinking about Jeff. I wondered what he must be doing at the hospital right now; then I found myself thinking about a particular hotel room and the things Jeff did to me. By the time I left the shower, I had to wash twice because of my dirty thoughts.

Chapter Seven

JEFF

How is it possible after so long, I can still remember the night I spent with Beck as if it was last night? My body aches for him, it's that simple. I know I can't expect us to pick up where we left off. He believed that night was the lowest of his life, my memory, well, what I remember doesn't matter, what matters is what Beck thinks. If I ever want a repeat of what we did in that hotel room, I have to change his mind. When I knocked on his door, I wasn't sure he would be there, it's early in the evening on a Friday, and I expected that he would be out with friends. I was glad when he did answer and even happier when he invited me to go to a club with him. Right now I welcome any excuse to spend more time with him, and I don't care if it's around strangers.

I made my way back to the apartment and took a long shower to calm the ache in my pants. It didn't help.

Around nine-thirty I started to dress for the club. I decided to wear my black jeans, and a black button down. I was casual enough, but the black made my attire less relaxed.

Ten on the dot I'm knocking on Becks door, when he answered, he looked breathtaking, also in black jeans, but his were skin tight, and a burgundy shirt that accentuates his sleek body and defined muscles. Beck isn't muscular, but you can tell he works out. When he opened the door, I just stared at him like a lovelorn fool.

I guess he could tell the effect he was having on me because he smiled shyly and asked if I was okay. "I'm fine," I said after clearing my throats. "Are you ready to go?"

"Almost, come in, I need another minute. We want to be fashionably late anyway." I walked into his living room and take a seat on his sofa. "So tell me about your best friend."

Beck walked back into the room while putting on a black leather jacket. "He is a terrific friend, I've known him since

freshman year at NYU when we shared a dorm room. It's also because of him why I have the job at QTI. He is just a great guy, you will like him. Do you want something to drink before we leave?"

"No, I'm good, I'll drink something at the club. I should tell you, I don't usually go to clubs, so I should apologize in advance if I'm acting funny." I moved from the couch to stand in front of his terrace when he walked up to me." I don't think the Attic is considered a club; it's more like Starbucks with live music and alcohol. Besides, I don't like clubs either, so I understand how you feel." I couldn't stop staring at him as he speaks; I'm fighting the impulse to reach out and pull him into me. I must have been staring too long because Beck said, "You keep doing that." Coming to my senses, I said, "I'm sorry, what do you mean?" He stepped back and leaned against a chair facing away from the window, "You were staring." I tried to act as if I didn't know what he is talking about, I shrugged my shoulders, " You look amazing, I'm sorry if I made you feel uncomfortable."

“I didn’t say you made me uncomfortable.”

“What are you saying then?” I asked as I absently took a step towards him. He suddenly stands up straight and put both hands in his already tight pants. If he wasn’t uncomfortable before, chances are he may be now, and I didn’t want to take that chance, so I stepped away then ask, “Are you ready to go?” He looked puzzled by my question but answered, “Yes, let me call an Uber, then we can go.” When we arrived at the Attic, I decided it was unmistakably a club. There were cars everywhere, the line outside the door extended down the block and there was a bouncer at the door. We paid the Uber driver and was standing on the sidewalk taking in the atmosphere. “Beck, this is a club.” He looked at me then laughed, “I guess it is. I swear the last time I was here, it was nothing like this. They must have new management.” I was about to answer him when someone walked up and stand next to us. Beck was busy staring at the club and didn’t notice the man, as he I access each other. Finally, I reached out to Beck and touch his arm

to get his attention, then said hello to the stranger. Beck finally noticed, "Patrick, you are here."

Still looking at me, he answered Beck, "I said I would meet you at the entrance remember?"

Who is this? Your next door neighbor?" Realizing he didn't introduce us, Beck apologizes then proceeded with the introduction. "Hey Patrick, it's nice to meet you."

"I've heard all about you." Patrick said softly. Beck immediately jump in to get Patrick's attention. Just as Patrick is about to say more, another man walked up and cover Patrick's eyes while bracing his entire body against his back.

"Guess who?" The stranger asked. "Fred, what are we? In grade school?" The stranger immediately removed his hand, turn Patrick around and kissed him passionately. Beck cleared his throat. "Guys, can you please save it for a dark corner of the club? Patrick, can you make the introductions?"

"Oh shit sorry, Fred, this is Beck my bestie and his date Jeffrey, right?" Patrick asked while turning to me. "Jeff is fine,

Fred, it's nice to meet you." Beck repeated the sentiment then said, "Pat, did new management take over the Attic?" Fred immediately started to answer before Patrick had a chance to speak. "Yes, isn't it great? My brother bought the place and did an entire facelift and change a few things. Come on let's go inside so you can see how cool it is." Beck turned to look at me and rolled his eyes. I couldn't help but chuckle.

Once we were inside the club, it was totally dark except for the luminescent tables, Bar, Barstools, and stage. There are three sections to the Attic. One part for those who wanted to listen to music; another for those who wanted to dance to music. Then there is the socializing part. The Bar was on one side, and sofa's placed strategically opposite the bar. The four of us gravitated towards the Bar. As we approach, I couldn't help but notice the many eyes watching us. I had no doubt it was Beck they were looking at. While the four of us were good-looking men, Beck was gorgeous, and the on-lookers knew it. We weren't seated at the bar for five

minutes when someone approached Beck and asked him to dance. Five minutes later it happened again, and this time Patrick turned and whispered something in Beck ear. Feeling possessive, I decided that I wasn't going to let anyone or anything control this moment. So I turned to Beck and asked, "Would you like to dance?" Either he was shocked by my question, or he didn't hear it, so I asked again. This time he bowed his head, and I took his hand and led him onto the dance floor.

Lucky for me the song the band was playing was slow. Once on the floor, I turned to faced Beck. I held out my hand for him to take but he bypassed my hand and strolled towards me. He put both hands on my hips and placed his forehead on my upper chest. I wrapped my hand loosely around his shoulders and placed my chin on his head as we move slowly to the beat of the song. As we moved rhythmically, I reached down and took his left hand entwined our fingers then wrap his arm around my waist, pulling him even closer to me.

If I had any doubt Beck was attracted to me, those doubts disappeared as we danced. As I pulled him closer to my body, I could feel the swell of his dick. I knew if I could feel him, then he could certainly feel me. Regardless of our physical reaction to each other, we didn't move away from each other. We kept swaying to the beat of the song until the band finally stopped playing and announced their intermission. We slowly pulled apart, and Beck turned to walk away, but I pulled him back towards me as I bent and whispered in his ear, "Don't." He looked up at me then, "Don't what?" I didn't answer. Instead, I brought my hands up and encircled his face then slowly lowered my lips to his. I sucked on his bottom lip, then raised my head slightly so that our foreheads touched. I closed my eyes and breathe deeply then reached for his lips again. This time, the kiss wasn't gentle, it was insistent, it was dominant and unapologetic.

When we stopped kissing, we stood in the middle of the dance floor staring into each other eyes as people walked

around us. Patrick walked up to us and burst our bubble. “Can I have a word?” He asked Beck as he pulled him off the dance floor. I watch them as they walked towards the bathroom, then I made my way to the bar where Fred was waiting with a smile on his face. “That was some hot kissing the two of you were doing.” He said as I took a seat next to him. It wasn’t that I didn’t want to answer him, it just that my lips were still throbbing and my mind was on the man responsible.

BECK

When we arrived at the Attic and saw that it was more like a club, I thought Jeff would want to leave. I was so focused on the atmosphere and the number of people littering outside the club; I didn’t notice when Patrick walked up. The moment I realized Patrick was standing behind me, was the moment I panicked. I don’t know why, was it introducing

Jeff to my friends? Or the realization that someone else will know he is not a figment of my imagination. In any case, I managed to introduce them as Patrick and Jeff stared at each other intently. Luckily his date chooses that moment to distract him from whatever mission he was on.

We made our way into the club and had to agree with Jeff; it is undoubtedly a club based on the setup. The most obvious of all, the way the bystanders stared as we walked in, no doubt checking out Jeff because he looked hot and mysterious in his all-black outfit. We made our way to the bar, and of course, we aren't there for five minutes before someone approaches me. The last thing I wanted was to have cruisers mistake me for the guy who is going to suck his dick in a back alley. And, I wasn't expecting what happened next. When Patrick whispered in my ear that Jeff looked jealous because of the attention I was getting, I didn't believe him, and I didn't want to turn around to find out for myself. But when Jeff whispered in my ear that he wanted to dance, every hair on my body and my dick came

to attention. I managed to find the words to say yes, In fact, I didn't say yes, I just bowed my head. Once we walked away from Patrick and Fred, I was nervous, but I didn't let my nerves dictate the moment. Once on the dance floor, he reached his hand out for me to take it, instead of following his lead, I walked straight past his outstretched hands and into his arms.

The dance was slow, and he smelled like expensive cologne and man. Then he pulled me closer to his body and that's when I felt the consequence of being so close to him. His prick was as hard as mine, and we were both aware of the effect we were having on each other, but we didn't pull away. We continued to sway to the music, but my senses were on overload from the feel of his body so close to mine. I wanted to look into his eyes, but I dared move my head; I didn't want to break the spell. I wondered if he was feeling what I was feeling, as I closed my eyes and enjoy the moment, enjoy the familiar feel of his body next to mine. This time with a layer of clothes between us.

The music stopped, and I turned to walk away, but he wouldn't let me go. Instead, he gently turned me to face him, and when I looked up into his eyes, I saw nothing but want and need. I wanted to fall to my knee right there on the dance floor. He drowned my face with his big hands and brought his lips to mine in a deep probing kiss that made my dick even harder than it already was. He took my breath away. I pulled away slightly to breathe, and we just stared into each other's eyes. He was about to say something when Patrick chose that moment to interrupt. He dragged me away abruptly, and I swear I instantly missed his hands on me, the touch of his lips as it penetrates mine. I wanted to kill Patrick.

Patrick didn't say a word as we walked to the bathroom in the back of the club. Once inside, he turned and said, "So tell me again why you think he may not be into you?" I smiled, not because I didn't know what to say, but because I couldn't stop thinking about what just happened. Patrick snapped his fingers to get my attention. "You are in trouble

Beckett Copeland.” He said while forcing me to look at him. “I know, but I thought you already knew that. You are the one that’s been telling me to take things in stride, to go with the flow.”

“I know,” Patrick said, “But, I didn’t know it was this bad,” He continues. I walked around him and went into an available stall to use the bathroom. When I walked out, Patrick was standing where I left him. “The good news is, I am more convince than ever that he is just as into you as you are with him.”

“Pat, I don’t know what to say other than what I’ve already said. When I’m with him I feel fine, I feel in control. When I’m not with him I feel frazzled; I feel as if I’m about to have a panic attack. Tonight, what you saw out there, is the first time since the airport that we’ve kissed and it’s as if the airport happened yesterday. What’s more, I feel as if he can read my mind and . . .” Patrick wouldn’t let me finish; he put his hand over my mouth to stop me from continuing. “You are panicking right now aren’t you?” I shook my head.

“Beck, Noah, was a long time ago, you need to stop thinking everyman, no, this man out there, is going to cheat on you.”

I pulled Patrick hand away from my mouth, then said, “The cheating is not what I’m worried about Pat, it’s the growing apart. I stopped loving Noah long before he cheated on me. I was just going through the motions with him, and I’m afraid it may happen again.”

“Did you ever consider the fact that you never loved Noah? The two of you were just roommates with benefits for christ sake. You didn’t care because you didn’t love him. You just met the doctor out there, and you’ve shown more emotions for him that I ever saw with Noah. I don’t think its fair to Jeff that you compare him,”

“I’m not comparing him to Noah. I’m just... I’m just scared.” Patrick put his arm around my shoulder as we exit the bathroom. “It’s ok to be scared. I would be more worried if you told me you weren’t and can you do me a favor? Please don’t forget why you are here. If I sleep with

Fred tonight, it will be your fault.” I gave a spirited laugh then said, “If you sleep with Fred tonight it’s because you wanted to, so don’t fool yourself in believing my being here is going to make a difference.” Patrick didn’t say another word as we returned to the bar.

When we arrived at the bar, Fred and Jeff were in a heated discussion about Star Wars versus Star Trek and which is better. Patrick and I looked at each other in disbelief as we watch the exchange. Jeff turns to me and asks “Which do you think is better? Star Wars or Star Trek.” I looked back and forth between the two of them and was about to plead the fifth when Jeff stopped me “No, don’t you dare, this is something I need to know, are you a Star Trek fan, or a Star Wars fan?”

“What if you don’t like my answer?” Jeff stood up from the stool, peered into my eyes then said, “Just tell me, Copeland, which are you?”

“I like both, I think the old Star Trek series was awesome, and the movies weren’t bad, especially the third one. And, I

love Star Wars because of its cultural impact, I also love it because I feel as if it's about normal people experiencing extraordinary things."

"That is sappy." Fred says, "The only thing great about Star Wars is the technology that goes into filming it. The premise is stupid; even the actors aren't that great."

"I think you better stop talking Fred, I want my friends to like you, and you are not helping." Patrick said while putting his arm around Fred. As for Jeff and I, we can't stop staring at each other. Fred announced the next round of drinks is on him. We were in the club for over an hour when Jeff said, "Patrick, I just remember you told me you would help me with the app I was trying to create. You said you would look at the code for me and let me know if I was on the right track, do you remember?" It took Patrick and me a minute to realize what Jeff was doing. Patrick looked at me, then at Jeff then says, "You are right, I almost forgot." "Wait, what do you mean?" Fred asked. "Are you leaving, you can't leave, you just got here, we haven't even danced

yet, I wanted you to meet my brother." Patrick pushed himself between Fred's legs then said, "Maybe next time," Then kissed him ardently. "I promised him," Patrick whispered. Jeff and I continue our staring match before he jumped off the stool then said, "Patrick, why don't we give you and Fred a minute, we will meet you outside." Jeff wrapped our fingers together again as we walked towards the exit.

Chapter Eight

JEFF

I COULDN'T wait to be alone with him, even if it was just for a few minutes. We walked outside the club into drizzling rain, and ran to the side of the building to seek shelter. Once there, I didn't wait for Beck to say a word. I pushed him against the wall as my tongue seek entry into his mouth. At first, I could feel his resistance, then he relaxed into my arms and opened for me. I leaned my body into his and pulled him closer attempting to remove any space between us. When I felt his need to breathe, I slowly release his mouth and look down into his eyes. "I've wanted to do that since I saw you again." Beck didn't say a word. Instead, he leaned his forehead on my shoulder and breathe deeply. I ran my left hand through his hair and for the third

time tonight Patrick interrupted. He cleared his throat from a distance, and we both turned to look at him. I stepped back and took Beck's hand as we walked towards him. "Are you ready to go or are you thinking about going back in there?" Beck asked.

"No, I'm ready to go, but I think I'm going to grab the Uber I know you called, the two of you can take another."

"Why can't we share?" Jeff asked. Patrick turned and looked at both of us then said, "I get the impression the two of you want to be alone." Neither Beck nor I said a word. I turned to look at Beck, I wasn't sure if he was blushing or if his red face was a result of the rain. Finally, Beck spoke up, "We can share the ride, Patrick unless you need an excuse to go back in there," He said while pointing towards the entrance of the Attic. Patrick started to laugh then said, "Okay, since I won't be interrupting, let's go get something to eat, I'm starving." Beck and I looked at each other, then Beck said, "Let's go, where do you want to eat?"

It was an ideal night in New York City. The light rain that

was falling when we walked out of the club suddenly stopped, so we decided to walk to find somewhere to eat. One of the great things about New York City is it's indeed a city that never sleeps. No matter what time of day it is, you can always find a restaurant that's open for business. As we walked, my mind was racing. I can't believe the intensity of what was happening between Beck and I. While I wanted to be alone with him to explore those feelings, I was very okay with us roaming the city with Patrick. At least I was until he started talking. "So Jeff, what's your story?"

"What do you mean?" I asked. "What are your intentions towards my best friend here?" He asked while walking backward. Beck called his name and was about to say more, but I stopped him. "I intend to go on a few dates with him and maybe get to know him, is that okay?" I asked. Patrick shrugged his shoulders then turned and continued to walk ahead. "I'm in the mood for something light, what about if we go to Red Bamboo?" He asked. Beck nor I didn't answer if I had to guess, we were both too busy recovering from

Patrick's impromptu question. "Jeff, Red Bamboo is a vegan restaurant, do you mind?" Beck asked. Up until this point, Beck and I were walking side by side but not touching. I reached down and took his hand in mine then said, "Vegetarian is great if that's what you want." He looked up at me then, and I saw a combination of uncertainty and something else I couldn't define.

Red Bamboo is a tiny restaurant with barely enough seats for the patrons. We were lucky when we arrived, or maybe because it was so late, we didn't have to wait. We sat, ordered Asian dumplings which consist of shredded soy protein, carrots, and cabbage, which was surprisingly delicious. Beck and Patrick obviously frequented this restaurant because they knew what they wanted. Beck ordered tonkatsu chops, and Patrick opted for the coconut chicken. I decided to be more conventional and tried the chicken parmesan. After we ordered, we quietly sat at the table for a few minutes. Patrick had a cunning smile on his

face, and I knew he was about to ask another about-me question. I decided to turn the tables on him. "So Patrick, what's the story between you and Fred?"

"You mean why did I need to be rescued tonight? Well, its simple really. I'm tired of my dates ending in a hook-up, so I directed my best friend here to make sure I go home alone tonight." I couldn't help but laugh, "So you are telling me that you don't know how to say no, that you are an easy lay?" Patrick looked over at me with shock on his face, "Jeff what so ever your last name is, are you calling me a hoe?" I laughed hysterically and held my hands up defensively.

"No, I'm just rephrasing your words." Beck started to laugh as well, then said, "Don't bother denying it, or pretending to be shocked Pat, you are easy, and you know it."

"No, I don't know it. If I am anything, I'm selectively easy." We all started to laugh then. "Besides, Patrick said, if I'm easy Beck what are you?" Beck choked on the water he was sipping then said, "This conversation is not about me, besides, if I'm anything, it not easy." Patrick mouth widened

into a grin as he looked between Beck and I. Knowing what message he was trying to relay to me I put my arms around Beck's shoulder then said, "I like not easy." He turned then and looked into my eyes then smile. I impulsively bend down and connect my lips to his.

By the time our meals arrived and we ate, it was two-thirty in the morning. I offered to pay for dinner, and we exit the restaurant onto the street. Beck suddenly realized the time turn to me and ask, "Are you on call right now?"

"I snickered, "If I was on call right now I couldn't be here with you; I'm off for the next couple of days. Still, it's late, and we probably should call it a night, what do you think?"

Beck and Patrick both agreed. "Do you want to share that Uber ?" I asked as Beck dialed the number for the Uber driver we abandoned earlier in the evening.

By the time we dropped Patrick off at his apartment, and we arrived at ours, it was well past three in the morning. As late as it was, I wanted to spend more time with Beck.

While I didn't want to be on the streets any longer, I craved

being alone with him. As we are walking into our building, I called his name. Beck stop walking and turn towards me then asked, "What's wrong?"

"Nothing is wrong, I just don't want the night to end, can we have an early breakfast together?" Beck smiled broadly then ask, "Are you offering to make me breakfast Doc?" I smiled then said, "I was hoping we would walk to the Starbucks a few blocks over unless you prefer I cooked." Beck reach out and put his hand on my chest then said, "Breakfast at Starbucks sounds great."

A comfortable silence developed between us as we walked the two blocks hand in hand. We were halfway there when Becks says, "Thanks for coming tonight." I smirk at his comment then said, "I should be thanking you for inviting me."

"I know Patrick was a pain in the ass most of the night." I stopped him from finishing, "Beck, Patrick was fine, you are right, I do like him. You can tell he cares about you, that he is a good friend."

“He is a good friend, but he is a little overprotective.”

“Does he have a reason to be protective? You don’t have to answer if it’s too personal,” I quickly said. Beck was silent for a long while, in fact, we were at Starbucks and walking through the door. Because it was so early in the morning, the coffee shop was empty. We each ordered our coffee and pastry then took a seat away from the door. When we sat, I turned to Beck to tell him he didn’t have to answer my question, but the Barista called to let us know the warm pastry was ready. I stood to get them but not before leaning down and kissing Beck on the lips. “I’ll wait for the coffee too, I’ll be right back.”

BECK

When he asked if there was a reason why Pat should be overprotective, I didn’t know how to answer. Is it too early to mention your ex? It’s just tonight that our relationship

took a turn for the intense. Now I'm considering throwing in a conversation about a previous relationship. I watch him from across the coffee shop. He turned to face me, and our eyes connect. We didn't break the connection even when the Barista put our coffees in front of him. Finally, he took the Latte's and pastries and walked towards our table. As he slides into the seat, I decided to follow my motto, which is 'Go strong or go home.' We both started to talk at the same time, him, saying he is sorry I asked, and me, saying it's a long story.

We looked at each other intently, and knew I needed honesty between us, so I answered his question candidly. "Pat feels he has reasons to worry about me because I've been hurt in the past. The day we met, I found my boyfriend in our bed with another man."

Jeff gave me a questionable look then asked, "The day we met?" I took a deep breath then continue. "Yes, when we saw each other at the airport, that same day I came home and Noah was in our bed with another man." Jeff shook his

head but didn't say anything. "Before you say what I'm sure you must be thinking let me finish telling you the whole story okay?" He jerked his head for me to continue, so I did. "That day, when I walked in on him in our bed with another man, it didn't phase me. I wasn't upset, I didn't feel betrayed, I felt vindicated. I was in a relationship that I shouldn't have been in. I knew my feelings for him was anything but love. We met my sophomore year in college, and we had a relationship through college. When we graduated, and I was offered the job at QTI, I needed a place to live and so did Noah. He came up with the idea that we should share and I went along. I told myself why not, I didn't want to go back to Orange County and I didn't want to ask my father for money, so sharing seemed like the obvious solution. We lived together for three years, and you would think in the end, I would feel something, I felt nothing. After what happened between you and I, I thought that was my reaction, that, that was why I gave myself to you, but you know what Jeff? It wasn't. Does that make

sense?”

Jeff and I were looking directly into each other eyes when I spoke, when I asked him the question, he looked down at his coffee then cleared his throat. “I want to believe what happened between you and me are separate from what happened between you and Noah. You do have to understand though why it’s hard not to think that they are connected.”

I started to say, “I understand,” but Jeff interrupts. “Why did you stay with him so long if you didn’t love him?”

“Patrick said he was my roommate and he was right.”

“A roommate with benefits?” Jeff asked. “Patrick said that too,” I mumbled.

Jeff took his hand and ran it across the back of his neck before saying, “I don’t care right now what Patrick thinks, I only care about what you have to say to me. Look Beck. I’m going to be honest with you, I like you, a lot. What happened a year ago, wasn’t something horrible for me, not the way you described it. For me, it was a defining moment.

I was disconnected that day. I thought I lost my best friend and I felt numb. Then you walked over to me and changed everything. You brought me back to life, and you made me feel. I wouldn't trade what we did in that hotel room for anything. Now you tell me there is a possibility that it could have been revenge sex."

"No, Jeff, it wasn't that for me at all, you saw me that day, did I look upset to you? Did I look as if I was on a mission? Actually, don't answer that last part, I was on a mission, but not out of revenge. That was the last thing I felt." We sat silently for a few minutes, then Jeff said, "We should walk back." I shook my head, but not before taking his hand in mine," Jeff, if nothing comes from this night and morning, please know that I like you a lot too. My doubts about what we did a year ago have more to do with how I gave myself to you, but not regret, not because of Noah; you have to believe that." He looked down at my hand over his and entwined our fingers, "I want to believe that Beck, I would be distraught otherwise."

We walked out of the coffee shop into the early morning air. We were a block away from the apartment when Jeff took my hand. "I'm glad you told me about Noah."

"I'm glad I told you about him too," I said while looking straight ahead. When we arrived on our floor, we stopped at my door. I lean against the door while thanking him again for the night. "You know tonight wasn't our date right?" He asked. I smiled, then said, "It could be if you want it to." Suddenly looking very serious he entered my personal space, enclosed my neck with his hand and brought our lips together in a seething kiss that made my toes curl. He pulled away slightly before saying, "I don't want it to." He kissed me again softly then said, "Good night Beck, go get some rest, I'll see you in a few hours." I grin slightly, "That's what I should be saying to you." He stepped away from me, push his hand into his pocket then started to slowly walk backward. "I plan to do the same. I'll talk to you when I wake up." I bowed my head, reach for my keys and open the door. We looked at each other one more time

before I walked into the apartment and he turns to walk to his.

When I closed the door, I leaned against it and closed my eyes. I couldn't believe the direction this night has taken. First the dance, then the kiss, and now the honest talk at the coffee shop. I force myself to stop holding up the door, walked to the bedroom strip down naked and took a shower. What this night has proven is that Jeffrey Corbin is as into me as I am into him. Now I just have to make sure he knows that I wasn't using him a year ago. My mind drifted back to our dance and the feel of his body next to mine, the feel of his burgeoning cock. Again, the memory of what we did at the hotel seethe into my mind. My cock began to grow from thoughts of him. The way he held me down as he piston into me over and over again. My cock throbbed as the water sluice down my skin. Suddenly my hands were very useful. By the time I walked out of the shower the water was cold.

Because of the magnitude of the day, it didn't take long to

fall asleep. When I opened my eyes again, it was late in the afternoon, and someone was knocking on my door. I immediately jumped out of bed expecting the knocker to be Jeff. I threw on a robe and hurried to the door and open it to find Pat. "How did you get into the building?" I asked before he had a chance to say a word, and as I walked into the living room. "Good morning to you too," He said, as he closed the door and followed me in. "It's not morning. I don't know what time it is but—"

"It's three-thirty, I would have bought you something to eat, but I wasn't sure if you would be here."

"Where did you think I would be?" I asked as I flopped down on the sofa.

"I thought you might be next door." He said as he sat beside me. I didn't respond to his comment. Instead, I asked, "Can we get food, I'm hungry."

"Only if we get to talk about you and the doc."

"What if I don't want to talk about us?"

"Come on Beck; you can't do this to me. The two of you

were practically all over each other last night when I left you, I was sure the two of you would end up in one or the other's bed, and you don't want to talk about it, not fair."

"Fine we will talk about it, but I'm telling you right now I don't want to hear I told you so." Pat laughed as he walked towards the kitchen to get menus.

Chapter Nine

JEFF

ITS FIVE in the morning and I can't sleep. My mind is filled with thoughts of Beck. I don't know which thought dominates my mind the most, the conversation we had at the café, or the times my lips were plastered to his. I am glad he told me about Noah and what happened between them. I can't help but wonder if it led to our encounter at the airport. How could it be that he found his boyfriend of five years in their bed with another man, and he didn't care? Even if he didn't love him as he said, there had to be some reaction to what happened. Could what happened between him and me revenge sex? I want to believe him, in fact, I'm choosing to believe him because that man is under my skin. I think about him when I should be focused on work, He

walks into a room and my heart skips a beat, and when I'm with him, I have this incessant need to touch him. Around six-thirty when I realized sleep eluded me, I decided to get up and make a few calls. I haven't spoken to my Grandmother in a couple of weeks, and I need to call her. Lucky for me, she is a morning person. When she picked up the phone, I spoke before she had a chance to say more than hello, "Morning Grans, how are you?"

"Jeffrey, this is a surprise, how is it you are calling me this early?"

"I couldn't sleep, and I knew you would be up getting ready to go into your garden." She laughs before saying, "I'm in fact going to paint this morning. How are you, my little man?"

"Grans, you do know I'm not a little man anymore right?"

"You will always be my little man, no matter how big and grown you get."

"I love you, Grans."

"I love you too, now tell me what's going on in New York,

how is the new job?"

"The job is hectic as usual. I had to talk to the head of the department about my schedule because my hours were so erratic."

"Did he change it?"

"Yes, he just changed it, I no longer have a sporadic schedule. It's still regimented, but not as bad as before."

"Good, I'm glad to hear that. What about your uncle, how is he adjusting to New York?" I laughed before answering,

"Well, he is not in New York right now. He left for Ireland a few days ago. He should be back any day now. He is adjusting, and I think New York is growing on him. He is looking into buying property in Massachusetts."

"Massachusetts? Why there?"

"I don't know why there, I just know he looked at waterfront property there and he is considering buying. You know Uncle Max, there is always a method to his madness.

Anyway, I wanted to come and see you, let's talk about when would be a good time so that I can make sure I'm not

scheduled at the hospital.”

“Come next month for my birthday; it will be a great birthday gift.”

“That’s right! It's your birthday in a few weeks; you know what Grans, I will see you on your birthday.” I heard my grandmother's familiar infectious laugh. I love that laugh. It’s yet another memory from my childhood that makes me smile. As much as my grandfather cheated me out of the chance to get to know my mom and dad, I can’t help but be happy and thankful for my grandmother and how she raised me. I truly do love her. “I’m going to let you go and paint Grans. I’ll see you in three weeks for your birthday.”

“I’m looking forward to it Jeff, I’ve missed seeing your face, I can’t wait to see you.”

“Me too Grans, I love you.”

“I love you too.”

I ended the call with my grandmother and was about to call my uncle to touch base with him as well when the phone began to ring. When I checked the caller id, it was the very

person I was about to call. "Uncle Max, you are going to live a very long time," I said, the moment I answered the call. "Why do you think that?" He asked while laughing. "Because I was just about to dial your number. What's going on, still in Ireland?"

"No, I just arrived back in town last night, so I decided to call and see how you are doing."

"I'm doing great, I'm still not in the apartment yet, but it's coming along, I just spoke with Grans, she asked about you."

"How is Geraldine doing, still enjoying Florida?"

"She appears to be; she sounded great when I was speaking to her. In any case, I'm going to check up on her in about three weeks for her birthday. Max, I have to go, someone is knocking on my door."

