



# Law And Awe (Pirates After-game Press Conference: All It Takes Bonuses and Shorts #1)

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**Category:** LGBT+

**Description:** Though they got their HEA in Repair and Prepare, we now revisit our favorite rockstar/athlete duo in these extended bonus scenes.

Everything that happens in Jules and Sterlings life during Tell Me Lies is life changing. Every day seems to bring another massive change, and this is how they get through it.

This is a very extended bonus epilogue and isnt essential to the main story of this couple in Repair and Prepare.

Law And Awe is a Contemporary M/M Hockey Romance intended for adult readers. This book is NOT a standalone (should be read at least after Repair and Prepare Book #1 in the All It Takes series), has no cliffhangers, and ends in a HEA. There are a lot of very gay things happening inside this book, so if thats not for you, then this book isnt either. If it is, then welcome to my mostly low-angsty world, Im thrilled to have you and hope you enjoy this journey.

**Total Pages (Source):** 6

# Page 1

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 12:53 pm*

ONE

JULES

August

Sterling's hand on my knee makes the twitching stop, for about one point two seconds. Fucking hell I'm nervous.

Why am I so nervous?

I've known this was going to happen for a month, it's not a surprise. It's not unexpected.

And still...

Waiting in the private room at the airport for my mother to come inside from the tarmac is the most nerve-wracking thing that's happened to me since my first game in the NHL.

I puked back then—hopefully I don't do the same today.

"Baby boy," Sterling whispers and grips my thigh harder. I'm about to put a dent in the linoleum floor, and I can only imagine how annoying it must be for him.

"I'm sor—" I start, but he cuts me off with a serious but tender look.

“There is absolutely nothing to be sorry about, baby. I just want to know what I can do to help you.”

“I don’t know,” I whine. “I don’t owe her anything, and I don’t need her to say or do anything either. I just... We’re two days away from our wedding, why didn’t I just go see her before today so we could get this reintroduction thing over and done with?”

“Jules,” he says seriously and turns in his seat to look straight at me. “It’s going to be fine, and if it isn’t, then we’ll just say okay, bye now, and she’ll go back. She doesn’t know about the wedding, so let’s just take everything as it comes. I’ll be by your side the whole time, okay?”

“Okay.” I’m back to whispering, but his reassurances do make me feel better. “Promise?” I ask and close my eyes. I may need just a little more reassurance, sue me.

“I promise.”

“Thank you for being here, Daddy.” I lean in and find his lips, even with my eyes closed.

This last six months have been the best of my life. Even with all the shit from the outside world, the need for secrecy in everything we do, it’s still been the best time.

Learning everything about Sterling, memorizing his voice, his movements, getting to know him on a soul-deep level, it’s all been the most amazing thing.

Besides getting to love and dote on Ava, of course, and finding another best friend in Jamie. Our family saved me, just like my hockey family has saved me before.

My life couldn’t be better, it really couldn’t.

But still... Thoughts of my mom have been plaguing me more and more recently.

Especially after I got another letter from her, after my relationship with Jules was made public. And after my father made his views even more clear in a televised interview.

I've felt more at peace with Michel as well. Not with his death, never. I'll never understand why he had to leave me, why his life wasn't longer. I'll never not miss him. Never.

What I'm more at peace with is the fact that he'd want me to be happy. To leave our childhood behind and do what we always talked about doing.

He'd forgive Mom. He actually did forgive her and wanted us to go look for her. I was more indifferent, really. Only wanted to get on with hockey so we didn't depend on Dad anymore, but I would've made peace with Mom in a heartbeat for him.

"Jules?" I hear her voice and yeah, she sounds different. Then I see her, and her eyes—the same honey brown as Michel—hurt to look at.

I don't look away though, because they're filled with tears. I don't like seeing her sad. Even though it's her fault. Even though she left us. I could never enjoy seeing her cry. I just don't have it in me.

"Hi Mom," I say simply. I get paralyzed then, just looking at her. Cataloging every single thing that's different. Sterling stands and distracts me.

"Hello, Mrs. Duke, I'm Sterling." He walks over and extends a hand which she shakes with a smile on her face.

"I know who you are, of course. It's very nice to meet you."

“You as well.”

They give me time to compose myself, and as I watch her watch Sterling with adoring and sparkling eyes, I realize she’s just Mom. Just another human who’s flawed.

The difference between her and my father is that she knows she’s flawed. She’s asked for forgiveness. And I’m going to give it to her. Finally.

“Hey Mom,” I repeat as I stand and walk to her. We stare at each other for an uncomfortable amount of time when I reach her, then I just have to lean in for a hug.

I’ve spent a long time without a mom’s hug, I think it’s about damn time I make up for it.

It feels great.

Not like it did before. I don’t think it ever will.

But it’s nice in any case.

I lean back, irrationally disappointed that her actions didn’t disappear from my memory with that hug.

“Are you hungry?” I ask.

“Yes,” she answers, like she knows what I’m thinking. Like she’s fully feeling the consequences of her actions for the first time.

It’s not like I can—or want to—say anything to make her feel better. She has to work through her own shit, and I hope she will.

“We thought having dinner here would be better before we go home. Ava’s not great with new people.” Sterling tells the complete lie with a straight face, and I feel oddly proud.

Our angel is that exactly—an angel. She charms every single person she comes across and knows it damn well too.

We’re fully prepared to be her slaves for life as soon as she realizes her power.

Since she just turned two last month, I think we’re safe for a little while yet.

“That’s perfect,” Mom tells us from the back seat.

She’s been staring out the window the whole ride and asking innocuous questions without looking at me. I get it.

Well, not really, but I’m not gonna condemn her for taking a few moments to compose herself.

Sterling maneuvers the car into his spot in the underground garage of the Winner Resort. We reserved a private room in one of the more chill restaurants... which is still a very stuffy restaurant in my opinion, but beggars can’t be choosers.

It’s not like Sterling and I can just go places.

Least of all when it’s just the two of us.

People have surprisingly been a lot more respectful when we have Ava with us, but not when it’s just the two of us.

It’s sadly led us to know a lot of places where we can find privacy, and how to get in

and out of them without being noticed.

We walk in silence to the service elevator, through the back hallway on the second floor, and through the kitchen of the restaurant until we reach the small room where we'll be eating.

We got Mom a room at the Resort, so if things go well tonight, we'll invite her over tomorrow and to the wedding the day after, but if they don't, then she can have a chill weekend in Vegas on us, then go back to her life without too much damage.

"How is your husband?"

"Oh!" She jumps a little in her seat but turns to me with a relaxed smile on her face. "James is well, thank you. He had to work this weekend, just finishing up a big construction."

"I'm glad," I say, not knowing what else I could possibly talk to her about. Sterling saves the day again.

"What do you do?"

"I work at a school. In the administration now."

"That's nice," I manage to choke out. She used to be a math teacher. Why isn't she anymore?

"I'm sorry, Jules." She says it so suddenly that it takes me a second to understand. Then I have to let out a big breath.

"For what?"

“For leaving you and Michel.” She’s pleading with her eyes. I just have to know one thing before I tell her I’ve already forgiven her.

“Did you know he was allergic to pineapple?” If she did, then I don’t know if I’ll actually be able to forgive her.

“I didn’t,” she whispers with a shake of her head. Her eyes immediately fill with tears and I can clearly see she’s telling the truth. “I swear I didn’t.”

“Okay then.” I breathe out and take a moment to control my own tears. When I’m sure I won’t break down, I take a deep breath and reach for Sterling’s hand under the table. He takes it and holds on to me so strongly I almost lose feeling in my fingers, but I hold on as tight as I can and don’t complain.

I need to focus on his touch right now, not on the pain of knowing Michel would love to be here. He’d love that I’m about to say what I’m about to say.

“I forgive you.”

“Hey,” Jamie calls out as soon as the door opens. I rush to stand, to help her with Ava, but she’s not there. Jamie must recognize the question in my eyes, because she rolls her own. “Your mom’s with her in the car. She doesn’t want to move her because our angel’s sound asleep. She was passed out when we finally got into the car, but the woman just wants to stare at her.” She shrugs. “I don’t blame her.”

I see then, Jamie’s carrying about a dozen different shopping bags.

All from brands anyone in the world would know.

I raise an eyebrow at her and she smirks back.



“I very much enjoyed giving your credit card a whirl. I’ll give it back soon.” She winks. “Promise. But we did get the perfect outfits for tomorrow, for all three of us.”

I can’t help but chuckle at her retreating back.

Mom came home with us yesterday. We didn’t use the reservation at the hotel in the end. It was Sterling’s idea to invite her to stay with us. He asked when Mom excused herself before dessert, and I agreed.

