



Lily

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Description: Devin is a dream come true. I'm already daydreaming about those deep blue eyes, that lean swimmer's body, and, my God, that accent – and I've only had one conversation with him. And he's not just good-looking, he's a true gentleman. But he's used to the best of everything, while I have to scrape together the cash for a plane ticket. Will I really be enough for him? When Lily runs into Devin in her Literature class, she's certain she's stumbled onto the perfect guy. He's got courtly manners, impeccable clothes, and arms that can carry her to the bedroom like she weighs nothing. And on top of all that, he loves *Frankenstein*? But Devin is a Whitethorn – his family is used to luxuries Lily's never even dreamed of. Can she really find a place in his high-class world? Or will it all turn out to be just a beautiful dream?

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1

Lily

Today has been a mess. It's the first day of the second week of the semester, and I've got an early class – Gothic Lit, my favorite. The problem is that everything seems to be going wrong. I spilled my coffee all over my last clean pair of jeans and my favorite white shirt, I forgot to grab my protein bar on my way out the door, and I forgot my book for this class. And on top of that, I left too late to walk and had to call an Uber.

By the time I slink into class, everyone is already seated, and the professor zeroes in on me with a disapproving look. He's a stickler for being on time – not that I'm late. I'm just here at the last possible second. I take a seat in the back next to the guy from England; I've noticed him around campus. Honestly, how could you not? He's a stunning specimen – tall and lean, with broad shoulders and a killer jawline. Not to mention the wavy blond hair and those ocean blue eyes – I have a type, okay? And he's it. I sigh and pull out my notebook and a pen, still annoyed that I forgot my book. The professor is already irritated with me.

“Did you forgot your book?” asks the man beside me, and I feel goosebumps slink down my arms. Did I forget to mention the accent? Yeah, the accent really does it for me.

“Yeah,” I whisper back, glancing up at him. “Everything got a bit thrown off this morning.” I glance down at my Nike leggings and Uni sweatshirt. I hated dressing in workout clothes for class.

“Here, we can share.” He puts his copy of *Frankenstein* in between us on the desk and gives me a dashing smile.

“That’s really sweet of you, thanks.”

“It’s no trouble at all. I’m Devin, by the way.”

“I’m Lily.” I hold my hand out, and he takes it gently, pressing a kiss to my knuckles. I feel my face flush.

“It’s a pleasure to meet you.”

I smile through the redness in my cheeks, but before I can reply, the professor demands our attention and begins the lecture. I take notes throughout the class, but I keep finding my eyes moving to Devin. He doesn’t seem snobby like some of the other attractive guys in this school for all his gorgeous looks. His eyes are gentle and kind.

At the end of class, Devin stands and turns to me. He’s dressed immaculately in dark wash jeans and a crisp white button-up shirt with the sleeves rolled to his elbows. He smiles.

“Again, it was lovely to meet you, Lily.” He picks up his bag after placing his books inside. “I hope the rest of your day looks up.”

My voice catches with my nerves, so I only smile shyly and nod, giving him a wave as he walks out.

After classes end for the day, I go to Paws and Claws to talk to Riley. The second I

walk in the door, I see Shay chasing that silly pug around the shop while Riley cackles at the register.

“It’s not funny, Riley!” Shay yells, trying to keep from laughing herself. The pug – Winston, I think – rushes around the shop in open-mouthed glee, his tiny tush tucked as he zooms from one end to the other.

“He’s got the zoomies!” Riley snickers and continues. “Let him get the energy out.”

“Winston, get back here!” Shay laughs and continues the chase. I shake my head at their antics and go over to Riley.

“I met someone today,” I say and feel my face bloom into an excited grin. Riley raises an eyebrow.

“Oh? Do tell.”

“His name is Devin. He’s a guy in my Gothic Lit class.” I feel my grin go a little sappy. “He’s from England, and oh God, Ri, he’s gorgeous. Plus, he dresses like a model, and he’s smart and charming.” I heave a sigh; I can literally feel the stars in my eyes. “I think I’m in love.”

“Whoa, slow down, Lils,” Riley says with a laugh. “Look, I know you like him, and you think he’s cute but isn’t it a little early to throw around the L-word?”

“Haven’t you ever heard of love at first sight, Ri? Because that’s totally what this is. Okay, maybe today isn’t technically the first time I’ve seen him around, but it’s the first time I talked to him, so it’s practically the same thing.”

“Lily, you’re only nineteen. I’m not saying you shouldn’t date or have fun, but you shouldn’t take this so seriously. You have a lot of life to live, and getting too invested

in someone you barely know isn't healthy."

The door chimes and our sister Bree comes through the door.

"Hey, guys! What's the good word?" She rushes up to the counter and scoops Riley into a huge hug. Bree is the oldest, and she's always had a bit of a motherly vibe, even though she's only 32 – not all that much older than Ri.

"Sorry I haven't come by sooner. Work has been running me ragged. What do you say we go grab dinner?"

"Sounds good to me! What about you, Shay? Lils? You guys in?" asks Riley.

Shay quickly agrees, but I've got a lot to do before I get to bed.

"Sorry guys, I have a lot of homework and laundry to deal with before bed. I'll take a raincheck, though." I hug my sisters one by one and then leave. I can't help but wonder if I'll get to talk to Devin again tomorrow.

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Devin

The next day, I settle in for class, wondering if the girl from yesterday will sit beside me again. She's lovely, with her long wavy blonde hair and her shy smile. I think I'd like to get to know her better.

I've just started perusing my notes from yesterday's lecture when the chair beside me pulls out with a squeak to the linoleum floors, and someone taps me on the shoulder. It's her: Lily. I feel my heart flutter in my chest. She's relatively short, with lovely curves that are accentuated by the slim-fit jeans and cream V-neck sweater.