"Go, I'll call you on Monday or Tuesday, to schedule our weekly lunch."

"I look forward to it Max." I hung up the phone and head towards the door wishing the person on the other side is

Beck. Of course, that isn't the case; it's Efram. "Good morning, I was hoping you would be home, it's not too early is it?"

"No, its fine, how are things going with my apartment?"

"Well, that's why I Knocked. We are about ninety percent done, and I thought maybe you would want to see it and recommend any last minute changes."

"Efram, give me about a half hour to shower and change, and I'll meet you in the apartment." Efram shook his head, "Good, I'll see you in there then." As he walked away I stepped out into the hall and glanced down at Beck's apartment, then I turned, walked back into the apartment and head for the shower.

When I walked into my apartment, it looked exactly how I hoped it would look when finished. The walls were painted a stark white, and the sofa and chairs were a combination of black and brown. Efram installed vertical blinds on the floor to ceiling windows which will help to control the amount of light coming in through the extremely tall

windows. I loved everything Efram has done to the place from the kitchen to the bedrooms, bathrooms, and closets. I thought he did an excellent job in the short amount of time he worked on the apartment. "What do you think so far?" He asked as we walked from room to room?" I turned and smiled before saying, "It looks and feel like a home, thank you."

"Don't thank me yet; I still have a little more to do."

"As far as I'm concern, you are practically done, and everything looks great. When do you think you will be finished?"

"I can be out of here by next Saturday, why don't you take your time and look around to see if there is anything you want to change. This is the moment to make any changes you want." I shook my head and continued to survey the apartment. "Efram, I'll walk around more slowly, but as far as I can tell, you've done exactly what I wanted."

"Ok, well I'm leaving, and we won't be working anymore in the apartment today so look around and call me if you want

any changes, okay?"

I stayed in the apartment for another hour looking at Efram's work. Beck was right; he said I would like the job Efram does and I certainly do. I left the apartment and tried again to get some sleep. When I woke up it was six in the evening, I immediately thought of Beck and wondered if he was home. I put on jeans and a tee shirt and made my way down the hall again, this time to knock on Beck's door. When he opened the door, he took my breath away. He was wearing faded jeans with cuts in numerous parts of the jeans; a just as faded Metallica tee shirt and his hair was ruffled as if he just woke up. "Am I interrupting?" I asked before he had a chance to speak. "No, how are you." "I'm fine. I was wondering if you were busy tonight, or if you wanted to catch a movie with me? I thought I would go and see Star Wars." He laughed then said, "I would love to go, what time?" "I thought we would catch an early show and then maybe get something to eat, how does that sound?"

“It sounds great, did you check the movie times yet?”

“No, I was about to do it.”

“Come in, and we will do it together.” I walked toward him as he steps aside to let me in. I wonder if he could hear my heart beating out of my chest as I walked past him. I guess it didn’t matter because the moment he closed his door, I turned and walked straight into him forcing him against the door. I put both hands on the door around his head then looked down into his eyes. We stared at each other before I took his lips in a deep probing kiss.

BECK

“So, did you sleep with him?” I turned to look at my best friend and wonder how I was going to tell him to mind his own business. We ordered food, and now I’m going to make an excuse to get away from him because the last thing I want to talk about is what happened last night between Jeff

and I. "I'm going to take a shower," I said to him as I'm walking out of the kitchen. "I think you are avoiding talking about last night." He yelled as I'm walking away. I didn't answer him I just kept walking. The truth is I don't think Jeff would want me to talk about last night. What happened between him and I, from the time we kissed inside the club, to the conversation we had at the coffee shop seems so intense and personal. As much as I love Patrick and trust him, I wouldn't want to betray Jeff's confidence, nor jeopardize any trust we may share. After my shower, I am going to be as vague as possible with Patrick. Hopefully, that will satisfy him.

A half-hour later our food arrived, and I am showered and dressed. I walked into the kitchen and Patrick is looking at me curiously. "What's up?" I asked as we sat to eat.

"Nothing, I realize you are not going to tell me everything about last night are you?"

"It's not a lot to tell Pat. We've already established I didn't sleep with him. After we left you, we walked to Starbuck

and sat and talked.”

“You know I’m happy for you right?”

“Everything is just new with him.” I whispered.

“I know, but Beck, you can tell he likes you a lot. If you didn’t get that last night, then something is wrong with you.”

“I actually did get that Pat. I like him a lot too. We talked about Noah.”

“You told him about Noah?”

“Well, it was either that or lie to him. After your ‘what are your intentions toward my best friend’ speech.”

“I think its good that you talked to him about Noah.

Anyway, thanks for the food, but I’ve got a date with you know who.”

“Do you need a babysitter again?”

“No, I think I need to act like the big boy I am and learn how to say no.”

“I knew sooner or later you would figure shit out.”

“What are you going to spend the rest of your Saturday doing?”

“I’m going to try and get some more sleep then I thought I would look at the Monroe App and see if I can find the bug.”

“Don’t mess with work until Monday Beck, go and knock on docs door and go do something with him.”

“He is probably still sleeping, maybe he and I will do something, I have to wait and see. Have fun on your date tonight.

I’m tempted to go down the hall and knock on his door; I decided not to take Pat’s advice and started to work on the app. A few hours later, frustrated and ready to throw my computer out the window, I stopped and catch up on one of my favorite Netflix series. I was halfway through the second season of Frontier when my doorbell rang. When I opened the door, he was standing there. The moment I saw him, I had to force myself to breathe. I invited him in, and once the door closed, he reached for me and kissed me softly on the lips. He pulled away, but I didn’t want him to stop.

“Don’t.”

“Don’t what?” He whispers against my lips. “Don’t stop kissing me.”

“Don’t worry; I don’t plan for this to be the last time my mouth find yours.” I was dizzy from his kiss, but I found the strength to walk away from him; “Let’s check the movie times on my Mac,” I said while walking towards my desk. Two hours later we are at the theatre waiting for the movie to start; We choose seats in the back of the theatre, and it's a lucky thing we did. It began with us holding hands; then Jeff did my favorite thing which was to entwined our fingers. Then I thought he was trying to whisper something to me; what he was doing was reaching for my lips; I turned my head quickly, so he kissed me softly on the side of my lips. Not giving up, he leans over again; this time I was ready for him and met him halfway. I thought the kiss was going to be a short one. The kiss went from soft and subtle to deep and probing in a matter of seconds. He raised the arm of the chair up and practically pulled me into his lap. If it weren’t for an onlooker whistling, we probably would have done

much more. Other people being aware of us, forced us to stop and take note of where we were, which was a shame because I wanted nothing more than to have his lips on mine again. The movie started, and we spent the rest of the time holding hands and watching the movie.

Jeff chose a restaurant that was close to the movie theatre.

“How is our first date going?” He asked as we stroll down the street. “As far as I’m concern, this is our second date, our first date at the Attic was pretty amazing. Our second date is coming along just fine. What do you think?” He didn’t answer right away, then he stopped and turned to look at me. “Alright, so this is our second date, but I didn’t ask you out last night you asked me. Tonight, I asked you out, so for me, this is our first date.” I laughed then ask “Are we going to argue over semantics? Because I’m willing to acquiesce.” He laughed fully then took my hand as we continue to walk towards the restaurant.

We arrived at the Blue Smoke, and it was filled with patrons. Even though Jeff made a reservation, we had to wait

thirty minutes for our table. We took a seat at the bar and waited to order our drinks. “What are you thinking about right now?” Jeff asked. My eyes were roaming the restaurant when I turned to him. “I’m thinking that the restaurant is nice, what are you thinking?”

“It’s not so much as what I’m thinking as what I’m wishing.”

“What are you wishing?”

“That I was alone with you and not standing in a crowded restaurant waiting for a free table.” Just as he finished speaking, the bartender walks up to us and ask what we wanted to drink. I was just a little speechless from his comment, and I guess he realized it because he turned to the bartender and ordered: “I’ll take a gin and tonic and my friend here will have a lime daiquiri is that right?” He turned to me and asked. I shook my head, and the bartender walked away. “How did you know I like lime daiquiri?”

“I have an excellent memory, and you were drinking it when I met you a year ago.”

“You keep surprising me do you know that?” He didn’t

answer. Instead, he turned and looked me straight in the eye. We didn't speak. Instead, he brought his face close to mine and kissed me softly. He pulled back slightly then whisper in my ear, "I hope I never stop." I turned my head slightly, and we were staring into each other eyes again. We were so focused on each other we didn't even acknowledge the bartender when he delivered our drinks. "I think we should finish these drinks and then get out of here, what do you think?" I asked almost tentatively. "I think I like that idea as long as the night is not over for us." I took a sip of my drink then whisper, "It's not."

We finished our drinks, cancel our reservations with the maitre d, Jeff hailed a cab, and we were on our way back to the apartment. The cab ride was a indication of what was going to happen when we get to the apartment. Jeff pulled me close to him and started with a chaste kiss, which leads to a more demanding kiss. Thank god the ride was a short one. We paid the Cabbie then silently walked into the building. In the elevator, I was leaning in the corner

watching the floors go by. Jeff walks over to me, frame my head with his hands then said, “Beck, I won’t lie to you, I want you. I’ve wanted you since the moment I saw you again but if this is too fast for you.” I didn’t let him finish. I covered his lips with my fingers, and then I brought my lips to his. When I pulled away, I whisper in his ear “Do you always try and talk your conquest out of being conquered?”

Chapter Ten

JEFF

THE ELEVATOR opened, and we pulled apart. Beck said nothing as he walked backward, our eyes still connected. Suddenly, he turns and strides ahead of me, turning his head slightly as he walked as if to confirm I was following him. He arrived at his door, and with trembling hands, opened it. He stopped just before entering and turn to look at me again as I walked towards him. He strolled further into the apartment which was dark, but I could still see him as he walked towards the bedroom. Inside the bedroom I found him leaning against the wall opposite the door. I ambled closer to him, and lean my body into him; I was so close I could feel the swell of his cock. He started to speak, but I stopped him with my finger and whisper, "No words."

I slowly unbutton each button on his shirt, our eyes still connected. He started to unbutton my shirt as well, but I finished first, and push the shirt off his shoulders, then I reached down, and rub the back of my hand against his burgeoning cock. He moans deeply as I brought our lips together, he opened for me, as I sucked on his tongue as if I was hungry for more than he had to give. While our tongues dueled, I unzip his pants and in one swift move, push it and his underwear down his thighs. I pulled away from his mouth and dropped to the floor. Looking up into his eyes as I grabbed hold of his pulsing cock. I stroke his dick up and down, before sliding it into my mouth. I immediately took him deep into my throat, and his legs swooned. Using my hands, I held him against the wall as my mouth goes up and down on his shaft. Beck put his hand on both sides of my face, as he begins to fuck my mouth with slow deep thrust. "I'm going to come." I immediately stopped, because I wanted him to come when I was balls deep inside of him. "Please don't stop." He whispered, as I lick his dick one

final time and stand. I brought my lips to his before saying, "Don't worry baby, I'm not done with you yet." I pulled him off the wall, then instructed him to finish undressing." I started to walk and undress as well, as I finish unbuttoning the buttons he started, then quickly unbuckle and unzip my pants. I was naked in a matter of seconds. I turned, and Beck was naked also. "Come here," I said to him as I sat on the bed. He strolled towards me, his body a sight to behold. He is a beautiful man, inside and out and I wanted to own his body tonight.

He is standing in front of me quivering, "Are you cold?" I asked. He shook his head to indicate that he wasn't cold and I smiled. I love the effect I have on him. I scoot my butt to the end of the bed and rub my forehead against his abdomen and prick. He put his hand in my hair and whispers my name. I look up into his eyes, "Straddle me." He followed my instructions and brought his knees to the bed. I lift him then and turn, landing him on his back with me on top of him. "I need you Beck, can I have you?" He

shook his head but that wasn't enough for me, I needed to hear him say it. "Say it. I want to hear you say I can have you." He ran his hand through my hair again then whispers, "Jeff, I'm yours, you can have me." It was what I needed to hear. "Where are your condoms and lube?" He pointed to a chest on his bedside table, and I reached over and opened it and pull out the supplies we needed.

"Open wide for me, let me prepare you." He opened his leg wide and brought his foot to land on my buttocks. I uncapped the lube, place a little on my fingers then inserted my index finger deep into his hole. He pushed up off the bed, but I pushed him back down then whisper, "I'm not even inside of you yet." He called my name as I pushed in and out. I inserted a second finger and pushed in even deeper. His ahh's and, mewls could be heard throughout the apartment. After scissoring and kneading his ass, he was ready for me, and I didn't waste any time. Rising on my knees, I inserted my dick into a condom and coated it with the lube. Within a matter of seconds, I was lining my dick

with his hole. I pushed his leg further towards his chest, "Are you ready for me?" I asked before plunging deep in one swift move. He cried out as if he was in pain. I stopped and asked him if he was all right. He opened his eyes, "I'm okay, I forgot how big you are, just give me a minute." I struggled to wait, but I didn't want to hurt him further, so I breathed deeply and willed my cock to wait. After a minute he opened his eyes and told me to move. "Are you sure baby, I don't want to hurt you." He reached up, brought his lips to mine then repeated, "Move." I drove in slow and deep, but not too deep. Then he started to raise his hips to meet my thrust, and I lost it. I pushed his leg still further toward his head, and I attacked his hole. He was screaming my name as I drilled deeper and deeper into him. The room smelled of sex and our moans carried like a wave throughout the apartment. I don't know how long I moved in and out of him. We were both lost in ecstasy, as my balls grew tighter and tighter, and I knew I was about to come. He came first, as he spilled on his stomach and chest and I

ruptured deep inside of him in a barrier I wish wasn't there. I fell on top of him, my head is spinning, and I feel as light as a feather. After a few minutes, I realized my full weight was on him, and I attempt to move, but he stopped me.

"No, I like the way your weight feels on me." He whispers.

We stayed locked together for untold minutes before I slowly and carefully pull my condom coated phallus from him. He moans deeply as I pulled out of his body. I got up, walked to the bathroom to get rid of the condom and to get a wet cloth. When I came back to the bed, Beck was laying exactly where I left him. "Are you ok?" I asked while cleaning his abdomen and chest. He opened his eyes and asked, "Are you ok?"

"I asked first." We both smiled as I threw the wet cloth on the floor and climbed on top of him. He wrapped his legs and arms around me, and we stayed that way until we both fell asleep. When I woke up the clock on the dresser says, seven-thirty and I was in bed alone. I reached for my pants and made my way to the living room where I found Beck

staring at the computer. I watched him for a few minutes before he noticed. He looked over at me and smiled shyly. "Good morning," I whisper as I sat opposite him. "What are you staring at so hard?" He turns the screen towards me, "Work, this app has a bug, and we can't seem to find it." "They ask you to find it on a Sunday?" "No, I just hate that I can't find it." "Beck, can I ask you something?" "Sure, you can ask me anything." "Do you regret last night?" He looks up then to face me. "No, why would you ask me that?" "Because not only did I wake up alone, but I find you out here deep in work from QTI. Why would you be out here and not in bed with me, if you don't have regrets?" He put his laptop aside then stood and walked towards me while saying, "I don't regret last night, I didn't wake you because you go on shift tonight am I right?" I shook my head as he continues walking towards me and kneeling between my open legs, "I just wanted you to get some sleep, trust me, I

regret nothing about last night. I reached up and pull him so that he was laying on top of me, then I kissed him softly. Looking up into his eyes I said, "I'm glad to hear that, because I not only don't regret it, but I want more, a whole lot more."

BECK

It's five-thirty on Monday morning, and I can't sleep. My bed feels cold and empty, he woke me at one-thirty this morning to let me know he was called to the hospital. I've tried to get more sleep, but it's futile. After tossing and turning, I got up made my way to the gym downstairs and tried to calm my racing mind and my aching dick. The past twenty-four hours have been the best I've had in a long time. Being with him, making love with him, word's can't describe.

After the gym, I did what I usually do on a Monday

morning, just a few hours earlier than usual. I made my way to QTI determined to throw myself into work. Hopeful work would help to alleviate the need I have for Jeffrey Corbin. As expected, I wasn't the first to arrive, as usual, Patrick is there.

"Another early morning?" Patrick asks as he walked up to my desk. "I couldn't sleep, so work seems to be the best option."

"Again with the sleeping problem. Why can't you sleep this time?"

"The same reason as the last time, I can't stop thinking about a certain doctor."

"Did the two of you go out on Saturday?"

"Yes, we caught a movie, let's not talk about Jeff and me, why are you here so early, don't think I haven't noticed that you've been coming to the office early almost every day."

"I like coming in early, I get a lot done before the horde gets here. QTI has a lot of projects going at once, the quiet time helps me stay on top of things."

“Speaking of staying on top of things, we need to find the bug in the Monroe app, let me use this time to focus maybe we can have it working before the day is out.”

“On that note, I will leave you to it then, talk to you later,” Patrick says as he is walking back to his office.

It was noon when I stopped staring at the computer screen. I was hungry, so I decided to walk to the coffee shop and grab one of their sandwiches. My phone vibrates in my pocket, and I pull it out expecting it to be Patrick. I started to talk the moment I hit talk, “I needed a break, the code was jumbling in my head.”

“Still trying to find that bug?”

“Jeff, hi, sorry, I thought you were Patrick.”

“That’s okay. You’re at lunch?”

“Yes,”

“So am I, can I come and join you, or are you with your colleagues?”

“No, I’m in the coffee shop in our building, you’re coming

here?”

“I thought I would unless you thought it was a bad idea.”

“No, I’ll wait for you.”

“Text me the address, and I should be there in twenty minutes.”

I texted him the address and waited for him to arrive. I’ve spent the whole morning doing my best to keep thoughts of him at bay, and suddenly with one phone call, my mind is flooded with thoughts of him again. A little over twenty minutes later I spotted him as he exits the cab. I watched him as he walked into the building, then the coffee shop. I couldn’t help but notice how impeccable he looked in a grey suit and a navy tie. He saw me and our eyes connected as he walked towards me. The closer he gets the more my heart beats erratically. I stood as he approaches, “This is a surprise.” I said almost nervously. Instead of answering, he kissed me on the lips, a move I wasn’t expecting. He must have sensed my reaction because he immediately stepped away from me. “I’m sorry, you just surprised me,” I said

nervously

“Surprise you how? My coming to have lunch with you or the kiss?”

“Honestly, both.” He walked around me and took a seat opposite me. “Was it a bad idea to come and have lunch with you?”

“I'm just surprised that you are here.” He looked around the café then look back at me then ask, “Beck, I'm going to ask you again, and please be honest, was it a bad idea that I came to have lunch with you?” I must have waited too long to answer because he acted as if he wanted to get up and leave. “I'm sorry for my reaction. I finally said. He looked at me with a frown for a few minutes then said, “I'm going to go, I think my idea was a bad one.” As he is standing, I stand as well. I called his name as he walked away. He turns to say, “It's okay Beck, I needed to get back anyway. I'll talk to you later.”

I stood there and watched him hail a cab and drive away. I can't believe how I reacted to him coming to have lunch

with me. I don't know what scared me the most, the fact that he cared enough to want to spend time with me in the middle of the day. Or, the fact that I'm not used to this kind of attention. I was in a relationship with Noah for over five years and not once did he offer to come and have lunch with me. I'm obviously not used to someone caring about me on this level. I hope Jeff will let me apologize. I pull out my phone and text two words. Hopefully, later he will allow me to apologize in person.

We found the bug in the Monroe App and was able to put it in test mode finally. Because of this new phase, I ended up staying at the office later than usual. By the time I made it home, it was well after eight, I didn't even open my door, I walked down the hall and knocked on Jeff's door. When there was no answer there, I knocked on his condo door and still no response. Realizing he is probably still at work, I went to my apartment and tried to relax. After trying to watch some tv, I realized I wasn't going to unwind until I spoke with Jeff. Since the doorman was so helpful the last

time, I decided to ask if I can get a call when Jeff arrived. When midnight came, and I still didn't get a call, I gave up and went to bed. At least I tried to sleep. Around two in the morning my cell rang, and I jumped up thinking it was Jeff. It was the doorman letting me know Jeff just arrived home. I debated going to knock on his door, after all, it's after two in the morning, what sane person would do that? I decided this sane person needed to do that, so I walked down the hall and knocked. When he opened the door, we just stare at each other before I finally spoke. "I know its early and I know you must be tired, but I needed to talk to you." He pushed the door open and motion for me to come in. I walked into the apartment and suddenly lost my nerve. We stood in the foyer of the apartment, neither one of us saying a word; he was waiting for me to speak. With my hands stuffed in the pocket of my jeans, I stepped into his personal space, then look up into his eyes. He didn't attempt to touch me, nor push me away. "I'm sorry," I whispered. He still said nothing. "Jeff, it wasn't you this

afternoon, it was me. My reaction was not about me not wanting you there." He stepped away from me then and walked further into the living room. I turned and slowly followed him."Please believe me, Jeff."

"What was it about then? If it wasn't about me."

"You just caught me off guard,"

"It was lunch Beck, nothing more. It was lunch."

"It wasn't just lunch for me. Look, I've been in one relationship my entire adult life and the man I was in the relationship with wasn't nurturing; he never cared enough. At first, when you called, I didn't think twice about it. Then in the twenty minutes, it took for you to get there, it hit me. And, then you kissed me, and that showed how much you cared, and I just lost it. Please tell me you understand."

"No, I can't tell you I understand when I don't. Fuck Beck, we spent almost two days in bed together. How much more connected can two people be? Did I do something to make you think that what we did was just sex, that I didn't care?"

I felt my eyes starting to swell. I didn't want to cry in front of

him, but here I was about to cry. I held my nose to try and stop my emotions from spilling. “No, you did nothing to prove you didn’t care, in fact, it was the opposite.”

“Then did you think that I would be one way behind closed doors and another when we were in public?”

“Jeff—”

“No, just answer me please, I need to know. I need to understand where you are coming from.”

“It’s just not what I expected. Maybe I thought you would be one way in private and another in public. I don’t know. I just know that your care and consideration is new to me.”

“Do I need to say that I’m not Noah?”

“No,”

“Beck, I really care about you. I don’t want a casual relationship with you. If that’s what you expect from me —”

“It’s not what I want from you Jeff; I want you to care.”

Chapter Eleven

JEFF

WAS IT the wrong decision to go and have lunch with him? I've been asking myself that question since I walked away from him this afternoon. I'm asking myself that same question as he is standing in front of me trying to explain his behavior. Deep down, it bothers me that he expected so little from me, that he thought I would take him for granted. It angers me to know that this other man would mistreat him so badly. Still, I want him to understand that I am not like the man he left behind. My decision to put my feelings out there was an impulsive one, but it's a decision I hope I won't regret. He says he cares, but can he handle my true feelings for him. If he is reacting this way because I wanted to have lunch with him, how would he react if I admitted that I am

falling for him?

He is nervously waiting for me to say more. I've already said too much, I want him to say more, so I wait. "Jeff, Please forgive me for today," He finally said. I didn't respond; instead, I walked up to him, pull him into my arms, and just held him. At first, he didn't respond, then he relaxed into my arms and returned the embrace. "Do you know what I want right now?" I asked while pulling away from him slightly and framing his face with my hands. "I want to go to bed, and I want you to come with me. I'm tired, and I don't want to talk, I just want you in my bed. Can we do that?" He shook his head, then took my hand as we walked towards my bedroom.

We didn't bother turning on the light in the bedroom. We slowly took our clothes off, as I walked to the bed and pulled the comforter back. Beck walked over to the bed as I'm about to get in and followed me under the covers. I pulled him close, his back to my front, as I buried my nose in his hair and inhaled. I really have it bad for this man. He

wrapped his arm around my arm as I pulled him even closer to me. "I'm sorry about today," He said again. I kissed the nape of his neck, "I need you to stop apologizing. What happened today, happened because of feelings you have from your past, I just need you to know that I'm not Noah." We didn't say anything more. He fell asleep before me, and I made myself stay awake as I listen to the steady rhythm of his breath as he slept. I also made a promise to myself, I will do whatever it takes to get Beck to forget Noah and see that I would never mistreat him.

I woke up hours later and reached for Beck, but he wasn't there. I opened my eyes and called his name. "I'm right here," I heard him whisper. I turn on my back, and he was sitting on the other side of the bed watching me. I pulled myself up to the headboard then ask, "How long have you been awake?"

"Not long, I was just sitting here thinking about you."

"What were you thinking?"

"That I ruined what we shared this weekend and I didn't

mean to.” I pulled away from the headboard and eased slightly towards him. “You didn’t ruin anything Beck.” He leaned his chin on his folded knees and asked, “didn’t I?” I tousled his hair while saying, “I won’t lie to you, when I walked away from you yesterday, I did wonder if maybe I’ve made a mistake and read you, us wrong.”

“Jeff, I know you don’t want to hear me apologize again — “

“You’re right. I don’t need to hear you say you’re sorry.”

“I wish I could take back this afternoon.” He whispered.

“Can I ask you a favor Beck?”

“Anything.”

I pressed my lips to his forehead as I speak. “Please stop being upset with yourself, let’s move on. The next time I want to have lunch with you, have lunch with me.” Beck shook his head as I softly kissed his nose, then his mouth.

The soft kiss instantly turned to a searing kiss. I raised onto my knees and pull Becks arm away from his legs, and pull him up from his waist to meet me. Breathless, we stop kissing and kneel silently on the bed with our foreheads

together. I pulled back from him and sat with my back braced against the headboard again. "Come here," He crawled to me. "Straddle me," I whispered.

I grabbed his dick, and he bellowed loudly. I swiftly covered his lips with mine in another deep bruising kiss. His body melted into mine and I pulled his legs even closer to me. My dick rubs against his hole, and he quivered. I tugged at his underwear, "Take these off before I tear them off." He pulled away, stand on the bed and discard the briefs. "Come back down here to exactly where you were," I uttered as I rubbed my quickly hardened dick up and down. He sat back in my lap, even closer than he was before, giving me full access to his puckered hole. I inserted my index finger, and he moaned as his head falls on my shoulder. I needed him nice and stretched, so I inserted a second finger, then a third. His moans became groans as I worked his ass to make him pliable. I was close enough to my bedside table to reach for a condom. Without taking my fingers out of his ass, I told him to put it on me. He raised up a little and

rolled it on my swollen throbbing dick. The condom wasn't on a second before. I pulled him by the hip to come close to me again as I surge deep into him. "Ahhh, Jeff, please."

"Please what?" I asked while pulling his head away from my shoulder and looking into his eyes. I lift him while pushing up into him again. He didn't answer me as I did it again and again. Lost in ecstasy, his body was malleable as I pushed him back a little to get better access to his ass. I continue to lift him up and down until he was screaming my name.

Finally, his cum spilled between us, but I wasn't there yet, so I lifted him off my penis and raised myself to my knees.

Laying on his back, I pushed his legs into the air and re-entered him and pound his ass until I spilled into the condom.

I fell onto the bed beside him. We are both breathless as we turned and stared into each other eyes. I manage to raise up on my elbow and took his lips in a deep sloppy kiss. When I pulled away from him I whispered, "When I want to have lunch with you, have lunch with me." He put his forehead

on my chin as we awkwardly try to hold each other. We fell asleep with our heads facing the foot of the bed. When I woke up around noon, Beck was gone, but he left a note next to my head.

“I didn’t want to leave out of your arms this morning, but I had to go to work. Without apologizing again, I want you to know that I know you are not Noah and I’m sorry if I led you to believe otherwise. Jeff, I never expected you. I never thought I would meet someone like you so please be patient with me.” BC.

I read and reread his note then forced myself to get out of bed. Because of the way we made love last night my body is sore. I smiled at the memory and reached for my phone to send him a text.

“I just read your note. I missed you when I woke up, and you weren’t here. I’ll see you tonight after my shift, —JC.”

As I'm getting out of the shower, the doorbell rings. I wrapped a towel around my waist to answer. When I opened the door, it's Efram. I jarred the door, "Hello Efram, this is a bad time."

"Sorry, I wanted to let you know we were done with the apartment."

BECK

QTI is having a staff meeting, and I am not paying attention. My mind is filled with thoughts of Jeff and last night - this morning to be technical. Two things are happening in my mind right now. I can't stop thinking of the words he said to me last night, and I can't stop thinking about what he did to me last night. I hurt him yesterday; I didn't mean to, but I know I did. I never want to do that again. Then there is the sex. Intimacy with Jeff is unlike any I've experienced. I've

had lots of sex, especially after breaking up with Noah, but being with Jeff is incomparable to any man I've been with. What's even scarier, is the need I have to please him, to surrender to him.

My phone beeps to let me know I have a text. I'm tempted to look, but it's bad enough I'm not paying attention in this meeting; to look at my phone right now would be inexcusable. I try to clear my mind of all thought relating to Jeff and focused on the meeting, but I can tell it's too late; Pat already noticed my lack of interest. After another hour of updates and discussions about building client relationships, the meeting ends, and I tried to make a beeline for the door. I was almost there when Glen the CEO called my name. I guess he noticed my lack of interest as well, I thought, I stopped and turned to acknowledge Glen. Both he and Patrick were still seated at the conference table. "Close the door and come and have a seat," Glen says while pointing to one of the vacant chairs.

Before I even sat, he started to speak, "Beck, I wanted to

take the time to thank you for the work you did at NYU. Several of the doctors called personally to thank us for sending you to do the supplemental training.” I looked at Pat and Glen. I’m sure with a dazed look on my face. Of all the things I expected to hear that wasn’t it. “Well, it was my job to make sure they were trained, and that’s what I did. I’m glad they were pleased.”

“So, we have an offer for you,” Glen says, as he continues to gaze at me across the table. My interest now peaked entirely. I sat up straight to hear his offer.

“We want to promote you Beck, and we were hoping you would consider accepting our offer to be QTI’s Deployment Facilitator.”