The conversation flowed after the apology, and I loved every second of reconnecting with her. She asked a lot about my life over the last fifteen years, a lot about Michel as well, and remembering him healed another tiny part of me.

She fell at Ava’s feet as soon as she met her and hasn’t been able to be away from her since. She’s a great grandmother already.

There are still a lot of things to unpack with her. Neither one of us is completely over the years apart, there’s no way we could be, but this is a start.

She got very emotional last night, after Ava had gone to bed, when we told her about getting married tomorrow. She cried, hugged us both, and told me how happy she is, how proud.

I sigh to myself, for no specific reason, but this has all been... a lot. I go out to the garage and open Ava’s door. Picking her up from the car won’t disturb her. She can sleep through anything when she’s really tired, and I just bet a whole afternoon of shopping took a lot out of her.

“Come on,” I tell Mom in a normal voice, and she winces. I can only smile at her as I unbuckle Ava and have her in my arms soon after.

I've become a pro at unstrapping her from her chair, and I'm prouder of that than I probably should be.

We get Ava into her pajamas, leave a bottle of milk on her nightstand, and walk back into the kitchen just in time to hear the garage door open again.

"That's Sterling coming from the airport. He went to pick up his parents."

"Right." Mom nods. "You told me this morning."

"They're very nice." I don't know why I say it, but suddenly I'm very nervous. I've met Sterling's parents before, of course, but this "parents meeting the parent" thing is getting very real. "You'll like Sarah and Anthony, they're professors at UCLA, super smart. But they're also amazing grandparents to Ava."

Unlike Jamie and Rose's parents, I think. It's better to keep that to myself though. For now.

The Sterlings come in and I forget my nerves at the sight of Anthony's big smile. He opens his arms for me, and I fall right into the hug.

They've been so warm toward me since the moment we met back in April, I couldn't be more grateful to have them as my in-laws.

We sit down for dinner, and I love the way Mom asks them so many questions about their jobs, Ster's childhood, and their life in general.

All in all, it's another great day, and tomorrow, everything will be even better.

Sterling

I walk up to the start of the aisle where Jules is already waiting for me. He looks so fucking beautiful, like every day. I'll have him every day for the rest of my life, and I honestly can't wait. I take his hand and see his smile get even bigger, but his gaze doesn't stray away from Ava. She's throwing flower petals down the aisle, skipping happily, and entralling every single one of our guests.

She gets a round of applause for her amazing performance and then we're walking down the aisle hand in hand.

"Welcome everyone," Bear starts. I see him swallow hard, and once more think how smart Jules was to suggest he be the one to officiate our wedding.

I get lost in Jules' brilliant green eyes shining in the morning sun. I don't know if I hear anything until Bear says my name.

"So I want to thank you, Sterling, for fighting like a crazy sister for our Jules, for bringing warmth to his world again, for giving everything you have in you to protect him, and for being his best friend and doing what we never could—make him look at himself and realize he deserves the world." Bear's voice breaks on the last word, and even though I missed everything he said before, I know it must've been beautiful just from the reverent silence of the guests.

I nod at Bear, to show appreciation. To tell him I promise I will.

"What I don't know personally, is a love like the one you two share—a combination of every love. I'm not that lucky. And I'll be honest in saying I didn't believe it existed, until I saw you two crazy old men holding hands and gazing into each other's eyes like you'd just won the Olympics and the Stanley Cup at the same time."

I smile, remembering the first time I met Bear, how he came over to give me the shovel talk, and how all of Jules' other teammates followed after. He's the best

choice for this, because he always makes Jules feel safe, and that's transferred to me as well in the few months I've known him.

He places our hands on top of his before continuing. "But thanks to you, I'm a believer. Thanks to you, I can hope that one day, it'll be my lucky day."

The silence stretches for a long moment, and I see a tear slip out of Jules' eye. My smile only gets wider. This is without a doubt, one of the two happiest moments of my life. "Now, the grooms will exchange vows." Bear steps back, and Jules turns his hand to hold mine. I reach for the other hand and nod at him to start with an encouraging smile.

"Ster, you're the one that's good with words between us, so I'm afraid I don't know how to express what you mean to me. The way you and our family have changed my life. All I can do now is vow to love you, Jamie, and our angel forever. I promise to always put our family first, I promise not to wake you up at six in the morning every day." I can't help the laugh, that's a promise I can get behind, and I'll hold him to it, too. "I promise that whatever life throws at us, we'll face standing together, and I promise to always cheer you on."

"That's more than I need from you." I lean in for a kiss. "Love you, baby boy," I whisper against his lips, then clear my throat.

"You say I'm the one with all the words, but right now I forgot everything I memorized." Our guests laugh lightly and Jules is the one giving me a gentle smile then. "I promise to love you for the rest of my life Jules. There's no one in the world I would rather grow old with. I promise to always cheer for you too, to support you with kindness every day in whatever you want to do. I promise I will never forget how precious you are, and to cherish you until the end of my days."

Jules looks like he's about to launch himself at me, but Bear starts speaking again

before he can.

“Now, by the power vested in me by the state of Nevada, and with everyone here as witness, I declare you married. You may kiss.”

My boy almost tackles me to the ground, and mixed into his kiss, I can taste our tears of joy, of happiness.

“Fuck, I love you,” he tells me between kisses. “I need you, Ster.”

I smirk and tell him, “After the pictures we’ll have a while to ourselves, baby. I’ll take care of you.”

His eyes get darker with desire, and I know I’m the luckiest man alive.

## Page 2

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 12:53 pm*

TWO

STERLING

October

“This is insane.” Jamie sounds nervous, on edge.

I don’t blame her, I’m nervous too.

We’re about to get Jamie pregnant.

Fuck, even the thought is weird.

“Let’s just keep going. They said the third door.” I take her hand and turn back to see Jules as he smiles nervously. Then we start walking down the long hallway. We’re in the service hallways of a private medical practice.

We came here last week for tests, and the month before, and the month before. It’s been a lot.

But the three of us want this. We’ve talked about it a lot ever since Jules and Jamie both agreed, and yeah, we’re excited, happy, ecstatic even. The nerves are here to stay though.

The thing is, we’re probably gonna be nervous until the baby is born. I mean, we have three different jobs plus taking care of Ava to think about, and having a

newborn baby is no easy feat. We planned it all out so Jules would be in the off season when the baby is born and for a couple of months after, at the very least. Then I'm taking a few weeks off to take over the mantle while Jamie is still recovering.

All throughout the pregnancy, Jules will be playing almost every day since the season is starting next week. The doctors have assured us that Jamie's in great health and there shouldn't be any complications like there were for Rose. Hearing her say that helped ease some of my worries, of course, but nothing will get rid of them completely.

For either Jamie or me.

Yes, she's more than a decade younger than Rose was when she was pregnant, but it's still fucking terrifying.

We have a plan.

This is going to work, of course it is.

I squeeze Jamie's hand harder.

"Hello, Jamie," the doctor says with a big smile as soon as we open the door. Having to hide every single thing we've been doing for so long has admittedly been exhausting, and it's not like that's ever going to change. Well, it might change when I finish my residency and Jules retires, in like a million years.

I know perfectly well my boy will be in the NHL until someone kicks him out. He'll go kicking and screaming, but he'll go.

I'm not in any kind of rush, and I do think we can make it work even with the spotlight constantly trained on us.

Jules and I step out after the doctor explains once more what the procedure will be like, and then we wait. Hugging and leaning against the hallway door, I just close my eyes and think positive thoughts the whole time. If it doesn't work, then it's not like we can't try again—fortunately we can afford it—but we all want it so much now, that I know we'll be crushed if it doesn't work.

We went with intrauterine insemination this time, though the doctors told us there's also the option of taking a few of Jamie's eggs, fertilizing them in a lab, then putting them back in and seeing if they stick. We're open to that option if this doesn't work, but we thought, simply... well... having them just put Jules' semen into her was easier this time around.

Jules hated having to jack off in the clinic, and he went bright fucking red when I asked—not too quietly—if he wanted any help. He gave me a murderous glare, but it made all of us relax a little in the moment.

Apparently, they chose the healthiest sperm to be injected into Jamie, so it has the best chance at “taking.”

It doesn't take long at all before the doctor is coming out, with Jamie walking behind her. I look at her worriedly and ask, “Shouldn't you like, keep lying down?”

She rolls her eyes at me so hard that I'm scared she'll see her own brain.

“You don't know shit, Josh.”

“I know a few things,” I mumble. “Got your sister pregnant, didn't I?”

