



# Dirty Player

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**Category:** Erotic, Romance, Billionaire Romance, Adult

**Description:** She can look at me with those big brown eyes all she likes. I am not interested... anymore.

That's my first lie.

Finding her lips on another player broke my heart once. I thought she was the one. That was months ago. Fast forward to me being drafted into the NFL and I'm not surprised to see her sniffing around. Damn Jersey Chaser.

Except, now, she's working for the team as our new physiotherapist. We agree to be professional, putting our relationship and history behind us, and be friends.

Second lie.

Trying to focus on my training and not her sweet ass is apparently not a strength of mine. I find myself hoping for an injury, just to get her hands on me.

Just once more.

Then I'll forget all about Kaylee Rose.

That's my third lie.

Dirty Player is Book Three in the steamy Montgomery Billionaires series. This forbidden billionaire romance will appeal to readers who like spicy books with strong storylines, dominant heroes, witty dialogue, heart-clenching moments, and a delicious happy ever after.

**Total Pages (Source):** 98

## PROLOGUE

LEVI

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Jackson Billows holds up his hands, laughing as his dark braids hang around his shoulders, almost covering his ice.

Ice, as in diamonds.

He has at least three chains draping from his neck and is sparkling like Marilyn fucking Monroe.

One could call him an actor, the way he dances around the field during an NFL game. He's a show pony for sure, but Philadelphia loves him—hell, America loves the fifty-million-dollar-a-year Hawkes player.

Philadelphia Hawkes, that is.

The team I hope to play for one day.

Next year, if I'm being exact.

I don't care about the money. I'm already a billionaire in my own right because of my family. I'm the son of Ward Montgomery—of Montgomery Enterprises and the luxury fashion label Verity & Co.—but it's the game I love.

I'm currently a star quarterback at Penn State and in the spotlight for this year's draft.

"Okay, okay." Jackson laughs, trying to quiet the room with the waving of his hands, while I lean my hip against the sofa, beer in my hand and my other arm around my girl.

Kaylee Rose.

"Thank you all for coming. Don't go thinking because I'm twenty-nine now, this is my last year." He laughs.

The room is filled with players and guests who chuckle along with him.

"Getting old there, J?" someone yells out.

I smirk, sipping my beer. I'm probably the only college football player here, but that's not because I'm hopefully going to be drafted.

I met Jackson at some famous movie star's party over a year ago. I think one of my brothers, Knox or Atlas, was initially invited, but you know what society is like. It's a surname or reputation that opens doors, so it's assumed we were all invited.

There I met him and a bunch of other players, and we see each other at events held by artists, musicians, and all kinds of interesting—and rich—people.

Now I'm proud to call a bunch of NFL players my friends.

Which is pretty damn cool.

I've followed the game since I was old enough to hold a football. Growing up, my bedroom was filled with posters, flags, signed jerseys, and anything else I could get

my hands on. Especially signed stuff.

My brothers followed Dad into the business while I tossed the ball around outside.

“One day, this will be you.” Kaylee twists and kisses my cheek, then drops back down on her feet.

We met in college. The moment I met her, I think I fell in love.

It felt fated. She’s studying to be a physiotherapist and has an interest in sports. Her dad is a big fan of the Hawkes and when he found out I was a quarterback, well, let’s just say, I think that was a bonus.

Not so much a Montgomery.

They’re a middle-class family and I get a sense he’s one of those people that hate anyone with too much money.

He never said anything, nor has Kaylee, but I sense it.

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Anyway, she's at Penn State on a scholarship and I'm fucking proud of her.

"Hopefully." I wink at her, and someone bumps my arm, spilling some of my beer down my Armani shirt.

"Shit, sorry Levi." The guy says as Kaylee wipes her hand over my chest.

Can't say I am. If it gets my girl's hands on me, then hell, I'll pour my drink down the front of me.

"Keep doing that." I purr, and she smiles up at me with what looks like innocent eyes.

She's not.

It's a sexy little act.

One I love.

Let's just say I'm pretty dominant and her submissive side gets me hard in seconds. Outside the bedroom, she's a smart and beautiful woman.

This is our last year at Penn State, and if I get drafted, I'm going pro. I don't have a plan B—which my father has brought up from time to time—but I'm confident.

You have to be.

Playing at this level, you have to kick doubt to the curb and have a strong mindset.

Reminding yourself that you're fucking amazing is a daily chore. Even if it does sound narcissistic.

But that's how I'll become one of these men.

A quarterback for the Philadelphia Hawkes.

Jackson says a few more things, and the room erupts into "Happy Birthday." Then he points to the back of the room where I'm standing.

"Hey everyone, give it up for my boy, Levi. He's gonna join the team this year."

Damn.

I lift my beer humbly and shake my head. "Don't fucking curse me, Jackson."

The six-foot-seven Black man roars with laughter. "Keep your nose clean and keep winning those games, Montgomery, then you'll be wearing the green jersey next."

I hope so.

I'm not going to starve obviously, but I don't want to fail. Montgomery's don't fail.

Like my brothers and half-sister Bella, I have a trust fund and inheritance from our mother, who passed a few years ago.

When you don't have to count your pennies, what you do in life is more about purpose. That's what my father told me, and he's right. I need to do something that is meaningful to me, and then one day, something that can contribute to the world.

I don't know what that is.

First, I want to prove I'm good enough to be in the NFL.

Jackson jumps down, and the party kicks back into action. The music goes up and Kaylee turns to talk to one of the girls.

I drop my hand from her hip when one of the players from another team, Jimmy Gage, walks over and asks, "So how's the year going?"

"Good. Only lost one game. A strong season," I reply as my eyes dip to Kaylee's cute ass.

She's wearing denim shorts which she somehow dressed up with a pair of red Nikes, a red tube top, and white cropped jacket.

Sexy as fuck.

## Page 3

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And I'm not the only one noticing.

We started dating two months ago, and I'm already possessive of her. I never intended to go steady with anyone, and god knows I've had a lot of really short relationships.

Is four hours a relationship? What about forty-eight? One did last a week.

Hence my nicknamePlayer.

You know, because I was a football player and... yeah, you get it.

That was before I met Kaylee. Now, I wake up every day and the first things I think about are her pretty brown eyes and sweet pussy.

Shoot me.

I love fucking this woman.

I've never been obsessed with anything else. It's been football, football, and football since I could walk and talk.

Now it's football and Kaylee.

I chat with Gage some more about the NFL year and how his team is doing. He's at least five years older than me and gives me some great advice while we watch the girls doing shots.



Then the twerking starts.

“Shit’s getting messy.” He laughs.

“Hey bro, come check out my new pool.” Jackson says, looping his arm around my shoulder.

“Jesus, how much more do you weigh with all that ice around your neck?”

Shit, Kaylee is using Jackson’s Player of The Year trophy as a microphone.

He doesn’t seem to care.

“Less than your bank account, Montgomery,” he replies and while I doubt it, I snort and let him take me outside.

A few of the other Hawkes players follow us, talking shit among themselves, but there’s a vibe I pick up. It feels like I’m about to step into an intervention or something.

The door closes and everyone goes quiet.

The hell?

“We want you on the team next year, Levi,” Jackson says. “You need some help, let us know.”

Wow.

I was not expecting that.

I mean, I know they've accepted me socially and we all click. But that's different from on the field.

Have they been to one of my games?

I'm sure they're all way too busy for that.

"Appreciate it." I nod and the little boy in me, the one who dreamed of moments like these, gets emotional.

Damn.

"I've been watching your game. You're good. You know that. Coach and management know that. I meant what I said...work hard and you'll draft."

## Page 4

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Act cool.

“Fuck, I hope so.” I rub my jaw and smile coyly.

I mean, I don’t want to be overconfident and look like a dick. Nor do I want to throw my arms around him and tell him he just made my week.

Hell, my year.

“Yeah, and don’t eat shit food like Wallace.” Kemal, one of the wide receivers, says and gets shoved by the guy for it.

I laugh.

“Hey.” Jackson slaps me on the shoulder. “I know the stress, but the only helpful thing I can say is that this is the easy bit.”

I choke on my beer and cough as I bang my chest. “Gee thanks.”

They all chuckle at my reaction.

“No joke, man,” Jackson says. “Once you go pro, shit gets real. The media is on you every single minute. The fan pressure is insane.”

Yeah, and for the money they’re all making, so it should be. I understand hard work. My father drummed that into all of us from an early age.

“Do you have a manager?” he then asks.

“Working on it. Dad has some meetings set up. He’s been my manager until now.”

“Makes sense. Dude knows what he’s doing.” He smirks.

“Yeah,” I reply because Ward Montgomery’s story of becoming a self-made billionaire many times over is well-known. “But if I go pro, we both decided I needed to have my own manager to separate work from family, you know.”

“Smart.” Jackson nods.

None of us pay any attention to his new pool, so I was right. This was an intervention of sorts. A show of support and I’m blown away.

I can’t wait to tell Kaylee.

She’ll get it.

That’s the thing with her. She believes in my dream, and I feel like I can tell her everything.

So much so, it fucking scares me.

Falling in love so quickly and so young...man. It’s overwhelming. I’m not sure if she feels the same yet, so I’m trying to hold back.

To play it cool.

Which I think I suck at.

Unlike my oldest brother Knox, who's broody as hell, or Atlas, who's kind of charming but super dominant, I'm the more emotional one.

Cheeky, I've been told.

But I'm no poker player.

One of the guys lights a cigar and I shake my empty bottle and head back inside, eager to get my girl and head home.

As I walk through the door, something makes me turn my head and watch the couple making out in the hallway.

Blue denim shorts.

## Page 5

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Red Nikes.

The fuck?

The blood in my veins turns to ice as I watch Colby fucking Wade, a retired quarterback, thread his fingers through her mid-length wavy chestnut hair.

I blink, thinking I must be seeing things.

There's no way that's her...

"Fuck," Colby says, taking a step away and my jaw clenches as Kaylee blinks, wipes her mouth with the back of her arm, turns to look at me.

She turns pale.

She's been caught.

A thousand words threaten to escape as I stare at the two of them. Honestly, I'm not surprised by his actions. He's slept with every jersey chaser in the area.

But for Kaylee to do this...to me. To us.

I thought...fuck; I guess I have my answer to how she feels about me.

"Levi—"

I turn and walk away.

Striding through the party, I push past a dozen people muttering sorry and finally step outside. In a haze, I find my car where I parked it on the large sweeping driveway. As I climb in, I hear her call my name, but in the next second, the roar of my Maserati's engine drowns her out.

I don't even look at her as she runs up alongside it, as I put my foot to the floor and burn rubber, driving past the entrance to Jackson's mansion.

I'll sort that out with him another day.

When I get home, I head straight to my gym, rip off my jeans and shirt, and pull on my boxing gloves. Then imagine both their faces as I smash the ever-loving shit out of the bag.

How fucking dare she?

How dare she make me look like a goddamn idiot in front of all my friends and idols?

How dare she break my fucking heart?

I've never seen her as a jersey chaser. We met by accident—literally. She was sliding on the wet pavement and I saved her. But it looks exactly like that to me.

Colby is a heartthrob. I mean, he has ten million follows on his Instagram and most of them are women.

Enough said.

Emotions aside, I hate that my brother was right.

“Careful bro, you know she’s on a scholarship, right?” Knox said to me.

“So?”

“Don’t rush into anything. You don’t know enough about her. There are gold diggers in the world who will marry you and take half of everything.”

I hated him at that moment. After yelling at him to fuck off, Atlas told me about a friend of his who’d had that exact thing happen.

I began to listen.

Reluctantly.



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I suppose that was the moment I realized telling her I loved her wasn't smart. That I needed to wait for her to show me she felt the same.

Dad joined the conversation that day, saying, "Knox is right. He's just as tactless as a comedian telling knock-knock jokes at a funeral."

Atlas snorted.

I hadn't. I wanted to defend her. "Kaylee isn't like that. She loves the sport as much as me. Hell, she wants to work as a sports physio."

I thought I'd proven my point, but they both just stared at me.

"Just be careful, Levi," Dad replied. "You know a lot of women are interested in the players. You aren't stupid."

After cooling off and thinking about things, I knew they just needed time to get to know her. We'd only dated for two months.

I figured in another six or twelve months, we'd show them how committed we were. How in love.

What a fool I was.

Now, she's proven them right.

Thirty minutes later, the mix of alcohol and sweating like a pig dehydrates me. My

head throbs and I don't know if I want to scream or let myself cry.

Goddamn you, Kaylee.

I toss my gloves across the room and stalk back out to the living room. Not learning a thing, I pour myself a few fingers of whisky and press dial.

I don't know who the fuck I'm ringing. Whoever the last person was. It's a fifty-fifty gamble between Atlas and Knox.

"What?" Knox answers.

My fucking luck, I got the grumpy brother.

"Wrong number," I grumble.

"Good try. What's up?" he insists, and I guess it's due to the late hour that he knows something is wrong.

"Yo! Was the party shit, or are we just more interesting?" Atlas says in the background.

"Oh good. A two-for-one deal." I rub my head.

"Gonna hang up if you keep being a dick," Knox warns.

I'm silent for a moment, knowing he wouldn't hang up.

Actually, he would, but they know me.

Plus, I'd just ring back.

“You were right,” I finally say.

“Clarify,” Knox, the arrogant of a bitch, says as I roll my eyes and flop back on the sofa, wishing the cushions would swallow me up.

“She’s a fucking jersey chaser.” My voice sounds bitter and angry, and I hate it.

I hate that I have to say those words about her.

Silence.

“What happened?” Atlas asks, all humor gone.

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“Found her sharing saliva with Colby Wade.”

“That dick.” Knox grumbles.

“Not everyone is a dick, Knox. He was an incredible player,” Atlas says firmly, and I can’t help it. I let out a sort of insane laugh.

Colby is one of the greats, but my big brother—the big idiot—would have my back no matter what.

“We’re coming over,” Knox says, and I glance at the clock on the wall. It’s just past midnight but I have practice the next day.

“Nah, I have to be up in six hours. I’ll be okay. Just wanted to talk shit about her.”

It’s a lie, but I say it anyway.

“Gold digger,” Atlas chirps in.

“Punt bunny,” Knox adds.

My anger fades, and a strange pain in my chest has me dropping my head. I guess this is my first true heartache.

Two days later, when Kaylee Rose and Colby Wade are all over social media as the hottest new couple, I realize the player just got played.

## CHAPTER ONE

LEVI

SIX MONTHS LATER

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“Here we go,” Dad says. “Proud of you no matter what, son.”

“I’m going to throw up,” Bella says, biting her fingernails.

“Shush.”

My eyes are glued to the screen as my heart thuds in anticipation.

This is it.

My life is about to change one way or the other.

“In this year’s first pick for the NFL draft, the Philadelphia Hawkes select Levi Montgomery, quarterback from Penn State.”

The room erupts.

I freeze for a moment, then the words sink in, and I leap off the sofa and scream. Knox and Atlas tackle me, and we go tumbling to the floor, laughing as the reality of what this means for me sinks in.

Oh, my fucking god!

I just got fucking drafted!

“Jesus I should’ve moved the antiques.” I hear Dad cry, but his voice is thick with emotion and pride.

I fly at him, hugging him harder than I ever have in my life.

“Thanks for believing in me, Dad,” I whisper for his ears only.

“So proud of you, son. So damn proud.” He grabs my face, smiling at me with glossy eyes. “Your mom would have been too.”

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Fuck.

I'm not going to cry. Well, I might.

We both know I nearly didn't make it.

After finding Kaylee sucking Colby Wade's face, I went downhill a little. And a little is a big deal when you need to keep your grades up and be a star college football player while the scouts are watching.

There was no getting away from them. They were in the media for weeks.

My pride and game were hurting, but not as much as my heart. That I kept to myself.

"Montgomery, word." Coach had pulled me aside. I'd followed him into his office where he stood with his hands on his hips, staring at me.

We'd just lost a game.

"What's going on?" he demanded.

Fuck, my heart had been thumping like crazy.

"Yeah, just having a bad week I guess." I rubbed my hand up the back of my head awkwardly.

"Levi, that wasn't a bad week. That was a colossal fucking loss. You dropped the

ball. Twice.”

Shit.

Once, because I’d thought I’d seen Kaylee’s red Nikes in the crowd.

I couldn’t believe I was letting a jersey chaser fuck up my dreams.

“Listen, son.” Coach sighed, dropping his arms, then crossing them as he sat on the edge of his desk. “If this is about that girl, I need you to pull your head out of your ass and get back in the game.”

I nodded.

“I can tell you right now, Levi, you have a real shot at going pro,” he said, and it wasn’t the first time he’d told me this.

Rubbing the side of my neck, I nodded some more.

“If you refocus.”

He was right. I wasn’t intentionally fucking up. I hadn’t expected to feel like this. I’d never liked a girl this much. Being cheated on so publicly fucking hurt.

Losing Kaylee, who I’d realized had become so important in my life in such a short time, had felt like losing a best friend.

Not just a lover.

And while I’d ignored all her attempts at contact, it felt like no excuse would be enough to change what had happened.



“No girl is worth ruining your future. Very few get this type of opportunity. Hell, I didn’t. You’re a talented player. Let her go.”

“Thanks.” I slid my hands into my pocket.

“Don’t thank me.” He pushed off the desk, his hands returning to hips. “If I don’t see improvement next week, I’m pulling you from the team. These next few games are key for the season and your chance at being drafted.”

“Coach, wait—”

He held up his hand. “There is no waiting. Life is happening to you right now, Montgomery. Go do what you need to do, then bring your A-game with you next week.”

He looked at me and I could hear the words hanging in the air. Or you are out.

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“Or you are out,” Coach said.

Fuck.

Over and over and over, I heard those words for the next few days. He’d given me a chance when another coach may not have. I could’ve lost my dream because of Kaylee Rose.

When I told my brothers, they were furious.

At me.

And at her.

I swore to myself I’d never let another woman come between me and football.

Six months on and life looks different for all of us.

I just got fucking drafted!

But also Knox and Atlas, sworn to be bachelors their entire lives, have fallen in love. Knox is married, and Atlas engaged.

I’m the ol’ single man in the family.

Well, except Dad, who is obviously a widower.

Oh, and I'm about to become an uncle again. Jamie, Bella's daughter, was my first niece, and Payton is about one thousand weeks pregnant.

Her words, not mine.

Dad clears his throat and holds up his glass to make a toast. Everyone is grinning like a bunch of idiots as we quieten down.

"To my youngest child. I'm proud as hell of all my kids and my grandkids, and today is no different," Dad says. "I wish your mom was alive today to see this. She used to dress you up in little Hawkes t-shirts and tell me one day you'll play for them."

What?

"She never said that to me." I bite the inside of my lip.

"Because she didn't want to pressure you. Neither of us did. Until you told us this was your dream."

My siblings glance at me and I see the emotion in their eyes, mirroring mine.

We all miss Mom.

"This is an incredible achievement, Levi. You've worked hard and honored the gift you've been given. I don't know where you got it from. I'm not sporty and neither was Mom."

"He's adopted," Atlas teases.

It's a stupid joke that's about fifteen years old. We all ignore him while he chuckles to himself.

“I’m a pro player, bitches!” I punch my arm into the air as my two best friends, Kyler and Drew, launch themselves at me.

“I guess you’re going to have a million groupies now.” Bella groans.

I smirk.

Because I’m trying to get my reputation back as the Player, but I’m failing. I’ve hardly dated and just focused on the game.

And the girl I once loved walking around campus.

“He only has eyes for one girl,” Kyler says, nudging my arm.

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Goddammit.

My mood darkens. Only my brothers know the true depth of my feelings when it comes to Kaylee. And not even they do, truly.

“Fuck off.” I laugh, hoping they’ll drop it.

Knox and Levi share a glance.

“Who?” Payton asks, glancing around. She’s always trying to keep up with the family gossip.

“You better not be talking about Kaylee?” my new manager, Trent, says.

He also knows.

Soon after I hired him, Dad and my Penn State coach met with him. Trent needs to know everything. I appreciate that’s the only way these things work.

But Kaylee and I are over.

So are her and Colby—big surprise.

Trent saw me watching her one day after a game and called me on it. I made the mistake of telling Kyler and Drew one day at lunch.

“Well, she’s single. Why don’t you try again? Or just fuck her.” Kyler shrugged.

“Fuck that. She cheated on me.” I stuffed a mouthful of food in my mouth.

“Who cares? She’s still hot. Not like you’re going to marry her.”

I just kept chewing.

“Well, if you aren’t going to tap it again, how do you feel about—” Drew started.

“Finish that fucking sentence and I’ll string your balls around your neck.” I growled.

Kyler sat back and grinned. “Interesting.”

It wasn’t fucking interesting. It was disturbing. My reaction was an overkill. I should have said yes and let Drew date her.

Then get cheated on.

“Kaylee Rose?” Atlas asks Trent, bringing me back to the present.

Shit.

“Tell me you are not seeing her again,” Knox adds. “She’s a jersey chaser, Levi.”

I glare at him. “No, I’m not. Can we just move on? There are no women in my life.”

Payton looks intrigued while Knox studies me.

Most people can’t read him, but I’m his little brother. I’ve been looking up to him since I could. He’s worried and disappointed.

Sometimes I feel like I have three fathers, but the truth is, my brothers are there for

me no matter what, and so this shit just comes with the territory.

“I heard she is dating Jimmy Gage now,” Drew shares.

She is?

“See.” I shrug in defense, even though my fingers itch to open Instagram and find out if it’s true.

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I hate that I care.

But I do.

For some fucking reason I can't seem to get over Kaylee, but I have to. I can't and won't let my feelings for her interfere with my game. No matter who she dates...or fucks.

I've made it to the NFL. I'm now the quarterback for the Philadelphia Hawkes. Staying there is my priority.

No, fuck that. Making it to the Super Bowl is!

## CHAPTER TWO

KAYLEE ROSE

SEPTEMBER

---

Honk!

I glance in the rearview mirror and curse. I probably am driving weirdly, but I'm nervous, which is silly. I've been around NFL players a lot.

Heck, I've dated one of them.



For five seconds.

Colby Wade.

Familiar regret laces through me, but I push it away. I'm nervous enough about starting my new job as the new assistant physio for the Philadelphia Hawkes without thinking about him.

And I don't mean Colby.

I mean Levi Montgomery, the newly drafted quarterback and my ex-boyfriend.

Being hated was never on my vision board, not least by him, yet here we are. Every time he looks at me, there's so much disgust in his eyes it makes me wince.

I deserve it.

I kissed Colby Wade while we were still together, and there's no excuse for that.

Even if...

No, there's no excuse.

I was drunk, but I could've pushed him away. I'd been a huge fan of Colby's, and so had my dad, for years. To meet him in real life was a big deal.

I don't think I was flirting...he said I was.

He dragged me down the hall and told me I was pretty...

I remember thinking in that moment about how Levi had been pulling away and not

invited me to his family event. Which, not to sound like an insecure girlfriend, but I guess that's what I was being.

Something was off...I felt it and still to this day don't think I'm wrong.

We all knew Levi was going to get drafted, and he has been. Back then, I wondered if he was planning to break up with me when we graduated.

At Jackson's party, he'd been distracted with the players and mostly ignoring me. When he walked off with Jackson and a few of the players, I wondered if this was the beginning of the end.

"What's up gorgeous?" Colby said as he danced with me and the girls. "Lover boy ignoring you?"

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“He’s excited to join the team. Hopefully,” I’d replied.

“You know you’ll be competing with all the groupies, right?” His eyes ran down my body. “If you were my girl, I wouldn’t let you out of my sight.”

He usually didn’t.

But tonight he had.

And Colby was right. This was the beginning of the end.

“My dad is a huge fan,” I said, not wanting to discuss it with him.

“Yeah? You want to take him a signed cap? I have some in my bag,” he offered.

My eyes widened. “Really?”

I knew Dad would love that.

“Come on,” he said and wrapped an arm around my lower back, leading me down the hall.

That was my first wrong move.

Before I knew what was happening, Colby turned, tugged me up against him, and kissed me.

Second wrong move was me not stopping him.

My stupid drunk self just stood there, shocked, as his tongue pushed inside and devoured me. Next minute I'm against the wall and his hands are in my hair, and all I knew was that I wanted him to stop.

He did.

When I glanced away, I found Levi staring at me.

The look on his face is something I'll never forget. The betrayal and pain.

