



A Lesbian's Guide to Women

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Description: Annalise Finch is content - she has a job she enjoys, lives close to her family and friends, and spends most Wednesday nights drinking wine with her grandma. According to her grandma, though, she has lost her sparkle, and the only solution is to join a site to hook up with other women. The only problem (aside from a meddling grandma with a dirty mind) is Annalise doesn't like women. At least, that's what she always thought, but when she meets Brinley Adams, she starts to question everything.

Brinley Adams loves women, but not commitment. She is more than happy picking up ladies at the bar she works at to have a little fun. When a hot blonde walks into her bar and completely fails to go home with the woman she came with, what choice does Brinley have but to take her under her wings?

Their arrangement is perfect - Brinley will teach Annalise everything she knows about pleasing a woman, and in turn, Brinley gets to have a little fun herself. Since neither of them are interested in any sort of commitment, what could possibly go wrong? It's not like this is a romantic comedy.

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Page 1

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:37 pm

Prologue

“Yes. Right there. Oh, fuck. Yes.”

Annalise grabbed fistfuls of curly blonde hair while the most perfect mouth did the Lord’s work between her legs.

When the blonde added her fingers into the mix, Annalise was done for. She knew she wouldn’t be able to hold off her orgasm for long, but she was going to resist it as long as she could. One of the most important lessons she had learned these past few months was the harder she fought against an orgasm, the more explosive it would be.

Trying to hold off her climax also had the added benefit of making the woman currently going down on her work even harder. As if taking it as a silent challenge, the blonde moved her fingers even faster and worked her tongue harder. That was it. With one especially good flick of her clit, Annalise let go, screaming so loud she was sure the woman’s next-door neighbors heard her. Right now, she didn’t care though. Another great orgasm was in the books and Annalise felt completely satisfied, which was much different from when she was only having sex with men.

The blonde smiled up at her, the smirk on her face indicating that she was very proud of herself. When she ran the back of her hand over her mouth, Annalise was suddenly very ready for another round. The blonde scooted up the bed and greeted Annalise with a scorching kiss. Annalise could taste herself in that kiss, which was surprisingly hot.

When the woman pulled away from the kiss, she studied Annalise’s face for a minute,

her eyebrows furrowing as if she was putting a lot of consideration into the next words out of her mouth. “Would you...?” The woman cleared her throat as if she was embarrassed. “Mind if I did that again? You taste really good.”

Holy shit. Having sex with women was so much better than having sex with men. Just another thing Grandma was right about.

Chapter 1

“Excuse me? What did you say?” Annalise crossed her arms over her chest and stared at the older, shorter woman standing in front of her. She really hoped she had heard the words that had just left her grandma’s mouth incorrectly.

Her white-haired, eighty-two-year-old grandma simply laughed as if this was all some big joke, which honestly, Annalise really hoped it was. “You heard me. I said I signed you up for one of those fornication apps . It’s like those dating things you kids use nowadays since you apparently can’t meet people without a screen.”

Annalise shook her head. This was a nightmare. There was no way this was actually happening. “I know what you’re talking about. A hookup app that people use just to have....” Annalise let her words trail off. She couldn’t have this conversation with her grandma.

“Sex. You can say it, dear.”

Annalise cringed. Apparently, they were having this conversation whether she liked it or not. “I’m so confused right now. How... why would you do that?”

“I just figured you deserve to have a little fun. You’ve been mopey ever since that asshole dumped you. It’s been four months. It’s time to move on.”

Annalise tried to ignore the pain that shot through her heart at the mention of Grant. Just because she wasn't ready to settle down didn't mean she hadn't been in love with him. They had been together for four years. Of course she loved him. Of course it still hurt to be without him. "Grant's not an asshole. We just wanted different things." Meaning Grant was ready to settle down and have a family and that thought gave Annalise hives for some reason. "He's actually a really nice guy."

Grandma waved her hand. "Even more reason to do this. Nice guys don't make women come. Trust me, I would know. Your grandpa was a drunk asshole most of the time."

"But you just said..." Annalise scrunched up her nose when she realized what her grandma was getting at. "Ew."

Her grandma laughed once again. "Anyway, this app thing is great. It's for women only."

Now Annalise was really confused and apparently her grandma was too since that made absolutely no sense. "Only women? How? What are you talking about?"

Her grandma smirked as if Annalise had just asked a stupid question. "It's for women to find pleasure with other women."

Annalise wanted to gag at the sound of her grandma using the word pleasure, but she was too thrown off by the fact that her grandma had apparently signed her up for a gay hookup app. "Grandma, I'm straight."

"Sure you are, dear." Before Annalise could question what her grandma meant by that, she waved her hand. "Anyway, that doesn't really matter. It's not like you're going to be looking for your soulmate. Just a good time."

“And you think I’m going to find that with another woman?” Annalise swallowed hard. Just the thought made her nervous.

“I think you should damn well try! I heard on TV that lesbians have over double the number of orgasms per year compared to straight women. And I believe it. They know what they’re working with.”

“Grandma.” Annalise took a deep breath. She refused to lose her cool with her grandma. She could give the lady a heart attack if she spoke too loud, let alone yelled at her. “I don’t like women.”

“You don’t have to like someone to have sex with them, dear. That’s kind of the point. At least let me show you how it works.”

Her grandma turned toward her kitchen and took her cell phone out of her purse. The cell phone that Annalise’s dad had bought her a few years ago that she refused to use because she had a house phone. Annalise had never even seen her pick it up. Her grandma slipped on her glasses then moved the phone farther and closer as if she was having trouble seeing it. “Ah! There it is.”

She held her phone toward Annalise, showing her the app entitled The Lit Clit . Annalise choked out a laugh. Now she knew this had to be a joke. “ The Lit Clit ? There cannot be any self-respecting women on that app.”

“This isn’t about respect. It’s about getting you to loosen up. I read an article recently that said the best way to get the stick out of your ass is by putting something else in it.”

Page 2

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:37 pm

This literally can't get any worse.

"We really need to keep you away from TV and magazines." Annalise clicked on the app and her name and picture popped up on the screen. "No offense, Gram, but how did you figure out how to do this?"

Her grandma shrugged. "I had your brother help me."

It just got worse.

"Grandma, no. Dalton knows that you signed me up for a one-night stand app?"

Grandma waved her hand. "Of course not. I told him it was for one of my friends from bridge club."

"You told him one of the ladies you play cards with every week wanted to be on The Lit Clit app? There's absolutely no way he believed that."

Annalise's grandma crossed her arms and narrowed her eyes. "And why not, young lady? We might be old, but we're not dead."

"Grandma, you used my picture and name."

Her grandma's features softened slightly. "Yes. That may have given it away."

"Listen, Grandma, I appreciate you looking out for me, but I'm good." Annalise forced a smile. "I promise."

“You’re twenty-seven, dear. If you’re not getting married, you should at least let yourself have some fun.”

“I have fun. I don’t need to...” Annalise shook her head. She couldn’t even say the words out loud. Not in front of her grandma. Even if she was the one orchestrating all of this, it was still weird. “I can find other ways to have fun.”

“Just give it a try, please?” Her grandma gave her the most pathetic puppy dog eyes. “I’m old. I’m going to die soon. My only wish is for my only granddaughter to experience something new. Is that really so much to ask?”

Shit.

“You’re really going to pull the death card right now? Seriously?”

“You bet your ass I am.” The old woman laughed much louder than the situation warranted.

Honestly, Annalise couldn’t find any reason to laugh right now, unless... “Grandma, are you drunk?”

Her grandma scoffed. “Of course not. I’ve had a few glasses of wine today, but nothing more than usual.”

“After this conversation, I think I’m going to need a few glasses as well .”

“That’s not a problem.” Her grandma slowly started to walk toward her wine cabinet and motioned for Annalise to follow. She stopped just short and pointed at the mirror she was now standing in front of. “I want you to do me a favor. Look in there for me.”

Annalise did as her grandma asked and let herself take in her blonde hair that fell down her back in loose curls and the blue eyes that always seemed to grab people's attention.

“What do you see?”

Annalise tried her best not to roll her eyes at her grandma's question. “I see myself.”

Her grandma stood beside her and wrapped an arm around Annalise's back. “You know what I see? I see a cute little girl with curly pigtails who has grown into a beautiful young woman. You know what else I see?” Annalise shook her head and allowed her grandma to continue. “I see sadness. I don't see that same sparkle that I did when you were little. I want to see that sparkle again.”

Annalise sighed. Her grandma wasn't wrong exactly. Annalise couldn't say she was happy. Content, maybe, but she didn't have the same zest for life that she used to, and honestly, she had no idea why. She had a good job as an assistant manager at the apartment complex she currently lived in, which was only a few minutes from her parents' house and within walking distance of her grandma. She was also only about forty-five minutes from her older brother who owned a townhouse with his girlfriend in Philadelphia.

Since she was living in the same small New Jersey town where she grew up, she had a good group of friends. Unfortunately, they were also friends with her ex since they had reconnected after both moving back to their hometown post college, but that wasn't a big deal. She had meant what she said to her grandma. Grant was nice, and they had ended things very amicably, which was good since they still ran into each other now and then. And if she was being completely honest, the lack of spark her grandma was talking about had been there even before Grant dumped her. If anything, the breakup might have actually brought a bit of that spark back. She had gotten too comfortable with Grant. It was good, but it wasn't great.

Her grandma was also unfortunately right about the sex. The last year of their relationship, the times they actually did have sex, which wasn't much, it left a lot to be desired. It was... fine... just like every other part of her life.

“Okay, I'll do it.” Shit. Why did I just say that? Annalise held a finger in the air. “One girl. If it's extremely uncomfortable or I don't enjoy it, I'm done.”

Much to Annalise's surprise, her grandma held up her hand. “I need you to give me five.”

Page 3

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:37 pm

“You want me to have sex with five women?” Even though Annalise did not want to talk numbers with her grandma, that would almost double her current number of sexual partners.

“It doesn’t have to be sex. Just some type of fun .”

Annalise tried to ignore the way her grandma wiggled her eyebrows when she said fun because ew . “That’s...” Annalise shook her head. “Absolutely not. I can’t agree to that.”

Her grandma threw a hand over her chest and squeezed her eyes shut. “Ouch. My heart. I don’t think it will hold up much longer. Probably have another heart attack coming on. This might be the one that finally kills me.”

Annalise knew this was all fake since her grandma not-so-subtly opened one eye clearly to check her reaction, but still. She wasn’t lying. She had already suffered from three heart attacks, and the last one almost did kill her. “You don’t fight fair.”

Annalise tried her best not to crack a smile in response to her grandma’s. She groaned and shook her head. “I’ll see what I can do, okay? I’m not making any promises, but I’ll at least download the app and give it a try.”

“That’s my good girl.” Annalise’s grandma patted her hand. “Now, what do you say we split a bottle of wine?”

“ Please. ”

An hour, and way too much wine later, Annalise was back in her apartment. Since she was already buzzed, she figured this was a better time than ever to log on to the Lit Clit app. She giggled as she stared at the name once again.

Seriously, what the hell?

The first screen that popped up on the app was a reminder that regular STD testing was required and proof of testing had to be provided to be able to continue using the app.

Well, that's pretty cool.

She set her location to Philadelphia because the last thing she needed was for someone from her hometown to find her on the app.

She was surprised when she started scrolling and found that most of the women looked extremely normal. Most of them were even incredibly hot. She didn't need to be gay to appreciate that. She wasn't sure if it was the wine, but as she scrolled from one woman to the next, she actually felt a tinge of excitement over what she was about to do. Her scrolling was interrupted by the sound of her phone ringing.

She smiled when she saw that it was her best friend, Nathalie, calling. Nathalie had been her best friend since elementary school, and Annalise was sure she would get a kick out of what she was currently doing. "What's up, babe?"

"I'm bored. Wanna order pizza and watch a terrible Lifetime movie?"

"I can't think of anything I want to do more." Annalise burped and giggled at herself.

“You were drinking wine with your grandma again, weren’t you?”

Annalise laughed once again. Her best friend knew her too well. “How’d you know?”

“Lucky guess. She up to her usual antics?”

You don’t know the half of it. “Oh, yeah. You’ll never guess what I’m doing right now.”

“What’s that?”

“Scrolling through a women-only hookup app.” Annalise let out another giggle.

“No way.” Nathalie’s voice rose in excitement. “It’s about time.”

“About time? What are you talking about?”

“What are you talking about?”

Weird.

“My grandma’s antics. She signed me up for a sex-only, women-only app called The Lit Clit. She’s insistent that I need to get laid by a woman, even though I’m obviously not gay.”

Nathalie made a noise that sounded like something between a cough and a laugh. “Obviously.”

Page 4

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:37 pm

“What’s that supposed to mean?”

“Forget it. Just stop scrolling for now. I need to be there for this. I’ll be over in fifteen.”

Nathalie hung up without saying another word, and exactly fifteen minutes later, there was a knock on Annalise’s apartment door.

Within ten minutes, they were sitting on Annalise’s bed with a bottle of wine between them and Annalise’s phone open to The Lit Clit . Both were laughing uncontrollably between sips of wine straight out of the bottle.

“So, what’s your type?” Nathalie asked as she swiped from girl to girl, barely taking the time to look at them.

Annalise rolled her eyes. What kind of question is that? “Men.”

“Well, that doesn’t help me right now, does it? Give me a little something at least. Do you prefer this girl?” Nathalie pointed to a woman with short hair that was dyed purple with an undercut. “Or this one?” Now, she pointed to the complete opposite—a girl with straight blonde hair that fell halfway down her back.

“Honestly, they’re both hot.” Which wasn’t a lie. As a woman, Annalise could certainly appreciate the female form and she had a lot of appreciation for both of these women.

Nathalie smirked. “Choose one.”

Annalise's gut reaction was to choose the blonde, but that didn't make sense. If she was going off her usual taste, she should have been more into the woman with short hair. Her stomach shouldn't dip at the thought of running her hands through... shit. "Definitely the short hair."

"Perfect." Nathalie took the phone in both hands and began typing.

"What are you doing?"

"I'm getting you a sex date. Duh."

"Wait. I don't think I'm ready." Annalise tried to grab the phone back from Nathalie but she yanked it away before she could, holding it high and out of reach.

The ding of the phone caught both Annalise and Nathalie's attention. "You better get ready," Nathalie said with a laugh. "That's her already."

Annalise squeezed her eyes shut. "What did she say?"

"She asked when you're free and suggested meeting up at some dive bar in Philly so you two could have some drinks and loosen up."

"That's bold. She didn't even ask anything about me?"

Annalise opened her eyes to find Nathalie rolling hers. "It's a hookup app, not Christian Mingle." A smirk spread across her face. "Except it sounds like she's ready to mingle." Nathalie lay back on the bed, closed her eyes, and sighed. "I'm so jealous. You're going to get your vagina licked so well. I love Boden, but sometimes I wish I was flexible enough to lick myself. He's got a great dick, but his tongue just doesn't cut it."

Annalise grabbed the phone that was now laying on Nathalie's stomach. "Please stop. The last thing I want is to hear about your husband's dick and lack of oral skills."

"Whatever." Nathalie's eyes popped open and a wicked grin spread across her face. "Maybe you could give him some pointers once you've hooked up with a few people."

"Absolutely not. I'm not teaching your husband how to go down on a woman. Plus... I don't know if I'm ever going to feel comfortable doing that."

"Ah. A pillow princess." Nathalie pointed to Annalise's phone. "You should add that to your profile. Your subjects deserve to know."

Before Annalise could respond, another message came through. What about this weekend?

She showed Nathalie the message and shook her head. "This girl isn't messing around."

Nathalie acted like she was studying the message then stole the phone once again, typing furiously before Annalise could get it back from her. "You have a fuck date on Saturday."

"Seriously, Nat? This is all happening way too fast."

Nathalie threw the phone back at Annalise, took a big chug of the wine, and winked. "Well, buckle up, babe. You're about to go on the ride of your life."

Holy.Fucking.Shit.

Chapter 2

Page 5

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:37 pm

Brinley

“So, what do you think? Date? Friends? Hookup ?” Brinley’s coworker, Maddie, pointed across the bar to where two new women were now sitting.

“Definitely just meeting here to have a few drinks before going back to someone’s place to have sex. It will be a one-time thing... if it even gets that far.”

Maddie squinted and scrunched up her nose. “I think you’re finally wrong for once. That blonde girl looks way too nervous for this to be a planned hookup . She doesn’t seem the type. It’s gotta be a first date.”

Brinley shook her head and laughed. “You’re wrong. Blondie is clearly new at this, hence the look of terror, which is the complete opposite of Professor Plum, who is looking at her like she wants to eat her up right here at the bar.”

Maddie stared at the two women for much too long. “Interesting take, but I still think you’re wrong.”

“Looks like it’s time to find out.” Brinley whipped Maddie’s ass with her towel before walking to the other end of the bar. She leaned down on the bar right in front of the two women and shot them her best smile. “What can I get you two?”

When the blonde made eye contact with her, Brinley noticed for the first time just how hot she was. Actually, hot didn’t suffice. This woman was drop-dead gorgeous. So gorgeous that Brinley almost forgot where she was and what she was doing. She ran her eyes down the length of the woman’s body, and she must have noticed,

because her face turned the slightest shade of red.

The sound of a throat clearing interrupted whatever this moment was that they were having. “We’ll take two tequila shots,” Purple Hair said, sounding annoyed. She must have noticed Brinley’s wandering eyes.

Brinley ignored the obvious disdain for her and smiled at the woman. “Each or total?”

“Total,” the purple-haired woman said at the same time the blonde said, “Each.”

Brinley couldn’t help but smirk. These two definitely weren’t leaving the bar together.

“Five shots coming up.”

Purple Hair furrowed her eyebrows. “Five?”

“Yep.” Brinley pointed between the two women and then at herself. “Two for each of you and one for me.”

“That’s a bit unprofessional, don’t you think?” Purple Hair crossed her arms and lifted an eyebrow in challenge .

Is this seriously because I checked out the woman she is just here to hook up with?

Brinley waved a hand and smiled. “Nah. All part of the job.”

Before the woman could say anything else, she got to work filling five shot glasses with tequila. After she pushed four over toward the women, she held up her own glass. “To whatever this is. I hope it goes well for both of you.”

This finally made Purple smile, but instead of looking at Brinley, she stared at the woman beside her, that territorial look back in her eyes. She lifted her glass toward the woman, completely ignoring Brinley. “To new beginnings.”

Brinley smiled as she took her shot. She was right about them just meeting. New beginnings sounded more along the lines of a first date, but she was still sticking to her first assumption that this was nothing more than a hookup.

“What else can I get you two?” she asked once all the shots were gone.

“I’ll take Sex on the Beach,” the blonde said, her face turning red once again.

Brinley inadvertently licked her lips. I’m sure you would. “Great choice.” She forced her eyes over toward Purple. “And for you?”

“I’ll just take whatever beer you have on tap and some privacy, please .”

The way she said please made Brinley want to slap her, but unlike what this woman believed, she was a professional. “Coming right up.”

She got the drinks ready then set them down in front of the women and pointed toward the other end of the bar. “I’ll be over there. Holler if you need me.” She winked at the blonde because she couldn’t resist.

“So, what’s the verdict?” Maddie asked when she was standing beside her.

“Inconclusive.” Brinley was disappointed in herself that she hadn’t walked away with any answers.

“I knew it. I told you that you were wrong this time.”

Page 6

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:37 pm

“I never said I was wrong. I just need some time to gather more evidence.”

“Then why are you over here?”

Brinley gritted her teeth. She knew Maddie was going to enjoy this way too much.

“Miss Amethyst shooed me away.”

Maddie cackled so loud that it caught everyone’s attention. “She totally caught you checking out her date, didn’t she?”

“First of all, it’s not a date. Second of all, yes, that’s exactly what happened. Can you blame me though?” Brinley looked at the blonde who was already staring over at her, the small smile that spread on her lips when their eyes met, causing Brinley’s stomach to churn. “She’s hot.”

Brinley forced her eyes away because she couldn’t handle the way this woman was affecting her. She could barely breathe with those eyes on her, which was not something that happened to Brinley Adams . She was way too cool to be acting that way. At least, that’s how she wanted other people to see her, even if she knew the truth, which was that she was a total nerd. No one else needed to know that though.

“I can’t disagree with you there. Purple is hot too though. I’d do both of them... preferably together.”

“Of course you would.”

Maddie was still talking, but Brinley tuned her out so she could catch the

conversation at the other end of the bar.

“So, what made you decide to join The Lit Clit ?” Purple asked.

The Lit Clit? What the hell?

“Oh, um... actually... my grandma signed me up.”

Purple choked on her beer. “Your grandma?” She laughed quietly. “She sounds fun.”

Blondie’s eyes went wide. “Too much fun.”

“Why did she sign you up?”

“Apparently, I’m not having enough fun, and she thinks sex with a woman is exactly what I need.”

Damn, this girl is honest. Hot.

“And what do you think?”

“I’m having fun so far.” Blondie smiled. Her smile dropped slightly as she stared down at her drink. “If I’m being completely honest, you’re my first, so I’m not exactly sure how all of this is supposed to go.”

“Your first random hookup or first time meeting someone from this app?”

“Both.” Blondie cleared her throat. “Also, my first... um... woman.”

Brinley thought her eyes might pop out of her head. She definitely didn’t see that coming.

“So, I’m just an experiment?” Purple asked loud enough that people who weren’t already listening in on the conversation could hear.

Unnecessary.

The blonde looked around, clearly waiting for people to stop staring at the two of them, and began talking when everyone’s attention was back on their own conversations. “No. That’s not... that’s not it at all. I promised my grandma I’d give it a try.”

“Give what a try? Lesbianism?”

Ouch.

“I think we got off to a bad start. Maybe we can just start over.”

Purple Hair shook her head. “I think we should forget about it. Clearly, we’re on a completely different page.”

Before the blonde could say anything else, the purple-haired woman threw cash on the bar and walked out. The blonde’s eyes immediately landed on Brinley. Normally, Brinley would look away so the woman didn’t realize she was already staring at her, but it was too late. Instead, she smiled at her while she mixed a drink. She didn’t take her eyes off the woman as she added in the ingredients and shook it up before pouring it into a cup. To the woman’s credit, she didn’t look away either, which had Brinley’s body buzzing.

Page 7

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:37 pm

“On the house,” she said as she sat the drink down in front of the blonde.

The blonde studied the drink, almost as if she was trying to decide if it was poisoned.

“What is it?”

“A little something I made up. Those lucky enough to try it call it The Brin .”

The blonde looked from the drink to Brinley. “So, is that your name? Brin?”

“It’s Brinley, but naming the drink completely after me felt a bit pretentious.”

The blonde smiled a smile that lit up her whole face. It was a smile that made Brinley feel like something had been lit up within her as well. “You’re right. Much less pretentious when you remove the last three letters.”

Were they flirting? It felt like they were, but Brinley was pretty sure this woman wasn’t even gay, which meant it was all wishful thinking. Whatever. Whether or not the woman was flirting , this banter was still fun, so Brinley was going to enjoy it.

“And if you were going to name a drink after yourself, what would it be called?”

Much to Brinley’s surprise, the blonde started to laugh. “Does that actually work?”

“Does what work?”

“That terrible attempt to get my name. Does it actually work with other women?”

Oh, so that’s how it’s going to be.

“It does when they’re actually into women.” Brinley ran a hand through her long, wavy brown hair with streaks of blonde and caramel that fell down just one side of her back, since she had an undercut on the other side. “Or maybe it’s just the hair.”

Brinley could have sworn she saw the blonde subtly lick her lips as she watched the scene in front of her, but it happened so quickly she couldn’t be sure. “Or the tattoos,” the blonde added as she ran her eyes down the arm that was practically a full sleeve at this point.

“So, um, are you?” With the way the woman was staring at her, Brinley could barely get her words out, and she was pretty sure she hadn’t spoken a full sentence.

What the hell is wrong with me right now?

“Am I what?”

“Into women?”

“I’m not.” The woman cringed, and Brinley was sure she had just ruined whatever moment they were having, or whatever moment she wrongly assumed they were having. “If you heard any of my conversation with the woman I came with, I’m sure you now think I’m a terrible person.”

“Why would I think that?”

The blonde shook her head. “Just forget it. I’ve already said too much tonight. It’s for the best if I don’t embarrass myself for a second time.”

Brinley could have dropped it, but she wanted to hear more of what this woman had to say. Unlike the woman with the purple hair, Brinley was interested in hearing her explanation. “Do you mean because you’re on an app called The Lit Clit even though

you don't like women?"

The blonde cringed once again. "So you did hear that."

"Unfortunately. Now all I can picture is a clit that looks like Rudolph with a blinking red light on it. Or a little cartoon clit character wearing a headlamp. Is that what they use for advertising? Because, honestly, if they don't, they're missing out on a great opportunity."

Brinley was happy when the woman actually laughed at her terrible joke, but a few seconds later, her face became serious again. "So, you don't think I'm completely awful for joining that app when I'm not actually into women?"

"The app is called The Lit Clit. I'm going to assume women aren't going on there to find their soulmate. Am I right?"

The blonde nodded. "It's definitely for sex. There's even a whole disclaimer whenever you open the app that goes into excruciating detail over the fact that it's solely for pleasure and physical connection. Nothing more."

"Then you're completely fine. You haven't done anything wrong." Brinley rested her elbows on the bar and leaned closer to the other woman. "Listen, as a lesbian, I realize that sometimes straight women do use lesbians to experiment. I've even seen times when they enter into a relationship with another girl, just to decide it's not for them and leave the girl completely heartbroken. But that's not what you're doing. You're looking for fun, and what better place to find it than with another female? Women know what they're doing. Trust me."

"Now you sound like my grandma."

Brinley lifted an eyebrow. "Is your grandma a lesbian?"

“No, she just seems to think the only way to get the stick out of my ass is by having sex with another woman.” The blonde shook her head and laughed. “Her words. Not mine.”

Page 8

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:37 pm

“Smart woman.” Brinley stood up so she could hold a hand out toward the woman on the other side of the bar. “Let me see this app.”

Brinley tried her best to hide her smile when the woman did exactly what she asked and handed the phone over with The Lit Clit open on the screen. Just as she hoped, it only took a few clicks to get to the woman’s profile. Score. “Annalise, huh? Cute name.”

The woman, apparently Annalise, quickly grabbed her phone back. “I can’t believe you.” Annalise bit her lip, and Brinley could tell she was trying not to smile. Luckily, she was failing and the most perfect smile parted her lips.

“Girl’s gotta do what a girl’s gotta do, right?” Brinley leaned down on the bar once again. “Now that we’re on a first-name basis, could I give you some unsolicited advice?”

“Do I really have a choice?”

“True.” Brinley winked in a way she knew most women she was flirting with couldn’t resist. The fact that she knew Annalise could resist her somehow made it more exciting. A challenge. “Even though I appreciate the honesty and don’t actually think you’re doing anything wrong, I think you should keep the details to a minimum when you meet up with women from this app. They don’t need to know how many women you have or haven’t been with.”

Much to Brinley’s surprise, the woman leaned in too, so now their faces were just inches apart. Brinley didn’t want to react to this, but her body had other ideas. Her

heart beat faster and her palms became sweaty. “Don’t they deserve some type of warning that I’m probably going to suck, though?”

Brinley moved in just a little bit closer, so close that the tips of their noses were now touching. “I highly doubt sex with you could ever suck.” When she licked her lips, she could have sworn the other woman took in a big, shaky breath.

Much too quickly, the woman backed away and took a big sip of the drink Brinley had made her. She closed her eyes as she swallowed it down. Then her eyes popped back open. “This is amazing. What is it?”

“My secret recipe.” Brinley winked once again. Was she overdoing it? More importantly, why was she overthinking it?

Annalise closed her eyes and took another sip, this time letting out a small moan as the drink traveled down her throat. That moan hit Brinley in places it definitely shouldn’t, but what the hell. She was only human. “I don’t even remember what we were talking about.”

“Huh?” Apparently, Brinley didn’t remember how to form words at all. Get yourself together, dude. “We were talking about being bad at sex.” She ran her eyes up and down Annalise’s body. Yep, I’ve still got it. “Something that isn’t possible for someone who looks like you.”

“Oh, come on.” Annalise rolled her eyes but the smile stayed on her face. “That’s such a line, and we both know it’s not true. When I was in college, I hooked up with arguably the hottest guy on campus and it was awful.” Brinley was about to make a sarcastic comment, when Annalise held a finger in the air to stop her. “And don’t you dare say that’s because it was with a guy. I’ve been with plenty of guys who were good in bed.” When Brinley gave her a look, Annalise groaned. “Fine. I’ve been with a few guys who were good in bed. But they were all really good.”

“Is that a challenge?”

Her comment must have taken Annalise by surprise because she spit out some of her drink as her face turned a dark shade of red. “I... no... that... that wasn’t a come-on. I promise.”

Brinley reached across the bar and put a hand on Annalise’s shoulder, ignoring the fact it felt like she was playing with fire, a heat spreading through her body that she wasn’t used to just from some harmless flirting. “I was totally messing with you.” She removed her hand from Annalise’s shoulder and crossed her arms. “What we do need to do is talk about how to make sure your next sexcapade goes better than this one.”

Annalise shook her head. “I think I’m done. This was a bad idea.”

Brinley let her arms drop as she softened her demeanor. “What are you so worried about? Not liking it? Liking it too much?”

“I... I don’t know.”

Brinley studied the woman in front of her, trying to figure her out. It wasn’t easy. Annalise refused to give anything away. “You’re still worried you’re going to be bad at it, aren’t you?”

“I just feel like I’m going to embarrass myself. These are women who are on an app looking for sex. They are clearly experienced.”

“Then the solution is simple. You just need some experience.” Brinley smiled as an awful, and wonderful, idea popped into her head. It honestly might have been the greatest worst idea she ever had. “Experience with someone who understands where you’re at. Someone who knows the truth. Someone who can teach you. Who has

plenty of experience with other women but won't judge you for your lack of it." She lifted an eyebrow. "Someone like me."

"Are you seriously offering to teach me how to have sex with women?" When Brinley nodded, Annalise laughed. "And I'm guessing you want me to believe you're totally doing this out of the kindness of your heart?"

"Absolutely not. It's 100% selfish on my part. I've wanted to fuck you ever since you walked in here. I'm not going to deny that."

The blush was back, but to her credit, this time Annalise recovered quickly. A small smile played on her lips as she sat her elbow on the bar and rested her chin in her hand. "And what makes you think you're qualified for this position?"

"Aside from the fact that I'm twenty-four, in excellent shape, and great in bed, I happen to know a lot about human anatomy."

Annalise lifted an eyebrow, clearly intrigued. "From all the girls you've had in your bed?"

"That and from studying for the MCATs."

"MCATs as in... medical school?"

Brinley wasn't surprised by the shock on Annalise's face when she nodded her confirmation. People often judged her by her looks and didn't expect a girl like her to be smart enough to become a doctor. She should have been offended, but life was too short to let stuff like that bother her.

Page 9

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:37 pm

“Don’t let the tats fool you.” She tapped the side of her head. “I do have some brains up here.”

“I don’t doubt that at all.” Annalise threw her hand over her face, completely flustered all over again.

God, she’s adorable.

“Did I make it seem like that? I’m so sorry. I’m just impressed. Like extremely impressed. The fact that you are cool, funny, down to earth, and also incredibly smart and driven. That just makes you even hotter.”

“So, you think I’m hot?” Brinley could tell her normally smug grin had become a goofy one, but right now, she wasn’t worried about that. This apparently straight girl who was a certified ten thought she was hot.

Her smile was back. God, that smile. “I think you’re aesthetically pleasing.”

“Aesthetically pleasing enough to take me up on my offer?”

“This is completely crazy, but what the hell? Let’s do it.” Annalise took a big breath and blew it out. “When should we start?”

Brinley looked at the clock and shrugged. “I’m off in ten minutes.”

Chapter 3

Annalise

Annalise couldn't believe she had agreed to this. She had even shocked herself by following Brinley back to her apartment. Sure, physically, it wasn't a big deal since she lived in the apartment above the bar, but mentally, this was huge. Honestly, she wasn't sure what she was thinking, except that she had been expecting sex tonight, so now she was extremely turned on. It obviously had nothing to do with Brinley's perfect hair and those dark eyes that were accentuated by her even darker eye shadow. It certainly wasn't because Annalise wanted to run her hands along every tattoo on Brinley's body.

Shit. It's been way too long since I've had sex.

"Can I get you water or anything? Maybe a tour of the place?"

Annalise nodded her head, but when Brinley just kept staring at her with a questioning look in those dark eyes, she realized she hadn't actually answered her question. "Water and a tour both sound great. Thank you."

"Perfect. If you follow me over here..." Brinley led them about ten feet before their toes hit the linoleum of the kitchen floor. "We have now reached the kitchen." She threw Annalise a bottle of water then pointed back to where they had just come from. "The room way over there is the living room." She waved a hand. "And if you follow me down this very long hall, you will find the bedroom and bathroom."

The two of them walked down a hall that was more like a tiny alcove since it was so small. She opened two doors that were right across from each other. The bathroom was filled with dark blues and had a beach theme, and the bedroom was a lighter blue, with a more chic, simple look to it. The queen-sized bed took up most of the room, but in one corner there was a white dresser and in the other corner a matching desk with books piled high on top of it. "Not very exciting, but it's home."

“I love it.” Annalise truly did. She didn’t know Brinley well, but from what she knew , this house just felt like her .

“You don’t think it’s weird that I live above where I work?”

Annalise laughed even louder than she meant to. “Not at all. I am the assistant manager at an apartment complex... that I also live at .”

“No way!” Brinley stuck her hand in the air for a high-five. “Cheers to us for sticking it to the man and not wasting any of our day traveling to work.”

“I never thought of it that way. I’m just happy to not have to put on a coat.”

“Also a great point.” Brinley placed a hand on Annalise’s back to direct her out of the hallway and over to her couch. “So, what came first, the apartment or the job?”

“The job. I’ve worked there for two years. I just became the assistant manager last year then moved in four months ago.”

“Loved it so much you wanted to stay there all the time?”

Annalise could lie, but what was the point? Brinley already knew some of the most embarrassing information about her and had witnessed every part of her disastrous not-date. “Not exactly. My boyfriend broke up with me, and since we lived together, I needed a new place. Since I’m on staff, I can rent a room for almost nothing at the apartment complex, so I figured why not?”

“Sounds like a great deal to me. Minus the whole dumping part.”

Annalise waved a hand in the air. For the first time since their breakup, the mention of Grant didn’t cause her any sadness. “It’s fine. It was honestly for the best.”

“So you could give women a try?” Brinley playfully bumped her shoulder against Annalise’s.

“No. That was all my grandma . I didn’t feel any passion with Grant. I loved him, but the sparks were missing. Do you know what I mean?”

“Not exactly. I don’t do relationships.”

“Really? Never?”

Brinley shook her head. “And I don’t plan on it either. Past trauma and all that shit.”

Shit. Did I overstep? “Shoot. I’m so sorry.”

Brinley waved a hand and laughed. “It’s nothing crazy. I just grew up watching my parents be miserable as one marriage after another failed for them. I don’t want that for myself. The only example of a healthy relationship I ever saw was my grandparents, and when my grandpa died, my grandma almost did too. From a broken heart. Fuck that.”

“Are you close to your grandma?” Annalise hoped she was so maybe she could understand a little better why she couldn’t say no to her own.

“I was. She died two years ago after fighting cancer for four years. That’s when I decided I wanted to be a doctor. Not because I think I’m going to cure cancer or anything, but because I saw what a big difference it makes when doctors really care about their patients. I took my grandma to almost all of her appointments and I met a ton of different doctors. You could always tell which ones were just doing their jobs and which were passionate about helping people. Even when she got the worst news, when my grandma saw certain doctors, she still left with a smile on her face. I want to be that doctor for people. Even if I can’t do anything else, I want to always make them smile.”

Well, that was the sweetest thing Annalise had ever heard. “That’s really sweet.” Annalise put a hand on top of Brinley’s. “You’re going to kill the MCATs, get into the best medical school, and be the greatest doctor ever. I know it.”

“Technically, you don’t know that. For all you know, I could be really dumb.”

“Are you?”

“Nah. I’m not going to lie, I’m pretty fucking smart.”

“Oh, yeah? How smart?”

“Are you sure you want to know? I’m kind of a nerd. This information might ruin my allure and you won’t want to have sex with me anymore.”

I highly doubt that. Wait... what the hell. Damn hormones. Damn lack of sex. “Try me.”

“I got all As throughout undergrad, then all As and Bs in the prerequisite classes I had to take when I decided to go to med school. I actually just finished the last of those a few weeks ago, and now it’s time to get to studying so I can take the MCATs in January.”

“Jumping right into it, huh? Not going to at least let yourself relax over the summer? January is still over half a year away.” Annalise couldn’t imagine studying the same information over and over again for that long.

“I know.” Brinley sighed. “I just really don’t want to have to take it more than once. Plus, I’m trying to work as many hours as possible at the bar on top of studying. That way I can save up some money since I won’t be making any for a very long time.”

“Just be sure to make time for some fun.”

“I thought that’s what I was trying to do right now.” Brinley scooted closer to Annalise. “Speaking of which, why are we talking about me when we have other things to do?”

Annalise was going to say she didn’t know, but the truth was, she knew exactly why. “It’s what I do when I’m nervous. I ask a lot of questions as a form of avoidance. I guess it’s not the worst quality since it helps me learn about people, but it definitely ruins the mood in situations like this. What was your major in college, by the way?”

“It was sociology.” Brinley put a hand on Annalise’s knee. “You know we don’t have to do anything you don’t want to. This is only lesson one. Honestly, given how tonight went, we might want to start with how to actually make it to the part where you have sex.”

“Ouch.” Rude, but true. “Okay. Let’s practice.”

Brinley removed her hand and sat up taller as if she was preparing herself for her role. “So, what made you decide to join The Lit Clit? ” Brinley put a hand over her mouth and giggled. “Sorry. It might be immature, but I cannot take that name seriously.”

“Right? It’s ridiculous.”

After only a few seconds, Brinley’s face became serious again and she sat up even taller. “Anyway, let’s get back to it. What made you decide to join The Lit Clit ?”

Annalise’s face warmed. This wasn’t even real and she was still nervous. “My grandma—”

Brinley put a hand in the air to cut her off. “Stop right there. Listen, I personally think it’s weirdly adorable that your grandma signed you up for a lesbian fuck app, but that’s not what most people want to hear about to get in the mood.”