Jamie smiles, sadly, but it's still something. “Yeah, you did, and I bet your boys weren't as far up in her uterus when you finished as Jules' are in mine, so just relax, okay?”



There's a moment of silence, and then Jules bursts out laughing. "I know even less about vaginas than Ster, and I have to say, she's right. Let's just go home. We could research what we can sacrifice to the gods, or whatever, and put Jamie's feet up there."

I chuckle and take both their hands. They smile at me, then hold on to each other as well.

"We've got this, boys." Jamie's voice rings out with confidence, and somehow, she transfers a bit of it to me, too.

"We've got this," I repeat with a nod. And keep repeating it in my mind all the way home.

## Page 3

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 12:53 pm*

THREE

JULES

Late October

I get out of my SUV before the garage door is even closed, open the back door to get my duffel and suitcase, then walk to the door to the laundry room. I can't open that one until all the noise from the garage door ceases since it's three fucking a.m.

There's no way in hell I'm waking up Ava or Jamie. Ava for obvious reasons, but poor Jamie has been having a shit time sleeping. The doctors tell us this is probably a good sign. That she's indeed pregnant, but in reality, Jamie's just cranky as hell.

There hasn't been much we can do except leave her alone to brood in the mornings, and take care of Ava as much as we can until she's a nice human again.

Ava's words.

She's awesome, our girl, and she loves her "Mom cuddles" in the morning, but we've done our best to explain that Jamie's just not feeling great without really telling her why.

Ava's not dumb, she knows that something different is going on, but we don't want to tell her she's going to be a big sister until after the three-month mark.

It's going to be a challenge, we all know it, but we want to be on the safe side of this.

I dump all my dirty clothes in the laundry and put all the suits in a bag to take to the dry cleaners tomorrow, then silently walk to the kitchen to get a glass of water.

Roadies are more brutal than they used to be now that I've got a family waiting at home for me. Mater's been great about hearing me whine all day and night, and now I understand why he always shows me pictures of his kids while we're on the road. I've been doing the same with everything Ster and Jamie send me.

It's only going to get worse because we're almost positive Ava will start going to nursery school soon. We've been searching for reputable ones that won't make a huge fuss about, one, the fact that she has two dads and one mom and that we're not a throuple, and two, that she's Sterling's daughter. The security also has to be great and the fucking secrecy... Well, there's no chance of hiding from other parents, that's for sure.

But we found one that's willing to send out an email to all of them, telling them pictures of Ava aren't allowed to be posted online unless her name is nowhere to be found or Sterling and I aren't in the pictures either.

So if Ava gets invited to a birthday party or there's an event, they can take and post all the pictures they want. We just don't want the world to know what our angel looks like.

The one nursery school that's on board with all of this will get back to us this week, and we're all extra tense waiting for the verdict.

We want Ava to make friends, we want her to have a normal childhood—as normal as possible at least. Giving her this chance, to meet kids beyond just other players' sons and daughters, is important. For her and for us.

We have to figure out how to live without her at home all day, start that natural

separation that hasn't happened because of Sterling's fame and the public's interest in our relationship.

It fucking sucks, not gonna lie.

The thought of coming home from morning practice and not having her there at breakfast gives me the heebie-jeebies. But I have to move past that. I have to be okay with her growing up.

Somehow.

Ster finds me in the kitchen, staring blankly at the wall of windows with a full glass in my hand. I smile and take a sip as he walks up to me. He hugs me tight, tucking his face in the crook of my neck and breathing deeply. My guess is he's been thinking about everything I have on top of missing me, but I have to ask.

"Is something wrong?"

"Not now that you're home, baby."

I let out a long breath, put the glass down, and hug him back.

"You'll never guess what happened in New York," I say, to try and get his mind off of what troubles him.

"I saw how Bear destroyed that guy."

"Yeah, that's not even the most interesting part." I lean back, give him a quick, hard kiss, then smile. "How about we get into the tub and I tell you all about it?"

"Hot tub, outside?" I nod. "Yes, I want you in my arms and to watch the stars."

“Perfect.” I don’t resist kissing him again, slower, deeper, but he stops me before either one of us can get too worked up.

We get changed into our bathing suits pretty easily, and go out onto the patio we built just outside our bedroom in the renovation we did.

Ster puts some relaxing instrumental music on his phone and connects it to the outside speakers as we get in. I settle with my back to his chest and let my body float lazily as I tell him the story. “When the game was done, we stepped into the locker room only to find Bear making out with Drew.”

“What?” Ster demands. “Drew, our wedding planner, Drew?”

“Yes,” I say with a laugh.

“Drew, who also planned Bear’s wedding?” he asks again just to make sure, and I can’t contain my laugh anymore.

“Yes. We knew they’d become good friends, but not to this extent. It was honestly very sweet. Then we went out to dinner, and we all got expensive-as-hell drinks we didn’t even drink because Bear was paying.”

“You guys got him back for leaving you in the lurch.”

“He didn’t, though. Not really. Baby Bear’s game was flawless. He was nervous, I could tell. Hell, everyone could tell, but the kid pulled through. He’s gonna be drowning in offers. Well, Gab will be drowning in offers for him before the season is even over.”

“Good for him,” Sterling murmurs next to my ear, and his hands softly trace my ribs. I get goosebumps even though we’re in warm water. The way his touch always lights

my body up is addictive.

“Yeah, it was nice seeing them together. I think they’re good, and I like Drew.”

“He’s pretty awesome, at least he was with our wedding.”

“Yeah.” I sigh out the word. Then I close my eyes and just let myself feel for a while. Sterling’s hands keep roaming over my torso, brushing too lightly over my nipples, my abs, the sensitive skin under my belly button.

I know what he’s doing. He’s getting me worked up so I’m desperate by the time we get inside. I don’t mind, I know he’ll deliver. Like he always does whenever I come back from a roadie.

There’s just one more thing I want to talk to him about before we go back inside and he makes me forget even my name in bed.

“Ster?” I ask, already hesitating.

It’s so soon. Maybe I should wait. Maybe this is too selfish. But if I can’t talk about it with my husband, there’s no way I’ll ever get the courage to talk about it with Jamie.

“Hmm?” He nuzzles my neck and for some strange reason that gives me the courage to take a deep breath and ask.

“I know it’s still a long way out, and I know we’ll have to talk to Jamie about it as well, but what do you think... that if our baby is a boy... what do you think about naming him Adam Michel?”

I hold my breath as I feel Ster go rigid under me. I wish I had the bravery to turn around and see his expression, but I don’t.

“For your brother,” he concludes.

“Yes.” I nod. “And for Adam Darnell. He was... well, when he came out, I know he doesn’t even know, and might never know me, but what he did changed my life. Not instantly, and of course not literally, but what he did eventually gave me the courage to change it myself. Does that make sense?”

“It does, baby.” He takes a good grip of my hips and turns me himself. I close my eyes. I can’t face this. I have to get the whole reasoning out before I risk looking at him while he tells me it’s stupid.

“There’s also the initials thing,” I say, starting to ramble now. “Jamie, you, and I, we all have the same initials. And even though, technically, Ava and our baby will be cousins by blood, they’ll be raised like siblings, you know? I want them to feel like they’re siblings. So, I thought, if they also share the same first initial, that’d be cool, right?”

There’s a beat of silence, and then Sterling snorts. Instantly defensive, I open my eyes to give him hell, but he speaks before I can.

“What would suck is if Jamie falls in love with a guy whose name doesn’t start with J, but I like that idea baby.”

He cuts off any possible response with a kiss, and then just never stops.

Fuck, he’s so freaking perfect. I still can’t believe how much my life has changed in the last year. How much more I have. How Ava wasn’t even a part of my life back then. I didn’t even know she existed.

The thought hurts. There’s no way to encompass the love I feel for her. The way she makes me feel, for the first time, that my life and what I do will have a positive

impact on the world.

The thought of all of that doubling when we have another child is daunting, but the yearning is stronger than the fear.

As long as I have Sterling and Jamie next to me, it always will be.

“C’mon baby boy, let’s go inside.” I follow Sterling to the bed, we don’t even towel off, we just topple over and keep kissing. His hands roam my arms, torso, sides, until finally, they reach my ass.

I don’t know where he got them, but clearly he was prepared because next thing I know, he’s gently thrusting a fat plug inside me. It takes a few minutes since I’m not stretched at all, but when the base is finally flush against my cheeks, I moan in relief.

The fullness is almost as perfect as if it was Sterling inside me. I always feel complete when we’re one.

“I have a surprise for you, boy,” he growls against my ear as he kisses a path from my jaw to my shoulder.