I felt sick to my stomach and shoved at Colby to go after Levi. I desperately needed him to know it was a mistake and didn't mean anything. I don't even think I could say I gave him permission.

I never kissed him back.

Except Levi never gave me a chance to explain. Or apologize. The next day I tried to call him seven times. He ignored all of them. Even cutting them off after the first ring.

Which left me with only one conclusion: my prediction that he was going to call it off and wasn't serious about our relationship was correct.

But I saw on his face that I'd hurt him.

I would've been heartbroken if I'd caught Levi doing the same thing, so after crying myself silly in the shower and telling my parents that we'd broken up, I stopped calling him.

“What happened?” Dad asked. “The rich boy thinks he was too good for my daughter?”

I was too ashamed to tell my father what I did.

So I just shrugged.

We’d only been dating for a few months, so nobody considered it seriously.

I guess I was the only one.

The first few weeks we’d done everything together. I slept with him on the second date, and OMG the sex! Levi was a rough lover and had taken me by surprise with his dominance, but what was even more surprising was how much I liked it.

How much I craved it.

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We were insatiable.

When we weren't going to a movie, or to one of his wealthy friends' parties, or having lunch at Penn State together, we were at each other's houses having wild, amazing sex.

Mostly though, our lives had consisted of classes, study, Levi's training, and going to his games.

I was happy.

I thought we fit together.

I was studying toward my Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) degree to become a sports physio. It was a passion. We'd even joked about me being his physio when he went pro.

And here I am.

When I saw the position with the Philadelphia Hawkes after graduating, I hesitated. Levi had already been drafted, and I knew it would be awkward if I was successful.

We couldn't see each other.

There was no way that could happen. So, after chatting with my best friend, Stephanie, about it, she hit me with some reality.

“Hate to be the bearer of bad news, Kaylee, but Levi Montgomery is likely well over you.”

Ouch.

“You cheated on him,” she reminded me.

One kiss.

Which I didn’t exactly have the ability to stop at the time.

“Then dated the guy, and images of you and Colby were splashed over every social and media channel.”

It was two dates. One of them because he rang me up and said he was sorry for breaking us up and wanted to give me the cap for Dad.

I stupidly agreed and met him at a restaurant. When we walked out, the media went insane. Then... I guess I was feeling rejected, and Colby was really into me.

I’m not dead. The guy is one of the hottest players on the planet.

Levi didn’t want anything to do with me.

So I went out with him a second time and didn’t even sleep with him. The media made it sound like we were in this full-on relationship. Which was totally untrue.

After our dates, I realized I didn’t feel anything for him.

Let me tell you, the depression of losing Levi because of Colby was bad.

“Then you dated Jimmy Gage from the Chiefs.”

I held up my hand. “No, I went on one pretend date with him as a favor because that crazy ex of his was stalking him.”

“Fine, but I’m just saying you don’t have anything to worry about. Levi has moved on.” Stephanie shrugs.

I realized she was right.

“Is he dating someone?” I asked. Steph also attended Penn State, and her brother knew Drew, Levi’s close friend.

She snorts.

“Girl, seriously. He’s been drafted. You know what he thePlayerwas like at Penn State. He’ll be a thousand times worse. He’s always been more interested in the game than you.”



## Page 14

*Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:35 am*

Steph tried to tell me not to date Levi when we first met, but he charmed my socks off and there was no way I could've turned him down.

I'd flopped back onto the sofa and nodded. "Yeah. What a fuckup."

She did the same beside me, then turned her head. "You probably should've dumped him before making out with another guy, but I know he'd been distant, and things weren't great."

I turned to face her. "It was the family dinner, you know. Like, why didn't he invite me?"

Stephanie shrugged. "Dunno. But it's a message. He wasn't serious."

"So why does he glare at me like I'm the devil incarnate when he sees me?"

Stephanie climbed off the sofa. "Men. Egos. You hurt his pride. And in front of his idols."

Which I regret. But if I could just explain to him what happened. It didn't play out like everyone thought. Even Steph didn't buy my story.

Which wasn't a story.

But going on those dates with Colby after completely discredited me.

What did it matter? Levi had given me absolutely zero opportunity to explain. Or

he'd listened to my messages and not cared.

I park my car and stare at the Hawkes Complex—a state-of-the-art NFL practice and training facility built for the Hawkes—and let it sink in. This is a big deal. Getting this job is a dream and has secured my career for the rest of my life.

Unless I mess it up.

My parents worked hard to help me attend Penn State. Unlike most of the kids attending, my parents were blue-collar workers. My scholarship paid for most of the cost, but they made up the difference allowing me to focus on my studies instead of getting a job.

So there are expectations.

From them.

And from myself.

I'm the first person in my family's history to get a degree and do something worthwhile. My dad's words. Plus, he is an NFL fan, so he's invested.

“Just keep away from the Montgomery boy and you'll be fine,” Dad said. “He thinks you're not good enough, aye? Well, he's not good enough for you.”

Every time he'd say something, I'd feel guilty about letting him think Levi dumped me.

But telling my father I kissed another guy was not something I wanted to get into.

He'd be ashamed of me.

A silver Jaguar pulls into the parking lot. I watch as they park near all the other luxury vehicles. These players earn some of the biggest incomes in the United States. While I know some of them, working with them is going to be a whole other ballgame.

Pun intended.

I'll need their respect to do my job, and I hope Levi will be as professional as I intend to be. We both need to put what happened behind us and focus on our careers.

We have too much to lose if we don't.

He may be pissed about what happened, but so am I. I told Colby he had no right to kiss me, and he apologized.

If Levi had just taken one of my calls, we might have been able to fix it. Or broken up amicably. Or maybe he wanted it over and was happy for me to feel like the asshole.

I'm not going out of my way to be nice. Professional, yes. Friends...no.

That ship has sailed.

## Page 15

*Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:35 am*

I climb out of the car, stride across the parking lot, then pull open the door to my future.

And slam into a solid, football-jersey-covered chest.

### CHAPTER THREE

LEVI

---

Boof!

I grab the tiny frame before it bounces off me, and stare down into the pair of chestnut eyes that I hoped to never see this close again.

Liar.

“What the fuck are you doing here?” I ask before I can stop myself.

Kaylee rips out of my arms, her eyes turning dark as she tugs her bag back up onto her shoulder. Then straightens her outfit.

Goddamn she looks...

Don't say it.

Do not fucking think it.

Beautiful.

She's wearing is a pair of black leggings and a...wait a fucking minute. Over a tight white tank, she's wearing a Hawkes zip-up jacket.

A team one.

"I'm working."

I snort.

"Is that what you're calling it now? Who are you fucking now, Kaylee? No one outside the team gets those jackets."

Her face turns bright red.

I lift a brow, demanding an answer.

I'm pissed.

She's fucking another player, and he's clearly given her a jacket. Now I have to put up with this in my face.

"Jersey fucking chaser." I shake my head and push past her. I left my phone in the car, otherwise I'd be doing hill sprints by now. I can't believe she's shown up here on the first official day of the season.

Un-fucking-believable.

And not one word of apology.

She had me right there and couldn't drop a simple hey Levi, sorry for sucking Colby Wade's face while I was your girlfriend.

To be fair, I haven't answered or listened to her messages. I deleted them when I was furious and then it was too late.

She gave up quickly, though.

Then the coach pulled me aside, and I needed to refocus. I knew then it was better to just walk away, despite how I felt about her. Especially when I heard she was fucking dating Wade.

## Page 16

*Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:35 am*

Kaylee nearly cost me my career.

Now, on day one of the season, she turns up at the Hawkes training facility in a team jacket and that skimpy damn top.

As I rip open the door to my car, I curse my body. My cock is semi-hard from five seconds near her.

“Mother fucking fucker.”

“Levi Montgomery, how dare you speak to me like that?” Kaylee demands from behind me.

I spin, hit my head, curse, then glare at her. “Excuse me?”

She jabs me in the chest. “You heard me.”

I snatch her finger out of the air and tug her closer to me, bearing down into her face. “What are you doing here?”

Her breathing is labored and suddenly I’m taken back to one of the nights she was underneath me.

Naked.

Panting as my cock filled her hot, wet pussy.

I drop her finger and turn back to my car, leaning in and grabbing my phone. Then I straighten and slam the car door.

“Go home.” I stalk off and she follows me.

Is she kidding me right now?

I glance over my shoulder, sneer, and then keep walking. When I reach the door, I spin. “Kaylee, seriously. What do you want?”

She shakes her head, pushes my shoulder, then walks past me and up the stairs.

What the hell is going on here?

I realize something that sends ice through my veins. She wasn’t—she isn’t—here for me.

Fuck.

Another player, Shaun, comes through the door. “Hey man. What’s up?”

He’s got half a foot on me and is one big Black man. His white, toothy grin tells me he’s as happy as I am to be here today.

Was.

No, fuck that. Am.

“Hey.” I release the door that I was holding open and follow him up the stairs.

“You hear the new album that dropped overnight?” he asks, pulling a bud out of his



ear.

I shake my head no then half listen to Shaun as he keeps talking while my gaze roams the office for the woman I can't get out of my dreams.

Where the hell did she go?

And why did my body feel like it had just received a thousand-volt shock the moment I put my hands on her?

Even though I've dumped my bag in the locker room, I head in there. Technically, she can't go in there, but as I walk around the corner and find it empty, I let out the breath I didn't know I was holding.

"Bro, first season." Kemal slaps me on the back.

## Page 17

*Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:35 am*

Focus.

The best thing to do here is forget I saw her and get on with practice. I really do need to get my fitness up and those hill climbs are not doing themselves.

I chuck my phone in my locker and rip off my jersey.

On the way out, the coach calls out. “Two hours, then everyone needs to go to the large meeting room. We’re introducing all the new team members.”

Fuck I’m happy to be here.

I nod and start jogging on the spot while a few of the guys call out yes coach, then when he heads back into his office, I go out to the training field.

It’s an inside setup allowing complete privacy and protection from the incoming cold weather. It’s already cooler, now that it’s September, and only going to get worse. But we can’t get too complacent. We need to be able to play in cold weather, so every morning I get up and run for at least an hour before arriving at the complex.

Coach isn’t referring to the players when he means team members. There are hundreds of people behind each team and without them, none of us can perform at our best.

I sprint up the hill and feel the burn in my calves. Two other players are doing the same nearby, all of us at different times. Thirty minutes later, I’m done and head into the gym.

“Montgomery,” one of the coaches walks over to me.

“Hey Davis,” I say, wiping my arm over my forehead.

“Want to set up a plan with you to strengthen your upper body? Focus on some push and pull exercises.”

Nice.

I’d been thinking about this last night, so I step into the conversation and for the first time this morning forget about a certain brown-eyed girl.

Ninety minutes later, we head to the conference room where everyone is gathered, and my brain freezes when I see her standing next to Head Coach Bill Waterman.

The fuck?

## CHAPTER FOUR

KAYLEE

---

The arrogant son of a bitch.

How dare he say those things to me? Like I’m some common whore.

Yes, he caught Colby kissing me. Yes, technically it was cheating, but I didn’t kisshim.

Levi didn’t bother to let me explain the situation and it’s clear he used it as an excuse

to end our relationship—which he wanted to do anyway.

How dare he assume I showed up at the Hawkes training camp this morning because I was fucking another player...and wearing his jacket?

If he'd taken a split second to think about it, the jacket was a size four.

Open your eyes, asshole. There ain't no size four players on this team.

Dick.

I wanted to punch the six-four, built-as-hell, handsome quarterback. And not just because of what he said. The moment he touched me and the way he stared down at my lips, my body buzzed with arousal.

Familiar arousal.

I know his body and he knows mine.

## Page 18

*Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:35 am*

It was the only reason I was silent.

I wanted him to kiss me. To feel his mouth on mine and to feel his tongue sweep inside and make me weak in the knees one more time.

I hate myself for still desiring Levi.

Especially when he clearly despises me.

He's just assumed I kissed Colby, and that's that. What sort of relationship would it be if he can't communicate?

What a lucky escape.

Liar. You wish you could turn back time and not go to the party. To have him slip inside your bed when he got home and thrust his thick, long cock inside you. While whispering in your ear that you're his kitten.

I don't know why he called me that.

"Hey kitten." Levi smirked when he picked me up for our second date.

It made me blush as he kissed my cheek.

That night we slept together. When his face was between my legs and tongue laving at my clit, he said, "Good girl, kitten. Let go and let me taste your precious juices."

I've never been so aroused or felt so taken care of by a man. His confidence was unbending. His skills, top notch.

As my body shuddered, and Levi lapped up the evidence of my pleasure, I lay staring at the ceiling in awe.

I wanted more. More of that and more time talking to him. Even that was amazing. He was on the path to becoming an NFL player and I was studying to become a sports physio. My father had always loved football—all sports actually—but never had the talent to play pro. My mom was a nurse. I figure the two of them rubbed off on me and by the time I was applying to college, I knew exactly what I wanted to do.

Working for the Philadelphia Hawkes was a dream. One I thought would take at least ten years to get the opportunity. As fate would have it, the guy whose job I now have ended up moving to London to marry the woman of his dreams.

They advertised the job and here I am.

"I'm so proud of you, sweetie," my dad said when I told them the news. "First you get a doctorate and now you're working for my team."

His team.

When his arms wrapped around me, I felt tears prick my eyes.

"And hey," Dad said, pulling back. "Don't you let that Montgomery boy upset you. He's a good quarterback but not worthy of my girl."

It wasn't the first time guilt had laced through me when he spoke about Levi like that. I was the guilty party.

But there was no way in hell I could tell Dad what happened. When I was younger, I overheard my parents talking and Dad accused Mom of cheating on him.

She hadn't.

When I asked her about it, she patted my hand and said, "Don't worry about your father. He was upset seeing me laughing with the man I got the house paint from. I would never cheat on Dad. But the woman he dated before me did. And he's always been a little insecure."

Oh.

It explains why every time a couple we knew or someone in the neighborhood divorces, he immediately says, "I bet she cheated."

I always wondered what that was about.

Mom would just say in warning, "Hank."

"Go ask them. I saw her at the street Christmas party last year all dolled up," he once replied.

It all makes sense.

## Page 19

*Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:35 am*

So no. I am not telling my father I kissed—was kissed by—Colby Wade.

But anyway, I don't know why I'm surprised at Levi's response to seeing me. A few months back Steph and I were at a party when he and Atlas showed up.

I didn't know they were going to be there, but in they walked, and half the women lost their minds. The Montgomery boys are popular to say the least.

I did my best to hide in the corner.

I was successful.

Until I went to the restroom and made my way back to the kitchen to top off my drink.

“Yeah I saw her,” Levi said.

“Consider it a lucky break,” Atlas said. “You know she's just a fan looking for a jersey.”

I froze at the corner of the door where they couldn't see me as my face burned with both shame and anger.

How dare they?

I waited for Levi to defend me.



He didn't.

"Guess it was a learning curve," he replied, and I felt my heart sink.

"Yep, and bro, there will be a hell of a lot more green jersey chasers in the years to come. So just ignore her."

"I don't care anymore. It's over. Barely got started."

Atlas snorted. "Just another college girl, huh?"

"Exactly. A really good fuck."

My mouth had fallen open. I tore away from the wall and ran outside. I found Steph, and we left.

Despite being together a short time—just months—I thought we had real feelings for one another. I was the only one, obviously.

Those words hurt me every time I think about them.

Now I have to see him every day.

But I chose this, and I'll have to get over it to live my dream job. While he lives his.

The head coach lets out an ear-piercing whistle and the room full of players and staff start to settle. He raises his hands.

"Everybody quieten down."

The players stand, leaning on different walls, and cross their arms. No one is in a suit.

Even the management and employees, like me, are in casual attire. This is a sports training facility, after all.

I sense my white sneakers, black tights, crop top and Hawkes sweatshirt are going to be a kind of uniform over the next several months.

Two more players walk in, laughing at something, and then zip their lips when they see everyone.

Jackson Billows snorts.

I smile and he winks at me in a friendly gesture.

I don't know everyone, but enough of them to have felt the warm welcome.

Except Levi.

I glance in his direction and there's no wondering about how he feels now he's worked out why I'm here. He's furious.

Good.

Hope he feels like an asshole.

"It's a new year. New players. And some new team members," Bill Waterman says. He does a round of introductions for the other newbies, including one of the marketing girls, Toni, who I think might end up being a nice friend.

Then he looks at me.

"And Kaylee Rose, which I know many of you are familiar with."

The room fills with greetings, whistles, and some taunting.

While they know I dated Colby and Levi, no one seems to be aware of the tension between us, which means Levi's cruel comment about me to his brother stayed right there.

"She's joined the physio team, working part time with Natalie and Glen."

Natalie is my boss. She's the head physio for the Hawkes and I'm excited to learn from her. I haven't met Glen yet.

“Kaylee is a Doctor of Physical Therapy, so just because she’s done shots with you, doesn’t mean you don’t take her serious when she gives you treatments,” Coach sternly says.

“I’m not getting any more damn injuries this season,” Kemal mutters, and I chuckle because last season he had three and sat on the bench with a scowl for the rest of the season.

“I want to look at your ankle.” Natalie folds her arms. “Come see me after this.”

“You need to stop doing all that dancing and do more throwing the ball.” Someone nudges Kemal's shoulder and next minute four of them are play-tackling one other.

Coach shakes his head and turns to us. “Well, welcome to the NFL. Don’t expect it to get any more professional than this.”

We all chuckle.

I let my eyes drift to Levi, who stands with his arms crossed at the back of the room. Not happy. Making a quick decision, as everyone starts piling out, I head in his direction.

Like he was expecting me to do just that, Levi doesn’t move. Just stands there staring while I get closer and closer.

He’s in a pair of black shorts and a white singlet showing off his defined muscles and the last of his summer tan. The way his dark hair is mussed from his workout looks exactly the way it did after I’d run my hands through...while he was thrusting inside me.

Do not think about that.

Not being attracted to this man is simply not possible. He towers over me and I'm pretty sure he's something like twice my width.

Not going to lie, I love big men. Their size makes me feel all feminine, and given I'm sporty, I like that.

The moment I saw Levi, I was immediately affected. I was running to class and late. There were no close parking spots left, so I had to leave my car miles away. Then run.

I was fit, but by the time I reached the campus, my brow was sweating and my books were sliding out of my arms.

Then one dropped.

I stopped, skidded on the wet pavement, and fell straight on my ass.

"Fuck!" I cursed and heardwoah there,before a strong arm hooked around my waist and placed me back on my feet like I weighed nothing more than a bag of rice.

To be fair, I'm only five foot three.

"You might want to walk when it's wet. It gets slippery," Levi said with humor in his voice as I dusted myself off and straightened my bag. Then he asked, "You okay?"

## Page 21

*Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:35 am*

I finally looked up and holy hell. The bluest eyes I'd ever seen held mine and I couldn't talk. My cheeks heated, and it took a whole five long seconds before I remembered I was late for class.

"Shit. I have a lecture. Thank you." I spurted out and walking backward, I waved, turned around, and pressed my eyes closed.

Holy shit, he's gorgeous, I remember thinking.

"Wait!" Levi called out to me, and I slowed, glancing over my shoulder.

"What's your name?" He laughed.

"Kaylee," I answered. "Kaylee Rose."

I realized he was slightly familiar but couldn't place him completely as he slid his hands into his pockets and grinned like an idiot.

It began to rain again, but he just stood there watching me walk backward into the building.

For two days I walked around in a daze, wondering who he was and if I'd ever see him again.

Finally, I walked out of my afternoon class, and he was leaning against the wall.

My heart leaped and about ten million butterflies started flying around inside my

tummy.

Pushing away from the wall, he casually started walking alongside me, took my books, tucked them under his arm, and said, “Have dinner with me tonight.”

“I don’t know you.” I laughed.

“I saved your life,” he said, staring ahead.

I snorted. “Hardly saved my life.”

“You don’t know. A car could have careened up over the lawn and killed you.”

“Try again...” I giggled despite myself.

“Earthquake?”

I shook my head.

“Tornado. It could have ripped right through the campus, and you’d have lost those precious moments getting to safety while on your cute ass.”

I stopped and he did the same.

“You think I have a cute ass?” I grinned.

Levi leans down closer to my face. “I think a lot of things, Kaylee Rose.”

A shiver ran through every inch of my body.

“I don’t know your name,” I whispered as people pushed past us, but that’s when I

noticed he was wearing a Penn State Nittany Lions sweater.

“Levi. Montgomery.” He winked as I connected the dots.

He was a football player. Not just any football player...he was the Penn State quarterback.

Holy hell.

I was starting to say that a lot.

“I’ll pick you up at seven,” Levi said, then handed me back my books and pushed a lock of hair over my ear.



## Page 22

*Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:35 am*

I was a goner.

He walked down the hallway while I stared at his tight ass and just stood there.

Stephanie bumped up against me.

“Were you talking to Levi Montgomery?” she asked.

My head spun. “You know him?”

“He’s the quarterback. How do you not know him? Wait, do you know him or not know him? I’m confused.”

I slapped my forehead.

I knew the name and if I’d really paid attention I would recognize him, but Levi looked different out of uniform. I wasn’t the groupie type. I worked hard during college and went to the occasional game. There wasn’t a lot of time even though I loved the sport. But unlike a lot of the girls on campus, I didn’t have a crush on any of the players.

Don’t get me wrong, there were some gorgeous guys on the team, but in just two meetings, Levi had stolen my heart.

I push the memories to the back of my mind and focus on the Levi I know today.

The one who wishes I didn’t exist.

Stopping a few feet in front of him, I wait a split second for his apology. After all, he'd been extremely rude this morning.

I should have known I wouldn't get one.

"You could have told me you were fucking working here, Kaylee."

His voice is low so no one can hear.

"I'm sorry. I thought your phone was broken. I'm still waiting for a reply from my other twenty messages." I hiss.

We glare at one another.

"What did you want me to say? That it was okay for you to suck Colby's face while my girlfriend? And have a nice fucking day?"

No.

Yes.

Kind of.

I wanted a chance to explain and see if he felt the way I did so we could move past it. Which he didn't. So it is what it is.

Sadness rushes through me and no way in hell am I going to let him see it.

"Clearly it wasn't important enough for you to respond, so let's leave it at that." I shrug.

Levi's brows lift slowly, as if he can't believe I said that. Why not? It's true.

Suddenly, he grabs my arm and drags me around the corner.

"Important? How about being loyal? Jesus, Kaylee." He shakes his head. "And now you're working here. You may not know how important this is to me, but...it is. And I cannot have you messing this up for me!"

I swallow.

How the hell would I mess it up?

I came over to clear the air, but instead he's attacking me again.

## Page 23

*Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:35 am*

“My job is important to me, too. It’s not just—”

“Bullshit. You could’ve found a physio role anywhere. How many quarterback positions do you think are out there?”

We both know the number.

Not many.

I hate that he’s right, but it’s selfish of him to say it out loud and make me feel like I don’t matter. That my dreams are less than his.

This job was also something I’d been wishing for and working hard to achieve.

If he thinks his life is more valuable than mine, then maybe Dad is right about Levi. Spoiled little rich kid.

I hate thinking that about him, but he’s proving my father’s point.

I shake my head. This is ridiculous. For someone who was actively pulling away from our relationship before the Colby moment, Levi certainly reacted dramatically.

Pride. Like Stephanie said. I hurt his pride. Well, he needs to get over it.

“We were together for eight weeks, Levi. Let’s be grown-ups. I’m sorry I hurt you.” I shake my head. “But for now, we are working at the same company.”

His face darkens and I try to step back but hit the wall behind me.

“Don’t flatter yourself. You didn’t hurt me. You embarrassed me.” His eyes run down the length of my body, then he glances away and curses before returning to meet my eye. “You’re right. We were nothing more than just a couple of weeks of good sex.”

Wow.

But his words don’t cut as deep as he wants them to. I already heard him say the exact thing to Atlas. The wound is already healed.

“Levi...”

“You might want to keep those thighs closed around here. Dating, and I use that term loosely, is highly discouraged in the organization.”

My eyes fly open wider.

Asshole.

“Fuck you, Levi!” I hiss and I shove at his chest then stride away, blinking back my hurt.

No one gets to treat me like a slut twice.

## CHAPTER FIVE

LEVI

---

I shovel the last mouthful of salad into my mouth and slide my plate away. I didn't know it was possible to be hungry and not at the same time.

But it is.

I'm only eating because I spent over eight hours training, and I need to fuel my body now. I'm a professional athlete. Although swallowing the chicken breasts was like a lead weight.