“You mean training our current and future client how to use and implement our software and apps?” Glen turns to look at Pat then back to me before shaking his head. “Thanks, but no thanks,” I said. “Thank you for considering me, but I don’t see myself training full time, It’s not what I want. What I want is exactly what I’m doing now, which is

development.”

“And you are fine with development? We need to fill that position, and if you are turning it down, then we will offer it to someone with less experience, someone who may not have been here as long as you.”

“Glen, I’m okay with that. I want to program. Keep getting new clients and giving us - me more challenges, that’s what would make me happy. Oh, and you filling that position so that I don’t have to do any more training, that would also make me happy as well.” Glen smiled then stood up and walk to my side of the table. I stand to face him. “I just want you happy here Beck. You are a part of the team, and I wouldn’t be happy if suddenly I hear you are leaving.”

“Other than my brothers’ wedding in a few months, I’m not going anywhere.” Glen smiled then walk towards the door, “Glad to hear it,” He says, as he exits the conference room. I turned to see Pat shaking his head. “What?” I asked as I sat back down. “I told him you would say no, he didn’t believe me.” I shrug my shoulders, “I like what I do Pat, and I don’t

need to be promoted, at least not in that position.” Patrick shook his head then ask, “What’s was up with you during the meeting? You were miles away.”

“I just have a lot on my mind,”

“Yeah, I could tell. How are things between you and the doc?”

“Things are good,” I said, even though I could sense Patrick wanted me to say more. “You know if you ever need to talk, I’m here for you.”

“Pat,” I started to say more but stopped myself. “I know,” I said instead, as I stand to walk out of the conference room. As I’m walking back to my desk, I remember the text notification, so I pulled my phone out to check. I stopped to read and re-read his text then I sent him a reply.

“I can’t wait to see you tonight too. No matter how late it is, knock on my door. BC.”

The rest of the day flew by after the staff meeting. I was

eager to get home, I wanted to make sure I was there when Jeff get home. I stayed in the office until almost six; then I made my way back to the condo. Once there, I realized I needed to touch base with my family in OC, so I FaceTime my brother. I haven't spoken to him since I told him about Jeff; I'm sure he realized I was avoiding him. "I was beginning to think I needed to hop on a plane to talk to you again," He said the moment he saw my face.

"Stop being so dramatic,"

"Dramatic is that what I'm being. You have been avoiding me ever since you told me about the doctor, now weeks later you call as if we spoke yesterday."

"I'm sorry I haven't called; I've been busy with work."

"How did it go?"

"How did what go?"

"Your first date with Dr. Corbin."

"It was okay; I didn't FaceTime you to talk about Jeff. How are you doing? How are the wedding plans coming along?"

"Beck, why won't you talk with me about Dr. Corbin?"

“I’m just not ready to talk about him yet Alex. Everything is new, and I just don’t know what to say about him, about us.”

“The wedding plans are coming along. Georgie is still having fun with mom, and mom is still going way overboard, but you told me to take it in stride, and that’s what I’m doing.”

“Good, I’m glad to hear it, how is our father?”

“He is talking about going to New York to meet with Dr. Corbin’s uncle.”

“Really, what are they going to meet about?”

“I have no idea, you know dad, he doesn’t talk business with us.”

“Alex, you sound as if you are annoyed with me.”

“I am a little Beck. You’re my brother, and I love you, but you won’t share anything with me, but you expect me to share with you, is that fair?” I didn’t know what to say to my brother; he is right. “I’m sorry Alex, I don’t mean to be that way. It’s just hard to share things with you about my private

life.”

“You weren’t always like this, you pulled away when you moved in with Noah. I knew things weren’t great with you and him, but your relationship with Noah changed you, and I want my brother back.”

“Alex, things between Jeff and I are going great. I like him, and I think, no, I know he likes me too. You once told me that I should put myself out there. Well, I am with Jeff.”

“I’m glad Beck, you deserve to be happy. Are you going to invite him to the wedding?”

“It’s too soon for that?”

“Is it? Are you sleeping with him? You don’t have to answer that. But if you are sleeping with him, then it’s not too soon, unless you think he is not good enough to meet the family.”

“You know what Alex, I’m going to hang up now. This conversation has gone from good to bad.”

“I want to meet him Beck, ask him to the wedding.”

“We will see, I’m going to go. I’ll talk to you again soon.”

“I love you, bro.”

“I love you too Alex.”

I had to end the call with Alex. I couldn't continue to talk to him without saying more than I wanted to say. I'm feeling a lot for Jeff, but I needed to speak to Jeff first about these feelings. Instead of focusing on the conversation I had with my brother, I decided to take a long shower and unwind by watching some mindless tv. I must have fallen asleep because I woke to a knock at my door. When I looked at the time, it was after midnight. I smiled because I knew who was on the other side of the door.

Chapter Twelve

JEFF

AFTER DOING a walkthrough of the apartment, I had to leave for work. While at work, its imperative that my mind is wholly focused on what I'm doing, my patient's well-being depend on it. But during my breaks, I can't help but let my mind wander. Beck and everything about him engrosses me. I couldn't wait until my shift ends so that I could see him again. I pulled the note he left me this morning out of my pocket and reread it. As I'm showering this morning, it occurred to me that I'm supposed to visit my grandmother next weekend. I want to ask Beck to come with me. I wonder if I should ask him if maybe I'm moving too fast. How could I be moving fast though after the times we've spent together? Before I can dwell on it longer I'm being

called to the ICU, I had to put thoughts of him aside again and focused on my job.

It's a little before midnight, and my shift is about to end. As I'm changing out of my scrubs and reaching for my phone, I see a text message from Beck, sent earlier in the day. I smiled because I had every intention of knocking on his door when I get home. It didn't take long to jump into a cab and get home. I knocked on his door, and he came to the door looking adorable. His hair is disheveled, and he is wearing those faded jeans with the holes in it that I love. "You said to knock," I said while leaning on the door post. He smiled and stepped aside for me to come in. He closed the door, and I immediately reached for him and attached my lips to his with a lingering kiss. He pulled away from me and said, "Hi." I smiled and retook his lips, this time the kiss wasn't chaste; it was demanding and familiar. When I pulled away to breathe, I finally said, "Hi." "Do you want something to eat? I have leftover Chinese in the fridge."

“No, I’m not hungry, I know it’s late, but I want to show you something. Put some shoes on and come with me.” I waited as he walked to his bedroom and came back, then I took his hand, and we walked across the hall. I opened the apartment door and turned on the lights. “What do you think?” I asked as we walked further inside. Beck didn’t say anything, as he walked into the living room, then the kitchen. He finally turned then asked, “What do you think?” “I love it. It’s what I wanted. I love the color combinations, the blinds on the windows, come and see what Efram did to the bedrooms and the bathrooms.” We walked through the guest bedroom and bathrooms; then we made our way to the master bedroom. “Whoa, This room looks bigger than mine, what did he do in here.”

“He took out the closet wall and turned one of the bedrooms into a walk-in closet.”

“That was a great idea.”

“Yeah, I thought so too.”

“Jeff I love the apartment, you are right about the color

combination, the brown and black against the white walls is beautiful. And, his choice of furniture isn't bad either."

"I'm glad you like it because I'm hoping you will be spending a lot of time here with me." Beck turn then and look at me then smile. "I know you have your place, and we will spend time there too, I just hoped —" Beck walked up to me and place his fingers over my mouth before I could finish. "If you want me to spend time with you here I will, okay." I shook my head and pulled him by the waist into me. I cupped his head with my left hand and reached for his mouth. "Are you going to sleep here tonight?" Beck pulled away to ask. "No, I was planning on spending the night with you," I whispered in his mouth. "Do you have to work tomorrow?" He asked. "No, tomorrow is my day off. I thought I would switch my things over then."

"Do you need some help?"

"Your help? Yes. Can we go to bed?" Beck took my hand and led me out of my apartment and back to his. He turned off the tv and lights as we head towards the bedroom. He

walked to the bedside to turn on the lamp, but I walked up behind him and stop him by encircling his waist and pulling him into me. He relaxed into my arms as my lips caress the nape of his neck. "I thought about you a lot today," I said in his ear. "I thought about you a lot too." He said as he turned to face me. I envelop his face with my hands and touch my lips to his. Our forehead connected and we both breathe in deeply. He reached for his tee shirt and pulled it over his head; then he began to unzip his jeans to reveal he was commando. I was mesmerized by his body as I stared at him from head to toe. "You have a magnificent body, do you know that?"

"I'm glad you think so," He whispered, as he reached for the buttons on my shirt and started to unbutton them. I let him slowly undo each button as I stepped out of my shoes. He finally pushed the shirt off my shoulders then began to unzip my pants. I held his hand as he is undoing my pants; I took over and quickly finished. Almost entirely naked, I walked him towards to the bed. He sat on the bed as he is

pulled my boxers down. Looking up into my eyes, he grabbed hold of my dripping and already hardened dick and massage it up and down. He brought the tip to his mouth and let my seed drip onto his tongue. It was so blistering it made my dick even harder than it already was.

Beck circled my shaft with his warm mouth. He choked a little as he pulled back and pushed down again. I grabbed his cheeks as his mouth grew fuller and fuller with my prick. Then I began to move as I slowly fucked his mouth. When I thought he couldn't take anymore, I pulled out of his mouth and pushed him onto his back. I crawled up his body kissing every inch as I move until I reached his mouth. I took his mouth in an erotic kiss tasting my semen on his tongue. I sat up between his legs and pushed them wide open; I wanted his ass closer to me, so I pulled his legs to bring him closer. He raised his legs towards his head, welcoming my ministrations. Having full access to his pink hole, I circled it with my dripping dick. He moans and lifts his ass up to welcome it. "Don't move," I said as I moved off the bed to

get the condom and lube. When I returned, his ass was still wide open waiting for me. I slowly crawled back towards him as I admired the hole I'm about to fuck.

I rolled the condom onto my cock and lubricated it with lube. Our eyes connect as I crawled even closer to him. I pushed my thumb into his hole, and he lifts his ass again. "Just give it to me Jeff, please," He said. "No, I'll never hurt you like that, let me prepare you." I removed my thumb and pushed in two fingers at the same time. He called my name and let out a deep moan. I bent over him and took his mouth as my fingers moved in and out of him. I knew he was ready for my big throbbing dick when he whimpered. Without moving off him, I rammed my dick inside of him hard, and his whimpers turned into deep moans. He closed his eyes and buried his face into my arm. "Open your eyes and look at me," I said softly as I continued to attack his hole. He opened his eyes and stared at me as his moans grew louder. I covered his lips with mine, and he bit my lip as his penis released between us. I raised my head up and

look into his eyes again as I seek my release. I jackhammer into him over and over my eyes never leaving his. Finally, I came deep inside of him. He held me as I erupt over and over again until I felt weightless. I fell on top of him, and he circled me with his arms and legs; holding me as my senses returned to my body.

BECK

I love the feel of his body on top of mine. I didn't want him to move after we made love, but after a while, he got up, walked to the bathroom and came back with a wet cloth. I watched him, as he cleaned my stomach and abdomen. He looked up, and our eyes met. "What are you thinking about?" He whispered. I didn't answer; instead, I took the wet towel from him and threw it on the floor, then I pull him so that he was laying beside me on his back. I practically laid on top of him, as I wrapped my arms and leg across his

body. He wrapped his arm around me and buried his nose in my hair. We stayed like that for a while before he said, "I want to ask you something."

"You can ask me anything," I whisper, as I run my hand through his chest hair. "I need to go out of town next weekend, and I was hoping you would come with me." I raised my head off his chest and look into his eyes before asking, "Where are you going?"

"I have to go to Florida to visit my grandmother, and I wanted you to come with me."

"Is she ok?"

"Yes, it's her birthday, and I need to go and see her and make sure she is okay. Beck you don't have to."

"I would love to go with you, are you sure you want me to come?" He raised his head off the pillow and reached for my lips. "I wouldn't ask if I didn't want you to come." We kissed then, long, lingering, delicious kissing that made my toes curl and other parts of my body respond to his touch.

"I need to ask you something too. In fact, I have two things

to ask you." I said, while gently pushing him away. "Ask me anything," he said while kissing my neck and my cheeks.

Do you remember I told you your uncle and my father have been talking on the phone? According to my brother, our father may be coming to New York to meet with your uncle." Jeff pulled himself up onto the headboard, and I followed him. "I don't know what my uncle is up to; I'm going to have to ask him."

"Alex and I think it has something to do with real estate. Our father doesn't talk to us about his business so asking him won't produce any answers. I figured my best bet is to ask you." Jeff reached over and put his arm on my shoulder. "Are you against my uncle and your father doing business?" "No, absolutely not. We are just nosy sons who are curious about what our father is up to. Not to mention the fact that he doesn't like New York City and if he is thinking of coming here it must be important."

"I'll try and find out what my crazy uncle is up to now, what's the second question?" I sat up on my knees then and

turn to face him. "Well, my brother is getting married, and I was hoping you would come to the wedding with me. You can say no if you want I would understand, I mean, I know its kinda soon for us to be ..." He reached over and covered my lips with his before I had a chance to end my rambling. "I would love to go to your brother's wedding. Why would you think I would say no?"

"I thought it was a bad idea because we are still so new and I don't want to scare you off by moving too fast."

"That's funny because I had the same thought about asking you to come with me to Florida." We both started to laugh as we settled back onto the bed. "I'm looking forward to meeting your grandmother," I whispered, just before we fell asleep.

When I woke up a few hours later, it was to find Jeff wrapped around me as he slept. I slowly pulled out of his arms and made my way to my computer to send a quick e-mail to Pat, letting him know I won't be in today and I'm taking next Friday and possibly Thursday off. I was in the

kitchen making coffee when I felt him behind me. "You're awake?" Pulling me into him, I willingly surrender to his hold. He kissed my nape before saying, "The bed was cold." I turned into his arms and kissed him ardently.

We were in the middle of our kiss when my phone rings. I reluctantly pulled apart and walked to the phone to answer. Checking the caller Id, I saw it was Patrick. "Good morning Pat," I said before he had a chance to say hello. "Is everything ok? You sound ok."

"I'm fine, if you are referring to me not coming in today, I just have plans with Jeff, so I decided to take the day off."

"It just that I was surprised, you never call out." I looked over at Jeff who was busy preparing our coffee. "Nothing is wrong Pat, and as for next weekend, I also have plans with Jeff, we are going out of town, that's all."

"A weekend with the doc, that sounds interesting."

"If you don't have anything more to say, can I go now, I need coffee."

"Fine go, enjoy your day off."

"I will, bye." I walked back into the kitchen, "Sorry about that, I emailed Pat this morning to let him know I wasn't coming in today and I would be taking next Friday and possibly Thursday off, and he panicked."

"I guess you don't take time off very often."

"No, usually don't."

"I'm glad you are coming with me next weekend."

"Me too, by the way, when are we leaving?"

"Well if you can get Thursday off, we can fly into Miami, spend the night, then drive the rest of the way."

"Where does your grandmother live in Florida?"

"She lives in Jacksonville, which is about five hours from Miami." We sat down on the sofa, as we are sipping our coffee. I guess I must have sat too far away, because Jeff looked at me then said, "Please come and sit close to me." I quickly obliged and sat close enough to him to cross my legs over his. "So, we are going to spend the day in Miami, have you been there before?"

Jeff wrapped his free arm around my shoulder, "A few times.

Once when I was visiting, my plane got forestalled in Miami. Instead of taking another flight, I spent the night at this quaint hotel on South Beach; then I drove the rest of the way. The drive is scenic and ever since then if I have the time that's usually the route I take whenever I go to Florida." "I'm looking forward to sharing it with you," I said, as I reached up and kiss him on the lips. We spent the rest of the day moving Jeff's belongings from one apartment to the next. We called Valentina to come and clean both apartments as we moved back and forth. By the time we were done with moving and organizing, it was after six in the evening. Valentina was still busy at work cleaning Jeff's apartment, so we decided to go out to eat. "Why don't you call Pat and invite him?" Jeff suddenly said. Surprised by his idea, I turned and asked, "Are you sure?" "Beck, he is your friend, and he is worried about you, yes, I'm sure, call him and see if he has plans if he doesn't invite him, maybe we can go to Red Bamboo again." "Yes, to calling and inviting Pat, no to Red Bamboo, I want

meat to eat.”

We both started to laugh at my innuendo, as I pulled out my cell to dial Pat’s number. Ninety minutes later we are on our way to meet Patrick at Per Se. The restaurant boasts French, American and vegetarian cuisine which will satisfy Patrick. When our Uber arrived at the restaurant, Patrick was already outside waiting for us. “What took you guys so long?” He asked smiling. “You live closer to the restaurant than we do, you remember Jeff.” Jeff held out his hand to shake Patrick’s. “I remember, Patrick said.”

“Good, then let’s go in and see about our table, I’m starved.”

It wasn’t long after walking into the restaurant that we were seated at our reserved table. It also wasn’t long before Patrick begins to interrogate Jeff.

Chapter Thirteen

JEFF

“ARE YOU ready to go?” Beck asked, as he walked into my apartment. It’s been a week since I officially moved in and what a week it’s been. Even though we had work obligations, we were able to spend quality time together mostly in my apartment and my bed; now we are off on our long weekend. I’m glad we have the next couple of days together with no interruptions, I’ve been looking forward to this from the moment I asked Beck to join me. “I called an Uber; they should be downstairs already,” I said to Beck as I walked out of the bedroom with bags in hand. “Let’s go then before the driver thinks we are not coming.” It wasn’t long before we were downstairs and headed to the airport. “You packed the gift?”

“Yes, it’s in my bag.”

“You packed a bathing suit?”

“Yes,” Before he could ask another question, I gave him a delicate kiss on his lips, “I promise we have everything,” I said, as I pulled away from him. “Stop being nervous, it’s just my grandmother, and you are two days away from meeting her so relax.”

“I’m trying,” He said, as he laid his head on my shoulder. Even with heavy traffic, the trip to JFK didn’t take long, we paid the driver, and head towards check-in. “The last time you and I were at this airport together we ended up in a hotel down the street.”

“I remember,” Beck said, as we made our way through the airport. Ninety minutes later, we are seated on the plane as it gets ready to taxi. A comfortable silence developed between us as we wait. I took his hand as he laid it on the armrest, “In about two months we are going to be doing this again, this time to California.”

“I can’t wait to meet your family Beck.”

“I can’t wait to meet your grandmother.”

Less than four hours later, we are landing in Miami. It’s still early enough for us to check into our hotel and make our way to my favorite spot on South Beach. “I hope you like southern food,” I said to Beck, as we walked into our hotel room. “I love southern food, what’s the name of the restaurant?”

“Yardbird, they make the best fried chicken in the country.”

“Really! I’ll be the judge of that,” Beck says as he walked up and wrap his arms around me. “Do you want to shower and change before we leave?” I asked while pulling him close. “I think if we take the time to get out of these clothes, we won’t be going anywhere; what do you think?” I laughed before answering because he is right. “Let’s go then, I’m starving, and I’m sure you are too.”

We made our way out of the lobby and walked the short distance to Yardbird. It wasn’t long before we were seated with menus in hand. By the time we walked out of the restaurant a few hours later, we were stuffed from eating

Lewellyn's fried chicken, buttermilk biscuits, and macaroni & cheese. "I think I've gained ten pounds from that meal alone," Beck says, as we walked down Lenox Avenue.

"Well, let's walk-off some of the calories, we can go down to Biscayne Bay Path. It's very scenic, and we can check out the boats." Hand in hand, we walked down to the bay. By the time we circled back to the hotel, it was late evening.

"Do you want to get a drink at the bar before going up?"

"Can we have the drinks delivered to the room? I want to be alone with you." I turned to look at Beck, and his eyes were dark with need. I took his hand and led him towards the elevators, "Let's go up we can order something later."

Once in our room, Beck walked onto the balcony to enjoy the lights of South Beach and the ocean view. I stepped out onto the balcony and embrace him by pulling his back to my front. He relaxed into my arms, "I like it here. I see why you would go out of your way to come here when you visit your grandmother." I kissed the nape of his neck, and bury my nose in his hair as I inhaled. "I liked it before; now I like

it even more because I'm sharing it with you." Beck turned in my arms and brought our foreheads together. "What's happening between us Jeff?" He asked, in a hushed voice. I didn't answer; instead, I took his lips in a deep probing kiss. Then whisper, "Let's go to bed."

As much as I wanted to answer his question, and as close as we've been these past weeks, I don't think we are ready to put our feelings to words; at least I'm not ready. I sat on the bed and pulled Beck to straddle me. Running my hand through his hair, I looked into his eyes and asked him earnestly, "Are you ready to tell me how you feel about me?" Beck looked at me intently but didn't answer. I brought my lips to his and skimmed it lightly. "Something is happening between us, but I can wait to voice it." Beck shook his head then lean his head on my shoulders. I put my hands behind his neck, and pull his head up to face me. "Whatever it is that's happening between us I like it, it feels good." He kissed me then passionately.

As our kiss intensifies, I stand and lift him with me. I kneel

on the bed, putting Beck on his back while I distributed my weight onto him as we kissed slowly and deeply. When we needed air to breathe, I raised up and pull his tee shirt over his head, then reached for the zipper on his jeans. Beck started to help by pushing the jeans and boxers down his legs. I pulled them all the way off, then kneel above him to admire his gorgeous body. Beck brought his legs around me, then sat up and started to unzip my jeans. I reached for my tee shirt and pulled it over my head as Beck wrapped his hand around my already swollen prick. I lean back and enjoy the feel of his hand on me before pushing him back onto the bed. I moved off the bed, and finish pulling my pants off. Then I opened my travel bag on the bench at the foot of the bed and reached for the condom and lube. Supplies in hand, I watch as Beck pleased himself by dragging his hand up and down his dick. Kneeling back on the bed, I crawled slowly between his leg and pushed his hand away. I picked up where he left off while going down on him. I brought my mouth to the tip of his dick to kiss,

then lick it. Beck moaned while raising his hip off the bed. He thrust up even further when I wrapped my mouth around his shaft and attempted to swallow it whole. "Jeff, I'm going to come if you keep doing that." I popped my mouth off his dick, then whisper "Not until I'm inside of you." I put my index finger into my mouth and saturate it; then I pushed it into his hole while taking his dick back into my mouth. Beck began to bash his head back and forth. I pushed his leg further apart as I assault his hole by adding another finger. Convinced he was ready for me, I stood on my knees again to put on the condom and lube. I grab hold of his legs, and pull him down to line up his hole to my dick and slowly pushed in.

Once I was balls deep inside of him, I laid forward onto him and took both his hand and put them above his head. "I want slow tonight," I whisper as I brought my lips down to his. As I slowly move in and out of him, I circled his tongue with mine. Beck was lost in ecstasy as I made slow, intense love to his ass and his mouth. I wanted the intensity of the

moment to last, but my body had other ideas. It wasn't long before we both came, as I filled the condom with my spunk and as he spilled between us. I couldn't move, my strength was gone from my body. All I could do was lay there on him as we held each other.

BECK

I'm awake, I've been awake for a while. Jeff's arms and legs are wrapped around my body as he breathes in the crook of my neck. I closed my eyes as I enjoyed the feel of his body. I didn't want to move, I don't want this moment to end. Last night he asked if I was ready to share my feelings with him. The truth is, it's not that I'm not ready, it's that I'm afraid. What if he doesn't feel the same way I feel. I'm falling in love with the man holding me right now. The feelings are unexpected and scary. When I think of the years, I wasted in

a senseless relationship with Noah. I had no idea, that love felt this way. What I feel for Jeff can only be defined as genuine tenderness and compassion I've never felt for another man. How do I relay my feelings for him without sounding like a befuddled fool?

He is awake, his breathing pattern changed, and he is kissing me softly in my hair. I closed my eyes and enjoyed the feel of his mouth. "What are you thinking about?" He whispered in my ear. I didn't answer; instead, I turned in his arms and kissed him reverently on the lips. "I think we should get up because we have a trip we need to take to Jacksonville." He in-turned kissed me gently. "We have time, lets order breakfast, then walk around South Beach a little, we can leave this afternoon." Realizing I would do whatever this man wanted, I shook my head and lay on his shoulder. He turned onto his back and held me until I finally needed to move because the bathroom was calling me. Once I used the bathroom, I returned to find him still laying in bed. I dropped down beside him and entwined our

fingers. "What time will we arrive in Jacksonville if we aren't leaving until this afternoon?"

"Jacksonville is just under five hours away. If we leave at one, we should be there by six or six-thirty." Jeff turns and leans on his elbow, "Are you still worried about meeting Grans?"

"Yes, and no. What if she doesn't like me?" Jeff laughed while laying back on his back. "My grandmother is going to love you, do you know why?"

"Why?"

"Because you are the first guy I've ever brought home," He said while turning to look into my eyes. I was speechless; I didn't know what to say, is it possible that Jeff feels what I feel. This time I raised up on my elbow and kiss him slowly and softly.

By the time we ordered and ate breakfast, and made love in the shower, it was after ten. "What are we going to spend the day doing?" I asked Jeff as we dress. "I have a surprise planned for you, hurry up," He says with a smile. "A

surprise? When did you have time to plan anything?"

"I'm very industrious when I need to be," He said as he is pulling on his jeans. As he reaches for a button-down shirt, he says, "I promise the day won't be wasted." As I pulled a tee shirt over my head, I said, "I don't think any time I spend with you is a waste, Jeff." He stopped buttoning his shirt then and looked at me keenly then said, "I feel the same."

We made our way outside the hotel to the Prius we rented at the airport. As Jeff is driving, I realized we are headed back towards the airport. "Why are we going towards the airport?" I asked curiously. Jeff smiled, while taking my hand, "You will have to wait and see." Twenty minutes later we pulled into the airport, and I immediately knew what we were about to do. "Are we going on a helicopter tour of Miami?" Jeff smiled then said, "Surprise!" If there is an absolute way to tour Miami, this is it. The sixty-minute ride afforded us unique views of South Beach, Biscayne Bay, the sea aquarium and some of the most beautiful homes in

Miami. By the time the tour was over, I was ready to pack up and move to Miami. Jeff laughed at me when I told him that, then remind me of my love for New York.

By one we check out of the hotel, and on our way to Jacksonville. An hour into the trip and I saw what Jeff meant when he said the trip was scenic. The trip took five hours. It was a little after six when we arrived in Jacksonville and almost seven by the time we drove onto Sunset Landing Drive. Jeff's grandmother's house was not what I expected. I thought since Jeff said she was retired that she would be living in a retirement community. Nothing could be further from the truth; she lived in a custom waterfront home with enough land around it to afford privacy. The house was almost as big as my parent's house in OC. I couldn't believe only one person lived in it. The moment we pulled up to the house from the long driveway, a tall silver-haired woman who resembled Jeff comes running out the door. Jeff jumped out of the car and walked straight into her arms for an affectionate hug. I exited the car and walked around to the

drivers' side when suddenly she saw me. "Jeffrey, who is this you brought home?" she asked inquisitively. Jeff let go of this grandmother and walk back toward me while holding her hand, "Grans, I would like to introduce you to Beck Copeland, Beck this is my grandmother Geraldine Foster." "And you can call me Geraldine," she says while walking over to me and dispensing an unexpected hug. "It's very nice to meet you Beck." She continues after pulling away slightly. "Well, come inside, the two of you must be tired after that long drive."

"We are mostly hungry Grans, we didn't stop to eat. We drove straight through."

"I figured as much, that is why there is food warming in the oven. You didn't tell me you were bringing a guess, so I'm going to have to fix a plate for Beck. I looked at Jeff, surprised that he didn't tell his grandmother I was coming. He looked at me and shrugged his shoulders. The inside of Geraldine's home was as spacious as the outside. The floors on the entire lower level was a rich wood accented by

yellow on the walls throughout. As late in the day as it was, the light streaming in from the windows made the open space look and feel serene. "Sit down you two, and I'll have your food ready in a few minutes." We sat at the island in the kitchen, and Jeff squeezes my leg under the table to reassure me. Ten minutes later we are eating Roast beef, Mash Potato, and gravy with corn on the cob while Geraldine looked on. I couldn't help but feel she was staring at me, which she was because of what she said next, "Beck, I'm sorry if I'm staring at you, you have to understand, my grandson here has never bought anyone home for me to meet. The only friend of his I know is Jax, and I haven't even him in a long time. "Gran's stop staring, you're making Beck feel uncomfortable, and you haven't seen Jax in a long time because he moved to London and is happily married. "I know that," She says, "I'm just saying this is a big deal, you bringing Beck to meet me," She continued. "Well, if I knew you were going to embarrass him, I wouldn't have bought him." Geraldine, stood from the table put her hand on her

hips then said, "Jeffrey Corbin, don't you dare say such a thing to me. I'm glad you're here, and I'm especially happy to meet Beck."

I'm watching and listening as Jeff and his grandmother goes back and forth about me, and I didn't know how to interact. Geraldine is a spunky grandmother who clearly loves her grandson. After we finish eating, Geraldine took our plates and turned to Jeff, "You know which room is yours, I assume we don't need another room." At this point, I'm sure I'm redder than a cherry because Jeff turns to look at me and started to laugh. "No, Grans we don't need another room." Jeff took my hand while still speaking with his grandmother, "We are going to bring in our bags and settle in, we will be back down in a little while."

I didn't say anything as we walked to the car, and still nothing as we made our way upstairs to the room Jeff claims as his. Once inside the bedroom, the bags weren't out of our hands before Jeff took me in his arms. "Are you okay?" He asked while pulling me close. "I'm fine; I'm just a little

shell shock.”

“Why are you shell shock?”

“Well, where do I begin, your grandmother is wonderful and spunky by the way, but you’ve never bought anyone home before?”

“I told you that, you didn’t believe me?”

“It’s not that I didn’t believe you, it’s just to hear your grandmother say it, it’s just so real.”