“Daddy,” I moan out the best word in the world. I can’t say anything else right now, especially when he pushes the plug in deeper and the next second it starts vibrating softly but insistently against my prostate. “Oh, fuck!” That’s the last coherent thing I say.

Sterling continues his kissing path down my body, biting and licking my nipples, and tracing a path through the valleys of my abs.

When he gets to my desperate dick, he keeps teasing me with barely there licks and kisses until he arrives at my tip.



“You want to come for Daddy, baby?”

I try to say yes, to nod, to do anything but whine and moan at the constant torturous pleasure the plug and my Daddy are giving me, but again, I can't.

“Fuck, I love you like this, boy. Desperate for me. Unable to do anything but lie there and let me take you however I want.” He takes a strong hold of my cock and starts pumping furiously slow. This is the best and worst thing. I need to come. Now. But I know my Daddy will make me feel a million times better if I wait until he's good and ready for me to explode. “It's because you're mine, aren't you boy? You're all mine and I get to do whatever I want with this perfect body. Forever.” He says the last word reverently as he lowers his mouth to where I want it, where I need it.

Then his eyes connect with mine, and I see the satisfaction of having me at his will in them. “You can't come yet, okay baby?” Again, I can't speak because trying to hold my orgasm at bay is taking all of my focus, but I do manage a nod. That's all he needs apparently because he takes my cock to the back of his throat and sucks hard as he bobs up and down quickly.

I cry out, in pain, in pleasure, in desperation. “Please, Daddy,” I manage to say in a cry.

He doesn't seem to hear me, he has his eyes closed and looks blissed out as my cock disappears between his lips. My fingers are starting to hurt with how hard I'm fisting the sheets, but still I try to do what my Daddy asked of me. I need to be good for him. I can hold off until he allows me to come. I can.

I repeat the mantra over and over but it gets harder and harder as the seconds go by because I can't look away. Seeing Ster sucking me off is hypnotizing, it's enthralling, and honestly, even if I do lose control because of the picture alone, I don't think I'll ever regret it.

Finally he opens his eyes, and I try to convey my desperation with my eyes. He smirks only with his eyes somehow as he slowly leat's my dick drop from his lips. Then the smirk appears on his lips as well.

My husband is the hottest man on earth on any giving day—most people would actually agree with me, so it's not only my love for him talking—but when he stares me down like this, I'm pretty sure I could come only from that look if he caught me off guard.

“On your knees, baby boy.”

I scramble to follow the command and thankfully he doesn't make me wait too much longer. He doesn't yank the plug away, that wouldn't be pleasurable, but he doesn't stall either, and once I'm empty again, it's not for long.

The feeling of being suddenly empty, so much so that I feel my hole gaping, desperate for something to fill it again, is both heaven and hell. Mostly because I know what's coming next.

Daddy thrusts inside me in one not-too-slow movement, and then everything is fast. He grabs my hips with his thumbs digging into my cheeks hard and moves me close and away from him like a ragdoll. I fall on the mattress from the force, unable to hold myself up anymore, and let him take whatever he wants.

“I'm close, baby,” he says in a growl. “Are you gonna come without touching your pretty dick?”

My only response is to reach down and stroke myself two times. That's all it takes for me to explode.

“ Fuck ,” Daddy groans as my ass clamps down hard on his fat cock and I feel the

rush of warmth from his come flood me.

My legs give out then, but thankfully Daddy follows me down so he's lying on top of me as he keeps coming.

I can feel the cooling pull of come under me, but I don't care. I know my Daddy will take care of me. He always does.

## Page 4

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 12:53 pm*

FOUR

STERLING

May

I interlace my fingers with Jules' as soon as the doors of the private elevator at the Winner Resort close. Since no other people will be calling for this elevator, we don't have a lot of time before arriving at the penthouse suite.

Jules has a very rare day off. It's the playoffs, but the Pirates won the second round against Toronto in four games, so they're waiting for the other teams to play a few more games.

I decided the best way to spend the day was to get Jules to relax a little. I had a lot planned, and then Gab called. Well, her daughters called, actually.

There's very little Jules wouldn't do for his fearless leaders, and joining the bachelor party of her nephew is something he didn't hesitate to say yes to. Especially because if anyone gives him shit for still being hungover when he's back to practice in two days—which Lucy and Alex assured us we will be—he can blame it on her.

Now that the moment is here, I realize this is the first time Jules is going to meet the man we're going to name our son after. The man who put things into motion that led to us being married and expecting our second child.

Jules made it very clear he doesn't want me to say anything about it to anyone. He's

still not sure if he ever wants to tell Adam what his actions mean to him, but also, a bachelor party isn't the time or place to have such a conversation.

We arrive at the door to the penthouse and step out.

"Alex said we should wait for her to open the door for us," Jules says, and looks at his phone to see the time. "We're right on time, though."

"Good." I nod and smile at him. "It's going to be fine, even fun."

A second later the door opens and Alex smiles warmly at us. I smile and walk in, dragging a suddenly hesitant Jules behind me.

Like it always happens when I arrive somewhere unexpectedly, shocked faces greet me. A lot of faces. At least twenty, I think. Then jaws drop even more when Jules moves to stand next to me. He smiles half-heartedly at our audience. I pull him closer. "C'mon baby boy, we got a babysitter for forty-eight hours and we're only spending like ten of those with these guys. Smile a little."

I lean in closer to whisper in his ear when he doesn't relax. "I'm taking you to Provoke tomorrow." I get what I want when his shoulders fall and he finally has an honest smile on his face.

"Jesus, did anyone else pop a boner just from seeing that?" a lithe, brunette guy says and fans his face.

Everyone, us included, chuckle at that. He seems like someone who always dissipates tension in the room, and a few minutes later, I find out he's the other groom, Sebas. He introduces everyone present and then two women step up in front of the TV and address us all.

“All right everyone, here are the rules of the game. Each groom will have a draft where they pick their teams, you each get eleven picks. Once they’re done, we’ll explain the challenges they have to overcome with the help of their teams. Please proceed with the ceremonial coin toss.”

A man steps up to them, looking way more serious than I think is needed, but it makes me smirk. Everyone here is clearly a football fan. They even do a ceremonial coin toss as if this is an actual game.

Sebas wins the coin toss and cheers obnoxiously which only makes me smirk again. I like that dude. The teams are then chosen, and I’m surprised when Adam chooses me, then Sebas chooses Jules. I guess we won’t be spending a lot of time together then.

When everyone’s been picked, one of the women from before speaks up again. “We have five categories on which you will both be judged by the unbiased judge panel Alex and Lucy prepared for us. You have to present proof of capacity and competence in cooking,” she says, and starts counting off items with her fingers. “Romance slash lovemaking, childcare, finance management, and household chores.”

“What?” Adam demands. “How the fuck are we supposed to prove that?”

“Get creative and prove it with a video. You have to be in the videos, but you can get one person on your team to help out in each of them. It has to be a different person for each challenge. Our panel will watch all videos here at ten p.m.tonight. Alex and Lucy, you’re not allowed to disclose who the judges are.” It’s ten in the morning now, so that gives us twelve hours. I don’t think that should be too hard, I’m already thinking of videos we could make.

“Oh,” the other woman calls out. “And you have to take a shot every half hour. All of us.”

A chorus of groans and laughs is heard all around the filled suite, me and Jules included. So that's the catch. Okay, I spent twenty years as a typical rockstar, I bet I can keep up with all these twenty-year-olds. Two cases of tequila bottles appear, and we're sent on our way. I kiss Jules softly and tell him, "Try to have fun, okay baby?"

He nods and gently nuzzles my cheek, then walks away. Alex walks up to me and smiles. "You think you can corral all these youngins?"

I growl at her. "I'm here to drink and to have a good time. I'm not a dad here."

She laughs lightly and Luke Riggs, the Las Vegas Rogues quarterback, steps up next to her and offers me a hand to shake. "Nice to meet you," he tells me.

"Same. There's no way we can get all the videos without going to some places, how are we going to handle the crowds?"

We're two very known men in Vegas, there's no way we won't be stopped for selfies every second step if we go out.

He shrugs. "We'll make it work."

I nod and I'm about to say we should get started when an alarm goes off. I look back and see one of the women who explained the challenges, I guess they're on different teams. She grimaces then looks back up at us. "Time for the first shot. Hope you all had a good breakfast."

I finish chewing on the last slice of my pizza and lean back to sprawl on the couch. It's so fucking comfortable. I start to close my eyes and smile at the drunk sleepiness that's taking over.

I've had more fun today than I thought I ever could while hanging out with ten people

who are half my age.

After we filmed the third video at Target five hours ago, we all decided we needed food if we had any chance of getting to the judging part of the evening alive.