I rub a sore muscle in my shoulder and lean back in the chair.

"So, good first day?" Kyler asks as he sits beside me at the kitchen counter.

"Yeah. Felt good to be there." I smile, even though I am trying to bend time and go back so I can have a do-over with Kaylee.

*Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:35 am*

Not our relationship, that's irreparable.

I mean our conversation. I was rude. Really fucking rude. My mother would be ashamed of me and...well, I'm ashamed of myself.

I meant what I said though—most of it, anyway.

Months of hurt, anger, and frustration boiled up and exploded when I got her alone in the hallway. When she shoved me and disappeared, I caught the glisten of tears in her eyes, and it did something to me.

All this time, I thought she'd dumped me for an NFL player and it just didn't work out. No surprise—Colby's relationship average is worse than mine.

But today, as she ran from me, I realized I might be wrong. I also realized a few other things.

I fucking miss her.

I miss her pretty whisky-colored eyes, her soft locks, her sexy smile.

I miss hearing her smoky voice and little giggles.

The way she skips around life, positive and excited.

I miss having her in my arms.

In my bed.

In my life.

How I used to surprise her after class. Take her for drives and impress her with my stupid car. Well, not that stupid—it's a Maserati, the sexiest car on the planet.

According to me.

I miss working out while she reads one of her textbooks, studying toward her own degree. Not that we are in college anymore. We've both graduated and are living different lives now.

Unfortunately, not that fucking different. Kaylee is working for the Hawkes.

Jesus, fuck.

"But?" Drew climbs off his chair and heads over to my fridge for another beer. He holds it up in question.

Kyler and I shake our heads.

Atlas, with a mouth full of chicken, says, "I'll have one."

"Why are you not home with your nearly wife?" I ask my brother.

He swallows. "She's insane."

Drew laughs.

Molly is not insane. I know that for a fact. But she is pregnant with twins, and from



what I've observed, Atlas has become a he-man. Way overprotective and driving her nuts.

"She kicked you out, didn't she?"

Atlas takes the beer from Drew and shrugs.

"She kicked him out," Kyler says, and bites down on a piece of grilled chicken.

"Fine. She said we need space tonight and that I should go and play elsewhere before, and I quote, she fucking kills me for knocking her up," Atlas admits.

We all burst out laughing.

## Page 25

*Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:35 am*

An image of Kaylee pregnant with my child appears completely uninvited inside my head.

Ugh.

Is this what my life will be like every goddamn day with her working for the Hawkes? There is no way I can ignore my feelings for her. Then and now. I may hate what she did, but my body still reacts.

Yes, my cock.

But also my chest. The tightening I felt seeing her wet eyes and the force under my feet pushing me to go after her distracted me all afternoon.

I climb down off my stool and gather the empty plates, dropping them in the sink, leaving them for my cleaners.

For me, adjusting to being a professional player is more about the day-to-day stuff than the financials.

Yes, earning multiple millions every season is a shit ton of money, but as a wealthy man already, there's no giddy excitement about buying new cars, or having employees to help me in my home and life. That infrastructure is already set up.

Like everyone in my family, I have a large home, staff to take care of things, and my gorgeous Maserati. Oh, and a couple of shiny wristwatches.

Along with the surname and money comes media attention.

Becoming a quarterback for the Hawkes is a big deal, but when it's the son of Ward Montgomery, the press thinks it's an even more interesting story.

The real story is me performing once I get on the field.

The moves I make.

The mistakes.

The wins.

And everything in between.

Coach is yet to make a decision about whether I'll be the starting quarterback or keep me on the bench for a few games.

I don't know what the right decision is. Of course I want to get on the field and do my thing, but the pressure is enormous, and I have the entire team to think about.

It's not just about my career.

I want to see us make it to the Super Bowl. Like every player. And to do that, I need to focus on my game...not Kaylee.

Kyler and Drew head off and just as I'm about to tell Atlas he needs to get the hell out of my house and go home to his pregnant fiancé, he reaches for his jacket and picks up his keys.

"About time," I tease. As brothers, we couldn't be any closer, but that doesn't mean

we don't hassle the shit out of one another.

“What happened today?” he asks.

“What?”

“Something happened.”

Fuck.

Of course, he noticed my mood. I would've been able to hide it from Knox—maybe—but not Atlas or Bella. They're way too observant and intuitive.

I sigh and lean my ass against the back of an armchair, then cross my arms. “Kaylee was there.”

He startles. “Why?”

“She's working for the Hawkes. One of the new physios.”

*Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:35 am*

“Jesus. She didn’t think to tell you?” he grunts.

I shake my head. “She doesn’t owe me anything...and in her words, it’s been months.”

He lifts a shoulder and nods. “True. You okay?”

No.

“Yeah. I, ah, I said a few things I shouldn’t have,” I confess. “If I’d known she was going to be there, I could have processed it beforehand, you know.”

Atlas nods.

“But I was a dick.”

“So apologize. Move on,” my brother says.

“Yeah.” I unfold my arms and run a hand through my hair.

As if it’s that easy. I thought she was important. That we were each other’s future. Kaylee was not just some girl I dated for a few weeks.

Despite telling her that.

Despite telling Atlas that months ago.

He watches me.

“Dude.” I lift my eyes to his. “You still like her.”

“I never didn’t like her.” I growl, knowing I should shut up, but the words fall out and I can’t stop them.

This is what she does to me.

She tilts my world, and I feel unbalanced.

Atlas drops his jacket over the back of the sofa and plants his hands on his hips. “Do not forget what happened. The coach nearly dropped you at Penn State. You need to stay focused on the game. Not Kaylee Rose.”

“You think I don’t know that?” I snap.

Glancing down, he draws in a breath. “God, Levi, I want to throttle this girl. If she fucks this up for you...”

I push away from the chair and walk over to him, slapping him on the shoulder. “She can’t. Only I can do that. Listen, don’t worry, this is far too important to me. It was just a surprise today. That’s all. I’ll be fine tomorrow.”

I meant what I said. I can blame Kaylee all I want, but I don’t want to hear anyone else doing that. After all, it’s my responsibility to stay focused. No one else’s.

I’m a professional athlete. If I gave that power away to anyone else, I’d fail in a week.

“Anyway, I don’t think she’ll talk to me again after what I said. So it’s likely we’ll

just zig and zag, keeping out of each other's way." I smirk, a little ashamed.

My parents raised me to respect women, so it wasn't a proud moment.

But she broke my heart

I've never admitted this. Not even to myself. Before Kaylee cheated on me, I was struggling with my feelings for her.

I'd fallen in love.

As brothers we'd claimed we'd never marry—now of course they'd all broken that vow—so being the youngest and still at college, it had taken me by surprise.

How could I be in love so young?

*Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:35 am*

I hadn't been drafted yet, and my mom had only died a few years ago.

Kaylee was my first serious girlfriend. One I couldn't imagine spending my life without. But I was questioning it. Telling Kaylee that I loved her was a big deal. I needed to be sure.

Did I know what love was?

Was it just because she was the only woman I'd spent much time with? We'd been spending every free moment together, when I wasn't training, at a game, or at class, so I made some shitty excuses and did some things on my own.

This period coincided with when we had a big family dinner. I wanted to invite her. I should have invited her. But it felt like a big deal to have her there. Not only would it have sent a message to Kaylee that we were serious, my family would have thought the same thing. So I decided this would be a good one to sit out and see how I felt not having her there.

I missed her.

The following weekend was Jackson Billows party. The rest is history.

So I concluded that, no, it wasn't love.

We were together for eight weeks, Levi.

To Kaylee, it meant nothing. She more or less said that this morning with her



statement.

It was time I moved on.

I refuse to mess up my professional football career, like I nearly did in college.

I will be her friend.

Nothing more.

---

TWO HOURS LATER, I'm lying in bed, jerking off as I picture Kaylee on her knees, her bare ass under my hands as I thrust my cock inside her.

She moans my name as her small, pert breasts bounce under her. Then gasps as I pinch her nipples in my imagination.

"Come for me kitten," I imagine telling her, as my thick muscular thighs drop, and my hand fists my cock.

"Harder," she begs.

"My girl likes her pussy pounded, does she?"

My hips lift off the bed and I let out a moan. Come spills over my abs and the relief I feel is minimal.

I let out a frustrated groan.

As a newly minted player, there are plenty of choices out there. I'm done being

thePlayer. I want what I had with Kaylee.

Correction: I want something better. Someone loyal and honest, who feels the way I do. Not someone who just wants a guy wearing a football jersey.

I liked being able to talk with Kaylee and share my dreams. I'd tell her about my plays as we jogged through the park, and I'd help her study.

In many ways both our interests were on the athletic body. Mine, my own. Hers, those of her future patients.

I just had no idea that I'd be one of them.

As her fucking ex-boyfriend.

I've fucked a few girls since we broke up, and I'm almost certain it makes me feel worse. I may not have known back then, but I do know now...I loved Kaylee Rose.

That's what hurts the most.

*Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:35 am*

I stare at the ceiling, then reach for my phone.

Friends.

It's time to truly let her go.

### CHAPTER SIX

KAYLEE

---

I lean my head against the steering wheel of my car and start to cry. It's been a day from hell. I don't know if I have the strength to deal with this right now.

My car won't start, it's dark outside, and my father has been rushed to hospital.

Goddamn life.

When I woke up this morning Levi had messaged —sent at two in the morning—that simply said sorry. Otherwise, he's avoided me all day.

Has he? Or does he just not care enough to look my way?

His conscience clearly got the better of him, and he decided to apologize. I guess that's something. Now, he's free to carry on and live his life.

You should too.

Even though we haven't spoken in months, seeing him yesterday has stirred things in me. I still want answers. I want to know why I wasn't good enough for him back then.

Why didn't he invite me to the stupid family event?

Did he not think we were good together?

I thought we were happy.

I thought he was happy. Until he began pulling away. I can't even blame another woman, as he's not been linked to anyone since we split up.

"We aren't in the same league as his family, Kaylee," my father said. "His father is Ward Montgomery. They probably have expectations about who their sons marry."

I stared at him that day, bewildered. "Then why would he date me?"

Dad frowned at me. "Why do boys date any girls?"

Oh, my god.

My own father telling me that a boy just spent two months dating me for sex. And nothing else.

"Hank, you don't know that's true." Mom had told him off as he dropped his utensils and wiped his mouth on a napkin.

"I do. I was a young man once. If a guy doesn't take you home to meet his family

after a few weeks of dating, then—and don't shoot the messenger— he's not looking for a wife, and he's getting his other needs met.”

My face had been a beet red.

How could I have been so dumb?

The next day, Levi said he was going to do some circuits around the park and would just see me at Penn State the next day, instead of us going back to his place.

My instincts were on fire, and I was worried.

I really didn't want to hear their's me, not yourspeech. I also hoped Dad was wrong.

*Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:35 am*

I will never know.

That weekend we went to the party at Jackson's and Levi caught Colby kissing me.

I blink down at the dashboard in my car, willing it to start as I sit in the dark.

Dad.

Now my father is in the hospital. He's been having heart problems for a few months and the doctor said he had to change his diet.

Mom called from the hospital three hours ago saying he'd been taken there by ambulance after having severe chest pains.

"I'll be right there." I leaped up from my chair.

"No! Stay at work. He's fine. Stable. Just another scare." Mom reassured me.

"Scare? He was taken there by ambulance, Mom."

"We'll be home in an hour. Come by after work. If anything happens, I'll let you know," she'd said. "It's your second day at a new job. Don't leave."

Traffic would have been a challenge to get through, so she was right. I'd hung up and sat at my desk, staring at the phone.

I wasn't a doctor, but I had some medical knowledge due to my degree. She'd been

telling the truth—it wasn't an emergency and was a known issue.

If it had been serious, I trust that Mom would've told me I needed to get in there fast.

Dad had been warned to make lifestyle changes and hadn't. Hopefully, this was the scare he needed. But then again, he's a stubborn man.

And here I am sitting in my car crying. Between seeing Levi again, Dad being rushed to hospital, and my car not starting, I burst into tears.

A knock on the window startles me.

Fuck.

I lift my head off the steering wheel and find Levi staring at me through the window. He spins his fingers to tell me to wind my window down.

I shake my head.

God, this is the last thing I need. I wipe my eyes, turning my head and wave out my hand.

"Kaylee," his muffled voice calls through the window.

"I'm fine."

"Open the damn window," he says.

Ugh.

I can't. There is no power. The car is dead. So I open the door, letting in the cold air,

and glare.

“What?”

“Why have you been sitting out her for twenty minutes?” Levi asks, hitching his bag onto his shoulder.

The hood of his Hawkes hoodie is up over his head, and I notice he has scruff on his jawline. I’ve always thought he looks the most handsome when he hasn’t shaved.

It’s a little rough...like he was with my body.

Oh god.I clench my thighs, and I’m not sure, but I think he notices.



## Page 30

*Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:35 am*

Taking a step back, he frowns. “Kaylee.”

“I’m fine.” Grabbing my handbag and digging through it for my phone, I climb out of the car. “Just need to go back inside.”

Jesus, I’m the worse liar in history.

“It took you twenty minutes to figure that out?”

I tug my bag on my shoulder and slam the car door. “Yes.”

I meet his eyes, and Levi blinks.

“Did you get my message?”

“Thanks. Apology accepted.” My voice is softer and suddenly I have this ridiculous need for him to wrap me in his arms.

Shit.

A tear threatens to escape. “Okay, I—”

As I turn to walk away, Levi reaches for my arm and the waterworks explode out of me like a bubble bursting.

“Woah.” He drops his bag and his strong body envelopes me.

Nestled inside his big strong arms, I press into his chest and cry my little heart out. Without a word, he just holds me, rubbing his hand along my back.

After a long moment, I suddenly realize how inappropriate this is and an awkwardness sets in. I fight it for as long as I can, not wanting to ever leave his arms.

I promise to reflect on that later, but right now, I need to get over to my parent's place to see Dad.

"I'm sorry," I say and reluctantly lift my head.

"You want to tell me what happened?" Levi glances around, and when a couple of the players exit the building, he takes a step away.

Cold air replaces the warmth of his body, and I wrap my arms around my middle.

"Dad is in the hospital."

"Shit, Kaylee," he says, shaking his head. "Is it serious?"

"Yes. No. It's his heart. He's on his way home now. But..."

Levi waits for me to keep talking about I don't want him to know everything about my life. I don't want him to be the man I share this with.

I do.

But wanting that will only lead to more disappointment. Right now he's only comforting me because, while I hate to admit it, Levi Montgomery is a gentleman.

"I just need to ring an Uber." I admit.

I feel stupid. All around us are luxury vehicles that most people in America could never afford, and while no one expects me to own one, the least my trusty—past tense—Toyota could do is start.

Levi glances at it, then seems to make a decision.

“I’ll give you a ride. Come on.”

He’s already moving, and my traitorous body follows for some reason.

“That’s okay. Levi, wait.” He turns and I bump into his back.

## Page 31

*Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:35 am*

Oomph.

He grabs my arms and lets out the sexiest grumbling sound I've ever heard. "You need to stop doing that."

"Sorry." I bite my lip, and he makes that sound again.

"I'll just order an Uber. Thank you, though." My words come out choppy and I'm unsure what the protocol is here.

Yesterday we were screaming at each other. Today he's...god, he's running his hands up and down my arms.

Warming me.

But I'm burning up. I want him to kiss me. My eyes lift to his, half filled with a question.

"Levi—"

Beep.

"Get in the car, Kaylee," he rumbles, then opens the door and waits.

I climb into the Maserati and nestle into the soft leather as he tosses his sports bag in the trunk then drops into the driver's seat. We don't speak as he fires up the engine with a roar. Actually, it's more a purr.

Without thinking, I reach for the seat warmer button and push it. As I did when we were dating.

My finger halts after and I glance at him.

His eyes hold mine for half a second, then he lifts them to the mirror and reverses out of the parking space.

With his foot on the pedal, and I'm sure there is a bit more gas than is needed, Levi drives out of the Hawkes' parking lot, and we hit the highway.

This is not at all how I saw today ending.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### LEVI

---

“You want me to drop you at your house or your parents’?” I ask Kaylee, then wonder if she is still living in the same place.

She might have moved.

For all, I know, she has a boyfriend.

My teeth clench at the thought of her with another man. I might have had photos of her and Colby shoved down my throat, but she wasn't with him for long.

Who knows, she might be in a relationship with someone I don't know.

“Or wherever,” I grind out.

“I want to see Dad,” Kaylee answers, and I immediately feel like a dick.

Her dad was just in hospital and all I’m thinking about is her waking up with some guy wrapped around her body.

“So what’s the story?” I widen my thighs to get comfortable and glance down at her.

My little kitten.

She’s so tiny, sitting in the black leather seat of my Maserati. I forgot how much I like seeing her in it.

## Page 32

*Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:35 am*

It's fall, so gone are her little shorts and dresses, replaced with another pair of black leggings showing off her taunt and toned legs. A Hawkes sweater drapes the top half of her body, and I notice she has the sleeves rolled at her wrist.

"The doctor told him he had to make some changes, as his heart wasn't good." Kaylee sighs. "He hasn't. Today, at work, they called an ambulance."

My hand reaches for her, and I stop it just in time, running it through my hair. "Not good. Think this might scare him?"

I don't look at her.

I can't.

If I do, I'll want to take her hand and pull her into my arms, and I can't because I'm fucking driving... and because she's not mine.

Regardless, I wasn't going to let her sit out in the car on her own. When I walked out of the building, I saw a shadow inside her vehicle and went to check it out. I knew she'd left twenty minutes earlier as I'd watched her leave.

When I got closer I saw it was Kaylee with her head on the steering wheel, my instincts kicked in and without a second thought, I was knocking on the window.

Because I'm her friend.

Whatever, liar.

“It scared us. Mom and me,” she replies and wraps her arms around her middle.

I go quiet. Memories of losing my mom just a few years ago come flooding back. I know the fear, the panic, and the deep grief. It never goes away. They say it fades, but it’s still raw.

I don’t want her to feel the same pain I did.

Do feel.

“Did you call Stephanie?” I ask, knowing I can’t be there for her, and I really don’t want to ask if she has a boyfriend.

“Not yet.”

I turn off the highway and head toward her parent’s house.

As we get closer, Kaylee glances up. “Thanks for the message.”

I nod, then laugh because I sent it at two in the morning. Just after stroking my damn cock. She deserved my apology, and we have to work together so I wanted to clear the air.

“Yeah, random time. I just...you know. I was rude, and that wasn’t okay.”

We share a smile as I turn onto her parents’ road. When the car glides to a stop outside, I turn, trying to ignore her toned petite frame I once loved throwing over my shoulder...and pleasuring.

So much fucking pleasure.



Her body purred like a kitten—hence the nickname—the moment I touched her.

“I can wait. Or come in.”

“I don’t deserve you being this nice.” Kaylee’s eyes dip.

I reach out and squeeze her fingers. “Hey. Your dad got rushed to the hospital. I lost my mom not that long ago, remember? This is grown-up stuff.”

She snorts out a little laugh.

“Yeah. It is. Levi...I’d really like the chance to explain one day. But—”

“No need.”

This is not the time, and I don’t want to hear that she wasn’t into me anymore. That she never thought we would work and didn’t feel the same way about me.

*Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:35 am*

What was done was done?

I'd made my decision to truly get over her.

"I want to. I thought—"

"Truly Kaylee. It's over. I'm just being a friend. That's all."

I don't miss the flash of hurt cross her face.

What is that?

She cheated on me.

God this woman is confusing.

"Sure. I know...shit. I'm sorry. Okay." She glances out at her parents' house. "Thank you for the ride. I'll see you at work tomorrow."

I nod as the front door of the house opens, and her mom stands in the doorway. Kaylee reaches and collects her purse, then climbs out, giving me a small wave goodbye.

I watch her walk along the path, trying to ignore the curve of her gorgeous ass and draw in the vanilla scent she left behind in my car.

I miss her.

I fucking miss her.

It's like becoming a pro footballer was too much good luck so the universe wanted to balance things out by putting the woman I love, and can't have, right in fucking front of me.

I'd really like the chance to explain.

Feeling her in my arms, being able to wrap my body around hers, took me back physically to a time when I thought she was the one.

Beside me, her slight frame fits like a glove.

Most of the time she was under my arm, her hand against my pec, and if she wasn't grinning up at me, there was a sizzle in those pretty brown eyes of hers.

There was never any question what it meant.

I need you.

I want you.

And as far as I knew, I made her happy.

I pull out of the street after the front door closes and floor the Maserati. I feel my cock harden as I remember the night I used the string of my robe to tie her arms up in the shower.

The warm water sprayed over her soaped-up body as I dropped to my knees.

"Legs wide, kitten," I instructed her, sliding my fingers through her soaked pussy.

The way she obeyed immediately had me reaching for my cock and stroking fast as I pressed my face into her sex and licked her.

Glancing up, watching her tremble, her small pert breasts shuddering needily, I almost came as fast as she did.

But I throttled my cock and released the tie, kissing her with the taste of her clit still on my tongue. Then said, “Down on your knees, Kaylee. I want to see you take all of me inside your hot mouth.”

“God, Levi. I need you inside me.”

“Patience,” I said, pressing her to the shower floor.

*Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:35 am*

I didn't ask her to swallow.

I released over her face as she peered up at me like I was some kind of god.

I felt like it when I was with her.

"Christ," I mutter, flooring it along the highway back to my penthouse.

How the hell am I going to survive an entire season of this? I need to either focus on the game or start dating.

A cold hard fuck is not going to fix this. Trust me, I've tried.

Now that we are friends, it's going to be even harder. Pun fucking intended.

It was so much easier when I hated her. No, I never hated her...I was embarrassed and broken-hearted.

That's the hardest pill to swallow.

---

KAYLEE

---

"Was that Levi?" Mom asks as I follow her into the living room.

Dad sits on the sofa, looking pale and more vulnerable than I've ever seen him. My heart sinks as I cross the room and throw my arms around him, sitting.

"Dad."

He pats my arm. "I'm okay, kiddo. It was just a scare."

"It was not just a scare, Hank. You have to take the doctor's orders seriously." Mom growls.

"I will. Don't nag me. I'll...die."

"Dad." I chuckle while Mom loses her mind at him. "Don't joke about that stuff."

He smiles down at me, then a frown appears. "Did I hear your mom say that Levi dropped you off?"

Damn.

I was hoping to dodge that question.

"My car wouldn't start." I sink into cushions. "So, what did the doctor say?"

"What's wrong with your car?" Dad asks, not giving up.

I shrug. "I don't know. Levi showed up, and it was already dark, so I accepted his offer to drive me over."

Both of them are silent.

"It's fine."

“Don’t you get back with that boy, Kaylee. He treated you horribly,” Dad warns me.  
“I don’t care how good he is with a football. He didn’t respect you.”

A part of me wants to tell them the truth. I can’t. Not with Dad’s heart the way it is. I know how he feels about people who cheat, and I definitely don’t want him to see me that way.

It would break my heart.

*Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:35 am*

I love my father.

What does it matter anyway? Levi did me a favor tonight and I doubt my parents will ever see him outside the TV screen again.

Despite the electricity in the car tonight, we are just friends. Even if I dared dream Levi might forgive me, or that my parents could see past what they think happened, I've dug myself into a hole with my little lie.

So there's no future for us.

Levi did apologize for being rude to me and I'm pleased, as we will need to work together this season.

That is, if we can ignore the chemistry that still flows like lava between us.

He can pretend all he likes, but I know that man. His eyes were roaming all over my body. The jaw grinding could be that he still hates me, but I suspect he wanted to touch me.

Because I wanted to touch him.

I wanted to feel his mouth on mine and melt into the sexual pleasure I know exists between us. My body was buzzing just sitting next to him.

That doesn't happen with anyone else.



“Levi and I are just colleagues, that’s all.”

Mom watches me for a long moment, then nods and says, “Let me get you some dinner.”

I thank her, then turn to Dad. “So, no more ice cream, huh?”

“My life is over.” He sighs as I grin and drop my head onto his shoulder.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### LEVI

---

“You ready for the next game?” Ward asks me as I watch him toss chicken, corn, and zucchini on the grill.

“Of course.” I grin and he glances at me in question. “It’s going fine, Dad. I’m loving it.”

He’s quiet for a moment, and I wonder what he’s concerned about. My answer comes a few seconds later.

“I hear Kaylee works there. That going to be a problem?”

Jesus.

Are there no secrets in this damn family?