“So, if I’m not telling the truth, what should I say?”

“Keep it light and simple. What did you say the reason was for your grandma to sign you up?”

“She said, and I quote...” Annalise tried to keep a straight face, but she couldn’t keep her smile down thinking of her grandma’s words. “The only way to get the stick out of your ass is by putting something else in it.”

Page 11

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:37 pm

Brinley's serious demeanor completely shattered as she cackled and threw her head back against the couch. "No! She didn't actually say that, did she?"

"Unfortunately, yes. It's burned into my brain forever."

"Okay. So, we're getting closer, but maybe don't say that either. Vagueness is the key. Vagueness is good. Got it?"

Annalise nodded her head slowly. Who knew so much went into having sex with people? It'd been so long since she was with anyone other than her boyfriend, she forgot how it all worked. "I'll just say I needed a little more fun in my life."

Brinley clapped her hands together and pointed at Annalise. "That's perfect." She snapped back to seriousness once again. "So, what made you decide to join The Clit Lit?"

Annalise had to refrain from rolling her eyes. It felt like she was preparing for a job interview. "I just figured I could use a little more fun in my life."

"Oh, yeah?" Brinley smirked and leaned closer. "And what does a little more fun look like to you?"

With Brinley leaning in close and flirting with her, fake or not, Annalise felt like they were back in the bar. The banter from earlier she could do, so she ran her eyes up and down Brinley's body and licked her lips. "I'd say it looks a lot like you."

Brinley's body moved even closer now. "Oh, yeah? Does that mean you like what

you see?”

As if she was suddenly a different person, Annalise ran one finger across Brinley’s jaw and stared at her lips. “I’d like it even more if you were naked.”

Now, Brinley leaned over fully so her body was positioned above Annalise’s, hands on either side of her shoulders. They weren’t touching, but Annalise could still feel her everywhere. “In that case, maybe we should get out of here. I have a lot to show you.”

When Brinley lifted an eyebrow and licked her bottom lip, Annalise lost all control. She couldn’t think. Couldn’t rationalize what the hell was happening right now. It was something she had never experienced before, and she had no idea what was about to leave her mouth until the words were already out. “Maybe we should practice kissing now.”

Brinley’s eyes went wide, clearly surprised by Annalise’s boldness. She recovered quickly, that signature smirk returning to her face. “Overachiever, huh?” She leaned in so her lips were just inches from Annalise’s, the brush of her breath causing Annalise to quiver. “From what I hear, when it comes to kissing, guys just dive right in.” Their noses now touched just like they did for a brief moment in the bar. “Not me. I like to take my time. Really build up the moment. After all, the build-up is the best part, right?”

Annalise had never known it was before, but in this moment, the build-up was pretty fucking great. Right now, the build-up felt better than sex itself. God, I’m losing it. What’s happening to me?

As if reading her mind, Brinley ran a thumb across Annalise’s bottom lip. “Don’t overthink it.” She kept her thumb there, toying with Annalise’s lip as she closed what little bit of space remained between them.

Then their lips touched and an explosion erupted throughout Annalise's whole body. She wasn't sure if it was the build-up or the tension that had started back in the bar or maybe just the fact that she had been so repressed lately, but this was the best damn kiss of her entire life. She ignored the fact that it was a woman. A kiss was a kiss, and the lips that were currently on hers were the literal definition of perfection.

When a tongue slipped into her mouth, fireworks exploded behind her eyes. She never knew a kiss could feel like this. She never thought she could be transported to a completely different time and place just from the touch of a tongue. Damn.

Much too quickly, Brinley pulled away, studying Annalise's face for a minute before speaking. "How was that?"

"It was good." Annalise tried her best to keep her voice smooth and cool, although neither of those words had ever been used to describe her, so she was sure it wasn't working. To compensate, she grabbed onto the collar of Brinley's shirt and pulled her close again, relishing the way Brinley's eyes went so wide they almost looked cartoonish. "I think I need a little bit more practice though."

Brinley bit her lip, clearly in an unsuccessful effort to hide her smirk. She didn't give in to Annalise's advances though. Instead, she pulled away and sat back against the couch, leaving way too much space between the two of them. "We can get back to that soon, but first we need to figure out how this all is going to work."

Annalise nodded as if she understood, even though she wasn't sure she did. "You mean like ground rules? A way to make sure things don't get messy between us?"

"Honestly, I'm hoping things get very messy between us." Brinley's smile grew as she wiggled her eyebrows, making Annalise's stomach rumble as if she was suddenly hungry for whatever Brinley was talking about. "But, no, that's not what I'm talking about. This isn't some lame romantic comedy where we agree to be sex buddies then

fall madly in love. Seeing as how you're straight and I don't do relationships, that's the last thing we need to worry about. I more so mean a plan, like a timeline. What you want to learn, how quickly you want to learn it, when you want to meet up with someone else from the app."

"Oh... I... hadn't thought about any of that." And just like that, the nerves returned. Scratchy throat. Sweaty brows. Itchy palms. All the weird things that happened when Annalise began to feel anxious came at her at once.

Brinley must have noticed because she placed her hand back on Annalise's knee just like earlier. "Don't worry about it. I'll come up with something, write out a syllabus, and then you can take a look and let me know what you think."

Annalise had never experienced her anxiety disappearing just as fast as it came on until she burst into a fit of laughter at Brinley's words. The full-belly laugh continued as she kept hearing the word syllabus over and over in her mind.

Brinley furrowed her eyebrows and crossed her arms as her lips tilted up the slightest bit as if she was trying to hold in her own laugh. "I don't understand what's so funny."

Annalise wiped at the tears that had formed at the corners of her eyes and forced herself to stop laughing. "Did you really just say you're going to make me a syllabus?"

"You bet. A Sapphic Sex Syllabus , to be exact." A proud grin spread across Brinley's face as if this was the greatest idea in the world.

"Sapphic?"

Brinley shook her head and sighed. "Oh, sweetie, you have a lot to learn."

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:37 pm

“I sure do. Will I be getting a grade in this course?”

“I wouldn’t be a legit teacher if I didn’t grade you.”

Hope, excitement, and anticipation all bubbled up in Annalise’s stomach. Everything about this was so different, it might just be exactly what she needed to get some of that spark back in her life. She scooted closer to Brinley. “And what grade did I get on my kissing?” she asked as she brought her lips a whisper away from Brinley’s.

Brinley swallowed hard but quickly recovered, her lips brimming into the most beautiful smile. “Inconclusive. I guess I’ll have to keep testing you.”

Days later, Annalise couldn’t stop thinking about that kiss. Or kisses. It had definitely been multiple. That was the only explanation for the fact that she had spent three hours at Brinley’s apartment after they left the bar together. Of course, now that her lips were no longer entangled with Brinley’s, her excitement was also riddled with questions and anxiety. Was her perception clouded by all the alcohol she had consumed? Thank God for rideshares because the kisses definitely hadn’t sobered her enough to drive home. If anything, they only made her feel more intoxicated. Even if the alcohol hadn’t thrown off her judgment, it was just kissing. Where was her limit? Could she actually follow through and do more than that? Could she let another woman touch her? Would she be able to touch another woman? The scariest part of it all was how excited she was to find out. She had literally been counting down the days until she could see Brinley again and it was finally only a day away.

First, she had to survive Wine Wednesday with her grandma, an every-other-week tradition that had started when she moved back after college. When she walked up the sidewalk and found her grandma waiting by the door for her, she knew she was about to be attacked with a million questions.

“So...?” Her grandma raised both eyebrows.

“So, what?” Annalise asked, feigning innocence.

Her grandma smacked her butt with the newspaper she was holding as Annalise moved past her into the house. “You damn well know what, young lady. Have you been using the app?”

Annalise threw herself into a chair at her grandma’s kitchen table and sighed. “I hit a bit of a snag, but I’m working on it.”

“What kind of snag?”

Annalise could feel her face turning red at what she was about to admit to her grandma. She was really going to need this wine tonight. “The girl I met up with wasn’t too happy when I told her my grandma had set the app up for me and I wasn’t actually gay.”

Annalise’s grandma scoffed and waved her hand. “Some people are way too sensitive. I’m sure the next one won’t be like that.”

“I won’t be sharing any of that with the next one so I don’t need to worry.”

Her grandma’s eyes lit up as she grabbed a bottle of wine. “So, there will be a next one? Good girl!”

“We’ll see.” Annalise poured some wine into the glass her grandma sat in front of her and gulped it down to prepare herself to say the next part. She wasn’t sure why she was about to admit this to her grandma, but for some reason, she wanted to. “I actually have someone helping me.”

“Helping you how?” Her grandma sat down beside her and watched her with wide eyes.

“She’s going to... you know... teach me how to...” She moved her hands around in a circular motion that was in no way representative of anything she was talking about. “With a woman.”

Her grandma’s eyes lit up and she wiggled around in her chair as if she couldn’t contain her excitement. “I love it! Who is it? One of your friends? It’s Nathalie, isn’t it? I always got the feeling she wanted to tickle your naughty bits.”

“What?” Annalise spit out the sip of wine she had just taken. “First of all, if you never said tickle your naughty bits ever again, it would be too soon. Second of all, no, Nathalie does not want to tickle my naughty bits. She has a husband, for God’s sake.”

“Oh, I would totally tickle your naughty bits. I’m sure Boden wouldn’t care.”

Annalise’s grandma pointed to where Nathalie had just walked in the door. “See. I told you.”

Annalise looked between the two of them. “What the hell are you even doing here?”

Nathalie shrugged as she walked across the kitchen and took a seat at the table, picking up the bottle of wine and drinking directly out of it. “It’s Wine Wednesday. Grandma invited me. The two of us want to get weird.” Nathalie wiggled her eyebrows at Annalise. “I just didn’t realize how weird we were getting.”

“Nobody here is getting weird,” Annalise said much louder than she meant to, her blood pressure rising with her anxiety. “At least, not in that way.”

Annalise’s grandma patted her arm as she shared a knowing look with Nathalie. “Aw, sweetie. Take a chill pill. We’re just joking. Although, I do want to know who is teaching you.”

Nathalie’s head shot from Annalise’s grandma to Annalise as if it was on a swivel. “Whoa. Hold up. Someone is teaching you how to have sex with women and you didn’t tell your bestie? The girl who was there when you first kissed a boy? The one who cheered you on during your first blow job?” Nathalie looked back at Annalise’s grandma and flashed her an innocent smile. “Sorry for the overshare, Grandma.”

“Don’t worry, dear. I already knew all of that. I read Annalise’s diary when I was staying at her parents’ house after my second heart attack.”

What the actual... “Seriously, Grandma?”

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:37 pm

Her grandma shrugged as if it was no big deal. “What? I finished all my overly dramatic romance novels and your diary was the next best thing.”

Nathalie high-fived Annalise’s grandma before turning her attention back to Annalise. “Now, tell me about this girl.”

Annalise knew they were going to get the story out of her in one way or another so she told them everything from her failed first hookup attempt all the way to ending the night by making out with Brinley.

“So, when do we meet her?” Annalise’s grandma asked as soon as she finished.

“You two?” Annalise pointed between her grandma and Nathalie. “Hopefully never.”

“Aw, come on.” Nathalie stuck her lip out into a fake pout. “Bring her to the next Wine Wednesday. ”

“I’ll get right on that.” Annalise made sure they couldn’t miss the sarcasm dripping from her voice.

“If you won’t bring her, at least bring stories of everything she teaches you.” Now Nathalie put her hands in a praying motion.

“If you don’t, we’ll just read it in your diary anyway.”

As her grandma and Nathalie high-fived once again, Annalise let her mind wander to what stories she might have after tomorrow.

Chapter 4

Brinley

“You’ve been cleaning that same spot for an hour.”

Brinley jumped at the sound of Maddie’s voice. She was so lost in her own thoughts, she didn’t even hear her coming. She stopped scrubbing the spot she had been cleaning (not for an hour, but much too long) and turned around, leaning back on the bar as she faced Maddie. “Lay off me. I’ve been here all day. I finally leave in five minutes.”

“And I take it someone is leaving with you.” Maddie lifted both eyebrows and nodded her head toward the door.

Brinley spun around to look, but no one was there.

Maddie laughed as Brinley turned back toward her. “Wow. Who is she? I’ve never seen you like this.”

“It’s a... client.”

“A client? Did you get another job I didn’t know about?”

“Kind of. This is a volunteer position though.” Brinley tried not to smile, but she couldn’t help it. If that kiss was anything to go by, this would be the most fun she ever had volunteering.

“This is clearly about a girl. You need to explain now if you don’t want me to embarrass you when she comes in.”

Brinley knew she wasn't lying since Maddie had delivered on that threat in the past. "Do you remember the two girls we were watching on Saturday night? One was blonde and the other had purple hair."

"Of course. I forgot to ask what you learned after you swooped in to rescue the hot blonde."

"Turns out I was right. It was a hookup, but it didn't go well, so Annalise asked me to help her out for the next time."

"Annalise? That's Hot Blonde's name?"

Brinley nodded and bit her bottom lip to try to suppress her smile at the mention of Annalise.

"And how exactly are you helping Annalise?" Maddie crossed her arms and lifted one eyebrow as if silently challenging Brinley.

Brinley knew if she didn't give enough details, Maddie really would question Annalise, but she also didn't want to share too much of Annalise's personal business. "Let's just say she's lacking experience and I'm offering my services in that department."

That must have been good enough for Maddie because she walked away at the sound of the door opening. This time, when Brinley turned around, Annalise was there. Her face was red, as if she was embarrassed just from showing up.

Damn, she's cute.

Page 14

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:37 pm

Brinley looked down at her watch then back at Annalise. “Right on time.”

This brought a smile to Annalise’s face. She sighed as she put both hands down on the bar. “I was never once late for a class. I’m not going to start now.”

“Nerd,” Brinley said while coughing into her hand.

Annalise leaned across the bar, bringing her face closer to Brinley’s. “ I’m the nerd? Did you make my syllabus?”

“Of course I did. Want to come up to my place and check it out?”

“I thought you’d never ask.” Annalise’s lips curved up on one side, and Brinley had the sudden urge to kiss her again.

Instead, she turned toward the computer and clocked herself out, then motioned for Annalise to follow her through the bar to the stairs in the back that led up to her apartment. She could feel Maddie’s eyes on her the entire time but refused to acknowledge her.

Once they were up in her apartment, she immediately grabbed a copy of the two-page syllabus and handed it to Annalise.

Annalise’s eyes went wide as she stared down at the paper in her hands. “This is... very detailed.”

“Of course it is. I don’t do anything half-assed. You’ll learn that soon.” Brinley

winked, but Annalise hadn't taken her eyes off the syllabus to notice.

Damnit. What a waste of a good flirt.

The longer Annalise studied the syllabus, the more Brinley's heart rate seemed to pick up. She was normally always cool and collected, but something about this moment had her on edge. She wanted to do this right. She was currently representing the lesbian community. Messing up was not an option.

When Annalise finally looked up, her eyebrows were furrowed and lips puckered as if she was nervous. "Is it bad if just reading this gives me anxiety?"

"Nope." Brinley made sure to pop the "P" to accentuate the word. She took one of Annalise's hands and directed her over to the couch where they both sat down. She kept her hand on top of Annalise's because it seemed to be helping. "That just means it's good that we're doing this. It will slowly help you become more comfortable with it." Brinley studied Annalise's face to try to decipher if it was nerves or hesitation. The last thing she wanted was for Annalise to feel like she was being forced into something. I mean, come on, their third lesson was consent, for God's sake. Since she wasn't a mind reader, she decided to just go ahead and ask. "Are you sure you want to do this at all? We really don't have to. If you want, I'll even go to your grandma and act as if I'm someone you met and hooked up with from the app. That way she won't bother you about it anymore."

"No, I definitely want to do this," Annalise answered quickly, her fingers running across the words Quiz #1: Achieve orgasm from instructor's hands and mouth as she said it. It was probably just a coincidence, but there was a part of Brinley that wanted to believe it wasn't. "Plus, that would never work." Annalise laughed and shook her head. "My grandma already knows all about you teaching me."

"You told your grandma about me?" Thud. Thud. Chill out, heart. What the hell?

“She forced it out of me against my will.”

“She sounds great. I’d love to meet her.” Why did I just say that? Get it together, Brinley.

Luckily, Annalise just laughed at this. “She would love that, which is exactly why we need to make sure it never happens.”

When the room became silent again, Brinley pointed to the syllabus. “So, you’re sure you’re okay with this?”

“I do have one issue.”

“Oh, yeah? What’s that?” Brinley couldn’t imagine. Not to toot her own horn, but she honestly thought the plan was pretty flawless.

“So, I know we’re technically on lesson three—consent—very important, but the problem is, I think I need to brush up on lesson two first.”

“Lesson two is…” A big grin spread across Brinley’s face that she wouldn’t have been able to stop if she tried. “Kissing.”

“It is.” Annalise leaned in until her lips were just barely brushing against Brinley’s. This girl was going to be the death of her. “In sticking with lesson three—is it okay if I kiss you right now?”

Not only was it hot as hell that Annalise was taking the lead, but also asking for consent before initiating it? If Brinley wasn’t already turned on (which she very much was), she definitely would be now. “Wouldn’t want to let my student down. I’m all about extra study time.”

“Please shut up.”

That was all Brinley needed to hear. She moved her lips against the ones that had just been teasing her. Ever since their last kiss, Brinley wondered if she had played it up in her mind. There was no way this girl who claimed to have no idea what she was doing and had no interest in women had given her the best kiss of her life. Sure, kissing men probably wasn't much different from kissing women (Brinley wouldn't know), but there was a confidence in Annalise's kisses she hadn't expected.

And holy shit she definitely hadn't played it up in her mind because this kiss was somehow even better than the ones from last time. Kissing was kissing, and while some people were certainly better than others, she didn't know you could be compatible kissers, but that's how it felt with Annalise. Their mouths moved in a perfect rhythm. Their tongues touched, teased, and entangled as though they were made for each other. It made Brinley's whole body hum. It made her starved for a lot more than kissing. She couldn't though. She had to take this slow. That was the whole point.

Apparently, Annalise didn't have the same reservations. She moved her body so she was now straddling Brinley's lap and grinding against her while running her hands through Brinley's hair, never once backing away from the kiss. It was Heaven on Earth. Electric currents bolted through Brinley's whole body, and she was about to lose all control. But she couldn't let that happen.

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:37 pm

Shit. Breathe in. Breathe out. Taxes. Bills. Donald Trump.

When Brinley was finally able to get herself to pull away, she took a few deep breaths. She then closed her eyes because the way Annalise was looking at her was definitely not the look you would expect from a straight woman, and she knew if she kept staring back at her, there was no way she could keep control.

“You’re quite the overachiever.” Brinley forced out a laugh, which was hard with the way her body was fighting her to give in to every urge she was currently feeling. “You were definitely moving onto lessons four and five, and if you kept it up, I would have been tempted to dive into lesson six.”

“Oh.” Annalise moved her eyes down toward a spot beside them on the couch, and Brinley knew she was checking the syllabus. “ Oh! ” Annalise cleared her throat then promptly moved off Brinley’s lap. “You’re right. I was definitely getting carried away there. I also... don’t think I’m ready for lesson six.”

Lesson six... Receiving . While Brinley was very much looking forward to teaching that lesson, she completely understood why Annalise wasn’t ready. She might not be a virgin, but this was still a big deal, and Brinley was going to make sure to treat it that way. “Of course. That’s why there are five other lessons before that. Five lessons that we can spend as much time on as you want! Also, without even realizing it, you passed the consent lesson with flying colors.”

Annalise lifted an eyebrow. “Really? I don’t remember asking before I straddled your lap.”

And grinded up against me... Brinley squeezed her eyes shut. Sand in my bathing suit. “True, but we both know I obviously wanted that. I’ll just throw it out there right now that I never don’t want anything when it comes to you. But I’m talking about the fact that you are looking for consent from yourself as well. Being honest about what you’re comfortable with. That’s a great step.”

A sweet, subtle smile spread across Annalise’s face, making her appear so much more innocent than the woman from just a few minutes ago. “I never thought of it that way. That’s such a good point. You really are smart.”

“Told ya .” Brinley winked and this time Annalise definitely noticed, at least if her deep, shaky breath was any indication. Score.

“So...” Brinley slowly ran her fingers across the syllabus, touching it in the way she wished she could touch Annalise. “It looks like you passed lessons one through three with flying colors. Did you want to move on to lesson four?”

Annalise studied the syllabus once again then looked back at Brinley. “How about this... Let’s continue the kiss from earlier and this time if it progresses to over the clothes touching , we won’t stop?”

“What about dry humping? How do you feel about that?” Brinley had no idea how she got that sentence out without even cracking a smile. It was definitely a question she didn’t think she would ever ask someone after the age of fourteen.

Annalise cackled then threw her head back in laughter. “I still can’t believe you have dry humping as a lesson. I feel like I’m a teenager again.”

“Hey, don’t knock it until you try it... again.”

Before Brinley knew what was happening, Annalise was back to straddling her lap,

her arms around Brinley's back as she moved against her. "You're just so surprising."

"I'm surprising? Says the straight woman who is grinding against me right now."

"Is... is that okay?" Annalise asked, her unsure tone the complete opposite of her confident body.

"It's more than okay. Like I said, you never have to ask with me. I want it all, like yesterday."

"Then I guess you won't mind if I do this." Annalise bent down and placed kisses across Brinley's neck. She stopped at a spot where Brinley's pulse was erratic, and Brinley figured that must be the reason she stopped, until she licked the skin, then sucked it into her mouth.

"Are... are you sure you're straight, because I—" Brinley moaned instead of finishing her sentence. She had no idea what she was planning to say anyway. At this point, any rational thoughts were out the window.

Which was exactly why she didn't think it through when she pushed Annalise off her then lay down across the couch, pulling Annalise on top of her. Annalise let out an almost imperceptible gasp when their bodies met fully. "Is this okay?" Brinley asked as her hands traveled lower down Annalise's back.

Annalise moved against her the same way she was on her lap.

Shit. Why does that feel so good?

"It's more than okay as long as your hands go where I think they're going."

Brinley moved a hand to each of Annalise's ass cheeks and squeezed, which only

encouraged Annalise to move harder and faster up against her. Brinley honestly wasn't sure who made the effort to move in, but soon their lips were on each other once again.

The mixture of hands, mouths, and tongues was too much, and Brinley was honestly afraid she might come just from this. How embarrassing would that be?

Annalise moaned into her mouth then pushed her body even harder into Brinley's, as if she was searching for some type of release. A release that Brinley was about to reach very shortly if she didn't get herself back in control. She had been with multiple women throughout the years. There was no way she was going to let herself come while fully clothed.

Puppy mills. Mustache bleach. Slushy snow.

Brinley was so busy trying to distract herself, she almost didn't realize when Annalise shouted out as she did one last hard push and how her body vibrated as she gasped for air.

Annalise's eyes went wide and she jumped from the couch, leaving Brinley to feel her absence all over her body, especially in a few very particular places. "I'm so sorry."

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:37 pm

Brinley quickly sat up. At least, as quickly as she could with being so wobbly and not in the slightest bit recovered from the greatest dry hump of her life. Words I never thought I'd utter. "It's okay. What's wrong? Did you—?"

She didn't have to finish her question because Annalise answered with a slow, hesitant nod. "I'm... God, I'm so embarrassed." She put her red face into her hands and shook her head. "My boyfriend broke up with me over four months ago and it had been at least three months at that point since we had sex. I guess being with another person... well, it just..."

"Listen, I get it." Brinley stood from the couch and took one of Annalise's hands in her own. "You don't have to explain to me. It's fine. Actually, it's more than fine. It's incredibly sexy, and I'm flattered to be the person to bring that out after all this time."

Annalise moved her hands from her face but kept one closed as she chewed on one of her nails. "Honestly, you're the first person to bring it out in over a year. I've had orgasms. I just... they were my doing."

Brinley looked from Annalise to the couch. "All the more reason to get back to what we were doing, right? It looks like we've got some lost time to make up for." And I'm so incredibly horny, I might literally explode.

"I think this might have actually been enough for one night. I should probably just go. I'm sorry."

"No need to apologize." Brinley hoped the wide grin on her face was enough to mask her disappointment. "This is all about you and your pace. That's why we're doing it,

remember?”

“Yeah, thanks.” Annalise’s eyes darted all around Brinley’s apartment, looking at absolutely everything, except for her.

She continued to do this as she put on her shoes and laced them up. When she walked to the door and reached for the handle, Brinley thought she might leave without another word. If that was the case, she was pretty sure she’d never see Annalise Finch ever again. She had no idea why that fact felt like a shot right to her heart, but it did.

With her hand on the doorknob, Annalise turned around and finally smiled at Brinley. “Text me and let me know the next time you’re free, okay? I wanna work my way up to being comfortable with lesson six as quickly as possible.”

Without another word, she was out the door, and Brinley was left standing with her whole body tingling. She needed release. Now. She thought about calling or texting one of the many numbers in her phone. Working at a bar, she got numbers all the time, and most of the women were always up for a good time. She didn’t want to be looking into another woman’s eyes though. With how tonight had gone, she only wanted to see one woman when she came and it was the woman who had just walked out her door.

She practically ran back to her bedroom and threw off her clothes before jumping into bed. She brought her comforter over her then ran a hand down her body, imagining that it belonged to Annalise. She pictured touching Annalise this way at the same time she pictured being touched by Annalise this way. She was playing both parts and it was working. By the time her hand reached its destination, she was soaking wet.

She ran her fingers through her folds, but they weren’t her own. Annalise’s fingers. Annalise’s center. Annalise’s sexy face and those stunning eyes. Annalise’s thumb rubbing against her clit. Her thumb on Annalise’s clit. Her fingers pushing deep

inside Annalise. Riding Annalise's fingers as she moved them in and out, adding another with each push. Each thrust. Shit. Brinley saw stars behind her eyelids before her whole body went taut. She could barely breathe as she struggled to come down from that high, her chest moving up and down so rapidly, it looked like her heart was going to break through her skin.

She laughed out loud into her otherwise silent room as millions of thoughts swirled through her head.

This woman might be the literal death of me... and I love it.

Chapter 5

Annalise

One month. One whole month of weekly lessons with Brinley, and Annalise was feeling better than ever. They still hadn't gotten to the point of taking their clothes off, because it scared Annalise. Except, it didn't scare her because she was hesitant. What scared her was how much she wanted to. She's wanted it for a long time, but what did that say about her? What did it mean? Nope. Stop. She wasn't going to overthink this. She had spent her whole life in a constant state of overthinking, and she refused to do it in this situation.

What she was going to do was tell Brinley she was finally ready for her next lesson. They had already gotten so comfortable around each other, she normally didn't think about what she was wearing too much. Last week, after an especially long day of work, she even went to Brinley's in a pair of sweatpants. If the way Brinley looked at her when she ran her hands up and down said sweatpants was any indication, she didn't seem to mind.

Tonight was different though. Tonight things were getting serious. Well, as serious as

they could in a no-strings-attached hookup with someone of the gender she wasn't attracted to. At least, the gender she always thought she wasn't attracted to. The lines were starting to get very blurry. No overthinking. As Annalise searched through her closet, nothing seemed good enough.

She turned away from the closet and groaned as she picked up her phone. She couldn't believe she was about to do this. After just two rings, Nathalie picked up. "What's up, babe?"

"I can't figure out what outfit to wear for..." She paused. Was she really about to say this? Nathalie would love it way too much. She'd never live it down. Desperate times though. "For my first time being naked with another woman."

"I'm pretty sure we've been naked around each other before. You've gotten changed in front of me like a million times."

Annalise rolled her eyes. "You know what I mean."

"I do, which is why I already have an outfit picked out for this very occasion. Hang tight. I'll be over in no time."

Before Annalise could even respond, Nathalie had hung up the phone, and just a few minutes later, there was a knock on her apartment door.

"Let me in, bitch, we've got work to do," Nathalie shouted from the other side.

Annalise was already regretting her decision and regretted it even more when she opened the door to find Nathalie holding a short black leather miniskirt and a white tank top. "I really hope you don't expect me to wear that."

Nathalie stared down at the clothes in her hands with a sparkle of pride shining in her

eyes. “Why not? It’s hot.”

“Well, first of all, that skirt is barely going to cover my ass.”

Page 17

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:37 pm

Nathalie laughed and pushed past her into the apartment. “Yeah, that’s kind of the point. It’s a tease. A preview of what she’s about to unwrap. Brinley will love it.”

“You don’t even know Brinley.”

“I know her type.”

“And what type would that be?”

“Human . Anyone would love you in this outfit. Hell, I might be tempted to lick you after seeing you in it.”

“You’re so crass,” Annalise said as she grabbed the clothes from Nathalie.

“I’m not crass. I’m just honest. I say the things everyone is thinking but too uptight to say.”

“I’ve never once thought about—” Annalise shook her head and held up the clothes.

“I don’t have time to fight. I’ll give this a try.”

She slipped into her bedroom and stripped out of her current outfit—the pantsuit she had worn to work.

“You know, if you don’t like the outfit I picked out, that actually looks pretty sexy hitting the floor.”

Annalise jumped at the sound of Nathalie’s voice. “For God’s sake, Nat, why did you

follow me?”

Nathalie shrugged and threw herself onto Annalise’s bed. “Like I said, we’ve seen each other naked.” She did a circular motion with her hand in the direction of Annalise’s body. “There’s nothing there I haven’t seen before.”

When Annalise pulled on the skirt, Nathalie whistled. “But that is a sight I haven’t seen.”

She ignored her best friend as she pulled on her tank top as well, but when she looked in the full-length mirror hanging on her closet door, she realized Nathalie was right. She looked hot as hell, and she couldn’t wait to see Brinley’s reaction to seeing her in this.

“Told you you’d love it,” Nathalie said smugly.

“It’s fine, I guess.” Except Annalise couldn’t stop the smile from spreading across her face. She was a mix of excitement and nerves. Butterflies fluttered through her stomach while her heart raced in her chest. It was honestly like nothing she had ever experienced before.

“Mhm. Sure.” Nathalie stood from the bed and gave Annalise a kiss on the cheek while squeezing her into a tight hug. “My work here is done. Have so much fun tonight.”

She was almost back at the open bedroom door when she turned back around and closed the space between them once again. Before Annalise could comprehend what was happening, Nathalie licked her right where she had placed the kiss just a few seconds ago. “Told you,” she said before winking and walking out for good this time.

Annalise spent a few more minutes in front of the mirror fixing her hair and makeup.

Once she was satisfied, she grabbed her keys and headed out the door. Since she was doing it weekly now, the forty-five-minute drive into the city felt like nothing at this point.

She parked on the street then tried her best to slip through the bar unnoticed. The female bartender that Annalise often saw with Brinley always kept a close eye on her whenever she was there, and she didn't want any extra eyes on her tonight. Luckily, she didn't see that bartender, and no one else seemed to give her a second look. Or, if they had, she was moving too quickly to notice. She walked up the steps and knocked on the door at the top.

When Brinley opened the door, her eyes just about popped out of her head. "Shit. Annalise. What's the occasion? You look... I mean, you always... but, damn, girl."

"Yeah?" Thank you, Nathalie.

"Um, yeah. What the hell did I do to deserve this? I'm racking my brain, but honestly, I can barely form a logical thought right now, so it's not going too well."

Annalise stepped past Brinley into her apartment then ran a hand over her tattooed arm. "Our lessons have been going so well, I think I'm ready. For... lesson six."

"Receiving." Brinley cleared her throat and ran her eyes up and down Annalise's body once again. "I am more than happy to move on to that." She pointed down toward her crotch. "My vagina would like you to know that it is very excited as well."

"Even though..." The last thing Annalise wanted was to give Brinley the wrong idea of how fast she wanted to move, but she also couldn't form words with the way Brinley was looking at her.

"My vagina isn't technically getting attention yet?" Brinley laughed. "Don't worry.

I'm fully aware of the breakdown of my syllabus. I wrote it, after all. I get just as much from giving as I do from receiving." Brinley pointed toward her kitchen. "Do you need a drink?"

Normally, Annalise would be all about loosening up with a few drinks, but not tonight. She wanted to be completely present for this, with nothing at all clouding her judgment or memories. "Believe it or not, no."

"In that case, what do you say we start on the couch for a review of our previous lessons, then when you're ready, we'll make our way to the bedroom?"

Annalise never knew patience and care could be such a turn-on, but with Brinley it definitely was. Which was exactly why she lost all control of herself when Brinley spoke sweetly like this. But then again, she also lost control when Brinley spoke dirty. Maybe Brinley just turned her on all around. Don't overthink. Don't overthink.

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:37 pm

Not overthinking resulted in Annalise pushing Brinley back toward the couch until she fell onto it with Annalise on top of her. It was Brinley who brought their lips together and Brinley who ran her hands up Annalise's bare legs. When she made it to her ass, she moved her hands over the skirt instead of under it. Damn her for being so chivalrous.

Annalise pushed harder into Brinley to try to give herself some relief. Not too much, since she didn't need her experience from the first time happening again. She wanted the kisses to be enough, but they weren't. She needed more. She needed the hands that were exploring her body to move underneath her clothes. She needed Brinley's hands and mouth all over every inch of her skin. She needed it now .

"Let's move this to your room," she said breathlessly.

"Yeah? Already?"

"Are you not ready?" Was Annalise being too forward?

Brinley scoffed. "I'm always ready."

As they stood from the couch and made the short walk to Brinley's room, Annalise's nerves returned. Without Brinley's hands on her, all the same questions shot through her head. What was she doing? Why was she doing it? Why did she want it so fucking bad? Breathe in. Breathe out. No overthinking.

Once the door was closed behind them, Brinley faced Annalise completely, her expression much more serious than before. "So, how do you want to do this? Do you

just want to be naked? Do you want both of us to be? Should I undress you or do you want to undress yourself? Would it make you feel more comfortable to undress in the bathroom?"

Annalise knew Brinley was trying to be nice, but her head was spinning from all the questions. Annalise would probably feel more comfortable if she wasn't the only one with her clothes off, but she was pretty sure she would be tempted to go further if Brinley had hers off too. She didn't want to rush something just because she was caught up in the moment. "I, um..." She pointed toward the closed bedroom door. "I'll go to the bathroom."

"Actually, you know what?" Brinley took a step toward Annalise and put her hands on Annalise's arms. "You stay here. I'll leave. Just shout when you're ready and I'll come back in." Before backing away, Brinley placed a light kiss on Annalise's forehead.

Annalise felt dizzy as Brinley walked away, but not from the thought of taking her clothes off or of what was yet to come. Instead, because of that forehead kiss. Why does a damn kiss on the forehead have me feeling like I'm about to pass out? It was probably just because she subconsciously knew what was coming from that mouth, because a kiss on the forehead should not have her body reacting like this.

She stared at the closed door for a few more seconds then unzipped her skirt and wiggled out of it. Thank God Brinley wasn't in the room because her trying to get out of that skirt was anything but sexy. With that thought, another thought popped into Annalise's head. With Brinley, she didn't have to put on a show or try to be sexy, because they had a deal. A plan. Sure, if either of them decided they didn't want to move forward anymore, it would be done, but Brinley wasn't going to call it off because Annalise wasn't sexy enough. Hell, Brinley probably expected this to be awkward. There was something reassuring and nice about that. It had been that way with Grant too, but she didn't really think about it since they were barely having sex

anyway. Annalise smiled as she pulled her shirt over her head then removed her bra and underwear. A sense of calm washed over her for the first time since getting to Brinley's.

Unfortunately, that didn't last long because when she called Brinley back into the room, her whole body was lit on fire by the way Brinley looked at her. Each inch of skin her eyes grazed burned. It was quite possibly the most amazing discomfort Annalise had ever experienced.

"Annalise, you are..." Brinley licked her lips. "You're fucking sexy as hell."

For the first time, Annalise believed it. With Brinley staring at her this way, she actually felt sexy.

"So, are you going to just stare at me all day or are you actually going to show me how sexy you think I look?" Between the subtle lift of her eyebrow and the smooth tone of her voice, Annalise was sure she appeared much more confident than she actually was.

"Oh, I plan to eat you up."

Annalise didn't miss where Brinley's eyes traveled as she said those words, the attention of her gaze causing Annalise's stomach to drop and her center to throb.

God, I need this.

Brinley ran a hand down Annalise's arm. "But before I do that, I'm going to teach you all about a woman's touch. Show you how much different it is than a man's. Gentle, but firm. Cautious, yet demanding." Her hand dropped to rest on Annalise's hip, and Annalise's skin burned at the contact. "Are you ready for that?"

“I’m more than ready.” Her voice came out just above a whisper. She was too turned on to hide it now.

Brinley nodded toward her bed. “Lay down.”

Annalise did as she was told. She lay flat on Brinley’s bed, with her head just slightly propped up by one of her pillows.

“Good girl.” Brinley smirked as she licked her lips once again, then she crawled right on top of Annalise.

Annalise gasped at their bodies touching. She found herself wishing she had told Brinley to get naked as well, because right now, even her thin layer of clothes were too much. Synapses fired from the spots where Brinley’s bare legs and arms touched Annalise’s.

Brinley put a hand on each of Annalise’s cheeks and leaned down to kiss her slowly and gently. As the kiss progressed and their tongues met in an agonizing need, Brinley’s hands moved down Annalise’s arms then up her sides. Annalise pushed up into her, her body begging for so much more. Every inch of her was desperate to be touched. It was way too long since the hands of another person had been on her and she needed this more than she ever realized.

Disappointment coursed through her when Brinley broke the kiss and rolled off her. Brinley must have noticed because she giggled. “Don’t worry, babe. I’m just getting started.”

She wasn’t lying. Her hands slowly moved up Annalise’s sides, fingers lightly scratching as they moved. She stopped just below the swell of Annalise’s breasts. “Is this okay? Do you still want it?”

“Please,” was the only word Annalise could force out. With Brinley so close to where she needed her, she could barely breathe.

With the permission she was searching for, Brinley moved her hands on to Annalise’s breasts, exploring the area with her fingers as if she was mapping it out. When she gently squeezed them for the first time, Annalise moaned. That feels so fucking good. Why don’t I ever remember it feeling like this before?

Page 19

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:37 pm

“It looks like we found something you like.” Brinley smirked then squeezed harder this time. Annalise moaned even louder.

“I...” Annalise could only nod. “I really like that. I... want... more.” Her breathing was ragged. There was a primal need bursting out of her.

“More as in harder?”

Annalise nodded once again. Words were impossible with Brinley touching her this way.