Chapter Fourteen

JEFF

I PULLED away from Beck and cupped his face, “Nothing about us is unreal Beck, this, whatever this is, is real. If you think otherwise, we are in trouble.” Beck reached up and entwined his fingers in mine. “I didn’t say what’s happening between us is unreal. I said, your grandmother reaction to us is.” He pulled me towards him so that our lips connected. The kiss was chaste yet fill with need. We stood in the middle of the bedroom holding each other until there was a knock on the door. We pulled apart as my grandmother opened the door. “There are no towels in the bathroom, I thought you two might need some,” She said as she walks past us to the bathroom. “Is everything all right?” she asked as she walks back towards us. “Everything is fine Grans,

we'll see you in a little bit."

"You know the two of you don't have to come back downstairs; it's understandable if you wanted to get some sleep."

"Grans, I'm coming downstairs, we have a lot to talk about, and three days will barely cover it. Give me a little while, and I will come and find you." Grans look between Beck and me then turn and walk towards the door. After she left, I pulled Beck back into my arms again and kiss him deeply.

"Why don't you get settled, I'm going to find Geraldine and talk with her for a bit."

"Is it alright if I take a dip in the swimming pool?"

"Yes, of course, I'll catch up with you either at the pool or up here, okay?"

I left Beck to look for my grandmother. I found her in her garden watering her roses. She saw me approaching and said, "Beck seems lovely."

"Lovely Grans, that's the way you describe a girl."

"Well, what should I say then? He is handsome. In fact, you

could even say he is beautiful.”

“I have to agree with you there,” I said while leaning against the fence. “I’m glad you are here Jeff, and I’m delighted you brought Beck; he must be important to you. Are you in love with him?” I didn’t answer her question; instead, I walked towards her with my hands buried in the front pocket of my jeans. I guess she realized I wasn’t going to answer because she persisted. “I mean, why else would you bring him if you didn’t have feelings for him.”

“Gran, you don’t have to push, It’s not that I don’t want to answer you, it’s that I don’t know how to answer you if that makes sense.” My grandmother stops using the garden hose then turn to me. “Jeff, nothing about love isn’t scary. It is hard to put your emotions out there because you don’t know if you will get hurt. But, if you do what’s scary, the reward of having someone return your feelings is the most amazing feeling you will ever experience. Are you afraid he will hurt you?”

“Honestly, I think we both are, anyway enough about Beck

and me, what's going on with you?"

"Well, I spoke with your uncle last week, he wants me to hire someone to come and stay with me in the house. I told him I don't need anyone, I'm perfectly fine on my own, but he is insistent that I need someone here with me."

"Uncle Max didn't tell me you two spoke."

"Your uncle calls me almost every month like clockwork, and I'm not surprised he hasn't told you."

"Why do you think he hasn't mentioned it?"

"That man views us as family Jeff. We are all the family he has left. I hope you are taking the time to see him,"

"I'm Grans. I see him almost weekly when he is in town.

Can we go back to his idea that you hire someone? I think it's a good idea, Grans. If anything were to happen to you."

"Nothing is going to happen to me, Jeff."

"I hope not, but having someone here would reassure Uncle Max and me. Can you please think about it?"

"I'll think about it, but I make no promises."

After catching up with my grandmother, I went in search of

Beck. The pool was empty, so I assumed he was in our bedroom. When I checked the room, I didn't find him so I walked outside to check the grounds. I saw him sitting on the boat dock staring out onto the horizon. "Hey," I said to him as I approach. "Hi, look at this view." He said, pointing to the skyline. I sat beside him on the dock and watched as the sun descends and nightfall. "Is everything okay with you and your grandmother?" He suddenly asked.

"Everything is fine. My uncle is trying to convince her to get someone to come and stay here with her, but she is being crotchety about it."

"I understand why you would want someone here with her; this property is kind of huge."

"She loves it here, I tried two years ago to persuade her to get something smaller, but she was against it. Now our best bet is a live-in companion of some sort."

"I could also see why she loves it here. It reminds me of home."

"Tell me about your family, what are they like? Is it just you

and your brother?”

“Yes, it’s just Alex and me, we are four years apart. Mom tried to have more kids, but it never happened, so Alex and I are their only spoiled children.”

“Do you think you are spoiled?” Beck laughed, “No, I don’t think we are spoiled, but being the only children raised by wealthy parents has its privileges. Not to mention, there wasn’t a thing our parents never gave us. In that sense, I guess you could say we were a little spoiled. We were also spoiled with lots of love too.” As I listened to Beck talk about his family, I can’t help but think of what I never had. Beck must have sensed my withdrawal because he reached over and took my hand. “What about you? Were you spoiled?” I brought his hand to my mouth for a kiss before answering. “Not the same way you just described. My grandmother was my only parent. She did the best she could with me. Even though she knew about Max side of the family, and that my father had left me a lot of money, she chooses to raise me independently. For her, that meant

the profits she made from her art. She even put me through two years of college on her own.”

“Spoil doesn’t necessarily mean getting everything you want as a kid. It could also mean being loved unconditionally.”

“I agree with that. Because I’ve always felt loved by that woman in there.” I said while looking back at the house. I turned to look back at Beck, “Tell me more about your family.”

“Well, you already know that my brother was in a car wreck a few years back and that you saved his life. He is a lawyer who works as a public defender and does photography on the side. Alex is engaged to be married as you also already know. Mom and dad are semi-retired. Semi, because my father is still buying and selling real estate, which reminds me, did you get to ask your uncle what he and my father are up to?”

“No, he is still in Ireland, when we spoke it was just to touch base. When he gets back I will ask him, don’t worry.”

“I’m not worried like I said, I’m just a nosy son.” I guess I

must have been staring at Beck because he nudges my shoulder then asked, "What?" I nudged his shoulder back then said, "Nothing, I'm just enjoying this moment with you." What I was thinking was how much my feelings have grown for him in such a short time, but I'm afraid to tell him that; I'm scared that he may not feel the same way. I know Grans said I have to do what's scary, but I'm just not ready to take that chance yet.

"Do you want to go and do something?" I asked to change the subject. "What do you have in mind?" He asked curiously. "We could go into town and catch a movie, or find somewhere to play miniature golf." Beck laughed while standing and holding out his hand for me to take. "Let's go play miniature golf; I haven't played in years." I took his hand and stood up, "I should forewarn you, I am really good."

"No matter how good you are Corbin, I promise you are not better than me." We start to walk towards the house as we regale each other about our upcoming game.

BECK

I'm having mixed feeling about being here with Jeff and his grandmother. In one instance, I'm overjoyed to know he doesn't bring men home often if at all, until me. But, I am also scared and overwhelmed. I'm fearful of the intensity of our relationship, of doing or saying something to ruin it. I woke up on the second day of our visit to find myself alone with Geraldine. She sent Jeff on an errand while I was still asleep. I walked into the kitchen to see her baking cookies. "Good morning Beck," She said as I stood at the door watching her. Caught, all I could do was respond to her, "Morning," a little embarrassed that she caught me watching her. "Come in and have a seat, I know you must be hungry, I have a plate ready for you." She took a plate filled with bacon, eggs and french toast from the oven and put it in front of me. "I sent Jeff to the bank, and he should be back

soon, in case you are wondering.”

“I was actually, thanks for letting me know.” She watched me for a few seconds before turning back to her baking. With her back turned to me she asked, “Can I say something to you Beck?” I stopped eating and look up at her, “You can say anything to me, Mrs. Foster.” She turned to look at me before saying, “First of all, don’t call me Mrs. Foster, my husband died a very long time ago; call me Geraldine.” I shook my head as she continued. “What I wanted to say was thank you.” I started to ask for what when she held her hands up to stop me. “I love my grandson, and I’ve been worried about him because all he ever concentrate on is work. I’ve never seen him take the time to have a life, much less a relationship. I’ve known he was gay probably before he did and I watched as he developed feelings for his best friend, feelings that Jax didn't share. He probably hasn’t told you about Jax, so I’m sorry if I’m sharing something he might not be ready to talk with you about, but mentioning Jax is paramount to what I’m trying to say to you. He Loved

Jax, but Jax loved him like a brother. Jax has been the only friend of his that I've met until now. Beck you must be special to him, he must have some strong feelings for you, and I just wanted to say thank you for caring about my grandson the way you do because he deserves to be happy." I was stunned by her words. My food was forgotten as I stared at her, then the words just fell from my lips, "I'm in love with him." She shook her head while smiling, then said, "I know, I can tell. Don't worry, he feels the same, even if he hasn't shared it with you yet." No sooner than she said her last sentence, we heard the front door open and Jeff calling to his grandmother. He walked into the kitchen looked at Geraldine and me, then asked, "What's going on?"

"What do you mean?" I asked. I picked up the fork then took a bite of the french toast before saying, "Geraldine made me an awesome breakfast, and I was thanking her, what do you think is going on?" He smiled then walked over to me, kissed me on my syrup soaked lips, then said, "Sorry

I left without telling you; I had to catch the bank before it closed.”

“No worries, Geraldine took care of me,” I said while continuing to eat the food in front of me. I watched Jeff as he interacted with his grandmother and thought about what she said to me. It’s the second time I’ve heard the name Jax, I plan on ask Jeff about him. I decided I wouldn’t approach the subject until we get back to New York. The next two days flew by. A friend of Geraldine came by with his boat, and we spent the day fishing and soaking up the sun on the bay. By the end of the third day, we had to leave. By the time we arrived in New York, it was Monday night.

“Stay with me tonight,” Jeff said as we are in the cab heading into New York City. “All right, but I need to ask you to do something,” I said still staring out the window of the cab. He turned my head to face him, “What is it?” He asked with concern in his voice. I reached over and softly kissed his lips before saying, “I want you to tell me about Jax.” He didn’t speak for a minute as we continued to look at each

other, then finally he asked, “Is that what you and Grans were talking about when I walked into the kitchen on Saturday?” I ran my hand along his cheekbone before saying, “She mentioned him, but we weren’t talking about him. But, she is the second person to mention him to me, and I want to know.”

“Who was the first?” He asked. “Eli mentioned him.”

“What did Eli say?” He asked as he moved slightly away from me. “It doesn’t matter what Eli or anyone said. I want to hear about him from you.” He didn’t pull further away from me, but we didn’t speak the remainder of the ride home. We were in the elevator in the apartment building when I decided to give him an out. “If you are not ready to talk about him I will understand,” I whisper while standing close to him. “He smiled, turned to face me, then said, “No, I want to tell you about him, I should have told you already, so, tonight or tomorrow morning is just as good a time for us to talk about it.” I shook my head while running my hand down his chest. “Let’s check on my apartment before going

to yours, okay?" He took my hand as the elevator doors opened and we walked towards the apartments.

"Let's talk about Jax tomorrow," Jeff said, as we dropped onto the bed more exhausted than we realized. Yawning, I said, "Ok, whenever you are ready, it doesn't have to be tomorrow." He didn't respond as he pulled me close and as sleep came quickly for both of us. When I woke up the next morning, Jeff wasn't laying next to me. When I rolled over, I found him sitting on the edge of the bed watching me sleep. "What are you doing?" I asked sleepily. "Watching you sleep." He said while reaching for my hand. Then suddenly he just started to talk about Jax, "He was, is my best friend. We grew up together; he was there through some of the most tumultuous times of my younger years. I don't know what Eli told you, but you are right, it doesn't matter. Jax and I were close, and for a long time, for a few years, I thought my feelings for him had grown from friendship to love. In retrospect, looking back, what happened is I saw him fall in love when we took a trip to Europe and I was

jealous. I was envious because he was pulling away from me as a friend. As a result, I gave him some bad advice, which he took and as a result, he and Edward, his husband didn't see each other for five years. A part of me felt guilty for what I did. When Jax and Edward met again, things came to a head. I told Jax how I felt, but I also told him that what was happening to me, was for me to deal with, which I did. In the end, I was there when he married Edward, and I couldn't have been happier for them. Our friendship while not the same as it was when we were children is still intact. Now I know what others like Eli and Efram and my grandmother for that matters think doesn't matter, but I want you to tell me what they had to say." I eased closer to Jeff as I decided to share. "Your grandmother thought you loved him and Eli told me you were overprotective of Jax."

"I supposed Eli was right, because of what I did. Jax was in a relationship he shouldn't have been in because he loved someone else. In a roundabout way, I tried to tell him, but I wasn't successful. I could see why his friends may think I

had feelings for him.” I lean my chin on Jeff’s shoulder as he talked. “Thank you for telling me” I whispered in his ear. He started to say more, but I stopped him by placing my fingers on his lips. I pulled him towards me as my lips covered his. In a low voice, I said, “Don’t say more, just come back to bed and hold me.”

Chapter Fifteen

JEFF

I KISSED him tenderly as I lay on top of him, relieved that he didn't need to hear more, worried about what he is thinking. I pulled away slightly. "Tell me what you are thinking," I whispered. He put his forehead on my chin then kissed my neck while burrowing himself into me. In a low voice, he whispers, "If I thought you were in love with him I wouldn't be here right now." I felt myself breathe a sigh of relief. "Beck, I had no idea—," He stopped me from finishing my thought, as he claimed my lips in a fiery kiss. His message was clear, and I was willing to comply as I deepened the kiss. I kneeled on the bed and pull his boxers off, then stand to remove mine. I returned to his open legs and cupped his ass as I brought my groin down to meet his. We both moan

from the feel of our dicks coming together.

“Do you realize we didn’t make love once while at your grandmother's house?” Beck whispered in my ear. I didn’t answer; instead, I reached for the lube and condom next to the bed as I pushed his left leg up to his chest. Filled with need, I coated my fingers with lube and thrust deep inside. He undulated under me as I inserted a second finger. He whimpers as my fingers submerge further and as they scissors wider. Not willing to wait any longer, I put on the condom, while he raises his other leg in anticipation of what I was about to do to him.

Looking into his eyes, I entered him slowly and fervently, Holding his hands over his head as I thrust deep inside of him. The more I assailed his ass, the deeper his groans became. I buried myself repeatedly in him, as sweat glistened off our bodies. Finally, he spilled between us as I continue to pound into him until I flowed into the condom. We fell back asleep after our lovemaking, and when I woke up again, there was a knock on my door. I turned over to

see Beck was gone, and a note laid on his pillow. I didn't have a chance to read the note because the knocker was persistent. Eager to see who it is, I quickly pulled on my jeans and ran to the door. When I opened it, standing on the other side was my uncle. "Uncle Max, seriously," He walked inside while saying, "If you answered your cell, I wouldn't have to resort to banging on your door."

"What do you mean? You didn't call my cell." I said as I walked over to my phone. "Shit, it's dead, sorry."

"I haven't seen you in weeks, and when I called you're not answering, I was worried."

"I'm going to take a quick shower, why don't you make yourself comfortable," I said, as I walked towards the bedroom. "I hope it was Beck you were having sex with." I turned to look at my smiling uncle. "I'm not going to answer that," I said as I continue to walk away. Twenty minutes later, I found him lounging on the balcony. "The apartment looks much better than the last time I saw it." He said as I sat in the chair next to him. "You didn't say you were going

to be in Ireland for weeks.”

“I know, business took longer than I planned, how was Geraldine’s birthday?”

“It was good. Grans didn’t even want us to get a cake, and she barely accepted the gift we gave her.”

“We? Did you bring someone with you.” Realizing what I said, I smiled. “Yes, I brought Beck with me.” My uncle began to laugh while turning his head to face me. “Things have progressed between you and young Copeland then.” I didn’t want to answer, at the same time I felt compelled to say something. “Yes, Uncle Max, Beck and I are seeing each other.”

“Seeing each other? That’s not the way Geraldine told it.” Shocked by his admission, I turned and asked, “You spoke with Grans?”

“Of course, it was her birthday, and I had to call and wish her a belated birthday.”

“That’s not what Grans told me; she told me you call her on a regular basis.” We stared each other down for a few

minutes before we both started to laugh. I lean back onto the lounge before saying, “Yes, Uncle, things are kind of serious between Beck and I, is that what you wanted to hear?” He leaned further into the lounge before saying, “I just want to see you happy Jeff. If Beck Copeland makes you happy, then I am all for it.”

“He makes me happy, now enough about Beck and me; tell me what you are up to with his father.”

“How do you know I’m up to something?”

“He has two sons who pay attention to details such as that.”

“Ahh the sons, I forgot about them.” He said while smiling.

“Max, what are you up to?” I asked again more forcefully.

“Richard Copeland is thinking of getting out of the real estate market in New York, and I’m considering buying all his property.”

“How the hell did this happen, you barely know the man.”

“Not true, Richard Copeland and I go way back. He was at Oxford the same time I was, we weren’t friends then, but we knew the same people and usually ended up at the same

parties.”

“Seriously uncle! I don’t know what to say.”

“He invited me to come out to California; apparently, his other son is getting married in a few weeks, and he wants me to come to the wedding.” This time it was my turn to turn and face my uncle. “I know, Alex is getting married, Beck invited me to the wedding.”

“When are you two planning on leaving for California? Maybe we can fly in together.”

“I don’t know, Beck and I haven’t talked about it yet, we will let you know what our plans are.” My uncle stayed for another hour catching up. After he left, I remembered Beck’s note; I walked into the bedroom to read it.

“I didn’t wake you because one of us needed to get as much sleep as possible. I just want to repeat what I said last night. I couldn’t be with you if I thought you loved another man. We are okay.” B.C.

I smiled as I reread the note, then walked into the living room to retrieve my phone to send him a text.

“You needed sleep as much as I did, wished you had called out and stayed in bed with me. Do you want to have lunch?” J.C.

Another smile lit my face as I hit send, remembering the last time I wanted to have lunch with him. It wasn't long before he responded back.

“Yes, I want to have lunch with you, what time and where?” B.C.

“It's almost noon, and I haven't eaten a thing, do you want me to meet you at the café in your building?” J.C.

“Yes, I'll see you at the café at twelve-thirty.”

B.C.

With an enormous smile, I head towards my closet to change, knowing this lunch will not be similar to the last one we had.

When I walked into the café at twelve-forty, he was already there waiting. I tentatively walked over to him, suddenly not sure how to greet him. He took away the uncertainty when he stood and kissed me softly on the lips. “Hey,” He said as he slowly pulled away. “Hey yourself, did you order?” I asked as we sat down. “No, I was waiting for you.”

“Then let’s go get something, I’m starving, and I have news regarding your father and my uncle.”

“Your uncle is back?”

“Yes, he came to visit me this morning, and we talked.”

“Good, I can’t wait to hear what my father is up to.”

BECK

“So let me get this straight, my father wants to sell all his property in New York to your uncle,” I bellowed. “That’s what Uncle Max said, oh, he also invited him to Alex’s wedding to discuss the details of the deal,” Jeff continued, as he is about to bite into his turkey sandwich. “My father constantly surprises me, do you know that?” Jeff reached across the table and took my hand. “Look at me and tell me you are okay with them doing business because if I told Max it’s not a good idea, he would probably pull out of whatever deal they are about to make.” I squeeze Jeff, hand before responding, “I’m very okay with your uncle and my dad doing business, that’s not why I’m stunned. I never thought he would actually retire, now it seems as if he is planning on doing just that. What else did Max say?”

“Nothing more about the deal, but he did mention that we could fly in together for the wedding. I told him we didn’t make any plans yet, and I would get back to him. When are you planning on leaving? I need to know so that I can let the

hospital know not to schedule me.”

“Alex is getting married on June thirtieth, which is a Saturday. My parents would want me there for a week or more before. I planned to leave the weekend of the twenty-third and stay until after July fourth. Can you come and stay that long with me?”

“Would you want me there with you for over a week?”

“Yes, if you can get off from the hospital, I would love to have you there.” “Then I’ll be there. Not to change the subject, but there is something else my uncle mentioned that I wanted to talk to you about.” My interest suddenly piqued, I asked, “What is it?” Jeff laughed as he reached across the table and retook my hand, “it’s nothing bad, he bought a house in the Hamptons and told me we could use it anytime, so I thought maybe we could invite Patrick and his friend Fred and go out for a weekend. What do you think?”

“I think Patrick would be ecstatic. Last year he tried to rent a house out there but couldn’t find one he could afford. When

would you want to go?”

“We can go anytime, Max is planning on being out there all this week, then he is off on another trip, the house will be empty.”

“Isn’t it going to be hard to get off from the hospital?”

“No, not if I let them know in advance, I just have to tell them not to schedule me. I was thinking you, and I can spend a few weekends out there before we leave for California.” I reached over and kissed Jeff lightly on the lips, “I would love to spend weekends in the Hamptons with you.”

“Good, let’s plan for next weekend with Patrick, I’ll arrange the transportation out there, let Patrick know. You probably have to get back to work, so I’m going to go.” I walked Jeff out of the building before heading back to the office. The moment I stepped off the elevator Patrick assaulted me.

“How was lunch with the doc?”

“How did you know I had lunch with him?”

“Maybe because I was in the café when you were having

lunch. The two of you were so busy talking you didn't even notice me."

"Sorry, why didn't you say something?"

"Why interrupt, your conversation looked private."

"Well, I have some news, and you are going to jump for joy. Do you remember last year when you tried to rent a house in the Hamptons?" Patrick pulls on my elbow to stop me from walking with a broad smile on his face."Tell me."

"Jeff uncle bought a house in the Hampton, and he offered it to Jeff to use for the summer."

"Hell no! Are you serious?" laughing at his hysterics, I continued, "Jeff asked me to ask if you and Fred wanted to come out for a few days next weekend."

"Hell yes! OMG, I need to find myself a rich doctor to date." As I shook my head, I walked away from Patrick while saying, "And, don't worry about transportation to get there, Jeff is taking care of that too."

"I want you to know I love your boyfriend," He yelled.

“When you said he would take care of the transportation, I thought he was going to arrange for the bus ride out there, not this.” We were standing in the lounge of Blade, a luxury transport that provides transportation to destinations such as the Hamptons. “Why couldn’t someone else take care of the patient last night if he was scheduled to be off?” Patrick asked, as our eyes roamed the lounge. “I don’t know, but I text him before leaving the apartment, he should be here any minute.” Walking into the lounge was like walking into a page of Architectural Digest. “I can’t believe we are going to the Hampton for the weekend and traveling there in a helicopter,” Patrick said. “How long is the flight did you ask?”

“I don’t know; Jeff made all the arrangements.”

“I’m going to find out,” Patrick said, as he walked up to the reception desk. I’m just happy that we are going away for the weekend. This past week for Jeff and I have been hectic, more so for Jeff than me. To have the weekend off, he had to work straight through the week, and be on call. I had to

work late most of the week because of flaws in the Monroe App. Because of our schedule, Jeff and I barely saw each other. As I'm thinking about him, I see him coming out of a cab. I walked outside the lounge to greet him.

"Hey you," I said as he is walking up the steps. He smiled then took the steps two at a time to reach me. Before I could say another word, he started to speak. "I'm sorry I'm so late; I just couldn't get out of the hospital on time no matter how hard I tried." I didn't even respond to him; I walked straight into his arms and kissed him desperately on the lips. "I'm just glad to see you and to know we have the next few days together," I said, as I pulled away from him slightly.

"Where are Patrick and Fred?"

"They are inside salivating over how luxurious the lounge is and finding it unbelievable how we are traveling to the Hamptons. I can't believe it either."

"Well, I didn't want us to take a bus, it would have taken all day, and we would miss out on a day of sun and fun." He said while laughing. He took my hand as we walked

towards the entrance."Let's go and see how quickly we can get out of here."

After leaving the heliport, it took us thirty-five minutes to get to the Hamptons, and another half hour to get the jeep Jeff rented for us to get around. The drive to the beach house took another half hour, but it was well worth it. As we drove along Old Montauk Highway and saw the homes situated practically on the beach, I knew this house was going to be an oasis. When we pulled into the large driveway, for the first time in Patrick's life, he was speechless. The house was huge, and the property surrounding it was unbelievable. As we exit the jeep, Patrick and Fred started to walk around to the back of the house, while Jeff and I entered through the front door.

We thought the lounge at the heliport was luxurious; it didn't compare to the house Max bought. The moment we walked in, you can't help but notice the view of the ocean through every window we saw on the lower level. The walls were painted white, and the contrast with the natural wood

throughout was breathtaking. “Wow, I can’t believe Uncle Max bought this, it is massive and beautiful.” As we walked through the living room and outer rooms, we saw Patrick and Fred jumping into the swimming pool. “I can’t believe your uncle bought this place, it really is beautiful.”

“Yeah he outdid himself, I’m beginning to think Uncle Max has no intention of going back to Europe.” I walked up to Jeff and wrapped my arms around him, “Wouldn’t you want him to stay?”

“Secretly I would; It's nice having him so close. He and my grandmother are the only families I have, so yes, I would want him to stay. Let’s not talk about my family woes, let’s go upstairs pick a bedroom, then go for a walk on our private beach.”

That’s what we did. Uncle Max also made sure the fridge and pantry were stocked with food. We even had a supply of liquor and beer to drink when we decided to barbecue later that night. This weekend will be an excursion not to be forgotten.

Chapter Sixteen

JEFF

THERE IS something to be said about waking up to the feel of a warm mouth moving up and down your dick. Beck held my hips as he assaulted my cock. I closed my eyes, lost in the warmth and feel of his mouth. It wasn't long before my cum shot down his throat, and as he licked my dick clean before slowly kissing his way up my sated body. He lowered his lip onto my mouth, and I could taste the mixture of my cum as he sucked my tongue until we both finally needed air. Breathing heavily, we held each other for minutes before Beck whispered, "Good morning." I laughed as I grab hold of him and pull him closer to my body. We laid in bed until Becks stomach roared and I had a sudden urge to use the bathroom.

“What are we doing today?” Beck asked while we showered together minutes later? “Do you want to go into town and roam the shops?” I asked before kneeling on the tiled floor and engulfing his dick down my throat. Lost in ecstasy, Beck leans his head against the tile as I return the favor he bestowed on me minutes earlier. When we finally made it downstairs, it was to find Patrick and Fred making breakfast. “Well, the two of you finally smelled the food?” Fred said as we walked into the kitchen. “It smells good, I hope you made some for us too,”

“Of course we made some for you two, Grab plates, it’s almost ready.” As we ate, we shared what our plans were for the day. Patrick and Fred’s plans involved the beach and sunbathing, which was fine with me because I wanted to be alone with Beck.

“Why are you so quiet?” I asked Beck as we walked from one store to the next on Main Street. He turned to look at me then smiled. “I’m just thinking.”

“What are you thinking about?” I asked as we entered an

antique furniture store. Beck took one look around then ask, "Why are we looking at furniture? Both our apartments are fully furnished?" I looked around the small shop before answering, "You can find a lot of unique pieces to accentuate the furnishings you have in an antique store." Beck looked at me with an amazed look on his face. "I didn't know you were a collector."

"I'm not really, I just like the idea of mixing old with new." "So do I," Beck says as we walked further into the store. We separated at some point during our browsing. I found Beck staring at a wooden chest big enough to use for storage. He was so busy inspecting the chest he didn't see me walk up behind him. "You like this?" I asked as I began to look closely at the chest. "Yes, it reminds me of one my mother has in her bedroom. My brother and I use to play hide and seek when we were younger, and we would take turns hiding in the chest." I inspected the chest closely then turn to Beck, "Why don't you get it, I'm sure you could find a place for it in your apartment." Beck continued to stare at

the chest. "You're right, but how would I even get it home?" "I can ship it for you." Someone said behind us. We turned to see an old man watching us intently. Beck turned then ask, "Do you work here?" The man walked up to us, "I own the store, sorry for eavesdropping, but If you are interested in the trunk, it wouldn't be a problem shipping it to wherever you would like." Beck and I looked at each other, and I could tell he was about to deny his wish to have the chest. I decided to speak up, "How much is the chest?" I turned to the owner and asked. If Beck thought he didn't want the chest, he was sure once he heard the cost. We thanked the owner and walked out of the store to the next. We walked the street until it was late afternoon. Finally, we decided to stop and eat when we saw the East Hampton Grill. "Why didn't you get the chest back there?" I decided to ask as we peruse the menu. "It's a lot of money, and I don't like to spend money like that." I didn't say anything as we continue to analyze the menus. After placing our orders, I finally said, "It's worth it if it's something you love and

would cherish.” Jeff looked at me startled. I guess he thought I was going to drop the subject. “I agree with you Jeff, I just have a hard time spending that kind of money, and besides, it would probably cost as much to ship it back to the city.” I decided then to change the subject, even though I was debating in my head the best way to get back to that shop and purchase the chest for him. “I’m glad you are here with me,” I said as I reached for his hand. “I’m glad I’m here too, and thanks for inviting Patrick and Fred, you made Patrick’s summer.” I wanted to say I only cared what he thought. Instead, I muttered, “I’m glad.”

By the time we made it back to the house, it was almost dusk. We found our guest on the beach in the middle of another barbecue. “Fred spotted us walking towards them then hollered, “Hey you two, just in time the clams are almost ready.” We spent the rest of the night ensconced on the beach enjoying the sunset and bantering back and forth. The next night Patrick persuaded us to go to a night spot he knew. When we entered the Beach Bar, patrons were either

hanging out at the bar mingling or taking part in the live music at the opposite end of the venue. Beck and I being of similar mind, purchased our drinks but decided we also needed food as well. By the time the night was out, Patrick and Fred were drunk, and we found ourselves being their chaperons.

The last day before we had to return to New York, Beck and I decided to join the hungover Patrick and Fred on the beach to get some sun. While they nurse their headaches, we spent the day on Jetski's roaming the water. By mid-afternoon, I needed to get into town before we leave the next morning, so I recommended that we go out and have an early dinner. We chose Cowfish a restaurant within walking distance of the antique shop. Once seated, I came up with a convenient excuse to leave the table and quickly found my way to the antique store to purchase and ship Becks gift. When I returned to the table, Beck looked concern, "Is everything okay?" He asked as I took a seat next to him. "Everything is fine, I said nonchalantly, my

uncle called, and I was talking to him for a few minutes.” My lie seems convincing; we relaxed and enjoyed the rest of the evening.