I roll my eyes and press my bottle of beer to my lips, then empty it as I decide how to

answer the question.

Because it is a problem. She's on my mind twenty-four fucking seven. When I'm not training hard and wondering if she will walk past or watch me through a window, I'm at home jerking off at the idea of dragging her into the Hawkes training facilities' restrooms and bending her over to fuck her.

Believe me, I've even chosen the perfect spot.

And visualized it at least ten times.

I know she'd enjoy it, because I already know what Kaylee loves and doesn't. At least I thought I did.

And the mind games with myself continue.

"Fuck, Atlas has a big mouth." I grunt.

*Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:35 am*

“Language,” Ward growls.

“Dad, I’m twenty-three.” I laugh, stealing a slice of zucchini off the hot plate and shoving it in my mouth.

Then regret it immediately as it burns my tongue.

“There are grandchildren around now.” Ward frowns, glancing around the empty yard.

He’s irritated about Kaylee. He was on the front lines with me when I almost sabotaged my football career after we broke up.

After she cheated.

“Babies who can’t speak yet?” I slap him on the back. “Lighten up, Ward.”

He hates it when I call him by his name instead of Dad. Which is exactly why I did it.

“Make sure the table is set.” He growls as I wander off.

“Jeez. Becoming an NFL player clearly means nothing around here.”

“That’s right!” he yells out as I step inside the house.

The girls have already set the table, as I knew they would. Both Payton and Molly are zipping around carrying plates and bowls of salad while Knox bounces his son,

Daxon, in his arms.

He's the apple of his father's eye and the moment he was born, I swear my big brother changed.

Atlas swipes on his cell, ignoring everyone.

"Hey big mouth." I whack the phone and it flies up into the air, forcing my brother to juggle for it.

He catches it.

"Dick!" Atlas launches at me, misses, then chases me around the large living room.

My father's house is huge. A mansion, technically, and the home we all grew up in.

"What did he do?" Molly, his fiancé, asks.

I reluctantly bring the topic up again, but figure he's already told everyone.

"Kaylee is working for the Hawkes. It's no big deal, so just get it out of your systems now and let's move on." I sit at the table and eagerly await the food.

I'm starving.

The protein shake I had after training today wasn't enough. In fact, I need to speak to our nutrition team as I'm finding the increased pro level training so much more intense. I'm not sure my diet is right.

That and I'm not sleeping as well as I should.

The past two nights, after jerking off to images of her, I've woken up in a sweat after having a nightmare that Kaylee was attacked in the parking lot instead of me finding her.

It's illogical. There is security, and any number of other players could have helped her. But apparently my stupid unconscious mind thinks it needs to protect her.

I want to protect her.

I also want to sink my cock deep inside her and fuck her brains out.

It's been a month since I dropped her off at her parents' and not a day goes by that I don't see her. Except the weekends in between.

We're friendly, and I notice every single blush on her cheeks when I smile at her. She's still affected by me, and I like it.

*Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:35 am*

Every time I find myself thinking what if, I remind myself of that moment I found her with Colby.

I saw him once, after they ended, which was a short fling, so it appears. What a fucking waste. Or a lucky break. I just don't know. All he said was, "We cool, man? You know it was nothing, right?"

Great.

The woman I loved was nothing to him.

I wanted to punch the guy, but Colby Wade was one of the most respected footballers of our time. Talk about career limiting and media grabbing idea.

Instead, I looked him in the eye and said, "No, we aren't cool. She was my girlfriend. I don't know what happened, but both of you are to blame. So we aren't cool."

And I'd walked away.

Because I am Levi Mont-fucking-gomery.

He'd let it go. Mostly because he was on girl number seven hundred or something. Likely didn't truly give a fuck what I thought.

And I doubt he cared about Kaylee, either.

I was angry on her behalf for some stupid reason.

Now, I wish I hadn't deleted her messages. Now I want to know what she had to say. What her explanation was.

I can't ask now.

It's too late.

Way too late.

And I don't want her to read into anything.

Yesterday at work, there were no tables left in the café and our eyes met. Before I could stop myself, I kicked the chair out and motioned with my eyes for her to sit.

"You okay with this?" she asked, dropping her salad down and sitting.

"Sure. How's the job going?" I asked.

"Good." She glanced at me from under hooded eyes. "Except this one guy."

I blinked.

Was she really about to tell me about her love life?

"He hates me."

Oh, right. She'd been talking about me. The softness in her voice had wrapped around me like a cotton blanket.

"He doesn't hate you," I admitted.

He hates what you did, but he could never hate you.

Payton plonks down across from me and picks up her glass. “So this Kaylee. She was your first real girlfriend right? Love. Whatever. Of course, it was a big deal then, but I’m sure you’re over it, and your brothers can get off your back.”

I smile, even though I want to tell her I’m not over Kaylee and ask how the hell I get to that place.

How do you fucking get over someone?

Knox sits down next to her and hands the baby over. I note he’s wearing dress pants—no doubt Tom Ford or Armani—and decide whether to hassle him about it.



*Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:35 am*

It's a Saturday for god's sakes.

He's the director of marketing for Ward Enterprises. One day he'll be the CEO, but when Dad recently stepped back into semi-retirement, he told Knox he needed more experience.

I know it was hard for my big brother to hear but now he has a wife and child, with no doubt more on the way, so it allows him some work-life balance.

Although he is a workaholic.

All of us are in a way.

Atlas did work for the company as a senior designer but recently surprised all of us by resigning and starting his own fashion label.

Not to compete. That would be nonsensical as a major shareholder. He told us he's targeting men in their twenties. Street wear. Stuff that I'd wear, I guess.

I'm not business-minded like my father and brothers, but I feel like the companies will merge one day if he's a success. Given that Atlas won a design award recently, it's highly likely he will be.

Plus, he's a Montgomery.

We always win.

Just as the Hawkes have won every game for the past month.

We're headed to Houston next week to play their team, the Tigers.

They have traded some talented players this season so it could be a tough one.

"Them? Get off my back? Highly unlikely." I laugh.

"You need to date," Atlas tells me.

"He needs to focus on the game. There is plenty of time for women after he wins his first Super Bowl," Dad says, carrying in a huge plate from the grill.

No fucking pressure.

"How many do you think he's going to win?" Atlas sits down beside me, and Dad takes his place at the head of the table.

"All of them." He smiles at me.

Fucking hell.

Sometimes being part of such a high functioning family of successful people is a curse. Sometimes it is a blessing.

I wouldn't say there's an unhealthy attitude because Dad also taught us that losing is part of the journey and where you learn the most.

But.

Apparently not when it comes to football.

I sometimes wonder if he is aware of the pressure it puts me under. Him. The media. The team. The fans.

Jackson was right that night. It is so much harder than college football.

I love it.

But every day the pressure is on my shoulders.

I wonder if it gets easier with each season, and if I'll get to play another year. And another year after that.

“Yeah, okay. Thanks for believing in me, but you know the Hawkes have only won once before in 2017, right? And lost twice.”

*Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:35 am*

Ward waves at everyone to get started.

“Well, now they have a Montgomery on the team. We don’t lose.”

Molly and Payton watch me, and I wink at them. They’re still new in the family and they take everything we say literally.

“Hey, keep your eyes off my girl.” Knox growls.

Go, he’s so predictable...and easy to wind up.

“Sorry bro. NFL player now. The girls can’t keep away from me.”

A potato flies toward my head. I catch it with one hand and smirk at him as I pop it in my mouth.

“Christ. Can’t believe I missed with a head that size.” He groans.

I laugh out loud.

“That’s a lot of pressure,” Payton says. “Don’t you dare do that to our children!”

“Don’t need to. They’re Montgomery’s. Winners. It’s a given,” Knox says, shoveling food into his mouth, then points his fork at me. “Atlas is right. You need to date.”

I bite down onto my chicken with more force than necessary. It hits me that Kaylee will one day soon start seeing someone else and I’ll be forced, once again, to watch

her under someone else's arm.

"Sure."

"Ooh, what about Joanne?" Molly pipes up. "She's very pretty."

"Sounds lame. Joanne. Nope," I reply and the girls glare at me.

"What? I've never met a hot Joanne." I shrug and Dad shoots me a dark look.

Yeah, that was a stupid thing to say, but I don't want to date. I don't want to imagine doing all the things Kaylee and I did together with someone else.

It feels like I'd be replacing her.

Which I would be...

And should be.

I know it would be the right thing to do, but I'm not there yet.

I need to get off this topic.

Fast.

Before my sisters-in-law set me up.

"Anyway, just keep your expectations realistic. We have a good team, but it may take us a couple of seasons to get some traction."

Then we might win.

Half the team is new, and we have two new coaches plus a new manager. The owner has invested a ton in the Hawkes this year, but we all know it will be a miracle if we take the home trophy.

We're going to give it everything, though.

## CHAPTER NINE

KAYLEE

I grab my bag once the plane lands and try to keep my eyes on anything except Levi Montgomery. You'd think after almost seven weeks of being friends, I'd be immune to him.

I'm not.

If he smiles at me, I blush.

If he winks, my core clenches and I have to do all I can not to moan. Truly, I deserve an Academy Award for my act of being the ex-girlfriend least affected by the hottest ex-boyfriend.

I mean, he's an NFL Player, so shoot me.

I'm human.

That said, there are over fifty of them in the team and not one—not one!—of them affects me the way Levi does.

Natalie asked me about it one day a few weeks after I started. Not long after, he drove me to my parents after Dad was in hospital.

Levi had popped his head around the corner. "Nat, I know you're expecting me at four today, but I'm probably going to be ten minutes late. Sorry."

She nodded, barely concerned. “Thanks for letting me know.”

It was only because he stayed in the doorway, his hand gripping the top of it like he was a sports model on a photoshoot—which he totally could be—that she glanced up.

And caught him winking at me. “You good Kaylee?”

“I’m always good, you know that, Levi.”

He walked away with a slow smile, and I shook my head as my entire body heat rose a million percent.

Ugh, he’s just so sexy.

“Is there something going on between you two?” Nat asked, watching me.

Shit.

I shook my head. “No. No. We dated in college. Ages ago. He just likes teasing me.”

Her look said she didn’t believe me, but I just stuck my nose back in my computer and then dove into the supply cupboard, claiming to do a stock take. Instead, I leaned against the wall, bit my lip and wished Levi was in there with me.

I was going insane thinking about all the naughty things he could do to me. If only we weren’t just friends.

I did like that things were back on neutral ground again, though. He was the same happy, flirty Levi I’d met in college who made my heart flutter.

That was the problem.



How could I move on when my body and heart wanted the one man I couldn't have?

When the players have disembarked, the rest of us follow and head toward the bus waiting to take us to our hotel.

This is their first away game of the season, and the excitement is rich in the air.

"Hey short stuff," Gleeson, the center, says as I stride alongside him.

"Hey you," I reply as he takes my bag, hoisting it on his shoulder.

One thing I will say about these guys is they are all giant gentlemen. Their mammas raised them right, that's for sure.

"Thanks." I smile and swap my purse for my other arm. "Excited for the game tomorrow?"

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“We’re going to kick the Tigers’ asses!” he replies, and the next minute Jackson Billows and he are high fiving one another.

I glance down at my blue jeans, Adidas sneakers, and Hawkes jacket. I look plain and boring beside these guys. Many of them are decked out in designer gear. Some of it blingy, some bright and abstract.

All of it is excessively expensive.

I see Levi ahead of us. He’s wealthier than all of them, despite what some of them earn and for how long. As a newbie, he doesn’t yet have a sponsorship deal like many of the others, but he had his trust fund.

I know this from what he shared while we dated.

Oh, and Steph googled it.

Perhaps that’s why he’s wearing a stylish low- key gray suit, white shirt, and white sneakers. No doubt the Verity & Co. luxury brand owned by his family.

Or Tom Ford.

What did I know?

Levi seemed to prefer the spotlight off him when he wasn’t on the field. When he was, that was a whole other story. I’ve loved watching him play when the coach put him out there this season.

It was decided he wouldn't start the first game, but after a knee injury put the star quarterback out, Coach said he wanted to put Montgomery in while Carson Lott gave it a rest.

What a game.

They won that day and Levi had two touchdowns. The crowd loved him. Surprising all of us after each touchdown, he ran in a circle and did this stupid little dance.

Next minute, kids everywhere were doing the Levitate...as they called it. I loved that for him.

We slow, waiting to climb on the bus, while Gleeson is towering over me.

My phone beeps and I tug it out of my pocket. Then my heart skips a beat.

Levi.

I glance up and find him watching me.

Sit with me

I stare at the message, frozen on the spot, and I swear I would've stayed in that position if someone behind me hadn't nudged me forward.

Like a robot, I walk down the aisle and when I see him, I stop. Levi slides over and tugs me down into the seat.

Gleeson doesn't react, simply tosses my bag on the overhead shelf and keeps walking.

I stare at the seat ahead of me.

“Hi.” Levi leans closer as the bus begins to move.

“Hi,” I reply.

He wiggles, getting comfortable, and my eyes dip to his huge thighs and back up at him.

“Do you guys really need to spread your legs that much?” I ask without thinking.

He lets out a laugh, glances out the window trying to hide his smirk, and fails, then leans back and whispers. “I think you know the answer to that, Kaylee.”

I choke.

On nothing but oxygen.

*Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:35 am*

He pats my back, laughing.

“Don’t kill our physio, Montgomery,” Jackson calls out.

“I’m fine!” I hold up my hand, not wanting anyone to ask what we were talking about. Sitting back, I shoot Levi a pathetic attempt at a glare.

“Be careful. Someone might think you actually like me.”

He leans back against the headrest and closes his eyes. “No chance.”

I smile at the same time as he does, then follow suit and lean my head back, closing my eyes.

That’s when I feel his leg press against mine, and his hand brushes my arm. I swear I can feel his heartbeat, and it’s got the same rhythm as mine.

My body sizzles, craving more of his touch.

I don’t think I’m alone.

I think Levi craves me, too.

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THE WHISTLE BLOWS and the players burst into action in the second half of the game against the Tigers. In one snap the ball is passed to Levi, who the coach put on

the field again.

I clap way too much, and Natalie shoots me a look.

“He’s a friend. What can I say? I’m happy for him,” I say, playing it off as nothing despite really wanting him to fuck my brains out.

After sitting next to him on the bus, like a crazy teenage girl, I checked into my hotel room and had to go have a cold shower.

And relieve my ache.

Sliding my fingers through my swollen flesh, I moaned out his name. God. I need him so much it hurts.

It took about two minutes before a full body orgasm ripped through me.

Right now, I force my eyes to stay off the ball and do my job. That’s Sports Therapy 101. Watch the players, not the game. Especially the knees and ankles of the offensive line.

The job is not as glamorous as people would think, we spend less time hands on when there’s an injury and more time asking “what’s the score” or “what’s your kid's name” to ascertain if there’s a head injury.

That’s priority.

Of course, I’m only a few months into the job and still think it’s amazing, but I’m craving some good table time with some players.

Not for creepy reasons.

Although let's just say it's not a bad part of the job.

“Just remember, when it's a live game finding out if they are conscious and determining whether they can keep playing safely is the main focus. Assess if doing so will be a detriment to the team in the short and long term.” Natalie had told the physio team before game one.

It's just her and me this weekend.

She heads off to treat Kemal, who comes off after hurting his ankle, and I dart my eyes away from Levi.

They almost score, and the ball is stopped on the fifty-yard line by the Tigers.

The crowd roars.

I watch Levi talk into his helmet mic and nearby the coaches regroup, and there's a mix of discussions and banter around me.

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The game continues, and I begin to jump on the sport as Levi pump fakes the ball to Billows, then hands off to Gage, who runs down the field, past the twenty yard line, the ten, and...

Touchdown!

The stadium erupts.

Oh my god. I think we're going to win this game.

Then again, it's only halftime.

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BY THE LAST quarter I am so wound up I can't feel my fingers and toes.

They snap the ball to Levi, who hands it to Billows, who runs before being tackled by two Tigers.

Damn.

The play starts again. Gleeson snaps the ball to Levi, and in a practiced move, Billows leaps in the air.

Yes! I clench my fists and jog on the spot excitedly.

Ten minutes of play left.



Levi drops back for what looks like a promising deep pass, and I watch him scan the field—I assume for an open receiver—when the opposing team's linebacker breaks through our offensive line and slams into him.

Woah!

The stadium is full of gasps as Levi is driven hard into the turf.

The ball bounces away and one of the Hawkes grabs it and runs out of bounds thirty yards out.

I don't hesitate. I run out onto the field and drop down next to him as he clutches his shoulder.

“Out of ten, how much pain are you in?” I ask, looking him in the eye to assess any other issues.

“Seven. Fuck, eight.”

I stand, my hand on his arm, and nod to the coach who followed me.

He's off.

“God fucking damn it.” Levi curses as he grips his shoulder and runs beside us back to the bench.

## CHAPTER TEN

LEVI

---

Talk about wishes coming true. But I can think of better ways to get Kaylee's sexy little hands on me, and this isn't it.

I drop down onto the bench, my left shoulder hunched as pain slices through me.

"Can you move it?" she asks, kneeling before me.

Natalie walks over with Bill Waterman.

"Can you go back on?"

Shit.

“Eight and a half minutes on the clock,” someone says.

I push back my shoulders and, clenching my eyes, let out a “fuck!”

“He’s off. Get Carson out there,” the coach says, giving me a nod.

“Let’s get him out back and on the table.” Natalie tells Kaylee, who says got it and does this cute attempt at helping me stand, keeping her hand on the side of my back as we walk down to the club rooms.

“Have I dislocated it?” I moan loudly as I sit on the table.

“Cut his shirt off.” Natalie says and Kaylee grabs the scissors. “I need these shoulder pads out of the way so we can see what we’re dealing with.”

All the possibilities run through my head.

If I’ve torn a rotator cuff, I’ll be out the rest of the season. A clavicle fracture, which is very possible given the way Donovan from the Tigers drove me into the field.

Two minutes and a ton of pain later, Natalie takes a step back, reaches for some pain medicine, and props her hands on her hips.

“AC joint. You’re lucky, Montgomery.”

“Thank god,” Kaylee says, knowing as we all do that it should heal in a couple of weeks.

As in, not a serious injury.

If it had been dislocated, I’d be out for the rest of the season.

“Get him an ice pack and back out on the benches so the media doesn’t lose their mind,” Nat says, then adds. “After the game, I want a sling on that arm.”

I climb off the bench and my ankle tweaks.

“Jesus, I’m falling apart.” I toss down the drugs.

Kaylee laughs. “Come on. I’ll work your ankle while you watch the rest of the game.”

She hands me the ice pack, then we head back out to bench. I get comfortable as a few of the team check on how I am.

By the time the coach glances over, with just five minutes left on the clock, Kaylee is crouched in front of me, my boot off, and rubbing some muscle cream into the ankle.

Goddamn, the images running through my head right now. I drown out the crowd and go back to that moment in the shower as her surprisingly powerful little fingers glide over my muscles.

Shit.

I open my eyes. Christ, I do not want a boner while all these cameras are on me.

Kaylee glances up at me and I groan. “Sore?”

“Something like that.” I smirk and grimace at the same time, adjusting the ice.

“You good, Montgomery?” Coach asks.

“AC joint,” I reply. “I’ll be back in action in a couple of games if not next week.”

With a nod, he turns back to the game. Around fifty percent of professional quarterbacks suffer from these during their career, so no one is surprised, I guess.

We’re two points behind. The tension is thick as I lean forward, watching Carson catch and pass the ball. There are ten seconds on the clock.

Kaylee’s hand tightens around my ankle. Her head turns to the game.

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*Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:35 am*

“Touchdown! For the Philadelphia Hawkes and they take the game,” the announcer cries.

Both Kaylee and I leap up at the same time and bounce off each other. I grab her, as she grabs me, and my shoulder hurts like a motherfucker. But her hands are up against my chest and the joy in her eyes as she giggles up at me is like the best pain relief known to man.

Almost.

It does still hurt like fuck.

If a million eyes weren’t on us right now, I think I would probably kiss her. The urge to tug her against me, drop my mouth to hers is so damn powerful I am not sure how I’mnotdoing it.

“We won,” she says, not looking away.

“We did,” I reply roughly, though no one will hear with all the cheering.

Our players return from the field and Kaylee spins and holds her arms up to protect me when someone tries to slap me on the back.

“Injured!” she calls out.

I snort.

She's so damn little it's hilarious she's standing in front of me right now.

Billows runs off the field and glances at the two of us. He picks her up, drops her back on the ground a few feet away, then embraces me.

I've never felt more pain in my life.

"You played well, brother. Those touchdowns in the beginning, man, they got us to the finish." He slaps me one more time on my injured shoulder.

"Jackson." Kaylee nudges at him. "You're hurting him."

He pants, still catching his breath as he stares down at her. "Nah, you did that already. Don't do it again, okay?"

Woah.

He's never said a word to me.

Her mouth falls open as Billows walks away, and then her eyes land on me. I see the hurt immediately.

"Kaylee."

"Don't. I get it."

I take her hand, discretely, and tug her to me as she turns to move away.

"I didn't say anything. You came with me to the party."

She nods, glancing down.

I tip her head up with my finger. “He just assumed something that isn’t there. I’ll clear it up with him.”

We aren’t together.

I watch as she shakes it off and gives me a fake smile. “Yeah, of course. Let me get your boot back on and then we can head inside to put the sling on you.”

This is how it should be. Just friends. Colleagues.

So why does my heart ache so much?

I want to see that smile on her face again. The sparkle in her eyes. The feel of her touch on my body, and so fucking much more, I don’t let myself think about it.



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*Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:35 am*

Which is a lie, because when I get back to my hotel room ninety minutes later and stand under the spray of water, I somehow manage to jerk off with my uninjured arm.

It's Kaylee's naked lean body lain out on my bed, I imagine.

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I MANAGE TO pull on a Tom Ford shirt and get it buttoned up, then slide the sling back on my arm. It's hurting much less than it was, so I figure it'll heal fast.

Or the drugs are good.

I make my way down in the elevator to the floor where most of the players are staying.

I pay for my own room—the penthouse—because I like space, and we happen to be staying at one of the Dufort Hotels. Given they are technically family, by marriage, I reached out to Hunter Dufort.

“I'll make sure it's available for you,” he said. “Shame I'm not in town, otherwise I'd come to the game.”

“Let me know when you do, and I'll get you into a box,” I reply, despite the fact they probably own one in every state, for all I know.

Like my father, Hunter's—Jonathan Dufort— started the billion-dollar hotel empire decades ago. Now the Dufort Hotel group is a household name here and around the

world.

Daniel, the eldest, is the CEO while Hunter and Fletcher hold senior positions in the company.

It's their cousin Blake, who married my sister Bella, and...man, this is complicated, but his brother Jacob is my half brother. That's right. Jacob and Blake's mom shagged Ward. We only found out this year because she kept it a secret from everyone.

So we're all this huge strangely connected family with a fuck ton of money, basically.

Many of our vacations are spent in the Hamptons at either Fletcher's or Jacob's house.

"Will do. I'll see who's available for the Super Bowl," he said to me totally deadpan.

I coughed.

"Okay, you all need to lower your expectations. It's my first year." I laughed. "Seriously though. Just let me know. It would be great to have you all at a game."

"I know Daniel would be keen. I'll come back to you," Hunter said. "Enjoy the room. I'll send you the details over email."

I am.

The room is amazing. The view outstanding. The service world class.

As are all the Dufort Hotels.

The doors ping open, and I wonder which room Kaylee is sleeping in tonight. Does she have to share? Or does she have her own space.

I berate myself as the thought of paying for her to have a nicer room enters my mind. Let's be honest, I want her in my bed.

Nothing has changed in all these months. Seeing her every day and being in close proximity just emphasizes my desire and feelings for her that much more.

I still love her.

I think I always will.

The question is, can I forgive her?

Actually, there are a ton more questions than that.

Why did she do it?

Did she ever care for me?

## Page 47

*Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:35 am*

Was I just the popular college quarterback that made her laugh...and scream?

Are my brothers right?

Did she just like me because I came from a wealthy family and was pegged to be drafted. The all-American boy who has it all compared to the grass-roots family she grew up in?

I hate thinking like that, but I have to keep my eyes open. She makes me blind to logic and sense.

It's taken a whole lot of work to stay focused on my training and the game this year. If I mess up, I don't just get a slap on the hand, I can be off the team.

I am at pro level now.