"Hi," she says with a smile. "Mind if I sit here?"

"Please," I say and smile back. Lily slips into her seat and pulls her notes and a worn copy of *Frankenstein* from her bag.

"That looks like quite an old copy," I say.

"Oh, it is! It was my mom's, but I took it when I was in middle school. It's one of my favorite books of all time." I can't help but grin at that.

"It's one of mine as well. I have an old copy on my shelves back in London."

"What's London like? I've always wanted to go." She leans in a bit, eyes focused intently on my own. Be still my heart. She seems interested in me too, and the way her

curious eyes light up makes my stomach flutter further.

“It’s a world apart from California,” I begin, but the professor comes into the room, and our conversation is cut short. I lean closer and whisper in her ear, “I’d love to tell you about it sometime.” She blushes prettily and nods, and I turn to my notes and hone in on the lecture.

After class, I wait for her to pack her things before restarting our earlier conversation.

“Care to get coffee sometime?”

“Sure. I actually have a free period now if you’re available.”

“I do as well. There’s a lovely little shop just around the corner,” I say, heart pounding.

“Sage is my favorite coffee shop! Let’s go!” she chirps and leads the way out the door.

It’s a quick walk, and we both read the menu for a moment before deciding on something. Lily doesn’t even have to tell the young barista her order; it seems she frequents the place. So, when I step up to order my London fog and blueberry scone, both Lily and the barista laugh.

“That’s my usual order, down to the scone. How funny!” Lily’s laughter is musical. As I look at her, I can’t help but love the unrestrained joy on her face. She laughs with a wide-open mouth full of straight, white teeth, and her eyes crinkle at the corners. She’s not afraid to really laugh. I grin and chuckle a bit as I pay the cashier, and then we grab a table in the back of the shop.

“So, tell me about London,” she says, taking a sip from her water bottle.

“London is a beautiful blend of cultures and is rich with history. I’ve always loved the museums, and when I’m home, I visit them often. Did you know admission is free in many of them?”

“No! That’s awesome! I love museums. When I visited my sister Riley in New York City last year, she took me to the Natural History Museum and the Met. I literally spent full days going through everything.”

“We have a spectacular Natural History Museum in London as well.” Our tea arrives, and I take a long sip before continuing.

“There’s this open-air market near London Bridge called Borough Market. There’s a vendor there that makes jammy dodgers the size of your head and another that makes the most spectacular rose jam. It’s a gourmet food lover’s dream. And don’t get me started on the cheese shops; just thinking about it is making me hungry.”

“That sounds incredible. I’ve always wanted to visit London. I hope I can visit someday. Also, what is a jammy dodger?”

“It’s a delectable little shortbread cookie filled with jam; they’re wonderful with tea.”

“I am here for anything fruit-flavored or cookie-related.” She nods as though to emphasize the point.

“Me too. My mum makes me these special sugar cookies every Christmas. I’ve been looking forward to it all year.” I flush a little. Perhaps that was too much information. “Well, maybe I’ll be able to show you my city someday.”

“I’d like that,” Lily says. We continue chatting about routine things such as the weather and our favorite places to eat in town. As it turns out, we both love Italian food.

“There’s this great place downtown, it’s small, but they have spectacular food. Could I perhaps take you to dinner this evening?”

“I’d like that. Here, give me your phone, and I’ll put my info in there for you.” I pass her my phone without hesitation, and she smiles before quickly typing out her contact info. “I put my number and my address, so you know where to pick me up,” she says and passes my phone back. I send her a text right away.

“There. Now you have my number as well. I’ll see you tonight. Seven o’clock, alright?”

“That sounds perfect. I’ll see you then, Devin.”

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Lily

That night, I'm a bundle of nerves. After I shower and fix my hair into soft waves that fall down my back, I slip into a modest knee-length dress with black tights underneath and a dark blue peacoat. A pair of ankle boots complete the ensemble.

Devin shows up at Seven o'clock on the dot. I open the door and swallow hard. He's dressed in snug dark-wash jeans and a black button-down shirt with a dark grey coat over the top. The clothes are perfectly tailored and show the incredibly attractive lines of his body.

"Wow," he says, eyes trailing over my form. "You look beautiful." I feel my face heat up, but I smile.

"Thank you. You look very handsome."

He holds out his arm to me, and I take it, pausing to lock my door before we make our way to his car. I hesitate when he leads us up to a sleek silver Mercedes.

"This is your car?"

"Yes..." He looks at me with a slightly furrowed brow. "Do you not like it?"

"No, it's not that. It's beautiful; I'm just surprised. I don't know many college students with cars like this."

“Really? I thought it was quite common in California.”

“Well, I suppose in LA and maybe further north, but in smaller towns like this, it’s not all that common.”

“I can’t say I ever noticed, to be honest,” he says and opens the door for me. I slide into the expensive leather seat and look in awe at the immaculate interior. He gets into the driver’s seat, and we are off to the Italian restaurant, Vinnie’s.

“I’ve completely fallen in love with this place since I’ve been in the states,” he says as we make our way inside.

“Hello, reservation for Whitethorn.”

“Yes, sir, right, this way.”

The hostess leads us to a secluded table toward the back of the restaurant.

“I always get the eggplant parmesan; it’s amazing. But the cannolis are to die for.” Italian is my favorite kind of food, too. I’m continuously surprised every time Devin and I share a love for the same things. For me, this is just another sign that this is meant to be.

I’m totally in love.

“I always get the Bolognese; it’s an old family recipe passed down in the owner’s family. I’ve never had anything so delicious. But I do agree with you on the cannolis. I can’t come here without eating at least one.”

Our meals come quickly, and we chat throughout dinner about our families and our majors in school. More often than not, our paths are so similar it’s crazy.

“Hey, what do you say we get some cannolis to go and hang out at my place. A little Netflix and chill?”