When Brinley squeezed even harder, pain mixed with pleasure. It was perfect. Annalise groaned, the slight discomfort she was experiencing evident in the sound.

“Too much?”

Annalise squeezed her eyes shut and shook her head. “No. I love it.” She actually did. She never saw herself as someone who enjoyed a little bit of pain, and in prior experiences she never had. But Brinley was right. Even with the pain, there was still something so gentle about her touch.

Brinley’s smirk spread into a smile that spread across her whole face and made her dark eyes shine. “In that case...”

Annalise didn’t think it was possible for Brinley to squeeze even harder, but she quickly proved her wrong. More pain . More pleasure . Absolute ecstasy .

Next, Brinley moved her fingers to Annalise's nipples. She started by simply massaging her thumbs over the hard peaks then squeezed them between her fingers. Shit.

Her line of sight was perfectly in line with Annalise's as she twisted slowly and gently, watching Annalise closely as if she was judging her reaction. Annalise was attacked with a need so feral she honestly thought she might explode. It must have been obvious on her face, because Brinley twisted even harder.

"Ah. Ouch. Yes. More. Harder. Ow. Gah. Yes! Yes! Yes!" Annalise couldn't control the sounds leaving her mouth, but she didn't care. Brinley was in complete control now. Annalise trusted her with her life, or at least with her pleasure and the budding orgasm that she was afraid was going to come much too soon.

"Time to soothe that pain for you, babe."

Brinley removed her hands and replaced them with her mouth, first placing kisses across her chest then licking each breast. Every swipe of her tongue pushed Annalise closer to the edge. When Brinley lightly bit down on one nipple, Annalise thought that was the end. She twisted, pushed, pulled... anything she could to release the pleasure she was feeling. She didn't care if it was too soon. She needed it. She was ready to explode and wanted nothing more.

"Not yet, babe," Brinley said softly. When had she started calling her babe? Why did it sound so right ?

Brinley got back on top of her, her mouth aligned with Annalise's breasts, her hand steadily slinking down her stomach.

Annalise's center was already wet, but it became more soaked the closer Brinley's hand came. When Brinley's hand stopped just above its destination, Annalise let out

an involuntary groan. She needed that hand. She was desperate for those fingers. Ravenous. That was the only way to describe how she was feeling.

Brinley laughed. “I was going to ask if this was okay, but I’m going to assume from that noise that it is.”

“Pl—”

Hands. Fingers. Uncontrollable moaning. Words were useless. Impossible. There were no words. Annalise lifted her hips as fingers explored her folds. She was a volcano brimming on the edge of eruption. Every touch, every movement brought her one step closer.

Brinley’s mouth went back to work on her breasts at the same time a finger worked its way inside of Annalise. A flick of her tongue across a nipple. A second finger pushed inside. Nipple . Between . Teeth . Three. Fingers. Panting. Sweating. Tears . Annalise was at the precipice of something she had never experienced in the past. Orgasms? Sure. But not like this. Never. Like. This.

Fingers moved faster and harder; teeth, tongue, and lips worked together. Back arched. Neck crooked. Hands. Mouth. Climax . Annalise screamed as she coated Brinley’s fingers with the proof of her pleasure. Her eyes stung and her throat burned as she struggled to come down from the greatest orgasm of her entire life. Never before had she come like that. She didn’t know if it was the buildup, Brinley’s magical touch, or something else entirely, but it was more than she bargained for. She wasn’t sure if she would ever recover from this. The thought of going again made her whole body ache. She was pretty sure this was going to be a one and done lesson for her. She needed time.

At least, that’s what she thought until Brinley took the fingers that had just been inside of her and licked them clean, moaning as she did. “You taste so good. I can’t

wait to make you come with my mouth.”

“What are you waiting for?” Annalise hadn’t meant to say those words, but the way Brinley’s eyes practically popped out of her head made it all worth it.

Well, that, and everything she was sure was yet to come...

Chapter 6

Brinley

To say Brinley’s mind was blown would be an understatement. The women she was with in the past weren’t shy, most of them very vocal and very honest about how much they enjoyed her mouth and hands. Annalise, though... She was different. Brinley wasn’t sure if it was because she expected her to be hesitant, but her vocalness and need had shocked her. If she didn’t know the situation, she would have a very hard time believing this was Annalise’s first time with a woman. It also made it hard to believe that Annalise was completely straight, but that wasn’t up to Brinley to put a label on.

As hard as it was, she was willing to stop after Annalise’s first orgasm, but Annalise had other plans. With Annalise’s permission, or insistence might be a better word, Brinley was more than happy to continue. She kissed and licked her way down Annalise’s body until she made it to her very wet center. She hummed with the first stroke of her tongue. She needed to cherish each taste because she could already tell Annalise wasn’t going to last long.

Annalise pushed up into her, but Brinley backed away, laughing when Annalise groaned in frustration. “Don’t worry. I know how to really get in there without making you do too much work, pillow princess.” She winked at Annalise then brought both of her legs over her shoulders, which in turn brought Brinley’s mouth

right where it was needed.

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:37 pm

She hoped Annalise was actually ready for this, because she was about to devour her. Not wasting any time, she dove back in, this time going for her clit and sucking it into her mouth.

“Holy shit!” Annalise screamed. “Shit, shit, shit,” she repeated under her breath.

It was hard to keep from getting cocky when the woman you were with was this vocal, but Brinley stayed focused on the task at hand. All she cared about right now was bringing this woman to another, much-needed orgasm. She licked and sucked once again then moved her tongue deep inside of Annalise. Her tongue went in and out in the same way her fingers had just a few minutes earlier.

When Annalise gasped and put both hands into Brinley’s hair, forcing her tongue even deeper, she knew it was time to really rock her world. She replaced her tongue with her fingers once again and sucked on Annalise’s clit as her fingers moved in and out. It only took a few thrusts for Annalise to scream out once again, her body vibrating against Brinley’s mouth and fingers in a way that made her hungry for even more.

Tonight wasn’t about her, though. Even though she was very turned on, she needed to keep the focus on Annalise. “So, what did you think?” she asked as she lay down beside her.

“I think you just completely blew my mind.”

“The feeling is mutual.”

“Yeah? It didn’t leave you completely unsatisfied?”

“Nope.” Brinley crossed her legs to try to calm the throbbing between them. When that didn’t work, she jumped out of the bed. “Do you want to work on updating your profile?”

“I’m not ready…” Annalise shook her head. “Actually, it will probably take a while for people to respond, so we might as well do it now to get the ball rolling.” Doubtful. “Could I get dressed first?”

“Yeah, I’d say that’s probably a good idea.” Brinley ran her eyes over Annalise’s body once again, which definitely didn’t help make her less turned on, but it did a good job of getting her point across. That, and the way she licked her lips as she did it.

Brinley left the room to give Annalise privacy while she changed, which seemed a bit strange after fucking her twice, but she wanted to make sure Annalise was comfortable. She sat on the couch and took a few deep breaths, which was working to calm her down until Annalise walked out of the bedroom. Shit. How did I forget about that outfit? I should have offered her sweatpants.

Brinley patted the spot next to her on the couch and tried her best to ignore how close Annalise sat next to her. She grabbed Annalise’s phone so she had something, anything, else to focus on. “Mind if I do it for you?” she asked softly so Annalise didn’t think she was rude.

“Go for it.”

“So, here’s what I’m thinking,” Brinley said as she opened the app. She spoke the words out loud as she typed them. “Pillow princess looking for a royal subject to serve her.”

“Seriously?” Annalise cackled. “No one is going to message me.”

As if Brinley had timed it herself, a message came through at that very moment. Brinley smirked as she read these words out loud as well. “Hello, princess. Happy to serve you whenever, wherever, and however you want.”

Annalise grabbed the phone back from Brinley. “There’s no way someone actually said that.”

“Sure did. Complete with the winking emoji and the salivating one. Corrine wants you.”

Annalise looked toward the couch and pushed a stray piece of hair behind her ear. “I think I want a few more lessons with you if that’s okay.”

“Tonight?” Smelly armpits. Gas station bathrooms. Why isn’t any of this working, damnit?

“No, I should probably get going.” Annalise stood from the couch, and once Brinley did as well, she gave her a quick hug. “Tonight was a lot... but in the best way possible. I’m really looking forward to more lessons. I can’t wait to learn how to use my tongue and hands as well as you.” The deep red blush returned. “You know, eventually.”

Neither one of them said another word as Annalise turned around and left the apartment, but as soon as she was out, Brinley sprinted back to her bedroom and stripped. She lay down in the bed that still smelled like Annalise and brought one hand to her boob and the other down to her center. She played with her nipple the same way she had played with Annalise’s and imagined it was Annalise’s wetness that was coating the fingers of her other hand.

She could still hear the sounds Annalise was making and played them over and over in her head as her own moans mixed with them. Brinley was so turned on, she knew it wouldn't take much to come, and she was right. Within seconds, she climaxed just from touching herself. Well, and picturing Annalise. That was a pretty important part of the equation.

Brinley wasn't exactly sure how she would get through these lessons, but ending her nights like this would definitely help. So, that's what she did over the next month as Annalise became more comfortable with the idea of a woman pleasuring her. She provided that pleasure to Annalise then provided it to herself as soon as Annalise was out of the apartment.

"I think I'm finally ready to meet up with someone from the app," Annalise said between large, gasping breaths after Brinley had finished going down on her once again.

"Oh yeah?"

"For sure. It's time. I need to see how it goes, so we can either move on to the next lesson or move on completely."

"Move on completely?" This made Brinley sit straight up. She had no idea Annalise was thinking about stopping this arrangement. "You don't think you want this anymore?" She wasn't sure why this fact stung so bad. She was doing Annalise a favor. Sure, it was a mutually beneficial favor, but she could easily get those benefits elsewhere if Annalise wasn't into it anymore.

Annalise sat up as well, her arms resting in front of her chest as if she had just become aware of her nakedness. "That's not it at all. It's just... I've been really hesitant about the next part. I'm all in my head about it, and that's not fair to you. I feel like I'm wasting your time."

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:37 pm

Brinley pointed a finger into her own chest. “Wasting my time?”

“Yeah, between work, studying, and teaching me, have you even had time to hook up with other people?”

“No, but that’s not...” Brinley was going to say it wasn’t because of Annalise, but that felt like a lie. Not because she was falling in love with her or anything. She just liked their arrangement. It was fun and easy. She could focus completely on bartending while she was working, instead of shamelessly flirting with every female who walked through the door. “It’s not a big deal. I’ve found ways to get myself by when you have me really turned on.”

Annalise’s eyebrows went so high they practically touched her hairline. “You mean you...” Instead of finishing her sentence, Annalise cleared her throat as if the words were caught in it. “After I leave?” When Brinley nodded, Annalise’s face turned that deep shade of red she had grown to love. “Do you... ever...?” Annalise cleared her throat again. “...think of me?”

“Every. Single. Time.” Brinley let the words slowly roll off her tongue because she loved the effect it was having on Annalise.

“I wanna see.”

“Wanna see what?” Brinley was pretty sure she knew exactly what Annalise was asking for, but she wanted to hear her say it.

“I want to watch... what you normally do when I leave. I want you to do it in front of

me.”

“You want me to masturbate in front of you?”

“Yeah,” Annalise answered immediately. Her voice was much more quiet and reserved when she added, “Only if you want to.”

“Have I ever said no to you? Of course I want to.” This is hot as hell. Brinley’s heart was pounding just thinking about it. Of course, that wasn’t the only part of her that was reacting. “But I’ll only do it on one condition.”

Annalise furrowed her eyebrows. “What’s that?”

“You have to tell me exactly what you want.”

“I thought I already did.”

“You beat around the bush, pun totally intended, and made me say it. I want to hear you say it.”

“Fine.” Annalise squeezed her eyes shut and blew out a long, shaky breath. “I want to watch you masturbate.”

That was somehow even sexier than Brinley expected. She couldn’t wait to rip off her clothes and get started. Except, Annalise had yet to see her naked. Maybe she wouldn’t want the full experience. “So, normally I’m so turned on by the time you leave, I strip off all my clothes before I start. If that makes you uncomfortable, I don’t—”

“I want you to do it exactly as you would if I wasn’t here.”

“In that case...” Brinley hopped out of bed and pulled off the T-shirt and shorts she was wearing.

Since she had taken her bra off as soon as she walked in the door from work, all she had left to do was shimmy out of her underwear.

“Shit,” Annalise whispered from where she was still lying on the bed. “I knew your body was perfect, but really? Do you have any flaws?”

“The big toe on my right foot looks like a chode .” She was somewhat joking, but it was honestly disgusting and used to be something she was very self-conscious about.

“Well, chode toe and all, you’re perfect to me.”

Did my heart just grow in response to one kind sentence from this woman who was a stranger less than three months ago? No. Absolutely not. The way Brinley’s heart beat in her chest told a different story though. She shook her head. “Save the sweetness for another time. I need you to talk dirty to me.”

Annalise patted the spot next to her on the bed. “Get over here. I need to see what you look like when you come.”

Welp. Wasn’t expecting that. Brinley stood frozen in place for a moment before she finally got her shit together. She quickly moved to the bed where she sat down beside Annalise.

For some strange reason, she was suddenly nervous. Her heart was beating out of her chest, she had to think about taking breaths, and her hands were getting clammy. It was so unlike her and she needed to snap out of it.

Luckily, the way Annalise was staring at her with wide, hungry eyes made her forget

about everything else, except how horny she was.

She shut her eyes and brought both hands to her breasts, gently squeezing and playing with them. “I always start with my boobs since you love boob play so much.” Brinley smirked. Even with her eyes closed, she knew Annalise was blushing right now. “I picture the way you looked while I touched you. I imagine you touching me too.”

The feeling of a hand on her bare stomach caused Brinley’s eyes to shoot open. It took a minute for her vision to come into focus since her head was spinning from that touch that seemed to radiate from her stomach throughout her whole body. When she was finally able to focus on Annalise, her face was red just as she predicted, but the hunger in her eyes was like nothing Brinley had ever seen before. It was like Annalise was the hunter and she was the prey.

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:37 pm

Annalise licked her lips as she continued to stare at Brinley, her hand still against Brinley's skin. The weight of that touch, the first touch of skin that was normally covered by clothing, was like a boulder. "Don't close your eyes. I want you to watch me while you do it."

Shit. This was definitely going to take even less time than usual. Brinley's whole body was already humming in anticipation, begging her to give it what it needs.

She kept her eyes locked with Annalise's as she twirled her nipples between her fingers. She moved one hand down her stomach and squeezed Annalise's hand as she passed it. She tried to speak, but no words were coming. Instead, she communicated everything with her eyes, telling Annalise just how much she craved and needed her.

As one thumb massaged her clit while the other massaged her nipple, the hand moved away from her stomach. Brinley was disappointed until she realized where that hand had gone.

Annalise was lying beside her, eyes still glued to Brinley's as she mimicked everything Brinley was doing, but on herself. Fuck. This was so much better than using her imagination. Brinley continued to play with her nipple as she pushed a finger inside of herself. She watched as Annalise did the exact same thing. No words were spoken. Their communication came in the form of touches, eye contact, and moans. It was, quite frankly, the hottest experience of Brinley's entire life. She moved her finger in and out, before adding a second, then a third.

Annalise's eyes squeezed shut when she added the third finger and she bit her bottom lip so hard, Brinley thought it was going to bleed.

It was almost impossible to speak, but she found a way to force the words out. “Look at me, baby. Watch me while you come. I want you to see me come.” Even though it was taking everything in her to keep her own eyes open, she did it. “I’m so close, baby. Are you?”

Annalise opened her eyes, her pupils burning into Brinley’s. “So... close....” she said between gasping breaths.

Their eyes never left each other as their hands continued to work on their bodies until they were both puddles of sweat and moans. Brinley’s orgasm hit at the exact same time she watched Annalise’s hips shoot up from the bed. Annalise screamed while Brinley bit her lip to keep her noises under control. She only wanted to hear Annalise. She loved knowing that she was the reason for the sounds she was making, even without touching her.

Brinley laid her head back on her pillow, took a deep breath, and finally allowed her eyes to close.

For a moment, the room was silent, but then a whisper floated between them that Brinley could just barely make out. “I wanna touch you like that.”

Brinley’s eyes shot open. Had she really heard that correctly?

If the way Annalise was looking at her was any indication, then she definitely had. Her body was screaming at her to agree. She had been dreaming about Annalise’s hands on her for weeks and weeks now. There was nothing in this world she wanted more. Except, they had a plan. She didn’t want Annalise to get caught up in the moment, move too quickly, and do something she would later regret.

Brinley closed her eyes as she spoke because she knew if she looked at Annalise she would change her mind. “We can’t move on to lesson seven until you pass the lesson

six test. You need to get an orgasm from someone else.”

Silence spread between them that seemed to last for hours before Annalise finally answered. “You’re right.”

Shit. Really? I don’t want to be.

Brinley opened her eyes and rolled onto her side so she was facing Annalise. “You better get on that, because I’m sick of my own hands. I need yours.”

Chapter 7

Annalise

“So, you’re really doing it? You’re meeting up with someone from the app in two days ?” Nathalie looked from Annalise to her grandma then scrunched up her face as if she was crying. “Our little girl is growing up.”

As usual, Annalise regretted sharing anything with her grandma and Nathalie, but after a few glasses of wine, all of her reservations fell away. She had gone on the app as soon as she left Brinley’s apartment after they masturbated in front of each other and began messaging back the women who had already reached out to her. At that point, all she could think about was getting the chance to touch Brinley. Watching her climax was amazing, and Annalise wanted to be the one to cause it.

Unfortunately, the more days that passed since seeing Brinley, the more hesitant she was about it. It wasn’t that she didn’t want to touch Brinley, but without the heat of the moment moving her along, the questions returned. Being pleased by a woman was one thing. It was a basic human need. But touching another woman? Could a straight woman really do that? The truth was, she had no idea. She had always been so sure she was straight. Her sexuality had never even crossed her mind. She liked the

guys she was with, even loved some of them. But what she felt with Brinley? It was completely different and so much the same all at once. She couldn't explain it. All she knew was she craved Brinley more than she had ever craved anyone before.

She thought about asking Nathalie and her grandma what all of this meant, but even with her buzz, she knew that was a bad idea. Those two would never let it drop.

The sound of a throat clearing brought Annalise out of her own thoughts and she found both Nathalie and her grandma staring at her, waiting for more. What was the question? Oh yeah. The app. "I am."

Nathalie waved her hand in a go on motion. "So, who is she? What's her name? Can we see her picture?"

This was exactly why she didn't share everything with them. She already felt dizzy from all of Nathalie's questions. "Her name is Clarissa, and she lives in Philly." She opened the app and held her phone up to show Nathalie the woman a few years her senior with short, spiky, dirty-blond hair.

Nathalie studied the picture much longer than Annalise found necessary, as if she was somehow searching for answers within the photo. "She's very handsome. Is that your type?"

No. My type is a brunette bartender with tattoo sleeves and dark eyes ... Shit... What the hell? A heat spread through Annalise's body at the thought. "I don't think I have a type," she lied.

Nathalie pointed to the phone. "She's hot. She also looks like she knows how to please a woman. I'm sure you'll have a good time."

From their conversation, Annalise didn't doubt that. Clarissa was cool and confident

and the slightest bit dirty without taking it too far. If she was being honest, their conversation had actually turned her on quite a bit. It was strange but enlightening. Even though she would never admit it out loud, her grandma had been right. There was a spark in her life that wasn't present a few months ago. She wasn't just living; she was thriving. Okay, shut up. Now you sound like a Hallmark card.

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:37 pm

“You’re totally thinking about her naked, aren’t you?” Nathalie asked.

Annalise’s grandma winked. “She definitely is.”

Annalise’s throat constricted to the point that she felt like she couldn’t breathe. Strangely enough, she hadn’t thought about that. She wasn’t a complete prude. She had enough experience to realize that sex normally involved getting naked. But, she had just gotten to that point with Brinley. The thought of seeing someone else naked almost felt wrong, like she was somehow cheating even though she and Brinley were the opposite of exclusive.

Annalise’s grandma patted her knee. “Don’t worry, dear. I’m sure she won’t realize one of your nipples is bigger than the other one.”

Annalise was about to open her mouth to argue that wasn’t true, except it was. How the hell did her grandma know that though?

The fucking diary.

As if she wasn’t already nervous enough, she could add her asymmetric nipples that she hadn’t let herself stress over since middle school to that list. Great. Just great.

“Make yourself at home,” Clarissa said as soon as Annalise walked into her house, which seemed unlikely since this large two-story house was completely different from Annalise’s 650-square-foot apartment.

Going to a complete stranger's house probably wasn't the smartest move Annalise had ever made, but at least it saved her the hassle of trying to successfully make it through awkward small talk. Plus, she had her location shared with Nathalie and had given her strict instructions to come find her if she didn't text by midnight.

She looked at the large Victorian clock hanging on the wall. 9:00. Plenty of time before she turned into a pumpkin and had to call her bestie to reassure her she wasn't dead. It was also plenty of time for her to be murdered, but she refused to think about that. Clarissa seemed nice, and the woman who opened the door matched the picture from the profile, so that was a good sign.

"Are you nervous? Do you need a drink?"

The sound of Clarissa's voice caused Annalise to realize she was still standing in the doorway like a complete idiot. "I'm sorry. I'm a little nervous. This is my first time." Shit. What? "Not with a woman or anything, not at all. Not even close. Just my first time meeting someone from this app. Well, kind of. I mean, yeah. Pretty much."

Please shut up.

Instead of being turned off by Annalise's rambling, a wide smile spread across Clarissa's face. "So, I'm your first, huh? I'm honored." She put a hand on the small of Annalise's back and guided her over to the large kitchen filled with granite countertops, pristine black cabinets, and stainless steel appliances that looked like they had never even been touched, let alone used. "Don't worry about a thing. Tonight is all about me taking care of you." She went over to her wine rack and pulled out a bottle of wine Annalise had surprisingly never heard of, then grabbed one wine glass, filled it halfway, and handed it to Annalise. "Do you want to take that to my room so I can show you exactly what I mean?"

Annalise followed Clarissa up the stairs to her bedroom where she was directed to sit

down on the bed. Clarissa got on after her and immediately straddled Annalise's lap. Clarissa gave her a questioning grin, and Annalise subtly nodded her head in response.

Apparently, that was all Clarissa needed. She slowly slid down Annalise's legs taking Annalise's thong and jean shorts with her. Shit, that's hot.

Annalise held her wine in the air, making sure she didn't spill it when her hand became shaky. "Do you want me to put this down?"

Clarissa smirked and shook her head. "I want you to drink that up," she licked her lips, "while I drink you up."

Shit. Shit. Shit. Breathe. "And what if I spill it?" Annalise asked, trying her best to keep her voice level.

Clarissa lifted an eyebrow. "Then I get to wash my bedding with pride." A wink. A goddamn sexy as hell wink. "But, then again, I have a feeling I'm going to get to do that whether you spill the wine or not."

Damn. Are all lesbians this confident? Because... Damn. Annalise could already hardly breathe. Then without any other preamble, Clarissa's mouth was on her. She started at Annalise's knees and made her way up her thighs, switching from one to the other every few seconds. When she got to Annalise's center, she took a breath, then blew it out onto her, sending shivers mixed with tingles throughout Annalise's whole body. She was already so wet and this woman hadn't even licked her yet.

As if she could read Annalise's thoughts, Clarissa ran her tongue right up her center, licking up the wetness that was already gathered there. As if that wasn't enough, she sucked Annalise's clit into her mouth and swirled it around with her tongue. Holy mother of God. Jesus Fucking Christ. Is this even legal? Annalise had been with some

guys who were much better at giving head than others, but it was never like this. She had never had so much care and attention given to her, except from Brinley, of course, but Brinley was her teacher.

Nope. Don't think about a different woman than the one currently going down on you.

When Annalise moaned after a particularly good swipe of the tongue, Clarissa pulled away to smile at her. Maybe women with short blonde hair were her type, because this woman looked gorgeous down between her legs. Not as gorgeous as... Nope. Stop. Clarissa nodded at the glass of wine Annalise was clinging to. "Take a sip. It's great, I promise."

As soon as Annalise brought her lips to the glass, Clarissa sucked on her clit. Her hips shot up and her hand shook as the rest of her body vibrated with pleasure. The littlest bit of wine dribbled down her cheek.

Clarissa clearly noticed, because her smirk grew even wider. "Here. Let me get that."

She crawled up Annalise's body and licked a path across her cheek and up her chin before placing a searing kiss on her lips, not hesitating for a moment before slipping her tongue into Annalise's mouth. As their tongues met, Annalise could taste herself. She never realized what a turn on that was until now, and she found herself wanting to taste more. As if reading her thoughts once again, Clarissa slipped a hand between their bodies, gathered some wetness on two fingers, then shoved those fingers deep inside Annalise. They continued to make out as she slipped in and out of her. When Clarissa removed her fingers for good, she also broke away from the kiss.

Annalise was initially disappointed, but that didn't last for long since Clarissa replaced her tongue with the two fingers that had just been inside of her. The proof of Annalise's pleasure flooded all of her senses. She could smell herself; taste herself;

hell, she was so turned on, she could practically feel herself.

Clarissa licked her ear before whispering into it. “So, what do you prefer, yourself or the wine?”

Page 24

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:37 pm

The answer was easy, but Annalise wasn't sure if she should speak the truth out loud. Eh . Fuck it. "My... myself."

Clarissa's smile could almost be described as malicious. "Me, too. Which reminds me...." She licked her way down Annalise's body and went to work on her center once again.

After a few seconds, she added her fingers to the mix, and with one good pulse of two fingers inside Annalise combined with a long swipe of her tongue, Annalise fell apart. Her legs flew in the air, her mouth went dry, and all of the gravity seemed to be swept from the room. It was as if she was floating above her body and watching herself have the orgasm... one of the best of her entire life. When she finally came down, she was nothing more than a mass of heavy limbs that she couldn't move if she tried.

Clarissa scooted up beside her and ran a hand through Annalise's sweat-drenched hair. "How can I pleasure you next?"

"No way! You've gotta be shitting me. She did not say that." Nathalie playfully punched her husband who was sitting beside her. "How come you never ask me how you can pleasure me?"

Annalise didn't necessarily want to be sharing this story with Boden, but Nathalie had insisted they get lunch the day after her hookup, and she knew Nathalie would end up sharing the story with Boden anyway. Plus, she liked Boden. He chilled Nathalie out,

even if only very slightly.

Boden rubbed his arm as if Nathalie's punch actually hurt. "I didn't know I was supposed to."

Nathalie rolled her eyes as she looked back at Annalise. "Men. Anyway, are you two getting together again?"

Annalise had to hold in a laugh as she thought back on the last part of her night. "It turns out, Clarissa is a very busy woman. She squeezed me in this time, but she couldn't pencil me in again until September fifteenth."

Nathalie looked down at her phone then blinked at Annalise with wide eyes. "But that's a month from now."

Now Annalise giggled. "I know. I'm not kidding. She literally penciled me into her calendar. A calendar she has specifically to keep track of women."

"Damn." Nathalie shook her head at her husband. "I might have rushed this thing between us. I should have given women more of a chance."

"More of a chance?" Boden choked on his beer.

Nathalie rolled her eyes once again. "Put your boner away. I'm talking about the few friends I made out with in college. It unfortunately didn't go any farther than that." Nathalie let out a dramatic sigh and lay her chin in her hand. "Anyway, what are you going to do before that?"

Annalise's heart rate picked up and her hands became clammy. She stared down at the table to try to somewhat hide her warm face that she was sure was the same color as the cranberry vodka she was drinking. "I made plans for the next three Friday

nights leading up to it.”

“With three different women?” Nathalie shouted.

Annalise’s eyes darted around the restaurant as her face became even more warm and her heartbeat more erratic. Her nerves calmed slightly when she realized no one seemed to be paying any attention to them. Thank God. “Yes. That’s correct.”

“Shit.” Nathalie moved her hands as if she was bowing toward Annalise. “My queen. What about Brinley? Are you going to be seeing her at all during that time?”

Annalise shrugged, trying her best to play it cool. “I hadn’t really thought about it.”

Which was a complete and utter lie. She thought about it all the time. It was practically all she thought about at this time. She was still itching to touch Brinley. She dreamed of watching Brinley fall apart below her. She fantasized about what she would taste like. It was still a line she wasn’t willing to cross though. Going there meant something... something she didn’t really want to have to overthink right now. This was supposed to be fun, not eye-opening.

Part of the reason she had made so many plans was to have an excuse not to see Brinley. Not because she didn’t want to, but because she had no question that as soon as she did, all bets were off. She would be touching her, whether she was ready to or not.

Deep down, she knew the truth. She was more than ready.

Chapter 8

Brinley

Three and a half weeks. It had officially been three and a half whole weeks since Brinley last saw Annalise. In that time, all she could think about was the two of them masturbating in front of each other. Every time she pleased herself, she pictured Annalise lying beside her watching and doing the same. Even when she was working or attempting to study, her thoughts kept returning to that moment. It was like she was addicted, and now she was definitely going through withdrawal.

She needed to respect Annalise's space though. She was the teacher, and Annalise was the student. A student who was taking her assignment very seriously, it appeared. She already had three different hookups, the latest one happening last night, and two more scheduled. She didn't need Brinley right now, which meant it could be a while until they saw each other. She chose to ignore the slight sting in her heart over that fact. She wasn't getting attached. She was just horny. Very horny.

The solution was simple, and it hit her like a ton of bricks. She needed to have sex with someone else. She needed to scratch that itch and then she'd feel better. It was decided. The next woman who walked into the bar, Brinley would coax into her bed. Only if she was willing, of course, but most women were.

When the bells above the door of the bar sounded, Brinley's eyes shot to it. Moment of truth. Holy fucking shit. This must be a joke. Brinley laughed as she walked to the side of the bar closest to the door and leaned down onto it. "What are you doing here?" she asked the beautiful blue-eyed blonde standing in front of her.

Annalise smiled shyly as she sat down across from where Brinley stood. "I was looking for a last-minute tutoring session."

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:37 pm

“That’s funny, because I was looking for someone to have sex with.”

Annalise swallowed hard and stared down at the wood separating the two of them.

“Really?”

“Absolutely. I just got done telling myself I was going to have sex with the next woman to enter this bar.” Brinley waited for Annalise to look up at her, and once she did, she lifted an eyebrow. “Looks like you’re the lucky winner.”

“I, um...” Annalise made a sound that fell somewhere between a cough and a gag. If she wasn’t so sexy, Brinley probably would have found it a bit gross, but Annalise could somehow pull it off. Her awkwardness only made her more attractive to Brinley.

Brinley could tell she was nervous, so she held up a hand. “Don’t worry. We can stick to lesson six.”

Annalise nodded slowly. “I was hoping we could start there.” Her eyes drilled into Brinley’s, throwing Brinley off balance, so much so that she had to lean on the bar for support. “I don’t want to make any promises now, but if I say I’m ready to move on, don’t stop me this time, okay?”

With the way Annalise was looking at her, she could do anything she wanted to Brinley, and Brinley hoped she would. “ I get off in twenty-five minutes. ” Brinley reached into her pocket and pulled out a key then handed it to Annalise. “Head up and make yourself comfortable. Unless... you want a drink.”

“I don’t need a drink tonight.” Annalise’s message was clear. Whatever happened between them tonight, she didn’t require a buzz for.

Brinley was still trying to process all of this as Annalise walked away.

“I don’t think I’ve ever seen you let a girl go up to your apartment without you.”

Brinley jumped at the sound of Maddie’s voice from right behind her. She turned around and slapped her with a towel. “You scared the shit out of me. You can’t creep up on people like that.”

“I wasn’t creeping. You were just too distracted to be aware of your surroundings.”

When Maddie lifted her eyebrows and smirked, Brinley knew exactly what she was trying to imply, so she shook her head. “It’s not what you think.”

“Oh, really? Because I think you’re starting to fall for a straight girl.”

“First of all...” I’m not convinced Annalise is completely straight. She obviously wasn’t going to tell Maddie that, especially because it didn’t actually matter, since she absolutely wasn’t falling. “I’m not.”

“Mmhmm. Keep telling yourself that.”

Brinley rolled her eyes. “I don’t do relationships. You know that.”

“Doesn’t mean you can’t have a crush.” Maddie put a hand on Brinley’s chest. “You can’t help what your heart wants.”

“Ew, stop.” Maddie clearly had no idea what she was talking about. Brinley didn’t fall.

Sure, she normally didn't let random women make themselves at home in her apartment, but Annalise wasn't random. Brinley wasn't sure how to classify their relationship, but she thought of Annalise as a friend at this point. She would have no problem giving Maddie the key to her apartment. Why should Annalise be any different?

She kept telling herself this as the next twenty-five minutes passed by. When she walked into her apartment, she found Annalise sitting on her couch, reading a book. At first, Annalise didn't seem to notice her, so Brinley allowed herself to take in the moment. There was something... oddly comforting... about it. It felt so natural for Annalise to be making herself at home in Brinley's apartment.

"Hey, you," Annalise said when she finally looked up from the book, the sweetest smile spread across her face. She put a bookmark in and sat it down beside her.

Brinley walked over to the couch and sat down as well, picking up the book Annalise had been reading. A weird warmth spread through her body when she saw what it was. "I see you took my advice."

Annalise ran her fingers over the title, *The Last to Leave*. "I did. I'm only on the first book from the list, but I plan to read them all."

"This is a good one to start with. Erica Lee is great. I would recommend every single one of her books to absolutely anybody." Brinley tapped on the cover. "The third-act breakup in this book is stupid though, a total miscommunication trope. Boring. I was like, 'Could you idiots just talk, please?'"

When Brinley was done rambling, she noticed Annalise was looking at her with an amused look on her face. "Third-act breakup? Miscommunication trope? You really are a nerd, aren't you?"

“I don’t know.” Brinley straddled Annalise’s lap and rubbed up against her. “Would a nerd have you this turned on right now?” Brinley talked a big game, but she was getting just as much (or more) out of this, so she continued to move her body against Annalise’s.

“Who says I’m turned on?” Annalise asked between two deep, shaky breaths.

“Well, your pupils are so huge I can barely see any blue in your eyes right now, your breathing is ragged, and I can already feel your wetness soaking through your jeans.” The last was a lie, but it didn’t change the fact that Annalise was definitely turned on.

“I am not that wet.”

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:37 pm

“Ah, but you are wet, huh?” Brinley laughed because Annalise had walked right into her trap.

“I hate you.”

“Do you, though?” Brinley bent down and placed kisses across Annalise’s neck and up her jaw.

She loved everything about this. Annalise definitely wasn’t the only one who was wet. Brinley was so turned on, she could hardly take it. She felt like she might explode any second. That’s what you get for studying instead of having sex.

Annalise didn’t answer with words but instead brought her mouth to Brinley’s. Damn. She somehow got even better at kissing these past few weeks. When their tongues met, it was as if they had never left each other. They continued the dance that they already knew so well.

Annalise’s hands landed on Brinley’s hips and she ran her fingers over the bare skin where her shirt met her pants. As crazy as it was with how long they had been doing this, Brinley was pretty sure this was the most Annalise had ever touched her, at least underneath her clothes. The sensation of those fingers on her was driving her insane. It was such a light touch, but she felt it everywhere, especially all the places she needed those hands to be.

Since she wasn’t going to beg Annalise to do something she wasn’t comfortable with yet, she would do the touching. She used one hand to pull at the bottom of Annalise’s shirt and slipped her other hand between them and into her own pants. She needed to

relieve the throbbing down there immediately.

Annalise helped Brinley with getting the shirt over her head then grabbed Brinley's wrist that was currently aching as she tried to stop the other ache. "Wait."

Brinley let out an involuntary huff. "What?"

"I want us both to be naked this time."

Brinley's eyes went wide and her jaw dropped. Was she dreaming? "Really?"

Annalise grabbed her jaw and kissed her once again. After leaving her breathless, she pulled away but kept her hand on Brinley's jaw. "Yes."

Brinley could barely breathe, let alone form words. "Maybe... we..." She pointed down the hallway. "Bedroom?"

Annalise nodded multiple times as if she was a bobblehead doll in the front of a fast-moving car. "Yes, please."

Brinley didn't even know whose hands were removing which clothes from where. All she knew was as soon as they hit her room, they attacked each other, and within seconds, all of their clothes were on the floor.

Brinley panted as she took in Annalise's body. "I almost forgot how hot you were."

"Really?"

"No, I've thought about it every night."

Brinley reached out to pull Annalise closer to her, but Annalise stayed rooted in

place. “Wait. Really? You’ve been thinking about me? ”

Play it cool, Brinley. Brinley ran her eyes up and down Annalise’s body and licked her lips. “How couldn’t I? Look at you.”

This time, Annalise was the one to reach out. She took Brinley’s hand and brought it to her own wrist. “I want to touch you.” Annalise used one hand to direct Brinley’s fingers around her other wrist. “Show me how.”

Heat. Lust. Affection. All three swirled inside Brinley’s body as if they were a hurricane. “Are... are you sure?”

Annalise stared at her, eyes unblinking, as if she was looking straight into Brinley’s soul. Right before she spoke, she swallowed hard. But those eyes didn’t move. Never once did they falter. “I don’t think I’ve ever been more sure of anything my entire life.”

Brinley nodded in return. Her mouth was too dry to speak, her brain too dizzy to function. She led Annalise over to the bed, never once loosening the grip from her wrist.

When they were both lying down, she directed Annalise’s hand down her stomach and onto her center. They both gasped at the first contact. Annalise’s fingers were barely touching her, but it still felt like everything Brinley had been dreaming of. When Annalise didn’t show any signs of hesitation, Brinley directed her fingers up through her folds.

Annalise gasped once again. “You’re so wet.”

Brinley nodded. “You did that to me. You always do.”

“Show me what to do next.”

Brinley moved her hand slightly, so she could bring Annalise’s thumb over her clit. Once it was there, she encouraged her to move it in slow circles, biting her lip when she hit just the right spot.

Brinley re moved her hand and allowed Annalise to continue massaging her all on her own. As her thumb continued to work, the room was silent aside from their heavy breathing. Their eyes stayed locked as if they were telling each other a silent story. Brinley didn’t want to turn the page because she was afraid the story would end.

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:37 pm

Annalise must not have had the same fears because after a few seconds, she broke the silence. “I want to go inside.”