We bought everything we needed to make Adam's cooking video, and I spent the whole time we were in that magical store in the makeup section with Bidy and Mariana. Mariana's married to one of Sebas' brothers and she's the one who organized this whole thing with her sister-in-law. I may have bought too much, but I was already fourteen shots in, and honestly, who lets twelve drunk as fuck adults parade around Target for two hours? The living room of the suite is barely visible under all the white and red bags.

I can guarantee eighty percent of those are from our purchases. I went crazy, buying them everything they wanted, and they had a lot of fun putting my credit card to the test. I kept laughing every time they used it for some reason. I had a lot of fun, and almost started crying when they ended up buying me an adult-sized onesie with guitars, drums, and microphones all over it. Then they showed me they bought one for Ava too and I lost the battle against the tears.

I thought I could hold my liquor, but even though my belly's full of dough right now, my head's still spinning. At least I didn't puke all over the place like George, one of Adam's football buddies. I snicker to myself thinking about the house chores video we shot.

Man, I hope we win. We had so much fun making these videos, I think we should attend more bachelor parties. Though I really hope I can spend all day with Jules for the next one. I miss him.

When is he getting here? I haven't seen him in soooo long.



The first seven hours were insane. With Alex, the daughter of the most famous woman in the city, as well as Luke and me on the team, we were stopped a lot.

It was only worse when people noticed Adam and George were with us as well.

Now, after our room-service order arrived a little while ago, we're all settling down, quiet, and probably about to fall asleep.

Mariana's phone blares a second after I have that thought and every single person in the room groans.

"I thought we didn't have to drink any more after we were done," Santi, Sebas' brother whines.

"Nope," Mariana tells him, and everyone passes bottles around including Sebas' team.

The two biggest football players of the bunch burst through the door, and fall from the cackles racking through their bodies. They look unhinged, but I don't spend too much time focused on them. I go straight to Jules, who looks like he's about to fall asleep leaning against the wall of the foyer.

"Hey, baby." I kiss him softly then wrap my arms around him. "Did you have a good time?" He nods against my shoulder and sighs.

Sebas' team are already demanding various plates from room service, and I lead Jules to them so he can get something too.

"We're screwed," I slur at Alex the second Jules' teammates come into the suite. Turns out Mater, Santa, Bear, and Bates are the surprise judges panel she and her twin arranged for this thing.

The big guy, Mike, I think his name is, has Theo in his lap. Apparently, they're together. Theo didn't really talk to me much today, but I like him a lot, especially after he gave us brownies. I have no idea when he had time, or the brains to not burn the suite down, but I appreciate it since they're the best brownies I've tasted in my life.

Jules is standing behind me, and he pats my back in commiseration.

Yeah, he knows his teammates all worship the ground he walks on, even if it makes him feel awkward as fuck. So of course they're gonna side with him.

Lucy and Alex—now standing—are on the opposite side of the couch, staring at each other with narrowed eyes. They're absolutely having a stare-off. I guess they didn't consider that the team with Jules in it would have an advantage when they invited the “judges” to this event.

“Uh, ladies,” Santa interrupts, risking bodily harm by walking up to them and placing a hand on each of their shoulders. They both turn identical disgusted stares at his hands, but he seems unbothered by them and keeps talking. “Don't fight. We are impartial and only want to make fun of Picard, and maybe of all the delicate, tiny football boys, too.”

A chorus of protests rings out, and a second later Theo is unceremoniously dropped on my lap. He tenses all over, and I smile at him to tell him it's okay. His very not-tiny boyfriend—seriously, he's like six inches taller than Santa—walks over to the Russian and stops until their chests are almost touching. He gets in his face with an amused, and somehow still kind, smile.

“Wanna say that again, doll?” he asks, looking down at Santa. I have to bite my lip to keep the chuckle in.

Santa scoffs. “I say, you are all delicate flowers.” The balls this man has... someday it’ll get him beat up, I swear.

“Well, this delicate flower can pick you up and sit you at a tiny table to have a tea party, doll.” The twins smirk while I and everyone else snickers and chuckles. “Why don’t you drop the macho attitude and sit down to see some videos?”

There’s a silent pause where they just stare at each other. Then Santa unleashes his big smile, and a loud, boisterous laugh follows it. “I like this one,” he tells Bear, while pointing at Mike with his thumb.

“All right,” Alex sighs. “Let’s do this, even if we all know they’ll give the win to their leader. Fucking sports dude-bros, ” she mutters at the end, and I laugh again. Ain’t that right.

Everyone finds a place to sit in the incredibly crowded room and then the twins play the videos. There are laughs and groans galore while we watch everyone make a fool of themselves. I laugh hard as hell as I watch Adam listen to my instructions in the Target parking lot.

“You have a child, you left home without your diaper bag, and you can’t go back and get it. You have to buy everything you need for one whole day.” Adam nods and sprints inside the store. Luke was holding the phone and keeping up with Adam’s long strides, and I can finally see he did grab everything I could think of buying pretty quickly.

I think I fell asleep with my eyes open for the last two videos because I don’t remember anything about them.

“Come on, Santa. Tell us who won,” Jules says, the impatience in his tone brings me out of my sleepy daze.

“Well, team Sebas won the cooking one, then Adam’s team won romance and childcare, just because they were funny. We all agree with Sebas’ opinion on how to spend money on what you love, so he gets that one... and the chores one, I gotta say it was unanimous. Sorry,” he winces at my husband. “Team Adam wins.”

“Yes!!!!” Santi and Sando jump up while Sebas wails, “NOOOO.”

“What’s the prize anyway?” Theo asks, back in his boyfriend’s lap.

“Honor,” Adam says with a smug grin.

“Ugh, you’re never gonna let me forget this are you?” Sebas asks his fiancé.

“Never,” Adam mutters, as he circles Sebas with his arms and leans down for a slow kiss.

I can’t help but smile at them. I stand and walk to Jules, circling him in my arms as well. I kiss the protest he’s about to voice. He’s a sore loser, of course he is, but this competition doesn’t matter to us.

“Let’s go, baby.”

He looks at me with a dazed look, licks his lower lip slowly, then nods. There’s so much heat in his eyes, that my body is blazing in seconds.

## Page 5

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 12:53 pm*

FIVE

JULES

End Of June

The door to our bedroom bangs open and wakes me up from a dead sleep and has me thinking Ava needs something.

“ Ew , Jesus. Cover yourselves up, for fuck’s sake.” Jamie covers her eyes, but her mouth is frozen in a sneer making it very clear we’re about to be in deep shit.

“You’re the one that burst in here while we’re asleep,” Ster groans.

The throbbing in my head gets worse now that I know there’s no immediate danger. Saying I’m hungover would be the understatement of the century.

“You’ve got about thirty seconds before I can’t keep distracting Ava from coming in here.”

I sneak a look at my phone and see it’s eleven in the morning already. Jamie’s mornings have been hell for the last eight months, but she graciously told us to go wild last night at the party we threw for the team to celebrate winning the Stanley Cup.

She told us she’d take the morning shift with Ava, but I guess we reached her limit.

I find my briefs next to the bed and reach for them, Sterling stands and strolls into the walk-in closet to get some clothes, and the next second, Jamie bursts into tears.

“I’m sorry,” she wails, and I really feel for her. I walk quickly and have her wrapped in a hug the next second.

“You have nothing to be sorry for, Jamie. I’m sorry, we shouldn’t have let the party go on so late last night.”

“Ava’s already used to spending mornings with you guys, and she’s been sad all morning. I just wanted her to smile a bit, and I couldn’t make her. I’m such a shitty mom, she doesn’t like me anymore. How am I going to be a mom to another baby in just a few weeks?”

“Shh,” I soothe, and rub a hand up and down her back. “You’re the best mom in the world, Jamie, and Ava loves you, just like Adam will. Mostly because you’ll be able to sleep a whole night once he’s done wreaking havoc on your body.”

She chuckles lightly. “Damn right. That boy’s going to be a handful if this pregnancy is anything to go by.”

“And with you as his mother even more so.”

The next second, little stomps sound down the hallway. Then, “Papa!”

Panic has me looking for Sterling. He comes out of the closet the next second, pauses at his nightstand to take a gulp of water, then comes toward us.

He hands me the glass and a couple of painkillers, kisses Jamie’s temple, then walks out without a word.

I relax, take the pills and some water, then set it down on the TV stand. I go back to hugging Jamie tight, keep murmuring reassurances at her, and eventually feel a hard kick against my own stomach.

“He’s hungry, huh?” I say in a lighter tone, hoping I get another laugh out of her.