Later that night I found Beck on the balcony staring out onto the water. Lost in thought, he didn't notice when I walked up to him. I touched his shoulder then ask, “What are you so deep in thought about?” He didn't answer right away; instead, he turned and reached for my lips. At first, the kiss was light, and it quickly turned into a deep probing kiss that took both our breath away. “I'm thinking how happy I am right now and it's because of you,” He whispered against my lips. I pulled him even closer to me before saying, “I'm glad you are happy, that's all I want.” It was my turn to take his lip. This time, I lift him as my mouth penetrated his and walked him to the bed. Kneeling on the bed, I slowly lowered him as I lay on top of him. I raised up onto my elbow and look into his eyes. I could tell he wanted to say something, “What is it?” I asked while running my hand against his cheek and neck. He shook his head, “Nothing,

just make love to me.” I knew he wanted to say more. I needed to say more. At that moment I wanted to tell him I was falling in love with him, but something held me back. I kept thinking of the words my grandmother said, about being scared and how I should act in spite of my fear. I can’t get myself to say the words to Beck because I am afraid he will reject me. Nothing would hurt more than to know the man you loved didn’t love you back.

BECK

Twice today I came close to telling Jeff I’m in love with him, and each time I wiggled out. I don’t know why this is so hard for me. Well, that’s not true, I do; I’m afraid. I don’t think I’ve been afraid of many things in my life. Not the way I fear losing Jeff. Instead of telling him how I felt as he looked down on me, I reached up and kiss him softly on the lips. He knows me well enough to know that something is on my

mind, but as I said, fear is keeping me from sharing how I feel. I reached up and kiss him under his chin, and down his neck while pulling him closer to me. He pulled away slightly and looked into my eyes. "You would tell me if something was wrong right?" He asked in a low voice. I suddenly felt bad for not being able to open up to him, and for allowing him to think something could be wrong. I reached up and held his face with both my hands looked into his eyes and whisper, "I promise, nothing is wrong, please believe me." He kissed me then, softly, reverently, before moving stealthily down my body to remove my shorts, he slowly pulls it off as he kissed up my thigh, my groin, my stomach. He avoided the one place I wanted to feel his warm mouth. I groan in frustration as he kissed my stomach and continued up to my mouth. "What are you doing to me?" I asked in a frustrating tone. He didn't answer as he reached above me for the condom and lube.

This time when he returned to my groin, he took me deep down his throat. I moan from the feel of his tongue as he ran

it up then down again. While his mouth devoured me, his fingers invaded my ass, pushing in deep. My moans grew louder as he touched my prostate which caused me to thrust up into his mouth. I lost my senses as he assaults my hole and continues to practically swallowed my cock. Suddenly he stopped, and I immediately felt the loss. "Baby, please don't stop," I pleaded. He stood on his knees as he pushed my legs still wider and above my head before saying, "I have no intention of stopping." Jeff entered me in one swoop, and I cried out from the intensity. He didn't move as he lingered above me, "Tell me when." He whispered in my ear then move to suck on my collar. The intense pressure on my skin alleviate the profound burn, and I knew I was ready for whatever he planned on doing to me.

I raised my hip, giving him permission to move. He slowly pulled out of me and just as slowly thrust back in. I lost my mind after his fifth slow thrust, and I gutturally moaned as he bottoms out inside of me. Then he stopped with his slow ministrations and bit my ear before saying, "Open your eyes,

I want to see you.” I opened my eyes as he started again with his agonizingly slow thrusts. My ass was on fire as I begged him by saying, “Please,” over and over again. I didn’t know what I was asking of him, all I knew, all I felt, was the slow forward and back movement of his dick as he moved inside me. I lost track of time and my senses before I felt my body tremble beneath him and as I spilled between us. He didn’t stop moving slowly inside of me as I held him close and as his orgasm flow through his body. He fell on top of me, and we stayed that way, him still deep inside of me for many minutes. I was so sated from what he just did to me; I didn’t feel him pull out, or saw him walked to the bathroom. He returned with a wet cloth and slowly wipes away the cum from my stomach. I opened my eyes to see him staring attentively at me. I reached for him, and he returned to the bed and wrapped his body around mine as we fall asleep.

With the morning light streaming through the blinds, I woke before Jeff and I couldn’t help but watch him sleep. I need

to tell him how I feel, but first I have to overcome this lingering fear. I ran the back of my hands along his cheeks as he stirs. He opened his eyes to meet mine and immediately shift his head to my pillow. We stared at each other keenly before he brought his lips to mine. Our sensuous kiss was short-lived when one of our roommates banged loudly on our door. "Why are you banging?" Jeff asked in a sleepy voice. "Good morning to you too sleepy," Patrick called back. "I just wanted to know if we are leaving this morning or this afternoon," He continued. Jeff rolled on his back then call out, "The helicopter leaves at one-thirty." "Thank you very much, sorry for interrupting, you can go back to what you were doing now," Patrick said in a humorous tone. "I think your friend has a sadistic sense of humor." I leaned up on my elbow and pulled Jeff face towards me. "Just ignore him, he thinks he is funny when he is not, let's not talk about him, what do you want to do between now and noon?"

"Can we stay in bed, or just lay out in the sun until its time

to go?"

"Laying out in the sun sounds like a great way to end the weekend, come on, let's put on trunks and go for a swim," I said, as I jumped over him and headed towards the bathroom. "Has anyone ever told you, you have a beautiful ass?" He asked as I walked away. I turned to look at him before saying, "You just did, that's all I care about."

We relaxed by the pool until it was time to catch our ride back to the city. Three weeks later, I was exiting the elevator and walking out of my building when the doorman stopped me. He informs me that a delivery was attempted yesterday and they would be back today and what should they do. I wasn't expecting a package, so I was taken aback by the news. "Did they say what they were delivering?" I asked. The doorman was perplexed that I wasn't informed by the night crew, but he didn't know what was being delivered. "Did they say what time they would be back?" I asked now bewildered. "No, but they came around this time yesterday," He informed me. I decided to go back upstairs work from

home and wait for this mysterious delivery. I was deeply involved with work around noon when the doorman rang to let me know someone was here to make the delivery. "Ask them to wait until I come down?" I told the porter as I head towards the door. I wasn't expecting a package, and if they were delivering to the wrong address, they should know before bringing up whatever they plan to deliver.

I walked into the lobby to find four burly guys waiting around with anxious looks on their faces. "Hi, I'm sorry, but I'm not expecting a delivery," I said to one of them. He pulled out a slip and proceeded to disclose my name and address. I looked at the slip, and sure enough, the package was for me. "Okay," I said, bring your package inside. "Its pretty big do you want us to bring it in through the lobby?" One of them asked. "How big is it?" I asked, more baffled than before. I could tell the guys were getting a little agitated, so I told them to bring the package in through the freight elevator, and I would meet them at the apartment door. I went back upstairs and waited another half hour for

this mysterious package to arrive. When they knocked on my door, and I opened it, I was officially stumped by the monstrous box they were struggling to bring into the apartment. “Do you want us to unpack it, sir?” One of the deliverers asked while huffing and puffing. I bowed my head and watched as they proceeded to remove the encasing. When they were almost there, I immediately recognized the chest Jeff, and I perused at the antique shop. Stunned by what was in front of me, I almost didn’t hear someone say they were done. I snapped out of my daze and offered a tip for the work they just completed. They took the empty box and left me standing in the middle of my apartment staring at what clearly is a gift from Jeff.

Chapter Seventeen

JEFF

BECAUSE OF the plans Beck and I made for our trip to California in a few weeks, I've been working non-stop. When I get home from the hospital, Beck is already in bed and I usually just crawl in with him; and when I wake up, he is gone to work. For weeks we've followed the same routine until last night when I had to go to the hospital for an emergency. My schedule being what it is, I didn't remember my gift to Beck. When I read his text sent hours ago, I was confused. He merely said: Thank you, and I shouldn't have; It took a minute to realize what he was thanking me for. Instead of responding to his text I called. "Hey, I just read your text," I said as he said hello. "Jeff I can't believe you did this, why did you buy it? It must have

cost a small fortune to ship it, and I already know you paid a fortune for it." I let him continue rambling. When he finally didn't say more, I interjected, "You loved it, I saw your face when you were looking at it,"

"I know but... "

"No, but Beck, I wanted to buy it for you." There was silence on the phone before Beck muttered, "Thank you, I did love it, I do love it."

"Good, now where are you going to put it?"

"I was thinking the bedroom, at the foot of the bed."

"That's where I was thinking too." Another comfortable silence developed between us before he asked, "What time are you getting off?"

"I'm going to work through until tomorrow."

"Why? You were called in on an emergency, doesn't this mean you get to leave after the emergency?"

"Yes, it usually does, but remember, we have plans in a few weeks; I have to make sure to compensate for the time I'm going to take. Just think, we will have almost two full weeks

away from work, isn't that something to look forward to?"

"I just miss you—I wake up, and you are fast asleep next to me, but I hate to wake you because I know you are tired. I just miss you." He whispered.

My relationship with Beck wasn't the only one suffering. I've had to turn my uncle down several times to meet for lunch. He decided to come to me since I haven't been able to meet him. I spotted him the moment he walked into the hospital cafeteria. "Well, look, it's my prodigal nephew," he says as he joined me at the table. "I'm sorry Max, I know I've been neglectful. If its any consolation, you are not the only one I've been neglecting." Max suddenly developed a serious expression on his face, "I don't understand why you are killing yourself at this hospital, Jeff. You don't need the money, so please tell me again why you're so fervid."

"I'm going to California with Beck for two weeks, and I don't want Dr. Munch to think I'm not serious about working in the Cardiology unit. I worked hard to get where I am Max, and I don't want Dr. Munch to think I'm not

dedicated." My uncle shook his head as if he understands, but I can tell he didn't agree with me. "The crazy hours will be over soon." To change the subject, I asked, "When are you leaving for California?"

"I'll be there a few days before the wedding, and I know what you are trying to do Jeffrey. We'll change the subject for now, but after your vacation, if you come back to this hospital with the same hours, we are going to talk further." I held my hand up defensively while saying, "I promise Max, no more crazy hours after my vacation. Now tell me, have you spoken to Grans?"

"Of course, I've spoken to her; I think I've spoken to her more than you have lately. She is still considering a roomer. I'm thinking of stopping there before going to California."

"I think that's a good idea, she would love to see you, and maybe you can convince her in person."

"I'll let you know if I decide to go to Jacksonville, now tell me how are things between you and the young Copeland." I couldn't help but smile when Max mentioned Beck, "Things

are good. We haven't seen much of each other in the past few weeks, but we are doing great."

"That's another reason why you need to stop with these crazy hours Jeff. If you are not careful, you could ruin whatever it is that's happening between you two."

"I'm not ruining anything Uncle Max; we've both been working hard with a goal in mind."

"So, things are still going strong between you and Beck?" I shook my head. "Have you told him you love him yet?"

"What? Have you been talking to Grans about me?" Uncle Max started to laugh, "Yes, Geraldine may have mentioned she thought you were in love."

"Can you stop talking about me with Grans? And, my private life is none of yours or Grans business so lay off." My request seems to make Max laugh even harder. We sat and talked for another hour before I had to return to work. The next few weeks flew by. Before we knew it Alex's wedding was a week and a half away and we were about to leave for California. After leaving the hospital, I arrived home to find

Beck asleep in my apartment on the couch. I eased up to him and watch him as he slept. He stirs and opens his eyes to catch me staring at him. "Hey, you are home," He said sleepily. I slipped out of my shoes, climbed over the couch and ease my body next to him, spooning him on the couch. Our legs and arms entwined, we held each other. For the first time in weeks, we are not reaching out for a body that's fast asleep.

"Are you sure you packed enough for two weeks?" Beck asked while standing at my bedroom door watching me struggle to zip my suitcase."Are you going to stand there? Or can you come over here and help me." Laughing, Beck walked towards me but still didn't attempt to help. "I think you need to put some of your things in my suitcase since I don't have to carry as many clothes as you." I stopped struggling with the suitcase and sat on it facing him. "What will your parents think?" Beck started to laugh before I finished my thought, "Babe, my parents won't care that we

shared a suitcase much less a room.” I looked at him in disbelief, “Are you sure about that, tell me again how many men you’ve brought home to meet them.” Beck looked at me intently before answering, “None, I’ve never brought anyone home. They met Noah because they came here to New York one Christmas.” I eased off the suitcase and joined him on the edge of the bed. Sitting close to him, I reached over and kissed him lightly on the lips before asking, “So how do you know how they will feel about me sleeping in the same bed with their son.”

Beck pushed me to lay on my back, then straddled me. “I want you to trust me,” He whispered in my ear before looking into my eyes. “If I thought my parents would have issues with us I wouldn’t have invited you to come home with me. You are not sleeping in a room by yourself when we get there, and my parents and brother are going to love you, trust me.” I reached up and pull Beck down onto me. I kissed him deeply until he pulled away from me. He jumped off me and the bed, “ If we don’t stop right now we

are going to miss our flight, I'm going to get a bigger suitcase to transfer my things, then you can put some of your clothes with mine." I took a deep breath and laid on the bed a few more minutes to calm my half-hard dick. When he came back with his suitcase, we work together to repack our things. It wasn't long before we were in an Uber heading to the airport. "Why are you so quiet?" Beck asked as we wait to go through security. I shrugged my shoulder because I didn't know how to tell him I was feeling a little jittery about meeting his family. Every step we take from this point on leads to meeting Beck's family, and I would be lying if I said I wasn't a little apprehensive.

BECK

"I just want you to promise me you won't embarrass me when we get there," I said to my brother as he laughed hysterically. "I'll make no promises, and I can't wait to meet

him.”

“I can’t wait for you to meet him too. And, don’t be late coming to the airport.”

“Hey, I can’t help it if California’s traffic is a killer.”

“Just give yourself enough time to get there.”

“Hey, Beck, does he know?”

“Does who know what?”

“Does, Dr. Jeff know you are in love with him?” I sat down hard on the bed and stared at the phone until I heard my brother say, hello, again and again. “What makes you think I’m in love with him?” I finally asked. “Am I wrong?” We were both quiet on the line for a while before I finally found the right words. “I can’t talk to you about this Alex, not because I don’t want to, it’s just that I need to figure out how to talk to Jeff before I’m screaming on top of my lungs how I feel about him. Does that make any sense to you?”

“Yeah, it makes sense; I can’t wait to meet him.”

“I should go, we still have packing to do, and our flight leaves in a few hours. I’ll see you at the airport and don’t be

late.” Alex laughed before hanging up the phone, he and I both know he will be late. I’m glad Alex didn’t force the subject of my feelings for Jeff. How can I tell my brother I’m in love with Jeff when I can’t find the courage to speak to Jeff himself? I opened his apartment door and headed towards the bedroom where I can hear him swearing. I stood at the door and watched as he struggled with closing his suitcase. I want so much to tell him how I feel, but I’m so afraid he doesn’t feel the same. I also know deep down my fears are unwarranted. Every time he touches me, look into my eyes, I can feel his abiding feelings for me. As I stood at the door and watched him, I know in my heart that part of the problem isn’t telling Jeff I love him. It's fear of what will happen once we’ve touted our feelings.

After securing both our homes, we finally made it to the airport. Jeff has been unusually quiet. Without asking, I already know he is worried about meeting my parents. The truth is, I’m a little concern too. I’ve never bought another man home, yet here I am bringing Jeff to meet them. What if

Jeff is right and they don't like him? A stupid thought, because my parents see the good in everyone. I want them to see more in Jeff though. I want them to see his kindness, his sincerity, and to know my feelings for him are real. "My turn to ask why you're so quiet?" He asked as we sat and waited for the boarding announcement. I turn and smile at him, trying to decide what to say. I don't want to tell him how I'm feeling; he is already nervous enough. I couldn't tell him I was nervous too. "Do you know I hate flying?" I asked instead of answering him. He laughed, then took my hand. "Do you know what the probability is of our plane crashing?"

"I don't care; I still hate the idea of being so far up in the sky with nothing between us but metal." Jeff brought my hand to his lips before saying, "Don't worry, I'll be right beside you. You can hold my hand through the whole flight if that will help." I could tell he wanted to laugh but was holding it in. I started to laugh before saying, "Don't laugh at me." We both guffawed which ease whatever tension I was feeling. An

hour later, we were boarded and taxiing on the runway. Before long we were in the air and one step closer to my home away from home.

“What time did your brother say he would be here?” Jeff asked as we walked towards baggage claims. “He said he would be here around now, but I know my brother will be late, he will use the excuse that traffic was heavy when in reality, he didn’t give himself enough time to get to the airport. He does the same thing every time.”

“I suppose renting a car is out of the question?” Jeff asked laughingly. “No, we have enough cars at the house, trust me. My brother does this because he knows it pisses me off.” As we retrieve our bags, we exited the airport expecting to sit and wait for Alex to arrive. Imagine the shock of seeing my brother parked, waiting for us with a broad smile on his face. “Is that your brother?” Jeff asked, “The one you

were convinced would be late?" He lamented as we walked towards him. "I can't believe you," I said as I walked up to him and hug him. He hugged me back, but his eyes were on Jeff. "Hey Doc, it's nice to meet you," He said before I could officiate an introduction. "Jeff, allow me to introduce you to my little brother. Alex, this is Jeffrey Corbin." Alex held out his hand before I even finish with the introduction. "It's good to meet you Doc, for two reasons, first because you saved my life and I get to say thank you, and because you apparently makes my big brother happy and I get to say thanks for that too." Jeff stepped forward and took my brother's hand before saying, "No thanks are necessary for both instances, and I'm thrilled to meet you, Alex." Well, let's load up and get out of here before we get a ticket, I said to break the silence enfolding us. We packed the suitcases in the back of the jeep and was on our way.

"So how are things at the house?" I asked a few minutes into the drive. "How do you think? For the past few weeks, it has been a madhouse. Between the planners coming and going,

the preparation for the rehearsal dinner, which mom has turned into a party, and the bachelorette party and the bachelor party, I swear all I want to do is flee. But, I keep thinking about what you said to me, and I'm trying to take things in stride, knowing that the mayhem is only temporary. Jeff and I both start to laugh at the dismay in my brother's voice. I pat him on the shoulder while saying, "You are right, it is only temporary, just think, this time next week you will be married and on your honeymoon in Fiji.

After driving in stop and go traffic through most of the commute, we finally made it to Laguna Beach and pulled into my parents' driveway. As Alex said, it was a madhouse. He looked at me with resignation on his face before getting out of the Jeep and disappearing at the side of the house. Jeff and I still sitting in the car, I turned to him, "Are you ready to meet the rest of my crazy family?" I asked with a smile on my face. He looked around at the commotion happening outside the vehicle before saying, "As ready as I'll ever be." I opened the jeep door and stepped outside before Jeff joined

me. We were in the middle of taking our luggage out of the back when my mother called my name from behind us. “Beckett Copeland, you are home.” She said as she practically ran towards me. I held my mother tight as my eyes connected with Jeff’s. I could tell his nerves was getting the best of him. “Mom, I want you to meet someone,” I whispered in her ears as she continued to squeeze the hell out of me. She pulled away and turned towards Jeff. “Mom, this is Jeffrey Corbin — “ She didn’t let me finish before walking over to Jeff and pulling him into a hug while saying, “The man who saved my son’s life. How could I possibly forget you?” She asked while continuing to hold him. “It’s very nice to meet you, Mrs. Copeland.” My mom pulled away while saying, “Don’t call me Mrs. Copeland, my name is Beth, and I am glad to meet you too. I hear you are also responsible for making my son here very happy.” I put my hand on my mom's shoulder before saying, “Your son is standing right here so let’s not talk about me as if I’m not here.” My mom turned and looked at me sternly, “Beckett

Copeland, I gave birth to you, and I can talk about you any way I wish." I held my hands up defensively while edging towards her. I lift her into another tight hug. "I'm delighted to see you, mom."

Chapter Eighteen

JEFF

EVERY TIME I think I've moved on from not having a relationship with my mother and father, something happens to remind me of what I've missed. Watching Beck with his mom, my heart ached for what I've never had with my mother. The Copeland's home was exactly what I expected, opulent, comfortable and filled with love. I watched as Beck greet his father, a tall grey haired man with recognizable blue eyes and an infectious smile. I didn't get to go unnoticed for long before Beck eyes scanned the room for me. "Dad, I would like to re-introduce you to Jeffrey Corbin, I believe the two of you have already spoken on the phone." "Yes, Jeffrey and I have spoken; It's nice to put a face to the voice," He said while extending his hand. "It's nice to meet

you, Mr. Copeland.”

“Richard will be fine Jeff, no need for formality.” Beck’s father stared at me intently, “I understand you are also responsible for my youngest son being alive today.” I didn’t know how to respond to him; I didn’t want to sound obtuse by saying I was just doing my job. Luckily for me, Beck must have sensed my unease. “Dad, did you go to the golf course already? Or, are you headed there?” Just like that, the conversation shifted, and I couldn’t be more grateful for the man standing next to me. “I’m headed to the course now, do you want to come and play a few rounds with me?”

“No thanks, that’s your thing, besides I want to show Jeff around.”

“Suit yourself; you don’t know what you are missing.” He said as he walked towards the door. “Jeff, I’m glad you’re here, and I look forward to getting to know you,” He uttered as he closed the door behind him. Alex walked over to me and patted me on the back, “Don’t be intimidated by my dad, he is a pussycat.” I didn’t get a chance to respond,

because Beth interjected, “Beck, why don’t you and Jeff go and settle in, then come down and get something to eat.”

“This house is huge,” I said to Beck as we walked down a long hallway. “Yes, it is, my mom and dad, love this house, just like your grandmother loves hers, I don’t think we could get them to downgrade if we tried.”

“This is the house you were raised in?”

“Yes, born at the hospital not far from here and raised right here.”

“So, is your room filled with memorabilia of when you were a kid?”

“This whole house is filled with shit from Alex and my adolescent years. By the time we leave to go home, you will know more than I want you to know, especially if you are talking to my mother.”

“I can’t wait to talk to her and learn more about you.”

“That won’t be fair, we visited your grandmother, and she didn’t embarrass you, but you want my mom to embarrass

me?" laughing, I shook my head as we walked into Beck's bedroom. "This isn't the way your room looked when you were a kid," I said, as I noticed the modern design.

"I didn't say the room would be the same, only that it's the room I've slept in since I was a kid." "This is some room to have at a young age, look at the view," I said while pointing out the terrace doors towards the ocean. Beck turn and look at his room, "I know, I was a lucky kid, even though you probably couldn't have told me that when I was thirteen."

I walked up to Beck and circle him with my arms. "When I was thirteen, you couldn't tell me shit either." Beck relaxed in my arms and placed his forehead against mine. "I'm glad you're here."

"I'm glad I'm here too. I'm starved, can we go and get something to eat?" Beck laughed while easing out of my arms. He took my hand as we retraced our steps and returned to the kitchen to find his mom on the grill. "Mom, you want me to man the grill?" Beck asked as we step out onto the terrace. "I'm almost done, sit down, where is your

brother?”

“I don’t know; I thought he was down here.”

“He’s probably picking up Georgie.” As Beck and his mother continue to talk, I took the time to browse the backyard of the house. On the left side was a big white tent that I’m sure would be the location for the rehearsal dinner. Even with the gigantic tent in the yard, it didn’t take away from the massive backyard overlooking the ocean. Beck walked up next to me, and look in the direction I was looking, “This is a great view,” I said while entwining our fingers. “Boys, come and eat, I know you must be hungry.”

By the time we finish eating, Alex returned with his fiancée. We relaxed by the pool as Georgina and Alex shared their plans leading up to the wedding day. It was dusk when Richard returned and joined us. He took a seat next to me, look at me as if he was on a mission, then said, “So, tell me about yourself young man.” In my whole life, I’ve never felt more daunted. “Are you from London like your uncle?” I

took a deep breath then proceeded to answer any questions he may have. "I was born in London, but raised in New York, sir."

"Don't call me sir, Richard, and how did you end up in New York if you were born in London?"

"Dad, are you asking Jeff a thousand questions?" Beck says as he walked up and took a seat opposite me. "It's okay Beck," I said, as I turned to his father and continued. "My mom was from New York, and she met and fell in love with my dad who lived in London. She followed him back to London and planned to marry, but my grandfather had other plans for his son and broke them up. A few months later my mom found out she was pregnant with me and that's how I ended up with dual citizenship." Richard shook his head in understanding before saying, "It sounds like your mom and dad didn't get a happily ever after."

"No, they didn't. My mom died of cancer when I was six, and my father died in a car crash." You could cut the silence that developed around the table with a knife. Beck reached

for my hands under the table and squeezed it for reassurance. "Who raised you?" Beck mother suddenly asked. "I was raised from the time I was six by my grandmother," I said with a smile on my face. "So you have your grandmother and your uncle?" Richard said while patting me on the shoulder. "Yes, I do, they are my family." "Why did you decide to become a doctor?" Alex suddenly asked. Beck intervened, "Enough with the questions please, can we talk about something else, like why you decided to become a public defender and not work for profit." Alex childishly stuck his tongue out at his brother before saying, "Let's not start again about my need to give back to the community."

"Jeff, we are sorry if we brought back memories you would rather leave behind."

"It's okay Beth; I'm with your son, it's natural to want to know more about me." That was the last serious conversation we had for the rest of the evening. Eventually, Beck's parents excused themselves and disappeared inside

the house. "Do you two want to drive into town?" Alex asked. Beck turned to look at me but didn't bother asking me. "No, I think we are tired, let's make plans for tomorrow. What's happening in town?"

"There is a festival happening all week on the San Clemente Pier. Maybe we can go tomorrow night. Notice I said tomorrow night because during the day we are having a rehearsal for the rehearsal dinner." Alex said, in a pained voice. "You poor baby," Georgina said as she hugged her fiancé. "Babe, I just can't wait for this wedding to be over with."

"You mean you can't wait to marry me, right?"

"Oh, of course, babe that's what I meant." We all started to laugh as Alex attempt to recover from his blunder. "We are going to go, are you sure you don't want to do something?" Alex asked as he is standing and pulling up Georgina with him. This time, I was the one to answer, "Tomorrow; definitely." Beck and I watched as Alex and his fiancée disappeared at the side of the house. Beck turned to me and

asked, "Do you want to take a walk on the beach?" I reached over and pulled Becks head toward mine, "All I want right now is us naked and in bed, is that okay?"

BECK

I saw the sadness in Jeff's eyes as he talked about his mom and dad. I wanted nothing more than to end the questions my parents directed at him and take him away from the discomfort he must be feeling. It took every bit of self-control I had to sit there and not react like a lion protecting her cubs. When my brother started to ask questions, that's when I knew I've had enough. I couldn't let them continue to dissect him further. I was glad my brother understood my interruption and didn't press further. It was late, and I breathe a sigh of relief when my parents said goodnight to us. It was also easy to turn my brother down when he asked us to go into town. The truth was, I wanted to be alone with

Jeff; I wanted to hear him tell me he was okay. I pulled out of his arms and took his hand as I'm standing, without saying another word, we walked the distance to my room. Once inside, I stepped onto the balcony knowing Jeff would follow. I turned with my back facing the ocean and reached for him, and he came willingly. Wrapping my arms around him, I asked, "Are you okay?" He wrapped his arms around me, and I could feel the breath leave his body as he inhaled and exhaled deeply. "I'm fine, I know we haven't talked about my mom and dad, there is still so much we don't know about each other." I looked up into his eyes, "You're right, but there is a lot we do know about each other; the rest will happen when the time is right."

Jeff sheathed my face with his hand and took my lips in a soft, chaste kiss. "I think I want to tell you about my mom and dad," He whispered against my lips. I shook my head and walked over to the lounge and sat. He immediately came over to join me." I lost track of time, as Jeff told me about his mom and dad and how they met, and the tragedy

that befalled them. I listened as he talked about the mom he could barely remember and the dad he never met. When he finished speaking, I knew words of reassurance wasn't what Jeff needed. I straddle him and kiss him delicately at first, then deeply. He stood, and I wrapped my legs around him as he walked to the bed. He sat on the bed and pull me closer as he took command of my mouth. When he pulled away, I wanted to tell him I was in love with him. Instead of sharing my heart, I reached for his mouth again, as he began to pull my shirt over my head. He then turned and practically threw me on the bed as he ripped off my Jeans and tee shirt. He looked down on me reverently before he began to slowly remove his clothes. Our eyes connected, before he lowered himself onto me, covering my body with his while burying his face into my neck. I wrapped my arms and legs around him and held him. I knew at that moment, what he needed was the connection of our bodies. After a while, Jeff eased off of me and pulled me close as he spoons me. We fell asleep sometime later, never saying another

word, as he held me close.

The next morning, I awaken the way any self-respecting gay man would like to wake up in the morning. With wet lips sliding up and down my dick. I thread my hands through his hair as I lose myself in ecstasy, as his mouth ravished my dick. It wasn't long before I gave in to the urge to thrust into his mouth. Sensing my need, Jeff let me fuck his mouth until I spilled down his throat. I was weightless, recovering from my intense orgasm, as he kissed up my body. He reached for my mouth and proceeded with a scorchingly wet kiss, allowing me to taste my essence as he sucked on my tongue. "Your turn," I said, as I moved down underneath him. Jeff shifts his weight to the side as I continued my descent. I palmed his already hard leaking cock, brought my tongue to its tip and lick the leaking cum. Jeff moaned as he opened his leg to welcome my ministrations. I kissed down his ample dick and reached for one of his balls and suck it into my mouth. Jeff's cum continues to drizzle from his dick onto my face as I continue to suck on his sack. I suck one

ball, then the next, before moving to his dick. I licked up to the tip then tried my best to swallow it down my throat. Holding its base, I moved up then down, again and again, pushing his dick down my throat. On my fifth deep throat, he came deep down my throat. I pulled off his dick and lay my forehead against his groin already spent from our morning activities. After a while, Jeff reached for me and pulled me up onto him. "Morning," He whispered in my ear as I lay my head on his shoulder. "Morning," I said as I kissed from his collarbone up to his lips. I laid on top of Jeff and looked into his eyes, "Ready for the day?" Jeff laughs softly before shaking his head.