“That sounds like a perfect end to the evening.” Devin smiles and waves down the waiter, ordering dessert to go and paying the bill. In a few minutes, we are on our way.

Back at my place, I brew a strong pot of black tea and set it out on the coffee table with cream and sugar, and Devin pops open the container of cannolis.

“Have you seen *The Witcher*?” I ask, flipping on the TV.

“No, I can’t say that I have. I’ve heard good things, though,” Devin replies.

“I haven’t seen it yet either. Does that one sound good?” Devin nods enthusiastically, and we sink into the sofa as the first episode begins, and we start on our dessert.

Three episodes and four cannolis later, I am feeling happy and full. I look over at Devin, who is watching the screen with rapt attention. He got a smear of cream at the corner of his mouth. I lick my lips and lean over, pressing my lips to his. Devin looks surprised for a moment before leaning in and returning my kiss sweetly. He’s gentle and not at all demanding. I get the feeling that he wasn’t even expecting this, much less even more intimacy.

I’m not usually the kind of girl who does anything on the first date, even kissing. But I feel like I’ve known him forever, and everything just feels so right. I push my body closer to his and swing my leg over so that I’m sitting in his lap. I dig my fingers into his perfect golden curls and press my lips even more onto his. He groans into my mouth and grasps my hips firmly.

“Naughty,” he moans when I pull away to kiss my way down his neck.

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“Bedroom,” I moan in return. Devin grips me firmly and stands as though I weigh nothing, earning a shocked squeak from me. He chuckles and makes his way down the hall.

“Last door on the left.”

He nudges the door open with his foot and carries me over to the bed, laying me gently amongst the covers. The moment my back hits the bed, I tug off my tights so that I’m only left in my dress and undergarments. Devin unbuttons his shirt and drapes it over the back of my desk chair before climbing over me and kissing me again.

It wasn’t nearly enough time to admire his strong, lean body. I run my hands up his arms and over his shoulders before raking my nails down his back. He pushes his hips into mine, and I wrap a leg around his waist to urge him on.

“Yes,” I hiss when his hardness presses against my core through our clothes. I feel so hot. I reach down and swiftly unbuckle his belt before trying to shove his pants off his hips. He smiles against my mouth and gives me a hand, kicking the jeans onto the floor. He’s in silky black boxer-briefs. He leans back on his knees, and I get a good look at him, every delicious inch.

“I’m feeling underdressed by comparison,” he teases and tugs at the hem of my skirt. I reach down and pull the slinky material up over my head, tossing it aside, and I’m left in nothing but my navy blue lace bra and panties.

“Stunning,” he says in awe, positioning himself over me again. I can see his hard

cock through the thin material of his boxers, and it makes my mouth water. He's large and throbbing, and all I want is to have him inside of me. I don't really care how at this point. He thrusts against me, clothed cock making me quiver in want. He groans and hooks an arm under one of my knees, hiking my leg up onto his bicep and giving him a better angle.

"Jesus," he groans. "You're so hot." I can feel my legs starting to shake. With every thrust, he hits my clit dead on, and I'm flying quickly to an orgasm. Two more quick thrusts, and we shudder together in completion.

Devin collapses beside me, and we are both breathing heavily. After a few moments to calm my racing heart, I giggle and stretch.

"I've never had an orgasm that strong with my clothes still on," I say. Devin chuckles.

"I haven't come in my pants since I was a teenager." He makes a face and pulls at his boxers.

"Next time, let's lose the layers, okay?"

"Sounds like a plan, love."

We lay there and whisper for a while before I feel myself nodding off. Devin presses a soft kiss to my temple.

"I should head home. We have an early class tomorrow." I nod sleepily at him, and he runs a hand through my hair. "I'll lock the door on my way out. Sleep well." He kisses me on my lips, and the last thing I hear before sleep takes me is the quiet click of the door.

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Devin

A month later, Lily and I are official and exclusive, and I am completely and utterly in love. We spend nearly every day together, and I never tire of her. I'm just finishing up breakfast when my phone rings; I see my mother's name on the caller ID.

"Hey mum," I say when I pick up and smile at her cheerful voice coming down the line.

"Hello, darling! How are you?"

"I'm fantastic! Mum, I've met someone, and I think she's the one."

"That's wonderful news, love! Tell me all about her."

I spend the next hour telling my mother all about Lily and how we met, and my soul warms at how supportive and wonderful a woman my mother is.

"She sounds charming, darling. I can't wait to meet her! You should bring her along the next time you're able to visit home."

"That's a great idea, mum. She really wants to see London, and I'm coming home for the holidays. I'm going to see if she'd like to come with me. Is that alright?"

"Of course, Devin! Keep me updated."

“I will, mum. Look, I’m meeting Lily for lunch in a little, so I need to go. I’ll call you in a few days, though. I love you.”

“Love you, too, sweetheart. Keep care.”

“Bye, mum.”

A feeling of excitement bubbles in my chest, and I can’t wait to meet up with Lily and ask her to come home with me. I run through the shower after washing the breakfast dishes and then sit down to finish some reading for class before shooting Lily a text that I’m on my way.

We meet up for lunch at a little ramen shop down the street from Paws and Claws, and when I spring the idea on her, she’s thrilled that my family is excited to meet her.

“I’d love to, babe. If I can come up with the money for the plane ticket, I’m totally in!”

We slurp our miso ramen, both with extra fish cake, and enjoy the quiet atmosphere of the noodle shop. Usually, the place is packed, but we lucked out and hit a slow time.

“Hey, Dev? Would you like to come to my sister’s shop with me after lunch and meet some of my family?” I feel my stomach drop a bit at the thought of meeting her family, and while I’m incredibly nervous, I’m also happy.

“I’d love to meet your family, darling.”