“Yes, even though I ate three huge pancakes with Ava.” Jamie softly caresses her belly and I see a soft smile on her lips when I finally let go.

“C’mon, I’ll make you something else, whatever you want, and we can feed Sterling too. Otherwise we’re all going to perish before the team celebration lunch.”

“Okay,” she whispers with a sigh. She wipes her wet cheeks and groans. “I can’t wait for my emotions to get back to normal again. And fuck.” She groans out the word and throws her head back. “I need to get ready, no way do I want to look like this next to all the gorgeous girlfriends and wives of the players.” She gestures to her face.

“You’re beautiful,” I say simply, and though I see she hears me, I know my words won’t really have a lasting impact. She’ll deck herself out like she loves to do every day.

“It’s part of my ritual, Jules,” she always tells me, and I’m not stupid enough to tell her she doesn’t need it. She’s well aware of her beauty and impact. She has all my single teammates wrapped around her little finger after all.

None of them are right for her, in my humble opinion, and thankfully she agrees.

I don’t even feel bad for being a tiny bit overprotective because she’s the same way about me and Sterling. She hates when people throw themselves at us—though they’re more often than not throwing themselves at Sterling.

I don't mind, the man's my husband after all, isn't he?

The morning passes in chaos, like all of them do. It's perfect, and when three in the afternoon comes around, we drive down to Gab's place and park behind the dozens of cars already in her driveway.

Like our home, she has a lot of parking space, and more than one plot. Though, her home is not as big as ours since we added the "wing," for Jamie to have another master for herself as well as a huge office and even bigger closet.

Gab's place has more outdoor amenities, though. She has a tennis court, since her daughters play, an Olympic-size pool, and a fifty-foot-long shaded sitting area. There are tables, couches, loungers, wingback chairs, a few swings even, and of course an outdoor kitchen.

I love celebration parties at Gab's place.

It's always super chill, with every single employee of the Pirates in attendance, but never stuffy.

Looking around, I see most people wearing swimsuits, kids running around with huge smiles, and I smell the grill.

The only rule is, you have to bring something. We brought the leftover drinks from last night, as well as a huge casserole I made after the worst of the hangover wore off.

I see most of my teammates are drinking beer, and debate on whether I should or shouldn't. I decide I won't, in solidarity with Jamie, since Ster reaches blindly into the first cooler in our path to the kitchen and pops open a can of beer without hesitation. The hot summer afternoon is perfect for a day of drinking away a hangover, so I don't blame him.



I even envy him, but he'll just feel worse tonight.

Ava runs right over to Bear, like she always does.

He's sitting in one of the loungers with Drew in his lap, and he's talking to Milkman and Spiderman. He throws his head back in a loud, booming laugh at whatever the younger guys say, and I smile just from looking at him.

It's been a hell of a year for our goalie, and I couldn't be happier for him.

I keep walking until I find the table where all the dishes are placed buffet-style, leave the casserole there, and see Jamie walk straight to Mater's wife, Ingrid, and Gab who are on the couch. She's probably going to complain about us to them. That's fine, she can vent all she wants.

We hang out with our friends, Sterling standing by me the whole day instead of going to talk to other people.

He's the worst stereotypical rockstar ever. Can't handle his drinks anymore. I snort into my drink at the thought of him hearing someone say that to him and what his responding scowl would look like.

"What?" he asks me with a small smile, and I just smirk at him then pretend to listen intently to whatever Santa is saying.

I bet Ster would put me over his knee if I dared, which I won't, but that's an idea for sure.

I might try to see how he reacts to me saying something less offensive. Maybe I can get that reaction out of him easily, who knows.

I'm a good boy, after all. I never tell my Daddy no, and he loves me for it, I know, but I want to find out what would happen if I misbehaved.

"Shut up!" Gab's loud voice stops every conversation. I look back toward the doors leading to the house and see Gab looking over her garden in frustration. "Listen, please. Everyone listen."

The grave look on her face has me panicking for the second time that day.

"Today is a celebration of course, but it's also a sad day for me, because our GM, Fred Thompson, is retiring for good today. So you will all listen to his speech, and thank him for putting you where you are, you get me?"

A chorus of, "Yes, Gab," goes around the whole place and she smiles, satisfied. Though not as satisfied as she normally looks when we all bow down to her superiority.

"Well, that's one way to start the speech." Fred sighs and runs a hand through his thinning hair. I know for a fact the man's been wanting to retire for half a decade, if not more, but he stayed because he wanted to help Gab out.

"It's truly been an honor watching this team over the years," he says without looking up. "Especially the last few years." He turns back to look briefly at Gab. She nods, with tears already streaming down her face. "Please know that even though I do need to retire and travel and do all the things my wife wants"—he smiles ruefully—"I'll miss you. And you won't be able to get rid of me that easily. I'll stop by from time to time to see how well you're doing without me."

There are soft chuckles from all around the garden, and I start walking closer. I'm gonna give Fred the biggest hug ever. The man did take a chance on me when I was only nineteen years old. He took me away from the awful house I lived in with my

father, and changed my life by believing in me.

A big-ass hug is the least he deserves.

“But I’m definitely not leaving you in the lurch.” Fred looks up and finally smiles fully. “I convinced my prodigy to come back.”

“Only because Gab promised me she’d make me president in a few years.” A deep voice comes from the sliding doors to the indoor lounge area. I have to shield my eyes from the glare of the sun but it makes no difference. The man’s in the shade and until he walks out, I can’t place him.

When he comes into the light, a slight gasp goes over the garden, and then a few cheers, a couple of shouted yesses, and I just chuckle.

“Yeah, yeah, you and your ambition needed more than simply being the general manager of a Stanley Cup winning team.” Fred rolls his eyes and shakes Jake Barlow’s hand.

“Hell yeah, I do. Especially since my team took the Cup from you last year.” The smirk that’s permanently on his face doesn’t fade as Fred grumbles.

“Oh, so you don’t want the job anymore?” Gab asks, walking toward them.

“Of course I do,” he says loudly and puts his hands up. He looks honestly alarmed, and I realize he left to work in South Carolina before Gab bought the Pirates, and he has no idea she’s the biggest shit-talker in the world. I hold my snicker in. I don’t want to give anything away.

Gab stares him down for half a minute and his eyes only get wider. Eventually, she bursts out laughing and so do we all.

Fred claps Jake on the shoulder. “You’ve got a lot to learn, boy.”

Boy is a stretch. Well, not compared to Fred who’s in his seventies now, but Jake is about Sterling’s age, more than two decades older than the rookies present. Barlow’s face relaxes, and he even chuckles after a few seconds.

“You got me there,” he tells Gab.

“I’ll keep you on your toes Barlow.” She winks at him, then tilts up her head. “Go, meet everyone, I’ll get you a drink. Beer, okay?”

“Yeah, thanks.” Once more his eyes open wide. I don’t blame him. In my experience, most billionaires, hell most millionaires, don’t offer to get you a drink.

Jake makes his rounds across the grass, and the guys who’ve met him before all hang back with me in the covered lounge. It’s true that he built a great team in South Carolina, it’s in part thanks to him that the Strike won their first Stanley Cup ever last season, so this is a great move all around.

I’m sure Gab and Fred considered a dozen people for the job, if not more, and I trust them implicitly. I’m sad to see Fred go, of course I am, but I can’t help but think this transition will be even smoother than when Gab bought the Pirates.

I stand when Jake is finally making his way to us, and Sterling kisses my cheek before making himself scarce. He’s hungry and still a little bit grumpy. He also said something about getting some damn water. Good, he should stay hydrated because the heat is no joke.

“Picard,” Jake greets me warmly. I go right in for the hug and pat his back enthusiastically.

“It’s good to have you back, Barlow,” I whisper, and I mean it.

“Feels like coming back home.”

“That’s because it is your home,” Santa declares, before he yanks Barlow back and gives him his own hug. Mater’s next, and then it’s Bear’s turn.

“I’ve missed your bear hugs, man.” Jake goes in with a little jump and the goalie laughs. “No one gives such good hugs, I swear,” he mumbles.

They part, and Bear takes a minute to introduce his brand-new fiancé to Jake. We bullshit about the past two seasons for a while until Jamie comes over with Sterling in tow. I throw my arm around her and turn us to introduce them, but Jake’s gaze is already on Jamie.

“And who’s this?” he asks with a... strange smile on his face. It puts me on edge.

“This is Jamie, my—” I’m cut off when she yanks her hand back from Jake’s grip and slaps it over her mouth. Then she’s running away into the house. Probably another bout of not-morning sickness. I’m about to go after her and help her—she’s had such a hard time getting up from kneeling in front of the toilet in the last few months, her belly is too big—but Sterling’s hot on her heels.