Please. Fuck me. Finger me so hard that I scream out in both pleasure and pain. Brinley took a deep breath to keep herself from saying all of the things she wanted to say. She kept her voice level and calm, which was the complete opposite of how she felt. “You know what to do. Just do it the same way you would to yourself. Start with one and work your way up.” When Annalise looked at her with furrowed eyebrows and questioning eyes, Brinley squeezed her hand. “It’s going to feel good, don’t worry.”

Annalise nodded then circled her finger around hesitantly, which was inadvertently sensual and excellent foreplay. Brinley couldn’t remember a time she was more desperate for a finger. Then that finger was inside of her, exploring as it moved in and out. In and out. In and out.

“Is... is that good?” Annalise asked nervously, her voice so unsure Brinley couldn’t believe it.

How does she not realize how amazing she is? How is she already so fucking good at this?

“Yes.” Brinley nodded as a guttural moan escaped from her throat. Shit. Fuck. “More. Please. More.”

Annalise removed her one finger and replaced it with two then continued to explore the exact same way she was doing before.

“So. Good,” Brinley whispered, her voice barely audible between each of their gasping breaths. She was so close to the edge, but she wasn’t ready for this to end. “Wait,” she pushed out. She took a moment to catch her breath before forcing more words out. “D-do what you did the other night. C-copy whatever I do, but this time instead of doing it to ourselves, it will be to each other.”

“Okay.” The word was soft, but there was no hesitation behind it.

They were doing this. They were going to make each other come. It was what Brinley had thought about all those nights in bed alone, and now it was finally happening. She lay on her side facing Annalise and waited for her to do the same then moved a hand up her center, gasping when Annalise did the exact same. She massaged her clit in the same way she had shown Annalise to do it, and she repeated it perfectly. Brinley bit her lip so hard she tasted blood, but it was worth it to somewhat calm the synapses firing throughout her body. She needed this to last. She couldn’t come yet. No matter how much she wanted to...

She moved a finger inside of Annalise and pushed it in and out while she did the same. She added a second finger and pushed harder. She wasn’t sure who leaned in first, but soon they were making out while they both fucked each other hard. At the same time she felt herself toppling over the edge, Annalise moaned into her mouth. All of her muscles tightened as the orgasm shot through her. To the contrary, Annalise thrashed back and forth and screamed.

Damn, I love how vocal she is.

Neither of them spoke for a few minutes, and as Brinley stared up at her ceiling in total post-orgasm bliss, she wondered if Annalise had fallen asleep. That was, until Annalise’s soft voice cut through the silence.

“How do you know if... you’re not as straight as you once thought you were?”

Brinley sat up straight. This is serious. “Wait. Are you...?” Gay? Bisexual? Queer? Pan? Brinley let her voice trail off, because she wasn’t sure how to ask the question.

Annalise shrugged then brought her fingers up to her mouth and chewed on her nails. “I have no idea. That’s why I’m asking. How did you know you were gay?”

Brinley blew out a breath. She had come out in ninth grade. At this point, it was almost hard to remember being in the closet. “For me, it was pretty simple. Aside from it not being the societal norm, there wasn’t a ton to question.”

“When did you come out?”

“High school.”

Annalise groaned and threw her hands in the air. “Of course you did. I think I’m all up in my own head because of everything that’s been going on. I’m closer to thirty than I am to twenty, and I’ve never questioned this once... until the past few months. It doesn’t make sense.”

“It actually makes perfect sense.” Brinley put a hand on Annalise’s knee as Annalise watched her intently, clearly waiting for answers. “I’m not going to minimize my experience by saying it was easy. Anytime you feel or do things that are different from what society deems to be normal, it’s hard and confusing. It was much more cut and dry for me though. For as long as I can remember, I was always noticing girls, even before I could comprehend what that meant. It wasn’t like that with guys. I could convince myself I had a crush so I could talk about it with my friends, but it wasn’t the same as when I actually started developing crushes on girls. It’s the same today. A woman hits on me and all I want to do is hop into bed with her. A man hits on me and I feel like I could throw up. I’m a huge lesbian. So gay.” Brinley laughed but forced herself to become serious. She squeezed Annalise’s knee. “I take it you’ve actually liked guys in the past, right? Enjoyed kissing them? Got turned on having

sex with them? Developed real feelings?”

Annalise nodded. “Of course. None of that was fake. Except, maybe, a few of the orgasms, but that’s pretty par for the course.”

Brinley put up a hand. She couldn’t listen to that bullshit. “Not with women, but that’s a whole other subject.” Brinley shook her head. Focus. This is important. “Anyway, it makes perfect sense that you never considered it until now. I can only imagine how confusing it is for women who identify as anything other than a hardcore lesbian. Your whole life you’ve had feelings for the people that the world claims you should. You get in a relationship that looks exactly like the ones on TV and in movies and you feel everything you’re supposed to feel.”

“But shouldn’t I have also felt that for women before now?”

Brinley shrugged. This was somewhat uncharted territory for her. “Maybe. And maybe you did, but you never really thought about it until now. Before the past few months, did you ever take extra notice of women on TV, movies, or just in general?”

“Well, yeah, but....”

At the same time Annalise’s eyes widened, Brinley pointed a finger at her. “ Exactly . I’m not saying it necessarily means anything. I’m just saying I’m sure it’s easy to blow off those thoughts when you’re sitting next to your boyfriend.”

Annalise groaned and rubbed her hands over her face. “But couldn’t you use the same type of argument in the opposite way? That I’m only considering it now because of what I’m doing?”

“I guess you could.”

Annalise groaned once again. “Then how do I know?”

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:37 pm

Brinley wished she had the answer, but she didn't. "That's something only you can figure out. What I can tell you is that sexuality and gender are fluid. Maybe you're compatible with women in bed, but when it comes to anything beyond that, you only have feelings for men. Maybe you have feelings for both. Maybe it all depends on the specific person—male, female, non-binary, gender nonconforming... doesn't matter. As hard as it is, try your best not to overthink it. If you're happy, then let yourself be. You don't ever have to put a label on yourself if you don't want to, but if you feel like a label fits and you want it, then go for it."

"So, pretty much do whatever the hell I want and don't think about it?" Annalise laughed. "You do realize who you're talking to, right?"

"I know. Easier said than done." Given all of her questions, Brinley figured this was the best time to check in with Annalise. "Are you... okay... with everything that just happened between us?"

Much to her surprise, Annalise laughed even louder now. She laughed so hard that tears started to stream down her face. She wiped the tears away with the back of her hand. "Sorry. I'm laughing because I'm more than okay with it. I've been questioning my sexuality for a little while now, but I'm questioning it even more now that I know how much I love touching you."

Brinley lifted an eyebrow and smirked. "Oh, yeah? Maybe we could do it again sometime."

"I'd like that." Annalise looked down and ran her hand over Brinley's comforter. "I should probably go for now though. This was amazing but still a lot."

“Why don’t you stay?” What the hell? Why did I just say that?

“Stay?”

Brinley shrugged as if it was no big deal and tried to ignore how fast her heart was racing. “Yeah. Not to do anything. We can watch a movie on my couch... fully clothed. It’s late. You have a lot on your mind, so I’m sure you’re exhausted. I’d feel bad having you drive home when you can get a good night’s sleep here and drive once you’re fully rested.”

“You don’t have work or anything tomorrow?”

Brinley shook her head. “I just have to study. The bar is closed on Sundays because the owner is actually super religious, but in a cool way. The only time I work on Sundays is if he hosts events like Sips for the Soul , Gin and Jesus , or Lemondrops with the Lord . And before you ask—no, I did not make those up. Those are actual events he’s hosted.”

Annalise laughed but quickly became serious again. “And you’re sure this doesn’t break some unwritten rule?”

What’s with this girl and rules? “The only rule I have is that if you stay, I have to make you eggs and bacon.”

This finally caused Annalise to visibly relax. “I can agree to that.”

“Movie?”

“Sounds perfect.”

It took more time for the two of them to get dressed and choose a movie than it did

for Annalise to fall asleep during said movie. She was snuggled underneath Brinley's arm with her head resting against her chest. This wasn't normally how Brinley acted with random hookups, but Annalise wasn't random. She also felt more like a friend than a hookup at this point. A friend she was very compatible with in bed, but that was just an added benefit in Brinley's mind. It didn't mean anything because it didn't have to. She was happy about where things stood between them and that was all that mattered.

When the movie ended, she woke Annalise up with a kiss to her forehead. As Annalise's eyes fluttered open, Brinley ignored the other fluttering that was taking place in her stomach. She led Annalise back to her room and held her in her arms just as she had on the couch. This was a friendship she could definitely get used to...

Chapter 9

Annalise

When Annalise woke up, it took her a minute to regain her bearings and remember where she was. She opened her eyes and took in the room around her. She was at Brinley's apartment. Last night, she had touched another woman for the first time then fallen asleep in that woman's arms. Was that weird? It didn't feel weird. It felt oddly natural. Almost too natural.

Don't overthink. Don't overthink.

Speaking of Brinley, where was she? As if on cue, Annalise's other senses awakened at that exact moment, and the most wonderful smell hit her nostrils. Bacon and eggs. Brinley wasn't lying.

Annalise stood out of bed and took the short walk to the kitchen, where she found Brinley standing by the stove, her hips moving slightly to the rhythm of whatever

song was playing from her phone. Instead of saying anything, Annalise enjoyed the moment.

She watched the sway of Brinley's hips and the way her head pivoted back and forth between the book she had sitting beside her on the counter and the pans in front of her. She looked so relaxed, so at home. Obviously, she was literally at home, but she somehow seemed even more content than usual, which was saying a lot for Brinley.

As if she could sense she was being watched, she turned around at that very moment, her whole face lighting up when her eyes met Annalise's. "Good morning! I hope I didn't wake you. I have an unspoken rule with myself that whenever I'm listening to Fletcher, the volume has to be as loud as it goes."

"Fletcher?" That was a name Annalise had never heard before.

"Oh, sweetie, you have so much to learn." Brinley turned off the stove then walked over to Annalise, her hand landing on Annalise's arm once they were close. "Maybe between all the sex we could work in some lessons on Lesbian Gods and Bi-cons. Fletcher is definitely one of the top Lesbian Gods in my mind. She might literally be at the top."

Annalise refused to think about how good it felt to have Brinley's hand on her arm. She refused to consider how the heat radiating from that one spot and spreading throughout her whole body made her want to rip off Brinley's clothes and have her way with her right there in the kitchen. No, she was going to focus on her words instead. Words that were now all jumbled in her head thanks to her other inappropriate thoughts. "What's a bi-con?"

Brinley playfully rolled her eyes. "A bi icon. Duh. You know Renee Rapp?"

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:37 pm

“She’s the one from Sex Lives of College Girls , right?” Annalise and Nathalie loved that show. They had devoured each season in just a night.

“Yes, but more importantly, she’s a bi-con.”

“She’s bi?” Annalise knew she played a queer character, but she had no idea she was bi in real life.

“You’re so cute.” Brinley laughed then unfortunately removed her hand from Annalise’s arm and walked away. She held her phone, which still had music blasting from the speakers, up in the air. “Meet Fletcher. She’s gay, she’s hot, and she’s an amazing singer. I have a new assignment for you. Before we meet next time, I want you to listen to her music and write an essay on which song is your favorite and why.”

“An essay?” Now it was Annalise who laughed.

“It can be written in your head if you prefer. I just need to know your thoughts.”

“Deal.” Annalise walked over to the stove where the bacon and eggs sat, cooked and ready. She pointed to the food. “Is that for me?”

“Of course.” Brinley looked deep into Annalise’s eyes before moving her own eyes all over Annalise’s body. Even though she was fully clothed at that moment, Annalise felt naked and completely revealed. “I thought you earned it after last night.”

Is she talking about...? Oh, God, she definitely is. Look at those eyes. They’re

ravenous. Annalise's body was now screaming at her, begging her to take what she really wanted. "I'm starving." Annalise licked her lips as she stared back at Brinley just as deeply. "But not for food."

For a moment, Brinley's eyebrows furrowed as if she was confused. "What are you—?" Her eyes went comically wide. "Oh. Oh! Bedroom? Now?"

Annalise nodded. If she could see herself, she would probably laugh at how intense she looked with all of her muscles tightened and her head bobbing up and down as if she had just been asked if she wanted air in a room completely devoid of oxygen. This moment was much too charged to be funny though, so she squeaked out a just-barely-audible, "Yes, please."

Brinley smirked and lifted an eyebrow. "I love how polite you are when you get nervous."

There was no time for small talk or flirting. Annalise needed this and she needed it now. Without saying another word, she turned around and speed-walked to Brinley's room, tearing off her clothes as soon as she was in the door.

When she turned around, Brinley was pulling up her shirt, but Annalise put a hand out to stop her. "Wait. I wanna do it."

She hadn't gotten the chance last night, so now it was all she could think about. She nodded toward Brinley's bed. "Sit down."

Brinley sat at the edge of the bed just like Annalise hoped she would. When Annalise knelt in front of her and brought a hand to the bottom of her shirt, Brinley lifted her arms. Annalise slowly pulled off the shirt and gasped when she realized Brinley wasn't wearing a bra. Her boobs weren't very big, but they were perfect. Annalise definitely hadn't paid enough attention to them last night, but she wasn't going to

make the mistake again.

She leaned in and took one into her mouth, while bringing her hand up to the other one. God, she was horny. In the past, touching another person had never turned her on like this, but she was pretty sure she had never touched someone with a body as amazing as Brinley's. She was also shocked how easy this was for her. She expected to be more hesitant, but she wasn't at all. She loved the way it felt with Brinley in her hand and mouth.

Speaking of mouth... She meant what she said about being starving. She was ready to taste Brinley. She couldn't remember the last time she was hungry for anything, let alone a person. She was hungry for Brinley though. So hungry.

She backed away from her slightly and tugged at her shorts. Brinley lifted her hips to help Annalise get them off. No underwear. Annalise licked her lips. There were no nerves, just need. She looked up at Brinley to make sure she had permission to continue what she was so desperate for.

Brinley swallowed hard and watched Annalise with just as many questions in her eyes. "Are... are you sure?"

"Please."

Brinley smirked and ran a hand through Annalise's hair. "You're amazing."

That was more than enough encouragement for Annalise. Without giving it another thought or worrying about whether she was going to do a bad job, she ran her tongue up Brinley's center. She tasted tangy, yet sweet. It was like nothing Annalise had ever tasted before, even much different than the taste of herself that Clarissa had given her. Much to her surprise, she loved it and wanted more. She swiped her tongue once again and was happy when she heard soft moans coming from Brinley's direction.

“You’re doing so good, baby. Are you sure you’ve never done this before?”

Instead of answering with words, Annalise licked her once again. She moved her mouth to the side and placed kisses along Brinley’s thighs before placing another one right over her center. She let her mind wander to what she enjoyed that others had done to her in the past. She licked through Brinley’s folds until she reached her clit, which she twirled around with her tongue.

“Shit. Yes. Yes. Suck me, baby. Suck me.”

Annalise did as she was instructed and sucked Brinley’s clit into her mouth. For a second, nerves overtook her. Sweat gathered on her forehead, her heart beat all the way up in her throat. But then Brinley moaned once again, this time even louder, and her nerves floated away. She wanted to hear more of that. She wanted to taste the signs of Brinley’s pleasure, and she wanted Brinley to come in her mouth. Please. There was nothing she wanted more. She wanted Brinley to climax against her and she wanted to drink it all up.

Now she was on a mission. She had a goal and she was going to reach it. She moved her tongue down until she reached an area that was even wetter than where she had just been. She only hesitated for a brief moment before tentatively slipping her tongue inside of Brinley.

“Fuck. Yes. Right there.”

With Brinley’s encouragement, the next push of her tongue was anything but tentative. She quickly moved it in and out, pushing it in harder and deeper with each plunge. Brinley helped by moving her hips and thrusting against Annalise’s face. It was all so primal. So animalistic. So fucking sexy .

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:37 pm

As Brinley panted above her, Annalise remembered the one thing that was sure to send her over the edge when she was close. She replaced her tongue with two fingers and drove them in and out just as hard. She moved her tongue back to Brinley's clit and worked there while her fingers continued their work down below.

Brinley's thrusts became harder and more needy and when Annalise was sure she was right there, she switched the positions of her fingers and tongue one more time. She needed to maximize the extent of pleasure she tasted on her tongue, and even without prior experience, she knew this was the way to do it.

At the same time Brinley screamed out, a warm liquid flooded Annalise's mouth. While it still tasted like Brinley, it also tasted different somehow. Better . She let herself bask in the taste before licking up the rest of the wetness that remained. She didn't need food. She didn't need water. She was pretty sure she could live off Brinley Adams for the rest of her life, and at that moment, that was good enough for her.

She sat back and leaned against her elbows , eyes closed as she took in the feeling of absolute bliss that was filling her whole body. When she opened them and looked up at Brinley, she was already staring at her with wide, sparkling eyes.

"That was..." Brinley also leaned back and shook her head, chuckling slightly as she did. "Are you sure you've never done that before?"

Annalise could feel her face turning red with embarrassment. Now that the moment was over, she could fully contemplate what she had just done and while she didn't regret it, she was still anxious over it. What does it mean? Stop. Don't overthink. It

was awesome. You want to do it again. That's all that matters right now. "Not that exactly. I haven't gone down on a woman. I've obviously—"

Brinley put up a hand to stop Annalise's rambling. "Please stop. Don't ruin my lesbian post-orgasm bliss by talking about what you've done with penises."

Annalise smiled. She could physically feel some of her anxiety leaving her body, like an actual weight being lifted off her shoulders. It was amazing how Brinley could do that with just a few words. How one laugh from Brinley made her completely grounded. It was a million times more potent than any anxiety medicine she had ever tried.

She forced herself up off the floor and was able to get her wobbly legs as far as the bed, where she sat down next to Brinley and placed a hand on her leg. She quickly moved it, because that one touch made her crave even more. It was as if Brinley was a drug and she couldn't control herself. "So, you're sure I did okay? Because any advice you have, I'm happy to take. I am your student after all."

"Advice. Hm." Brinley tapped her chin as if she was really considering it. "My only advice is to work on your confidence. I know I'm going to have to say it a million times for you to actually start to believe me, but you have the mouth of a goddess. You're amazing, and I'm actually blown away that you've never done that before. Frankly, it's unnatural how good you are. Anyway, since I know you well enough by now to know you just think I'm blowing smoke up your ass, my advice is to fake it until you make it. Without being over the top, act as if you know you're the baddest bitch around. You're going to blow some woman's world, and you need to walk into every hookup acting like you already know that. It will make you even hotter than you already are."

"Is that so?" With a newfound confidence, Annalise pushed Brinley flat onto the bed and climbed on top of her. "Did I blow your world?"

Brinley's pupils were completely blown, showing just how turned on she was, but the smirk remained on her face. She put her hands on Annalise's hips and pulled their bodies even closer together. "I thought we already established that, babe."

Ah. That word. "Confession: I love when you call me babe. It's such a turn on."

Annalise hoped she hadn't confessed too much, but the way Brinley's smile grew at her words told her she hadn't. "Confession: I love calling you babe. I like the way it sounds rolling off my lips and the way you look at me whenever you hear it."

Annalise tilted her head slowly, curiosity getting the best of her. "How do I look at you?"

Brinley licked her lips then bit the bottom one and somehow pulled Annalise even tighter up against her. "Like you can't wait to touch me."

Erratic heart. Blurred vision. Pulsing need. It was all there. "Confession: I want to touch you again right now."

"Confession: I want to touch you, too."

And they were off. In one swift motion, they slid up the bed together and immediately started to make out, their hands wandering to any and all areas they could reach. At some point, Brinley flipped them around so she was now on top and snaked her hand down Annalise's body. As she touched her, Annalise did the same. They fucked each other hard and fast and it took no time at all before they both reached another orgasm.

Annalise fell back onto the bed and held her chest as she struggled to catch her breath. "Confession." Breathe. Breathe. "Now I am actually hungry for food."

“Confession.” Brinley laughed loudly. “I’m fucking starving. I might chew off my arm if we don’t eat real food soon.”

“Well, then, what are we waiting for?” Annalise winked. If she was supposed to act more confident, she might as well start now.

“Should we eat naked or clothed?”

“Definitely naked. I’m too tired to get dressed.” And you look way too good wearing nothing.

“In bed?”

A million dirty thoughts entered Annalise’s mind at the thought of a naked breakfast in bed. “It sounds like a terrible idea. Let’s do it.”

A ton of bacon, way too many eggs, and two orgasms later, Annalise lay in Brinley’s bed completely satisfied. “I should probably get going.” The last thing Annalise wanted was to leave, but in her mind, that was even more reason to go. She needed time to decompress from everything that had happened between them.

“Are you sure?”

Is that disappointment? Did Brinley actually sound disappointed that Annalise was leaving? Annalise was sure Brinley would be ready to get rid of her at this point, especially since she had just shown up at the bar without an invite in the first place.

“You probably have a lot of studying to get done, don’t you?”

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:37 pm

Brinley groaned. “Yeah. I don’t want to though.”

That’s probably why she was fine with Annalise sticking around. Any excuse to put off studying. Annalise couldn’t blame her for that. “I know, but you have to, so you can be the world’s best doctor. I already found a mug for you that says that. You can’t let me down now.”

Brinley laughed and pulled Annalise in close, resting her head on Annalise’s chest. “When can I see you again?” As soon as the question was out, Brinley stiffened up, so much so that her body felt like a brick against Annalise’s. “I mean... When do you want your next lesson? I’m off on Wednesday, but if you want a break to go out and explore, that works for me. It’s all about whatever you want, obviously.”

Why is she rambling? Also, why is it so cute? “Wednesday sounds good.”

Wine Wednesday just happened this past Wednesday, which meant this one was free for Annalise. Since she wasn’t ready to remove pillow princess from her profile and still had dates lined up for the next two Fridays, she might as well enjoy time with Brinley before she got way too busy studying.

“Want me to come to you? I don’t have to if you’re worried about people from work or anywhere else seeing me and getting the wrong idea. But I just wanted to offer. I feel bad that you always drive here.”

“Are you sure? That will take away from your studying time.” Also, I’m not sure if I can deal with the smell of you that is likely to linger in my bed. Except, that also sounded amazing. It would make masturbating even easier, not that it had been

especially hard with Brinley's face flashing into her mind every time she laid down at night. "You could bring your stuff along. You're helping me. The least I could do is help you too."

"Really? You would do that?" Brinley's voice was soft, but full of wonder, almost to the point that it sounded child-like.

How could I ever say no to that? "Of course. Depending on when you have to go to work on Thursday, you can even stay over if you want." Annalise couldn't believe she had just offered for them to have their second adult sleepover in one week. She was sure this was crossing some unspoken line, but if Brinley didn't seem bothered by it, why should she be? Brinley was her friend. Friends had sleepovers sometimes. End of story.

"Cool."

Annalise wasn't sure if that was a yes or a no, but for now, it was more than good enough for her. "Yeah. Cool."

Annalise looked at her microwave when she heard a knock on her apartment door. 6:45PM . Brinley had texted her twenty minutes ago to say she was leaving. Unless that girl was going way over the speed limit and literally driving over traffic, there was no way she could have made it there that fast.

She slowly opened the door, and as soon as it was open just enough, her grandma squeezed past her. "Thank God. I thought you were going to leave me standing out there all night."

"Grandma? What are you doing here?"

“It’s Wine Wednesday , bitches,” Nathalie shouted, now standing right outside of Annalise’s doorway as well.

Annalise shook her head as Nathalie walked into her apartment. “It’s not Wine Wednesday . Last week was Wine Wednesday .”

Her grandma giggled into her hand. “I told you she wouldn’t remember.”

Annalise looked between her grandma and Nathalie who were sharing a secretive smile. “Remember what?”

“Last week when we got you drunk, we made you agree to do it again this week,” Nathalie said before throwing herself onto Annalise’s couch.

Annalise’s grandma sat down next to Nathalie and looked at Annalise with eyebrows raised and a malicious smile on her face. “You don’t have plans, do you?”

Annalise put her head in her hand. Had they somehow predicted this would happen? How could they have known she was going to invite Brinley over? She didn’t even know until the moment she was asking her. “I do, actually, which means you two need to go.”

Her grandma pushed out her bottom lip. “You’d kick out your own grandma? But I’m so old and fragile. I risked my life to come here. Any time I leave the house could be a death sentence.”

Nathalie pointed to Annalise’s grandma and nodded. “Exactly. What would your girlfriend think of that? If I had to guess, I’d say she wouldn’t be too happy about it, would she?”

Annalise crossed her arms over her chest. This was ridiculous. “I don’t have a

girlfriend.”

“Interesting.” Nathalie looked toward the door that Annalise was sure she had inadvertently already looked at about fifteen times. “No one is coming over?”

“Yes. Brinley is. But she’s a friend.”

Nathalie nodded as if she understood, but the shit-eating grin on her face told Annalise she wasn’t backing down. “Perfect. A friend is great! We’re all friends here. She’ll love joining us.”

“She has to study,” Annalise said quickly, looking for anything to get them out of her apartment before Brinley showed up. She could only imagine the embarrassment she would endure if her grandma and Nathalie had the chance to meet her.

“And that’s all you guys were planning on doing?” her grandma asked. “Just studying?” Her grandma gave Nathalie a knowing smile, and Annalise was pretty sure she also winked.

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:37 pm

“For all intents and purposes, yes.” It wasn’t exactly a lie. Brinley was studying for her MCATs, and Annalise was studying Brinley.

Her grandma waved a hand in the air as if she was blowing off everything Annalise was saying. “Give her a call. Ask her if she wants to join us, or if she needs us to leave.”

Annalise shook her head. “I’m not putting her on the spot like that.” Annalise had no question that Brinley would say yes, and she felt bad putting her in a position where she felt like she had to.

“That’s fine. We’ll just wait and ask her ourselves.”

When her grandma and Nathalie didn’t budge, Annalise groaned and threw her hands in the air. Assholes. Why do I love these two so much? “Fine. I’ll call her. But I’m doing it from my bedroom, and you two are staying here. Deal?”

“Of course.” Nathalie smiled an innocent smile.

“We would never want to intrude,” her grandma added, and this time, she definitely did wink.

Annalise couldn’t help but smile as she walked into her bedroom. Those two were insane, but she adored them. She clicked on Brinley’s name and took a deep breath as the phone rang.

“Hey! Everything okay? According to my GPS, I’m about fifteen minutes away.”

“We have a bit of a situation.”

“Okay.”

Annalise felt guilty about the worry in Brinley’s voice. “It’s nothing bad. It’s not great, but it’s also not serious.”

Brinley simply laughed in response to Annalise’s rambling. “Okay. Are you going to share it with me, or do you want me to guess?”

“You know how I told you I do Wine Wednesday with my grandma every other week and sometimes my best friend joins us? They are terrible influences, and last week I drank way too much wine and apparently, agreed to get together again this week. I don’t remember anything about it, and honestly, for all I know, they conspired behind my back and made it up.”

Much to Annalise’s surprise, Brinley cackled on the other end of the phone. “That’s amazing. I love them already.”

“So, you don’t care? I can ask them to leave if you want.” Please tell me to make them leave.

“Absolutely not. I need to meet these two. They sound great. Plus, I could use some wine. I feel like my eyes are going to fall out from studying all day. I almost forgot how to walk when I stood up to get ready.”

“Cool. So, I’ll let them stay?” Shit.

“Of course! I can’t wait. I’ll see you all soon.”

“Yep. See you soon.”

When Annalise opened up her bedroom door, Nathalie jumped away from it. Annalise rolled her eyes at her best friend. “Very smooth.”

Nathalie shrugged. “If it makes you feel any better, I could only hear your end of the conversation since you didn’t have her on speakerphone.”

“Well, I’m sure you heard enough to know that she said it’s okay if you fools stay.”

Nathalie jumped in the air, clapped her hands together, and let out a high-pitched squeal. “I know. We’ve been waiting months for this.”

Annalise rolled her eyes again. “I’m sure you have.” She pointed at Nathalie. “Behave,” then turned and pointed at her grandma, “yourselves.”

“We always do,” her grandma said, clearly trying to look as innocent as possible.

It felt like no time passed at all before there was another knock at Annalise’s door. Her hand was actually shaking as she opened it because she was so nervous about her two worlds colliding. Maybe I should have just gone to Brinley’s apartment again.

When she opened the door, Brinley was standing there looking unfairly attractive. She was wearing tight black jeans and a low-cut white T-shirt with an open gray zip-up on top of it. She had on tall gray boots and was wearing glasses, which was completely new to Annalise.

Brinley pointed to her glasses and smiled shyly. “I have a really small prescription, but when I’ve been studying all day, I feel like I can’t see anything without these.”

“I like them.” Which was completely true. Brinley was one of those people who looked even cuter with glasses on, if that was possible. “You’ve got that whole sexy nerd look going for you. I like it.”

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:37 pm

The sound of a throat clearing behind her reminded Annalise that they weren't alone. Funny how quickly the sight of Brinley standing in front of her could make her forget that fact.

She turned around and motioned toward the couch. "Brinley, this is my grandma and my best friend, Nathalie. Grandma and Nathalie, this is Brinley."

"It's so nice to meet you," Annalise's grandma said as she stood from the couch faster than Annalise had ever seen her move before. She walked over and held out a hand toward Brinley. "I've heard so much about you."

"I've heard so much about you, too. It's so great to have someone in my life who is as close to her grandma as I was to mine."

For maybe the first time ever, Annalise's grandma's face went serious, her eyes down-turned and sad. "I'm so sorry for your loss."

"It's been a few years, but thank you so much. I still think about her every day. She was my best friend." Now it looked like Brinley might cry.

Annalise's grandma sat a hand against Brinley's side. "I would never try to replace her, but if you ever want another grandma, I'm here." She wiggled a finger at Annalise. "This one drives me crazy, so I'd be happy to turn her in for a newer, cooler model."

Annalise laughed, thankful for some of the tension, no matter how sweet it was, to be broken. "Wow, thanks a lot, Gram."

“And I’m Nathalie.”

Annalise hadn’t even noticed that Nathalie had gotten up from the couch, but now she was standing right next to Brinley with her hand outstretched. “Since my best friend tries to keep everything from me, applications are open for a new one if you’re interested.”

Brinley shook Nathalie’s hand but then looked over at Annalise and winked. “I’d say you have a pretty good one here.”

Did someone just turn the heat on? Annalise suddenly felt very hot. Unfortunately, she must not have been the only one to notice the moment between her and Brinley because her grandma and Nathalie shared another look as if to say, We knew it. Except whatever they thought they knew wasn’t the case at all. Brinley was her friend. Simple as that.

“Wine, anyone?” Annalise asked much louder than she meant to.

Brinley lifted an eyebrow ever so slightly but continued to smile at Annalise. “I’d love a glass.”

Luckily, once they all relaxed and started drinking, the rest of the time went past pretty seamlessly. Annalise’s grandma didn’t try to pull any baby pictures out of her big purse, and Nathalie didn’t tell any embarrassing stories from their high school or college years. It was actually a lot like every other Wine Wednesday . They joked around, gossiped, and laughed a lot. Brinley fit in perfectly. She could hold her own against Nathalie, sweeten it up for Annalise’s grandma, and still had a way of making Annalise feel like the center of her world even when she didn’t have her full attention on her. None of her exes had ever been able to do that. Most of the guys she dated all but ignored her when there were other people around, and Grant was the complete opposite. He was so focused on Annalise when other people were around, he didn’t

pay attention to anyone else. It was kind of embarrassing and extremely annoying, but she put up with it because she knew he meant well.

Annalise was also pleasantly surprised when it was her grandma and Nathalie who decided it was time for them to go an hour and a half into their time together. Some nights Wine Wednesday went on for hours, so she knew they were leaving to be polite and give her and Brinley some alone time. She actually considered asking them to stay, but when Brinley placed a hand high up on her thigh, all thoughts were wiped from her mind. She could see her grandma and Nathalie any time. She needed to take advantage of the woman sitting next to her, literally and figuratively.

Both Annalise and Brinley exchanged hugs with her grandma and Nathalie as the two of them loudly made their way out of the apartment. Once they couldn't hear them anymore, which probably meant they were in the elevator, Brinley put an arm around Annalise's waist and leaned into her. "They're both awesome. I love them so much."

Annalise laughed and leaned into Brinley as well, relishing in how good it felt to be so close to her. When did this become so natural? Annalise was starting to need Brinley in the same way she needed oxygen. Except... no, obviously not that much, because that would be crazy for a girl who was just her fuck buddy. "They're something. That's for sure."

Brinley yawned as if she hadn't slept in days. "Shit, I'm sorry. The combination of studying all day then drinking a bunch of wine has made me so tired."

"Do you want to go to bed?" As much as Annalise wanted to touch Brinley, she was just as happy to hold her in her arms as she was to have sex with her. Again, a pretty weird thought to have about the woman who was literally supposed to be teaching her about sex.

"You didn't invite me over to sleep."

“Maybe not, but I also didn’t plan on forcing you into spending time with my grandma and best friend.”

Brinley scoffed. “Stop. I was happy to spend time with them.”

“And I’m happy to just spend time with you .” Annalise refused to overthink why she meant those words so much. Instead, she massaged her fingers through Brinley’s hair and smiled at the way she hummed contently in response.

“If we’re going to go to bed, which I have to admit, doesn’t sound that terrible with how tired I am, we at least have to be naked. I would feel like a terrible teacher if I didn’t at least let you objectify me a little tonight.”

“Deal.” Annalise took Brinley’s hand and led her into her room. Sex or no sex, she couldn’t let another second pass without seeing this woman naked.

Chapter 10

Brinley

Brinley felt like she was floating as she walked into work the next day. She never thought she could feel so good after a night of not having sex, but she did. Even though she would never admit this to anyone and it hurt to even admit it to herself, snuggling with Annalise naked was just as good as having sex with her. Well, almost. She was still human, but it was pretty amazing.

She smiled as she looked down at her phone and read the text Annalise had just sent her. I owe you a study session. I’m so sorry the wine made that impossible last night.

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:37 pm

Brinley's smile grew as she sent her reply. It's okay. I owe you sex. I'm sorry the wine made THAT impossible :-p

Sex and study party?

Brinley laughed at the text from Annalise. Who was this woman? She was so different from the one who was tragically messing up a sex date just a few months ago.

"What's so funny?" Maddie asked from behind her, maneuvering her head to clearly try to read Brinley's phone.

Shit. Brinley was so distracted by her texts to Annalise, she hadn't even noticed Maddie was standing there. She put her hand on her chest to emphasize that she was surprised. "Dude, you can't just sneak up on me like that."

"I wasn't sneaking. You just weren't paying attention." Maddie took a step back and studied Brinley. "What's with the backpack? Are you doing the walk of shame into work?" A sly grin spread onto Maddie's face. "You stayed somewhere last night, didn't you? Who is she? Do I know her? Is it one of our regulars? Shit, it's so unlike you to go to them. I thought you always let your one-night stands come to you."

"It wasn't a one-night stand. I didn't even have sex."

"Then what did you do?"

Was it really that hard to believe that Brinley didn't hook up with someone last night?

Okay, yeah, probably. In Maddie's defense, it was a fair assumption. "I stayed at a friend's house. We had wine and I was too tired to drive back."

"A friend?" Maddie scrunched up her nose. "Like a friend friend? Someone you haven't had sex with?"

"Not... exactly." Brinley looked toward the dirty bar floor, because this interrogation was getting hard to handle.

"Then what—?" When Maddie suddenly cut herself off, Brinley moved her eyes to focus on her once again and found her with her mouth hanging wide open. "You were with your not-so-straight straight girl, weren't you?"

Since Brinley obviously hadn't mentioned anything to Maddie about her private conversation with Annalise about her sexuality, she had made that assumption all on her own. She refused to say anything to confirm these assumptions might be true. "I was with Annalise."

"Okay. Let me make sure I have this right. Last night, you were with the woman you are teaching how to have sex with other women, but you didn't have sex with her. Now you're staring at your phone like a lovestruck idiot while I assume you're texting her."

"I wouldn't say I look like an idiot right now, but yes, I did stay at Annalise's apartment and yes, I am texting her." Brinley refused to even acknowledge the lovestruck part because it was so ridiculous.

"You really got it bad." Maddie laughed way too hard, even throwing her head back, which had to be for extra effect, because the situation wasn't that funny. "You've got it so bad."

“Do not.”

Brinley threw her backpack underneath the bar then waited for Maddie to walk away so she could take her phone out of her pocket and respond to Annalise. Much to her surprise, she had another text from Annalise waiting for her.

I promised my parents I'd spend time with them on Sunday, but maybe the following Sunday...?

That would be the one Sunday Brinley actually had to work. Damnit . Gin and Jesus. Sorry. I do have off next Friday and work an early/short shift on Saturday because of that event.

She was tempted to tell Annalise she didn't go in until later this upcoming Saturday and could do their sex and study party in the afternoon, but she didn't want to suggest something so soon, especially since Annalise had asked her about a day over a week away.

Shit. I have plans both of those nights.

An ache settled in Brinley's stomach when she read the text from Annalise. She had completely forgotten about the plans Annalise had next Friday, even though she told her about them a long time ago. She didn't know anything about the day after though. Maybe she had plans with Nathalie or another friend.

Quite the overachiever ;) Brinley typed, secretly hoping Annalise would tell her she didn't have plans to have sex on Saturday too. It wasn't that she was jealous. She just worried about Annalise jumping into things too fast, especially when she had so many questions about herself.

Brinley laughed at herself. Why was she being so ridiculous? Annalise was a grown-

ass adult who deserved to have a lot of sexy fun while she figured things out.

I've had the Friday plans for a while, but just made the Saturday plans once I changed my profile. Need to pass my lesson 7 test so we can move on (even if the sex toy lesson terrifies me TBH).

You changed your profile? The ache in Brinley's stomach became worse. But why? It shouldn't bother her that Annalise was going to touch another woman. Correction... it didn't bother her. Of course it didn't.

Yeah! I didn't tell you? I'm so sorry! I should have.

No worries!! I'm excited for you!!

So excited.

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:37 pm

“Why do you look like someone just kicked your puppy?”

Brinley jumped about five feet in the air at the sound of Maddie’s voice. “Jesus Christ, Maddie, what did I say?”

“What did I say? You need to pay better attention. Seriously, though, what’s up? One minute, you had a big smile on your face. The next, it’s nothing but broody Brinley.” She grabbed Brinley’s cheeks as if she was a little kid.

Brinley swatted Maddie’s hand away. “I’m fine. Nothing’s wrong. Everything is great.” Brinley knew the sound of her voice was saying the complete opposite, but she had no idea why. Everything was fine. She had no reason to be upset.