By the time we arrived downstairs, mom and dad were seated for breakfast, "Good morning you two," Mom said as we approached the table. I walked over to her and kissed her on the cheek as we both said, "Good morning. Where is Alex?" I asked when I didn't see him sitting at the table. "He is over there?" My father said, pointing to the tent. "There is some issue with the placement of the tent he is

trying to deal with.”

“What’s the issue?” Before dad could answer, mom, walked over and put her hand on my shoulder, “Beck, you and Jeff go get your breakfast, it’s in the oven. You can go and help your brother when you are finished eating.”

“Dad, what’s on your agenda for today?” I asked as we returned to the table with our plates filled with pancakes and bacon. “I have a few business calls I need to make, and then I’m headed to the club for a few rounds. Jeff, do you play golf?”

“I’ve played a little.”

“You have?” I asked, stunned by his answer.

“Yes, a little.”

“Do you want to come and play a few rounds with me?”

Richard asked.

“It’s been a long time since I’ve played Richard, I probably should practice first before going a few rounds with you.”

“Nonsense, let Beck and his brother deal with their issues, come with me to the club and show me what you can do.” I

started to come up with an excuse for Jeff when he accepted my father's invitation. Shocked, I looked at Jeff with a confused look. He shrugged his shoulders and smiled as he continued to eat his breakfast. "Jeff, I know you don't have golf shoes, but do you have sneakers?"

"I do, sir, but I think I would fit Beck's." Ninety minutes later, Jeff and my father left for the county club and I walked across the lawn to find my brother. I tried my best not to think about the conversation Jeff, and my father will have during their rounds of golf.

"Where is Jeff?" Alex asked as I approached. "You are not going to believe it; he is headed to the club with dad to play golf." Alex started to laugh hysterically. "Are you serious?" He asked through his delirium. "How did that happen?" He finally calmed down and asks. "Dad just asks him, and he said yes."

"Why didn't you go with them?"

"Because dad suggested that I come and help you. What's

going on anyway?"

"The stupid Event Planner wants to turn the tent so that it's facing the ocean after setting it up this way. Now we are going to have to get the company to come back to move the damn thing."

"What does Georgie want?"

"She is not sure, and she is talking to the stupid Event Planner now. I'm waiting for her to tell me whether I need to contact the tent company. Now everything is at a standstill until the two of them debate the best placement of the tent, which should have been decided before now if you ask me." My brother sounds miserable, and I felt for him, but I know he loves the woman he is about to marry. "Alex, it doesn't matter if the tent company have to come and move the tent. It's not as if we can't afford it, so just relax and let them debate it." My brother took a deep breath then suddenly snickered. "I can't believe Jeff is playing golf with dad and you let him go, are you crazy?" I laughed before agreeing with my brother that I may have lost my mind.

Chapter Nineteen

JEFF

“HOW DID you meet my son Jeff?” Richard asked as we walked the green, headed towards our first tee. I couldn’t imagine telling Beck’s father how we initially met, but a half-truth in this instance is better than the whole truth. “We met in an airport lounge in New York. We were both headed to California on separate flights. Beck recognized me from when I came into the waiting room to tell you about Alex.” “I don’t remember anything about that night other than being told that my son was still alive. Leave it to Beck with his photographic memory to also remember the face of the man responsible for keeping Alex alive.” We reached the first boundary, and Richard suggested that I take the first putt. As expected, my first approach was less than stellar.

Richard put his hand on my shoulders to reassure me and proceed to show me how it's done.

We were walking again when Richard continued our conversation. "I'm sure you know that Beck was in a relationship with another man." I knew Richard was referring to Noah, but I didn't want to share what I knew, just in case Beck didn't tell his father everything that happened between him and Noah. "We met Noah just once, and it was only because Beth and I decided to surprise Beck with a visit. I'm convinced that otherwise, Beck wouldn't have introduced him to us." Richard stopped walking then turn to me to make his next point. "Imagine our surprise, when he told us he was bringing you home to meet us."

I didn't know what to say to him as he looked me in the eyes, so I stood my ground and returned his stare. Finally, he turned and continued to walk the fairway, I took a deep breath as I turned and walked with him. Richard placed the next tee and motioned me to take the shot. I was in the

middle of hitting the ball when his next question caused me to drive it off the green. "Are you in love with my son?" I turned to him, I'm sure red-faced, and didn't say a word. I must have been silent too long because Richard asked, "Are you going to answer my question?" I eased up to him and practically whispered, "I haven't told him." Richard again stared at me intently, then turn to hit his ball towards its destination.

I stood next to him, my mind in a frenzy. I thought he would want to talk about his son; it makes sense that he would want to make sure I don't hurt him. I wasn't expecting him to look into my soul and see what I felt for his son. His ball landed closer to his destination than mine did. "I think we should try and retrieve your ball, what do you think?" He asked with a broad smile. We walked to where my ball landed, and we both try to find it. After searching for a few minutes, we gave up and continue the game. "Jeff, can I say something to you?" He suddenly asked. "You can say anything to me, sir; I mean Richard." We continued to walk

for a few more minutes before he finally spoke. "I'm a good judge of character, and I can tell you are a good man. I also know, because my son wouldn't bring you within an inch of his family if he didn't trust you. What I'm trying to say Jeff is this: If you love my son, you should tell him. Don't wait for the right moment, because that may never come. Think of your mom and dad. Don't you think they would have given anything to be together? Life is so short Jeff, anything can happen, be straightforward with my son and tell him how you feel."

"What if he doesn't feel the same?" I asked almost to myself. Richard turns to face me, "If you think my son doesn't return your feelings you've lost your mind. Jeff, do you realize my son brought you home to meet his family? Don't you recognize what a big deal this one simple act is?" I didn't answer Richard; I didn't need to, and I don't think he was expecting an answer. We continue to play for several hours. For me, those few hours were painful, because my golf playing skills were less than adequate. By the time we made

it back to the house, Beck, his brother, and fiancée were there waiting for me. Beck walked across the lawn to greet us. "How was the game?" He asked as he walked closer towards me. "Your father whipped my ass." Beck and Alex look at each other in disbelief. "You must be bad," Alex whispered as Richard walked away. "I heard that Richard says before walking towards the house. Beck and Alex laughed as I looked on in disbelief. "Did my father tire you out, or do you want to go to San Clemente Pier with us?" Beck asked as he encircled me with his arms. I lean into him as he kissed my forehead, "I'm not tired, let's go." "Hey you lovebirds, what are we doing? Town or not?" "We are coming, give Jeff a minute to change." "Good, let's take the Jeep, Beck you can drive." An hour later we were on our way to the Pier.

After spending half the day and most of the night at the fair, you would think I would be fast asleep. I couldn't sleep, but

and I had the urge to go for a walk on the beach. Beck was fast asleep, and I didn't want to wake him; I eased away from him, pull on my shorts and tee, and quietly walked out of the house towards the water. The private beach was tranquil, the only sound was the splash of the waves on the sand. I stepped closer to the water as my thoughts dwell on Beck and his family. What he has with his family, is what I wished I had with parents I never met or barely remember. Still, I can't negate my aunt and everything she did for me. Because of her, I know what it is to love and be loved, to Love. I'm so in love with Beck, and I'm so afraid to tell him how I feel. I know Richard believes Becks' feelings are the same, but what if he is wrong? I've debated that one point so many times this past week. Lost in thoughts of Beck I almost didn't notice him walking towards me. It was dark, and I should have questioned who was walking towards me, but I knew it was him. I turn to face him as he came closer. "It occurred to me as I'm coming out here that maybe you needed space and I shouldn't have come." He said when he

was arms-length away from me. "I don't need space; I just couldn't sleep, so I came out to take a walk."

"Why didn't you wake me?" I shrug my shoulders, as he invaded my space and put his hand on my waist. "Are you okay?" He whispered in my ears as he held me. "I'm fine. My mind is just filled with thoughts right now."

"Do you want to talk about it?" I pulled myself out of his arms and took a seat on the sand; Beck immediately sat beside me. We sat silently, not speaking, Beck's chin on my shoulders. My heart was beating out of my chest. I couldn't ask for a better moment to tell Beck how I feel. The urge to tell him was never stronger; Beck didn't say a word as we sat close. I knew he was patiently waiting for me to say something. "Do you know how lucky you are?" I finally whisper. He raised his head off my shoulder to look at me. I knew he was wondering what I was talking about. "Your parents, your brother, do you know how lucky you are?" I repeated. Beck shook his head to acknowledge that he understood my question, he didn't say anything for a few

minutes. "I know," He finally said in a hushed tone. "My family and I are close, we always have been. We love each other, so yes, I know how lucky I am." He put his chin back on my shoulders, and I lean my head against his. "I feel lucky too you know." He started to move his head, but I stopped him by putting my hand on his cheek. "Since the day I met you, I've felt lucky. You walked into my life, and everything changed." I could tell he wanted to say something so I waited. "Has it changed for the better?" He murmured. "Yes, more than better, I feel as if my life is in a good place right now and I think it's because of you." He raised his head again and this time I didn't stop him, but I covered his lip with my finger when he started to speak. "I think it's because of you. You are the best thing that has ever happened to me Beck." I need to say something to you, and I want you to know you don't have to say anything, In fact, I prefer you didn't say anything. He held my wrist as I asked, "Beck do you understand?" He shook his head, and at that moment, my chest swelled as I uttered the words I've felt for

so long. "I'm in love with you Beck."

BECK

The moment I opened my eyes I knew he wasn't in bed with me. I called for him, but he didn't answer. I noticed the balcony doors were open so I walked onto it and saw him standing on the beach staring into the darkness. I was walking down the steps towards the beach when I suddenly thought he may want to be alone. I was about to turn back and return to the house when he turned around to face me. I tentatively started to walk towards him. As dark as it was, I sensed his sadness. "It occurred to me you may need space, and I shouldn't have come," I said as I got closer. He said he couldn't sleep, but I knew it was more than that. After a while, we sat on the beach, and neither of us spoke as we look out onto the blackened water. Finally, he began to share his thoughts. It didn't surprise me when he mentioned

the relationship I had with my family. My heart beat erratically when he told me he had something to say to me. I didn't expect him to say the words he uttered. My head was spinning as he eased away from me, stood, and walked towards the water. That's when I realized he thinks I don't return his affections. I stand and walk towards him, grabbed his arm and turned him to face me. I was suddenly mad. Angry because he thinks I don't love him too; In the dark, I saw it in his eyes.

"Are you expecting me to say I don't love you? Is that why you prefer that I don't say anything?" I didn't wait for him to answer, I continue to speak. "You are a fool if you think I don't love you too Jeffrey Corbin, a damn fool." I turned to walk away, but he grabbed me and pulled me so that our bodies melded with each other. We didn't speak; we just stared at each other. I pushed at his chest to escape him again, but he held me tight. "Say it again," He whispered. I pouted, I couldn't help myself. I looked away from him as he kissed the side of my head before repeating the words. "I

love you so much, Beckett Copeland. Please don't be angry with me because I am insecure and afraid you might not return the intense feelings I have for you. Please." He kissed my forehead, and I lean into the kiss, as I wrapped my arms around him and buried my head in the crook of his neck. "I can't fault you for your insecurity. I was feeling the same way. I wasn't a hundred percent sure you felt the same way." He pulled away slightly and encircled my face with his hands. "I'm sorry I scared you."

"I'm sorry I doubted you. I love you so much." In the dark, on the deserted beach, Jeff and I held each other after confessing our love for each other. "Let's walk," He finally whispered. We walked hand in hand, on the empty beach until the sun peaked above the horizon.

"Good morning!" my mom says as we walked into the house hours later. "The two of you are up early." She continued. "We decided to watch the sunrise," Jeff said as we entered the house.

“The sunrise is beautiful, isn’t it? Do you two want coffee? It’s ready.” Jeff walked towards the coffee as my mom gave me a worried look. I walked up to her and hug her while reassuring her that everything was alright. My father picked that moment to walk into the kitchen. “Well, good morning, the two of you are up early.”

“ Jeff and Beck decided to watch the sunrise.” My mom shared, as my dad walked towards the coffeemaker. He reached for a cup while looking intently at Jeff. As he poured the coffee, he literally knocked me off my feet when he said, “So, You finally told him how you feel. Did he say he didn’t love you?” He asked while looking at Jeff.

“Richard!” My mom exclaimed, “Why are you putting Jeff on the spot like that, leave him alone.” Jeff started to laugh, “It’s okay Beth, no Richard, he didn’t say he didn’t love me.”

“Told you.” He said as he walked out of the kitchen and as my mom and I stared at him amazed by his comment. I finally turned to Jeff and asked, “When did you talk to my father about us?” Jeff smiled, shrugged his shoulder and

continue to sip his coffee. My mom turns to us and laugh; she didn't say anything as she walked towards the fridge and began to remove items to make breakfast.

Jeff and I excused ourselves with plans to shower and change and maybe get some more sleep. The moment we walked into the bedroom and closed the door, Jeff grabbed me and pulled me close. "I need you." He whispers against my lips. "I'm right here." Jeff pulled me with him as he walked back towards the bed. I reached under his tee shirt and ran my hands up over his warm skin as our kiss grew in intensity. When we reached the bed, Jeff turns and push me onto the bed, coming down with me, as our tongue continues to battle for dominance. Suddenly he stopped kissing me and look down into my eyes, "I love you." He whispered as I pulled his shirt over his head. "I love you too. Now take me, before my brother gets here and start banging on our door." Jeff laughed as his lips came down on mine again. It wasn't long before the kiss grew more profound and intense.

After a while, Jeff eased off of me and began to pull my shorts and brief off. I pulled my tee shirt over my head, and unzip Jeff's shorts, desperate for us to be naked, to feel skin against skin. Jeff stands, and finish the job of removing his clothes, then he kneels onto the bed towering over me, as he looked at my naked body. Finally, he reached for the lube and condom stashed in the drawer and dropped them onto the bed. I reached for the Condom and held it in my hand before saying, "I think we can stop using these, I've only been with you since we met and I took a test after Noah." Jeff lowered his head onto my forehead then said, " I'm clean too. I took the test months ago, and it's been just you since we met." Jeff turn and sit with his back on the headboard. "Come here and straddle me." My body trembled from his words, as I raised up onto my knees and crawl towards him. Our dicks were dripping with cum as they touched. We both breathe deeply as I lean my head onto his shoulder and as Jeff grab our dicks and massaged them up and down. "Ahhh, that feels so good," I managed

to whisper in the crook of Jeffs' neck. He used his left hand to grab my buttocks and pull me forward so that our dicks were even more aligned. He reached behind me and inserted a finger into my ass as he persists with his ministrations on our dicks. As he pushed another finger into my ass and continued his slippery wet massage, my head began to spin. I closed my eyes lost in the sensation Jeff is delivering to my body.

I didn't notice when he stop paying attention to our dicks and continue to focus on my ass. He inserted a third finger, and I groan from the intensity of his invasion. "You are ready, come down on me." I took the lube, coated his dick, then slowly lowered my buttocks onto his dick. I groan as I continue to slowly move down his big shaft, the feeling of him as he filled me was intense. "Go slow baby," Jeff whisper as I stopped to allow my body to adjust. Jeff raised his head off the headboard and pull me down and took my lips in a deep bruising kiss. I started to move again down his shaft; I groaned in Jeff's mouth as I bottom out. "Are you

okay baby?" I looked into his eyes, and nod my head to let him know I was okay.

After a minute, I lift my ass half way up his shaft and slide down again. After repeating the action several more times, I began to move up to the tip of his dick and slam by ass down again. We were both lost in ecstasy groaning from the feel of our sexual act. Jeff took my neglected dick in hand and began to massage it as I rode him harder and harder. It wasn't long before Jeff spilled his seed into me. Following right behind him, ropes and ropes of my cum shoot onto Jeff's stomach and chest. Spent, I fell forward and onto the cum, I sprayed all over him.

Chapter Twenty

JEFF

BECK FELL asleep after our lovemaking, I, on the other hand, was wide awake. As I watched him sleep, my mind wonders to last night and our confessions on the beach. My heart beats erratically as I think of the moment he told me he loved me. I can't help but smile, knowing he shares my feelings. In my whole life, I never knew this is how love would feel. Thinking back to my infatuation with Jax, I now know with certainty that my feelings for Jax were a brotherly one because it feels nothing like this. I slowly ease off the bed, careful not to wake Beck, and walked to the bathroom. Glimpsing at myself in the mirror, I smiled. I like what I see looking back at me. I love the direction my life is going. I don't think my life would feel as complete if Beck wasn't in

it. I started the shower and stepped into the warmth of the spraying water, I closed my eyes and when I opened them, standing at the door was the man I love, watching me. "Are you just going to stand there and watch? Or are you going to join me?" I asked as I opened the shower door. Beck walked into the shower and straight into my arms. We held each other without saying a word.

A week later preparation for the rehearsal dinner was in overdrive. Even though Beth catered the event and the wedding planner and her crew were on hand, it seems there were countless projects Beth and Georgie needed help to complete. We were busy helping to set up tables under the tent when I saw my uncle chatting with Richard on the back veranda. "Did you know your uncle was arriving today?" Beck asked as he walked up to me and gaze in the direction I was looking. "No, I haven't spoken to him in a week. Let's go and see what they are up to." I said as we walked towards them. "I'm beginning to wonder what my father and your uncle have up their sleeves. I feel as if it's more than

just buying property in New York.”

“I think men like your father and my uncle don’t always click with others and when they find someone they like, they tend to become fast friends.” Beck didn’t get a chance to respond to my comment because Beth notice we were walking away and called to us, “Where are you going?”.

“Mom, we will be back, we are just going up to the house to say hello to Jeff’s uncle.”

“Can’t the two of you finish setting up the tables before heading up to the house,” She said as she walked towards us. “Mom, you are working us into the ground, we are just taking a break.” I laughed as I watched Beth pursed her lips, ready to give her son a piece of her mind. I decided in that instance to quell her onslaught. “Beth we can finish the tables, it’s not a problem.” I turned to Beck and gave him a look to let him know to back down. “Thank you, Jeff I was about to give my son a piece of my mind,” She said as she walked past us. “Where are you going?” Beck asked as she walked towards the house. “I’m going to say hello to Jeff’s

uncle." I laughed as Beck turn to look at me then at his mom as she walked towards the house. "I pulled his hand to stop him from following her. "You are so much like your mom, do you know that?" Jeff turned and peered at me with a stance just like his mother. I laughed then turn to continue setting up the tables.

Two hours later, after finishing our tasks, we walked to the porch to join my uncle and Richard. "You didn't tell me you were arriving today," I said to my uncle as I walked up to him and hugged him. "I wasn't sure which day I would get here. I stopped in Florida and spent some time with your grandmother."

"Why didn't you bring her with you, Max?" Beth asked as she join us on the porch with a pitcher of ice tea. "Thank you, Beth, but even if I had thought of it, pulling Geraldine away from her garden would have been impossible. My uncle turned to Beck then ask, "How are you? It's nice to see you again."

"You too Max, I'm glad you decided to accept my father's

invitation to come to the wedding.” A comfortable silence fell between us as Beth poured ice tea. “Jeffrey, Beck, have a seat and rest, I know the two of you’ve been working hard,” Beth says, as she hands each of us a glass. I chuckled as Beck, and his mother exchanged a look. It wasn’t long before Richard shared that he and my uncle plan to go to the golf range. After they left, Beck and I returned to the tent to offer help where it was needed. We were exhausted by the time we finished, but not too tired to head into town and spend the rest of the night browsing the stores. “So this is where you roamed as a teenager,” I said as we walked. “You know, when I was younger, I hated this town. I was almost a loner, in that I didn’t play well with others, and I hung around with few people; I usually stuck to myself.” “Did you keep in touch with any of them after you left for college?” “Yes, you are going to meet some of them on Sunday at the wedding.” “I’m looking forward to meeting your friends.”

“What about you, did you keep in touch with your high school friends?”

“I wasn’t close to anyone but Jax in high school. Like you, I was a loner. I stuck to myself a lot.”

“I want to meet Jax. Will that ever happen?”

“Yes, he lives in England, but we can always go and visit.”

“I would like that.”

Beck and I were so busy talking we didn’t notice that Georgie and Alex had stopped at an ice cream parlor. “Hey you two, are you not interested in ice cream or what?” Alex called to us. We turned towards the parlor. “Sorry, we didn’t notice that you stopped,” Beck says as we retraced our steps.

“When we were kids, this was Beck and my favorite place to hang out,” Alex says as we walked through the door. “It was more like your favorite place Alex, I just didn’t mind bringing you here.”

“Bro, are you telling me that you came every time just because of me,” Alex says as we took a seat at one of the

booths. "That's what I'm saying, bro." Georgie looked at me and rolled her eyes before saying. "Ignore them, Jeff they can't help but act like the kids they once were."

"Excuse me, I'm not acting like a kid," Alex says sounding appalled by Georgie's comment. "Yes, you are and so are you Beck. Every time you come home, the two of you act like you are ten again." I started to laugh as Beck says, "I don't know what you are talking about Georgie, I hated being ten, so I wouldn't ever act like I was ten again."

Georgie and I began to laugh as the two brothers look on and act as if they are outraged.

By the time we returned home, it was well after midnight. I wasn't ready for bed and hoped Beck would spend some time with me on the beach. "You want to go for a walk on the beach? "You love the beach at night don't you?"

"I do. I love the stillness of the night and the sound of the waves. You don't have to come with me if you don't want to, I know you must be tired."

"I am tired, but so are you. Unless you want to be alone, I

am coming with you.”

“I don’t want to be alone; I want to be with you, so let’s go.”

We walked across the lawn, headed toward the beach.

Before long we were enveloped by the darkness as we walked hand in hand. “What else do you love about the beach,” Beck asked as we strolled. “I like this beach a lot because this is where we told each other how we truly feel. I like the beach at night when its void of people, I simply love being alone on an empty seashore.” Beck laughed as I finished my thought. “Are you laughing at me?”

“No, but I am laughing because the man I am in love with is eccentric.”

“But you love my eccentricities right?”

“I love everything about you, Jeff.”

BECK

One of the best thing about living a stones-throw from the

beach is waking to the sound of the water rambling onto the shores. When I opened my eyes, two things I noticed. The feel of Jeff's body wrapped around mine, and the sound of the water on the distant shores. As I awoke, I felt contented, but it didn't last for long, because someone started to bang on the bedroom door. Trying to ignore the annoyance, I turned into Jeff's arms to go back to sleep. The banging, however, didn't stop and a familiar voice joined the commotion. "Hey Beck, if you don't answer I am going to open the door and come in, so get the hell up and come downstairs, you have ten minutes," I grumbled as I turn onto my back to see my boyfriend on the verge of laughing. "I'm glad you think this is funny," I said as I sit up. Jeff pulled me back onto my back and kissed me chastely before saying, "Good morning." I laid still into his arms for a minute before whispering, "We have to get up, my crazy brother will walk in on us."

"The door is locked."

"Trust me, that won't stop him," I said, as I tore myself out of

Jeff's arms and headed towards the bathroom. "You know, Georgie was right about the two of you."

"Right about what?"

"The age thing." I stopped brushing my teeth to look at Jeff in the mirror. "Are you telling me I act like a ten-year-old?"

Jeff started to laugh and held his hands up defensively. "I'm just saying the two of you are kind of vivacious when you are around each other."

"That's because my brother is crazy, he is the one acting like a pubescent kid." Jeff continued to laugh as he turns on the shower and steps into the water. I finished brushing my teeth, and join him. "Keep your distance from me, Beckett Copeland, I don't want your brother catching us in a compromising position."

"First of all, when did you start calling me Beckett, and, if my brother wants to walk in let him, that's on him."

"Your mom called you Beckett sometimes, and I notice she only say it when she is annoyed with you. I like that idea a lot."

“Why are you pissed at me?” Jeff eases closer to me and put his hand on my hips. “I’m not pissed, at least not right now, but the next time I call you Beckett...” He didn’t finish his words because I reached up and plastered my lips onto his. A half-hour later we walked onto the porch to find the entire family including Jeff’s uncle eating breakfast. “Morning everyone,” Jeff and I said in unison, as we took a seat on the available chairs. “The two of you need to stop taking late night walks on the beach so you can get up in the morning,” Richard says as he sips his coffee. I’m about to respond when Jeff squeeze my thigh under the table then says, “We’ll keep that in mind Richard.” It didn’t escape me that Alex and Max were both trying to suppress their laughter. “So what’s the plan for today?” I turned to Alex and asked. “We are headed to the airport to pick up Sebastian. His plane lands at eleven. I was hoping you and Jeff would come with me. Jeff, do you mind taking a ride to the airport?” Alex asked while looking at Jeff. “I would love to; we would love to.”

“Uncle Max, what are you up to?” Jeff then turns to his uncle and asked. “Don’t worry about your uncle Jeff, he and I have plans.” Richard answer before Max had a chance to speak. An hour later Jeff and I were on our way to the airport with Alex. “Tell me about Sebastian,” Jeff says as we drove away from the house. “Sebastian is Alex best friends, they’ve known each other since first grade.”

“Yeah, we use to do a lot of crazy things together that got us in a lot of trouble.”

“You could say that again,” Beck says. “The two of you would try and pull me into your antics, but I was always the one who was rescuing the two of you from getting in trouble.” Alex laughed before saying, “You are right. Do you remember that Halloween when we egged Mrs. Stevenson house, and she caught us and told us we had to call our parents?”

“Yeah, I remember, you called me instead, and I had to come to Mrs. Stevenson house and lie that mom and dad were out of town and I would tell them the moment they

came home. To this day I can't believe the old woman believed me and let the two of you go. You were lucky she didn't call the cops."

"You are right, we were lucky," Alex said while laughing hysterically.

"So what happened, did the two of you lose touch with each other? Jeff asked. "No, we kept in touch over the years. Sebastian went to Northwestern in Chicago, his father's alma mater. After he finished, he decided he liked living in Chicago and pursued his license to practice law there. Over the years we kept in touch through Facebook, and a year ago he was here on business, and we met up for drinks."

"Is he married?" Beck asked. "No, but I think he is seeing someone. I told him to bring her, but he said no, he just wanted to come and have fun for a week." After weaving our way through traffic, we finally arrived at the airport only to learn that Sebastian's plane was delayed. We waited for over an hour for the plane to finally land. When the

passengers finally deplaned it was two hours later. Jeff and I watched as Alex greet Sebastian in the distance. I guess I was staring too long because Jeff whispered in my ears, "Remember you are taken." I turned and looked at him and smile. He was jealous, and I like it. "Don't worry; I know who I belong to." Jeff didn't get a chance to respond because my brother walked up with Sebastian. The moment he saw Jeff he couldn't stop staring. "Hey Beck, it's been a long time how are you?" Sebastian says while still staring at Jeff. "Yes, it has been a while Seb, how are you?" "It's been a long time since anyone called me Seb and it's good to see you." "Sebastian, this is Beck's boyfriend, Jeff. Jeff, this is Sebastian."

The one thing I can say about me is that I have really good gaydar and it was clear to me the moment I saw Sebastian again that he was as gay as I am. If Alex didn't know, he knew at that moment as well as he watched Sebastian's eyes roamed up and down Jeff's body. I also realized Jeff and

Sebastian knew each other. That suspicion was confirmed when Jeff said, "It's nice seeing you again Sebastian." For a moment, what seems like forever, the three of us said nothing, and as noisy as the airport was, the silence between the three of us was deafening. Finally, Alex spoke up, "Well, let's get out of this airport and head towards some peace and quiet shall we?"

We exit the airport and head towards the parking garage, Jeff took my hand as we walked and I could tell it was to reassure me. Nothing, however, stopped my mind from going into overdrive wondering how the two of them knew each other. We weren't in the jeep driving out of the airport for long before Alex decided to voice my concerns. "So how do the two of you know each other?" Alex asked turning to look at Sebastian. Neither Jeff nor Sebastian were quick to answer. Finally, Jeff spoke up. "Sebastian and I met in Chicago when I was there a few years ago." Jeff's hands were still in mine up to this point. I didn't mean to pull my hand away, but that's what I did. My mind and heart was

reeling. I suddenly wanted out of the jeep and away from the feelings of doubt filling my mind. I closed my eyes to calm my nerves; It's clear that I am jealous of whatever relationship Jeff had with Sebastian and I needed to get a handle on my feelings. "Hey, Alex, can we stop at the mall? We are going to be stuck in traffic anyway, let's waste a few hours shopping." Alex looked at me in the rearview mirror and shook his head before veering off the parkway headed towards the mall.

When we arrived at the mall, my brother knowing me as well as he does, asked Sebastian to come with him to find the bathroom. Alone with Jeff, I turned to look at him before saying, "Let's walk around okay." Jeff shook his head and exited the jeep. I followed suit and exit the jeep on the opposite side. "Are you okay?" He asked when he joined me. "First, I want you to know that I know I'm being ridiculous. I've had relationships with other men before you, and I know you have as well. I just feel... I am jealous Jeff. I know I shouldn't be, I know it's stupid, but that's how I feel."

Jeff didn't say a word. He pulled me closer as our forehead connected. Finally, he said something I wasn't expecting, "I would feel the same way if I met any former lover of yours."

Chapter Twenty One

JEFF

WHEN I realized I knew Sebastian, I closed my eyes and curse under my breath. The friend Beck and his brother has been describing was one of my hookups from years ago, how can faith be so cruel? I knew the next few moments was about to be awkward and I was going to have to tell Beck how I knew Sebastian. After the introductions and the realization that Sebastian and I already knew each other, we exited the airport. As we walked to the garage, I tried to make eye contact with Beck, but he wouldn't look at me. I took his hand and refuse to let go, even after we entered the jeep. I wanted to tell him I loved him, that whatever happened between Sebastian and me was the past, and he was my future. Instead of being able to say those things, I

had to answer Alex question when he asked how Sebastian and I knew each other. For Beck, my declaration was enough for him to erect a wall between us, a wall that had to come down. When he asked to go to the mall, I wasn't sure if he was trying to get away from me, or if he wanted to be alone with me. I was relieved when we arrived, and Alex on cue took Sebastian and disappeared.