When I step into the room, the party is well underway. Rap music plays loudly, bottles are being passed around. Players lounge on beds, sofas, and out on a balcony.

I spot Kaylee sitting on top of a table, her legs swinging back and forth. She wears a short dress with long sleeves, and it fits her like a glove. Every curve on her lithe, petite body is visible and mine reacts.

My cock thickens and my fingers itch to lift her from the table and carry her back to my room. Then shove her against the door as she clenches my pecs, and lift that fucking skirt off her and slide my shaft inside her.

One hard thrust.

That's all it would take.

I've never fucked her as hard as I wanted to. I was being a good college boyfriend.

Well, something has shifted in me now. I am sick of standing back and watching her. There's a need to claim her completely. Tell her she won't leave me again. That she is mine.

And show her with every thrust of my cock inside her hot, wet, needy cunt.

Her eyes lift and meet mine and I see her cheeks pinken from across the room.

A beer is thrust into my hand.

“Get into it, bro!”

I mutter thanks and then end up in conversation after conversation about my injury and the game.

All the while I watch Kaylee and those swinging naked legs.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

KAYLEE

---

I'm wet.

It's almost uncomfortable. My panties are absolutely soaked, and I don't know how much longer I can ignore the way Levi is watching me.

Eating me up with his eyes.

Consuming me with some invisible electrical charge. It pulls me in ways I can't describe.

The number of times I've almost crossed the room tonight and nuzzled into his chest—or climbed the damn thing—and begged him to fuck me is innumerable.

I'm surrounded by testosterone-rich bodies and it's Levi Montgomery who has my attention.

He always has. After we broke up, I continued going to his games at Penn State and would see him around campus...and once I sort of followed him.

Not that far, but still, who does that?

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*Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:35 am*

Levi's eyes find mine as I laugh at someone's joke. Then he flinches and adjusts his sling.

Perhaps I'm looking for an excuse, or maybe I'm just doing my job, but I drop my glass on the table and cross the room.

He watches every step I take as I get closer and closer.

"Kaylee," his rough voice greets me.

"Do you"—I clear my throat—"do you need me to adjust that for you?"

Blink.

"Yes."

He doesn't. I know he doesn't.

But I'm ninety-nine percent certain he wants me to touch him as much as I need his touch right back.

Pressing my body against his side, I tiptoe up and start playing with the knot of his sling. Heat buzzes between us, and then I feel him turn ever so slightly, so I'm flush against him.

The entire front of his body.

That's when I know for sure. The hardness of his abdominal muscles doesn't do anything to distract from the hardness lower.

I arch against his erection and our eyes lock.

"Fuck. Let's go," he says under his breath, his blue eyes alight with desire.

I've seen them like this before and I know what they promise.

Levi doesn't wait for me to agree, he just places his free hand on my hip and guides me toward the entrance.

"Need to patch him up again." I joke with a few of the players as we slip out of the room, mostly unnoticed. When the door closes behind us, I turn, but he pushes me down the hallway.

"Keep walking, Kaylee, or I'm going to fuck you against the wall, and someone is going to see us."

Holy hell.

I let out a moan in response and walk in an aroused blur as his hand burns against my skin.

We stop at the elevators, standing no more than an inch apart as it takes seven thousand years to open. I step inside and he leans around me and pushes the button to the penthouse.

Of course.

Just as I'm about to turn, Levi brushes the hair to the side of my neck and leans down.



“This is the part where you get to say no. After this, you’re all mine, kitten.”

My breath catches and I lean back into him.

“Please. Take all of me.”

God, I’m a hussy.

But I have zero cares right now.

---

THE DOOR CLOSES heavily behind us and Levi’s body presses me against it. I place my hands on his chest. “What are we doing?”

“No talking.” His free arm leans against the door above me as his mouth closes around mine.

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*Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:35 am*

Oh god, I think my legs are going to give out.

Opening to him, his tongue sweeps in and his cock presses into my stomach, taking control in the dominating way he always did.

God, I've missed the taste of him.

Tingling pleasure fills every core of my body as I kiss him back.

"Kaylee, fuck." Levi moans.

I wrap my arms around his body. Being this close to him after months of regret, desire...it's...I don't know what this is.

Shut up, brain.

Levi straightens and pulls his arm out of the sling.

"Be careful." I reach for him, but he ignores me, tossing it onto the floor.

"Come." He takes my hand and leads me through the penthouse.

There's something different about Levi now. Maybe he's grown up. Maybe it's because he's gone pro. I don't know. But he feels more powerful, much more in control, and I start to tremble at what lies ahead.

I can't imagine it could get any better.

“Take your clothes off,” he says when we reach the bedroom.

I take in the California king-sized bed and the rest of the luxurious suite.

“Wow, this is much nicer than mine,” I say, tilting my head as he removes his shirt, then I can’t breathe or talk.

Christ, he’s way more ripped than the last time I saw him naked. I might be around NFL players almost every day, but this is Levi.

My Levi.

And he’s definitely matured.

He grabs my chin with his thumb and finger, and my eyes lift slowly to his. I’m met with one of his gorgeous smirks.

“Naked, kitten. Now.”

Reaching down, I pull off my dress and start to undo my black bra. The moment it’s off, Levi has one of my breasts cupped in one hand, the other hand pinching one of my nipples.

My head tilts back as a moan escapes.

“I can’t throw you over my shoulder like I want to because of this damn injury, but I’m going to fuck your little body and show you just how much you’ve been missing for the past few months.”

I swallow.

His arousal is mixed with a past bitterness, and I don't like it. I don't want him to angry fuck me and toss me away, but there is a chance it could happen.

I could stop right now...

Who am I kidding?

No, I can't.

“Lie on the bed.” Levi walks me back until the mattress hits the back of my legs and I plonk down.

When I lean back on my elbows, he pulls down my panties.

## Page 50

*Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:35 am*

Shame fills me at how wet they are.

“Christ.” Levi presses them to his mouth and sucks. “You’ve been thinking about my cock all night, haven’t you?”

I need him to touch me so badly.

“Yes.” I writhe on the bed gripping the covers.

“Naughty girl. Such a naughty, naughty kitten.” He unfastens his dress pants, and they fall to the floor. Then kicks off his shoes.

Commando.

I lick my lips as I take in his familiar long, thick cock, the V outline, and his eight pack. Levi is almost perfect in every physical way. Tonight he’s all mine.

Gripping his cock confidently, he begins to stroke while his hungry gaze roams my body.

I feel myself begin to tremble with desire, needing.

“Spread your legs and I want to see you slide those fingers of yours through your pussy.”

He’s so much more dominant.

I obey, widening my thighs and letting out a groan as my hand touches my wet flesh.  
“Levi, oh god.”

“Good girl.” He rasps.

Jesus, I think I might come right now. If he doesn’t touch me soon, I am going to start screaming.

Even begging.

“Please.” I meet his eyes, but they are locked on my sex like a madman, as he strokes himself rhythmically.

What is this?

Revenge sex? Or are we...don’t get your hopes up.

Kneeling on the bed, Levi climbs over me, his mouth claiming mine again, but the look in his eyes as we connect feels like two lovers coming back together...in a way that’s meant to be.

I’m not imagining this. It’s more than just two people fucking. I’m sure of it.

His cock eagerly seeks out my entrance and then, without warning, his mouth lifts off mine.

“Tell me you’re okay with this?”

What?

I think I’ve made that pretty clear.

“Well, I’m naked, wet, and have just been touching myself, so if you need more proof, then yes.” I giggle.

Levi doesn’t smile. Instead, his eyes roam my face seeking something...something I’m not sure of...then meets my eyes.

“I mean tonight, Kaylee. Just tonight. When we get back to Philly, we go back to being colleagues.”

Oh.

I force back my disappointment. “Sure. Yes. I know.”

I didn’t know.

## Page 51

*Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:35 am*

“We need this Kaylee,” Levi says, as his cock glides through my wet folds and his hips press against me. “Once. To say goodbye. To get this out of our systems.”

Right.

Just once.

I nod.

“Tell me you are on board with this,” he says roughly, sliding his hands through my hair.

I am.

If it’s this or nothing, I’ll take this. So I have to be okay with it. I messed up and don’t deserve Levi Montgomery. Even if he doesn’t know the entire story.

“Fuck me, Levi,” I say, and as his eyes close, he slams inside me with so much force I cry out.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

LEVI

---

Holy hell.



I've forgotten how good it feels to be inside this woman. If Kaylee had said no, I'm not sure if I would've been able to stop. I mean, I would have, but fuck, it would've been difficult.

Right now, I need to consume every inch of her like I'm a madman. I had planned to lick her sweet pussy and tease that sensitive rear of hers, but the moment she touched herself, my cock had different ideas.

I may have been too rough, so I slow my thrusts and lean on my good arm, cupping her other breast.

My eyes roam down the space between her breasts as I flick her nipple. My gaze returns to her beautiful brown eyes as she moans.

"Levi, oh god."

Her pussy clenches around me and as she digs her nails into my shoulders.

"Don't come yet," I tell her, wanting this to last forever.

But the reality is we only have this one night.

Just one.

That's all we get. We can't do this once we get home. Hell, we shouldn't be doing this now.

She cheated on me. I can't forget that.

But I also can't ignore the way I want her more than my next damn breath some days.

Something happened today at the game when she came running onto the field. I looked up, my body screaming in pain, and saw the concern in her whisky-colored eyes. It was different from the concern on other medical faces or my coaches.

Kaylee cares more deeply than I realized.

I tried to shake it off as the friendship we've built over the last few months. Or the pent-up chemistry that's been sizzling like a Fourth of July barbeque for weeks and weeks.

All I know is that this needs to happen.

For both of us.

How everyone at the party didn't see us eye-fucking all night, I don't know. Halfway through the evening, I'd decided she was coming to the suite with me. I was simply trying to work out how to make it happen. Without being obvious.

## Page 52

*Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:35 am*

This time, I'm not getting attached. I might still love this girl, but I've packed it away nicely.

Liar.

Pulling out, I tap her hip. "Roll over."

Kaylee scrambles underneath me, and I reach under her thigh, tugging her tight up against me.

"Face in the pillow." I press down on her back, and she mumbles something. Staring into those rich brown eyes is not going to help me keep an emotional distance.

I slide back inside her and we both moan.

"You feel so good, so hot, so fucking slippery wet, Kaylee."

"I'm going to come, I swear, Levi. Hurry."

I thrust harder, slap her ass once, then twice, and feel her begin to shudder around me. As my body pounds into her, I watch her breasts wobble under her and reach for her clit.

"Ahh!" she cries out when I pinch it.

"Come around my cock, baby." I demand as a fire descends along my spine and my balls tuck up.

Fuck.

This.

This is what I've missed. What I've dreamed of.

Imagined.

Craved.

I spill inside her, then collapse over her back as my hot come leaks from her body.

Jesus Christ. Why can't I feel this way with any other woman?

It's always her.

Always fucking Kaylee.

My shoulder aches like a motherfucker, but it's too bad. Tonight I'm taking all that I want from her.

I'm only just getting warmed up.

One night.

---

TWO HOURS LATER, Kaylee is sitting on top of me, riding my cock slowly. I think it might be about to break off, but I don't give a shit.

I lift my arms to cup her breasts.

“Keep that one on the pillow.” She instructs me, pushing my arm down. She set it up before climbing on top and helping herself to what appears to be my permanent erection.

I run my finger between her breasts and along a sweat bead. My own body drenched.

We haven’t stopped.

Sped up and slowed down, yes. But we never stopped.

## Page 53

*Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:35 am*

Almost like fucking one another is as important as oxygen. It feels like that. Like we don't have much time and know we need to make sure of every single second.

The moment I pull out of her, we both groan at the loss of connection.

Has anyone ever successfully slept with their cock inside a woman?

I need to know.

A more important question is, do I really think this will be a one off?

I hate myself for being so weak and wanting Kaylee again. Hell, I hate her for fucking our relationship up.

I want to fuck her until she can no longer remember what any other man feels like. So she can only feel me.

Until I hurt her.

Scar her.

To make her permanently mine.

And yet...knowing I'll have to let her go.

Instead of asking me to be gentle, my little kitten arches eagerly and my cock slips back inside her.

“I need to come again.” She pleads like a crazy woman.

I don’t judge. I feel just as insane.

She rubs her clit.

Motherfucker. I’m not that strong.

I take over, reaching for her so I can get my mouth on her neck. Then as my thrusts jackhammer up into her, I move my mouth to her ear.

“Come for me, baby,” I rumble, then spill inside her for the four millionth time.

Shuddering, Kaylee collapses onto my chest, and her hand closes around my biceps.

I shut my eyes, exhaustion taking me under after playing today then fucking for hours. Leveling out my breathing, my cock softens, and I wrap my arm around her.

Mine.

I know Kaylee’s not mine.

But she is mine.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

KAYLEE

---

Levi’s nose is stuck in his phone when I board the jet and walk down the aisle the

next day. I push back all the emotions threatening to engulf me after spending the night with him.

Rejection.

Self judgment.

Anger.



*Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:35 am*

When I woke up, there was a note on the pillow:

At the gym. What a goodbye. You are amazing. See you back in Philly. L x.

Wow.

Not that I expected a marriage proposal, but waiting for me to wake up, given our situation, would've been nice.

I'm not some one-night stand, but that's how he's treated me.

Is it more than I deserve?

Maybe.

But frankly, I'm getting over this self-hatred game. If he doesn't want me, if he can't forgive me, then he needs to stop with the flirting and eye-fucking.

Ugh.

I rip my eyes away from him and go find some people to sit with for the flight home.

"Hey, where did you disappear to last night, girl?" Jimmy Gage asks from a few seats away. He pats the seat beside him.

Out of the corner of my eye I see Levi lifting his head. It would've been easy to sit down, knowing it would irk Levi, but if that really was our last goodbye, then it's

time I accepted it.

Clearly he's moved on.

Playing games isn't going to help either of us move forward, so I point down toward the plane. "Early night. Needed to make some calls so..."

Jimmy shrugs.

I plug in my ear buds and close my eyes as the plane takes off, and I listen to my mom's voice message from last night, updating me on how Dad is.

She's been doing this a couple of times a week since he was rushed to hospital. Surprising all of us, Dad took the doctor's orders seriously. He cut out processed foods, reduced his alcohol intake massively, and began doing walks with Mom in the evening.

I joined them once or twice, trying to get Dad to jog. It was kind of cute. I felt like a kid again hanging out with my parents like that.

"I could find you a good gym to join, Dad."

"Don't push it, kiddo. This is enough for me. I'm more of an armchair sports guy," he said, so I left it.

The next message is from Steph.

"I saw the game on TV. Is Levi okay?" she asks. "Anyway, you need to call me. You know that guy at work I told you about? The new manager from England. He's single. Gah, should I ask him out? You have to ring me as soon as you get back."

Then I click into my messages and look at the photo.

Heishot.

But he also looks like he's fully aware of just how handsome he is.

I type her a message.

If he's not showing any signs of interest, wait for him to notice you. He could be a player.

Then I add:

You know half the guys on the team want to sleep with you, right?

Ten minutes later, my phone beeps with a reply.

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*Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:35 am*

Yes, but I don't want half of America to know I'm fucking one of them. Plus, I'm obsessed with Richard. Message me when you get home.

I smile, then close my eyes.

I really do need a few more hours sleep. Next week is going to be challenging. Levi has an injury and given it's a low level one, I know Natalie will insist I'm the one giving him treatment.

One of our wide receivers ended up unconscious two games ago and she's treating him for a neck injury, so Natalie's time is focused on him.

There might be someone else, but it would appear suspicious if I don't want to be near Levi. As well as unprofessional.

Tell me you're okay with us doing this. I mean tonight. When we get back to Philly, we have to go back to being just colleagues.

Sure. Yes.

Was I okay with it? I would have agreed to walk on hot coals, I was so horny and ready to be fucked last night.

Today?

Today I feel...used. Even if I was a willing participant.

The best thing I can do is accept Levi Montgomery is never going to want me the way I do him. He never has. Yes, he's extremely attracted to me, but nothing more.

There has never been more for him.

I hurt his pride by letting Colby kiss me and he's made me the evil ex in his mind, but I'm starting to see I wasn't.

I'm not big enough or strong enough to have stopped Colby. Levi never gave me the opportunity to explain.

He just ghosted me.

That's not exactly love.

He won't forgive me, but it doesn't matter. There was never a future for either of us, and it's time to face those facts.

I curl up in my seat, roll to the side, and shove my Hawkes sweater under my head. Then drift off.

---

LEVI

---

Pretty sure if Kaylee had sat next to Jimmy Gage... who I often see checking her out, I would be in handcuffs right now.

She belongs to me.

This is not over.

I'm just not sure how it ever fucking will be.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

LEVI

---

“Kaylee, get in the damn car!” I demand while she stands a couple of yards away, glancing around the airport parking lot.

I'm losing my patience, as she's refused twice.

## Page 56

*Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:35 am*

“I’m fine, Levi. Natalie is giving me a ride back to my car. She’s waiting for me.”

I grit my teeth.

“Message her and. Get. In. The. Car.”

She plants her hands on her hips. “Why should I?”

Well, I can give her a handful of reasons, starting with orgasm and ending in multiple orgasms, but I know why she’s unhappy.

I wasn’t there when she woke up.

That was on purpose.

When my eyes opened, she was sprawled over my chest, my non-injured arm locked around her like she was the most precious thing in my life. I freaked the fuck out.

My heart clenched and all I could do was stare at the ceiling, wondering how the hell I was going to get over this girl.

My brown-eyed little kitten.

Facing the music of our decisions wasn’t something I had the capacity to face this morning, so I’d decided a good workout and disappearing act was better.

Clearly not.

“We need to talk,” I say, darting my eyes down to the passenger side of my Maserati in encouragement.

She keeps glaring at me.

“Please.” I almost roll my eyes as I lean my arm on the roof.

With a huff, she stomps over.

I fight my smile.

“Montgomery is giving me a ride. I’ll check his shoulder out meanwhile,” she says into the phone. Then waits, standing beside the car. “Oh. No. It’s fine. I knew him in college, remember? Just friends.”

I lift a brow.

I plan to ask about that later.

“kay. See you tomorrow.” Kaylee pockets her phone, tosses her bag onto the back seat, then climbs in.

I slide into the driver’s seat, rip off my sling, and start the engine. Neither of us talk until we exit the airport and hit the highway.

“I’m sorry I wasn’t there when you woke up.” I’m giving myself ten damn points for being a great guy until she replies.

“I’m glad you weren’t.”

The fuck?



I glance over at her, then force my eyes back on the road. “Why is that?”

“It would’ve been awkward. Anyway, you said it was a one off. I agreed. Let’s move on.” She flips down the sun visor and does some shit to her lips.

Gloss.

Something.

I dunno.

*Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:35 am*

I'm too busy wondering how the tables got turned and holding myself back from driving the car off the road and throttling her.

Kaylee's hair is up in a ponytail and she's wearing black Nikes, a pair of denim cut-off shorts, and a Hawkes sweater.

Images of me pushing her head down onto my cock and making her suck me off for lying almost consume me.

And make me hard.

Always goddamn hard around this girl.

The fact she won't even look at me confirms her little lie.

The traffic builds and we start to slow, so I make my move. My hand reaches and slides between her legs.

"Levi," she moans in surprise.

"We aren't done. I know it, and you know it." I inch my fingers under the denim and lace to her hot flesh.

Kaylee presses into my hand.

"Take them off." I demand.

“What?” she gasps.

“Take them off, spread your legs, and lean back in the seat.”

There’s a short hesitation before she does what I ask, ripping down her shorts and panties.

I press play on my favorite soundtrack, turn up the volume, and get comfortable as my fingers slide between her now wet flesh.

When I glance over, I let out a curse.

My girl with her legs spread and pink glistening flesh on the seat of my Maser-fucking-rati. Thank fuck I’m wearing sweatpants as my cock swells at warp speed.

I focus my attention between the traffic and her clit as I circle it and slide my fingers through her fold. The angle isn’t right to insert it, but I’m going to make her come, anyway.

I take a moment to lick my fingers, then return them to her body.

When I glance back down at her, Kaylee’s half-lidded eyes are rich with arousal, and she’s writhing with pleasure.

That’s right.

This is not over.

Not even fucking close.

When we get back to my place, I carry our bags inside and drop them on the floor.

Kaylee follows me to the bedroom and takes me by the hips and drags down my sweatpants.

Then, going to her knees, takes my cock in her mouth as I grip her ponytail.

She's so goddamn perfect.

How did we fuck this up?

---

FOR THE NEXT six weeks, Kaylee and I spend at least three to four nights a week together. Mostly she's at my place. Every morning we agree this has to end and leave knowing it won't.

Thankfully, no one in the team has caught on.

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*Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:35 am*

More importantly, my family hasn't. I know what they think of her, and I can't blame them. She cheated on me and had a very public relationship with the guy after the fact.

Not that I know the details.

So there's no path forward for us. I can't exactly take her to family events or tell them we are seeing one another again. I'm a little ashamed, yet I can't give her up.

After six weeks of incredible sex, I think both of us are ignoring what this is. My heart is shielded, but I already fucking love her. I just fight it every day.

The fact she hasn't asked for anything more speaks volumes.

With Thanksgiving looming, it feels weird that we won't be together, but it is what it is. I'm not telling my brothers I'm seeing her again.

Or my father.

They'll bring up what happened and tell me I'm a fool.

Maybe I am. I know how I feel about her, and in my head I keep running this thing I call the excuse program. It goes like this:

I'm young. I have time. Kaylee might be the one right now, but eventually you'll get sick of her and move on.

Except I don't fucking think I will.

Yet I can't trust her to tell her how I feel.

So another day passes, then another, then another.

We don't go out in public for fear of being seen together, so most of our time is spent in bed, in the shower, cooking together in the kitchen, or watching movies.

All of which we have found ways to fuck while doing.

It's amazing.

Like right now as she sits on the kitchen counter with her legs swinging back and forth, naked except for a fitted white strapless top. I'm cooking chicken in a pan and there's a ninety-five percent chance of it ending up in the trash.

Again.

"So," Kaylee chimes, and I glance over my shoulder.

"Swear to god woman, if I don't eat, my muscle mass is going to disappear, and I'll get fired and end up on OnlyFans."

She snorts.

"I'll support you." She pokes me in the ass with the plastic salad spoon she's holding.

"I'm not looking at you. Isn't your pussy sore?" I rumble.

Do not look.

Do not look.

“I think I’m have an ouch right here. Can you take a look?”

Do not—I turn.

Because I am a man.

Kayle slides the spoon over her pink flesh as she leans back on the marble counter and my dick is instantly hard.

“Goddamn you.” I spin, turn off the gas, and tug down my shorts. Gripping her hips, I pull her to the edge of the perfect height counter and slam into her.

*Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:35 am*

“That what you want, baby?”

“Yes.” She drops the spoon and grips my biceps. “So much yes.”

Her tight channel clenches around me, sucking me into her hot body.

I am totally addicted.

Not just to the feel of being inside her, but of her glossy eyes which draw me in and her chestnut locks that have grown a little longer and are spread out across my counter.

No one else.

I don’t want anyone else to be the woman spreading herself out before me.

God, what the fuck am I going to do?

“Levi,” Kaylee cries, arching as the sounds of our bodies slapping together fill the kitchen.

“Fuck,” I curse. “Jesus, I could do this forever.”

With a jerk, I come, squeezing her small body as I groan. I lean one palm on the counter beside her, and she smiles up at me.

“Little kitten.” I kiss her lips and grin. “Such a sex addict.”



“Only for you, Mr. Montgomery.” She kisses me back. “Cook your chicken and let’s watch that movie.”

It hasn’t all been sex, if I’m honest. I’ve just tried to focus on it only being that. If I think about the fact she’s been helping me navigate some sponsorship deals that have been offered and doing online shopping for my niece/nephew and sister-in-law, and trimmed my hair putting a number seven on the back for one of the games...

Doesn’t mean anything.

It.

Does.

Not.

Mean.

Anything.

Or that I replaced the battery in her car, which died for the second time a month ago. She doesn’t know. She thinks I just did some guy stuff on it.

Or how I’ve been pricing up cars and trying to work out how big of a deal it would be to gift her one at Christmas...

Without it meaning anything.

I mean it’s just a pain to sort out mechanical parts all the time, so it’s mostly a time savings for me.

Matching Maseratis?

Yeah...doesn't mean a fucking thing.

I slide out of her and grab some napkins, then lift her off the counter, placing her on the floor.