“Are you trying to convince me or yourself?”

Brinley groaned. “Seriously, Maddie, I’m fine. I think I’m just exhausted from all the studying and it’s messing with me.”

“That’s understandable.” Maddie put an arm over Brinkley’s shoulder and pulled her close. “Don’t overdo it. If you have to sacrifice something, definitely make sure it’s studying, because sex is much more important.”

Brinley rolled her eyes and pushed Maddie away. “Thanks for the great advice, pal.”

Without realizing it, Maddie actually had helped. Her joke made Brinley laugh, which in turn jolted her from the funk she had almost gotten herself in for no reason at all.

When her phone vibrated in her pocket, Brinley pulled it out with a new goal to not get herself worried over whatever it said.

Thanks, Teach! We'll have to figure out a time for our party later, but I promise it will happen as soon as we can coordinate it! I'll make sure to text you after my "dates" next weekend!

Great. Can't fucking wait.

By the time the day of Annalise's lesson eight "test" rolled around, Brinley was feeling much more like herself. She had been happy to hear from Annalise the night before and listen to her stories about the lustrous Clarissa, who it turned out, was quite the lady killer. She had texted back and forth with Annalise all day as she freaked out about her first time touching, and possibly tasting, a woman other than Brinley. Brinley reassured her that she was going to do great, which wasn't a lie. Annalise was amazing in bed, and this woman was about to get her world rocked.

She looked up at the clock on her TV. Correction, the woman was probably already getting her world rocked. It had probably been rocked a few times at this point. And Brinley was so happy about that. She was ridiculously happy for whoever this fucking woman was who got to have sex with, quite honestly, the sexiest woman Brinley knew.

Her spiraling thoughts were interrupted by a knock on her door. Shit. It didn't happen often, but every once in a while, a drunk person stumbled up her stairs and knocked on her door, looking for a bathroom. Since Maddie wasn't working so it couldn't be her, Brinley was sure that's what it was. She'd learned pretty early on that if she tried to ignore these knocks, they normally just got louder and more obnoxious, so she had no choice but to open the door and shoo them away.

When Brinley pushed open the door, she was shocked at what she found. It wasn't a drunk person, but instead, a tall blonde with eyes as blue as the ocean, and a tight, red knee-length dress that left nothing to the imagination. "Annalise? What are you doing here?"

Annalise walked inside the door and immediately began talking at a mile a minute, her hands moving around expressively as she spoke. "So, this is going to sound crazy, but hear me out, okay? I went to Gemma's place. You know, as planned. I played it cool and acted confident just like you said, and it worked. Man, did it work. I'm not kidding when I say, I don't think I was even there for thirty seconds before we were ripping each other's clothes off in her room. The first time was fast. Almost too fast, but still great. Then I decided to just go for it before I could overthink it and I went down on her. She started to go down on me and I was getting closer and closer until... her ex knocked on the door. Long story short, I'm pretty sure they are getting back together as we speak and I... Well, I didn't finish, and you guys actually live super close to each other, so I figured I'd come here. But saying that out loud right now sounds really stupid."

Brinley put her hand up to stop Annalise from rambling more. "So, what you're saying is you're really turned on and using me to finish the job that some other woman started?" A million fireworks burst inside of Brinley's heart. "Hell, yeah! Get in here and use me, baby."

She pulled Annalise into her apartment and Annalise made the cutest little squeal of surprise when Brinley wasted no time kissing her. Brinley continued to kiss her as she pulled her through the apartment and into her room. She pulled Annalise's dress over her head in one swift motion and kneeled down in front of her to place kisses up and down her stomach.

Annalise put a hand on Brinley's head and ran her fingers through her hair. "Thanks for being so cool about this. I still feel weird about doing it. I never want you to think

that you're option two."

"I know." More kisses. Her hands moved up Annalise's sides and back down again. She wanted to kiss and touch her everywhere, but she knew exactly where she needed to start. "So, you said she was going down on you when you two got cut off, huh?" she asked as she shimmied Annalise's thong down her legs.

"Yeah, but if you don't want... Oh!"

Brinley stopped Annalise from talking with a broad stroke of her tongue. She couldn't explain why, but she was ravenous. She needed to finish what the other woman had started, and she needed to finish it even better than she would have. "Was it like this?" Another stroke of the tongue.

"K-kind of."

Brinley licked once more then sat back to gaze up at Annalise. "How was it different?"

Another lick. Another pause. She sat back and waited for Annalise's answer, which came in the form of Annalise putting her hands in Brinley's hair and forcing her mouth tight up against her once again. "It's... Oh, God. Y-you're better. You're so much better."

Brinley pulled away once again. "Are you just saying that because I'm the one going down on you right now?"

"N-no. No one has compared to you. You're the best by far."

"Oh, yeah?" Long stroke of her tongue. Shit, she loved this. "What makes me better than all the other women you've been with?"

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:37 pm

Brinley normally wasn't one to need extra encouragement, but there was something hot about it tonight. There was something sexy about Annalise comparing her to another woman—a woman who had been in this same position not too long ago.

“Everything.”

Brinley licked her once more then pulled away just enough to be able to talk. She laughed when Annalise groaned at the lack of contact. “Not good enough. I need something more specific.”

“T-that thing you do with your tongue... ah... around my clit. I... I don't know.”

“You mean this?” Brinley swirled her tongue around Annalise's clit then sucked it into her mouth, letting it go with a pop. She did it once more before pulling back once again. “Or do you prefer when I add my fingers too?”

She moved her finger in the same circular pattern she was moving her tongue then pushed the finger inside of her at the same time she sucked on her clit.

Annalise cried out and grabbed Brinley's hair even tighter. “A-all of that. I love it all. Shit, Brinley, I'm so close.”

“Let go, baby.” Another lick, another suck, fingers driven deep inside of Annalise. “I've got you. I'll finish what she couldn't.”

Annalise rode Brinley's fingers and thrust against her tongue. “Yes. Yes. Please don't stop. Right there. Right there.” Annalise screamed as her body went stiff.

Brinley held her tight as she came down from her orgasm, kissing her legs that were now firm like a statue made of heavy stone. She slowly stood up, kissing every inch of Annalise's body that she could reach along the way. "So, hi," she said once they were standing face to face.

"Hi to you," Annalise answered, looking much more shy than the woman who had shown up at Brinley's door a few minutes ago. Her cheeks were red and her eyes moved around the apartment, focusing on anything other than Brinley.

"Everything okay?" Brinley asked before finding Annalise's lips and stealing a quick kiss.

"I'm good. Great, now." Annalise sighed. "I just feel bad. I don't want it to seem like you're my second choice."

"I don't care if I'm your second choice or tenth choice," kind of a lie, "as long as I fall on the list."

"You'll always be at the top of the list." Annalise's gaze was deep and sincere. There was no hesitation. She meant exactly what she was saying, and she clearly wanted to get that point across to Brinley.

The moment was charged between them. And heavy. So very heavy. It was one of those moments where you could feel a shift zapping between them like a current of energy.

Brinley removed her eyes from Annalise's to break this energy. There was nothing to shift. They were friends with benefits. Fuck buddies. Teacher and student. That's all Brinley wanted. It was all she had ever wanted. One super pretty woman questioning her sexuality wasn't going to change that.

Brinley laughed as she stared at the ground. “You make quite the entrance.”

Annalise laughed along with her. “And I’d say you more than made up for your side of our deal. I still owe you some studying though. I know you work tomorrow, but what time do you get off? Maybe I could drive back.”

“I only work from ten until two. That’s how long Gin and Jesus goes on for.” A crazy, stupid idea popped into Brinley’s head, and the words spilled out of her before she could stop herself. “If you don’t have any plans the rest of the weekend, why don’t you just stay? Tomorrow, you can either stay up here and rest or come down for Gin and Jesus , then once I’m done working, we can study for a while. And after my study session, we can move on to your next lesson. It will be a reward for both of us.”

“Are you sure? You don’t mind me crashing all weekend? I’d have to borrow some clothes from you.”

“I prefer you naked.” Brinley made a point of running her eyes up and down Annalise’s body. “But I’m also happy to let you borrow some clothes if you must wear them.”

“There’s no reason for them right now.” Annalise smirked and raised an eyebrow. “Although, I’d say you’re a bit too overdressed for this party.”

“Oh, yeah? What are you going to do about it?”

“Just wait and see.” Annalise gently bit Brinley’s ear then blew into it, causing goosebumps to pop up over her whole body. This was going to be a long night... A long, perfect night.

“I can’t believe you brought her to Gin and Jesus . Having a woman meet Dale is like having her meet one of your parents.”

Dale was the owner of the bar, and even though he was like another parent to Brinley and Maddie, Maddie was clearly being ridiculous. “Technically, Dale has met her. He’s been at the bar some of the times she’s been in here.”

“But has he officially met her?” Maddie wiggled her eyebrows as she asked the question. “As your date?”

“She’s not my date. She’s a friend.”

“And how much sex did you have with this friend last night?”

Brinley let out an involuntary sigh as she thought about the night before and this morning. After Brinley went down on Annalise, Annalise repaid the favor right back to her. They made each other come two more times after that before collapsing into a sweaty pile of limbs and falling asleep. At some point throughout the night, their bodies had moved and when Brinley woke up, Annalise was in her arms as she held her from behind. She lay there quietly for a few minutes, just enjoying the moment, until she had no choice but to get up and shower. Not even a minute after getting into the shower, a groggy, but very sexy, Annalise asked to join her. Of course, that led to shower sex and the two of them getting more dirty before they actually got clean.

“That much, huh?”

Maddie’s sarcastic remark brought Brinley back to the present moment. She slapped Maddie’s shoulder playfully. “Mind your own business. A lady doesn’t kiss and tell.”

Maddie moved her eyes across the whole bar. “Interesting. I don’t see any ladies around here.”

Brinley rolled her eyes. “Ha. Ha. Very funny.”

Maddie’s gaze traveled over to the table in the corner where Annalise was sitting reading a book. “I’m going to go see if she wants anything to drink.”

Brinley grabbed Maddie’s shirt as she began to walk away. “Absolutely not. I’ll take care of her.”

“I’m sure you will,” Maddie said sarcastically, the shit-eating grin on her face one that Brinley would want to slap right off if she didn’t love her so much.

Brinley mixed together a fruity drink she knew Annalise would love and carried it over to her table. “I thought maybe you could use a drink,” she said as she sat it down on the table.

Annalise looked at her phone then held it up toward Brinley. “Really? It’s not even ten a.m. yet.”

“But it’s for Jesus,” Brinley joked.

“In that case...” Annalise picked up the glass, sniffed it once, then closed her eyes as she took a sip. She moaned softly and it made Brinley’s insides turn, thinking of the last time she heard that sound from Annalise. When she opened her eyes back up, a small smile parted her lips. “That’s really good. It’s also the only one I can have, or I won’t be able to fulfill my duties as your study partner.”

Brinley leaned against the table so she could get closer to Annalise. “Can’t have that now, can we?” She leaned even closer so their faces were only inches apart. She bit her bottom lip and ran her eyes over Annalise’s face. “We also want to make sure you’re ready for what comes after studying.”

Annalise lifted one eyebrow so slightly that Brinley would have missed it if they weren’t so close. “Should I be scared?” she asked flirtatiously.

“I’ll be gentle.” Brinley lowered her voice slightly, making sure her tone was sultry. “Until you tell me not to be.”

When Annalise sucked in a quick, deep breath, Brinley knew her words had their desired effect. With their mouths just inches apart, the only thought on Brinley’s

mind was how easy it would be to kiss Annalise right now. Except, obviously, she wasn't going to do that. She didn't even want to. It was clearly just a fleeting thought since she was still so horny from their morning together. Instead of a kiss, she backed away and winked at Annalise before turning around and heading back to the bar so she didn't get in trouble for not doing her job.

Brinley spent the rest of her shift filling drinks, listening to Dale and others in attendance share their testimony, and stealing glances at Annalise. A few times when she looked over, Annalise was already staring at her, and they would share a smile or a goofy face before Brinley got back to work.

As the last person left the bar, about fifteen minutes after two, Dale walked over to Brinley and put a hand on her shoulder. "Now that everyone's gone, want to introduce me to that little lady of yours?"

"She's just a friend," Brinley quickly corrected him.

Dale laughed and squeezed her shoulder. "I didn't know that meant she wasn't a lady."

"I just didn't want you to have the wrong idea. She's not my girlfriend or anything." Who am I trying to convince right now?

"Of course she's not," Dale said with another laugh, clearly not buying it. "Oh, look, here comes your not-girlfriend right now."

Brinley looked up just in time to see Annalise standing on the other side of the bar. "We were just coming over to see you." She pointed toward Dale. "Annalise, this is my boss, Dale. Dale, this is my friend, Annalise."

Dale took his hand off Brinley's shoulder and held it out toward Annalise. "It's so

nice to meet you. I'd like to say I've heard a lot about you, but this one is a closed book."

"Maybe if you didn't work me so hard, I'd be able to find the time to tell you stuff."

"Interesting. You seem to find the time to chat up every woman who walks into this bar so I guess I don't work you that hard." Dale winked at Brinley then turned back toward Annalise. "It was really nice to meet you, kiddo. I wish I could chat more, but I told the wife we could go for a bike ride before it gets dark, so I better get going."

"He's sweet," Annalise said as Dale walked around the bar and out through the back door.

"He's just a big old teddy bear," Maddie said as she joined them. "Why don't you two head out? I can lock up."

"Are you sure?" Brinley asked. She knew closing everything down would go faster with the two of them working together, but she also really needed to start studying.

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:37 pm

“Of course. I’m sure you have a lot to do.”

Brinley didn’t miss the way Maddie’s eyes traveled to Annalise as she said those words. She worried the obvious innuendo might make Annalise feel uncomfortable, but the smile never left her face as she wrapped an arm around Brinley’s waist. “She sure does, but first, she needs to get her studying done.” She winked, and for the first time Brinley had ever seen, Maddie was left completely speechless.

Holy shit. Brinley was more than ready for what was coming after this study session.

Chapter 11

Annalise

“If I have to answer one more question, my head might explode.”

Annalise looked down at the book in her hands, all the words on the page blurry from how long she had been staring at it. She truly had no idea how Brinley did this day after day. “Just one more. What do you want for dinner?”

Brinley smiled maliciously as she took the study book from Annalise’s hands and threw it onto her coffee table. “That’s easy. I want you.”

She positioned herself so she was hovering right above Annalise, which caused all rational thoughts to leave Annalise’s body. That was until her stomach decided to inform both of them that sex wasn’t happening yet. “Food, then sex.”

“Or we order food, have sex while we’re waiting for it, then do it all over again once we’re done eating.”

Brinley was insatiable and Annalise loved it, since it turned out she kind of was too. She had always been take it or leave it with sex, but around Brinley, she craved it constantly. Every little move Brinley made had her fantasizing about touching her, so to say she was ready was an understatement. “I like the way you think. What should we order?”

“How do you feel about pizza?”

“I feel great about pizza.”

“Pizza it is then.” Brinley put an order through to a local Italian restaurant then joined Annalise back on the couch. “So, should we start our next lesson before or after dinner?”

Lesson eight was sex toys and since Annalise had never been into that sort of thing, it was all new to her, and in all honesty, a bit scary. “Aren’t I supposed to take a pre-test for that or something?” she asked, trying to prolong the inevitable. She really wanted to have sex right now, but what she didn’t want was to look like an idiot in front of Brinley.

“Oh, yeah!” Brinley’s eyes lit up as she jumped up from the couch and ran from the room.

A minute later, she came back carrying a piece of paper and a pen. She handed them both to Annalise, and when Annalise looked down at the paper, her head started to spin. On the page was a list of descriptions on one side and pictures of sex toys on the other side. Annalise thought she was an idiot when it came to the information she was reviewing with Brinley for the MCAT, but she knew even less about this. She felt

like she was back in college, staring down at a pop quiz she was guaranteed to fail. Just like in school, she thought about all the ways that one failure would ruin everything for her. Brinley is going to think I'm an idiot. I'm going to look like such a prude. This shouldn't be a new concept. Heterosexual couples use sex toys all the time.

"Everything okay?" Brinley asked at the same time a bead of sweat from Annalise's forehead landed on the paper.

"Can I be honest? I don't know anything on here."

"That's perfect!" Brinley said, sounding much more excited than the situation warranted.

"It is?"

Brinley took the paper out of Annalise's hands and tossed it, then straddled her lap. "Of course. It means I get to teach you. I love teaching you."

She grinded against Annalise's lap, and Annalise pushed her hips up to bring them even closer. She was already thrumming with anticipation. Even though she had sex with Brinley that morning, it felt like way too long ago at this point. "You're a great teacher."

"Mm. I was hoping you'd say that." Brinley ground harder as she kissed across Annalise's neck and up to her ear, licking it before whispering into it, "Mind if I go get something?"

Annalise would have said yes to anything at that point, and since words were hard with Brinley moving against her like this, she nodded in response.

Brinley smiled like a little kid who was just told she could have five more minutes of recess and jumped from Annalise's lap. She ran out of the room, and without Brinley's body as a very welcome distraction, Annalise's nerves returned. Brinley was always so patient and kind, but the last thing she wanted was to completely embarrass herself in front of her.

When Brinley walked back into the room a few minutes later, Annalise's mouth went dry. She was completely naked, which was all Annalise noticed at first since it was highly distracting. Her eyes immediately went to Brinley's chest, which seemed to be screaming out for Annalise's hands and mouth.

She moved her eyes down Brinley's body and choked on her own saliva when she saw what was hanging between her legs. She was wearing a harness that had a huge rainbow object attached to it. It had more girth than anything Annalise had ever had near (or inside) her. If it wasn't for the fact that it was rainbow-colored, it probably would have been the most intimidating thing she'd ever seen.

"You... want... that's supposed to go inside of me?"

Brinley looked down at the object between her legs, then back at Annalise, head slightly tilted. "Yeah, why?"

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:37 pm

“I’ve never had something that big inside of me.”

Brinley smirked and swaggered over to where Annalise was sitting, stopping to stand right in front of her. “So, you’re saying I’m the biggest person you’ve ever been with, huh?”

Annalise stared at the object dangling right in front of her and chuckled. “I’m not kidding, Brinley. There’s no way that’s happening.”

“So, none of your boyfriends...”

“Had a huge rainbow dick? Nope. Definitely not.”

Brinley laughed and when she did, the dildo shook between her legs.

Okay, that’s kind of sexy.

“It’s okay. I can see what else I have. I obviously don’t want to do anything you’re uncomfortable with.”

Annalise wasn’t sure if there was anything in the world that was more sexy than Brinley Adams standing in front of her, large dildo between her legs, and offering to do whatever she needed to in order to make Annalise more comfortable.

“Actually,” Annalise pulled Brinley down onto her lap, “I want to give it a try.”

Brinley’s dark eyes lit up. “Really?”

Annalise felt the object against her lap and was even more turned on than just a moment ago, her body screaming at her to do this. “Yeah, I’m sure. Let’s go back to your bedroom.”

Brinley took Annalise’s hand and led her down the short hallway into her bedroom, slowly removing her clothes before gently pushing her down onto the bed. She climbed on top of her and slipped a hand between her legs. “Don’t worry, babe. I’ll make sure you’re nice and wet first.”

Just hearing Brinley call her babe was enough to make her wet. Why is that such a turn on? She didn’t have time to think it through because soon Brinley was touching her and that was all she could focus on. When Brinley went from pushing two fingers to three inside of Annalise and she had that very familiar sensation of pain mixed with pleasure, she wondered once again how she would ever be able to handle the object hanging between Brinley’s legs.

As if sensing her anxiety, Brinley bent down and kissed her slowly and gently. When she pulled away, she looked down at Annalise with deep and understanding eyes that spoke more than words ever could. “I’ve got you, baby. Okay? There’s nothing to be nervous about. If you ever want to stop, just say the word, okay?”

Brinley kissed her once again, and Annalise was pretty sure she had never felt more cared for in her entire life. How did this woman, who was a stranger to her mere months ago, do that? Did she make all women feel this way, or was Annalise special? A strange pull hit her chest. She didn’t want to be like every other woman to Brinley. She wanted to be special. But what did that mean?

No overthinking, she reminded herself once again.

“Everything okay? Do you want to stop?”

“Everything is perfect.” Annalise initiated the kiss this time and kept it slow.

Their tongues danced across each other as Brinley’s fingers continued their work, slow and gentle, yet somehow also firm. Annalise wasn’t sure how much time passed before Brinley broke away from her mouth and began kissing down her body instead. Each kiss was tender, so soft that they could be missed if she wasn’t paying attention. But she was paying attention. She was hyper aware of every move Brinley made, especially as she got closer to the spot between Annalise’s legs.

Brinley moved to Annalise’s thighs first, placing kisses up each of them before finally running her tongue through Annalise’s folds. She knew what Annalise liked by now and gave her exactly what she needed. Before Annalise could even consider what she wanted next, Brinley was there.

She was getting closer and closer to the edge until Brinley suddenly stopped. Annalise let out a soft involuntary groan in response to the loss of Brinley’s mouth, which caused Brinley to look up at her with a wide grin on her face.

“Patience, babe. This is when the fun really starts.”

Brinley positioned herself on top of Annalise, and Annalise could feel the dildo against her leg, but instead of getting nervous, Annalise was turned on. She wanted Brinley inside of her. She was ready for it.

Brinley reached over toward her nightstand, and in one swift motion, opened a drawer and pulled out a bottle. “Would you like to do the honors?” she asked as she held the lube for Annalise to see.

“Oh. You want me to put it on?”

Brinley nodded and licked her lips. This wasn’t just to make sure it was ready for

Annalise. It was foreplay. Brinley wanted to watch her. So hot.

Annalise took the lube and squirted some out, making a show of slowly moving her hand up and down the length of the dildo as she applied it.

Brinley closed her eyes and hummed in contentment. When she opened them, she stared down at Annalise and pushed a piece of hair away from her face. “Are you ready?”

“Yes,” Annalise pushed out. She wasn’t just ready. She was excited.

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:37 pm

Brinley took the dildo in her hand and ran it across Annalise's center then winked. "No such thing as too much lubrication, right?"

"I... I guess not," was all Annalise could say. Her heart was racing and center pulsing as what felt like a million electrical currents shot through the rest of her body.

Brinley brought the dildo to Annalise's entrance and circled it around once before slowly starting to push it into her. Just as Annalise predicted, it hurt at first, but once the initial pain wore off, it was fucking fantastic. The fact that the object was attached to Brinley somehow made the whole experience that much sexier.

Brinley pulled out slightly and continued to stare down at Annalise. "I'm going to go a little farther and harder this time. Okay?"

"And faster?" Annalise asked, suddenly ravenous for more.

Brinley smirked once again. "That's coming, babe. Don't worry."

As promised, she pushed the dildo even farther into Annalise this time and some of the pain returned, but it was mixed with so much pleasure she didn't even really notice. Brinley did this a few more times, going faster and deeper with each push.

"Hey, babe?"

"Hmm?"

"I'm going to fuck you now."

Holy fucking shit. “Yes. Please. Yes.”

As Brinley thrust harder and faster into her, Annalise grabbed her ass to help. She needed to feel Brinley everywhere. “Yes,” she shouted after an especially good thrust. “Oh God. Yeah. Keep going. Fuck. Yes.”

Her dirty talk only seemed to encourage Brinley who picked up her pace even more. She rode Annalise until Annalise couldn’t hold off her orgasm anymore. With one especially hard thrust, her vision faded, body went taut, and the throbbing that had started in her center reached from her head to her toes. She screamed out one more time as she came back down. She couldn’t help it. She wasn’t able to be quiet when Brinley was involved and she didn’t want to be.

“That was sexy as hell,” Brinley said as she rolled off her. She lay on her side with her elbow propped on a pillow and head resting against her hand. Her hair was mussed with sweat, and her chest moved up and down as she caught her breath.

Now, that’s sexy as hell.

Just when Annalise thought she couldn’t look sexier, Brinley bit her lip and smiled. “I love how vocal you are during sex. It’s not what I expected with how you normally act.”

“What did you expect? A lame lay?” Annalise laughed it off but really hoped that wasn’t the vibe she gave off to people.

Brinley shook her head and not-so-subtly studied Annalise’s body, which caused her to get turned on all over again. “Someone who looks like you could never be a lame lay. Just staring at you would be enough to get me off. I think I just expected you to be more reserved, like the kind of girl who would hold a pillow over her mouth before ever letting herself make a sound.”

“Is that the kind of girl you want me to be?”

Brinley sat up ramrod straight as if the question had taken her by surprise. “Hell, no. I think you’re perfect.” The way Brinley’s body stiffened even more told Annalise she hadn’t meant to say that out loud.

“I think you’re perfect, too,” Annalise said to make her feel better. Well, that and because it was true. With her confession, all of the air seemed to be sucked from the room and everything felt extremely heavy. Annalise knew she had to think of something to save the moment, so she quickly added, “aside from that chode toe, of course.”

Luckily, this caused Brinley to burst out in laughter. “You don’t like my toe, huh?”

Before Annalise knew what was happening, Brinley maneuvered herself to bring her foot close to Annalise’s face and wiggled her toes in front of her. “This toe? This is the one you don’t like?” she asked between fits of laughter.

Even though it was disgusting to have a foot in her face, Annalise burst into laughter as well, her giggling continuing as she struggled to wiggle away from Brinley and that toe, which actually was pretty awful.

Brinley moved her foot then positioned her body on top of Annalise’s once again, only this time there was nothing sexual about it. She tickled her to the point that Annalise could hardly breathe. It was one of those tickles that she loved and hated all at once.

“Say my toe is perfect,” Brinley said as she continued her assault.

“Never,” Annalise said between laughing and gasping for breath. She wouldn’t give up that easily.

“Say it or I’ll never have sex with you again.”

“Your toe is perfect.” Desperate times.

Brinley stopped her attack and stared down at Annalise with a cocky smile on her face. “I can’t believe you fell for that. As if I’d ever stop having sex with you. I’m not a masochist.”

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:37 pm

“Oh, yeah?” Annalise brought her hands to Brinley’s ass and squeezed. “Does that mean you’re ready for round two right now?”

Unfortunately, Brinley’s phone chose that moment to ring. Brinley grabbed it off her nightstand and rolled her eyes when she looked at it. “That’s the pizza. Of course they choose tonight to get here in record time.” She slowly peeled her body away from Annalise, which Annalise didn’t make easy since she kept her hands on Brinley’s ass, not letting go until she had no other choice. “I have to run downstairs to get it, so I’ll be right back. Make yourself comfy on the couch. Clothes are optional.”

Brinley answered the call, telling the person on the other line that she’d be right down. She grabbed a pair of sweatpants and a T-shirt off her floor and quickly threw them on, pulling the sweatpants right over her strap-on. Annalise figured eating piping hot pizza naked probably wasn’t the best idea, but she also didn’t want to put the jeans back on that she had borrowed from Brinley that morning.

Even though she had only stayed over at Brinley’s twice now, she knew the middle drawer of her dresser was filled with oversized T-shirts she liked to wear to bed sometimes. She went to the drawer, pulled one out that read Girls do everything better , and slipped it on. When she sat down on the couch, she suddenly became nervous that she had done the wrong thing by going through Brinley’s dresser without asking her. She stood from the couch so she could put the shirt back and change into the other clothes that Brinley had given her permission to wear.

Of course, as soon as she stood up, Brinley walked back in the door. “You’re wearing my shirt?” Brinley stared at her, unblinking. “With nothing else?”

Annalise took a step toward her but stopped before going any further. “Sorry. I know I should have asked first. I didn’t feel like putting my jeans back on, and then I remembered you had a bunch of big T-shirts so I figured one of those would be comfy to wear while we eat. After I put it on, I realized it was stupid that I didn’t ask first. Are you mad?”

“Mad?” Brinley scoffed and closed the distance between them, getting so close that the only thing separating them was the pizza box. “You look sexy as hell, and the fact that it’s my T-shirt literally makes it that much hotter.”

Brinley looked at Annalise as if she would much rather eat her than the pizza in her hands. The look made Annalise’s mind go right to what was still hanging in between Brinley’s legs. As if on cue, they both looked at each other then down at the pizza box at the exact same time. Without saying a word, Brinley placed the pizza box down on her coffee table.

As soon as she stood back up, Annalise pulled her in for a searing kiss, wasting no time in pulling down Brinley’s pants as they stumbled over to the couch together. Brinley sat down first, and pulled Annalise on top of her. Instead of taking off Annalise’s shirt completely, she lifted the bottom of the shirt just enough to give access to where they both needed her.

“Shit,” Brinley said, pulling back from the kiss. “The lube is in my bedroom.”

“We don’t need it.” Annalise grabbed Brinley’s hand and brought it down to her center to show her just how turned on she already was. “See?”

“How are you...?”

“Honestly?” Annalise grabbed the dildo. “Seeing you pull your sweatpants on over this was a huge turn-on. I was thinking about it the whole time you were getting the

pizza.”

“The whole three minutes?” Brinley teased before placing a few stray kisses along Annalise’s neck that had her even more turned on.

“Shut up.” Annalise laughed and brought her mouth to Brinley’s once again.

As they kissed, Annalise lifted herself slightly and moved the dildo to her opening, then slowly lowered herself onto it. This somehow felt even better than the first time. She normally wasn’t the one to take control during sex, and there was something empowering about it that she hadn’t expected. As she moved against Brinley’s lap, pushing the dildo deeper with each thrust, both of them moaned. Is she really enjoying this as much as I am? Is that even possible?

Just to be sure she was, Annalise slipped her hands inside of Brinley’s shirt and played with her breasts as she sucked on her neck. She was sure she was going to leave a mark, but right now, she didn’t care. She wanted to claim Brinley, even if it was just for tonight. Brinley didn’t seem to mind either since she tilted her head to the side to give Annalise more room. When she wrapped her arms around Annalise and pulled them closer together, both of them moaned once again. Their sweaty bodies continued to move against each other until Annalise couldn’t take anymore, her body giving up to the climax that washed over her. The way Brinley vibrated against her told Annalise that she was also coming.

They were both silent for a moment before Brinley laughed and laid her head on Annalise’s shoulder. “Not gonna lie, I didn’t see that one coming.”

“I most certainly didn’t either.” Annalise ran a finger along the hickey on Brinley’s neck. “Sorry about this by the way. I don’t think it’s going anywhere anytime soon.”

“That’s what cover up is for.” Brinley lifted her head and looked behind Annalise.

“You know what is going somewhere? That pizza. I’ve worked up quite the appetite.”

Annalise stood up off Brinley’s lap and grabbed a slice of pizza before sitting back down beside her and taking a bite. Heaven. Is this pizza exceptional or does it just seem like that because of the amazing sex?

“Best pizza ever, right?” Brinley asked before taking a big bite.

“Wait, how did you know what I was thinking?” Did I say something out loud?

Brinley chuckled. “It’s all in your eyes. They’re very expressive.”

“What else do my eyes say?”

Brinley tapped on her chin as if she was considering the question. “I’ll have to get back to you on that.”

As they both laughed, it hit Annalise how much she enjoyed their time together. Sometime in the past few months, Brinley had gone from her teacher and fuck buddy to one of her friends.

Her mind went to her birthday, which was a few weeks away. She wanted Brinley to be part of it. Will Brinley think it’s weird if I ask though? Annalise decided to just go for it. If Brinley thought it was strange or didn’t have any interest in celebrating, she could tell her. No harm, no foul. She might as well rip the bandaid off.

“So, my birthday is three weeks away. I’m not sure how far ahead you get your work schedule or if you would have any interest at all, but I’m going out with some friends. You probably aren’t interested, but—”

“Hey, Annalise?” Brinley said, interrupting her rambling. “Tell me when and where. I

wouldn't miss it for the world.”

Page 42

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:37 pm

Annalise blew out the breath she had been holding, relief washing over her. “Really?”

“Of course. I can’t wait.”

Chapter 12

Brinley

Brinley bounced from foot to foot as she waited for Annalise to open her apartment door. Lately, they weren’t able to get their schedules to align, so Brinley hadn’t seen her since their study and sex party three weeks ago. Damn did she miss her. She also couldn’t help but wonder how many times Annalise’s plans were with women from the app. Not that she cared. She hoped Annalise was having a good time. She deserved that. Obviously.

When Annalise opened the door, it was like a breath of fresh air. She was wearing light jeans, a black sweater, and had her blonde hair straightened, which was different. Brinley loved Annalise’s curls, but this was an amazing look too. Her stomach did a weird flip as she continued to stare at her.

“Hey, you,” Annalise said before stepping to the side to let Brinley into her apartment. She didn’t hide the way her eyes ran over Brinley’s body as she walked past. “You look fantastic.”

Brinley was happy her outfit was having its desired effect since she had spent forever trying to figure out what to wear before settling on her tightest pair of jeans, a very low-cut red V-neck T-shirt, and her black leather jacket. She hadn’t had sex in weeks,

so she wanted to wear an outfit that made Annalise want to rip her clothes off, and given the way Annalise was still staring at her, she had to assume she had done a pretty good job of that. Too bad they would probably have to wait until after dinner for that to happen.

Annalise had been nice enough to ask Brinley to meet at her apartment since she didn't know any of her friends other than Nathalie. She wasn't going to repay her by messing with her perfectly straight hair that she had clearly spent a lot of time on. Plus, since Brinley was staying over and didn't have to work until the next night, they had plenty of time for that.

"Happy birthday." Brinley held up the two bags she was holding, gently shaking one at a time. "This present has to do with your current lesson, and since I don't know if you'll actually like it, this one is one I know you'll enjoy."

Annalise lifted an eyebrow and grabbed the bag pertaining to her lesson. "I'm intrigued."

"Open it."

Annalise ripped the tissue paper out of the bag then picked up the plastic case the object was stored in. She lifted her eyebrow once more before opening it. Does she realize how sexy that is? When she pulled the object out of its case, her eyes went wide and her face immediately turned red.

Brinley pointed to the object that Annalise was now moving between her hands and studying. "It's a vibrator."

Annalise laughed. "I realize that. I'm not a complete disaster."

"It's more than that though." Brinley pointed to the top. "This is for maximum

clitoral stimulation, and it has three different modes.”

“I take it you’ve used it before?”

“No. This one is new.” Brinley was like a giddy child at the thought of trying it. She didn’t want to assume Annalise would use it with her, but she hoped she would.

Annalise looked down at her watch then back at Brinley, her smile wide. “We don’t have to leave for another half hour. Wanna give it a try?”

“Hell, yeah.” Brinley practically skipped as she followed Annalise back to her room. “I took it out and cleaned it when it first came just to make sure it was all ready for you, so we’re good to go.”

“Amazing. Now how ’bout you let me unwrap my birthday present?”

“You want to open the other one?” It seemed like an odd moment to ask when they were getting ready to start this, but it was Annalise’s birthday. If that’s what she wanted, Brinley was obviously okay with it. “Sure. I left it in the other room. I’ll go get—”

Annalise ran a finger inside the waistline of Brinley’s jeans and leaned close to whisper in her ear. “That’s not the present I was talking about.”

Oh, shit. She’s talking about me. Brinley was so shocked by Annalise’s forwardness that she froze. Luckily, it only took her a few seconds to calm her beating heart and regain her cool. “I’m all yours, babe.”

Apparently, Annalise wasn’t one to savor the moment while opening presents, because she tore off Brinley’s clothes as if they were on fire. Brinley wasn’t complaining though. She loved how intense Annalise was, and the fact that she

seemed to be the one to bring it out in her made it even sexier. Before Brinley had the chance to do it, Annalise removed her own clothes as well. She pushed Brinley back onto the bed and crawled on top of her, immediately bringing their lips together in a scorching kiss.

As their lips and tongues entwined, their hands moved all over each other's bodies. After three weeks, Brinley was desperate to touch Annalise any and everywhere, and it was clear Annalise felt the same way.

Since they didn't have a ton of time, Brinley searched the bed for where she had dropped the vibrator when Annalise pushed her into it. As soon as she grabbed onto it, there was a knock on Annalise's apartment door. Seriously?

"You've gotta be fucking kidding me," Annalise said with a groan. "Who the hell could that be?"

Instead of going away, the person knocked harder. "Annalise Eleanor Finch, I know you're in there. Your old grandma didn't walk all the way here to be left out in the hallway."

"My grandma?" Annalise's eyes went wide as she rolled off Brinley and jumped up from the bed. "Shit. What is she doing here?" She hurriedly put her clothes on then threw Brinley's at her. "You need to walk out with me. If you come stumbling out after me, she'll know what we were doing, and we'll never hear the end of it."

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:37 pm

Brinley did as she was told and followed Annalise to the door. As soon as Annalise opened it and her grandma saw both of them standing there, a wide knowing grin spread over her face. “So, that’s what took you so long, huh?”

“I was just, um,” Annalise cleared her throat, “showing Brinley something in my room. We didn’t hear you at first.”

“Showing her something, huh?” Annalise’s grandma laughed as she walked past them into the apartment. “I’m sure you were.”

Brinley tried not to laugh, but it was hard not to. Annalise’s grandma was the most dirty-minded old person she’d ever met. She wasn’t wrong about what was happening between them, but that only made it funnier to Brinley.

Annalise took her grandma’s arm and led her to the couch to sit down. “Why did you walk all the way here, Grandma? You should have called. You know you’re not supposed to do anything strenuous.”

“Strenuous?” Annalise’s grandma laughed and waved her hand. “Poo-ey. Walking isn’t strenuous. I’m not dead... yet.” Her eyes twinkled when she said the word yet. “Plus, I wanted to give you your birthday present.”

She pushed a bag over toward Annalise. When Annalise pulled a bottle of wine and a wine glass that read Let’s Wine About It out of the bag, Brinley started to laugh. No way. “Hold on.” She stood from the couch and grabbed the other gift she had gotten Annalise. “Open it.”

Both Annalise and her grandma appeared confused about why Brinley had butted in until Annalise opened the bag to find a bottle of wine and three more glasses that were the exact same as the one Annalise's grandma had bought her.

Annalise's grandma patted Brinley on the knee and laughed. "Great minds think alike, huh?"

Brinley's heart swelled at the love from Annalise's grandma. It was almost like having a piece of her own grandma back. "I guess so. I got three so you and Nathalie could have one too. It looks like you guys will be able to take turns double-fisting your wine."

Annalise's grandma scoffed. "Nonsense. This just means you'll have to be a regular at Wine Wednesday."