I didn't know what to say, or how to begin. We sat in the jeep in silence before Beck finally spoke and I felt myself breathe, not realizing I was holding my breath. Outside the vehicle, Beck shared his feelings and my heart filled with love for him, not because he admitted he was jealous, but because it was clear he loved me and was afraid of losing me. The fact is, I would feel the same way Beck is feeling right now if I met Noah or any man he was involved with, and it was important to share that with him. We stood outside the Jeep holding each other for minutes before we finally pulled apart and started to walk towards the mall entrance. Inside the mall, we took the first available seat we

could find. I wanted to tell Beck about Sebastian, to show him how inconsequential he was to me. We sat, and it wasn't long before Beck asked me about the subject of our mire. "How long ago did you meet him?"

"We met New Year's Eve three years ago. It was a one-night thing, nothing more."

"Why?"

"Why what?"

"Why was it only one night?"

"Do you want me to be honest Beck? Because the last thing I want is to hurt you."

"I don't want you to be anything but honest with me, no matter how hard it is."

"Okay, I was lonely and horny, and he was there offering himself to me. I wasn't looking for a relationship; I just wanted to get off. Afterward, I got dress and left." Beck didn't say anything for a long while. He just stared at shoppers as they walked by. He was quiet for so long I finally had to ask him to say something. "I don't know what

to say," He finally said. " I didn't even know Sebastian was gay. We practically grew up together and I never once thought he was gay. Now I find out that he slept with my boyfriend, I don't know what to say or how to react."

"You weren't in my life back then Beck. I had no clue I would be meeting you. If I did-- "

"I'm not asking you to apologize for what happened years ago, Jeff. I told you, I'm jealous, I hate that he knows what it's like to be with you like that."

"He doesn't know Beck. Back then I was drunk a lot, and that night was no exception. You don't give yourself completely to someone when you are inhibited. Every night, every day, I've been with you, I've shown you my true self and not a washout liquefied version of me." Beck turned and look me in the eye for the first time since we left the airport. He was about to say something but didn't get a chance because Alex and Sebastian were walking towards us. "I thought we were going to shop," Alex said, concern still lacing his face. Beck stand, and I followed behind him

as he answers his brother. "Let's shop then, where should we go first?" We spent the rest of the morning roaming the mall while Alex bought clothes for his honeymoon.

We dropped Sebastian at his mothers' home, and it wasn't until we were in the Jeep alone that Alex voiced his

concern. "Is everything okay between the two of you?" He hesitantly asks. Beck turned to look at me before saying,

"Everything is fine between us." I could tell Alex wanted to say more, so I waited for him to continue. "So," He drawled

"You and Sebastian had a thing!" He continued while staring at me through the rearview mirror. "It was a long time ago, and it was nothing."

"Jeff, you don't owe my brother any explanation, so don't answer him."

"I know that," I continued with a practical whisper, "It's important to me that your brother knows how I feel about you." As low as I was speaking, Alex heard what I said. Just as we pulled up to the house, he turned off the engine and turned to me, "You don't have to show me how you feel

about my brother, I already see it. Whatever went down with you and Sebastian is in your past, I know, and I think my crazy brother knows how you feel. Alex jumped out of the Jeep then. Beck turned to me and whisper, "I do know, and I'm sorry if I scared you." I pushed him back against the seat and kissed him possessively.

We were four days away from the wedding, and the Copeland house was starting to fill with aunts, uncles, nieces, and nephews; I was having a hard time keeping track of all the names. The days leading up to the wedding, Beck and I barely found time to be alone. Plans were made, not just for the rehearsal dinner, but the bachelor party, the bachelorette party and then the big day. The bachelor party was as raucous as one would expect. Alex friends from his job, high school, and college were on hand for the celebration. To say that his friends put temptation after temptation in front of him would be an understatement; they went overboard with the strippers. I could tell Alex couldn't wait for the night to be over.

Alex and Georgie had one day to recover from their bachelor and bachelorette party before the rehearsal dinner. While the event was supposed to be given by the bride and groom, it was clear every part of it was planned and orchestrated by Beth. She wanted everything to be perfect, and I learned that night why. Georgie's mom and dad were deceased, and she wanted her future daughter-in-law to feel welcome and loved by the Copeland family.

At the dinner, I had the opportunity to see my boyfriend grow up. The film they were showing was meant to highlight Alex's life and how he and Georgie met, however, many of the images were of Beck with his brother. I'm sure everyone was paying attention to the groom in the film, I was more interested in the brother of the groom. Through all the commotion leading up to the dinner, I lost track of my uncle. He and Richard spent an inordinate amount of time with their heads together. We finally had a chance to have more than a two sentence conversation at the dinner. Beck had disappeared somewhere with his brother and my uncle

choose that moment to sit beside me. “Having a good time?” He asked with a grin on his face. I didn’t even answer his question. “Where have you been Max? I feel like it’s been days since I’ve seen you.”

“Maybe for you, it’s been days. I’ve seen you every day since I’ve been here; you are the one that’s been busy, coming and going.”

“You’re right, I have been busy. Still, what have you been up to?”

“Not much, Richard and I have become great friends plus we’ve been talking a lot about his properties in New York.”

“Are you planning on buying them?”

“Probably, it would be a wise investment; I can see our money doing well there, what do you think?”

“I think I’ll leave that decision up to you, you know that’s not my forte.” My uncle pats me on the back then change the subject. “How are things between you and the young Copeland?”

“You mean Beck? You keep calling him young Copeland.” I

couldn't help the smile that sheathed my face, "Everything is perfect between Beck and me."

BECK

"So, will there be another wedding in the near future?" My mother whispers in my ears, causing me to jump because I was so busy watching Jeff and his uncle. I decided to pretend I didn't know what she was talking about, "Another wedding with who mom?"

"Don't play coy with me, young man you know exactly who I'm talking about." I looked away from Jeff, and swivel on the stool to face her. "Mom, please don't start and I hope you didn't say anything like that to Jeff."

"What do you mean don't start, have I ever mentioned your getting married before?"

"No, but I've never brought anyone home before. Jeff and I love each other, but I think marriage is the last thing on his

mind." My mother sipped on the Martini she was holding. I could tell she was about to say something but was trying to decide how to say it. "It's funny," She started to say. "What's funny?" I asked. "That you said marriage was the last thing on his mind, not that marriage is the last on our mind." She was right, while I would marry Jeff in an instant, I wasn't sure if he was ready for such a leap. I wasn't going to tell my mother that though. "Mom, you are so caught up with Alex's wedding you think marrying me off is the next step. Well, guess what? It's not. Jeff and I will get there when we are ready. Even if we were ready, my wedding, if it ever happens, will not be like this," I said as I waved my hand around the tented area. My mom kissed me then on the cheek before saying, "We will see when it's your turn. Just don't you dare elope, or get married in a town hall. Make sure your family is there to share the moment with you." I didn't answer her; I guess she was waiting for me to say something, she grabbed my chin and turned me to face her. "Do you understand me, Beckett Copeland?" It was my turn

to ease out of her hold and kiss her on the cheek. "If I'm ever getting married, you will be the second person to know." My mother eased off the stool, then disappeared into the swell of people attending the rehearsal dinner.

When I turned to look in the direction Jeff and his uncle were sitting, they were gone. I ordered another Tequila Sunrise, while I finished the one in front of me. I was about to start on the second one when my brother joined me at the bar. "Why are you sitting here by yourself? Where is Jeff?" I sipped my drink then turn to look at my brother. Instead of answering him I asked, "Why are you standing here talking to me? Shouldn't you be standing next to your fiancée and thanking all these people for attending?" Alex jumped up on the stool next to me, "Georgie is doing enough thanking for both of us, I'm tired." I started to laugh at the weariness in my brother's voice. "If I didn't know you better Alex Copeland, I would think marriage is the last thing you want. But I know you well enough, to know that your about to be wife is marrying an anti-social snob."

“I can’t help it if I hate being around a lot of people, always having to smile, and say the right thing. I just want to marry the woman and go on our honeymoon, is that too much to ask?” I didn’t get a chance to answer my brother, because Jeff walked up behind me, causing me to jump for the second time tonight. “Why are you so jumpy? My brother and Jeff asked in unison. “You need to stop drinking; this is how you get when you’ve had one too many,” My brother continued. Jeff took a seat opposite me and asked, “Did you have one too many? You don’t look drunk.”

“I leaned over and kiss him chastity on the lips, “I’m not drunk, I promise.” My brother stands, then announce he was going to find his fiancée and pull her away from all the commotion. Jeff and I watched as he weaved his way through the crowd. “Are you okay?” He whispered in my ears. “I’m fine, this is my second drink, you would know if I am drunk.”

“Let’s get out of here and take a walk, what do you think?” I lean into him as he placed his arm around me, “Let me

guess, a walk on the beach.” Jeff laughed before saying, “Sounds good to me.”

The next morning, I opened my eyes, to the comfort of Jeff’s body lying next to me. In the distance, I could hear the clatter of people outside my window as they busied themselves getting ready for the reception. I tried to bury myself in Jeff’s arms and go back to sleep, but it was futile. Finally, the noise outside woke him up as well. He buried his face in my hair and took a deep breath, then whispered, “Good morning.”

“I have to get up and find my brother and make sure he get’s to the church on time.”

“I know, but not before this,” He said as he kissed me deeply. We were breathless when he looks down into my eyes with a cunning smile then whispers, “And, not before this,” As he kissed along my neck. “Or this,” As he kissed down my chest. “Or this,” As he kissed my stomach.”

Finally, I heard him whisper “Or this,” As his mouth

enveloped my cock. I bucked up into his mouth, as his lips traveled up and down my instantly swollen dick. Running my hand through his hair, I called his name as he continued his ministrations.

It wasn't long before he pushed my left leg onto his shoulder then one, two of his fingers invaded my hole. As his mouth came down on me and his fingers penetrated my hole, I was lost in ecstasy. I was on a precipice, on the verge of falling, when he suddenly stopped; gone were his mouth and his magical fingers. I opened my eyes to see him reaching for the lube. "Don't worry baby, I'm not done here," He said as he snapped the cap of the lube, then coated his penis and my hole with a generous amount of lube. He returned my leg to his shoulder, and move his body further into me, causing me to practically fold in half. Holding my leg as an anchor, he entered me slowly at first, then his movement became rapid and ravenous, as he moved in and out of me. He grabbed my dick and ran his hand up and down its length in unison with his thrusts, as

he assaulted my hole. I raised my hand above my head as Jeff invaded me over and over again. It wasn't long before my cum spilled everywhere. He continued to ravage my hole until he spilled inside me. He fell forward onto me, and I welcome the feel of his weight on me as we both recover. "I love you," He whispered in my ear. I wanted to say it back immediately, I was still recovering and couldn't muster the words. Finally, I ran my hand through his hair, and pulled slightly, so that he would raise his head and look at me. "I love you too," I whispered as I brought my mouth up to reach his.

Two hours later, I was by Alex side, he was unusually quiet as he prepared himself to get married. "Are you okay?" I asked as he wrapped the cumber bun around his waist. "I'm fine," He said with a smile. "I'm getting married today." He continued. "Yeah, you are, and to someone, you've loved most of your adult life." Alex turns then and looks at me speculatively before saying, "You're right, I've known Georgie since I was sixteen, through all the girlfriends, she

was there as a friend. I can't believe I almost missed it."

"Almost missed what?" I asked, not sure what he was talking about. "I almost missed her loving me. Did you know she liked me at sixteen? I mean how could she like me? I was such a cad back then."

"She saw in you what no one else saw Alex, and she waited for you. I don't think she knew this day would happen, but she knew you were not the guy you were showing the world, but someone better and you know what? She was right." Alex was looking in the mirror when he turned to face me. "What about you and Jeff?"

"What about Jeff and me?" Alex turned and put both his hands on my shoulders. "I see how much you love him Beck."

"You are right I do, and I have my hopes where Jeff is concern, only time will tell."

Chapter Twenty Two

JEFF

I'M SURROUNDED by a flurry of activity happening in the house and outside, as they prepare for the wedding reception. As frantic as everything seems, it's nothing compared to what's happening in my head. I can't stop thinking about Beck and how much I'm in love with him. It occurred to me that I want more from our relationship. I want our names to merge, for him and I to be responsible for each other. I want him to belong to me and me to him. I never thought a day would come when I would have such strong feelings for another person, and it scares me. Sitting on the back porch of his home watching the back and forth of the crew; I know I want this for Beck someday soon. As much as I want to marry him, I also realize it's

possible he may not want the same thing right now. If he doesn't, I will wait, no matter how long it took. How do I broach this with him? We only just acknowledged our true feelings for each other, would it be too much to now say I want to be married to him? Consume with my thoughts; I didn't notice my uncle joined me on the veranda; startled I jumped when he touched me on the shoulder. "Why are you so jumpy?" He asked. "I'm sorry Uncle Max, I didn't hear you walk up behind me, I was deep in thought."

"Yes, that's obvious. What are you thinking about so intensely?" I shrug my shoulders as a response. I'm not sure how much I wanted to share with him. I love my uncle and trust him, but we've never talked about my love life. Still, base on his next question, he is observant enough to figure out exactly what's on my mind. "Thinking about Beck, aren't you?" I nod my head, as words escaped me. "You know Jeff; at least I hope you know, you can talk with me about anything."

"I know Max, I've always felt as if I could talk to you about

anything.”

“Good, I’m glad you know.” We sat in silence for a few more minutes, before I finally muster the courage to tell him what’s on my mind. But, not before looking around as if I didn’t want anyone to hear me say the words I hope to say to Beck. “I want to marry him.” A broad smile formed on my uncle’s face before he started to laugh. “Tell me something I don’t already know,” He said while squeezing my shoulder. “ I just can’t believe it,” I said to him. “What can’t you believe?” He asked. “That I’m in love, and want to have this,” I said while gesturing to the commotion happening around me. Look at me Jeff; Max said while turning his chair so that he is facing me. I wish my brother were here to say what I’m about to say to you. He is not, and I have to believe that he would want me to say what I’m about to say. Are you ready?” He asked. I bowed my head, and he continued to speak. “Don’t be afraid of what you are feeling, embrace it. Love doesn’t happen for everyone Jeff; If you believe you love him and if he loves you then make

sure to show it to each other every day. If marriage is one of the ways, you want to declare your feelings then do it, because life is too short for hesitation and doubt.”

“You sound as if you are talking from experience Uncle Max.” Max didn’t get a chance to answer me. Beth stood by the door as she called to us. “You two come in here, we are getting ready to go to the church.” Outside there was a fleet of limousines waiting for the family to occupy. The entire family except the bride ambled into the available cars. I was about to join my uncle when I heard Beck calling my name. “Drive with us,” He said as I walked towards him. After kissing Beck gingerly on the lips, we walked the few feet into the foyer to find Alex pacing. “Alex are you okay?” “I’m fine; I’m just anxious. Whose idea was it anyway to have a big wedding?” Beck started to laugh while hugging his brother.” It was your fiancée and our mother. Just think, this time tomorrow you will be on your way to Fiji, and all this will be behind you.”

I lean back against the banister and watch Beck calm his

brother. I couldn't help but wonder if he would be this calm at our wedding. *I can't believe I'm thinking that.* I love this man, and all I want is for this day to end and for us to be alone. Alex's limo finally pulled up to the house. In the car, Alex and Beck helped themselves to the champagne that was chilled and waiting. I declined the drink because my stomach felt like the erratic mess my mind has been all morning.

Two hours later, and the bride was late. After the back and forth whispers, she arrived, and Beck and Alex took their place in front of the church. Finally, the wedding procession started. The moment Georgie entered the church, Alex's eyes were glued to her. It was so obvious how much they love each other. Through the entire ceremony, Beck would look in my direction. Each time he looked at me, my heart felt as if it skipped a beat. I hoped he and I were thinking the same thing.

An hour into the reception and my boyfriend was nowhere to be found. If I had to guess, he was with his brother and

his new wife as they prepare to make their entrance as husband and wife. As merry as everything was around me, I had the unbelievable urge to escape to the Beach. If it wasn't for the fact that Beck would be concern about where I am, and my uncle and Richard had me pinned between them as they talk about real estate I probably would have gone. It wasn't long before Alex and Georgie made their entrance and of course, Beck looked for me immediately. "What are the three of you over here talking about?" He asked as he walked towards us. "The three of us isn't talking about anything, My uncle and your father are talking about real estate," I continued.

"Well then, It's a good thing I'm here to rescue you." He said as he pulled me away from the bar. "You want to get out of here don't you?" He asked as we walked towards our table. "No and yes. I want to be here for your brother and his wife, to wish them the best; at the same time, I want to be alone with you." Beck turned then and planted a kiss on my lips, not caring where we are or who might see.

After the bride and groom cut the cake, had the first dance, and the speeches, the reception turned into a party. Beck who hasn't left my side, asked me to dance. The problem is, I don't dance, and I'm about to tell him that when he put his finger to my lips. "I don't want to hear you can't dance, just one slow dance with me, please."

His pleading was enough to convince me. That is how I found myself on the dance floor awkwardly moving my feet and trying hard not to make a fool of my self. *I must love this man.*

Hours later, I don't know how many because I lost track, the bride and groom made their exit through the rice throwing procession, which I think is ridiculous; they were off to their honeymoon. I turned and watched Beck as he made his way through the crowd and walked towards me. He stopped in front of me and looked up into my eyes, "Let's go be alone." He said as he took my hand and turn towards the beach. Two days later, It was time to return home. After the goodbyes, we were on my uncle's private plane headed

back to New York. A half hour into the flight, Beck is still staring out the window. I finally took his hand while asking why he is so quiet?" He leans his head back against the headrest, then turns to look at me. "My mom was distraught that I was leaving. She asked me to think about moving back. I told her New York is my home and I saw tears form in her eyes." I turn in my seat to face him before saying, "You need to go there more often Beck. Three months between visits is a long time."

"I know, but I have a life in New York, I can't just go home for a few weeks whenever I feel like it."

"Your mom and dad is a part of your life. Just go more often and maybe invite them to come to New York, don't wait until they decide they need to come. Baby, you are a good son, stop doubting yourself."

"You know, I really love you, Jeffrey Corbin."

"I love you too Beckett Copeland."

BECK

Two weeks later

Earth to Beck, are you in there? Patrick asked standing by my desk. I was so caught up in thoughts of Jeff I didn't realize he was talking to me. I swiveled in my chair to face him, "Sorry, what did you say?"

"What is wrong with you? Why are you in another world?"

"I just have a lot on my mind, what were you saying?"

"Forget what I was saying, let's go get some lunch," He said while pulling the back of my chair away from my desk. I didn't even bother arguing with him, I stood and followed him to the bank of elevators. He pushed the down button then turn to face me. "What's going on with you? Ever since you came back from California, you've been acting weird. Did something happen between you and Jeff?" I didn't answer him even after we stepped onto the waiting elevator. I was slow to respond, not because I didn't want to, I just didn't know how to put what I'm feeling into words. How

do I explain being angry because I haven't seen Jeff in days? How do I explain that I'm jealous of his work because right now it has more of his attention than I do? How do I tell him that I am head over heels in love with Jeff and I want to not live apart from him? I was again deep in thought even after the elevator stopped and Patrick waited at the open door for me to exit. "I'm really worried about you Beck, what the hell is going on? Seriously, did something happen between you and Jeff?" Again, I choose not to answer. Instead I walked towards the exit knowing that he was close behind me. We were entering the café when I finally found the words to talk to my best friend. "Nothing bad happened between Jeff and me Patrick."

"Then If nothing bad happened, what the hell is up with you?" I turn to face him, "I'm in love with him Pat, and he is in love with me." Patrick didn't say anything he just stared at me; then a wide smile formed on his face. "So the two of you professed your love for each other." I didn't use words to answer; I just shook my head. "Then what's going on

then?

“I’m scared,” I said almost inaudibly. “Why are you afraid?”

The two of you love each other so what?”

“I want more.”

“What do you mean you want more?” I didn’t answer as we ordered our food. Ten minutes later, coffees and sandwiches in hand we found a table and sat to eat. Patrick didn’t touch his food as he watched me devour mine. Finally, I looked up, and he asked again, “What do you mean you want more?”

“It’s been two weeks since we came back, do you know how many times we’ve seen each other? Two times. I’ve seen Jeff twice in two weeks Pat. He is so busy at the hospital, and I’m busy at QTI, then you send me on that stupid business trip to Washington last week, and now I don’t even know what his schedule is for this week. We talk on the phone, but our conversation is brief - I want more. For me, more is telling him he is putting too many hours in at the hospital, more is telling him I think we should live

together, I want so much more from him, and I am scared. What if he doesn't want what I want? Does that make sense?" Patrick didn't answer; instead, he reached for his sandwich and started to eat. "Do you know what I think the real problem is?" He finally asked. I didn't answer; instead, I looked at him and waited for him to say more. "I think your fear has more to do with Noah. You moved in with Noah, and things fell apart shortly after. You think that may happen with you and Jeff. I didn't bother answering. I know Patrick is partly right. I am afraid things may go wrong with Jeff and me. If I were to be totally honest though, things are not the same, I don't need Jeff, I want him, and there is a difference. I want to spend time with him; I want to laugh and talk with him, I just want to be with him. When I think of Noah, and what I went through with him, there was never a time that our relationship was easy. Things are easy between Jeff and me. "You're off in another world again," Patrick said while shaking my shoulders. "Sorry, I was thinking about what you just said. You are partly right. I am afraid, but I know things

are not the same.”

“Then why are you afraid of telling him what you want then?” Call him and talk to him. Better yet, say it to his face.”

“I will as soon as I see him.”

“Well, you are about to get the chance, he is over there, I’m guessing he is looking for you.” I turned, and sure enough, Jeff is standing at the door of the café looking around. I stand and wave to him, he finally saw me, and I swear my heart skipped a beat as our eyes connected. I walked towards him as he came closer. “Hey, what are you doing here?” I asked as I hesitantly held my arms out to hug him. He walked into my arms, and we held each other before he eased away. “I needed to see you, I stopped by your office, and the receptionist told me you might be here.” He kissed me briefly on the lips then turn to Patrick. “Hi, Patrick, nice to see you.” He said as he eased out of my arms. “Nice to see you too Jeff,” Patrick said as he stands to leave. “I’m going to give the two of you some privacy.”

“There is no need to leave,” Jeff and I both said at the same time. “I know I don’t have to leave. I also know that the two of you haven’t seen each other in days, so I’ll let the two of you have some private time. Beck, I’ll see you later. Alone, Jeff and I surveyed each other before sitting next to each other. We didn’t speak as Jeff took my hand in his while turning my head and kissing me again, this time it was a lingering kiss, a kiss I sensed we both didn’t want to end. As much as I didn’t want to pull away, I did slightly and looked into his eyes.

“I really do feel as if it’s been days since we saw each other.” Jeff brought our foreheads together before saying, “I’m sorry, I know I’ve been busy with work.”

“Not just you, I’ve been bombarded as well. I feel as if we are not finding time for us. I think that needs to change.”

“You’re right, but while you’ve been busy as well, I feel as if my schedule is the issue. I know I’m spending a lot of hours at the hospital.”

“Yes you are, why Jeff? Why are you working so hard?”

“I’m just trying to prove myself to Dr. Munch right now - my work at the hospital is important to me and... “

“More important than me? Than us?

“No, that’s not what I’m saying.”

“What are you saying then? Tell me because from my perspective I don’t understand why you feel you need to prove yourself to anyone - you are a good doctor?”

“How do you know that I’m a good doctor?” Jeff asked almost irritatingly. I didn’t answer his question because I sensed he was getting pissed. Instead, I asked what I should have asked when he first arrived. “Why did you leave work to look for me, did something happen?”

“Nothing happened, I just really wanted to see you, to touch you,” He whispered. We sat at the table in silence for a minute, then he finally says, “I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to snap at you.”

“Jeff, I have to get back to work, but before I go there is something I want to say to you. I love you.”

“I know you love me; I love you too.”

“That’s not what I wanted to say. I think if we are going to be together then we should be together. For me, that means finding time for each other. Loving each other isn’t enough, we have to be willing to find the time for each other, and that may mean not putting work first. Before you walked through those doors, I just told Patrick I wanted us to live together, but now I think we are not ready for that. “Beck.”

“No, let me finish, please. I’ve already had one relationship where I was living with someone yet we were as far apart as a couple could be. I won’t repeat that. The difference between Noah and you is that I’m in love with you and I’m afraid I’m going to lose you. Does that make sense?”

Chapter Twenty Three

JEFF

As I listen to him speak, I'm more convinced than ever that I want to spend the rest of my life with him. I have been a fool these past weeks, but what he doesn't realize is that I would have dropped everything for him if he needed me. Now I just have to convince him of that. "I know you have to go, but you can't say the things you just said and not expect me to respond."

"I don't expect you to have something to say."

"I want to respond, first of all, I am not Noah. While I know I've been busy these past few weeks, it's not a reason to compare me to him."

"I'm not comparing you, Jeff, I'm just saying..."

"I know what you are saying Beck. Let's get one thing

straight, while work has consumed my time lately, That job isn't more important to me than you. I thought you understood that, but clearly you don't." I didn't say anything more, and neither did Beck. We sat in silence for what felt like forever. "Why don't you go ahead and head back to work, I will be home early, and we can continue this conversation," I suggested. Beck turned and looked into my eyes, what I saw in his were fear and worry. "I love you Beck, Let's talk later when we have the time. What time will you be home?"

"I should be there a little after five."

"I'll be there by six, and we can continue this conversation because I have a lot more to say and I am sure you do too."

I bent my head and kiss him tenderly then stand to leave.

"Come on let's go; I'll walk with you to your building." We walked back to his building, and the silence between us was comfortable, especially after he reached for my hand as we walked. "I'll see you at home in a few hours," I said as we stopped in front of his building. "Jeff." I covered his lips

with my finger as he called my name, “No, let’s not talk now, let’s just wait until later, okay?” He shook his head then kissed me on the lips and turn to walk into the building. I stood and watched him until he disappeared. I know work has consumed me lately and the result is the doubt that’s crept into Beck’s mind. My uncle and now Beck is right; I need to stop believing I must prove myself at the hospital. Regardless of my efforts at the hospital, Beck is what’s important to me and tonight when we talk I will convince him of that.

It didn't take long to get back to the hospital. As I did my rounds, going from patient to patient, I couldn't help but think of Beck and the conversation we had at the café. I've also decided I am going to talk with Dr. Munch again about my schedule. If I haven't proven myself up to this point, I don't see how it's ever going to happen. I'll be damned if I lose Beck over this hospital. I was almost at the end of my shift when my phone vibrates. Without looking, I reached for it to answer. “Jeff, are you at the hospital?” My uncle

asked, without saying hello. "Yes, I'm about to get off shift."

"Good, I don't want you to panic, but Geraldine fell while working in her garden, she is in the hospital." Panic-stricken, I walked towards the doctor's lounge, "Tell me she is alright."

"I don't know; I just got the call, they couldn't reach you. I'm still in California."

"I'll leave right away," I said before he had a chance to finish his sentence. "Good, please call me and let me know how she is doing." After hanging up with Max, I called Beck the one person I knew would be there for me. He answers on the first ring. I didn't give him a chance to say anything, "Beck Grans is in the hospital, I have to go to Florida."

"What? Is she okay, where are you? Are you still at the hospital?" Yes, but I'm about to leave for the airport."

"I'll meet you at the emergency exit."

"Beck, you don't have to come with me."

"Don't say another word, Jeff I'll meet you at the exit, I'll be there in twenty minutes." Mindlessly I changed my clothes

and walked towards the emergency exit. As I am walking, I called Dr. Munch and explained the situation to him. I knew the time wasn't right to talk about my schedule, but I couldn't help but mention that we needed to meet when I return to discuss my job at the hospital. It wasn't long before Beck arrived in a cab, and we were on our way to the airport. "Tell me what happened, Beck says as the Taxi Driver wove in and out of traffic. "I don't know the details; I only know she was in her garden working when she fell, and she was taken to the hospital. I tried to call her cell while I was waiting for you but she didn't answer." Beck took my hand before saying the words he knew I needed to hear. "She is going to be okay Jeff. I know how important she is to you, she will be fine."

We had to wait nearly an hour for the next available flight; It was the most prolonged hour of my life. While on the plane Beck rented a car online. We picked up the car at the rental center and was on our way to the hospital less than an hour after landing. As we walked into the hospital, my heart

beats erratically. I didn't know what to expect - what condition I would find my grandmother in. We walked up to the reception desk and gave my name. We were told to take the stairs to the second floor and speak with someone at the nurses' station. When we arrived there, we gave the nurse my name, and she asked us to take a seat while they get the doctor. "Can we see her?" Beck asked the nurse. "We really need to know if she is okay," He continued. "Miss Foster is okay." Someone said behind us. We turn to greet a doctor that is probably Geraldine's age. He introduced himself as Dr. Hardwick; he ushered us to a small room at the side of the nurses' station where he proceeded to tell us the condition of my grandmother. "She actually was very lucky; she hadn't gone too far up the ladder before losing her footing. She sprained her hip but didn't break it; she will be okay in a few days if we can keep her still and off her feet." I took a deep breath and exhale. I feel as if I've been holding my breath up to this point. "Thank you Dr. Hardwick - I'm sure you have a lot more

you need to say but can I please see her? I need to see her for myself to know she is okay. "Of course, come, let me walk with you to her room." As we walked down the hall towards Gran's room, I felt a sense of relief. Lost in that feeling, I didn't hear the doctor as he continued to update me on the condition of Grans. Thank god, Beck was with me and asked any pertinent questions about her condition. As we walked into the room, I found my Grandmother fussing with a nurse as the nurse tried to keep her from raising the bed any higher. The doctor quickly interjected. "Ms. Foster, the bed needs to be lowered to lessen the discomfort in your hip." My Grandmother brushed the doctor aside while saying, "My hip is just fine." Then she turned to me and asked, "Why are you here? It was a small fall; I didn't hurt myself, the stupid gardener working with me didn't want to listen to me when I told him not to call anyone. Can you please get rid of this irritating nurse?" I smiled; I actually wanted to laugh, because after seeing Grans and hearing her, I knew she would be okay. I stood

there speechless. So much so, Beck had to speak up in defense of the nurse. "Geraldine, she is only doing her job, why don't you let her, that way you can get out of this hospital sooner rather than later."