“Go clean up.” I slap her sexy, tight ass. “Dinner in ten.”

She reaches up and kisses me, and I pull her against my body. Our eyes love, smiles fade away, and a density falls over us.

Shit.

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*Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:35 am*

I love this woman.

I want to say it.

A kind of pleading fills her soul-deep gaze, and I swallow.

Shit, shit, shit.

This is the moment. The moment we say the L word. We both know it.

Kaylee smiles painfully, her eyes dipping for a second. I smile back, my heart slamming inside my chest...

Her heels lower to the floor and Kaylee turns and heads across the room.

“Kaylee—” I start.

With a hand on the staircase banister she turns...and neither of us will ever know what would happen next because the elevator to my penthouse pings.

Both our eyes fly open.

Fuck.

Kaylee flies up the stairs, while I put my cock away and run my hand through my hair, ruffling it up, waiting to see which one of my siblings almost caught me fucking her on the kitchen counter.

“See. I told you he’d be cooking us dinner.” Atlas says to Knox as they wander in completely unaware. “Perfect timing.”

It really wasn’t.

It could have been worse, though.

“Don’t you two have wives?” I mutter and turn the gas back on the stove.

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

KAYLEE

---

“Richard is coming to Thanksgiving.” Stephanie grins like an idiot over her margarita.

Whatevs.

I don’t want to be jealous but I am. Especially considering Richard, which I say in my head with a posh English accent, is in fact a dick.

I knew he was the moment I saw his photo.

He uses Stephanie as his sex kitten and ignores her when he doesn’t want her. I’m sure he has about five other women.

But she is obsessed.

Exactly how is that different from what Levi and I are doing?

Levi isn't seeing anyone else. I know that. If he is, he's being very secretive and should work for the CIA after his football career is over.

We're having so much sex that I can't imagine him needing or wanting more.

My promise to myself that I'd walk away completely vanished and seems to vanish every day when I renew that vow.

So for months we've just fucked and kept our relationship a secret.

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*Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:35 am*

I mean, there is no possible way I could take him home to Dad. His health is improving, but I keep playing out the scenario in my head.

“Hi, Levi, if you want to see my daughter again, you have some apologizing to do,” Dad would say.

“You mean apologizing for catching her cheating on me?”

Then Dad would turn his face to me, and I’d have to meet his disgusted look head on.

“You cheated? Then lied about it?”

I can’t do it.

And because I’m almost certain Levi isn’t serious about us—I mean, why is he keeping us from his family? It’s not worth thinking about.

I figure one of us will end things eventually.

My feelings are growing for him exponentially and it’s messing me up right now. After that moment in the kitchen when I swore I saw deep into his heart, we’ve just gone back to banging one another.

It’s time to accept that I’ve fallen head over stupid heels in love with him. And no one knows.

I can’t tell Steph.

I can't talk to Mom.

I definitely can't tell Dad. I'm grateful he's still with us, especially this time of year, so I will not upset him. Not when Levi isn't speaking up...except to invite me to his house for a mind-blowing orgasm or three.

These last few weeks, hearing everyone making plans for Thanksgiving with their partners, and reminding myself that Levi is not my boyfriend, has been hard.

He hasn't brought it up at all.

Like last time, he's excluding me from family events, and it hurts.

I toss back my drink.

"That's awesome." I lie and lift my hand to the bartender, ordering another round.  
"You should marry him."

Steph is silent.

"You okay?" she finally asks.

I rear back way too dramatically. "Totally. Just saying. Richard sounds awwesssome."

Okay, so I might be a little drunk tonight. I'm on my third, no fourth drink, and they are sliding down just nicely.

Steph sips her drink and watches me.

"I could be your bridesmaid. Oh wait. Would you marry here or in Eng Land?"

“England. It’s pronounced England.” She frowns.

“Oh sorry. I speak American.” I shrug.

“What is wrong with you?” She pushes her drink away.

“Nothing. I’m planning your wedding.” I pick up my freshly delivered drink and as the glass touches my lips, Stephanie grabs my hand, and it splashes everywhere.

“Hey!”

“You’ve had enough. Since when are you a mean drunk?”

Since I fell in love with Levi Montgomery.



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*Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:35 am*

My phone rings and I grab at it, forcing it to go bouncing along the bar. Stephanie snatches it and stares at the screen. Then holds it up.

“Really, Kaylee? Levi Montgomery!?”

Oops. The cat is out of the bag I guess.

“We’re just fucking.” I shrug and slump in my seat. Before I realize what’s happening, Stephanie swipes the phone, answering it.

I sit up straight, wobble, and the guy behind me steadies me.

“Woah, darling.”

Ugh.

Stupid men.

I wriggle out of his hands and focus on getting my phone back.

“Hello Levi,” Steph says to Levi as the world wobbles. Maybe it was five margaritas... “Yes, it’s Steph. It appears my best friend has been keeping a secret.”

She frowns at me.

Oops. But to be fair...I can’t remember why it was a secret. Ooh, this is my favorite song.

I try to climb off the stool, catch my heel in it and end up back in the arms of the guy behind me again.

“This is becoming a habit.” He smirks.

“Take your hands off me.” I growl.

“What? Oh, that’s your girl, shit-faced and being manhandled by drunk guys.” Steph shakes her head at me, then says, “I bet you will be. Goodbye.”

I reach out my hand, but she slaps the phone down on the bar.

“Yournot-boyfriend will be here in a few minutes.”

“He isn’t my bowyfwrend.” I shake my head. “Just fucking. I told choo.”

Internally, I start making choo-choo train noises and force back my giggle.

Then fail.

I snort laugh and make a little train with my hand and move it between us. Although mine is a flying train.

Anyway...that’s not important, I think.

What were we talking about?

Oh, Levi.

Steph lifts her brows, and I can see she wants to laugh, but instead shakes her head

“Is this why you’ve been drinking like you just returned from a month in the desert?” she asks. “Let me guess, he hasn’t invited you to Thanksgiving.”

I slump in the seat.

“He can’t. I can’t. Dad would...” I can’t get that damn choo-choo train out of my head, which I’m certain Dad would think it hilarious.

“Kaylee!”

*Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:36 am*

I snap my eyes back to her.

“Dad is too delicate. I can’t...and anyway, Levi’s just sex.”

“Am I?” I hear his sexy masculine voice behind me.

My eyes widen as I stare at Stephanie. She looks between us and then climbs off her stool.

“This is my cue to leave. Make sure she gets home safe,” she says to Levi.

“Will do,” he says, walking around me and sitting in the seat she just vacated. He’s got a cap and black jacket on.

“Hiii,” I say, fluttering my eyes, but I probably look like I have brain damage.

Levi stands immediately. “Jesus Christ, Kaylee. You are trashed. Let’s go.” He slaps a few big notes on the bar and meets the bartender in the eye. “Neither of us were here. Got it?”

Momentarily, I remember that Levi is a professional football player and public figure, so this is probably not a great situation for him.

Why did he come?

Steph’s conversation with him flashes back.

Oh, that's your girl, shit-faced and being manhandled by drunk guys.

I bet you will be.

I blink and smile. I know exactly what he said. Levi cares. He...oh my god. He loves me.

I grin up at him as he lifts me off the stool and get a strange look back from him.

"You came." I reach for his hand but miss because he has it in his pocket.

"Let's go."

The door is opened for us, and I feel his hand in the small of my back as he guides me into the passenger seat of his car.

Levi loves me....

He climbs in and I grin at him, sitting sideways in the seat.

"Seatbelt." He orders and starts the engine, then turns back. "You going to chuck?"

No way. I'm feeling the best I ever have. The man I love loves me back, and he's going to tell me.

I know it.

We'll go back to his house, make love while I sober up, and then he'll gaze into my eyes and tell me how he finally feels.

He came for me.

Not wanting other men to be manhandling me.

When I'm sober, I'll work out a way to tell Mom and Dad that I won't be able to spend all Thanksgiving with them. My cousin Ash and his wife will be flying in so they can have lunch, and I'll join them later for dinner.

Then I'll ease them into me being with Levi now, we are making it official.

"No, I'm fine. Just mead some water."

"Need."

*Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:36 am*

“What?”

“Need...not mead. Christ. Just buckle up. Then I’ll get you home.”

I smile.

Home.I love how he thinks of his place as our home.

Turning up the music, I sing along, putting on a bit of a sexy car seat dance show for him. He smirks at me a few times and I don’t remember feeling so happy in my life. When a slower paced song comes on, I lean back in the seat and turn my head, singing softly to him.

I do love Levi.

He’s so pretty.

My hand lifts and I run my finger down his neck. He grabs it and places a kiss on the end of it. Then puts my hand back in my lap.

“Don’t fall asleep.” He rumbles, dropping down a gear and turning into a road.

“We’re nearly there.”

I wriggle in my seat and take in the neighborhood.

This is all wrong.

No.

This isn't right.

This is not at all how it's supposed to go.

"Why are we at my house?" I ask, an icy feeling prickling my skin.

"I have practice early and you need to sleep," Levi says, reaching out his hand. "Give me your keys, sexy, and I'll tuck you in."

When I just sit there, he climbs out and rounds the car, opening my door.

No.

We are supposed to go home. To Levi's. To make love.

I watch him take my handbag, tug out the keys and reach out his hand. "Come on Kaylee. I really need to get to bed."

Without me.

I give him my hand and when I'm steady on my feet, follow him along the path. He unlocks the door and drops my keys in the wicker bowl on the table.

"Shower or straight to bed?"

My eyes lift to his in question. Oh, maybe I was too quick to judge. He really needs to get me into bed.

I sway on my feet and cross the distance, trying to do a model walk, while Levi grabs



my arms.

Then leans down and scoops me up.

I start kissing his neck and smile as he lets out an aroused moan.

When he lays me down on the bed and brushes my hair from my forehead, I flop into a sexy—I think—submissive pose and wait for him to eat me up.

I love it when he does that.

Tonight Levi Montgomery is going to tell me he loves me.

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Swwoooooon.

He removes my shoes and pulls off my black slim pants. Then stands staring down at me.

I wish I wasn't so drunk because I want to remember this.

Then he pulls the covers over me.

Wait, what's he doing?

"Go to sleep, Kaylee." He kisses my forehead. "I'll see you at work tomorrow."

Then he turns off my light.

And.

Leaves.

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

LEVI

---

I drop the weight bar and sit up, feeling around for my shoulder. My injury is well and truly healed, but I'm still careful with it.

Coach has put me back on the field for the past two games. We won one, lost the other. So far he's pleased with my performance, but I want to make sure I stay with the team next year.

And the year after.

I'm serious about my football career.

Kaylee pissed me off last night. Why the hell did she get so drunk? I lost a valuable hour of sleep having to pick her up.

Not that I minded.

When Stephanie said there were assholes hanging around—my words, not hers— I already had my keys in my hand. But I'd rather have had six hours sleep last night instead of five.

She knows the level we work at in the NFL.

There was something weird going on in her head last night, and I was not going to get into a conversation with a drunk woman.

I saw the hurt in her eyes just before I turned the light out. I planned to see how she was today, but so far I've not seen her.

Tomorrow is Thanksgiving, so I won't see her until next week. We're flying to the Hamptons tonight to spend a few days with the Dufort's.

Fuck, I'm going to miss her.

As much as I love my family, and that's a lot, I hate that it means not being with her.

Still, I'll be coming home a day early to spend a day training hard, but it won't be downtime to be with Kaylee.

I move to another machine and think about all the men watching her in the bar when I walked in. I'm never going to be able to stand in public with her and tell them to fuck off and say she's mine.

I'm a public figure now.

I was lucky not to get recognized last night. She wasn't making a big scene, but the sexy little kitten wasn't exactly being innocuous either.

Finally, I spot her walking past the gym door wearing dark sunglasses, so I finish up my set. I chug down my water and head in the direction of her office.

## Page 66

*Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:36 am*

When I pop my head in, Natalie is on the phone at her desk.

Kaylee glances up at me and she looks rough.

I smirk. “How’s the head?”

“Sore. Thanks for the rescue,” she replies quietly.

“Anytime.” I smile and when she doesn’t smile back, I know something’s wrong.

Her laptop pings.

“Better get back to this. I was an hour late today.”

I nod and watch her.

“Happy Thanksgiving,” Kaylee adds, shooting me the coldest, fake smile I’ve ever seen.

She’s not just hungover.

I don’t even know how to call her on it.

We aren’t dating. We aren’t in a relationship. Either of us could end this at any moment. Kaylee’s pushing me away, so I need to listen.

“You, too,” I reply and push off the wall.

Walking back down to the gym, I feel empty and cold. Both of us are spending the weekend with our families. I already know I'll miss her.

I want her in my bed every night.

I once wanted her to be the woman I fucking married. Now I'm torturing myself by sleeping with her and hiding her from everyone.

Including my team, manager, and coaches.

Thankfully, the media.

Sometimes I wonder why she hasn't pushed for more, and it does bother me.

Neither of us is committed and I'm pretty fucking sure I'm the only one emotionally invested.

Yet all we do is have sex. Scorching hot sex... and I'm not complaining. But I am curious.

If I don't get traded next year, then what happens? Does she move on to another player? By the time I get back to the gym, my blood is pumping.

Maybe it's good that it's the holidays. I need a break to get things clear in my head.

With Christmas just around the corner, things could just get more complicated. I know my love is unrequited, and there's no way I can let my family know I've been seeing her. Especially if she really is just a jersey chaser.

Christ, I need to get real with myself.

Kaylee Rose isn't interested in me.Me, the man.

She loves the sport. That's what we have in common. Well, that, and the greatest sex I've ever had...

But I'm starting to realize it's not enough.

And that while she's mine, I can't keep her.

---

## Page 67

*Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:36 am*

I LEAN BACK in my seat and run a hand over my stomach. We're having Thanksgiving lunch at Lily and Jacob's mansion in the Hamptons and I've eaten way too much.

"Do you ever get fat?" Lily asks me, bouncing her kid on her knee.

I bark out a laugh and start coughing.

"That's what I want to know." Molly watches me carefully, as if I know witchcraft or something.

"He's an athlete," Payton says. "That's how. Personally, before I was pregnant, I was happy with my one-hour gym workouts six days a week."

"Five," Knox states, and Payton glares at him. Then because my brother is suicidal, he adds, "For forty-five minutes. And it's down the hall from our bedroom."

Definitely suicidal.

I rub my jaw and glance at Atlas, who's shaking his head at the idiot.

"Whatever, my point is"—Payton pokes her tongue out, and Molly giggles—"Levi can't just eat whatever he wants."

I can.

"I can." I say out loud because I can't help myself and winding up my sister-in-law is



a fun sport all on its own. “Speaking of which, I might have another slice of pumpkin pie.”

Knox, who is finally out of his Tom Ford suit and wearing a similar outfit to all of us—casual designer pants, a Prada shirt, and dark sweater—laughs and leans over to kiss his wife.

“Sorry honey.”

“Ugh.” Payton shoots me a jealous glance and I laugh.

“How? That’s not fair.” Molly rubs her swollen tummy.

“Science,” I reply because I am not getting into the whole thing with them.

“DNA.” Atlas shrugs.

“Lies. You’ve got quite a belly coming along since Molly has been cooking for you.” Blake leans back in his chair from across the table.

“The fuck I have!” Atlas leans back, glancing down his body.

Molly snickers.

Blake is Jacob’s brother and my brother-in-law. Basically, Blake married Bella, my sister. Who is busy with her toddler in the next room.

I slide my chair back and stand. “You can all fight this out while I get another slice of pie.”

The truth is, my body will burn these calories a million times faster than theirs, as I’m

a professional athlete. I've built it that way. But I'll also be at the training center for the rest of the weekend while they're relaxing.

"Fine. I'll have another slice too," Payton says, and when I glance at her, we both start laughing.

"Maybe I should become an athlete then." I hear Lilly say as I walk across the large room toward the kitchen.

"You will not," Jacob replies. "I love you just the way you are. All your curves."

"I don't have curves!"

"Jesus, do none of the men in this family have a clue?" Atlas groans as I chuckle.

I walk around the corner wondering if they have any clue how much hard work, tenacity, and mindset go into doing what we do.

Most people would give up after a week. Hell, a few hours.

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And they do.

That's why very few can do it and instead enjoy watching those of us at the top of our game.

As I step into Jacob and Lilly's stunning chef's kitchen, my mind drifts to Kaylee. We haven't spoken since Wednesday, and I miss her. Not for the first time this weekend. I've imagined her sitting at the table with us, walking along the beach, chatting with the girls.

They'd love her.

I know they fucking would.

I just couldn't ever bring her home. Atlas and Knox would rip me to pieces and tell me to get my head read.

Dad walks in with his phone to his ear and freezes when he sees me.

I lift my brows.

An odd reaction from him.

"When I get home, I'll give you a call," he says, turning away and walking back the way he came in. "Yes. I would. Very much."

The fuck?

Any man over the age of fifteen knows the tone he's using. He's talking to a woman.

I stand still, trying to listen when Knox walks in.

"The pie isn't going to cut itself." He nudges my shoulder.

I turn to face him. "When did Dad start dating?"

"Since fucking never." Knox glances over my shoulder in the direction Dad just left and looks as happy as I do about it.

Mom might have died almost three years ago, but I'm not sure I'm ready to see him with anyone else. I'd put money on Bella, Knox, and Atlas feeling the same way.

It's written all over my big brother's face right now.

My phone beeps in my pocket and I tug it out, my heartbeat speeding up, thinking it's Kaylee.

Kyler.

I can feel my face falling in disappointment. Which is totally unfair to my best friend.

Happy Thanksgiving dude. Are you drunk yet?

I type a reply.

Can't. Professional athlete now. Way too sensible.

Liar. You're still eating all the pie, aren't you?

I snort, take a photo of said pie and send it to him.

Kyler replies with a laughing emoji.

Knox has disappeared and I lean my hip on the counter, sliding a hand into my pocket and thinking about how we just reacted to hearing Dad on the phone to a woman.

Do we really have a say?

They've all been clear about what they think of Kaylee. Understandable, given the circumstances when we were together. And how I was impacted.

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*Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:36 am*

That was over a year ago.

She was my first love...fuck, at this stage, the only woman I love.

I wish she was here, goddamn it.

Pulling my hand out of my pocket, I swipe the phone and type.

Happy Thanksgiving, kitten. Lx

When I wake up the next morning, Kaylee still hasn't replied.

### CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

#### KAYLEE

---

It took Levi three days to confront me, and I've been an emotional mess the entire time.

Dad has fallen off the good eating wagon, so to speak, and Mom is stressed.

At Thanksgiving, he dived into the pie that Ash's wife brought and, despite us telling him he couldn't eat it, he got angry and took off into the living room, turning the TV on and binge eating the pie.

He refused to go for a walk.

“Give him a cheat day, Mom. I’m sure it will be fine.”

“You don’t know that. At any point, he could have a heart attack,” she replied, chewing her nails.

“Is that what they said?” Ash, my cousin, asked.

He and Dad have gotten closer since my uncle died a few years back. I never knew him all that well. Or Ash.

She waved us off. “They don’t tell you much. It’s frustrating.”

So while that was a distraction, I thought about Levi all weekend. And how he didn’t react to my coldness the last time we saw one another, simply nodded and walked away.

Like it was no skin off his nose if I wanted to see him or not.

Am I that irrelevant to him?

So three days after returning to work, after not replying to his message, he finally follows me downstairs as I’m about to exit the building.

“Kaylee,” Levi says firmly, holding the door closed so I have to face him.

“Hey.” I fake smile.

“I’m sorry.”

“For what?” I ask, deadpan.

“For...”

Ugh. He has no idea. He never damn well will.

I scoff and push his arm away, then step outside.

“Kaylee! Fuck’s sake, tell me what I’ve done,” he hisses.



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*Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:36 am*

I spin, my eyes casting around the parking lot, and hiss back. “Not here.”

“Yes, here,” he demands, then sighs, knowing I’m right. “Come back to mine. We need to talk.”

I cross my arms, snuggling my icy hands into my coat. “Levi.” I sigh. “Look, I just think we’ve gone as far as we can. As far as I can.”

He stares back, his face almost expressionless. God, I wish he didn’t have such a damn poker face.

Blink.

Blink.

In my head I’m screaming say something Levi. Tell me you love me. Or that you just want to fuck me. Fucking tell me where I stand.

“I missed you at Thanksgiving,” he finally says. His voice is soft, and I feel my heart skip a beat and walls start to melt.

Emotion flickers in his eyes and hope blooms in my chest.

“I should’ve replied.” I glance away, trying to weaken the effect Levi has on me.

“You should’ve been with me,” Levi says, and I draw in a breath.

He's never said anything like that before, and I'm taken aback.

What does that mean?

"What?" My voice barely audible. "What...what are you saying Levi?"

"I'm saying...you should've been sitting beside me at our family table and in my bed." He takes half a step forward. "Come home with me. Please."

Emotion plows through me as my arms fall to my sides, letting him in.

Levi wanted me there with his family? That means something.

Doesn't it?

God, this man moves as slow as a goddamn snail. But if I love him, and I think I stupidly do, then perhaps I just need to give him time to work it out.

As my head starts nodding, Levi glances around, then tugs me to him, crushing his mouth down on mine.

He's still hiding you.

Shut up, brain.

My stomach swirls with all those butterflies I get every time he touches me, and I ignore the warning whispering in the back of my mind.

"Get your sexy ass to my house now. I've missed it." He groans.

My core clenches knowing what he's promising me and that he will deliver. But I

wonder...did he miss my ass?

Or me?

Then Levi kisses me firmly once more, shoots me a grin and strides over to his Maserati and throws his bag in the trunk.

“Go. Get in the car.” He laughs.

I smile and head to my vehicle, but when the door closes, I sit still for a long moment, wondering why something doesn't feel quite right.

When I arrive, the pin code to his penthouse works, and I step inside. Levi is in the kitchen leaning against the counter, swiping on his phone.

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He drops it and meets me halfway.

His arms wrap around me as my bag drops to the floor and he dips me, kissing my lips.

“Don’t ignore me again, please.”

“Perhaps we should talk.” I cup his face. “Tell me about missing me.”

“I’d rather show you.” His hand slips under my sweater and the next minute my nipple is between his finger and my body is in charge.

Then he rips my sweater off, along with the rest of my clothes, and does the same with his.

I’m panting as he lifts me off the floor and I wrap my legs around his body. The head of his cock teases my bottom and I’m moaning as our mouths crash together.

“Fuck me, Levi.”

“Kitten, I’m going to fuck every thought out of your pretty little head.”

He places me on his bed and grabs my arms, then ties me to his bed frame.

Then climbs over my body and guides his cock into my mouth. “Don’t ignore my message again.”

He fills my throat, his eyes shimmering with arousal and a type of madness I've not seen before.

My arms tug on the restraints as Levi palms the wall with one hand and holds my face as he fucks my throat.

“Don't look at another man and don't look away from me.”

Jesus. My body is on fire as his possessiveness comes pouring out. Juices pool at my core and I moan around his cock.

In and out he thrusts, using me for his pleasure.

“Suck harder. I want to feel you work me as tight as your pussy,” Levi growls.

When my eyes flicker, he smirks.

“Feeling left out, is it?”

Yes.

“Make me come and I'll suck on your sweet cunt.”

Oh Jesus.

I feel him swell against my tongue as he slides along it and then he jerks, pulls out, and squirts over my face and tits.

“Fuck. So fucking hot.”

His mouth crashes down on mine, and he sucks hard on my tongue, the madness in

his eyes still there.

“You will stay tied up while I do whatever I want to this body, kitten.” Levi tells me, moving down onto his knees and between my thighs.

His eyes hold mine as he lowers his face, and I begin to tremble.

He blows on my pussy and I cry out.

“Or should I make you wait? Like you did me.”

Another puff of cool air hits my flesh.

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Trembling, I lift my hips, and he slaps my clit.

“Levi!”

“Tell me you won’t ignore my messages again.” He growls.

I might...this is incredible.

“No,” I say instead.

Then a finger pushes into my pussy, and I almost come. He adds another as his mouth clamps around my clit and this time I do.

Levi doesn’t let go. He holds my hips as he demolishes me lick by lick.

Then, when I think he’s done, he moves again and lifts my body to impale me onto his cock.

“Mine,” he growls.

I’m unable to speak as his shaft fills me completely.

“Mine. Never think you can keep me from it.” His thick, strong thighs are under me as he pounds over and over.