We head over to Paws and Claws after lunch. Shay, Riley, and Abby are there, and they are all nice, though Riley is a little less friendly than the others. She pulls Lily aside and chats with her in the corner, throwing suspicious looks my way every so

often. I get the feeling she doesn't like me much. Or maybe she just doesn't like the idea of her little sister in a relationship. Regardless, Shay and Abby are delightful and an absolute riot. Shay is obsessed with this little load of a pug and refuses to put him down the entire time. On the other hand, Abby decides to bring out a veritable parade of Welsh Corgi puppies they've just acquired.

"They're the same as the dogs your Queen has, right?" Abby laughs as the little loaves tumble about with their short legs, their big bottoms bouncing with every step.

"Ah, yes. Her majesty does have quite a liking for the breed. I personally think they're hilarious." I chuckle as one rushes over to me and nearly falls on its face when one of its siblings tackles it from the side. They really are cute.

Lily comes up behind me and tugs on my arm.

"Hey, it's getting late. Are you ready to go?"

"Sure, darling." I turn to her sisters. "It was lovely to meet you all." They reply in much the same fashion, though Riley's was more of a grumble, and Lily and I go back to the restaurant where I left my car.

"I hope I made a good first impression. I don't think Riley likes me much."

"Don't worry about Riley. She's just overprotective." She slips her hand into mine. "It went very well, babe. My family will love you as much as I do." She freezes, and I snap my gaze to her. She's bright red, and I feel a growing flush on my face.

"I, uh..." she begins, but then pauses and takes a deep breath. She turns to look at me fully. "I was going to wait a while, but... Yeah, I-I love you, Dev."

I can't contain the grin that splits my face as I sweep her up into my arms and twirl

her around before pulling her in for a passionate kiss.

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“Come home with me,” I whisper against her lips, and she nods, quickly pulling me along to my car.

Back at my place, I pull her in for a kiss and lead her to the bedroom; I can’t wait any longer. We settle into the sheets, and I kiss her slowly, trailing my fingers up her thigh and over her belly, then in between the valley of her breasts. She squirms against me, grinding her aching core against my thigh. I’m so hard it’s nearly painful.

“Say it again,” I whisper and undo the button of her jeans. She kicks off her Converse, and I slide the material off her legs.

“I love you, Dev.”

“Yes,” I groan and bury my face against her neck as I slip my hand between her legs, cupping her dripping sex. She arches up into me with a moan and begins pulling at my shirt. It’s a simple black tee, and I’m glad I decided to go casual today. I swiftly free myself from the garment and throw it across the room before pulling her sweater off and doing the same. Her breasts are pushed together by a pretty pink bra. I flick my finger over one hard nipple through the material.

“Beautiful,” I murmur and then bury my face there, inhaling the sweet scent of her perfume and something that is uniquely Lily. I cup one tender mound and mouth at the other, slipping her flesh free from the satin. Her buds are rosy and erect, and my mouth waters. I take the first peak into my mouth, and she digs her fingers into my hair to pull me ever closer. I’ve dreamt of this for weeks now.

“Dev, please,” she begs as I stand to take off my own jeans. I hesitate for a moment

and look up at her. I tug the waistband of my boxers.

“Is this okay?” I ask. Despite the depth of our feelings, I have to know that she’s comfortable.

“Yes. God, yes. Hurry!”

I smile at her impatience and drop the material at my feet. She spreads her legs, baring her covered pussy. Her matching satin panties are damp with her juices, and I have to taste her now.

I crawl up between her knees and grab the edge of the material, sliding it down her legs. She’s bare, no hair at all on her peachy-pink skin, but her petals glisten with her excitement.

I spread her gently and run my tongue up her slit, circling the swollen bud of her clit before spearing her opening. She cries out and clenches around me, burying her fingers in my hair again. I love it when she does this.

Her hips rock to meet my questing tongue again and again, and before long, she’s shuddering and clenching.

“Yes!” she cries, and her orgasm floods against me. I gently work her through it before sitting back on my heels and letting her catch her breath.

A few minutes later, she reaches out to me. “Come on, Devin,” she says softly. “Make love to me.”

“Baby,” I whisper and position myself. I tangle my fingers with hers on either side of her head. “I love you.” And then I slide into her tight body in one smooth thrust. I pause to let her adjust. Her walls clench and quiver around my girth, and I groan at

the sensation. It's all so good, so perfect.

"I love you, too. Now move!" She smacks me on the ass, and I can't help but let out a bark of laughter.

"So bossy."

Before she can open her mouth again, I pull back and slam inside of her in a powerful thrust. Her mouth drops open, and she tilts her head back. I can't help but have a taste of the exposed flesh. I nibble along the length of it and pound into her again and again until she's babbling incoherently. She starts slamming her hot pussy up to meet every thrust. I let go of her hands, and she digs her nails into my back. I wrap my arms under her shoulders, pulling her tightly to my body, and quicken my pace until neither of us can keep a reasonable volume anymore. I feel my rhythm stutter as my orgasm races to me.

"I'm going to cum. Cum with me, baby," I rush out. I feel her body stiffen beneath me, and she screams her pleasure for all to hear. My neighbors were probably going to be pissed, but I really couldn't care. I push into her one last time before jerking out and shooting my completion across the sheets. I collapse next to her and pull her into my arms, nuzzling her gently and trailing my fingers down her spine.

"I love you, Lily."

"I love you too, babe."

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Lily

The next morning, I wake up early. Devin is sleeping peacefully by my side, so I decide to make us some breakfast. On my way out of his room, I grab one of his shirts from the closet and throw it on, and then I grab my phone from the pocket of last night's jeans.