Don't cry, Brinley. "I'll definitely make sure to attend once I'm not studying all the time." Brinley smiled at Annalise who smiled back at her in a way that had her stomach in knots. "That is, if Annalise doesn't get sick of me."

"I don't think you have to worry about that, dear." Annalise's grandma winked at Brinley then looked between her and Annalise. "So, what are you two doing tonight? Aside from each other."

Brinley laughed so hard she couldn't hear the lecture she was sure Annalise was giving her grandma at that moment. It took her a few seconds to stop laughing, and by the time she did, Annalise was explaining their plan to get dinner and drinks at the local pub.

"That's nice," her grandma said, her voice wistful as if she wished she had been invited. "Who's going?"

That was a good question, one that Brinley also didn't know the answer to. Not that she was going to know any of the names that Annalise rattled off, but it would be nice to know how many people she could expect.

"Just Nathalie, Boden, Acacia, Max, and Grant."

Grant? Why does that name sound familiar? Isn't that...?

Brinley's thoughts were cut off by the sound of Annalise's grandma cackling. "I'm so happy that asshole ex-boyfriend of yours is going to be a seventh wheel."

"I told you, Grandma, Grant's actually a really nice guy. He had every right to break up with me."

"Sure. Sure." Annalise's grandma stood from the couch and began slowly making her way to the door. Before she reached it, she turned around with a big shit-eating grin on her face. "He's definitely going to feel that way when he sees your girlfriend here with her shirt inside out."

Brinley quickly looked down at her shirt, that was, indeed, inside out. Oops. When she looked back up, Annalise's grandma winked at her then laughed as she walked out the door. Brinley could hear her laughing the whole way down the hallway.

"Why didn't you tell me my shirt was on inside out?" Brinley asked once the laughing faded out. She normally wasn't one to get embarrassed easily, but getting caught by the grandma of the girl she's having sex with wasn't exactly on her bucket list.

"I honestly didn't notice." The way Annalise pursed her lips told Brinley she was trying not to laugh. "I'm sorry my grandma has no filter."

“Please don’t apologize. I love her lack of filter.” Honestly, it wasn’t her grandma’s dirty comments that caused the strange sensation bubbling up in Brinley’s stomach. It was the mention of Annalise’s ex. She didn’t care that Annalise invited him. She could have whoever she wanted at her birthday celebration, and if she wanted him there, he should be. But the question was why she wanted him there, unless... shit. Am I about to lose my fuck buddy?

“So, anything I should know about this ex of yours?” she asked, trying to keep her voice level. “Your grandma doesn’t seem to be a very big fan of his.”

Annalise rolled her eyes. “Grant is harmless. My grandma just doesn’t like the fact that he broke my heart.”

Broke her heart? Brinley didn’t like that either. She wasn’t sure how she could like anyone who could break a girl like Annalise’s heart. I guess I’ll try to give him a shot. Doubtful that she could actually make herself like him.

Twenty minutes into Annalise’s birthday celebration, Brinley already loved all of her friends. Boden was cool and soft-spoken, which was the perfect balance to Nathalie’s personality. Acacia and Max were both hilarious in different ways. Max tried to be funny, but unlike most guys who tried too hard, he actually was. Acacia was witty. It was easy to tell she wasn’t even trying, which only served to make her that much funnier. Then there was Grant. As much as Brinley wanted to hate him, she couldn’t. Annalise was right. He was a total sweetheart. No wonder she fell for him. Is she still in love with him? Brinley wondered to herself. It would honestly be hard not to be. Hell, Brinley was practically in love with him, and she didn’t even like men.

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:37 pm

“So, how did you two meet?” Grant asked as he pointed between Brinley and Annalise.

Nathalie smirked and leaned down onto the table, as if she was trying to get closer to hear. “Yes. Please tell us. I’ve been dying to know.”

Nathalie was an asshole, and Brinley loved that about her. She felt bad for Annalise though who was currently coughing on the last sip she had taken of her drink.

“Oh, um,” Annalise struggled to answer so Brinley put a hand on her knee to help her calm down.

“I work at a bar in the city that Annalise happened to go to with a friend a few months ago. Her friend ended up having to cut out early, so we talked a lot after that. I mentioned that I was studying for my MCATs, and being the sweetheart that she is, she offered to help me study. I don’t think she expected me to take her up on her offer, but I did, and I’d say it worked out well for both of us.” Brinley winked at Annalise, knowing she would catch on to the fact that the last part was actually in reference to Brinley helping her “study.”

A small smile parted Annalise’s lips, and she brought her hand on top of Brinley’s and squeezed it in a silent thank you that Brinley immediately recognized. Annalise looked around the table as she slowly regained her composure. “Yeah, it’s been a lot of fun learning about a bunch of stuff that’s over my head.” When the whole table laughed at that, Annalise visibly seemed to relax even more. “I actually have to run to the restroom. I’ll be right back.” She squeezed Brinley’s hand once again, and even though Brinley had no idea why, she could tell Annalise wanted her to go along. She

knew Annalise wasn't the type of girl to hook up in a public restroom, so even though she wished that's what this was, she knew it wasn't.

"Now that you mention it, I have to go, too," Brinley said as she stood from the table at the same time as Annalise. Luckily, no one seemed to think anything of it and they started a new conversation before Brinley and Annalise even walked away.

When they entered the restroom, Annalise's eyes searched the room as if she was checking to see if anyone else was there. Once she was apparently satisfied with what she found, she put her arms over Brinley's shoulders. "I'm really sorry I didn't tell my friends that we were, um, well..."

"Fuck buddies? Friends with benefits? Teaching you how to have sex with women?" Brinley chuckled. "I didn't expect you to tell them any of that. That's no one's business but your own, especially when you're still trying to figure certain things out. Plus, you invited me because I'm your friend, right? Not for any of those other reasons?" Brinley had no idea why she felt so vulnerable asking that question. It's not like it actually mattered why Annalise invited her.

Annalise wrapped her arms even tighter around Brinley's neck, bringing the two of them so close that Brinley could smell Annalise's breath, which was now a mixture of mint and vodka. "Of course that's why I invited you. Don't get me wrong, I love the extra benefits we have going on, but throughout all of this, you've become one of my best friends. I couldn't imagine celebrating my birthday without you."

Now Brinley felt choked up. Get your shit together. You've only had one drink. "That's really sweet. I'm happy I get to celebrate with you." Brinley had told herself she wouldn't ask about the deal with Annalise and Grant, but her curiosity got the best of her. "So, you weren't lying about Grant. He's a great guy. Any chance of something starting up between you two again?"

Annalise's eyes went wide as she put the slightest bit of space between her and Brinley.

What was that all about? Am I overstepping?

"Not at all. When Grant dumped me, I was heartbroken and didn't understand it at the time. He wanted to settle down, and I wasn't ready, but I thought that was a stupid reason to break things off. He was right to do it though. There was a reason I wasn't ready to settle down. It was because deep down, I knew I didn't want to settle down with him. Our relationship was pretty perfect, and that's all I focused on at the time, but now I can see that the passion was missing."

Brinley nodded. "That makes sense. You deserve a lifetime of fireworks and butterflies. You shouldn't settle for anything less than that." Ew. When did I get so poetic?

"Do you really mean it?" When Brinley nodded, Annalise closed the space between them once again. Only this time, she also placed a kiss on her lips. When she pulled back from the kiss, her face was red. "Sorry. I've just been thinking about doing that all night."

"You know you can do that whenever you want." Brinley moved her hands to Annalise's ass and gave it a squeeze before quickly moving them away. She knew she couldn't do more than that, but she also couldn't resist. "And honestly, there's nothing I want more than to stay in the bathroom kissing you all night, but I don't think you'll be able to pull off the whole friends only thing if someone catches us making out in the bathroom."

Annalise laughed and removed her arms from around Brinley's neck, a touch that Brinley immediately missed. "You're right. I guess we should get back out there, huh?"

“I guess we should,” Brinley said, a goofy smile on her face that she couldn’t have wiped away if she tried.

When they left the bathroom, Annalise pointed over toward the bar where Grant was standing. When he saw them, he motioned for them to come over. “I’m going to go join him. Do you want to come?”

Brinley could tell Annalise was only asking to be polite, and she wanted to give them some alone time if that’s what Annalise needed. “Nah. I’ll go back to the table and make sure Nathalie is behaving. You have fun.”

“I’ll try.” Annalise not-so-subtly ran her eyes up and down Brinley’s body then tilted her mouth toward Brinley’s ear and whispered, “Not as much fun as we’ll be having later.”

Holy shit. Any worries about Grant were officially gone.

Chapter 13

Annalise

“What are you doing over here?” Annalise asked when she joined Grant at the bar. “Not patient enough to wait for our waitress?”

Grant smiled his trademark smile, with the dimple showing on his right cheek. It was the first thing Annalise had noticed about him when she moved back home after college, and she always wondered how that dimple hadn’t won her over in high school. “She’s super busy, so I figured I’d give her a break.”

Of course. That’s the kind of guy Grant was. Always a sweetheart.

“Plus, I thought a round of birthday shots would be easier to get from the bar.”

“Birthday shots? Really? Are you trying to get me drunk?” Annalise playfully elbowed Grant in the side.

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:37 pm

Grant scoffed. “Obviously. Isn’t that what tonight is all about?” His smile dropped, causing that dimple to disappear. “In all seriousness though, thanks for inviting me tonight. I know we’ve obviously seen each other since the breakup, but I wasn’t really sure if you’d want me here for this. It’s pretty clear that I haven’t been your favorite person.”

Annalise put a hand on top of Grant’s. She hated the fact that she made him feel that way. “It’s not like that at all. You really are still one of my favorite people. I was just super butt-hurt over you dumping me. I didn’t get it at the time, but I do now.”

“You do?”

“Of course. I love you, but it’s clear that we weren’t meant to be together.”

Grant nodded slowly, as if he was taking in everything Annalise was saying. “You weren’t the only one who was butt-hurt. I thought I wanted to spend forever with you, and when you made it clear you weren’t ready for that, I kind of dumped you out of spite. I hoped you would realize you couldn’t live without me and would come back ready to start our life together. But when you didn’t, I realized something.”

“And what was that?” This was the most Annalise had spoken to Grant since the breakup, and she was happy to finally have some closure.

“We weren’t meant to be. I was convinced we were because you were my best friend. And I’ve missed the hell out of you since the breakup, but only because I miss my friend. Does that make sense?”

“More than you realize.”

Grant smiled wide and that dimple returned. “Obviously. You and Brinley are a much better couple. That’s pretty obvious. I’m really happy for you, by the way. I hope I can find my person someday, too.”

“Wait. What?” Annalise’s head was spinning. What the hell was he talking about? How could he possibly know that there was something more between her and Brinley? And what made him think they were a couple? He couldn’t have been more wrong about that. “Brinley’s not... we’re not... I’m not...” Why can’t I form a fucking sentence? “Did Nathalie say something to you?”

Grant furrowed her eyebrows. “Nathalie? What are you talking about?”

“What are you talking about? Why do you think I’m dating Brinley? She’s my friend. I’m not...” Annalise couldn’t finish her sentence because it felt like a lie. She didn’t know how or if she wanted to label herself yet, but she was becoming more and more convinced that she wasn’t completely straight. The only person who knew that she was questioning it was Brinley though, and clearly she didn’t talk to Grant.

Grant’s face became even more confused. “You’re not dating Brinley?”

Annalise shook her head. “I don’t... I’ve never... dated women.”

“Wait. Are you saying you’ve never dated a woman or you never would?” Grant laughed and shook his head. “Shit. I’m sorry. I guess I shouldn’t just assume these things. I know we never talked about it, but the whole time we were dating, I honestly thought you were bi. It obviously didn’t matter to me either way. I was just excited you actually liked me.”

“Why did you think I was bi?” Annalise was pretty sure he wasn’t wrong, but she

was curious how he would have known that when she had no clue.

“I don’t know. I guess I was being dumb. It was wrong of me to assume something without you telling me.” Grant stared down at the bar and ran his hand along the wood. Annalise could tell he was embarrassed, which made her feel guilty.

“I’m not offended. I’m truly curious.”

Grant shrugged. “When we used to watch movies or shows together, we always talked about the women we thought were hot. And there were a few times when we first started dating that we were out and another woman caught my eye. Each time it happened, when I looked over at you to make sure I hadn’t offended you by looking, I noticed your eyes lingering on her as well.”

Annalise laughed much louder than she meant to. How had she missed all of that about herself? Maybe Brinley was right. It was easy to blow off those feelings, when she also had feelings for guys. “You don’t have to feel bad for assuming that. I’m not ready to define anything, but I’m starting to think you might have been right.”

Annalise couldn’t believe she was admitting this out loud to her ex-boyfriend. She hadn’t even told Nathalie yet. Mostly because she didn’t know what to tell her since she was still working through it herself.

“If you ever want to talk about this or anything else, I’m here. I meant what I said. You really were my best friend. You still are. That’s why I miss you so much.”

Annalise could physically feel the hole that had formed in her heart when Grant dumped her starting to close. “I miss you, too. Can we be friends again?”

“You mean we aren’t already?” Grant asked with a laugh and a wink.

Annalise nudged him playfully once again. “You know what I mean. Can we go back to how we were before? Only, without the sex, of course.”

“What sex?” Grant laughed even harder now, and Annalise couldn’t help but laugh along with him.

“Touché.”

When the bartender brought over seven shots, Grant held up his fingers. “Could we actually get two more? It’s my bestie’s birthday, and she needs to celebrate.”

The bartender nodded and quickly prepared two more shots for them. When he handed one to each of them, Grant held his in the air. “To friendship. And to each of us finding the person we’re meant to be with.”

“Cheers,” Annalise said before clinking her glass against Grant’s and emptying it with one big gulp. The drink burned as it went down her throat, causing Annalise to cough.

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:37 pm

Grant chuckled at her struggle. “Still a lightweight, I see.”

“Yep. That certainly hasn’t changed. Are you trying to get me drunk?”

“Of course. Maybe then I can find out what’s really up between you and Brinley, because the way you both look at each other is the way we should have looked at each other when we were dating.”

Annalise shook her head. “It’s not like that. I promise.” It wasn’t a lie. They might have been having sex, but that didn’t change the fact that Brinley was nothing more than her friend. Whatever Grant thought he saw was nothing more than lust.

Grant put both hands in the air. “Fine. I believe you. But whatever it is that brought on this new glow you have, please keep it up. It looks good on you.”

Annalise tried not to let her eyes linger over to Brinley, but she couldn’t help it. That beautiful woman sitting there and chatting with her friends as if she had known them forever was the reason for her glow, whether she ever chose to admit it out loud or not. She didn’t know whether it was the alcohol, Brinley, or both, but Annalise’s world was spinning, and she didn’t want it to stop.

“Why won’t this key work?” Annalise asked Brinley with a giggle as she tried to get into her apartment.

“I’m going to say it’s probably because you have it upside down.” Brinley took the

keys from Annalise's hand and easily opened the door that she had been fighting with.

As soon as they were inside the apartment, Annalise threw her arms around Brinley. "My knight in shining armor." Being this close to Brinley brought back the desires that Annalise had been trying to ignore all night. She lost count of the number of times she thought about asking Brinley to sneak off with her to have sex somewhere in the bar, a thought that became more persistent as she had more to drink.

Now that they were back at her apartment, there was nothing to stop her. She was ready to end her birthday doing all the things she could only fantasize about earlier. Speaking of which. "Did you bring your strap?" she whispered into Brinley's ear, loving the way Brinley stiffened from her question.

"I did. Do you want me to use it? Right now?"

Annalise shook her head. She had a different idea. "I was hoping I could use it."

"H-have you ever done that before?"

Annalise laughed because it was such a silly question. Brinley had to realize she hadn't been with anyone since their last time together, right? The past few weeks had been crazy. If she couldn't even make time for sex with Brinley, sex with anyone else was low on her list of priorities. "No. But I need to, right? So I can pass my test?"

"Technically, you pass your test by using a sex toy with someone other than me. Have you done that yet?"

"Nope. I need more practice with my amazing teacher first." Annalise ran her hand over the front of Brinley's pants. She couldn't help herself. She was so desperate for her. "I want you to show me how to fuck you."

Brinley's body stiffened even more. "Are you sure you want to do it now? You're kind of...."

"Buzzed?" Another giggle escaped from Annalise's lips. Yes, she did have a bit to drink, but that didn't change the fact that she had been thinking about this for weeks.

"I was going to say drunk, but you can call it whatever you want."

"Afraid I won't be able to get it up?" Annalise's giggle turned into a cackle because she was fucking hilarious.

"You're ridiculous." Brinley laughed along with Annalise.

"Is that a yes?" Annalise ran her hand over the front of Brinley's pants once again. She loved the way that even though Brinley was trying to resist her, she couldn't help but push herself up against Annalise's hand.

"How am I supposed to say no?" Brinley asked breathlessly . She pointed to her bag. "It's in there. Do you need help getting it on?"

"Obviously not." Except, when Annalise pulled out the dildo and the strap, she realized she had no idea what she was doing. She wanted to save the moment, and in her intoxicated mind, she knew the perfect way to do that. She licked the suction part of the dildo and pushed it against her forehead, satisfied when it actually stayed like she hoped it would. " This is how I wear it, right?"

She wiggled her head back and forth and broke into another fit of giggles as the dildo moved with her.

"Is it weird that I actually find this whole scene incredibly sexy?"

“Of course not. That was my goal.” Annalise bent down and moved her head so the dildo slapped Brinley in the face. Even though Brinley was laughing and seemed to be enjoying her show, Annalise kind of hoped she didn’t remember this in the morning. The second slap to Brinley’s face caused the dildo to fall off.

Annalise picked it up off the floor and when she stood back up, Brinley’s eyes went wide. “Umm, babe...”

Annalise couldn’t figure out where Brinley’s serious expression had suddenly come from, but it worried her. “What? What’s wrong?”

Page 47

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:37 pm

“Nothing’s wrong, per se. When you were a kid, did you ever suck on a cup until it stuck to your face and then when you took it off, it left a big ring?”

Where the hell is she going with this? “Yeah. Why are we talking about that now, though?”

“Because,” Brinley cleared her throat, “that just happened... but to your forehead... from a dildo.”

No. She had to be kidding, right? Annalise ran to her bathroom, turned on the light, and looked in the mirror. Shit . It was even worse than she expected. Right there in the middle of her forehead was a big purple and red circle that seemed to be getting worse by the second.

Arms wrapped around her from behind and Brinley’s face appeared in the mirror. “Personally, I think you look hot like that.”

Annalise laughed in spite of herself. “Do you think my boss will also find it sexy when I go to work on Monday?”

“I don’t see how she couldn’t.”

“I’m serious, Brinley.” Annalise laughed once again. She couldn’t help it. This was all too ridiculous not to. “What the hell am I supposed to do?”

“Use coverup. It’s just like having a hickey, just bigger and in the center of your forehead.”

“I’ve never had a hickey anywhere visible.” Annalise had always prided herself on keeping her private life private, all the way down to the point of never letting a guy suck on her neck.

“I’d love to change that someday if you’d let me.” Brinley moved Annalise’s hair out of the way and placed one light kiss on her neck. “But don’t worry, I’ve had enough experience to know that coverup will do the trick. I promise.”

Hearing Brinley talk about all her experience, brought back Annalise’s desire to use the strap on her. “So, I admit I may need some help getting the dildo on. Is that going to ruin the moment?” More than I already have from getting a dildo mark on my forehead.

“I get to be the first person you fuck with a dildo. Nothing could ruin that moment for me.”

“I hope you still feel that way even if I’m bad at it.”

“Trust me, babe. Nothing you do to me could ever be bad.” Brinley wrapped her arms even tighter around Annalise and kissed her cheek.

Even though the kiss was quick, Annalise could feel those lips on her cheek long after they were gone. The heat of that kiss, mixed with the warmth of Brinley’s body tight up against hers, made flames shoot through Annalise’s body. She couldn’t wait any longer. She needed to do this now. “Let’s do it. Show me how to fuck you.”

Brinley closed her eyes and bit her bottom lip. “I promise I will, but could you please say that one more time? It was so fucking sexy.” Brinley’s eyes stayed shut as she moved against Annalise.

Talk about sexy. Annalise could hardly breathe, let alone push out the words that

Brinley wanted to hear. When she was finally able to, they came out in a breathy whisper. “I want to fuck you until you see stars. Could you show me how?” She had no idea where that had come from, but just saying the words made her feel liberated (and even more turned on).

Brinley took Annalise’s hand and the two of them walked to her bedroom. Brinley leaned in and stole another quick kiss. “You get undressed and I’ll get the harness, okay?”

Annalise simply nodded because she couldn’t form words. She took off her clothes and by the time she was done, Brinley was back in the room with the dildo already attached to the harness. “Just step in and I’ll tighten it.”

Annalise did as directed, almost falling over a few times while trying to get the harness on. Once Brinley had it secured, she sat back and stared at Annalise. It was a wonder the woman could still look at her as if she wanted to devour her after everything she had just seen, but that look was definitely there. It couldn’t be missed.

Brinley licked her lips and nodded toward the bed. “Lay down. It will be easier for your first time if you’re on the bottom.”

Annalise followed Brinley’s directions then watched as she took off her clothes and climbed onto the bed. She took the bottle of lube that Annalise hadn’t even noticed she was holding and went to squirt some in her hands. That’s when Annalise remembered how Brinley had helped her get ready to take the dildo.

“Wait,” she said as she put her hand on top of Brinley’s to stop her. “You can obviously use that, but I want to help you get a little wet first.”

Much to Annalise’s surprise, Brinley reached down and ran a hand between her legs. “I don’t think you have to worry about that. Do you know how much of a turn on it is

just to see you like this?" She brought two wet fingers up to Annalise's lips. "Just in case you needed some proof."

When Annalise took those fingers in her mouth, it made her craving to taste Brinley even stronger. She needed her mouth on her. "I need more." She licked her lips, hoping that helped to get her point across. "Please. I'm in the perfect position for you to..."

"You want me to sit on your face?" Brinley swallowed hard. "We've never done that before."

"Tonight is a night of firsts, right? Might as well add that to the list."

Without saying another word, Brinley situated herself so her center was right above Annalise's head with a knee on each side as she crouched down. She slowly lowered herself. "Is this okay?"

With Brinley so close, Annalise couldn't resist anymore. She ran her tongue across Brinley's center and hummed in response to the taste that had become one of her favorites. "Best thing I've had in my mouth all night."

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:38 pm

“Are you sure? Because that chocolate cake was banging.” The shakiness to Brinley’s voice told Annalise she wasn’t keeping her cool as much as she’d like to pretend she was. Annalise loved the fact that she could have that effect on her. It encouraged her to keep going.

She moved her hands to Brinley’s ass to prompt her to come closer, and then she really went for it. She licked and sucked Brinley in all the places and ways she had learned that she loved. Brinley’s breathing picked up and she started to move against Annalise’s mouth. After only a few seconds she moved away, and Annalise immediately felt the loss.

“Sorry. I was about to come and I want to save that for when you’re inside me.”

Brinley continued what Annalise had interrupted earlier and put some lube onto her hands. She moved her hands up and down the length of the dildo and it was so sexy, Annalise swore she could somehow feel her touch.

“I’m going to lower myself down onto it now. Do you want to hold it or do you want me to?”

“I want to.”

There was something so incredibly sensual about holding onto the dildo as Brinley lowered herself onto it, the length of the dildo slowly disappearing inside of her. Annalise watched in awe as Brinley moved up and down on top of the object between her legs, eyes closed, tongue out as if she was deeply focused.

When she opened her eyes after a few seconds, they latched right on to Annalise's. "Now is when you fuck me, baby."

Annalise wasn't really sure what that meant from her side, but she wasn't going to ruin the moment by asking. Instead, she put her hands back on Brinley's ass and pushed her hips up as Brinley moved hers down. They got into a rhythm and soon Annalise didn't need to overthink what she was doing. She was at the mercy of her body and Brinley's, and those bodies knew exactly what they wanted. It wasn't long before Brinley moaned in pleasure as she pushed into Annalise one final time. The way the object pushed back against her, along with the sight of Brinley falling apart above her, was enough to make Annalise come as well.

As Brinley rolled off her, Annalise struggled to catch her breath. "Wow. That was... Oh my God. Was that really good for you? Because it was amazing for me. Shit."

Brinley laughed and placed a kiss on Annalise's cheek. She seemed to be doing that a lot tonight. Annalise didn't mind. It was just very different from their usual interactions. "You couldn't tell? It was fucking ecstasy for me. Good God, woman. Is there anything you can't do?" Brinley kissed her once again. "Happy birthday, by the way."

"You're saying that like we're done here. We still need to use that vibrator."

Brinley wiggled her eyebrows. "Anything else you want to try now that you're a twenty-eight year old?"

Annalise laughed because she was pretty sure she knew what Brinley was talking about and for the first time with Brinley, her answer was a resounding hell no. "If you're talking about anything that involves my butt, it's a big no. One time, I was constipated and Grant had to stick a suppository up there. I couldn't even handle that." Definitely an overshare, but Annalise couldn't take it back now.

Luckily, Brinley just laughed in response to her embarrassing story. “I honestly can’t understand how you guys didn’t have any passion in your relationship.” The sarcasm dripped from her voice.

“Ha. Ha.” Annalise poked Brinley in the side. “We actually had a very good talk about that when we were standing at the bar tonight. We both agreed we fell for each other more as best friends and confused that as more. It makes so much sense, and weirdly enough, I think I needed that to get some closure on our relationship. It was hard since nothing major happened to lead to our break up.”

Annalise thought about telling Brinley that Grant thought she was bi the whole time they were dating, but she worried that would lead into all of the things he had mentioned about her and Brinley, and the last thing she wanted was to scare Brinley away. She knew Brinley wasn’t looking for a relationship. Not that she was either. She was just having the fun everyone seemed to think she needed.

“This is nice,” Brinley said as she burrowed her head into Annalise's chest.

Annalise hoped she didn’t notice how fast her heart was beating from this simple contact. “It really is. Don’t fall asleep though. I have plans for you. You’re a busy woman. I have to take advantage of any time we have.”

Brinley laughed and it caused her body to vibrate up against Annalise’s in a way that had her heart beating even faster than it was before. “The way you say that makes it sound like I’m busy with things much more exciting than studying and work. Plus, you’ll see me in a few days. Nathalie made me promise I wouldn’t miss Wine Wednesday this week.”

“Well, Nathalie was clearly drunk when she made you promise that seeing as how we’re not doing Wine Wednesday this week. Our event coordinator recently quit, so I have to host an event at my apartment. But you should totally come the following

week. I know my grandma would love to see you.” And so would I.

“I’m supposed to work, but I’ll see if Maddie can switch shifts with me. I’ve done it for her a ton of times, so I’m sure we can work something out.”

“Are you sure?”

“Of course. I want to see you.” Brinley moved her head slightly and placed a kiss on Annalise’s chest. “I hope I can see you before that, too.”

I want to see you every minute of every day .

What the hell? Where did that thought come from? Annalise definitely had too much to drink tonight. Thank God she had enough sense not to speak those thoughts out loud. Instead, she regained her cool and made sure the innuendo was clear in her tone. “You’ll be seeing a whole lot more of me tonight.”

“Damn, I love the sound of that.”

Me too.

Annalise whistled as she hit the button to take the elevator back up to her apartment. The universe seemed to have something against her and Brinley seeing each other because every time they tried to make plans since her birthday, something had come up. It was finally time for Wine Wednesday and Brinley had already worked a full shift that afternoon, so there was no way she was going to be forced to work the night shift as well.

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:38 pm

She was just about to get onto the elevator when the sound of loud heels caught her attention. Since the apartment manager, i.e. her boss, always wore heels, she could recognize that sound anywhere. She turned toward the sound and saw her boss walking toward her, hands waving. “Thank God I caught you. I really hate to do this, but there’s been an emergency.”

“Emergency?” They were managers of an apartment complex. What kind of emergency could there be that the emergency maintenance staff couldn’t take care of?

“The tenant in apartment 522 apparently started running a bath then got distracted by a noise down the hall. She went to check on it and forgot all about the bath. It overflowed so badly that it leaked into the apartment below hers. Let’s just say the tenants in 422 aren’t very happy. Maintenance is going to assess the damages now. I need to talk to them, and I need you to talk to the tenants and reassure them that we will do whatever needs to be done to make this right.”

Annalise groaned internally. Not only was she stuck doing the bitch work that her boss didn’t want to do, but because of that bitch work, she was going to miss out on seeing Brinley once again. “Okay. I just need to make two quick calls. I’m sorry. I had plans that I now need to cancel.” Annalise tried her best to keep the annoyance out of her voice, but she wasn’t sure if she did a very good job.

“I’m really sorry about this. If I could handle it on my own, I would.”

Annalise knew her boss actually meant that. As far as bosses go, she was pretty great, so there was no need to make her feel worse about a situation that she obviously had no control over. “Don’t worry about it.”

Annalise wasn't sure if her boss actually heard her since she was already hopping on the elevator that was supposed to be taking Annalise back to her room. She decided to call Brinley first so she could catch her before she started to drive.

"Hey! I'm getting ready to hop in my car now."

Guilt washed over Annalise at the sound of Brinley's excitement. "Wine Wednesday is going to have to be canceled. I just found out I have to stay at work for an undetermined amount of time." Annalise sighed. "It sucks. I really wanted to see you. Plus, I know how disappointed my grandma is going to be. She's going to act like it's no big deal, but she doesn't get a ton of company. This is the highlight of her week."

"Nathalie and I could go keep her company, and you can join us whenever you're done."

That was so incredibly sweet of Brinley to offer, it caused Annalise's throat to constrict, the way it often did before she started to cry. "Nathalie can't go either. Since she got the weeks confused, she was never planning on going this week."

"Then I'll just go." Brinley was silent for a few seconds before adding, "I mean, if that's okay with you. It's your grandma. I don't want to overstep at all or assume that she would even want me there."

Annalise laughed as a few tears escaped from her eyes. Wow, I'm pathetic. "Trust me, she would love to have you. Probably a little too much, honestly. I can't make you do that though."

"You're not making me. It's actually kind of selfish on my part. Spending time with your grandma makes me think of my grandma, and I like that."

Just when Annalise thought her heart couldn't feel any more full... "Are you sure? I

have no idea how long this will last. I might not even make it.”

“Then I’ll get quality time with your grandma, and I’ll bring you food whenever you’re done. You can’t go all night without eating.”

“After today, I’m not sure if I’ll have any energy to... you know.” Annalise didn’t want to say the words out loud since she was standing in the lobby of her job and was technically still on the clock.

“That’s funny. I don’t remember mentioning sex at all.” Brinley laughed. “Just take care of yourself and let me do the same. Don’t worry about anything else. If you haven’t called your grandma yet, don’t worry about it. I’ll let her know you might not be making it. Just send me her address so I can go right to her house.”

“Thank you.” That was all Annalise could get out, because Brinley’s sweetness had her all choked up. She could barely handle it, so she hung up the phone and focused on something she could handle—schmoozing her neighbors.

Chapter 14

Brinley

Brinley smiled as she pulled into the driveway of the one-story, ranch-style house belonging to Annalise’s grandma because even this house reminded her of the house her grandma had lived in. The red shutters and door were even exactly the same. She was disappointed Annalise couldn’t be there but still weirdly excited for this time with her grandma.

As soon as she knocked on the door, a voice yelled for her to come in. To the right of the entrance was a living room filled with old items that she would consider antiques but were probably just things Annalise’s grandma had collected growing up. To the

left was a TV room, with the TV turned up way too loud. Annalise's grandma was sitting on a chair that was so close to the TV, it was a wonder she had heard the knock at the door. Annalise's grandma picked up the remote that was sitting next to her and hit a button, which caused the TV to finally stop screaming at them.

"Where's my granddaughter?" Annalise's grandma moved her head as if she was trying to search behind Brinley for her.

"Bad news." Brinley walked across the room and took a seat on the couch. "Annalise is still at work and doesn't know if she's going to make it, so it looks like you're stuck with me."

Annalise's grandma stared at her for a long time, causing Brinley to worry that she didn't actually want her there. That worry disappeared when a huge smile spread across the old woman's face. "I'm still waiting to hear the bad news." She pointed toward the hallway Brinley had just walked from. "The kitchen is straight down that hall. There's a wine rack with everything we need. Go grab two glasses and your favorite kind of wine. It's time to gossip about my granddaughter."

Brinley was only a little bit scared about what Annalise's grandma was going to ask her about Annalise, but she was more excited than anything else. She picked out the bottle of wine that sounded the fruitiest and grabbed two glasses. Luckily, the bottle was a twist top, so she didn't have to bother searching for a wine opener. When she walked back into the room, she set the glasses on the small end table that was situated between the chair and couch and poured two hearty glasses of wine. She knew by now that Annalise's grandma wouldn't accept anything less than that.

"Sit down, dear. I have a few questions to ask you."

Brinley swallowed hard. Now she was a little bit nervous. "Yes, ma'am."

Annalise's grandma waved her hand. "Don't call me ma'am. It makes me feel old." She drank almost all of the wine from her glass, then set it back down on the table. "First question. What are your expectations with my granddaughter?" Brinley couldn't form words because her blood pressure was rising and heat was pooling throughout her body. Luckily, before she could think of what to say, Annalise's grandma laughed and slapped her hand down on the table. "I'm only shitting you. I know you two are hump buddies , or whatever you kids call it these days. Speaking of which, do you think Annalise is a little bit gay or are you just really good in bed?"

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:38 pm

Both, honestly. Brinley wasn't going to say that to Annalise's grandma though.

Annalise's grandma waved her hand. "I know you're not going to tell me that, so don't worry. I'm sure you two have an unspoken coochie contract or something." Annalise's grandma poured herself another glass of wine and topped off Brinley's. "There is one question I need you to answer for me. No exceptions. I won't accept silence as an answer."

Brinley took a big sip of her wine. She wasn't sure if she was prepared for whatever this question was. "Okay."

"How the hell did Annalise get that big bruise on her forehead? She won't tell me, so I figure it must be a great story."

Brinley laughed thinking about drunken Annalise sticking the dildo to her forehead and the bruise that immediately followed. Brinley brought her hand to her mouth to try to stifle her laugh. Annalise would kill her if she shared that story. "I'm really sorry, but it's not my story to tell."

Annalise's grandma sighed then lifted both eyebrows as she sat down her now-empty wine glass. "I'm going to tell you the same thing I tell my grandchildren. I'm one heart attack away from being six feet under the ground. You're really going to have them bury me without knowing this story?"

Wow, grandma, you really don't fight fair. Brinley shook her head. She had to stay strong. "I'm sorry. I can't."

Annalise's grandma put a hand on her heart and closed her eyes. Brinley was pretty sure she was messing with her, but she was doing such a good job, she couldn't be positive. Shit.

"Do you know what a dildo is?"

The old woman's eyes popped open and a small smile parted her lips. "I'm old, but I'm not dead." As if realizing she had broken her act, she coughed into her elbow. "Yet," she added, her voice suddenly weak.

There was no question that Brinley was being played, but this old woman was stronger than her. There's no way she'd win. "So, Annalise was... umm... playing with one after having birthday drinks. And, ah, well, she stuck it on her forehead, and when she took it off, she had that mark."

Annalise's grandma threw her head back in laughter so hard, Brinley worried she might actually break something. "That's the best story I've ever heard. Thank you, dear. Thank you so much." Once she calmed herself down, she patted Brinley's hand. "You're definitely not getting laid tonight." She chuckled lightly. "You'll be lucky if you ever get laid again, honestly."

Brinley knew Annalise's grandma was right. Her only hope was that the woman would forget what she told her by the time she saw Annalise. Of course, Brinley could never be that lucky, and at that exact moment, Annalise walked through the door.

Brinley was quiet as Annalise walked across the room and was surprised to find that her grandma was too. Except when she looked over, the old woman was staring right at Annalise's forehead, so she knew exactly what was coming. At least, she thought she did.

Annalise must have noticed too because she brought her hand to her forehead. “What’s wrong? Did I sweat my coverup off?”

“No. The cover up is doing a really good job. I’m surprised how well it’s hiding your dickey.”

“My what?” The realization showed on Annalise’s face at the exact same moment that Brinley figured out what it meant.

Don’t laugh. I don’t care how funny this is. Don’t fucking laugh.

Annalise’s grandma pointed at her forehead. “Your dick hickey. Dickey.”

Annalise’s eyes immediately shot to Brinley who was trying very hard not to burst out laughing. Even though she was clearly trying to hide it, a small smile parted Annalise’s lips. “She played the death card, didn’t she?”

Brinley nodded. “Faked a heart attack and all.”

Annalise’s grandma gasped and brought her hand up to her chest. “I would never.”

Annalise rolled her eyes at her grandma. “I think all three of us know that you most certainly would.” Annalise sighed and threw herself onto the couch beside Brinley. “Also, I’m glad you two are having such a good time together, because I came down to tell you I unfortunately can’t do anything tonight. I only have twenty minutes, then I’m going back to help the residents who now have water damage to move all of their shit to a new apartment.”

Annalise looked exhausted and Brinley felt terrible for her. She was definitely going above and beyond anything she had to do, but Brinley was quickly learning that’s just the type of person Annalise was. “Who do you have helping you?”

“It’s just me, the husband of the woman who overflowed the bathtub, and the man and woman who live in the apartment that was damaged due to the water that came through their ceiling. None of them are spring chickens, so it’s pretty much just me. My boss has to get home to her kids so she can’t stay any longer.”

“I can help.” Brinley jumped off the couch, eager to do whatever she could to make Annalise feel better. She hated seeing her so stressed out like this. She turned toward Annalise’s grandma. “That is, if you’re okay with me leaving a little bit early.”

“You go ahead. We had our fun. Plus, you owe her after giving away her dickey secret.”

Brinley focused her attention back on Annalise. “What do you say? Can I help?”

“You really want to? It’s not going to be easy, and even though it’s a small apartment, they packed a lot of shit into it. I have a feeling it’s going to take a while.”

“It will take less time with both of us working on it, though, right?”

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:38 pm

Annalise blinked her eyes as she stared into Brinley's, and for a moment, Brinley really thought she might start to cry. "You're one of a kind. I hope you know that, Brinley Adams."

Brinley closed the space between her and Annalise and wrapped her arms around Annalise's waist. "You would do the same for me."

Annalise stared at her for a few seconds, unmoving, unblinking, then placed the softest, gentlest kiss right on Brinley's lips. It was so light, she almost couldn't feel it, but the rapid beating of her heart was enough to tell her that she hadn't imagined it. She tried to think of words to say, but they all fell short, so she placed the same type of kiss on Annalise's lips.