The movements pull on my arms, restrained on the bed frame, and my breasts bounce.

“Is this what you wanted, kitten?” He growls darkly. “For me to fuck you into compliance?”

Apparently so.

“Yes. More. Harder.” I cry.

“Clench my cock,” he says, then reaches under his pillow and pulls out the sex wand we use from time to time.

Turning it on, he presses it to my nipples, and I tremble, writhing under the pressure.

“Such a little sex kitten. Will you be my slave, Kaylee?”

Um, yes.

“Come now,” he orders, pressing it to my clit.

And I’m history.

His cock deep inside me, the wand on my most sensitive spot, and this gorgeous, powerful man staring darkly down at me while tied up is too much.

I arch, tossing back my head and cry out.

I’m so addicted to this man.

Levi is right, I belong to him.

Even if I could walk away from him, I have to work with him every day and I truly don’t know if I could survive it.



God, what am I going to do?

As he unties my arms and wraps his body around me, I know I should demand we talk, but I fear it would end with me in tears and with a broken heart.

Not knowing is easier.

Not having him is too much to risk.

So I stay silent.

### CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

LEVI

---

I lie staring at Kaylee while she sleeps. It's the week before Christmas, and we're at my penthouse. The light is starting to peak through the small gap in the long plush drapes.

I know she wants answers. I know by the way she watches me. The way her eyes lock with mine when we're making love. When she thinks I don't know, she's looking.

She wants answers.

And so do I.

I'm almost certain she feels the same way about me, but at no point has she invited me to visit her parents, and I can't make sense of that.

Her father loved me. He loves the Hawkes.

I know why I'm not taking her home to my family, but why isn't she?

Over and over, my head goes around in circles.

What is it that she wants?

Can I risk finding out, or would she end it if she knew I was so madly in love with her?

Would she be loyal this time if we did make it official? Or am I some guy she's enjoying great sex with, and we both just can't walk away from it?

Sooner or later we are going to get caught. I know that. This is a huge fucking risk for me.

I'm a public figure.

My family would be ashamed of me if I let this woman do it to me a second time. Look, I know they love and support me, but every man in my family is highly successful and proud. I don't want to be the one idiot that they talk about in the news who was cheated on publicly.

The media knows Kaylee. They'd be watching her. Being connected to another player would quickly get her the title jersey chaser.

Can I do that to them...or myself?

I watch her eye lashes flicker and wonder if she's dreaming. I feel her legs thread through mine and grit my teeth at the things I'm thinking about her.

I love this woman.

I fucking love her.

There's no way I can be right. It doesn't feel right, and I hate even thinking about

them. But I have to protect my reputation and I'm not willing to shame my family.

Or myself in their eyes.

We should've had a talk weeks ago, but we both let it go and have just been working, training, and fucking since.

A mistake.

Now I'm not sure how to move forward and bring the topic up. The timing couldn't be worse. Tonight is the Hawkes family and friends Christmas party.

It's going to be huge. Dad, Knox, Payton, Atlas, and Molly will be there, along with Kyler and Drew.

Kaylee said her parents wouldn't be attending as her father was having a bad week, but that Steph might.

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Depending on whether her boyfriend Richard was working.

Either way, Kaylee and I need to ensure nobody suspects a thing. The media is going to be there, and if we give away the slightest hint we are together, it would be public in a matter of hours.

I wrap my arm around her, pressing my hardening length into her soft, warm body.

“Mmmphff,” she mumbles, and I smile.

“Roll over and I’ll wake you up with a smile, kitten.”

She’s so malleable. I gently roll her body and grip my cock, nudging it between her cheeks. Hell, I might go right for her tight rear this morning.

I swap my cock for my hand and start working my way through her pussy and feel her quickly getting wet.

I don’t want to hurt her.

We don’t do this often enough, but this morning the idea makes me hard as fuck. I lean back and grab the small bottle from my dresser and squeeze the clear liquid on my fingers, then rolling back, glide it over her anus.

“Levi, oh, oh god,” she moans, pressing back into me.

“Sleep,” I whisper into her neck, then nibble on her ear as my cock slides back

between her small, tight cheeks.

I grab one of them, opening the space and press the head inside.

Yes.

Her body sucks me in hungrily. I tip my head back and groan.

“Oh god,” Kaylee cries.

I push a little harder and watch her squeeze the pillow, her breathing now a heavy pant.

“That’s it, kitten. Relax, take me all in.” I lift her thighs and press in even more.

Fuck me.

She’s tight, hot, going to make me come so fast.

In another two pushes, I hit the end of her channel and draw back out.

I need more.

I move, lifting her to her knees, pushing her face into the pillow, tugging her body into the position I need.

“Fuck, Kaylee.” I grind. “Your body is so fucking perfect. So fucking fuckable.”

Wow. My ability to articulate has vanished. Clearly, the other head is in charge.

In and out I move, speeding up as her body adjusts to the intrusion, as my hands grip

her hips.

“Rub your pussy, baby,” I reply when she begs me for more.

I need to fill her.

I need to come.

Like an animal, I want to ride this ass and feel the roar of pleasure fly through me as her body sucks my seed from me.

“Levi, oh yes, touch me more. More.” Kaylee begs as her fingers rub vigorously over her clit.

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*Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:36 am*

She's so stunning when she gives me everything. Well, not everything, I remind myself.

Sharp pleasure shoots down my spine as I clench my hands around her cheeks. At the last minute, as I promised her I always would, I pull out and spill my come over her back and ass.

Stroke after stroke, something inside of me watches the streams mark her.

She's mine.

As she collapses under me, I flip her and shove my face in her pussy. When she screams, I drink all of her. Then climb up her body, both our eyes sparkling with desire and fulfilled pleasure.

"Good morning, kitten."

Her arms wrap around my neck, and she nuzzles her face into it.

"Good morning, Mr. Montgomery."

I hold her tight, feeling a strange sensation in my chest.

She's never called me that before. Call it premonition, but I sense something isn't right.

Or is about to change.



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THE LIMOUSINE PULLS up and I climb out, tugging on the cuffs of my tuxedo.

I feel like I've left my shoes at home. Or worse, my phone.

Kaylee should be here. On my arm. With me.

As the woman I love.

Yet, the risk is just too high, and tonight is not the night to take it.

"Levi!"

"Levi Montgomery. How's the shoulder?"

The cameras flash, and I shoot them a charming Montgomery smile, ignoring their questions, then make my way along the red carpet into the building. It might be a friends and family Hawkes event, but everything we do is public.

"What a superstar." Payton grins like an idiot as I join my family in the foyer.

"What can I say?" I shrug and Atlas shakes his head at me.

"Come on," Molly says as if she has ants in her pants. "I want to meet everyone."

Atlas takes her hands. "You mean you want to meet Jimmy Gage?"

She winks at me.

"Stop. Jimmy is mypretendboyfriend. You're my real b—"

“Fiancé.” Atlas says, firmly wrapping an arm around her waist. “And you don’t get to have a whole box of other boyfriends. Real or not.”

Knox shoots a grin at me while Dad slaps me on the shoulder. We all wander into the party. The music is loud and pumping, the room filled with players, coaches, wives—otherwise known as WAGs—friends, and families.

To the outside, it would look like a group of celebrities. And it is.

“Ward Montgomery. Long time no see.” A man steps up and shakes my father’s hand.

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“Neil,” Dad replies, and we leave them to talk.

“Bar.” Knox grunts.

“Whisky please,” I say.

The girls also place their drink requests, then Atlas and Knox disappear to get them.

“I promise not to be a dick if you introduce me to Jimmy,” Molly says...pleads.

I slide my hands into my pants pockets and rock back on my heels. “You’re playing with fire, Molly. But I can be bribed.”

“How about I won’t draw attention to the pretty brunette over there staring at you?” Payton quickly darts her eyes across the room. “Who I assume is Kaylee Rose.”

Shit.

I make the mistake of following the line of sight, and a bolt shoots through me as our eyes connect.

Fuck.

I smile, lift my hand. Kaylee gives me a wobbly, nervous smile in return and glances at Molly and Payton. Her smile drops and she turns away.

“You two drive a—” I start and by the time I’ve turned around, Payton has taken a

step closer to my face and I pull back.

“Levi Montgomery!” she hisses. “Are you...wait. Let me get my thoughts together.”

“They’re sleeping together.” Molly nods as I glance down and curse silently.

“I’m sorry, Sherlock Holmes and Veronica Mars, but you are both wrong.”

Liar.

Payton rests back on her heels and glances over again. Then back at me.

“So, let’s go over and say hello.”

Fuck.

“She’s my physio. I told you. Just a colleague now. We dated. It ended. That’s all.” I glance away uninterested.

“An ex who is still in love with you,” Molly says, peering over toward Kaylee like she’s about to pick up a pair of binoculars and bird watch.

Then the two women move to stand shoulder to shoulder as if it’s the most natural thing in the world and start discussing her.

“Hey,” I hiss, glancing over at my brothers and seeking out my father. He’s across the room chatting. Ward Montgomery knows a lot of people.

Suddenly an idea strikes me.

“So, who is my father dating?”

Their two heads spin around so fast I think they're going to fall over.

"What?" Molly asks and if the situation wasn't so dire, I might have laughed.

"I heard him on the phone to someone in the Hamptons." Leaving off the part about Knox hearing it also, because I know Payton well enough that she'd spit it out as soon as they return with drinks.

As in on cue, a glass of whisky appears in front of me. I lift it to my lips.

"Your father is dating?" Payton exclaims and whisky sprays out of Knox's mouth.

Jesus.

Tonight can only get better.

Surely.

But as it turns out I was wrong.

### CHAPTER NINETEEN

KAYLEE

---

This is so awkward. I hate it.

I spend every night in that man's bed. His cock is inside my body almost every day, yet we're pretending we don't know one another.

Well, aside from that weird wave.

Were his sisters-in-law watching me?

When Kyler and Drew arrive, I slink into the shadows. I once saw Drew at the movies, and he muttered *fucking cheater* when I walked past. I get he was being loyal, but being an asshole wasn't necessary.

I haven't told Levi. He doesn't need to know.

I'm so glad my parents aren't here. I have a feeling my father would have marched over and said something to him.

Levi is getting a lot of attention, and unsurprising, given the team is likely going to Super Bowl. With twelve wins and one loss so far in the season, it's almost a given, but no one is tempting fate by saying it out loud.

Levi, aside from his shoulder injury, has been a standout player. Next week's game will be vital and it's partly why I've kept my mouth shut for the past few weeks.

Okay, I'm not entirely selfless. I know that once we talk, whatever this relationship is will be over. So I'm waiting until after the holidays to talk to him.

I glance over again, and Levi is chatting with his father and Bill. I watch for too long, and his eyes flash to mine. Fire slices through me, the electric chemistry of our bond sets my body alight.

Sometimes I wonder how the rest of the world isn't aware.

A gnawing feeling slams into my chest. I want to be the woman standing beside him, to feel his arm around me and the warmth of his strong protective body.

Not his shameful secret.

Ugh.

I fucking hate this so much. I pull my phone out and look at the time. Goddamn, it's definitely way too early to be leaving, so I toss back my drink and laugh at something Kemal is saying, then excuse myself to go to the restroom.

I wish I smoked.

Not really...but it's always an easier escape. There are only so many times you need to pee before someone thinks you have stomach issues.

If Steph was here, it might be easier. But things are strained between us since the margarita night. I've apologized to her for lying, and while she said it's fine, she's spending a lot of time with Richard.

The dick,I say in my head.

Jackson's wife, Gina, skips up beside me in her beautiful pink fitted dress. "Hey gorgeous."

"Don't even with that. You look amazing." I give her a fake scowl. "You must spend as much time in the gym as your husband."

She snorts. "God no. Pilates. And running."



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“Tell me you don’t eat sugar.” I plead.

“I don’t. That shit is worse than cocaine. No joke,” Gina begins to tell me the scientific explanation about how sugar behaves in the brain to make us addicted, or something, but my eyes are frozen on the woman standing outside the restrooms.

The one staring right at me.

“That’s crazy,” I say robotically to Gina as she pushes through the door. My feet remain on the spot as she disappears.

“Hi,” the staring woman says.

I know who she is. Levi’s sister-in-law. Knox Montgomery’s wife. I don’t know what’s happening right now, but I force a smile on my lips and reach out a hand.

“Hi. Payton, right?”

She extends her hand. “Yes, Payton Montgomery.”

We shake...but I swear I’m already shaking.

“Nice to meet you. Are you having fun? I hope Levi is introducing you to all the players and not stealing the limelight.”

She smiles...like one of those pity smiles.

She knows.

Fuck.

She fucking knows, I can tell. And it makes me angry, because how can the man I lovenotknow and yet his sister-in-law does?

“Doubt it. You know Levi.” Payton shoots a glance toward the party.

Yes, I do.

Very well.

Or so I thought. Now I don’t know anything.

“Well, we work together every day.” I nod and hope to lead her off her scent.

I don’t know what she wants from me. I figure she knows we dated and what happened with Colby.

I thumb over my shoulder. “Are you going in?”

“I’m waiting for Molly. She’s carrying twins. I think she pees twice as long or something.” Payton smirks.

I let out a laugh.

She’s funny. I like this girl, even though I have no idea why we are standing here talking. I start to walk away, but she stops me with her words.

“How long?”

“Sorry?” I turn my head.

“How long have you been in love with Levi?” Payton asks.

I drop my head, and she takes a step closer. “I’m right, aren’t I?”

Damn her.

I don’t know why I answer or tell her the truth, but the need to talk to someone about it is suddenly overwhelming and it all just falls out. “Yes. Please, don’t say anything. He doesn’t feel the same and what happened between us was unforgiveable.”

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“First, I think he does. Second, I feel like there’s a story here. I have strong instincts, and you seem like a cool chick.”

Dumb stupid leaking eyes.

“I kissed Colby. That’s not cool,” I say to make sure she knows exactly what happened.

I cheated on her brother-in-law.

Payton glances over my shoulder. “Molly. I was right. You owe me fifty bucks.”

“It was five!” Molly replies, glancing between us then smiles at me. “Hi, Kaylee.”

What is going on here?

“Um, hi.”

“Eh.” Payton shrugs, grinning at me. “Come on. It’s time for some girl power. I swear these Montgomery men need a smack to the head before they recognize what’s right in front of them.”

Molly loops her arm through mine.

“Trust me, she’s right.”

I’m in such a state of shock that I don’t respond or say anything. I just let these two

women lead me off. Then, for the first time since I told Steph, I share what happened the night of Jackson Billows's birthday party.

The two of them listen carefully, nod slowly, then stare at one another. I watch them have this silent conversation as my heart thuds.

“So you and Levi have been seeing each other for months and no one knows?” Payton asks. “Neither of your families or friends.”

I nod, biting the side of my cheek.

“That man is scared.” Molly states and rubs her hand over her swollen belly. “We need to fix this.”

I don't think they understand. It can't be fixed. I left off the bit about not telling my father the truth... so even if Levi was to admit his feelings, I can't see how we could get around that. My father's health is too delicate. Cheating is the worst thing in the world to him.

I'm not having him hate me and then die.

My god.

That would be...I couldn't come back from that.

“If he loved me, he would've told me. I appreciate your help. Truly, it helps to know not all the Montgomery family hates me.” I wrap my arms around my middle.

Molly waves her hand in the air. “Please. Leave those guys to us. They are extremely loyal to one another, but they would die for us.”

Payton's smile grows and I shiver. She's a force to reckon with, I can tell.

"Come on. Let's go tell them you're our new friend. I can't wait to see their faces."

Molly giggles at her friend and loops her arm back through mine. "This is going to be good. And if Levi still can't man up, then he loses you and that's his loss."

I shouldn't entertain these two fireballs of danger, but I like them too much. And I am looking for a little hope. Or perhaps it's answers I'm looking for.

Is Payton right? Does Levi actually love me?

Or will he be furious?

I don't know if I believe in fate, but this moment feels like it as we walk through the room full of insanely successful sports people, celebrities, and industry people.

They guide me toward Knox, Atlas, Ward, and Levi, and my heart thumps. All three of them have their backs to us, except Ward, who watches us as we approach.

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I keep my eyes on Levi's broad shoulders and the feel of Payton's and Molly's support on either side of me.

As we get closer, Levi is speaking.

Little do I know this is going to be a defining moment in my life.

"Fine. Yes. I'm fucking her. As if I'd seriously date a woman like her."

My blood freezes and a sharp pain slices across my chest.

"Shit." Payton curses, and they all turn.

Levi's eyes lock with mine as I feel myself pale. I almost vomit as my stomach curdles.

How could he say that?

"Kaylee—"

"Excuse me." I glance at the Montgomery men, at his father, then at the girls, giving them a forced smile of appreciation. Then I pick up my skirt and push through the crowd as fast as I can.

Behind me I hear Payton say, "You fucking idiots."

I slam my hands on a side door and find the button that opens it then push outside.

Leaning onto my knees, I pant and push back the nausea.

I'm the idiot. How could I have been so goddamn stupid?

Bang.

I glance up as the door bounces off the wall and Levi steps out.

"Go away. Just go fucking away!" I yell at him and burst into tears.

## CHAPTER TWENTY

LEVI

---

"Kaylee, stop. Where are you going?" I demand as she walks away from me down the alley full of dumpster bins.

"To find someone else to fuck." She hisses over her shoulder.

I deserve that.

In my defense, I didn't know she was there, and I was trying to get my brothers off my back.

"Go away Levi. I'm done."

I follow her, catching up and grabbing her arm.

"Don't touch me. You do not get to touch me anymore." She yells a little insanely.



I curse.

I want to tell her my words were a lie, and that I'm a fucking coward, but I hope that she knows that. Surely she knows me well enough.

Now the truth is out.

My family knows the truth.

And that I lied to them as well.

Payton started talking and didn't stop defending Kaylee, as I should have done, while I ran after her. That in itself is a loud statement of what's really important to me. I didn't stop to explain or wait for their reaction when I saw her face.

"Payton I swear to god, stay out of it." Knox growls and I turn and find him and Payton behind us.

Goddamn it.

Why can't they stay out of this?

"No. They love each other, but because of your stupid Montgomery family pride, he won't tell her."

Kaylee's gaze moves from Payton to me.

She's waiting for me to respond.

"She cheated on him," Knox says, and I feel my jaw grind.

"I don't care." I say roughly into Kaylee's eyes as tears fall down her cheeks. I brush them away, moving her body closer to mine. "I don't care. I do love you. I've tried hard not to, but Kaylee, I fucking love you."

She hiccups and simply watches me.

I can see the pain and distrust in her eyes.

“Say a word and I’ll render you incapable of creating any more children, Knox Montgomery.” Payton threatens.

“What happened to as if I’d seriously date a woman like her?” Kaylee asks.

“Ignore him. He was being stubborn,” Payton interjects.

I turn and glare at them. “Knox, get your fucking wife out of here.”

“No. She stays,” Kaylee replies. “You say you love me but keep me hidden from your family and friends for months. A woman like her. What does that mean? What kind of woman am I like?”

Fuck.

“It’s just shit talk. It doesn’t mean anything,” I reply, wishing I had a better answer.

“You shit talk about the woman you supposedly love?” Kaylee shakes her head.

My heart pounds as I watch her pain.

I wish I could take back those words.

I wish I hadn’t cared so much about what my family thought. My damn fucking pride.

I can’t lose her

“I’ve always loved you, Kaylee. From almost the moment I met you, I think I loved

you,” I say, cupping the side of her face. “Twenty-one and in love. It scared me. Then I saw you and Colby and figured that’s why you were with me.”

Kaylee’s eyes drop.

“I angrily told my family what had happened, and their loyalty kicked in. We wrongly accused you of being one of those women just wanting to date a professional athlete.”

“Then I prove you right by dating him.” Her eyes lift to mine once more.

“Yes.” I nod softly.

“Which you did,” Knox says from behind us.

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Kaylee moves to the side and meets Knox's stare. "Actually, I went on two or three dates with him and the media made it sound like it was a much bigger thing. We never even banged."

Oh.

Probably not the right moment, but I'm doing a little dance on the inside.

"Knox," Payton hisses. "Let's go."

I turn to face my big brother and see Atlas behind him. At least Dad stayed away.

"If Levi says he loves you, then he does. And his heart is bigger than all of ours put together," Knox says, and I swallow audibly.

"Hurt him again and we won't forgive you," Atlas says.

"Guys." I close my eyes and shake my head. "She's five foot three and one hundred and twenty-five pounds. Not a damn gorilla. Please."

Being the baby of the family never changes. They will always see me as their little brother.

"I never tried to hurt him. Colby kissed me." Kaylee says, and her eyes land on me.

That's the first time I've heard that.

She's never said it before.

Except, I guess, in the messages I never listened to. God, I'm a fucking idiot. How much time have I wasted? And could I have forgiven the situation back then?

I don't know.

"If my wife believes you, then you have my attention. One chance," Knox says.

"Knock it off," Payton says, and I hear her slap him. "Come inside and let them sort it out. They're adults."

I smile down at Kaylee, but she's not returning it.

When there's only silence and I'm sure they've gone, I cup her face again.

"I'm sorry."

"If you truly loved me, Levi, you wouldn't have cared what your brothers thought." She shakes her head gently.

That's not true.

"The two things can, and did, coexist, Kaylee. I've never been in love before. Seeing you and Colby together ripped my heart out."

"I know," she says sadly. "But he kissed me. I couldn't stop him. You know how big he is. I wanted to explain."

Colby pushed himself on Kaylee?

The fuck?

“You never gave him permission to kiss you?”

She shakes her head.

“So, why did you date him?” I frown.

She lets out a sigh. “Another bad decision. He’d offered me a signed cap for Dad—how he got me into the hall to start—then wanted to apologize and meet for lunch to give me the cap.”

Jesus.

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“The media saw us, and he told them I was his girlfriend.” Her eyes fall to the ground, then back up to mine. “By then you hadn’t returned my calls, and I accepted his second invite, I think, out of spite. I was so upset.”

Goddamn it.

“Levi”—her soft voice tears me away from the image of me ripping Colby Wade’s head from his shoulders—“I thought you were going to break up with me anyway. You never invited me to that family dinner. So I thought...”

“You thought I was done with you?”

She nods.

“I wasn’t. I was trying to work out how I could have fallen in love at twenty-one and know you were the woman I wanted to spend my life with.”

Kaylee draws in a little breath, surprised by my words.

I wait.

I wait for her to tell me how she feels.

I wait some more.

But she doesn’t. She simply stands there, her breaths labored, her eyes roaming around us.



There's something more she isn't telling me.

"Kaylee," I rasp. "I'm standing here with my heart on my sleeve..."

Still, she says nothing.

What the fuck is going on?

One of my fears was that my feelings for Kaylee were one sided, and here I am sharing everything. My family knows and they've given her their version of a blessing.

Nothing but fucking silence.

Anger blasts through me.

"Tell me. Tell me the truth. For once," I demand. "You want my forgiveness. You have had the opportunity to explain. I've told you I fucking love you, Kaylee."

Bang, bang, bang.

My heart pounds like a jackhammer as I wait for her response. It feels like an eternity as I stare down into her golden-brown eyes stained with tears.

When she finally speaks, my heart cracks into shards.

"I love you, Levi. I've loved you for a long time," Kaylee whispers. "But this won't—can't—work. Too much has happened. Too many people have an opinion, and you need to focus on your career."

"That's not true."

She tilts her head.

Cupping both sides of her face, I say fiercely, “It’s not true, Kaylee. I love you with every part of who I am. You and football.”

Suddenly, fear slices through me as I imagine losing this woman. That can’t happen. I do not want to live without her.

Not for a single day.

I knew it once and I know it now. She’s the woman I am going to spend the rest of my life with.

We met early.

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College sweethearts.

Life just took us on a little detour. I had to do some growing up and realize my brothers' point of views weren't as important as what I thought.

I'll work out my father later.

"Listen to me." I pull her closer, brushing her tears with my thumbs. "Both of us have kept this from the other people in our lives. But now we'll ease them into it. Show them how much we are in love."

Her face crumples and I pull her to my chest when a song breaks through the silence, interrupting us.

I know what it is. Her mother's ringtone.

Kaylee curses, pulls out of my arms, tugging her phone out of her dress pocket.

It's late, almost midnight I think, and I'm almost certain both of us are thinking the same thing as she answers. Her dad...

"Mom?" Kaylee replies, then her mouth drops open, and she starts running.

Shit.