I didn't get a very good look at the place last night, but it is very nice. It's large and modern and looks expensive. There are immaculate marble countertops in the kitchen, a professional grade stove, and the biggest refrigerator I've ever seen in my life. I start peeking into the cupboards to see what I'm working with when my phone rings. I pick it up quickly, not wanting to wake Devin.

"Hello," I say quietly, standing on my toes to reach a high shelf. Olive oil, perfect!

"Where the hell are you?" It's Riley, and she doesn't sound happy.

"Ri? I'm with Devin, is something wrong?"

"Well, it's not every day you swing by to treat your baby sister to coffee only to find her MIA. Really, Lils, you should've let one of us know where you'd be."

I feel bad. I know I should've let someone know. Not because I don't trust Devin, but because all of us like to drop in on each other like this occasionally. I can't imagine how worried I'd be if I showed up at Riley's and she hadn't gone home.

“I’m sorry, Ri. I just got caught up. I have to tell you what happened, though!” I could hear my voice go high with my excitement. “We finally said ‘I love you’ last night!”

“Finally? Lils, you’ve only been dating for like a month. Don’t you think you’re moving a little fast?”

“No,” I say firmly. “I know this is right, Ri. I can feel it in my soul.”

“Wow, sappy much?” Ri laughs, and I laugh along with her.

“I know,” I groan as I search for a mixing bowl and a frying pan. “But it’s true, Ri. I don’t know how else to explain it. He wants me to go home with him for the holidays and meet his family in London!”

“London? Wow, that’s a long way from home. But a beautiful city. I think you’d love it there. Do you think you’re going to go?”

“I’m not sure, actually. God knows I want to, but I don’t know what the plane ticket will cost or if I’ll be able to afford it. As far as I know, we’d be staying with his family, so I won’t have to worry about a hotel at least.”

“I’m sure I can help you out a bit if you need it. I don’t exactly agree with you jumping into this relationship, but you’re a grown woman, so I’ll respect your decision. If he hurts you, though, I’ll take him out.”

“Okay, Ri,” I laugh. “I’ll let you know if it comes to that.”

“Good. I’ve got to head to work, so I’ll talk to you later. Text me when you get home.”

“Okay. Bye, Ri, love you.”

“Love you too, little sis.”

As soon as I hang up, a pair of strong arms wrap around me from behind.

I really hope he didn't hear that conversation. How embarrassing.

He kisses me on the top of my head, looking over my shoulder to see what I'm cooking.

“Bacon and eggs,” I say. “I found your olive oil, too. I hope you don't mind. I don't like cooking my eggs in butter very much.”

He smiles and steps away, then pulls out some bread and tomatoes.

“It's more than fine, love. You can always make yourself at home here. And I certainly don't mind you making me breakfast.” Devin winks and pops a few slices of crusty bread into the toaster oven before washing and slicing the tomatoes and layering them on two plates. He doesn't say anything about my phone conversation, and I can't help but feel relieved. It's not going to be easy, but I'm determined to save enough for the trip. He doesn't need to know.

6

Devin

The next couple of months fly by, and I decide it's time to let Lily know that my family is covering our travel expenses. I had overheard her conversation with Riley, but I didn't think it was polite to bring it up since she never brought it up to me. Of course, when I mentioned to my mum that I wasn't sure Riley would be able to purchase a ticket, mum immediately insisted on paying for it and wouldn't hear anything else about it. I just hope Lily will be okay with it. I tousle my hair with a bit of wax and grab my coat on my way out the door. We are having dinner at Vinnie's tonight.

Lily looks lovely in black leggings and an oversized sweater. Her hair is arranged in a casual bun on top of her head, and it shows off the graceful sweep of her neck. Once we are seated and place our orders – eggplant parm for me and carbonara for her – I decide to take the plunge and let her know what's happening with the holiday.

“I spoke with my mum the other day. She can't wait for us to come to London.” I see Lily's face pinch a bit. So she's stressing about it. “She's insisted on paying for our airfare.” Lily's eyes spring wide.

“Oh, no. I couldn't ask her to do that. It's too much.”

“It's fine, love, really. She wants to.”

“Devin. Do you have any idea how expensive those tickets are? I couldn't accept

something like that from your mother.”

“I know they’re a little pricey, darling. But mum’s put her foot down. And besides, my sister works for the airline and gets us discounts. Mum will feel far more put out if you refuse and can’t join me on holiday.”

She sucks her lower lip into her mouth and bites down on it. This is a nervous habit I’ve noticed over the last few months.

“I don’t want to upset her, babe, but I feel really uneasy accepting something so extravagant.”

“I want you there with me. And my family is dying to meet you. Please? For me?”

Lily sighs and folds her hands together on the tabletop, brow furrowed in thought.

“Alright,” she says slowly. “But I insist on helping out or something to make up for it.” I think about the family estate and what she could possibly help with; best not to overthink it now.

“I’m sure mum would love your help to prepare for Christmas.”

“Okay, then. It’s settled!” she chirps, looking much more cheerful.

“Everything is being arranged. All you’ll have to do is enter your passport and ID information when you get the airline’s email. You’ll also be able to choose your return date if you don’t want to stay for the entire break. I know that Abby is due to deliver her baby, and I wouldn’t dream of keeping you from your family for that.”

“We should be fine. The baby isn’t due until after the New Year, so as long as we are back before then, we are in the clear.” I was planning to come back a couple of days

after Christmas, so that will work out well.

“That’s perfect. We can come back a couple of days after Christmas. Will your family be upset if you aren’t here for it?”

“No. Mom decided to treat herself to a vacation this year, and all of us are doing things with our boyfriend and husbands.”

With that settled and arrangements made, all that’s left is do pack, because in two weeks we will be in London.

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7

Lily

The day is finally here!

We board the plane to London, and I am beyond excited. We are directed to the second floor of the aircraft – I’ve never seen a two-story plane before! The upper level has six seats that are more like private pods. We have televisions and plugs for our laptops, a bag of toiletries, and a chair that folds flat into a bed. It’s totally not what I was expecting at all.