The sound of a throat clearing caused them to jump apart. "Get a room," Annalise's grandma said with a laugh.

After that moment they shared, Brinley really wished they could, but they had a job to do. They said goodbye to Annalise's grandma then headed out.

Once outside on the sidewalk, Annalise grabbed Brinley's hand. "I meant what I said in there. You really are one of a kind."

As they started walking down the sidewalk, hand in hand, Brinley completely forgot that her car was parked in the driveway. All she could focus on was the fact that Annalise was holding her hand as they walked back to her apartment together. They had done so much together at this point, but this moment was more intense than any of that.

Brinley didn't have a chance to consider what that all meant because as soon as they were inside Annalise's apartment building, their work began. They spent the next two hours carrying furniture, clothing, and everything else you could imagine between two floors while the grumpy residents did nothing but complain about how tired they were.

By the time they were back in Annalise's apartment, all they could do was throw themselves onto her bed. The last thing Brinley wanted to do was move, but she also knew if they didn't eat anything, they would both regret it in the morning. She pulled out her phone and found the closest Italian restaurant to get pizza delivered to them. She was sure it wouldn't be as good as the pizza near her place, but she needed finger food, and pizza seemed like the best option.

After putting the order through, Annalise cuddled up against her. When Brinley heard tiny snores coming from her direction, all she wanted to do was close her eyes, but she needed to stay awake for when the pizza arrived. Luckily, it didn't take too long, and as soon as the delivery driver called to say he was there, she jumped out of bed to go get it. By the time she got back from the lobby, Annalise was sitting up in bed waiting for her.

With her tousled hair, tired eyes, and small, but brilliant smile, she looked absolutely breathtaking. It felt like a dream that Brinley got to sit in bed with this woman and share a pizza with her.

"So, did you pass your test yet?" she asked between bites. There was a part of her that didn't want to know the answer to that question, but as Annalise's designated sex teacher, she felt like she should ask.

"No, not yet. I honestly wasn't sure if we were still following the syllabus or not."

Maybe we shouldn't. Nope. Wrong answer. Why was Brinley suddenly thinking like

this? She was talking to the woman who spent years in a relationship with a guy she had no sexual chemistry with. She deserved to finally have a little fun. Brinley scoffed to make her point. “Of course we’re still following it. You’re not a quitter, are you?”

Annalise looked at Brinley, eyes serious for just a moment before she lifted an eyebrow and smirked. “I feel like that’s a challenge.”

Brinley raised an eyebrow back at her. “Maybe it is.”

“Okay, then, I’ll set something up for this week.”

“Perfect.” The way Brinley’s stomach clenched at the thought told her it was anything but perfect.

Unlike what was to come, however, this moment really was perfect, and she refused to let anyone or anything ruin that.

Chapter 15

Annalise

Annalise couldn’t remember the last time she hooked up with anyone other than Brinley. Things with Clarissa had eventually fizzled out, and all the other women were one and done.

There was something different about the woman she was meeting up with tonight though. Of course, she was gorgeous with her long curly blonde hair and sparkling green eyes, and her name, Lexie, literally rhymed with sexy—a fact that Nathalie had made sure to point out. But none of that was what made her stand out. Unlike all the other women she had hooked up with, Lexie and Annalise had actually talked.

Throughout the week leading up to their date (if that's what it could be called), they messaged each other back and forth. Annalise even felt comfortable enough to admit to Lexie that she wasn't quite sure where her sexuality fell, and that hooking up with women was pretty new to her.

If that weirded Lexie out at all, she certainly didn't show it. In fact, she responded by telling Annalise that she couldn't wait to show her what a woman could do. Annalise didn't bother telling her that another woman had already proven that very well. Instead, she told her she couldn't wait either.

Another difference was this woman only lived fifteen minutes away in the next town over, which made meeting up so much easier. Annalise didn't mind driving into the city to see Brinley, but doing it for random strangers was getting exhausting. The drive to Lexie's apartment, which was oddly similar to Annalise's, was a breath of fresh air.

She followed the directions that Lexie had given her for once she arrived, and within minutes, was standing outside of her apartment door. She took a deep breath before knocking. When Lexie opened the door, Annalise was surprised to find she was even sexier than in her pictures, but that also could have had a lot to do with the cropped tank and short skirt she was wearing—an outfit that left literally nothing to the imagination. Annalise suddenly felt very underdressed in her jeans and sweater, but the way Lexie's eyes raked over her whole body told her it must not have been that bad of a choice.

When Lexie's eyes landed on Annalise's backpack, they lit up even more. "Did you bring it?"

During their conversations, Annalise may have mentioned the new vibrator she got for her birthday. She also might have mentioned how she used it on herself almost every night since. What she didn't mention was the fact that she thought about the

woman who gave it to her each and every time she used it, and how she imagined her face as she came. Some things were better left unsaid.

Annalise licked her lips. “I did.”

She was happy Lexie was just as excited over the vibrator as she was because it meant she would get to pass the next test. A little bit later when Lexie made her come with that very vibrator, the first thought to pop into Annalise’s head was how excited she was to tell Brinley, so they could continue with their lessons.

“You really did it already?” Brinley asked as they sat on her couch a few days later, eating the Chinese Brinley had ordered to thank Annalise for helping her study. “You really are an overachiever.”

“What’s next on the syllabus?” Annalise asked as though she didn’t look over it every day. She knew for a fact the next lesson was about surfaces. She just thought it would be hot to listen to Brinley explain it.

Brinley looked toward the ceiling as if she was trying to remember then smiled once it hit her. “Surfaces.” The smile stayed on her face as she turned to look at Annalise. “You don’t know how excited I am to have sex with you on every surface of this apartment.”

Annalise moved her eyes over all the surfaces in Brinley’s apartment. A few months ago, the thought of it would have made her anxious. Now, it just made her extremely turned on. “Where do you want to start?” Annalise asked, her body begging her to get this lesson started immediately.

“That’s not for me to decide, is it?”

Of course. How could she forget? The pre-test for this lesson was for Annalise to choose a surface and fuck Brinley on it. Okay, so maybe she was a little nervous. As usual, she had never done anything like this before.

As if reading her mind, Brinley chose that exact moment to ask, “Where’s the craziest

place you've ever had sex?"

"I, um..." How the hell do I answer this without looking completely pathetic? "I gave a guy a blow job in the bathroom of his parents' house while Nathalie stood on the other side of the door cheering me on." Yep, I totally failed.

Somehow, Brinley was able to respond to this with a simple nod as if she was considering it, not a hint of judgment on her face. "And where would you like to take me?"

Annalise looked all around, but her gaze landed on the coffee table right in front of them. She set her dinner on the arm of the couch and gave Brinley a look that she hoped conveyed that she wanted her to do the same thing. Once she did, Annalise stood and pulled Brinley up with her, then did a 180 and pushed Brinley down onto the coffee table.

"I was thinking right here," she said as she crawled on top of her and put her hand down the front of Brinley's boxer shorts. She could have slowed down, but that didn't feel right at this moment, so she moved against her while her fingers worked.

It wasn't long before Brinley was panting underneath her, and soon after that, she came. When Annalise stood back up from the coffee table, legs almost too wobbly to stay upright, she smiled proudly. That had to be the quickest she had ever made Brinley, or any girl for that matter, come. "So, what did you think?"

Brinley stayed on the coffee table and stared up at the ceiling, the look on her face one of absolute satisfaction. "First of all, great job not overthinking the surface. A lot of people would have searched for the perfect one, but that's not what it's about. People have sex on random surfaces because they are too turned on to make it anywhere else. It's all about spontaneity and convenience and you killed that. At first, I was going to dock points for the lack of nakedness, but that was actually really hot,

too. So, all in all, I don't have much to say, except you totally aced it, and once I recover, I'm going to reward you, by eating you out while you sit on the dryer."

"Don't you have clothes in there right now?"

Brinley wiggled her eyebrows. "Exactly. If those vibrations mixed with my tongue don't send you to another dimension, then I've completely failed you."

Brinley was anything but a failure so when she took Annalise on top of the dryer a few minutes later, it was a total out-of-this-world experience.

"So, what are you doing on Sunday?" Brinley asked as she leaned against the dryer, chest moving up and down due to how much she had just exerted herself.

"I don't think I have anything. Why? Do you want more help studying?"

"I'm never going to turn down a tutoring session, but I was thinking we could take advantage of the bar being closed."

The bar being closed? Oh shit. The quiz. Annalise had almost forgotten about her quiz for this lesson being bar sex, because she honestly thought it was a joke. "Isn't the bar closed because of it being Jesus' day? Feels a bit wrong to do what you're thinking when that's the case."

"I didn't know you were so religious."

Annalise laughed. "I'm definitely not. I just know enough to feel guilty about it."

Brinley stood and rested her hands on Annalise's hips. "What if we consider it Gin and Jesus without the gin? I promise by the time I'm done with you, you'll be screaming out the Lord's name."

Okay, how the hell was Annalise supposed to say no to that? Simple. She couldn't. "Fine. You win. I'm in."

"Okay, you were right," Annalise said from where she sat naked on the bar. "That was ridiculously sexy. Total religious experience. I'm pretty sure I saw Jesus." Maybe not, but she definitely saw stars.

"Oh, yeah?" Brinley stood in front of her completely naked and grabbed bottles of alcohol, quickly whipping up two drinks for them.

Annalise nodded, her mouth now completely dry. She gestured toward Brinley. "I think you really might be onto something here. Naked bartending might be my new favorite thing."

Brinley handed Annalise a glass then took a big sip out of her own. "Should we start a weekly tradition?"

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:38 pm

Annalise shook her head. As amazing as that sounded, one of them had to be the mature one right now. “I think Dale might get suspicious when all of his alcohol starts disappearing.”

“That’s true, but you know what he definitely won’t miss?”

“What’s that?”

“One shot of tequila.” Brinley nodded behind Annalise. “Lay down.”

“Are you going to...?”

“Take a tequila shot off of you? Hell yeah, I am.”

“I thought people only did that at parties as a way to show off.”

“Maybe other people do that, but I’m doing it because I want an excuse to put my mouth on you again.”

Brinley shook a trail of salt down Annalise’s stomach, poured the tequila in and around her belly button, then ran her tongue down Annalise’s body and slurped out the alcohol. As if that wasn’t enough to have her going crazy, she then licked up her center as well and sucked on her clit.

Brinley smirked and shrugged. “Sorry. I didn’t have a lime, so I had to use the next best thing.”

Annalise raised a flirtatious eyebrow. “The next best thing, huh?”

“You’re right. I guess it was a little better than a lime.”

Annalise couldn’t handle the way Brinley was looking at her as if she still wanted to eat her up. And God, that’s what Annalise wanted, too. Annalise sat up slightly and rested back against her elbows so she could get a better view of Brinley. She ran her eyes over Brinley’s perfect naked body then looked down at her own. “Maybe you should finish what you started.”

After spending much more time in the bar than was smart and completely sanitizing it, Annalise and Brinley went back up to Brinley’s apartment.

“So, now that we had a bunch of practice, do you think you’re ready for your test?” Brinley asked as she boiled pasta to make them spaghetti.

“I think so. I guess I’ll just have Lexie come over to my apartment and have my way with her in the kitchen.” Annalise enjoyed Lexie. They had already gotten together for a second time, and Lexie had greeted her by not just going down on her once, but twice in a row. It was like she was back to her pillow princess days, except this time she got to repay the favor.

Still, there was a part of her that felt weird about the whole thing. She knew she had every right to hookup with whoever she wanted whenever she wanted, but she couldn’t shake the feeling that she was somehow cheating on Brinley. It made no sense since Brinley was the one cheering her along.

“Lexie again? That’s cool.” There was something off about the tone of Brinley’s voice, but Annalise couldn’t figure out what it was.

“Yeah, I figured I probably shouldn’t have sex with a woman I’ve just met on top of my kitchen counter.” Annalise moved behind Brinley and laid her head on her shoulder. “Plus, I’m not sure if I’m going to keep pursuing women on Lit Clit . I’ve already hit the goal my grandma gave me.”

Brinley rested her head against Annalise’s as she continued to stir the pasta. “You don’t want to do it anymore?”

Annalise sighed. Right now, all she wanted was to get lost in this moment. “I’m not sure what I want.” Why does that feel like a lie?

“Well, I’m about to get even busier with studying, so unfortunately, I’m not sure how much time I’ll have for sex.”

“Will you still have time for this?” Annalise asked as she snuggled in closer. She couldn’t stand the thought of not seeing Brinley as much. She didn’t care about the sex. She just wanted time with her friend.

Brinley chuckled. “What is this exactly?”

“Food and studying together.”

“You wanna study with me? Even if I’m too tired to have sex?”

“Only if you cook for me,” Annalise joked. “I’m just kidding. Of course I want to. I’ll use any excuse to stare at that cute ass.”

“Fully clothed, of course.” Brinley smiled at her with a smile that resembled a child’s—carefree and wistful.

“Of course.”

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:38 pm

“You should definitely keep meeting up with people from the app though. You deserve to have fun.”

“Fine. If you insist,” Annalise said sarcastically. She wasn’t sure if she would actually reach out to anyone new from the app, but she would continue having sex with Lexie if she was down for it.

“Holy shit,” Lexie said as she leaned her head back against Annalise’s kitchen cabinets. She was sitting on the kitchen bar, completely nude from the waist down. “That was quite the greeting.”

Annalise couldn’t disagree with that. As soon as she had let Lexie inside the door to her apartment, she dragged her into the kitchen, directed her to the bar, and went down on her. God, it felt good to be spontaneous.

“Where did that even come from?” Lexie asked with a laugh.

Heat pooled in Annalise’s face and she was sure it was turning red. It was the guilt of knowing she had done that to Lexie solely because it was an assignment that Brinley had given to her. It was an amazing assignment and one she had thoroughly enjoyed, but it still didn’t feel right. “If I tell you, do you promise not to get mad?”

Lexie laughed once again. “Sounds cryptic.”

Why was Annalise so nervous to admit this? Also, why did she feel like she had to?

“My friend actually told me to do it.”

“Your friend is a great American.” Another laugh.

“It’s a friend that I’m also having sex with. She kind of gives me assignments when it comes to other people I have sex with. Does that bother you?”

“Bother me?” Lexie sat up straight. “Why would it bother me? The app was made for meaningless sex. I didn’t think I was the only one you were sleeping with. Plus, assignments? That’s sexy as hell. Is this friend hot? Please tell me one of the assignments is a threesome, because I’m all in.”

A threesome? Aside from the fact that she never had one and just the idea of trying to navigate so many limbs made it hard to breathe, there was another very big reason that was something she wasn’t interested in. She didn’t want to share Brinley with another woman. Of course, Brinley could do what she wanted, but the thought of watching her with another woman made her stomach hurt.

Annalise forced out a laugh. “No threesomes, unfortunately, but she does want me to roleplay.”

“Roleplay, huh?” Lexie licked her lips. “I have plenty of ideas for that.”

“Can’t wait to hear them.” Their roleplay would have to wait though. Annalise was all about following the rules and she needed to roleplay with Brinley before she could ever consider doing it with Lexie. For now, they had plenty of other ways to enjoy each other.

Chapter 16

Brinley

Brinley turned on her most charming smile as she approached the smoking hot blonde that had just sat down at the bar. “You new around here?” she asked as she threw down a coaster in front of her. “I would definitely remember a pretty face like that.”

The blonde’s smile widened. Clearly, her charm was working. “Not new to the area, but this is my first time at this particular bar.”

“Lucky me.”

The blonde lifted one perfect eyebrow. “Is that what you think?”

“Excuse me?”

“Do you think that you’re going to get lucky tonight?”

Brinley leaned down on the bar so she could get closer to this captivating woman. “I guess that depends.”

“On what?”

“Do you like what you see?”

The woman ran her eyes up and down Brinley’s body. “I do, but that’s not all it’s about, right? Sometimes things look good from the outside, but they can’t perform.”

Wow. Hot. Brinley stood back up. “I always perform.” She pointed around the bar. “You could ask any woman here, and I’m sure they’d agree.”

The blonde looked around the bar as well. “So, what you’re saying is you get around?”

“I do okay for myself.”

“Good to know.”

Apparently, that was all the woman was going to give her, but luckily Brinley didn't give up that easily. “Can I get you a drink?”

There goes that sexy eyebrow raise again. “You're not trying to get me drunk, are you?”

Brinley made a point of pouring the woman a glass of water. She winked as she sat it down. “Of course not. I want you to remember tonight.”

“It's very forward of you to assume that you've made any progress on getting me into your bed.”

“Are you saying I haven't?” God, this is fun.

“I'm not saying that. I'm just not saying you have either.”

Brinley looked down at the watch on her wrist. “I get off in twenty-five minutes, so it looks like you have some time to figure it out.”

Brinley walked away without another word and started waiting on other patrons. As she worked, she stole glances at the blonde and was happy to find she was often already watching her whenever she looked over. She gave it twenty minutes before she walked back over. She figured she might as well make her sweat a bit.

“I’m going to be heading out in about five minutes. Anything else I can get for you?”

The woman held up a finger. “Just one thing.”

“And what would that be?”

“You.”

So fucking hot. Brinley licked her lips. “I would say ‘your place or mine’ but since I live right upstairs, I’ll skip that line. I don’t want to waste any more time without you underneath me.”

Brinley looked at her watch once again. Midnight. Thank God. She turned to the computer, clocked out, then put her focus back on the blonde. “Ready?”

“I’ve been ready from the moment I walked in here.”

Brinley met the woman at the other end of the bar and took her hand, winking at Maddie before leading the woman up to her apartment.

As soon as they were inside the door, the woman began kissing her. Brinley continued the kiss as she led the two of them back to her bedroom.

“I don’t even know your name,” Brinley said as she started removing the woman’s clothes.

“Does it matter?” the woman asked while she did the same.

“Hell, no.”

Brinley pushed the woman onto her bed and they were off. Hands and mouths were

everywhere with neither of them letting up until they both came.

Brinley laughed as she laid on her back and stared up at the ceiling. “That was fucking amazing.”

“Yeah? Did I do an okay job?”

“Okay? Annalise, for a second, even I forgot that we already knew each other.”

“Right? Who knew roleplay could be so much fun?”

Brinley laughed once again. “I told you.”

“You were right.” Annalise rolled onto her side and faced Brinley. “Sorry I texted you to change the plan last minute. It would have been fun to meet once you were done working and act like two strangers from Lit Clit, but I couldn’t stop thinking about how hot it would be to act like one of the women you picked up at the bar.”

Brinley laughed even harder now, and by the look on Annalise’s face, she could tell she had no idea why what she had just said was so ironic. “Annalise...”

“What?”

“You are one of the women I picked up in the bar. You realize that, right?”

Realization swept over Annalise’s face, followed by a wide grin. “Shit. You’re right. Man, you’re really good at what you do. It’s been months and I didn’t even realize that. So, what are your plans for Thanksgiving next week?”

Brinley shrugged. “Nothing too exciting.” She didn’t know why she wasn’t telling Annalise that she was skipping out on the holidays this year. Probably because she worried Annalise would feel bad when she told her that her actual Thanksgiving plans were to work a food drive that Dale was hosting then spend the rest of the night studying. “What are you up to?”

“Just lunch at my parents’ house with my brother, his girlfriend, and my grandma. Same old, same old.”

“Sounds nice.” It really did. Brinley couldn’t remember the last time she had a nice holiday that didn’t hold family drama of some sort.

“Do you work on Friday? I could bring some leftovers and shop the Black Friday deals online while you study.”

“On one condition.”

“Anything.”

“After studying and shopping, we roleplay again.”

“Deal. Wanna do the Lit Clit one I was supposed to do according to your syllabus?”

“I’m not sure yet. I’ll think about it.”

“Well, I’m sure whatever you come up with will be perfect.”

“Duh.”

Are you back at your place yet?

Brinley looked up from her notes as soon as she heard her phone go off. It wasn’t that she was waiting for a text from Annalise. She was just waiting for an excuse to take a break. Obviously .

Yep! What’s up?

Brinley didn’t see any reason to tell Annalise she had been at her place all day, just downstairs working for part of it.

Instead of getting a text back, a call came through from Annalise instead. “Hello?” Brinley said as soon as she picked up.

“Happy Thanksgiving! How was your day?”

“It was good. How was yours?”

“Good. I’m so full though. Did you eat a ton of food? Were you at your mom’s house

or your dad's today? I don't think you actually ever told me."

"I..." It was one thing not to give Annalise all of the details but another thing completely to lie. Brinley couldn't do it. "I didn't go to either. I worked until two and have been studying ever since."

"Really? Did you at least get some turkey and mashed potatoes?"

The mention of food made Brinley's stomach growl. Damn, she was hungry. It was too bad there was nowhere open to get food from. "No, I didn't."

"I'll be right over."

"What?" Brinley figured she must have heard that wrong.

"It's Thanksgiving. I'm not letting you go through the day without any turkey and mashed potatoes. My mom gave me so many leftovers. Much more than we ever would have finished in one day. So, this is perfect. Now we have two days to work on it." Annalise suddenly went from rambling to completely silent. "That is, if you want me to come. If you don't want me to stay over tonight, I can obviously wait until tomorrow. I shouldn't have just assumed you would want me to come."

"Hey, Annalise? Breathe. Of course I want you here. There's nothing I want more."

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:38 pm

“Good,” Annalise said, her voice much softer now. “I’ll be over within two hours. Hopefully less.”

An hour and a half later, there was a knock on Brinley’s door and when she opened it, she found Annalise standing there with bags full of food and a backpack on her back.

“Sorry,” Annalise said as she walked into the apartment. “My mom doesn’t know how to do anything small.”

Brinley’s stomach growled just from the smell of the food in Annalise’s hands. “I’m very thankful for that right now.”

Annalise walked right into Brinley’s kitchen and put all of the food out on the counter. “Is there any particular reason you didn’t do anything today?” Her voice wasn’t accusatory, just curious.

“With each of my parents having multiple exes, holidays are always a mess. With all of the studying I have to do, I decided to just skip them this year.”

“Them as in...?” Annalise let her voice trail off.

“I’m not going to celebrate Christmas with them either. I already told them, and they understand. Every year, it’s a fight over what I do for Thanksgiving and then the week of Christmas is normally spent visiting with my parents, ex-step parents, current step siblings, old step siblings, half siblings. Don’t get me wrong, I do love my family. It’s just too much when I have a life-changing test to study for.”

“That sounds like a lot.” Annalise blew out a breath. “So, you’re going to spend Christmas alone?”

Brinley shrugged. She hadn’t realized how sad that sounded until she heard it out loud. “I don’t really have much of a choice. If I could celebrate the holiday on just one, maybe two, days without pissing off everyone I wasn’t seeing, I would do it. But there’s too many different family members to cram them all into Christmas Eve and Christmas, so I figured I’m better off seeing no one.”

“You should spend Christmas with my family.”

“What?” Brinley was sure she must have heard that wrong. There was no way Annalise had just asked her to spend arguably the biggest day of the year with her family.

Annalise continued putting food onto plates as if what she just said wasn’t a big deal. “Christmas Eve can be a little crazy because all of my cousins, aunts, and uncles go to my grandma’s house, but Christmas is just my immediate family and Grandma. You should come for both. I know you need to study, so I promise we’ll work in time for that as well.” Annalise finally turned around and looked at Brinley with so much sincerity shining from her eyes that Brinley thought she might start to cry. “No one should spend Christmas alone, especially not you.”

“I’ll be there.” Brinley tried to think of any way to change the subject so her emotions didn’t get the best of her. She pointed to the plates Annalise had filled with so much food; she had no idea how they would ever finish it all. “I love this whole housewife thing you have going on right now. It’s pretty sexy.”

Annalise laughed and put one of the plates into the microwave. “Don’t get too excited. Heating up food that someone else has already cooked is the extent of my kitchen skills.”

Brinley didn't care if Annalise burnt ramen noodles. She had no question she would look sexy doing it. For some reason, her mind went to Annalise in an apron. Nothing, but an apron. She was suddenly even hungrier, but not for food.

She wrapped her arms around Annalise's waist and placed a kiss on her neck. "How would you feel about roleplaying tonight?"

"What did you have in mind?"

Brinley pulled Annalise tight up against her, relishing in the way their bodies fit together so perfectly. "I'm getting home from a long day at work and my wife, i.e. you, is in the kitchen making dinner. I get all hot and bothered watching her cook and have my wicked way with her."

"That's your fantasy? It sounds like life."

"Maybe. Except I was hoping I would come home to find you in just an apron."

Annalise hummed her approval. "Do you have any scrubs?"

Strange question. "I do, actually. I volunteered at a hospital for a little bit last year and they gave me some. Why?"

"My fantasy is to watch my doctor wife come in from a long day at work, then somehow still find the energy to have her wicked way with me."

Shit. Why is this such a turn-on? Brinley never thought fantasizing about coming home to her wife would make her heart race and cause other parts of her body to react as well. "The apron is in the top right drawer. You have five minutes, and then we begin."

Brinley ran out of the kitchen and down the hall to her bedroom, tearing through her drawers until she finally found her scrubs. After staring at them for a minute, she threw the top to the side, grabbed the sexiest red bra and thong she could find, and changed into them and the scrub pants. This was a fantasy after all.

Brinley bounced around her room as she impatiently waited for five minutes to pass by. At exactly five minutes, she channeled her future doctor self and walked out of the room. She definitely wasn't prepared for what was waiting for her though. Annalise stood at the stove with her back to Brinley and ass on full display. Brinley had to lean on the counter because she thought she might faint from the sight. Annalise was pretending to stir a pot and doing it completely wrong, but that only made Brinley swoon even harder. She had a minute to stare and take in the scene before Annalise realized she was standing there.

"Oh, sweetie, you're home," Annalise said as she spun around. "How was your—?" As soon as Annalise's eyes landed on Brinley, her words stopped and her jaw dropped. "Holy shit."

"You like it?" Brinley stretched out her arms and spun in a circle.

Annalise nodded a few times before any words came out. "I love it. Did you see patients that way?"

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:38 pm

Brinley walked over to Annalise and wrapped her in her arms the same way she had earlier. “Only the ones that were as hot as you.”

“Oh, yeah? And how many was that?”

Brinley scoffed as if this was a stupid question, because fantasy or not, it was. “Zero, obviously. No one is as hot as you.”

“Very smooth.” Annalise ran her hands up Brinley’s stomach and squeezed her breasts over her bra. “I really missed you today.”

Brinley could barely breathe. “I missed you, too.” She acted as if she was looking around Annalise. “What’s for dinner?”

“My special chicken parm.”

“Mm. My favorite.”

Annalise’s hands now moved back down Brinley’s body and squeezed her ass. “I know. That’s why I made it. My sexy doctor wife deserves a good meal when she gets home.”

“Mm. Is that all I deserve?”

Annalise lightly bit her ear before whispering into it and causing goosebumps to pop up over Brinley’s whole body. “I don’t know. You tell me.”

Before they started, Brinley had every intention of fucking Annalise hard and fast right there in the kitchen, but something had changed. Now she wanted to be slow and sensual. She wanted to worship Annalise and show her just how much... this is just roleplay, Brinley... How much she cared about her.

“How 'bout I show you?” Brinley asked before taking Annalise’s hand and leading her back to the bedroom, the one that belonged to the two of them in this fantasy. A chill ran down her spine at the thought.

Once in the room, they slowly removed what little clothes they were wearing. As soon as they were in the bed, Brinley brought her body on top of Annalise’s. Instead of touching her with her hands, she took in every spot their bare skin touched. Annalise’s legs entangled with hers. Breast to breast. Hearts beating as one. Brinley could have spent the whole night lost in this moment, but she also wanted more.

“Can we try something different tonight?” she asked softly.

Annalise swallowed hard. “What do you have in mind?”

“Do you trust me?”

“With my life.”

Brinley adjusted herself to bring her center to Annalise’s. As soon as they came together, Annalise gasped. Her eyes went wide for a split second before she closed them and bit her bottom lip. It was the most beautiful thing Brinley had ever seen. “Annalise, I...” Just a fantasy. “Love being your wife.”

Annalise’s lips tilted into a smile and her cheeks turned the slightest bit red as her eyes slowly opened back up. For a few very intense seconds, she stared at Brinley without saying a word. When she finally spoke, her words were soft but powerful.

“I’m so happy I get to spend forever with you.”

There were no words to describe what she was feeling at that moment, so Brinley brought her body even closer to Annalise’s and moved against her. She pushed into her as if she was trying to crawl inside of her and stay there forever, because right now, that was all she really wanted. The harder she pushed her body into Annalise, the more Annalise’s body rose to meet her. They kept this rhythm going until they came at the exact same time. It was perfect.

Reality hit Brinley like a ton of bricks. Annalise wasn’t just her student. She wasn’t just a friend she had sex with. She was the woman that Brinley was falling head over heels for, and she couldn’t stop herself if she tried. As if that wasn’t scary enough for someone who swore off relationships years ago, just a few minutes ago, she had agreed to spend Christmas together.

Shit.

Chapter 17

Annalise

Annalise paced the floor of her apartment as she waited for Nathalie to arrive. After spending all morning obsessing over Brinley coming later in the day to spend Christmas Eve and Christmas with her family, she couldn’t take it anymore. Everything was piling up and her questions were begging to be answered. In a moment of desperation, she had told Nathalie that she needed to talk, and Nathalie jumped on that opportunity, telling her she’d be right over.

She was nervous to put everything that was going on inside of her out into the open, but she needed to. Even though she knew it was coming, the knock on her door caused her to jump. She composed herself as much as possible then yelled for

Nathalie to come in.

“You look like shit,” Nathalie said after taking one look at Annalise.

Not a great start. Annalise looked down at her outfit, which was tight jeans and a nice Christmas sweater and ran a hand through the hair she had taken hours on . Where did I go wrong?

“Oh, I’m not talking physically,” Nathalie said, interrupting her internal panic. “You look fucking hot. I hope you told Brinley to get here a while before you actually have to be at your grandma’s, because she’s going to rip your clothes off. No question. You just look like you’re going to be sick, or maybe you already were. I guess what I should have said was, ‘Are you okay?’”

Annalise shook her head. Rip the bandaid off. “I think... I’m pretty sure... like almost positive... but I don’t know, it’s hard to say for sure, but that might just be because I’m afraid to say it out loud. Because it’s big. Really big. I think... no.... I am bisexual.”

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:38 pm

The room was silent for just a second before Nathalie burst into laughter. “Duh.”

Annalise didn’t say anything. Just stood there completely dumbfounded. Sure, she’d had a lot of sex with women these past few months, but like Brinley said, that could mean so many different things. Sexuality was fluid.

As soon as Nathalie took a good look at Annalise’s face, she stopped laughing. She closed the space between them and took Annalise’s hand. “Sorry, babe. I don’t mean to laugh. I’m so happy that you finally came to this realization.”

“Finally?”

“Girl, how long have we been friends? I’ve known you liked girls since we were in middle school.”

“But we used to talk about guys all the time. I had crushes and boyfriends.”

“And I never doubted that any of that was real. I always knew you liked guys , too. You just never realized that the way your eyes lit up when you talked about having a crush on a certain guy was the same way they lit up when there was a new girl in our class or you made a new female friend . I mean, come on, if I wasn’t so secure in how awesome I am, I would have gotten so jealous of how excited you got over these friendships.”

Annalise tried to wrap her mind around what Nathalie was saying. First her ex-boyfriend said he knew the whole time they were dating. Now her best friend is saying she always knew. “I’m confused.”

“Do you remember Odette Bard?”

Annalise only had to wrack her brain for a few seconds to remember who that was, which was strange since she hadn't even been around very long. “Of course. Why?”

“She went to school with us for half a year. She moved to town right after Christmas in sixth grade then was gone as soon as summer came. Yet, it took you no time at all to remember her.”

“I don't get it. You remember her, too.”

Nathalie's smile widened. “Of course I do. You know why? Because you were obsessed. I forget who you were dating at the time, but you literally dumped him a week after Odette moved here because you, and I quote, ‘needed to dedicate time to the new girl.’ You spent the rest of the school year doing everything you could to make her feel comfortable. You were with her all the time. Then, when the end of the school year came and she told us her dad's job was transferring him again, you had a complete meltdown. You spent the whole first month of summer crying over how much you missed her. The only reason you finally stopped is because Trey Everhart told you he liked you.”

All of those memories flooded back over Annalise, and it all made so much more sense. How did she not see this before? It was right in front of her the whole time.

She wished figuring out that she was bisexual solved all of the questions swirling around in her head, but that was just the beginning. There was so much more she was questioning. Liking girls was one thing. Having sex with them was another. But dating them? Was that something she wanted? And if it was, what did it mean for her and Brinley—the woman who had no interest in relationships?

“How did you know you wanted to be with Boden for something other than...?”

“His perfect dick?” Nathalie finished as Annalise searched for the words.

Annalise cringed. “Ew, come on. But yeah, sure.”

“As you had the pleasure of witnessing firsthand as my bestie, Boden was never supposed to be my boyfriend. He was hot and great in bed, and I fucking loved having sex with him. Still do, even if I fantasize about having one of the women from your app teach him how to go down on me better.” She waved a hand in the air. “That’s beside the point. Anyway, after months and months of him pursuing me and me insisting I just wanted to be fucked down, we were watching a movie one night and he put his arm around me and held me close. We both started laughing at the same part, and I don’t know. I just knew. I said to myself at that moment, ‘This is all I want for the rest of my life.’” Nathalie pointed a finger at Annalise, her expression suddenly becoming serious. “You share that with anyone, especially Boden, I’ll kill you.”

“You never told him?”

“Hell, no. I waited a few months after that to even admit that I wanted to date him. I had this irrational fear that if we started dating, the sex would go downhill.” Nathalie squeezed Annalise’s hand again. “Anyway, have you ever felt that way with someone before?”

Annalise’s head was spinning. “That’s where it gets confusing. I felt that way with Grant. I loved spending time with him. I was comfortable. I think I could have been happy spending my life with him. But we both agreed, we’re better off as friends.”

Nathalie shook her head. “You didn’t feel that way with Grant though. He’s just the security blanket you’re using as an excuse. I’ll admit that you recently unlocked a new, much more wild, side to yourself—which I’m really proud of, by the way—but it wasn’t there when you were with Grant. From the time we were in college, you

were talking about settling down and starting a family, yet when Grant wanted that, you suddenly didn't. I could n't have cared less about settling down, then this asshole comes along and wifes me up after just two years together. See the difference?"

When Annalise nodded, Nathalie smiled proudly. "Now, answer my question honestly. Have you ever felt that way with anyone? Maybe recently?"

It wasn't the question that scared Annalise. It was the answer. She had felt that way multiple times with Brinley, the worst being when they roleplayed their future fake life together. It was everything Annalise never knew she had always dreamed of. It was the life she wanted—a sexy partner she couldn't get enough of, days spent laughing with her best friend, doing mundane things together like studying or cooking dinner. She wanted it all. But the problem was, Brinley didn't. She had made that very clear from the beginning.

And then there was Lexie, who she still met up with regularly to have sex. Brinley encouraged it, and while that wasn't the only reason Annalise did it—Lexie was hot and fun and unlike her other hookups, they actually talked, and Annalise liked the person she was—it certainly helped.

"I'm still having sex with other women."

Nathalie rolled her eyes at this answer. "First of all, you're having sex with one other woman. I know for a fact you don't go on Lit Clit anymore. I stole your phone at the last Wine Wednesday. You deleted the app. Secondly, that's not what I asked."

Annalise put her face in her hands and groaned. "Come on, Nathalie, what love story starts with one woman teaching the other how to have sex with women?"

"The best one, honestly. I'd read that book in a heartbeat. Instant bestseller."

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:38 pm

“I’m serious.” Annalise couldn’t help the smile that came to her face as she playfully slapped her best friend. Nathalie was ridiculous, but there was no one else like her. She also knew Annalise better than anyone else, which meant Annalise didn’t have to say the words for Nathalie to know the truth. She dropped her eyes to the floor as she thought about the real issue holding her back. “It doesn’t matter how I feel. Brinley doesn’t want a relationship. I need to respect that.”

“Correction. She didn’t want a relationship. How do you know that hasn’t changed?”

“I don’t, but—”

Nathalie raised a hand to stop her. “And you won’t unless you ask. Talk to her. Tell her how you feel.”

“I’m scared.” Annalise’s voice was soft and vulnerable. It was the sound of the truth finally coming out. “I’m scared of things changing. Brinley isn’t just a woman I have sex with. She’s become one of my best friends. If she doesn’t feel the same, I’m worried it will ruin that. I don’t want to lose her.”

“But what if you end up losing more by not telling her how you feel?”

“When did you become such a romantic?” Annalise asked with a laugh. This was certainly a side of her best friend that she wasn’t used to seeing.

“I don’t know, but I hate it, so you need to talk to her so it stops.”

“I’ll think about it. This is big for me. This is the first time I admitted out loud that

I'm bisexual. I need to take things one day at a time. Plus, it's less than a month until she takes the MCATs. There's no way I'm saying anything before that. It wouldn't be fair."

"That makes sense. I'll accept that." Nathalie held her arms out toward Annalise. "Now can we hug and both forget about the disgusting lovey words that left my mouth today?"

Annalise accepted the hug and melted into Nathalie's arms. No matter what happened, at least she always had a safe place to land with her best friend.

Their moment was interrupted by the sound of one text, then another, coming through on Annalise's phone. The first one was from Brinley letting her know that she was on her way, and the other one was from Lexie wishing her a Merry Christmas Eve and telling her she hoped she had a nice time with her family.

Nathalie whistled as she looked over Annalise's shoulder at her phone. "Both women texting you? Wow. Guess I better let you go." She pointed at Annalise as she backed away toward her door. "You better tell those two that they'll never be the number one woman in your heart. That spot belongs to me. Don't forget it, bitch."

As soon as Nathalie was out the door, Annalise ran to the bathroom to continue getting ready. No matter what happened between them, Brinley spending Christmas with her was a big deal, and she wanted to look her best.

After thirty minutes, she finally felt satisfied with her hair, make up, and outfit. She looked in the full-length mirror in her room and took in the red form-fitting sweater dress she had paired with black leggings and a pair of gray boots. She teased her curls once more and smiled as she did so. She already knew Brinley was going to love this outfit and that fact caused a flutter in her chest.

The fluttering got worse when there was a knock on the door. All of the pep talks couldn't have prepared her for what was waiting on the other side of the door. There stood Brinley, hair falling perfectly to one side, red pants, green sweater—modest enough for a family event, low cut enough to make Annalise's mouth water—and in her hand, a single red rose.