KAYLEE

---

I DON'T KNOW where I'm going, but as Mom cries through the phone telling me Dad has had a heart attack and is in the emergency room, I just keep running.

When I find myself at the front of the convention center, I see a handful of cars and take a risk.

“Uber?” I yell into the window, and he lowers it.

“Where to?”

I tell him “the hospital” and he nods. By the time I'm climbing in, Levi is on my tail.

“Kaylee!”

I glance at him when I have one foot in the car, and freeze.

I can't do this right now.

I know how much of a hypocrite I am, being angry at Levi for not telling his family and keeping me from them. I've done the same with mine.

Worse, I let them believe Levi was the one who ended it.

I've lied.

I didn't want my father to see me as a cheater. Instead, I let him think Levi treated me like I was not good enough for him and his rich family.

I can't let him come with me.

My parents would be furious and with Dad in the ER, this isn't the time.

I'm not sure it ever will be.

How could I put his health at risk or confess to my mother the truth? That I lied to my father and now he's dead.

If he doesn't survive this.

What a fucking mess.

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This won't—can't—work. Too much has happened.

I've lost the man I love because of my lies.

“Sorry. I have to go.” I pull the door shut when Levi's a foot away, order the driver to drive, and press my eyes closed when I hear him slap the rear of the cab.

I've hurt him again.

---

LEVI

---

MOTHER FUCKING FUCKER. How dare Kaylee just run away like that?

I tell her I love her and when her family has an emergency, she pushes me away.

Why the hell would she do that?

It's not like I was the cheater, and she has nothing to worry about when it comes to her family. Her father loved me for god's sakes.

Fuck this!

I flag down a driver and give him the name of the hospital. Without wanting to sound

cliché, I say, “Follow that cab.”

He looks at me like I’m joking, but when I don’t smile, he pulls out onto the road.

“Just tell me you aren’t stalking her, mate.” His accent is Australian.

“No.” I sigh. “We’re in love. Apparently.”

“Ah.” He nods. “Makes perfect sense.”

I can’t tell if he’s joking or totally gets it. Either way, I’m not letting her deal with this alone.

“Wait. Aren’t you Levi Montgomery?”

Christ.

I am not in the mood to talk to a fan right now.

“No.”

## CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

KAYLEE

---

“Mom!” I cry as I race into the waiting room where she’s pacing the floor.

I cross the room and pull her into my arms.

“Kaylee. Oh god.”

“How is he?”

“I’m waiting for the doctor. He’s in surgery. It’s not good,” Mom says, and I can feel her shaking.



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All the hope that my super optimistic personality had conjured on the drive here vanishes. I'd convinced myself that Mom was overreacting and that when I arrived there'd be good news.

"Is he..." I can't finish the sentence.

Mom bursts into tears.

Oh shit.

I lead her over to a seat, feeling numb, and we sit holding one another's hand. I have so many questions and want to tell her about tonight.

My father might be dying right at this moment.

How could I have been so foolish and not told them the truth?

I don't want to have this regret.

Nor do I want him knowing I'm the type of girl who cheats. His own daughter.

"You need to prepare yourself, Kaylee," Mom says after a moment. "I'm not sure he's going to make it."

My face crumples and I twist my head, dropping it to her shoulder.

"Mom, don't say that."

Grief completely overwhelms me.

Don't die, Dad.

Please don't die. Not yet.

"He's a fighter." I lift my head, and we stare at one another. "He has to live, Mom."

She nods, looking more and more grief-stricken by the moment.

"Stupid Thanksgiving." I snap, getting angry suddenly. "All that food. We should have just not done anything this year."

She takes my hand and squeezes. "Darling."

Images of his funeral and the house without him being there fill me. My mom on her own. Our lives empty...her heart breaking.

My guilt consuming me.

Having to walk away from Levi because I can't live with myself.

"Mom, he can't die." I sob.

"He might, sweetheart," Mom whispers. "He's given up recently. For him, changing the way he lives is just too hard."

I stare at the ugly white wall with all the stupid medical posters and want to rip them off.

Give me my dad back.

Where is the damn doctor?

Why is it taking so long?

My phone beeps and I ignore it.

“He can’t die,” I say softly to no one, and Mom’s fingers tighten round mine. Suddenly I face her. “He can’t die, Mom. I need to tell him something.”

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Her hand lifts, and she places it on my cheek.

“Your dad knows you love him, Kaylee. The moment you were born, you were the apple of his eye.” Mom’s eyes leak.

No.

No, that’s not it.

“He’s so proud of you working for his team.” She smiles through her own fear and grief. “Getting a doctorate and becoming a physio.”

Oh god.

“He told me just last week he wanted to live longer to watch you do more great things.”

A guttural noise escapes me, and I drop my head into my hands as Levi’s words return.

Both of us have kept this from the other people in our lives. But now we’ll ease them into it. Showing them how much we are in love.

“Mom.” I sob, dropping my face into my hands. “I lied. I lied to Dad.”

Silence.

She's going to hate me, too.

I sit up and face her. She's waiting for me to speak. "I lied about Levi."

She frowns in confusion. Aside from being on the TV, she's not heard his name from me in a long time.

"I don't understand." I watch her eyes lift over my head and I spin around, expecting to see the doctor.

"Kaylee." Levi's deep voice is low as he stands a few feet away looking a mix of furious and concerned. "How is your dad?"

"What's he doing here?" Mom asks. "And what is going on?"

Shit.

I stand abruptly and glance between them.

"Ah."

"Mrs. Rose. Sorry to hear about your husband," Levi says. "Kaylee and I were at the Hawkes Christmas party..."

"Not together," I say too fast.

Levi slides his hands into his black dress pants and locks his eyes with mine.

I turn to Mom and she's working it out, I can see that.

Fuck.

“Is this the man you’ve been seeing for the past few months?” she asks, unimpressed.

“Yes. I am,” Levi replies. “The man who loves her.”

Mom’s brows lift.

Shit.

“Wait. Stop.” I hold up my hands. “Let’s focus on Dad.”

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Mom shakes her head and tugs her bag onto her lap, hugging it. “Is this what you lied to your dad about?”

I nod.

Not completely.

That was the moment I should’ve confessed everything, but like the coward I claim that Levi is, I don’t.

And it’s a second too late.

“He would’ve understood. I could’ve talked to him if you’d told me,” Mom says. “If you love one another, Dad would’ve forgiven Levi eventually for the way he treated you.”

NO!

“I’m sorry?” Levi asks, as my eyes close tightly.

No, no, no, no.

“I’m sorry, what? How? What?” Levi asks again and there’s an edge to his voice.

One that I deserve.

When I open my eyes I meet his deep blue globes, holding them for a long moment,

then look over at my mom.

It's time to tell the truth.

Finally.

And the worst time possible.

"I haven't been honest about a few things." I admit, then flop down into a seat, glancing at the one next to me, an invitation to Levi to sit.

"I'll stand." He crosses his arms and glares daggers at me.

Crap.

Then the doctor steps out.

"Mrs. Rose?"

## CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

LEVI

---

Kaylee's mom stands to speak with the doctor while we wait to hear the update. After a minute or two, she turns and gives her daughter a wobbly smile.

"He's waking up."

Kaylee runs over to her, and they hug.



“I’ll go in and see him. Give me ten minutes. It looks like he might be okay.”

Might?

I keep my mouth shut.

Mrs. Rose follows the doctor and Kaylee walks back over, her eyes avoiding me.

*Source Creation Date: July 3, 2025, 4:36 am*

“Kaylee.”

“My dad is dying, Levi. I can’t.”

“Yes, you fucking can.” I grunt under my breath and close the distance between us.

Her watery eyes meet mine and I let out a moan and pull her against my chest. She melts into me, wrapping her arms around my body.

That’s fucking better.

Jesus, this woman.

After a few minutes, I pull her away and stare down at her beautiful face.

“What have you done?” When she attempts to glance away, I take her chin in my hand and force her eyes to mine. “What have you said to them?”

Her mother never looked at me the way she did tonight. She’s only ever been warm, friendly, and supportive of my future as a football player.

There wasn’t a hint of that tonight.

And it wasn’t grief.

What’s he doing here?

Kaylee and I were at the Hawkes Christmas party.

Not together.

Then she confessed she'd been lying to her dad about seeing me. I get that. I know we've lied to both our families. I understand that they would be upset, but I figure they know what happened between her and Colby.

Wait...

"Start talking." I demand.

"They think you broke up with me," Kaylee says.

"Because?" My voice is hard. She tries to move, but I force her eyes back to mine.

"Because!"

"Levi, you don't understand." She hisses, grabbing at my arm. "Dad was cheated on. He loses his mind at Mom all the time, thinking she might be cheating. Imagine if he knew what I'd done. I couldn't have him hate me."

Jesus.

"Did you tell him I'd had the affair?"

Unbelievable.

"It wasn't an affair!"

I drop my arms and take a step away. Running my hand through my hair, I turn back.

"What did you say?"

“I said you thought I wasn’t good enough because I was on a scholarship and was just sleeping with you for association with the football league.”

In other words calling her a jersey chaser.

Which I had.

But not to her fucking parents.

“So all this time, they thought I was some asshole who believed he was too good for you. Talking shit about you.”

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While you had your mouth on some other guy.

I don't say that, as I'm starting to understand that Colby played a big part in what happened. One Kaylee wasn't completely in control of.

And I was the idiot who wouldn't listen.

I hold up my hand. "Fine. Okay. I'll deal with Colby."

"Levi, no." She steps forward, placing her hands on my abs. "Don't."

My fingers thread through her hair. "Kaylee, you don't get it, do you?"

Blink.

"I'm going to fucking marry you. That guy forced himself on you. I don't care he's the pope or POTUS. He's not getting away with it."

Her mouth falls open.

Oops. I hadn't meant to say that.

She blinks again.

My lips twitch, softening into the smallest of smiles. "No one touches my girl."

"Levi."

“Your dad doesn’t need to know, kitten.” I pull her closer against me. “You didn’t cheat.”

“No, I did.” Kaylee shakes her head.

No, fuck that. As far as I’m concerned, this was a powerful guy taking what he wanted from a woman a quarter of his size.

“I was wrong walking away. I should have given you a chance to explain. Called him on it.” I shake my head.

“I wish you had.”

“Your parents will come around. We will tell them we both said horrible things, and it was miscommunication. All right?”

I see the doubt on her face and rub my thumb over her cheekbone.

“Over time, they’ll work it out. That I love you. That you love me. Especially when I put a big fat diamond on this finger.”

I take her hand and lift it to my mouth.

“Are you joking?” she whispers.

“I never joke when it comes to you, Kaylee Rose.” I smile and a quick glance over her head tells me the world knows about this already because a bunch of smartphones are pointed our way.

Christ.

Being a public figure really sucks some days.

Well, here we go. Because I'm not letting her run away.

I drop to one knee.

"Levi!" she cries, glancing around and gasping when she sees everyone watching.

"This is a hospital."

"Hey, I'm in a tuxedo." I smirk up at her red cheeks.

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She's never looked so beautiful.

“Kaylee, I have loved you since the moment I caught you in my arms on campus. I let us fall once, and I'll never let that happen again. You are the most important thing in my life, and without you, my life felt incomplete.”

She bites her bottom lip.

“We've both made mistakes and that just proves we're human. Young. Growing. Let's do it together.”

More biting on her lip while people around us are making cooing noises.

My heart thumps as I ask the next question.

With an audience.

“Kaylee Lilly Rose. Will you do me the honor of being my wife?”

She nods once.

I lift a brow, waiting in agony.

“Yes.” She nods more. “Yes.” Then she launches herself at me and I swear if I wasn't a quarterback, this little pocket rocket would've bowled me over. “Yes, Levi Montgomery, I will marry you.”



The room erupts into cheers as I crush my mouth to hers.

It's the most impulsive and best moment in my entire life. One I will never live to regret.

Kaylee is mine.

She's always been mine.

And always will be mine.

"I'm going to need the photos and videos," I say to the crowd around us when I stand with her in my arms. "By the way, this is Kaylee. My fiancé."

"Kaylee?" We hear behind us.

I drop her feet back to the floor and we turn to face her mom.

"Mom, I need to tell you the whole story."

## CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

KAYLEE

---

We step into my father's room. He's hooked up to a bunch of machines and is as pale as I've ever seen him. The doctors said we only have about five minutes with him.

Mom has been back in since we explained everything.

Well, not everything.

Levi and I decided to exclude the cheating. That's between us. I never slept with Colby and he's right. I had no choice but to kiss him that night. I've always said he kissed me. Not the other way around.

I'm grateful he's finally listened to my side of the story and even had the foresight to tell me I was innocent.

I do love him for that.

I told Mom we should wait to tell Dad we were engaged.

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“It’s up to you, but while your father has come through tonight, he’s still not out of the woods. I don’t want you to have any more regrets.”

“Okay.” I nodded.

She’d listened to us both explain how we were young and had argued. That we were both overwhelmed with our feelings for one another and said things we didn’t mean.

And how we’d been seeing each other since September—four months—and had fallen deeply in love. Neither of us wanted to tell our families for different reasons. Most of all, for the things we said after breaking up and looking stupid.

“Ah, pride.” Mom shook her head. “The killer of relationships.”

I have a feeling she knew there was a little more to it than that, but she didn’t dig.

I might tell her one day.

In fact, I’m almost certain I will.

Levi squeezes my hand and then releases it, putting his in the small of my back, leading me over to the father’s bed.

“Hey pumpkin,” Dad says and then his eyes drift over to Levi. “I’d like to think God sent me a Hawkes quarterback as a parting gift from Earth because I’d been a good man, but I hear you’re in love with my daughter.”

I almost snort.

“Dad.” I chastise softly.

“Yes, sir.” Levi nods, draping his arm over my shoulder. “Have been since day one. Both of us too stubborn to say it.”

Dad nods.

“You said some bad things about my daughter.”

My eyes drift to Mom and she shakes her head, telling me to let him get it off his chest.

“Which I regret.” Levi dips his head respectfully.

“I did the same thing,” I tell Dad. “We were both hurt and scared.”

Dad lays there a while, the machines beeping. Levi tugs me closer against his side, showing me support.

“We should stop talking about th—”

“Love is scary,” Dad says breathlessly. “Being loveless is scarier. Surround yourself with people worth fighting for.”

I don’t know who he’s talking to.

Himself. Me. Levi.

Or Mom.

Because I become suddenly aware that he will not be with us much longer. It's a knowing I can't explain.

"I want you to look after her for me," Dad tells Levi.

"Yes sir. I haven't done a good job at that to date, but today that changes." He confesses, then glances down at me, almost seeking permission. I spot the moment he decides for himself. "I asked your daughter to marry me."

My eyes dart over to Dad.

He shakes his head. "If I could, I'd kick your ass for not asking me first."

We all know he couldn't kick my big strong football player's ass, but it's cute anyway.

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“I should have. I’d say I’m sorry, but I’m not. I wasn’t going to lose Kaylee a second time,” Levi says with strong conviction.

Mom lays her hand on Dad's leg.

He nods repeatedly.

“I would’ve done the same thing. So I respect you for that. Keep fighting for my daughter—that’s the man I want for her.” Dad glances at me this time. “Do you love him?”

“Yes.” I nod. “With all my heart.”

“Then love each other well. Fight. Make up. Forgive. And stick together.”

I place my hand on Levi’s chest and let tears fall down my cheek. “We will.”

“Well, maybe more of the making up and less of the fighting.” Levi grins down at me.

“You wish, son, you wish.” Dad coughs out his laugh and we all glance around nervously as the machines beep a little.

I tense, not knowing what to do.

“Give your Dad and me a minute, sweetheart.” Mom says, smiling at me sadly.

I turn but walk straight into Levi's chest. I lift my face to his. "Go say goodbye to him, kitten."

Something isn't right.

I lean down, planting a gentle kiss on my father's face. "Sleep well Daddy. I love you."

"I love you too, pumpkin." Our eyes remain locked for a long moment, his glossy and so faded that I barely recognize them.

Then I feel Levi take my hand and let him lead me out of the room.

"Take her home," Mom says to Levi.

He does.

We climb into a waiting vehicle down below and the luxury vehicle I barely pay attention to drives us back to Levi's penthouse apartment.

He undresses me, showers me, and drapes one of his white shirts over my head, then carries me into bed.

We leave the drapes open, and the moonlight fills the room as we lay in each other's arms.

"Is he going to die?" I finally ask.

"Yes," Levi answers eventually, holding me tighter.

I drift in and out of sleep all night, plagued with confusing dreams or nightmares.

I'm not sure what they are. Just garbled thoughts and images.

Finally, I'm startled out of sleep by the sound of a phone ringing.

Levi answers it, then he hands it to me.

"Mom," I say, already knowing.

"Your dad is at peace, darling," she says, crying. "He has given you both his blessing."

I press my face into Levi's chest and let the tears fall.



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He takes the phone.

“We’ll be there in an hour to pick you up, Mrs. Rose.”

“Please. Call me Gillian.” I hear her say. “Or Mom.”

“Mom. That sounds good,” Levi says.

When the call ends, this amazing man lifts my face and kisses my lips gently.

“I heard,” I say.

“You’re both part of my family now. I promise to be the man your father expects, but more importantly, the man you deserve, Kaylee.”

“I know you will.”

“Let’s go get your mom, so she knows she’s not alone.” He brushes the hair from my forehead. “Then let’s get your father buried and create our life.”

I don’t even know if Levi wants children. Or a big wedding or...I don’t know anything. We have never discussed these things.

It doesn’t matter.

I know the important things now. Levi is a man with great integrity and loyalty, and he loves me unconditionally.

The rest will fall into place.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

LEVI

SIX WEEKS LATER

---

“Babe, everyone is going to be here in a few minutes.” Kaylee purrs.

Which is why my cock is so damn hard.

I should be feeling dejected that we didn’t make it to the Super Bowl, but it’s my first year, and today we have over fifty people coming to watch it with us.

Arriving any minute.

And I just tied Kaylee’s arms behind her back while she sits on a kitchen stool and spun her around and pulled down her panties.

She’s right, we only have a few minutes. Fortunately Kaylee demanded I change the code on the front door, so my family has to request entry. So we will have some warning. But not much if I’m balls deep inside her.

I part her thighs.

“You shouldn’t have been cheeky, then.” I tug her bottom to the edge and plant my face inside her pussy.

“Oh god.” She groans.

I lap at her, wet juices pouring out of her. We’ve been teasing each other all day. The sexual tension building, so this has to happen.

It started when she sat on my lap at breakfast and told me she was not going to wear any panties at our wedding.

“Kitten.” I growled. “You cannot tell me that. I’ll have a fucking hard-on while you’re walking down the aisle.”

She giggled and climbed off, leaving me with a goddamn hard-on.

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So I'd crept up behind her while she was stirring the sauce an hour ago, slid my hands down her shorts, and circled her clit.

"Yes, oh yes, more." She'd leaned back into my chest.

I'd kissed her neck and walked away.

"Levi Montgomery, get back here!"

"Sorry, can't. Busy." I'd grinned so hard as I walked through the house to the gym.

It backfired on me. I smelled her on my fingers and realized I'd only teased myself more.

Life with Kaylee has been amazing.

We buried her father a week after he died. A handful of the NFL players turned up to show their respect. Gillian was a mess, but so grateful.

"He would have loved this. Thank you, Levi."

"Hey, they are here for Kaylee as well. They're her friends too," I said, gazing over at the woman wearing my big diamond ring.

I might have gone a little overboard.

Marking her as mine was part of that plan, but I caught her admiring the excessively

priced rare pink oval diamond while ring shopping.

I snuck back and purchased it. Then gently slid it onto her fingers when she was asleep.

The next morning, she woke me with a little scream. I was grinning before my eyes open.

That was a great morning.

Kaylee climbed on top of me and rode my cock until I came like a madman while her hand lay on my pecs, sparkling like a damn supernova.

She hasn't taken it off since.

"You want to come, kitten?" I growl, glancing up at her clothed body. I'd prefer her naked, but we really don't have much time.

Minutes.

The game starts in thirty.

"Yes, goddamn you, Levi." She squirms.

"On my face or mouth?"

"There's no time. Hurry." Kaylee lifts her hips and pushes them into my face.

"Horny little pussy." I lap at her again and moan at her taste.

Fuck this. I'm not spending the night burning for her after the teasing we've done

today. I stand, lifting her into my arms as she wraps her legs around my body, and place her on a nearby table.

The perfect height one.

Unzipping, I push my pants down, then guide my cock to her entrance.

“I should make you suck my cock.”

She grins.

I step back.

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“No, Levi.” She panics and I laugh. “Stop messing around.”

I palm the wall above her head as I guide my thick cock back in position and then, holding her gaze, slam inside her.

“Feel that, baby.”

“Yes. All of you.”

“That’s how much I need to fuck you every day.” I pull back and slam in again.

“Every day, my cock needs to feel this wet pussy.”

“Yes, oh god. More.”

I hold the table and pound her harder, faster, deeper, until I fill her with my hot seed.

Kaylee cries out, her hands tied behind her.

Powerless.

And yet, she holds all the power.

And all my heart.

---

WE CLEAN UP just in time for everyone to arrive. Kaylee leans against my side, and

my arms drapes over her as Knox, Payton, Atlas, and Molly pile in.

Logan and Aidan Dufort, Blake's cousins, arrive with him and Bella.

Then some of the Hawkes players drift in.

There's enough food to feed a small country, and the TV is on as the Super Bowl kicks off.

"Who's got money on the game?" Jackson asks as his wife drops down on his lap.

"We have," she answers.

"We do?" he asks, and everyone laughs.

Drew and Kyler arrive a few minutes into the first quarter and slap me on the back when they grab a beer.

Finally, Dad arrives.

I watch him as he pours himself a whisky, kisses Kaylee on the cheek, and greets everyone else.

"Hey, big guy," Jimmy Gage says, towering over my father.

"You guys should be on that field," Dad says.

Jackson shoots me a smile.

We had a chat one day. He told me to make sure Dad doesn't cross the line between supportive parent and the obsessive need to win.



One is healthy, the other is not.

Montgomery's have always won. I get it. It's our family motto. But this is the NFL, not a business deal. We are up against the best of the best.

This year, my professional career began.

I got my girl, soon we will be getting married—very soon—and the new season will be underway later this year.

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There is time to win.

I certainly didn't lose this year.

I have a favor to ask him, so at half time when he leave the room, I kiss Kaylee on the forehead.

"Everything okay?" she asks.

"Everything is perfect, kitten. You are perfect, nearly wife." I kiss her mouth, and we smile at one another.

"I love you, nearly husband," she whispers as I climb off the sofa.

I find Dad in our spare room, and he has the phone on speaker.

I keep walking, figuring it's a call to a friend about the game, but it's a woman's voice I hear when she says, "You could've told me that before spending the night with me, Ward. I haven't let another man touch me for over five years."

Oh shit.

"Penelope, I enjoyed every damn minute," he replies huskily. "Really fucking enjoyed it."

I should walk away, but I'm frozen.

It's not like I want to hear about my father's sex life, but some twisted sense of curiosity keeps me listening.

Who is this woman?

I was right. He's been seeing someone.

Why hasn't he told us? Or introduced us to this Penelope?

A part of me doesn't like this at fucking all. Mom only died like...recently.

"Hell, I want my mouth on you right now," he adds.

Fuck, no.

My ears are going to fall off if I don't get out of here.

"You have no idea how much I want that, Ward. Please come over, I'm—" Penelope replies, and I make a sound in my head as I cover my ears with my hand, missing that last part.

I walk backward, bumping into Knox.

"What the hell are you doing?" he asks and then glances behind me to Dad, frowning.  
"What did I miss?"

Dad punches the screen of his phone and slides it into his pocket as he meets my gaze directly.

I drop my hands from my ears.

“I have to go,” he says.

Do not think about your father having sex.

Do not think about your father having sex.

Do not...fuck.

“Okay,” I say blandly.

“Where?” Knox asks.

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My father smirks while I almost vomit, then he slaps my brother on the back. “Man stuff.”

Ward—as I now have to call him as I can’t think of him as my father anymore—walks off, and I rake my hand through my hair and groan.

“Fucking hell.”

I barely stop myself from gagging.

“Man stuff?” Knox frowns, then I see the moment he clicks. His eyes widen and I nod. “Who is she?”

“Penelope,” I reply.

Because that’s all we know.

For now.

But if I know my brothers and me, we are going to find out exactly who she is.

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