“This is insane.” I reach into the complimentary toiletry bag and start pulling things out. “Babe, they gave me fuzzy socks and slippers and an eye mask. How did I not know this kind of service existed?” Devin chuckles and leans over the divider to plant a kiss on my lips.

“At the bottom of the staircase is a little snack nook where you can drop in for a drink or something to eat anytime during the flight. You should have a menu over there for meals too. Since we are doing an overnight, we’ll get dinner and then breakfast in the morn. Probably a mid-morning snack as well, though that only happens occasionally.”

“Do you always fly like this? I was looking at coach seats, Devin. I didn’t even know what the hell business class was until now.”

“For this long of a flight, coach is miserable. It’s worth the extra money to show up

refreshed and with your back intact.”

I roll my eyes at his dramatics. Coach can't be all that bad, but I'm certainly not complaining that I get to be here. We settle in, and I recline in my seat-bed and scroll through the available movies. They have everything, even some that are still in theaters. I'm so distracted that I don't even notice take off.

The rest of the flight goes smoothly. We have delicious free meals, and I sneak down to the snack cart a couple of times before we nod off. I end up sleeping through most of the flight, and I wake to the sun's amber glow as far as I can see. I glance over to Devin, and he's sat up with his nose in a book. I wonder how long he's been up. I'll ask him, but first I need the bathroom. I grab my toiletry bag and walk around my pod, dropping a kiss on the top of Devin's head on my way, and head back to perform a simplified version of my usual morning ritual.

We have a hearty breakfast for airplane food, complete with scrambled eggs, bacon, fresh fruit, a scone, and some yogurt, and before I know it, we are landing. I can't help but bounce in my seat as the city comes into view, and when the wheels touch down, I clap my hands once and grin over at Devin. He grins back, and when we are able, we grab our carry-on bags and head off the plane.

I'm more than a little confused when a private chauffeur picks us up instead of his parents. Once we clear the busy roads around the airport, Devin turns to me with a serious look on his face.

“I have to be honest with you about something,” he begins and takes my hand. I feel my stomach knot with nerves. What could he possibly have to tell me? And right before I meet his family.

“My family is quite... Well off. I just don't want you to be surprised or nervous when we get to the estate.”

“Estate?” I squeak. Considering his apartment and the kind of car he drives, I knew he had money, but an estate in an expensive city like London? I mean, I suppose I’m not as surprised as I could be, but I’m not prepared for just how wealthy the family is.

“Yeah, it’s been in the family for generations. I’m sorry I didn’t tell you sooner. It’s not something I like to bring up.”

“No, it’s okay. Thanks for the heads up, though, babe.” I squeeze his hand and watch the scenery for the rest of the drive.

When we arrive at Devin’s family home, I can’t help but stare up at it in awe. It’s a beautiful two-story home set on sprawling grounds with lush green grass and hedges bordering the property. I would have never expected to see such a large house in London. I always thought it was filled with townhomes and apartments for such a populated place, like New York or San Francisco. The car pulls up to the house, and the driver opens the door for us, then moves to grab our luggage. But then he follows us inside the house, and I’m confused. Isn’t he a hired car? Like a taxi?

Sir, your parents will be with you shortly. Tea is being served in the lounge. Please go and rest while I put your things away.”

“Thank you, Sebastian.” Once he leaves to take our things upstairs, I turn on Devin.

“Is that man on staff in the house?”

“Ah, yes. Sebastian has been around since I was a child. We have a couple more people on staff here as well.”

I follow Devin into the lounge, and we help ourselves to the teas and snacks that have been laid out. There’s a beautiful Christmas tree set up, and all around the room are plush leather couches and chairs and beautiful artwork. But what draws my eye the

most is the enormous fireplace. It's almost tall enough that I could walk inside of it without stooping down. It reminds me of the giant hearths in the Harry Potter films, and it's decorated in garland and baubles and just radiates Christmas joy.

When Devin's parents come in, I'm immediately scooped up into his mother's arms. She's a woman of average height, with a slim build and shiny blonde hair twisted on top of her head. His father is also towheaded, and while he's quite tall, he is also on the burlier side. He's thick with muscle, but he also has a rounded middle.

"Hello, my dear. It's such a pleasure to meet you! Oh, Devin, she's absolutely radiant!" his mother gushes. "My name is Evelyn, and this is my husband, John." She waves a hand in his direction. "Devin! My darling, how are you?" She pulls Devin into a tight hug and then kisses his cheek before holding him at arm's length.

"Have you been taking care of yourself?" she continues. "You look thin. Have you been eating properly?"

"Yes, mum." Devin laughs. His father holds out his hand, and Devin shakes it before the older man pulls him into a hug.

"Good to see you, lad. We've missed you." John then turns to me. "And what an honor to meet your lovely young lady." He takes my hand and gives it a gentle shake. "Welcome to our home, Lily."

"Thank you, sir. It's lovely to meet you both."

"She's an angel, darling," gushes his mother. "Don't you let her get away."

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Finally, with introductions out of the way, Devin shows me upstairs to our bedroom, which is actually his childhood bedroom. It's filled with books and sketches, and some football memorabilia. Sorry, soccer, not American football. The bed is large and cozy, and Devin has his own fireplace, which is lit and gently radiating heat.

"I don't know why I'm so tired." I yawn, stretching my arms over my head. "I slept for most of the flight."

"With all of the excitement and the change in time zones, I'm not at all surprised, love. Why don't we have a nap?"

"That sounds perfect. It's so warm and cozy in here."

"I think this fireplace is the one thing I miss the most when I'm in my apartment in the states," Devin laughs as we kick off our shoes, change into some clean sleeping clothes and crawl into the bed.