“She’s pregnant,” I say at last, and look at Jake with a wince. “I’m sure you also recognized my husband.”

“Yeah, I did, and of course she’s pregnant. Is she married?”

The question takes me aback. I don’t know why, but I don’t register anything behind it in the moment.

“No, she’s not married.” Jake keeps staring at me, and I feel his unspoken follow up question. “That’s my baby she’s pregnant with, and hers of course. She’s my sister.”

Jake chokes on air, then. “What?!” he demands.

I realize a second later how that sounds to someone who doesn’t know shit about Sterling, Ava, and Jamie. “She’s not actually my sister, she’s like a sister to me and Ster, and the mother of our kids, of course. She’s?—”

“None of your business.” I hear a growl from my right. I snap my head in that direction and see Sterling. He looks at me quickly and murmurs, “She’s fine, lying down in one of Gab’s guest bedrooms. She’s just tired.” Then he looks back at Jake who’s looking at both of us with a thoughtful tilt to his head.

“Why is it none of my business?” he asks, directly to Sterling.

“Because,” is my husband’s brilliant answer.

It’s only then that I finally latch on.

“Oh, fuck no .” Is all I can say about it, but I point a finger to Jake’s face. “Absolutely fucking not.”

“Why the hell not?” Jake asks, defensively.

“A man doesn’t reach his forties single because he’s a good guy,” I reason.

“Hey!” Sterling protests.

“I’m sorry, Ster, I?—”

“That’s an archaic way of thinking,” Gab says walking up to us. I see my three teammates all watching this disaster unfold with glee in their eyes. Motherfuckers.

“I didn’t mean?—”

“I know you didn’t, you’re just letting your irrational and stupid macho genes poke out because you think you have to defend your sweet, helpless little sister.”

“She’s not helpless,” I protest.

“Exactly,” Gab snaps. “So the three of you can stop discussing her when she’s not even here to put you in your place. Jake, I suggest you go over to the pool full of germs and children and find the little girl with blonde curls. She’s your ticket into this family. Win her over and these two won’t be able to say shit. Then I suggest you get your shit together and actually talk to Jamie when she comes back out.” She nods to herself and goes to turn, but stops, looks back at Jake and smirks. “Just some food for thought. Santa tried too. He failed.”

I see Jake pale a bit at her last remark, and I smirk.

“I’d leave you for her,” I tell Sterling, nodding at Gab’s back.

“Same, baby, especially since I was single, way into my forties, so of course I’m not a good guy.”

“Ugh,” I groan, “I’m sorry.”

“You’re forgiven.” He turns to me and smirks, and that smirk is evil . Before I can say or do anything, he’s crouching down and putting me over his shoulder, fireman style. “But you’re gonna pay for it.”

He gives my ass a sharp slap—which answers my earlier question, I do like it when he spanks me—then throws me into the pool.

I come up for air only to be swarmed by kids.

Okay, I deserved that.



## Page 6

*Source Creation Date: July 18, 2025, 12:53 pm*

SIX

JULES

Three Days Later

My phone blares in the middle of the night, and I once again spring up from the mattress, terrified something urgent is happening.

Ava's birthday left us practically comatose yesterday, and with all the celebrations these last few days, we were already exhausted before the toddler tornado made a stop at our house. We also had a very late but quiet dinner last night, the three of us, to remember Rose on the day she passed. We laughed when Jamie and Ster told stories about her, we cried when we talked about keeping her memory alive, and we hugged... a lot.

When we finally went to bed, we all decided on a day in today, to recharge and spend some time together.

But it looks like that's not happening, I see when I grab my phone. It's four in the morning, and the blaring is because Jamie's calling me.

"Jamie," I say, the second I answer the call. "What's wrong?"

"My water broke."

"Oh, God. Oh, Jesus. Okay, don't freak out, we've got everything ready. I'm gonna

call Gab so she can watch Ava, and let Ingrid know too. I?—”

“I already did that, just wake up your sleep-deprived husband and come help me walk!” she snaps at me, then I hear her groan painfully.

“Yes, okay, yes.” I turn and nudge Sterling. I push too hard, and he flails as he falls from the mattress.

“What the FUCK!” he screams.

“I’m sorry!” I scream back. “Adam’s coming. Jamie’s water broke.”

“Oh, okay.” He stands quickly and covers his face with both hands for a long second, takes a deep breath, then straightens. “We’ve got this.” He nods once, then he sprints to the closet. I go after him and get dressed faster than I ever have.

“Get the bag into the car, and the car out by the front door,” I tell Sterling when we walk out of our room with our bags.

We’ve read and listened to every book available for dads. One of the most repeated suggestions is to take a bag to the hospital with clothes, snacks, and anything we might need. When I get to Jamie’s room, I get a good grip on her suitcase, then take her hand and smile at her.

I’m pretty sure my smile is shaky at best, but it’s the best I’ve got with my stomach going crazy with nerves. I squeeze her hand once, and she returns a smile just as shaky.

“We’ve got this.” I repeat Sterling’s words, not at all convincingly.

She nods, and then we walk out of the room.

Sterling

Gab's car is coming up the driveway by the time I park the SUV as close to the front door as possible. I look from the door to the headlights, then back to the door multiple times. We need to get Jamie to the hospital now , dammit.

Gab steps out of her Bentley SUV without wasting time. She has a bag slung over her shoulder as she walks determinedly to me and puts a hand on my shoulder.

“Don't freak out, don't stop holding her hand, and don't take the screaming personally, okay?”

I nod repeatedly. I've been through this before... technically. But Rose was in the hospital during the last few weeks of her pregnancy, and she had a C-section. Jamie wants to have a natural birth, and of course, she'll have some strong painkillers, but they can't give her those if we don't arrive at the hospital in time.

In any case, this time will be nothing like the day Ava was born three years ago.

Exactly three years ago, actually. Damn, but my children will have their birthdays one day after the other. That's okay, they can have two parties if they want, or one.

Whatever they want, they'll get. No matter how much Jamie throws daggers at me with her eyes when I spoil Ava... and okay, maybe not anything they want. I'll love them without limits, but I'll do everything in my power to shape them into good people. That's what matters the most.

Aaand I can think about this another time, I realize when I finally see Jules walking out with an arm around Jamie. I hurry to them and get the suitcase, put it in the trunk, and then hurry to the driver's seat.

I'm aware of them talking to Gab, but I can't focus on the words. All I can think

about is putting the car in drive and making sure we get to the hospital in one piece, and as fast as possible.

Hearing Jamie groan in the backseat makes me clench my jaw. Thankfully, Jules climbed in beside her so at least he's there to hold her hand. I will myself not to step fully on the accelerator—this would be the worst possible time to be pulled over.

That has me thinking about the hospital... the emergency entrance... people taking pictures of us.

My teeth are about break with how hard I bite down. Fucking stupid fucked-up world.

I hit the call button on the wheel and say the name of the doctor. Soon enough, the call connects, and I tell her we're on our way to the hospital. She tells me to do the same thing we did when Ava had her allergic reaction, and I breathe easier, knowing exactly what I have to do. When I enter the parking lot, I get my sunglasses out of the overhead compartment and only roll down the window once they're firmly on my face.

It's four in the fucking morning, it's unlikely that anyone will notice me, but I can't take any chances, not today. The last thing we need is for reporters to camp outside the hospital or for people to sneak in for pictures of us while we're here.

Jamie's groaning for the fifth time while I drive up in a spiral, and I curse then mutter a "sorry" to her. This would be the worst moment for her to get car sick, she's in enough pain already.

"Just get us to the door," she snaps back.

"We're almost there," I tell her as calmly as I can, while Jules goes back to telling her to breathe. I stop the car right in front of the entrance and get out to open her door.

I see her give Jules a murderous glance and send them on their way down the hallway with a whispered Godspeed to my husband. I'll be with them very soon, but I have to park the car and get all our stuff.

I grab everything. The suitcase bumps into my shin, making me curse again, but I drag it all in with me only for three startled nurses to greet me on the other side of the door.

"Jamie Wright?" I ask them, and they point me down the left hallway and tell me to go to the elevator and up two flights.

I follow their instructions and focus on my own breaths.

I find Jules pacing outside a door and he looks up sharply when I call out his name.

"She's changing," he tells me, then throws his arms around me.

I'm trapped by his arms, by all the damn straps of our bags, Jamie's purse, and her suitcase, but I do everything I can to hug him back.

It will all be okay.

We're together, the three of us, and everything will be just fine.