"I want out of this hospital now, I don't like these places, and a little discomfort won't hurt me."

The doctor spoke up, "Geraldine, can I call you Geraldine?"

"You can call me whatever you need to if that will get you to release me from this hospital." The doctor laughed, then pull a chair along the side of her bed. "I will gladly release you from this hospital under two conditions, do you want to hear what they are?" For the first time since walking into the room, my grandmother was quiet. "First, for one night and one night only, you allow this bed to be lowered to put less pressure on your hips. If you do that tomorrow I will release you."

"You said two, what's the other?"

"When you get home, no stairs, no gardening for at least a week. In a week, come and see me again and if all is well,

you can go back to your gardening sans the ladder. What do you say, Geraldine?" I didn't give Grans a chance to answer; I finally found my voice. "She will take those conditions doc, I'll see to it. Even if I have to stay in this hospital overnight to make sure the bed stays down." My grandmother and I had a staring match, one which I won because she turned to the doctor and shook her head in acknowledgment of his conditions. The doctor smiled then and stood to leave. "I'll leave the three of you alone. Geraldine, I will be back in a few hours to check on you." As he walked towards the door, I took the seat he vacated, and my grandmother and I proceeded to stare at each other again. "I am fine," she whispered. "I know, but I have a condition to add to the two the doctor just gave you." "I'm not moving Jeff, don't bother asking." "That's not the condition. I know I can't get you to move, but you need someone in that house with you. Someone to climb a ladder for you if that's what you need." My Grandmother didn't get a chance to respond; the nurse

chooses that moment to come in and adjust the bed. After she was gone, she turned to me, "You don't need to stay in the hospital. The two of you should go to the house and get some sleep." "We will stay until you're asleep," Beck says as he took a seat opposite me. Grandmother looked back and forth between us then smile. "The nurse gave me a sedative before you walked in, so I should be asleep soon. By the way, I am glad the two of you finally admitted your feelings for each other." Beck and I looked at each other and smile. At that moment words were not necessary.

BECK

"It's strange walking into the house with your grandmother not being here." While the reason for us being here was scary, I'm glad Jeff and I will have this time to ourselves. I think I hurt him with my words earlier today and I want the chance to let him know that was my last intention. The

house is semi-dark, but Jeff chooses not to turn on more lights. Instead, he walked to the back porch overlooking the garden. I walked up behind him and wrap my arms around him. He relaxed into my arms. "I'm just glad she is going to be okay. I don't know what I would do if something were to happened to her." He whispered.

"Your grandmother is very resilient; she is going to live a long time. I know her fall scared you."

"It did scare me. Grans is getting older and older; she is the only one I have left that's a direct connection to my mother, I'm not ready to lose her." I turned Jeff to face me before saying what I knew needed to be said. "Babe, your grandmother is getting old, but she is healthy and strong. Don't let her slight fall throw you into a state of panic. Let's figure out who will be staying with her from now on, that she won't chase away because I'm thinking that's going to be the true issue moving forward. Jeff Laugh then pulled me towards him, our lips practically touching, our body melded together. "You're right. I am panicking; she is as healthy as

an ox. I think what I'm going to do is hire a nurse/caretaker to come and live in the apartment above the garage. What do you think?" I brought my lips to his and kissed him lingeringly, "Let's do it and see how it works out. Maybe we will be lucky, and we will find the right person right away." Jeff didn't say anything more; instead, he kissed me, this time our kiss was deeper and more intense. "Let's make plans tomorrow for Grans, tonight we should talk about us," He finally said. We strolled off the porch hand-in-hand towards the pier. Once there, Jeff releases my hands, took a seat and invite me to join him.

We sat on the pier overlooking the water for a while before he finally spoke. "You hurt me this afternoon." I took a deep breath before acknowledging his words. It's one thing to know what I've done. It's another to hear the words leave his lips. "I know, I'm sorry, it wasn't my intention."

"I know that. As hurt as I felt, I knew the last thing you would do is hurt me intentionally. What's important to me right now is that you know that you are not involved with a

rendition of Noah. I would never hurt you, not the way he did, and not by choosing my job over you." I shook my head, unable to speak because of the effort it was taking to fight the tears threatening to fall. We continue to sit in comfortable silence as I lean my head on his shoulder. "I'm just scared Jeff," I finally whisper, "I want," I hesitate not knowing how to finish my sentence. Jeff turned to me and whispers, "What do you want? Tell me." I kissed his shoulder before continuing. "I want to marry you." Jeff turns to face me, and we stare at each other in the dark. I covered his lips with my hands when he started to speak. "Let me finish, please. I'm so in love with you Jeff that sometimes it scares me. What bothered me more than anything these past few weeks isn't that you were busy at the hospital. It's that I didn't see you. We were sleeping in separate beds, living in separate apartments and I missed you. I don't want that anymore. I want more, I want to be bound to you and you to me. I want to wake up in the middle of the night and feel you wrapped around me. I want to tell you when I think you

are working too hard, and I want to spend the rest of my life with you." Jeff smiled before turning completely to face me. He enclosed my face with his hands and brought his face even closer to mine. I expected him to kiss me; instead our foreheads connected as Jeff took a deep breath. "Can I speak now?" He whispered. I shook my head and wait to hear what he has to say. "You beat me to the punch. I knew at your brothers' wedding that I wanted to marry you. I was waiting for the right time to ask. I laugh as he continues. "Yes, I'll marry you. Yes, I will spend the rest of my life bound to you, and I'm sorry if I scared you."

"No, I'm sorry, I should have been more understanding..."

Jeff cut me off with his lips, kissing me ardently before saying more. "You should be exactly who you are, except for the Noah part. I always want you to tell me how you feel and you can believe I will tell you how I feel." Again I shook my head, and this time I couldn't stop the tears from streaming down my face. "Why are you crying?"

"I'm just in a really good place right now, I'm happy Jeff; I

feel like the luckiest man alive right now.” Jeff laughed again while standing and reaching for my hand. He pulled me close before saying, “Let’s go inside.”

I walked into the room designated as ours whenever we visited Geraldine. I didn’t bother turning on the light because I knew Jeff was following right behind me. I stood by the window looking out onto the lake as he walked up and encircled me with his arms. He took a deep breath in my hair as he often does, and I was lost from the feel of his body against mine and his intoxicating scent. Turning in his arms, I stepped out of my shoes and started to unbutton my shirt with the intention of removing every stitch of clothes on my body. I dropped the shirt to the floor and was about to start on my pants when he stopped me. Looking up into his eyes, even in the dark, I could feel his love. He pulled me by the waist, as he walked towards the bed and proceeded to finish removing my pants. Standing before him completely naked, his eyes roamed my body as if he is

seeing it for the first time. Without standing Jeff removed his shirt, unbuckled and push his jeans and underwear below his knee, releasing his stiff cock. "Come here, straddle me," He whispers while leaning back on his elbows. My body whimpers from anticipation, I kneel onto the bed, doing as he commanded. He kicked his pants and underwear off then lift me with his lower body as he crawled backward further onto the bed. Jeff ran his hand from my butt to the nape of my neck, then pull me into a searing kiss, before finding my crease and rubbing his finger up and down my hole. Realizing we need to breathe, he releases my tongue and trail kisses down my neck and chest. "You don't have to prepare me, just do it," I whisper into his ear. He ignored me and pushed his index finger deep inside my hole. "I will never hurt you like that; he says as he inserted a second finger and began to scissor my ass. Moaning and groaning from the sensation of what he is doing to me, I couldn't find the words to tell him that loving me like this isn't hurting me. It wasn't long before he leaned back onto the bed head

and commands me to ride him. I stood up on my knees, and slowly impaled myself on his dick. I pushed myself down until there wasn't space for air between his dick and my ass. I leaned my head onto his shoulder and waited for my body to acclimate to his throbbing dick. He held me close, his hands going up and down my back and through my hair. Finally, I push up onto my knees and abruptly dropped down. We both moan from the feel of our connected bodies. I did it again, and again we reacted the same. The feeling of Jeff deep inside of me was so intense; my head was spinning. Jeff wanted more, so he took charge, and I let him.

Chapter Twenty Four

JEFF

IT'S LATE into the night, and I should be sleeping, but I can't; after our intense lovemaking, Beck fell straight asleep, and I am wide awake, I'm watching him as he stirs and reaches for me. I eased closer to him and wrapped my arms and legs around him while laying my head on his pillow. Eventually, sleep finally came.

When I opened my eyes again, it's morning, and I wake to the smell of coffee. As I open my sleepy eyes, Beck is sitting next to me waving a cup of coffee under my nose. "Wake up sleepy head, we have to get to the hospital." I held his arm and took the coffee from him and began to sip it before answering him. "What time is it?" I finally asked. "It's early, good morning." I didn't return his greeting; instead, I put the

cup down and pulled him into my arms and kiss him slowly. Our lips barely parted, I put my forehead against his as we held each other. My phone rings, ending our moment. Beck reach for it and hand it to me. "It's my uncle," I said as I accept the call. "I'm sorry I didn't call you last night," I said before he had a chance to speak. "Is she okay? I spoke to the Gardener, he said she is still in the hospital." I pull on my boxers and walk to the balcony as I continued to speak. "She is still in the hospital but only as a precaution. I spoke to the doctor last night, he says her hip was sprained, not broken. He wanted to keep her overnight so that she stay off her feet, he is releasing her this morning."

"Well, that's good to hear."

"Max, I need your help, I have to find a nurse/companion to come and live here at the house, do you have any suggestions?" Max laughed before saying, "I actually know someone back in England that would be perfect. She isn't a nurse though, but she loves gardening and may relocate to the states if I ask her."

“Who is she? And she lives in England?”

“She has been with the family since your father, and I was kids. She used to take care of the two of us while managing our homes. Now her daughter has taken on the responsibilities. I think she would be perfect Jeff if I can convince her to come.”

“Can you call her, please? Do we need to do anything legally to get her here?”

“Yes, but I will take care of that, I'm going to call her now and tell her I need her to fly to the states to see me. She should be here in a few days.”

“Are you sure she would be interested?”

“Let me work on it. If Clarissa isn't, I will know right away.” I hung up the phone and turned to find Beck leaning against the door, waiting for me to end the call. “It sounds like your uncle knows someone to come and live here.” I smiled as I walked towards him and pull him into my arms. “He does, she lives in England.”

“I heard, if your uncle thinks she would be perfect then she

must be. What? Why do you look worried?" "I'm not worried about that, I just thought that I need to be here for awhile. You may have to go back to New York without me."

"Jeff, I'm not going anywhere. I've already called Glen, I told him I need a few weeks off because of a family emergency."

"You are amazing, do you know that?"

"I'm not amazing Jeff, I'm just in a relationship that's important to me, and I need to be here to support you. Now, we should get ready before we see your grandmother pulling up in a cab." I laughed because I know that's something she would definitely do.

As we walked into the hospital room, I found my grandmother already up and dressed. "I was beginning to think I was going to have to find my own way home." She said. Beck and I looked at each other and started to laugh.

"What's so funny?"

"Nothing Grans, are you ready to go home? Have you seen the doctor yet this morning?"

“No, I’ve been waiting all morning, if he doesn’t show up in a few minutes, I am leaving.”

“You can’t leave until you see the doctor Geraldine, Beck says while sitting next to her on the bed. “Beck, I love you, you are practically a part of this family, but I am telling you if that man doesn’t show his face in a few minutes, I am gone, so one of you better go see where he is.”

I’ll go, Babe can you please keep her here even if you have to sit on her?” Beck laughed before saying, “I’ll do my best.”

I was about to open the door when Dr. Hardwick walked in with a big smile on his face, “Good morning Boys and Good Morning Geraldine, are you ready to go home?”

“I’ve been ready for hours, I was just about to leave.” My grandmother said in an annoyed voice that didn’t seem to phase the doctor. “How is your hip this morning Geraldine, is it feeling better?”

“It’s a little sore, but nothing I can’t handle, can we go now please?”

“Sure, I just need to have a nurse take your vitals then you

can go home.”

“The nurse already came in and took my vitals or whatever you call it. What more do you need?” Dr. Hardwick ignored my grandmother’s annoyance as he reached for her chart and began to review it. “You are right Geraldine, sorry for the confusion. I am signing your release papers right now, and I just need to remind you of the promise you made to stay away from ladders and stairs for a week.” My grandmother was about to continue with her fussing when I spoke up. “Don’t worry doc, I’m personally going to make sure she follows your instructions.”

“Good, I need to see her in about a week. Geraldine, please follow my caution. I would hate to hear that you re-injured your hip.” My grandmother didn’t say anything as she and Dr. Hardwick stared at each other. He then turns and walked out of the room, but not before saying goodbye to Beck and I. We had to wait another half hour for Grans to be wheeled down to the lobby, it was a feat keeping her still while hospital procedures were followed.

We weren't In the car five minutes before Grans ask, "What do you mean you are going to see to it I followed his instructions? You have to go back to work."

"We are not going anywhere, Grans. Beck and I are going to stay for a few weeks. And Uncle Max is working on getting someone to come and stay with you."

"Who?"

"Someone who loves to garden as much as you do. That's all I know, for now, we are waiting to hear from Max."

"I'm telling you, Jeff, I will not have any riffraff coming to stay in my house."

"Grans, I wouldn't want anyone we don't trust to stay with you either. Let's just see what Max comes up with before you hit the roof, okay?" We didn't say more during the half hour ride back to the house. Once inside, my grandmother starts to look around the house as if she is checking to see if anything is missing. "Grans, I swear I didn't rob you," I said jokingly. "I'm just glad to be home that's all." She turns to look at me with a serious look on her face, "Jeff, I want you

to promise me that if something happens to me, you won't keep me in a hospital." Suddenly emotional, I walked up to my grandmother and wrapped my arms around her.

"Nothing is going to happen to you," I whispered. "I know, but if something does, I want you to know that a hospital is the last place I want to be, okay." We pulled apart and stare at each other intently before I shook my head to acknowledge what she said.

"Okay, so if I can't go up the stairs, this means I am going to sleep in the guest room down here. The two of you need to go into my room upstairs and bring down a few things I will need." That was how we spent the rest of the morning, going back and forth to make sure my grandmother was comfortable. Around noon, we are seated on the porch getting ready to have lunch when out of nowhere she asked, "So when are the two of you planning on getting married? Or is this something the two of you are not interested in."

BECK

Geraldine's question shouldn't have surprised us, but the look on Jeff's face and I'm sure mine, said she did. Neither of us said a word, we just looked at each other until Jeff finally respond to his grandmother. I thought he would rebuff her, after all, it was only last night that I proposed. However, that's not what he did. "Funny you should ask Grans, Beck proposed to me last night."

"Did he now," she exclaimed, as I sat there speechless. Jeff suddenly started to laugh, and Geraldine joins in. "You should see your face right now Beck," Geraldine said. "You are beet red." Still speechless, Jeff decided to rescue me.

"Grans, can you please leave my fiancé alone before he changes his mind about marry me." I found my voice then because I knew the last thing I would do is change my mind. "Not a chance," I whispered. Jeff and I stare at each other as Geraldine looked on. "When the two of you set a date, why don't you have the ceremony here."

“Give us some time to make plans Grans, we just got engaged.”

“I just want the two of you to remember one thing, don’t wait for the right time, there is no such thing. Now eat before your food gets cold.”

Geraldine disappeared after lunch, and Jeff and I decided to take a hike on the land surrounding the house. Ten minutes into our walk Jeff stopped and turn to me, “When do you want to marry me?” He asked with a smile on his face.

“And, did my grandmother embarrass you back there?” I eased up as close to him as I could get, put my hand around the nape of his neck, pull his face down to meet mine and kiss him chastely. “I wasn’t embarrassed, she just caught me off guard, she knows us so well.” Jeff wrapped his arms around my waist, as he leaned against a tree, then return my kiss. “You are right, she does know us, at least she knows we are in love, the rest is just her speaking from experience. But seriously, when do you want to get married?”

“When do you want to get married?”

“Sooner rather than later, what do you think?” He asked.

“Sooner, sounds good to me, but I have to tell you something.”

“What.”

“I don’t want to get married here or in California. Is that okay?”

“We can get married where ever you want, just as long as you marry me, now where did you have in mind?”

“How do you feel about a beach wedding? I’ve always told myself that if I ever do get married, I wanted it to be barefoot on golden sand and clear blue water.”

“Which island?”

“I was thinking Martha’s Vineyard. Do you think your uncle would let us use his house there?”

“Are you kidding? If my uncle bought a house, it’s not just his, it’s mine too, of course, we can use it. If he bought it?”

“You mean he may have changed his mind about buying it?”

“I don’t know, we haven’t talked about it since we visited. I know Max said he was thinking of buying it, we will just

have to find out if he did. If he did, I'm sure we can use it, and if he didn't we would just look into renting it, okay?"

"Okay. Now I decided on the location, you pick the date."

We started to walk again, and I could tell Jeff was deep in thought. "Are you seriously getting flustered over picking a date?"

"No, the problem is, if I have a choice, the wedding would be next week, so I think if you want to make this special, you better pick the date."

"Fine, I'll pick the date, because there is no way to bring our family and friends together and plan a wedding in a week. What about early summer? That would give us a solid five months to send out invitations to family and friends and plan for the day."

"Are you thinking June?"

"I was thinking more like July. What if we get married on July fourth? Our wedding could be a big get-together with fireworks, what do you think?"

"It would be like planning a barbecue."

“Yeah, a fourth of July concept would be fun.”

“Let’s do it then, this July in Cape Cod,” Jeff said as he took my hand and we continued our hike through the woods.

Clarissa Johnston arrived three days later with Jeffs’ uncle. I was expecting a studious woman that was closer to Geraldine’s age, The woman standing next to Max was strapping, and at least ten years younger than Geraldine. Right away I thought Geraldine would hate her, and when the introductions were done, for a moment I thought I was right. However, that’s not what happened. Over the following week, Geraldine and Clarissa bonded over roses and tulips. Every morning for the past week, when we arrive downstairs, Clarissa and Geraldine were already up for hours doing something in the massive garden. On day eight, I guess she had enough of the three of us because she pleasantly announces we would be leaving after the weekend.

Satisfied the coupling was a success, Jeff and I decided to share our news with his uncle. “I was wondering when the two of you were planning on telling me. Geraldine told me within an hour of my arrival over a week ago.”

“Uncle Max, It’s not that we didn’t want to tell you, Grans and Clarissa were just a little more important.”

Max walked up to us, put his hands on both our shoulders, then said the words I knew he would say. “I am happy as hell for the two of you, I know Geraldine was on your mind, so tell me the details, when is the wedding, Geraldine said she offered to host the wedding.”

“Yes, she did uncle, but we kind of have other plans, and we need your help to make them happen.” Jeffs’ uncle pulled up chairs, told us to sit as we re-hash our plans for the wedding. Turns out Max did buy the property on Martha’s Vineyard, and it was ours to use. “Can I make a recommendation to the two of you?” Max asked as our conversation was about to end. “Uncle Max, you don’t have to ask if its okay to share your thoughts. I love and respect

you and would listen to anything you have to offer and I'm sure Beck feels the same way." I look at Jeff after he spoke and bow my head in agreement.

"Don't look so serious," Max said. "I'm only going to recommend hiring someone to plan the wedding. I know it will be on the fourth of July and it will be fun, but remember, before the fireworks and the party on the beach or in the backyard, tons of planning needs to happen. I also don't want to see the two of you argue over logistics. "Jeff laugh before saying, "We are not going to argue over anything uncle, but I think you are right about hiring someone, Beck what do you think? He asked.

"I agree. A wedding slash event planner would make our lives easier."

"Good, I know someone," Max said as he pulled out his phone and started to dial. Jeff and I looked at each other as we realize our plans are suddenly in motion. "We have to call your parents and your brother, Jeff said as we stand and walk away from Max who was in deep conversation with

our about-to-be Wedding Planner. "I know, I thought maybe we would wait until we were back in New York, but I think we should call them today."

"Let's go upstairs and call them now," Jeff said as we walked into the house. In our bedroom I called my parents first to share the news; to say they were ecstatic would be an understatement. Next, we called Alex and Georgie. While we did share some of the details with my parents, Alex wanted to know every plan we've made so far. We were still on the phone an hour later when Max called us to come downstairs where he told us our Wedding Planner is going to meet us in New York in two days.

As Geraldine wished, the three of us return to New York on Max's private plane. He dropped us off in front of our building, and we were about to walk into the lobby when Jeff stopped walking and pull me to stop with him. "So let's decide right now which apartment are we going to stay in together, yours or mine?" Jeff asked. "Yours for now, but I

was thinking,” I said as I took his hand and we walked further into the building. “What were you thinking?” Jeff asked when we were in the elevator.

Chapter Twenty Five

JEFF

As tired as I am, as we walked into the apartment, I can't help but think of my grandmother, hoping she will be okay. As Beck wandered the apartment, I walked onto the balcony lost in thought. I'm also thinking of the man I'm about to marry and how much he is the source of my happiness. "Are you trying to sneak up on me?" I asked as the object of my thoughts stood not far from me. "No, I was just watching you and wondering what you are thinking about." I turn to face him and smile, I watch as he walked to the refrigerator, took out a bottle of water and drank half of it before walking towards me. "So are you going to tell me what you are thinking about?" He asked as he eased up close to me and

wrap his arms around my waist. "I was thinking about you." Beck raised his head off of my chest and look up into my eyes. "What were you thinking about?" Kissing him gently on the lips, I decided to share my thoughts. "I was thinking how much I love you, how much I feel loved by you, and that I can't wait for the fourth of July. Placing his forehead against my chest, I heard him whisper, "I know the feeling." "So what were you thinking about the apartment?" I asked as the thought occurred to me. "I thought that we either need to move to a bigger apartment or turn our two apartments into one big apartment. My father probably wouldn't object if we did some construction on the apartments and merge them."

"I actually like that idea better than us moving; do you really think your father will agree? And, isn't your father selling his properties in New York to my uncle?"

"Yes, but we don't know what's going on with their plans, you need to ask your uncle, and I need to ask my father. Either way, if your uncle buys the property, he won't tell

you, you can't merge the apartments."

"No he won't, are you sure you don't want to move?"

"I'm sure if you are." I kissed his forehead as I whisper,

"Let's go to bed, I'm tired, and tomorrow we have to meet with our Wedding Planner."

"That's right, I almost forgot about that."

"What! How could you forget? Laughing as he took my hand and walked towards the bedroom he muttered, "I didn't forget, now let's go get some sleep."

I woke the next morning to the sound of laughter in the apartment. Looking over at the clock, it was well past eleven. I can't believe I slept so late and Beck didn't wake me. I jumped out of bed and walked straight into the shower. I didn't linger, because I knew the guest with Beck in the other room was the Wedding Planner. I pulled on a pair of jeans and a tee shirt and walked towards the laughter. As I walked into the living room, Beck saw me first and stood to walk towards me. "You're awake, did we wake

you?" I didn't answer Beck instead I held out my hand and introduce myself to the wedding planner. "Good morning, I am Jeffrey Corbin."

"I know Jeff, is it okay that I call you Jeff, it's hard not to know who you are, you look just like your uncle, who is a great guy by the way, and it's so good to meet you, and I am rambling aren't I?" I laughed before asking the one thing she didn't share. "What's your name?"

"Oh sorry, it's Sophie, it's so nice to meet you."

"Sophie and I have been getting acquainted until you wake up," Beck said. "She already has tons of ideas for our themed wedding. Isn't that great?" Beck asked as he pulled me towards the seat opposite Sophie.

"Sophie, you've done other jobs for my uncle?" I asked as I sat next to Beck. "Oh yes, my company is responsible for all events held by your uncle, whether private or public."

"So planning a small wedding of just family and friends should be a piece of cake."

"I would think so Mr. Corbin,"

“Oh please, Jeffrey is fine, Babe, do you want to start telling Sophie what our plans are?”

For the next two and a half, almost three hours, Beck and I shared with Sophie what we wanted for a wedding in five months. The entire conversation took nearly three hours because Sophie didn't hesitate to take our ideas and embellish them. By the time we were finished, I was overwhelmed with all the information she shared. Beck, on the other hand, seem to have no problem keeping up with Sophie's elaborate plans. As I stood and watch them interact, I could tell that Beck liked her and she and he were going to create the wedding Beck wants.

I had called the hospital the previous day to let Dr. Munch know I would be returning to work the following day and I would like to meet with him. My plans is to ask for a reduction of the hours I work at the hospital. If that's not something he can do, I am going to have to find another hospital to work, or go into private practice. I was so deep

in thoughts, I didn't realize I had walked away from Sophie and Beck. Beck walked into the bedroom where I aimlessly walked and sat beside me on the bed. "Are you okay?" He asked with concern in his voice. I nudge him with my shoulder before answering, "I'm fine, Sophie and you are finish making plans?" Still concern, Beck said, "Yeah, she is gone, Jeff if you think this is going to be too much we can make other plans. I know Sophie was getting a bit carried away, I could..." "

I didn't let him finish. I grabbed him by the nape of his neck and kiss him hard. He returned the kiss and when we finally pull apart I said, "You are rambling, and nothing you want to do with Sophie is too much, I thought the two of you had things under control in there." Beck lean his head on my shoulder still breathing hard from our kiss. "I thought the reason you walked away was..." "

"You don't need me to make every decision, I want you to have the wedding you want. My only requests are that the wedding happens as soon as possible and that you are the

one I'm going to marry, the rest, all the planning is up to you, okay." Beck smiled, then shook his head as he kneel on the bed to straddle me. "We have a whole day before we have to go back to work, what will we do with all this time." I laughed as my hands span the length of his thigh and as the bulge in his pants grew. It was very obvious what we were going to spend the rest of the day doing.

The next morning Beck and I shared a cab as we made our way to work. The taxi dropped him off first, then I was on the way to meet the department head to discuss the changes I wanted. The one thing I will learn today is how valued I am at this hospital. My appointment with Dr. Munch was first thing in the morning. Instead of going to the Doctors locker room to change, I went straight to his office. He was already there waiting for me when I knocked on the door. "Come in Dr. Corbin, how is your grandmother?" He asked as I walked into his office and closed the door. "She is much better, thanks for asking."

“Good, I’m glad to hear it, now let’s talk about you and your expectations.” With those words, Dr. Munch and I spent the next hour discussing my future at the hospital. Turns out I didn’t have to worry about my value. By the time the meeting ended, my hours were reduced by almost half which was perfect. I’m also no longer expected to be on call, so no more late nights trips to the hospital. For me, this means my probationary period is over, and I am now fully ensconced in the cardiology unit. My meeting for the morning behind me, I became reacquainted with my roster of patients, so much so, I lost track of time. Before I knew it, lunchtime had past, and it was almost time to go home. I smiled, knowing who will be there waiting for me. I finish making my rounds and call Beck to see if I needed to bring home dinner. “Don’t you dare,” He said when I asked. “I just spent hours in this kitchen making us a meal, just get home,” He continued. I almost laughed out loud as I walked to the doctors' locker room to change and go home to my man slaving in the kitchen, something he surely doesn’t

have to do.

BECK

“What! When! Are you serious?” Patrick practically screeched, when I told him of my engagement. “You need to tell me everything, starting from the beginning and don’t you dare leave out a single detail.” For the next hour and until the other employees started to arrive, I told my best friend about Jeffs’ Grandmother and how I proposed to him and how we plan to marry in five months in Cape Cod. Hours later, I’m laying in Jeffs' arms as we watched tv. I wanted to talk about our wedding plans, I also wanted to talk about a subject he and I never talked about. I wanted to talk about Jax. “Are you going to invite Jax to the wedding?” I asked, my eyes still focus on the tv. Jeff gently pulled my head up to face him. “I thought I would, yes. What do you think?”

“I know you care about him and we are inviting family and friends, so it makes sense for you to invite him. He also invited you to his wedding so... “ Jeff eased me off of his body where I was laying. I sat next to him by legs folded in front of me waiting for Jeff to respond to my comment. “I want to invite him. It’s actually important to me that he comes. Our friendship has been through a lot, mostly because of me and having him at my wedding would be cathartic. I think him knowing that I have found what I’ve been looking for in the love department would mean a lot to him. Jax being at the wedding would mean a lot to me. Does that make sense to you?” He asked while pulling me so that I was straddling him. “Have you called him yet?” I asked. “No, I actually wanted to talk with you first. A week later, we are sitting in a very upscale restaurant having lunch with Max. He wanted to know every detail of our plans for the wedding. A day earlier, we had shared the details with my parents and brother who planned to be in New York a full month before the actual date. We realized

that this July fourth was going to be epic, not just because of our plans to marry, but because of the roster of people that will be attending. We knew that my parents and Jeff's uncle were already making plans we knew nothing about. I know I should be scared, but what I really am is looking forward to taking Jeff's name. Yes, we talked about it and decided that I would become Beckett Copeland-Corbin. A mouth full if you ask me, but a name I will gladly take because it represents the love I have for the man I will be marrying. July fourth, five months away, but it couldn't come fast enough.

MR

together with their families

JEFFREY

CORBIN

+

BECKETTE

COPELAND

MR

invite you to their
wedding celebration!

SATURDAY, JULY 4TH, 2019 AT 4:00 PM

20 LA FLEUR PLACE,

MARTHA'S VINYARD

COME AND CELEBRATE WITH US!