We wake later in the evening, and after peaking at the clock, I realize it's almost 11 pm. We had missed dinner. I roll over to face Devin, and he wraps his arms around me.

"I'm so happy to be here with you," I whisper and then lean in, pressing my lips to his. He quickly slips his tongue inside my mouth, and I feel my core tighten with desire.

"We have to keep quiet," Devin whispers in my ear as he slips his questing fingers beneath the waistband of my shorts. He slips his long fingers inside of me, and I huff

out a quiet, shuddering breath. It's so good;he'sso good. I can never get enough of him.

He pumps his fingers inside of me a couple of times, but it really isn't needed. My pussy is already soaked and aching for him.

“I need you inside of me, Dev.”

He wastes no time in shoving his own boxers down and guiding the swollen head of his cock to my opening. He presses in slowly, and we rock together, a slow and steady grind that leaves us both breathless. And when we cum, our tongues and fingers are curled together in silent bliss.

8

Devin

After two weeks in my hometown with Lily, I'm convinced that we belong together. She loves all the things that I love, and she's always so upbeat and excited about every new thing I show her. She loves the museums and seeing plays at the Globe. She loves our national dishes and walking along the Thames. She even loves my cranky grandmother, who came into town this morning for Christmas. And shockingly, my grandmother started to love her almost immediately, and Gram didn't like anyone.

Now we are out shopping. Tomorrow is Christmas Eve, and I want to get Lily an incredible gift. Lily also wants to pick up a couple of things for my family, so a day of shopping was in order.

As we wander through the small boutique shops, nothing much catches her fancy.

"Why don't we go to Harrod's? They have pretty much everything you can think of there." Of course, I will not tell her that I need to go there to pick up her gift. I'll have to think of a way to slip away for a few minutes.

Lily is puzzled over what to get for my family. At least until I show her the fine foods section in Harrod's.

"Ooh! I remember your mom talking about Turkish Delight the other day! She said it's always been her favorite, but she hasn't had it in forever. Look at all these

flavors, Dev!” She leans in close to the glass case, admiring the rows and rows of brightly colored sweets.

“I’m going to get a box for your mom. What flavors does she like best?”

“I know rose is her favorite,” I say and lean forward to look at the signs. “I think rose, lemon, and pistachio would be an excellent mix.”

“Done!” she says and places her order at the counter.

My Gram is a little easier, she is a traditionalist, and I knew what she would enjoy.

“Gram loves the Christmas pudding here. It’s soaked in cognac and sherry and aged for a year.” I point it out to Lily, and she promptly puts in her order and waits for the cashier to box it up. While she’s busy perusing the other baked goods, I slip away. Now’s my chance to pick up her gift. I swiftly make my way to the Tiffany jewelry counter. I had called ahead and been in contact with a jeweler here for a few days, and I am confident I found the perfect gift.

9

Lily

I've nearly finished my shopping. All that's left is Devin's father. He's a little more challenging to shop for. Still, Devin told me a story a couple of months back about him and his dad going for jammy dodgers at the open-air market that Dev loves so much. So when I spot a package of six beautiful Christmas themed cookies filled with sugar plum jam, I know it will be perfect.

I finish paying for my goods, but I don't see Devin anywhere when I look around. I sigh. It's too crowded in here. Rather than trying to hunt him down, I'll just send him a text.

Me: Hey babe, I'm done. Where'd you get off to?

Dev: I'll meet you at the Gran Caffè next door. I have to make a quick purchase, and then I'll be there.

Me: Sounds good!

The shop is lovely, with all kinds of pastries, coffees, teas, and a delicious looking English Breakfast. I'm starving, so I decide I'm going to go ahead and order a full meal. But I'll wait until Devin shows up to order. I get a cup of tea and some water and then read the menu while I wait. Devin doesn't take long, and when he does show up, there's no bag in his hands.

“I thought you had to pick something up?” I question, confused.

“Ah, yes. They didn’t have the size I needed, so they are going to ship it to me.”

“Oh, alright then. What did you get? New clothes?”

“Yeah, a new coat for mum.” He was looking at the menu instead of me while he talked, which I found a little strange. Oh well, maybe he’s just as hungry as I am.

“That sounds nice.” I smile and look at the menu again. “I’m starving, and this English Breakfast is calling my name.”

“I’m a bit peckish, but there’s no way I’d be able to eat a full meal right now. Mind if I nibble a bit from your plate, love?”

I nod in agreement, and not long later, we share a massive English Breakfast in a sizzling cast-iron skillet. It’s got bacon and sausage, baked beans and blood pudding, runny eggs, and toast. And Devin’s favorite, grilled sliced tomatoes. After we devour every last morsel, we each grab a pastry to go before heading back home to wrap our gifts.

Back at the house, Devin sneaks off to his father’s library for a moment, and I’m a little suspicious but decide to leave it be. Maybe he needs some quiet time. I shrug and go into our bedroom and wrap his family’s gifts as best I can. It’s not perfect, but it’s still pretty, and I hope they enjoy it. Once I finish wrapping, I stand and stretch, and Devin appears in the doorway.

“There you are,” I say. “Needed a little quiet time?”

“Yeah, shopping takes a lot out of me. Let’s head downstairs. Mum said Gram has been itching to chat all day.”

We spend the evening talking to his family. They share stories of their Christmas traditions and plenty of embarrassing tales of Devin as a child. I can't think of a better way to end the day.

The next day is Christmas Eve, and we begin the day with a big family breakfast. We are gathered around the enormous dining table, and we chat as we feast on all of Devin's breakfast favorites. The cook even made some thick waffles with real maple syrup. That evening, more of his family would be coming over to celebrate, including his older sister, some cousins, and his aunt.

"I should've gotten your sister a gift. I hope she isn't upset."