Adam Michel is born at nine in the morning on July second, and we all fall in love instantly. Jamie's in perfect health, thank all the deities in the universe. We cry, we laugh when Jules assures us he's very much one hundred percent gay—fuck fluid sexuality—after seeing Jamie give birth, and we hug.

Jamie can't stop smiling or looking at Adam, who's now nursing and in her arms.

"I get to pick the next one's name," she declares in a moment of silence and peace.

The nurses have been great, but we really haven't had much time for only the three of us.

"You're already thinking about the next one?" Jules asks her with a perplexed look on his face.

"Yeah," she laughs. "It's all the good drugs and the oxytocin flooding my brain. Maybe it'll wear off." She shrugs then and Adam protests, but she just rearranges him and he latches on without a second's hesitation. The nurses helped her feed him right after they cleaned him up and there were no issues with her breastfeeding.

"It's okay if it does, you know?"

"Yeah, I do." Jamie smiles up at me and reaches out her free hand. I take it and rise from my seat to kiss her forehead.

"It's not like we're going to miss you telling us we're the worst people on earth for getting you pregnant."

Jamie chuckles at that. "I'm not even sorry, you both know I don't think that, and I was in a lot of pain."

"But you did great," Jules assures her, rising too and sitting next to her hip. He throws an arm over her shoulder and stares down at Adam.

"Amazing," I add.

"You're an absolute superhero." Jules nods.

"The most amazing woman who ever lived."

"Okay, okay, that's enough." Jamie keeps laughing for a minute. "It's not like we

have to decide now, right? We still have lots of time.”

“We do,” Jules whispers.

“And we can always adopt too. Not like any of us give a shit about DNA or heritage or whatever.”

“Yeah,” they both agree in unison.

Then we all just keep staring at Adam. Fuck but it’s an amazing sight.

Four Months Later

I come home tired from a day full of meetings and a rare interview with a radio show in LA. I flew out at an ungodly hour and landed home only forty minutes ago, and thank fucking God for the private airport on the outskirts of the city. I also took Ava with me and dropped her at my parents’ place. She was so happy about spending a whole week with her grandparents, that she barely looked at me when I kneeled in front of her for a goodbye hug. They promised lots of fun as well as a few days in Disneyland.

It’s a good thing, I guess. She adapted to nursery school like a champ since she started last November, and after a brief time when Adam first got home, she now has no problem spending days away from us. She was confused, and even angry when we first brought Adam home, unhappy with not seeing us in the morning when she woke up.

We did the best we could to explain we were making sure Mom and her little brother were healthy and safe, and she eventually forgave us a few days later when Adam smiled at her for the first time. I guess it’s to be expected that we all cried buckets of tears when witnessing their bond start to form.

All in all, life as a family of five has been perfect. We've found our new normal, and with Jules in the off-season we've managed every little thing that has come up. It's been especially important since Jamie started dating that...

She's been dating the new GM of the pirates— Jake , I think with disgust—for a few months, and yeah, the dude has a great job, he's kinda nice I guess, he's good with Ava too which... is actually great.

He loves talking hockey with Jules of course, but he's also a big fan of mine, and he worships the ground Jamie walks on. That's really all that matters to me. I sigh as I open the door.

There's not one negative thing I can say about him. He's even hot, with a classically handsome face. Completely black, wavy hair, an always trimmed beard, and deep green eyes. And, like Jules told me with a teasing smirk a few weeks ago, his name starts with J, so it's probably fate.

Jules is all for them being together now, he actually has been rooting for them almost from the start. He got over the shock a few days after the celebration at Gab's place.

I walk into the house to find Jamie and Jules on the couch, Jamie sobbing, and Jules holding her tightly and whispering in her ear.

“What's wrong?” I demand as I rush toward them and kneel at their feet. “What happened?”

“I-I'm... Oh God!” Jamie stutters, then keeps crying uncontrollably. I look at Jules for answers, but instead of telling me what the fuck happened, he looks down at Jamie.

“Do you want me to tell him?” he asks her. Jamie nods furiously and wipes at her cheeks even while more tears fall. Then Jules finally turns to look at me. “Jamie's pregnant.”



“What?” I demand, seriously confused. “But we haven’t gone to the cli—” That’s when it clicks. “Oh, oh .” Well, putting those dots together took me an embarrassingly long time. I look at Jamie, seeing her in so much distress reminds me of when Rose told me she was pregnant. A deep pang of sadness hits me, and I let myself feel it. The only way out is through after all. Then I focus on what’s in front of me, not on the past. “What do you want to do?” I ask Jamie, knowing whatever she says is what’ll happen.

“Well of course I’m having this baby, Josh, for fuck’s sake. It’s just so soon. Adam’s not even six months old, we’re gonna be changing diapers forever. Oh shit, well not we , we. I don’t even know if Jake wants kids. Fuck, I didn’t mean?—”

“Okay, I’m gonna stop you right there,” Jules interrupts—thank God, I was about to fucking explode. “Whatever you do, we’re still a family. The three of us plus our angels. Adam, Ava, Ster, you, and I. We’re a family, and the three of us are parents to all the children in this family. If Jake doesn’t want kids, he’ll pay alimony, but if you want this baby, then this is our son or daughter, got it? The three of us can handle all of this, Jamie, we can.”

Jamie looks at him—eyes wide and tears still steadily streaming down her face—for a long minute, and then she nods once, twice, then jumps into his arms.

“I love you guys so much,” she wails against his shoulder. I sit on her other side and hug them both. The doorbell rings before any one of us is ready to let go, but I need to get it before whoever it is buzzes again and wakes Adam, who I assume is having his afternoon nap.

Jamie jumps back and looks from me to Jules with panic in her eyes. “It’s Jake, he’s supposed to pick me up for a date.” She bites down on her lower lip nervously.

“I’m gonna go make sure Adam’s okay.” Jules squeezes her shoulder once, then walks down the hallway to the nursery.

“You want me to be with you while you tell him?”

She shakes her head as she wipes angrily at her cheeks—the tears have finally slowed. “I can do it,” she assures me.

“Of course you can,” I tell her while walking backward to the front door. “But just know that you don’t have to.”

“Thank you,” she mouths at me, and I smile before turning to open the door.

I try to not let any emotion on my face show as I greet Jake and tell him Jamie’s in the living room. I see her nod at me when I pass on the way to the nursery.

I find Jules staring down at Adam who, like I thought he would be, is sleeping in his crib. “C’mon,” I whisper, and pull him out of the room.

Staring at a sleeping baby is just begging for trouble. If he doesn’t wake up just because he wants to, then we’ll have hell to pay. He’s just like his mother, this one. Though, to be fair, Jamie hates being woken up by anyone other than her kids. If Ava climbs into her bed in the morning she even smiles.

“Wanna spy on them?” Jules asks me once we close the door behind us. He looks so fucking sexy, with his mischievous smile. I kiss him and back him up against the hallway wall. I have to somehow express how fucking happy I am.

“We’re gonna have another baby,” I whisper against his lips.

“We are.” He’s smiling just as big as I’m sure I am.

“Let’s go, then.” He nods then he’s the one pulling me back to the opening of the living room. We press our backs against the wall so Jake and Jamie won’t be able to see us like we know what the fuck we’re doing, and listen.

“Jamie,” I hear Jake whisper in a voice that sounds strangled. My whole body tenses while I try to figure out if that’s good or bad. “A baby,” he croaks. “This is amazing, pretty girl.” My whole body relaxes and I turn to see Jules smiling sweetly.

I’m about to suggest we join them when Jake speaks again. “Jamie Wright?—”

“Oh, God,” she interrupts him. Why? What’s happening?

“Will you marry me? Will you let me join this incredible family you’ve built with those two amazing men? Will you let me be another father to all of your kids?”

I choke up, and Jules’ eyes are glistening with unshed tears. This man’s gonna make me want to kiss him, dammit.

“Yes,” I hear Jamie say in a voice full of emotion.

Jules and I embrace and kiss again. This is amazing. Our family’s gonna grow exponentially.

“We’re gonna have to come up with another name that starts with A,” Jules whispers.

I smile and nod. “Good thing the kids still won’t outnumber us.” I voice my thoughts way too loudly, forgetting we’re supposed to be anywhere but overhearing their tender and romantic moment.

I wince when I hear Jamie let out a watery laugh.

“Come out you two,” she calls out.

We walk like two kids who are about to get grounded and she just shakes her head at us.

“So, now you’ll have a kid from each of us,” Jules says with a shit-eating grin.

I burst out laughing. “ Damn . You get around, Jamie.”

She stands and hits me over the head with no remorse. It doesn’t stop Jake, Jules, and I from laughing, though. And eventually, she joins in.

This is one crazy life we’re going to have.