She held the rose out toward Annalise. “Just a little thank you for letting me come.” She smiled sweetly when Annalise took the rose and smelled it, all of her senses heightened as she took in the wonderful aroma.

“It's beautiful, Brinley.”

“Second most beautiful thing I've seen all day,” Brinley said with a wink.

Annalise giggled like a giddy teenager with a crush, which, minus the teenager part, was exactly what she was. “That was so cheesy.” Yet, I'm swooning. “Very off-brand for you.”

Brinley chuckled then wrapped her arms around Annalise's waist and backed the two of them into her apartment. “You're right. How's this? Roses are pretty, but you're fucking hot.”

“Hm, not quite as poetic.”

Brinley's hands stayed on Annalise as she bent down to kiss her neck. “Okay. I've got it. Roses are red, lemons are sour. Spread your legs and give me an hour.”

Annalise knew it was supposed to be a joke, but just the thought of Brinley between her legs had her extremely turned on. So much so that she couldn't focus on anything else. She had no other choice but to scratch the itch that Brinley had created. “We've got 15 minutes.”

Brinley laughed against Annalise's neck as she continued to kiss her. "I can work with that."

Exactly thirteen minutes later, Annalise stood in front of the mirror in her bathroom rubbing at her neck as if that was going to somehow take the big purple mark away. "I know you said you were going to change the fact that I've never had a visible hickey, but did you really need to do it before we were meeting up with my family?"

"Sorry. The way you said ' we've got 15 minutes,' was so fucking hot, I couldn't help myself."

She wasn't wrong. Everything that had happened since Brinley entered her apartment was extremely hot. The truth was, Annalise knew with how hard Brinley was sucking on her neck that it would leave a mark. But how was she supposed to tell her to stop? That mouth on her neck mixed with two very determined fingers moving in and out of her was pure ecstasy. And honestly, Annalise thought it was hot that Brinley had left her mark on her. If she wasn't about to be surrounded by her whole family, she would wear that mark proudly.

Brinley rested her chin on Annalise's shoulder and smiled that smile that could get her out of any and all trouble. "At least after the dickey, you are an expert on covering up a bruise."

Annalise rolled her eyes but couldn't suppress her smile. "I still can't believe you keep calling it a dickey."

Page 61

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:38 pm

“Your grandma is a very smart woman.” Brinley crinkled up her nose in a way that was ridiculously cute. “Is the rest of your family as crazy as her?”

“No one is like my grandma, but everyone is crazy in their own way.”

“Any tricks to impressing them?”

The fact that Brinley wanted to impress them made Annalise melt. “Just be yourself and they’ll love you.”

Just like... No. Chill out, heart.

Chapter 18

Brinley

Brinley wiped her sweaty palms on her pants as she and Annalise approached Annalise’s grandma’s house. She couldn’t remember a time when she was this nervous. She prided herself in keeping her cool in any and every situation life threw at her. It was one of the reasons Dale loved having her work at the bar. Nothing threw her off. But this... Christmas spent with the family of the woman she shouldn’t be, but very much was, falling for... This had gotten the best of her.

She had already made her decision about Annalise. In a few weeks, after her MCATs were over, she would tell her how she felt. She had no idea what to expect and it scared the shit out of her. Annalise wasn’t out. She might not have any interest in an actual relationship with another woman. But Brinley wasn’t sure what scared her

more—Annalise not wanting her or Annalise being interested in the two of them being more. She had spent her life watching relationship after relationship fall apart. If she got the chance to be something more with Annalise and then lost it? Shit, that could break her. What did this woman do to her? She wasn't like this before Annalise walked into her bar. She loved it and hated it all at once.

“There you two are.”

Brinley returned from her thoughts to find Annalise's grandma walking toward them. “I had a feeling you two would be the last ones here.” When her eyes landed on Annalise's neck, Brinley cringed internally and prayed she didn't notice what she thought they had covered up very well. “And now I can see why.”

Shit.

As if reading her mind, Annalise's grandma waved a hand at her. “Don't you worry, dear. The coverup is doing its job. None of these prudes will notice a thing.”

Normally, this would have cracked Brinley up, but she was way too nervous for that, so all she could do was let out the breath she had been holding.

“Let me introduce you to everyone,” Annalise said with a squeeze of her hand.

They made their way through aunts, uncles, and cousins, stopping to talk to each for a few minutes before moving on. They were all so nice that Brinley's anxiety started to float away.

That was until Annalise said, “There you are. I was wondering where you all got to,” and Brinley looked ahead of them to see three people who had an uncanny resemblance to the woman standing next to her.

Seriously. If they weren't all looking at her with warm smiles, it would be almost creepy how perfect this blue-eyed, blonde-haired family was. Brinley felt like she stuck out like a sore thumb.

The older man, whose blonde hair was a little thinner, stuck his hand out. "You must be Brinley. I can't tell you how great it is to meet you. Every time the family gets together, my daughter sings your praises. I hear you're going to be a doctor."

Annalise talks about her? To her family? That was news to Brinley. She wondered what she told them. Clearly, it wasn't about how they fucked like animals every chance they got. Her body warmed at the thought. Not now, Brinley. Brinley shrugged as she accepted the man's handshake and offered him her most charming smile. "That's the goal."

"With all of the studying you girls have been doing, I don't think you'll have any trouble." He winked, but Brinley could tell it was just a boomer thing and not because he actually knew what they had been doing aside from studying.

"Thank you, sir. I really appreciate it."

Annalise's dad scoffed. "Enough of that sir nonsense. Call me Kirk. If you haven't figured it out by now, I'm Annalise's old man."

Brinley looked between the two of them and chuckled. "I can tell."

For how much Annalise looked like her dad, she also looked just like her mom as well, except that her mom's hair stopped above her shoulders and was a darker shade of blonde. Brinley stuck her hand out toward the woman. "And it's nice to meet you as well, Mrs. Finch."

"I'm not one for formalities either," the woman said as she accepted Brinley's

handshake. “It’s Brenda.”

“And I’m Dalton.” The knowing smile on Annalise’s brother’s face told Brinley that he knew exactly who she was, even if Annalise hadn’t shared it with him. “You’ll meet my girlfriend, Shelby, tomorrow. She’s with her family tonight.” Dalton looked between Brinley and Annalise before his eyes stayed on his sister. “You’re staying at Mom and Dad’s tonight, right?”

Annalise laughed. “Why would I? My apartment is right down the street.”

Dalton crossed his arms over his chest. He was much bulkier than his petite sister. “Because I’m staying there.”

“And...?”

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:38 pm

“And I’m a thirty-two-year-old man. I don’t want to stay alone at my parents’ house. It’s weird.”

“Well, thirty-two-year-old man, why don’t you drive back to your house then?”

Dalton shook the beer can he was holding. “Can’t.”

Brenda clapped her hands together. “I would love it if all of you kids stayed at the house. I bought matching pajamas again. Brinley, my mother told me you were around the same size as Annalise. I hope that’s right.”

“Mom, we’re n—”

Brinley put her hand up to stop Annalise. “We would love to.” This woman bought her fucking pajamas. How could she say no?

“Merry Christmas, beautiful,” Annalise said, waking Brinley with a kiss on the cheek.

Brinley’s heart lit up. I’m pretty sure life doesn’t get better than this . Shit. Shit. Shit. Brinley looked around Annalise’s childhood bedroom. Between the Santa PJs Brenda had proudly handed her and the way she and Annalise made out for hours, not willing to go further with her parents down the hall, she was too distracted to take a good look at it the night before.

Posters covered the walls, the perfect mix of both male and female celebrities

represented. “Quite the setup you have here,” Brinley joked.

Annalise laughed and motioned around the room. “Welcome to the life of a closeted bisexual.”

The whole world seemed to stop from Annalise’s words. A soft humming sounded in Brinley’s ears almost as if she was underwater, keeping her from hearing what was going on around her. Bisexual? Did Annalise just come out to me? Does this mean...? She took a deep breath. Chill the fuck out, Brinley. You can’t let anything get in the way of this exam, especially not a broken heart from rejection.

“Oh, shit. I didn’t tell you, did I?” Annalise laughed nervously. “Surprise.”

Brinley opened her mouth to congratulate Annalise and get more details on what had finally made her come to this revelation, but she was interrupted by Kirk’s voice shouting from downstairs. “Guess who came!”

Annalise rolled her eyes. “Definitely not me since we slept here last night.”

Brinley burst into laughter. She was so proud of the woman Annalise had grown into these past few months. “You sound like me. I must be rubbing off on you.”

“I wish you would rub off on me.”

“Two for two.” Unable to resist, Brinley leaned over and gave Annalise a kiss on the cheek. “Later. I promise.”

“What are you going to do to me later?”

So many ideas popped into Brinley’s head. She wanted to do them all... forever. Before she could think of something witty to say back, Kirk shouted again. “Santa

Claus!”

“I guess we better get down there, huh?” Brinley would have been happy to stay in bed with Annalise all day, but she wanted to make a good impression on Annalise’s parents and staying in bed didn’t seem like the way to do that.

“Do we really have to?”

“Obviously, babe. Santa came.”

Annalise’s eyes went wide and she stared at Brinley for what felt like hours, unmoving except for her throat as she swallowed hard. “You just called me babe. I think that’s the first time you’ve done that when you weren’t trying to get me into bed or already had me there. ”

Shit . Brinley was letting herself get carried away now. Just because Annalise admitted that she likes women, doesn’t mean she likes Brinley that way. Brinley looked down and ran a hand over the sheet, desperate to do anything to take some of the heaviness out of this moment. “Technically, I do have you in bed right now.”

Annalise playfully shoved Brinley, a smile blossoming across her face once again. “You know what I mean.”

“Yeah, I know. I’m sorry. I shouldn’t have said that.”

Annalise quickly grabbed a hold of Brinley’s hand and squeezed it. “No, don’t apologize. I liked it. I really liked it.”

The sincerity in Annalise’s voice was too much for Brinley to handle. She needed to either tell her how she felt or rip her clothes off. Since she couldn’t actually do either of those things, she jumped out of the bed instead. She held a hand out toward

Annalise. “Should we go see what Santa brought?”

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:38 pm

Brinley had been joking about Santa bringing presents, but it turned out the Finches didn't do anything halfway. Right beside the piles of presents for Annalise, Dalton, and Shelby, was a pile for her as well.

She had no idea how these people who were just meeting her had somehow come up with presents for her, but each one she opened was absolutely perfect. Most of them were things for school—pencils, pens, highlighters, enough notebooks to last her until graduation. There were also two bottles of wine from Annalise's grandma, a nice bottle of whiskey and a glass to go with it from her dad, and a new pair of scrubs. She wasn't sure if Annalise had anything to do with that one, but it didn't stop them from sharing a secret, scorching smile when she opened it.

Brinley felt bad that the only thing she brought was alcohol and a pie, but Annalise's parents both insisted that was more than enough.

After they were done with gifts, Brenda announced it was time for their yearly family picture. She handed her phone to Annalise's grandma. "Mom, since you refused to wear the pajamas once again this year, you have won the role of photographer."

Annalise's grandma pointed around the room. "I'd rather sit out of a picture than embarrass myself by wearing that shit." She pointed directly at Brinley. "I'm especially disappointed with you."

Brinley put a hand on her chest in mock offense. "And to think, I was just going to be nice and offer to take the picture."

"Absolutely not," Kirk said, his voice firm, but sweet. "Everyone who wears the

pajamas gets in this picture.”

“Are... are you sure?” Don’t cry. Don’t cry.

“Of course.” Brenda waved a hand at her. “Get over here.”

Brinley did as she was told and took the spot right between Annalise and her mom. When both women wrapped an arm around her, a lump formed in Brinley’s throat and she had to remind herself once again not to cry. For a moment once the picture was taken, Annalise’s hand remained at Brinley’s side. She squeezed and winked before pulling it away.

It turned out the Finches always did a Christmas brunch, so Dalton and Shelby could then spend the rest of the day with her family. When Kirk announced he was going to start cooking, Brinley asked if she could help, and Annalise insisted her dad let Brinley make the bacon since she claimed it’s the best she’s ever had. Kirk agreed, and he and Brinley went to the kitchen and cooked side by side. As they cooked, Brinley opened the whiskey he had bought her and they both had a glass. Brinley didn’t have a bad relationship with her dad, but it was nothing like this, so she cherished the moment. They talked about everything from sports to liquor to the schools Brinley was the most interested in applying to. Brinley told him her hope was to stay in the Philadelphia area and the way Kirk said he was sure that would make Annalise happy sounded like something a dad would say to his daughter’s significant other.

Just a few more weeks. Then you’ll know, she reminded herself.

Once the food was done, they all sat down to eat. During the meal, most of the focus was on Brinley, each family member, even Shelby, taking time to ask her questions that they actually seemed to care to know the answers to. By the end of the meal, her heart was filled with so much love for this whole family, she thought it might burst.

After they were done eating, Dalton and Shelby said their goodbyes and headed out. Brenda said she would clear and clean the dishes and ordered everyone else to go relax in the living room. Brinley couldn't let her clean up alone after they welcomed her in as if she was part of the family, so she insisted on helping. Annalise looked between her mom and Brinley and it appeared as if she was going to offer to help as well, but her grandma pulled her out of the room before she could.

As soon as everyone was gone, Brinley felt the weight of the situation she had just walked herself into. She was alone with the mother of the woman she had fallen head over heels for. Play it cool.

"So, what made you want to go into medicine?" Brenda asked while they cleared the dishes from the table.

"My grandma lost a long battle with cancer almost three years ago. She was my best friend, so I spent a lot of time at the hospital with her at the end of her life. It's not so much the medical part that convinced me but being able to be a light to people who are going through a tough time. Whether it's a simple cold, or a life-threatening disease, I don't know too many people who are happy to go to the doctor. I want to give them a reason to smile."

Brenda put the dishes she was holding into the sink then leaned down on the counter, her own smile growing from Brinley's words. "That's beautiful. I love that. No wonder my daughter likes you so much."

Brinley's heart beat faster as she considered all the ways Brenda could have meant that. She wanted to ask, but that didn't seem appropriate, so she simply smiled in return. "You've raised a wonderful daughter."

Brenda scrunched up her nose in a way that reminded Brinley of Annalise. "She's alright, I guess." She pointed to the sink. "I wash, you dry?"

Brinley nodded and brought over the last of the dishes. As they cleaned, they talked more about medical school and Brinley's plans for the future. Talking to Annalise's mom wasn't like talking to most grownups. It felt like she was talking to an old friend, someone who actually cared what she had to say. She was so captivated by the conversation, she didn't even notice Annalise walk into the room until she was standing right beside her.

She pointed her thumb back toward the room she had just come from. "My grandma is insisting you open the bottle of wine she got you and have a glass with her. I can help with the rest of the dishes."

Brinley handed Annalise the dish she was currently drying and leaned in to kiss her before remembering where they were and pulling back. It hurt her to do it, but she didn't have a choice. Annalise wasn't her girlfriend. Brinley wasn't even sure if she was out to her family yet. In a few more weeks, she would tell Annalise how she felt and if things went well, she could kiss her anytime she wanted.

She hoped and prayed that was the case because now she wasn't only falling for Annalise. She had fallen for the whole damn Finch family.

Fucking hell. What have I done?

Chapter 19

Annalise

Annalise could feel her mom's eyes on her as she dried the dishes. Sweat gathered on her neck as she waited what felt like hours for her mom to say something. "I really like Brinley," she said finally.

Annalise took a deep breath then closed her eyes and blew it out. If she didn't say this

now, she was afraid she never would and she needed to get it out. It's not that she actually thought her family would care about her sexuality, but good or bad, it would change things, and that fact scared her more than most things. "Mom, I'm bisexual."

Her mom chuckled lightly as she continued to scrub dishes. "I kind of figured when you brought your girlfriend to Christmas."

Page 64

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:38 pm

What? More sweat, this time her erratic heart beat joining in as well. “Brinley’s, um, she’s not my girlfriend.”

A small smile played on her mom’s lips. “But you want her to be, don’t you?”

“Yes.” Annalise giggled like a small child. “God, yes. More than anything in the world. Are... are you okay with that?”

“Like I said, I really like Brinley. She’s exactly the type of person I always pictured you with.”

“Except female.” Annalise snorted.

“Male... female... that part was up in the air.”

“What do you mean?”

Her mom stopped washing the dishes and turned toward her. “Honey, I’ve known you liked girls since sixth grade. Does the name Odette Bard ring a bell?”

Annalise cackled. Seriously? “Am I the only one who didn’t realize this?”

“Maybe.” Her mom smirked and went back to cleaning the dishes. “But can we talk about the more important part here?”

“What’s that?”

“Brinley. Does she know how you feel? Have you talked to her?”

“Not yet. I’m scared.” Annalise hated how fragile her voice sounded, but she couldn’t help it.

“Scared of what?”

“Her not feeling the same way.”

Now it was Annalise’s mom who cackled. “Are we talking about the same girl? Because there’s no way you could ever convince me that the girl who was just helping me with the dishes isn’t madly in love with you.”

“Okay, now I know you’re just being ridiculous. Even if she likes me, there’s no way she loves me. That’s crazy.” Still, the sound of that word, and the thought of Brinley feeling that way about her made Annalise’s heart soar. Love. She liked the sound of that.

Her mom tapped her temple. “Mothers always know. Trust me.”

Annalise wanted to trust her, but believing her would only make it that much harder if the words weren’t true. And how could they be? Brinley had spent her life avoiding relationships. There’s no way she had let herself fall in love with Annalise, even if Annalise was pretty sure... Nope. Not thinking about this now. If I think about it too much right now, I’ll go crazy waiting for her test to be over.

As they finished up the rest of the dishes, they moved from the topic of Brinley and made small talk instead, which Annalise was thankful for. When they finally went back into the family room, they found her grandma, dad, and Brinley in the middle of an intense game of poker.

Still, Brinley's eyes immediately found Annalise's. "You should have warned me these two are card sharks. Soon, I'm not going to have any money left."

Annalise sat down beside Brinley and snaked an arm around her waist, a new level of confidence instilled in her after the talk with her mom. "Watch out for my grandma. She cheats."

"I knew it." Brinley threw her cards onto the floor and laughed. "Every time you acted like you were having a sudden coughing fit, you were totally looking at my cards."

Annalise's grandma threw a hand onto her chest as if she was offended by Brinley's accusation. "I can't believe you would say such a thing about an old woman."

Watching Brinley interact with her family only made Annalise's desire to get her alone even worse. She leaned in close enough so only Brinley could hear and whispered in her ear. "You want to get out of here soon?"

Brinley bristled at the question, but asked if they could spend a little more time with Annalise's family.

It turned out a little more time actually meant three hours, and by the time they got back to Annalise's apartment, she had lost all self-control. As soon as the door was shut behind them, Annalise pushed Brinley back up against it and had sex with her right there.

"Wow. Merry Christmas to me," Brinley said as they both struggled to catch their breath. "Speaking of which, I got you a little something."

"I got you a little something too, but please don't get excited because it's actually kind of lame." Annalise had questioned the idea she came up with multiple times, but

she hoped Brinley at least appreciated the thought behind it. She honestly wasn't sure.

“Whatever it is, I know I'll love it.” Brinley gave her a quick kiss on the lips then slipped past her and went into her room. When she came back out a minute later, she was carrying a small gift bag. “It's nothing big, but when I saw it, I immediately thought of you.”

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:38 pm

Annalise took the bag and pulled out tissue paper, followed by what looked like a jewelry box. When she opened the box, she gasped. Inside was the most gorgeous necklace she had ever seen. Annalise ran her hand over the stone. “That’s my—”

“Your birthstone, I know. That’s why I thought of you. Well, that and the fact that it’s beautiful.”

Annalise shook her head. “It’s too much. This couldn’t have been cheap.”

Brinley waved her hand as if it was no big deal. “This is why I work all the time.”

“No, you work all the time to have money for medical school, not to waste it on me.”

“Nothing could ever be wasted on you. Plus, now whenever you wear it, you’ll think about me.”

Annalise’s heart felt like it might beat right out of her chest. Why is she so perfect? “I don’t need a piece of jewelry for that, trust me.” Annalise’s heart beat even faster when she remembered the gift she got Brinley—a gift that didn’t even come close to comparing to this necklace.

She went to the drawer where she had hidden the card and pulled it out then practically shoved it at Brinley. “This is dumb. I’m not sure why I thought it was a good gift. I can get you something else. I’m not even sure if this is something you’ll actually be interested in.”

Brinley gave her a warm smile that made her insides turn to mush. “I’m sure

whatever it is, I'm going to love it."

Annalise held her breath while Brinley read what she wrote in the card. When Brinley looked back up at her, her eyes were shiny almost as if tears were threatening to fall. "You took off work the whole week leading up to my test? Just so you could take care of me?"

"Yeah. Whatever you need, I can do. I don't want to bother you, obviously. I know you're going to be spending every minute studying, so if you don't want me there at all, I understand. We both know I can't cook, but I thought I could at least pick up meals and bring them to you."

"You don't know how good not having to worry about cooking sounds. I'm sure that even microwaving something is going to feel like a chore between all of my studying."

Annalise nodded, her anxiety easing up a bit. Maybe this wasn't the worst gift in the world. "Cool. I can do that and anything else you need. That week is completely dedicated to you. I have nothing else planned so I'm good to come and go whenever you want me to."

"Or you could just stay." Brinley's voice was so soft, Annalise was sure she must have misheard her.

"You want me to stay? For the whole week?"

Brinley shrugged, looking more unsure than Annalise had ever seen her. "You don't have to. I just thought that would be easier than running back and forth."

"Do you want me to?"

Brinley's lips split into the softest smile. "I do. It'd be great to have company when I feel like I'm going crazy. I have to warn you that I'm sure I won't be the easiest to deal with though. I'm going to be a combination of caffeine, takeout food, lack of sleep, and nerves all bundled into one. It's going to be a side you've never seen and definitely not a good one."

"I'm sure I'll like any side of you." You don't know how much.

"Okay, but don't say I didn't warn you."

Spending the week with Brinley, doing nothing but taking care of her while she studied, only made Annalise like her more. Every night so far, Brinley had either passed out on top of her books or fallen asleep sitting up. Annalise would kiss her cheek and gently rock her awake, and a half-asleep Brinley would insist she wasn't even tired and needed to keep studying. After a little bit of coaxing, Annalise was always able to get her into bed. She would fall in and snuggle up against Annalise, and Annalise would watch her sleep until her own eyes became heavy.

Wednesday night was the first night Annalise stayed over that Brinley actually chose to go to bed, but only because she read that two nights before an exam was the most important night of sleep. On Thursday morning, they woke up early and made breakfast together. Annalise offered to pick up food like she had done every other morning, but Brinley insisted on cooking, which turned into Brinley trying to teach Annalise the art of frying the perfect piece of bacon and Annalise burning half the batch. Brinley ate the burnt pieces and tried to act like she was enjoying them, but Annalise could tell she wasn't.

After breakfast, Brinley reviewed answers from a practice test she had taken the day before while Annalise read another one of the books she had suggested. By noon,

Brinley decided she had done as much as she possibly could and needed to relax.

“What do you want to do the rest of the day?” Annalise asked as they sat on the couch, Brinley’s arm around her shoulder as Annalise leaned against her as if this was something they had been doing for years.

“Nap, watch movies, and not think about the huge life-changing test I’m taking tomorrow.”

“Deal.”

They spent the rest of the day on the couch watching movie after movie, each of them dozing at different times. It didn’t matter if one, neither, or both of them were sleeping. They never once stopped holding each other close. Annalise knew exactly what Nathalie meant when she said, ‘This is all I want for the rest of my life,’ because that’s exactly how Annalise felt. The two of them didn’t have sex all week, and that didn’t matter at all. Having sex with Brinley was absolutely amazing, but she was just as happy snuggled up on the couch with her.

“You know, you don’t have to drive me to the test,” Brinley said as she got ready the next morning. “You’ve done so much for me. You deserve to go home and take care of yourself.”

“And miss out on helping you celebrate? Never!”

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:38 pm

Brinley laughed. “My celebration is most likely going to involve food and watching the inside of my eyelids. Not very exciting.”

Annalise walked over to Brinley and wrapped her arms around her, placing a quick kiss on her cheek as she did. “Hm, I don’t know. That sounds pretty damn great to me.”

“You’re crazy,” Brinley said with another laugh.

Crazy about you. “What can I say? When you’re as old as me, boring is exciting.”

“Whatever. At least promise me you’ll find a way to pamper yourself today. Take a bath or something.”

A bath sounded amazing, but when Annalise opened her mouth to say that, Brinley put up a hand to stop her. “Actually, I don’t want to know if you’re going to get a bath. Then all I’ll be able to think about during my test is you naked.”

“You mean you’re not going to think about that anyway?”

Brinley sighed as if this wasn’t a joke. “I’m going to try my damndest not to. It’s going to be fucking hard though, trust me. It’s been way too long since I saw you naked.”

Twelve days, but who was counting? Definitely not me.

Brinley looked down at her phone then took a deep breath and slowly blew it out.

“It’s time. Let’s go.”

They were both quiet on the twenty-minute drive to the test center. It was obvious Brinley didn’t want to talk and Annalise respected that. She didn’t blame her.

Annalise honestly thought Brinley might get out of her car without even saying anything, but she paused with her hand on the door handle and looked back at Annalise. “One good luck kiss?”

Annalise didn’t waste any time leaning over the middle console and kissing Brinley like it was their first and last kiss all at once. She didn’t start to drive until Brinley disappeared into the big building.

Only five minutes into her drive back to Brinley’s apartment, a text alert sounded on her phone. She checked it right away just in case it was Brinley saying she forgot something.

Much to her surprise, it was Lexie. Even more surprising was what the text said. Hey! Hope you’ve been doing well and that your holidays were good. This is super random, especially since we haven’t seen each other in awhile, but I was wondering if there was any chance you wanted to go on a date with me. No pressure. I know you’re still figuring things out and have other people you’re hooking up with. I’m not expecting us to be exclusive or anything. I just thought it could be fun, and I’d love to see where things go.

The mention of a date caused so many thoughts to swirl through Annalise’s head. Idea after idea came to her as if they had been locked in a safe waiting to be set free. She waited until she was at a red light and sent a text back to Lexie.

Her open day had suddenly become a lot busier.

Chapter 20

Brinley

Ever since Annalise had picked Brinley up from her test, things had been strange. Annalise had asked how the test went and Brinley explained that it was brutal, but she actually felt okay about it, but after that, a heavy silence fell between them. Neither of them had said anything since. Annalise just kept clearing her throat and playing with something inside of her pocket. Brinley wanted to ask her what the deal was, but she decided to wait until they were back at her apartment.

After finding a parking spot, they took the freezing four-block walk to the bar. The cold was nothing compared to the freeze-out she was getting from Annalise.

Seriously, what the hell?

Annalise stopped short of the door and finally turned to look at Brinley, her eyes suddenly laser-focused on her. "Can we talk for a minute before we go in?"

"Um, yeah. Are you sure you don't want to just talk inside? It's kind of freezing out here."

"I know. I know. I'm sorry. This is just really important."

"Okay." Brinley had no idea whether to be scared or excited, but she was way too exhausted to feel much of anything.

Annalise closed her eyes and took a deep breath, the whole time playing with whatever was buried in her pocket.

Okay, this is getting kind of freaky.

“I was asked on a date today.”

A lump formed in Brinley’s throat. Out of all the directions she thought this conversation could take, she definitely didn’t consider this one. “By Lexie? Or someone else?”

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:38 pm

“Lexie.” Annalise shoved her hand deeper into her pocket.

Maybe she’s just doing that because she’s nervous .

“So, yeah, Lexie asked me on a date and—”

Brinley put her hand up to stop Annalise. “I really think we should talk about this inside.”

She was on the verge of tears and the last thing she needed was for someone walking into the bar she worked at to see. Hell, she didn’t even want Annalise to see. If they were in her apartment, she could hide in the bathroom and cry, then compose herself and act happy for Annalise. Because she was happy for her. First and foremost, Annalise was her friend, and she might have fallen harder than she thought possible for her, but no matter what happened, she didn’t want to ruin their friendship.

“Oh, um, okay, yeah. That’s fine.” Annalise turned away from Brinley and began walking toward the front door of the bar.

No. There was nothing fine about this and Brinley couldn’t pretend there was, so she gently grabbed hold of Annalise’s arm to stop her. “No. Wait.”

When Annalise looked back at her with those wide beautiful blue eyes, Brinley almost changed her mind once again. She just took a test that determined her whole future and yet this was the scariest thing she had ever done. But it was also the most important. “I’m not going to let this become a romantic comedy. I like you. I want to be with you.”

At first, Annalise just stared at her, her head tilted slightly as if she was confused. Then a wide smile spread across her face, and Brinley could finally breathe again because she saw it all right there in front of her. They felt the same way.

Annalise continued to stare at Brinley, smile beaming, eyes whimsical, head still tilted in a way that made her look so fucking cute. She took Brinley's hand in hers and intertwined their fingers, laughing softly as she did. "I mean, isn't that the very definition of a romantic comedy? Friends with benefits fall for each other, then one admits her feelings in a big dramatic fashion and they live happily ever after?"

"First of all, there's nothing big or dramatic about this. We're freezing our asses off standing outside of the bar where I work. Also, if this was a romantic comedy, I would act like I don't care and tell you that you should totally go on that date. Then I'd awkwardly pull away from you, leaving you wondering what went wrong. I'd let you go on multiple dates with this person and start to get attached, then I would swoop in and tell you I can't live without you. But I'm skipping all of that. No third-act break-up. No miscommunication tropes. Skip to the end. I'm here to tell you that I'd really like it if you didn't go on a date with anyone else because I really like you. Not love. I'm not a fucking cliché."

Annalise took a step closer to her and squeezed her hand. "You might not be, but I totally am."

"What do you mean?"

"First of all, I was never going to go on that date. You didn't let me finish what I was saying. Telling you about getting asked on that date was just my opener which, thinking back, was a really stupid one and I'm honestly not sure what I was thinking or why I thought that was a good idea, but—"

Now it was Brinley's turn to squeeze Annalise's hand. "Babe, I realize I say this all

the time, but breathe.”

Annalise laughed and finally took the hand that wasn't holding Brinley's out of her pocket. In it was a folded-up piece of paper. Annalise let go of Brinley's hand and used both of hers to unfold the paper. She cleared her throat, then began to read. “The final essay of Annalise Eleanor Finch.” She cleared her throat once more. “The past six months, I completed ten lessons on having sex with women. Trying to put into words what I learned from this experience is impossible, because there are no words that can truly explain something so life changing. When my grandma signed me up for The Lit Clit , she said it was because the sparkle I used to have was missing, and she thought I could get that back by having sex with women. I didn't understand what the sparkle was she was talking about until I started to see it coming back. The further I got into my lessons, the more that sparkle returned, and I wasn't the only one to notice. Multiple important people in my life mentioned it.”

Annalise folded the note back up and put it into her pocket then took both of Brinley's hands in her own. “There was one thing my grandma was wrong about. It wasn't having sex with women that brought that sparkle back. It was you. Ever since you came into my life, I found a happiness I've never had before. I know this is so cliché, but you are absolutely everything I didn't know I was looking for. I want to date you. I want to sit on the couch and read while you study. I want to hold your hand while you work your ass off to become a doctor. I want the big moments and the small ones and every single one in between. I know you're not there yet, and that's completely fine. I don't expect you to be, but I can't hold in what I know is true, and that's that I love you.”

“You do?” Brinley didn't care that she was standing right outside of the bar. She let her tears fall freely. How couldn't she? The most amazing woman in the whole world loved her. It was unreal.

“I do. So much that it scares the shit out of me.” Annalise laughed and shook her

head. “Also, I need to apologize for the huge cliché waiting in your apartment . I had a lot of time and may have overdone it.”

Brinley laughed through her tears. “Okay, now we have to get up there. I’m so intrigued.”

Brinley and Annalise held hands as they walked through the bar. When they were met with whistles and hollers from Dale and Maddie, Brinley flipped them off and kept walking.

The two of them practically sprinted up the stairs, and as soon as the door to the apartment was open, Brinley laughed. Rose petals started at the door and were scattered as far as she could see. “You totally made a rose petal path to the bed, didn’t you?” When Annalise nodded, she laughed even harder. “You really are such a fucking cliché. I love you so much.”

The words were out before she could even consider what she was saying, but it didn’t matter because they were true. She loved Annalise so much, and there was no reason to deny it anymore.

Annalise turned toward her, eyes bright, smile sparkling, and bounced up and down on the balls of her feet. “What did you say?”

“I said you were a cliché.” Brinley’s laughter grew even more when Annalise playfully pushed her chest. This is literally paradise. “Fine. I said I love you, okay? I fucking love you so fucking much, Annalise Finch.”

“In that case, shall we head to the bedroom?” Annalise lifted her eyebrows suggestively.

For maybe the first time in her life, the thought of sex made Brinley’s whole body

hurt, especially her brain. She had almost forgotten how exhausted she was until now.
“I don’t think I can have sex right now, babe. I’m sorry.”

“Did I say anything about sex? I figured we could take a nap.”

Brinley sighed. A nap had never sounded so good. “Yes! Let’s do it.”

Except, when she walked into her room, there was something else waiting for her.
Sitting on the bed, in the middle of a heart made of roses, was her favorite pizza.

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:38 pm

“Surprise,” Annalise said while hugging her from the side.

Brinley laughed because she was afraid if she didn’t, she might start to cry again. “Shit, babe. This is so sweet.” Her stomach grumbled at the exact same time another lower part of her body reacted. “Not going to lie, it’s also a really big turn-on. I wish I wasn’t so tired.”

Annalise hummed as if she was considering what Brinley had just said. “How ’bout this? You relax and eat the pizza and while you do, I’ll eat you.”

Brinley must have been dreaming. This blew every fantasy she had ever had completely out of the water. Brinley didn’t even have to respond because Annalise had already scooted down the bed and was in the process of pulling off her pants and underwear.

Brinley grabbed a slice of pizza and rested her head back against her pillow. “Holy shit. I have the best fucking girlfriend in the whole world.”

Annalise looked up from where she had started placing kisses along Brinley’s thighs. “Did you just call me your girlfriend?”

Shit. I did say that, didn’t I? “Yeah. Sorry. It just kind of slipped out. We don’t have to label anything if you’re not ready to.”

Annalise laughed. “I left a trail of rose petals back to your bed. I think it’s safe to say I’m more than okay with being your girlfriend.”

“Well, girlfriend, don’t mind me. I’ll just be up here enjoying my favorite meal.” Brinley moaned as she took a bite of the pizza, the moan becoming louder when Annalise ran her tongue across Brinley’s center.

Annalise looked up from between Brinley’s legs and raised an eyebrow. “And I’ll be down here enjoying mine.”

Holy fucking shit. How did I get so lucky? “I love you so much, babe.”

“I love you too, Brinley. I always will.”

1 month later

Brinley stared at the website on her computer, scared to death to login. The hand sitting on her leg squeezed it gently.

“I have no question that you did amazing, but no matter what happens, it’s going to be okay. If you need to retake it, I’ll help you every step of the way. If one of these stupid schools doesn’t let you in, I’ll go give them a piece of my mind.”

That made Brinley laugh. “I’m just picturing you walking into UPenn like, ‘My girlfriend is the smartest person I know. Why didn’t you accept her?’”

“It wouldn’t be exactly like that. I’d also add in how good you are in bed.”

Brinley snorted. No matter what number popped up on that screen, at least she had her girlfriend, who was quite literally the most amazing woman in the entire world. “So, the average score of accepted applicants is 512 at Drexel and Cooper, 513 at Temple, 514 at Jefferson, 515 at Robert Wood Johnson, and 522 at UPenn, so I just need to fall somewhere in that range. I’m not expecting to get into UPenn, so if I can fall somewhere around 517, I’ll be happy.”

Annalise squeezed Brinley's leg once again. "You got this. Online it said that 509-514 are competitive scores to get into med school. Remember—those aren't the only schools that exist."

"I know, but I want to stay around Philly." I want to stay close to you.

"If you don't, we'll figure it out together, okay?"

The look in Annalise's eyes seemed to say I'll follow you anywhere and Brinley selfishly hoped that was the case. Even though their relationship was new, she had no question that Annalise was her forever.

"Okay. I'm ready. Let's do this."

Brinley typed in her login information then worked to navigate the confusing page. If I can't figure out a fucking website, how am I supposed to survive medical school? She finally found where she was supposed to be and scanned the page to find her score.

Annalise gasped and said, "Holy shit, Brinley," at the same time Brinley's eyes landed on the score. 519. Even better than she expected.

Brinley jumped from the couch at the same time Annalise did and they met in a tight embrace. Annalise squealed and jumped up and down, taking Brinley along with her. "My girlfriend is the smartest girl in the world."

"I wouldn't go that far, but I am pretty fucking great," Brinley joked. "Let's not forget this is just the beginning. Now I have to get all my applications in, do interviews, pray to every god there is, and then spend the next year and a half spending as much time together before my life is nothing but school."

“First of all, you’re going to get in. There’s no question about that. Also, while I’m very excited to make the most of our time together until you start, I’m not worried about our future. While you’re in school for the next million years, I will be here to take care of you. I do owe you after all.”

“For what?”

Annalise had given Brinley just as much or more than Brinley had given her.

Source Creation Date: July 12, 2025, 6:38 pm

“For being the best teacher in the world. Duh.”

Brinley tilted her head to steal a kiss from Annalise. “Maybe you’re just a really good student. You did go above and beyond in my sapphic sex class.”

“And even though the class is over, I plan on doing a lot of extra credit.

“Is that so?” Brinley pulled Annalise tighter up against her and stole another kiss. She couldn’t resist. This woman drove her insane. “What do you say we start that right now?”

“I would love to, but we told my parents they could take you out for a celebratory dinner tonight if you had something to celebrate, remember? I’d say you definitely do.” Annalise deepened their kiss. “I could cancel if you want.”

Brinley let herself enjoy this kiss for a few more seconds before pulling away. “Don’t do that. It’s really sweet that your parents want to do that.”

“They love you.”

“Can you blame them?”

“No. Not at all.” Annalise smiled at Brinley with all the love in the world. She still had to pinch herself to make sure this wasn’t all a dream. The perfect girl. A loving family. Promises of forever.

And to think, it all started with a crazy offer to teach a woman who “ totally wasn’t

into other women” about sapphic sex.