"It's fine, love. Molly isn't going to be bothered at all. You haven't even met her yet, so she has no reason to expect a gift from you." Their chef makes treats and prepares the evening meal throughout the day, but Devin's mother and I spend a fair amount of time in the kitchen making cookies.

"You know, dear, Devin has always loved sugar cookies with royal icing. I make them for him every year with the same cookie cutters we've used since he was a child. I'm planning to send him home with a big box to enjoy when you guys are back in the states."

"I'm sure he'll love that, Evelyn. He speaks fondly of all of you all the time. I can tell he gets homesick."

"Thank goodness he has you, dear."

Throughout the day, Devin peeks in and steals me away occasionally to sneak kisses in the hall, and before we know it, it's time to sit down for dinner. I meet the other

family members, and all of them are incredibly kind. His aunt and younger cousins are olive-skinned beauties with the same deep blue eyes that Devin has. And his sister is nothing short of amazing. She's warm and affectionate, with an infectious laugh and an even brighter smile.

"You have to come to Australia some time, Lily! You'd love it. There is some much incredible wildlife."

"Yeah, and damn near everything wants to kill you there," Devin chimes in and snickers when Molly reaches over to whack him on the back of the head.

"You two behave," Evelyn scolds.

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After the meal, it's time to gather around the fire and Christmas tree to open gifts. Everyone is thrilled with my gifts and very appreciative of my thoughtfulness. I feel a radiant warmth in my chest. I'm so happy. Evelyn passes me two packages, and I tear into the pretty green and gold wrapping. She gifted me a beautiful sweater, and his father gave me a first edition copy of Rebecca, another of my favorite books.

"Thank you! These are wonderful." I feel a wave of gratitude for these lovely people.

After all of the gifts are exchanged, Devin clears his throat and nervously stands up in front of me, pulling me to my feet. His hands are shaking, and I look into his eyes, concerned.

"Dev?"

"Lily, I wanted to get you a special Christmas gift, and I think I finally settled on the right one." He reaches into his pocket and pulls out a small wrapped package that fits in the palm of his hand. He hands it to me, and I smile at him before excitedly tearing the paper off. My breath catches in my throat when I see a blue ring box from Tiffany. I quickly look up at Devin with wide eyes, and he sinks to one knee, taking my hand in his. The whole family gasps, and I can hear his mother sniffle on my left.

"Darling, I'm in love with you. You make me happy every moment of every day, and I want nothing more than to spend the rest of my life with you. Will you marry me?"

My hands fly around him as I jump into his arms and burst into tears.

"Yes! Of course, I'll marry you!"

He pulls me into a sweet kiss, and I hear the family around us begin to clap. His mother rushes over and sweeps the both of us into a giant hug.

“Welcome to the family! Oh my goodness, Devin, what a joyous day!”

He pulls back and takes my hand, sliding a large diamond ring onto my left hand. The center stone is round and glittering, set in a platinum band with small diamonds running down the sides. It’s beyond what I ever could’ve imagined for an engagement ring.

With that, the night ends on a high note. We go up to Devin’s room, and I can’t keep my hands off of him.

“I want to make love to my future husband.” I don’t give him a chance to respond before I drop to my knees and pull him out of his trousers. His thick erection pulses in my hand, and I lean it to take him into my mouth, working him with my lips and tongue until his thighs are trembling. I pull back before he reaches his peak, and we tumble into bed, content to take our time.

10

Devin

The holidays with my family were incredible, even if the goodbyes were tearful. Lily and I return to the states newly engaged, and we are planning to get the family together the following day to announce our engagement.

We are wrapped around each other in bed at Lily's flat when the phone rings.

"Bloody hell, it's near one in the morning. Who is calling?" I grumble. I'm exhausted and jetlagged, and I really want to sleep.

Lily glances at her phone and shoots up in bed, quickly answering.

"Ri? What's wrong?"

I can hear Riley's voice a bit through the speaker, but not enough to make out what she's saying.

"What? Already? Okay, we are on our way."

Lily leaps out of bed and starts pulling on a pair of sweatpants.

"Love, what's going on?"

"Abby is in labor! We have to get to the hospital!"

I jump up and throw on a t-shirt, some joggers, and slip into my shoes before grabbing my car keys.

“Right, do you have everything you need?”

“Yes, let’s go!”

Later we are sat in the waiting room in the maternity ward with the rest of Lily’s family.

Shay and Riley are chatting in the corner, and Bree is talking to a man near the coffee machine.

“That’s Matthew,” Lily says. “He’s Bree’s ex-boyfriend and high school sweetheart. Bree broke it off because she didn’t think she could handle a long-distance relationship when he went away for college, but she was sad about it for a really long time.”

Lily’s mother is here, and it’s the first time I’m meeting her.

“Mom, this is Devin. Devin, this is my mom.” Lily introduces us, and her mother smiles and moves to shake my hand, but her eyes fly to Lily’s hand when she takes a sip of her coffee.

“Goodness... Congratulations, honey!” She kisses both of us on the cheek.

“We want to wait to tell everyone. I don’t want to take the attention away from Abs and the baby.”

“Of course, dear. I’ll keep it quiet.” She winks and wanders off to chat with Shay.

Lily is calm and strong throughout the night, always asking her mother and sisters if they need anything and comforting some of them when they get nervous at how long Abby has been in labor. It shows her nurturing side, and I think I might have just fallen a little more in love with her.

What feels like hours later, Abby finally gives birth. Jake comes out to tell the family, and we are brought back to Abby's private room. It's spacious and cozy, which is good with how large Lily's family is.

The girls all take turns holding the baby, and when I see Lily cradle the tiny bundle to her chest, I know that this is it for me. My ultimate goal is to have this moment with Lily in the future, and I can't wait to begin the rest of our lives together.

To be continued....