



Stetson (Playing for Keeps)

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Category: Sport

Description: They say it's lonely at the top, but as the most sought-after rookie player in the MLB, I can tell you they're wrong. I could have whomever and whatever I wanted. And at twenty-three, I really only wanted one thing. Instead, I got two. I never saw myself as someone's boy, but Levi's soft and sweet attentions were everything I could wish for in a Daddy. And I loved pushing Barrett, whether we were in the bedroom or on the field.

Levi

Barrett said I could have anyone, and the moment I laid eyes on Stetson, I knew I had to have him. After saving his ass from a career-ending move, I made him my boy. He fit into our lives like a baseball in a mitt. Watching Barrett fall for him only made it hotter. It was almost perfect, but having my boyfriend and my boy play on opposing teams wouldn't become a problem, would it?

Barrett

I loved Levi, but I was no one's boy. He wanted one badly though, and I had my career to focus on. If I didn't bring home a World Series win this year, I'd strike out. Permanently. So I told Levi to pick anyone. I never thought he'd choose Stetson Holloway, the hottest ace in the league. Around him, I felt every one of my thirty-two years, a washed-up pro athlete without a title to his name. Now he's not only on the field but in my house—in my bed. And I loved it, but I hated that it could cost me everything.

Stetson is book one in the Playing for Keeps series, but can be enjoyed as a standalone.

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STETSON

“ Home sweet home .”

“ Home is where the heart is .”

“ There’s no place like home .”

Most times, when people think of home, it’s a house. They might reminisce about their hometown, a nearby landmark, the ocean. Maybe even a person. But for me? It was the diamond. The smell of fresh cut grass, the weight of a ball in my hand and the smooth drag of leather against my skin. The scent of greasy, fatty food wafting over from the stands and the endless chatter of the fans.

That was my home, from the time I was old enough to pick up a bat.

At twenty-three, I was the youngest player on my team. I grew up in a near-microscopic town in southeast Georgia, endlessly seeking a way out. According to my parents, I’d always marched to the beat of my own drum. It soon became evident that I was destined for something way too big for that town. I started in peewee baseball, just to have something to do with all my energy, then worked my way up. From there, a university in California offered me a scholarship, and that was where I became the most sought-after rookie in the entirety of Major League Baseball. Drafted by the Atlanta Thrashers, I packed my bags and moved home, where I worked my ass off to earn my spot on the starting lineup.

“Heads up Holloway!”

I snapped to attention, the ball soaring my way. With my eyes on the prize, I shuffled backward until I hit the fence. The ball passed over my head, but not far enough. I stretched my arm out as far as it would go, and the ball smacked into my glove. I retrieved it, and held my hand high, relishing in the groans from the “shirts” half of our shirts-versus-skins battle.

The Atlanta heat was relentless, even with the setting sun casting a golden glow over the field. Half an hour ago, we’d gotten the twenty-minute warning that the stadium would be closing, but we’d been too caught up to stop the game.

I approached the other guys, swept up in smacks on the back and ruffles to the hair. But neither of those compared to the frigid water dumped over my head a second later. My lungs seized and my heart seemed to stop. Between cheers from the skins, someone pulled me in by my shoulder.

“Killer catch, Rookie. Keep it up.”

I reared back to respond, but movement on the edge of the field commanded my attention. A man stood in the dugout—a gorgeous man. Even from the distance, his tan skin glowed like he was fresh from a beach vacation. A plain white t-shirt stretched across his form and his hands in the pockets of his worn-out jeans pulled the denim tight across his lap. Dark, shaggy hair curled from beneath the brim of a backward ball cap. When I finished my thorough onceover, my gaze returned to his face where he’d pushed his sunglasses onto his head. Dark, serious eyes gazed back at me, and uncharacteristic nerves made my head spin.

I ignored the fluttering in my stomach and goosebumps pebbling up my arms, only managing the slightest grin before he vanished. My teammate, Harrison, stood next to me, so I tapped his shoulder and indicated the dugout. The stranger was gone, but I

was too intrigued to let it go. “Did you see that guy watching us from the dugout?”

Harrison didn’t seem bothered. “Yeah, he’s always hanging around. What about him?”

“Who was he?”

“Levi Grant.” Sensing my apprehension, he continued. “He’s a sports agent and reps a few guys on the team, including me. Probably just making sure we’re keeping our asses in gear.”

I chuckled, picking through the pile of shirts to find mine. “Is there a reason he checks up on you?”

Harrison laughed and clapped me on the shoulder. “You’ll have to ask Matt what happened his rookie year. He may or may not tell you. And if he won’t, I will.”

As if he knew he was being talked about, Matt hollered, “What are you doing over there, Harrison?”

“Nothing!” Harrison aimed a glance in my direction. “Just making sure Rookie’s coming out tonight.”

I hesitated, which was apparently the wrong move because he raised a brow at me. “I probably shouldn’t. You know, first game coming up and all.”

Harrison’s grip tightened. “Which means this is our last chance to let loose for a while. You got us our win which means Matt’s buying. Could be fun...”

I shuffled on the spot. I needed to prove myself, both on and off the field. We did have two days before our first game against the Hellbenders. That was plenty of time

to kick a hangover, right?

It was Matt's voice who broke me out of my reverie. "Are you coming or what?"

My mouth twitched into the Holloway smirk. "If I'm lucky."

That earned me a chorus of groans, which widened the grin into a full smile. They headed to the clubhouse to shower, and I followed behind.

Did I go around announcing my sexuality? No, but it wasn't a secret either. I'd been lucky to be met with unwavering support from an early age. I started coming out in high school, when I started to think it would matter. Turns out, it didn't. Most people weren't fazed. There was the odd person that had something to say, but it was all water off a duck's back.

By the time college rolled around, I started to think of the guys on my team as family. That was even more important now that I was a pro. And if my family couldn't accept me for who I truly was, then I didn't want any part of it.

I showered and changed into a clean pair of gym shorts and a t-shirt. One by one, players left and I was alone in the clubhouse. I paused, standing in the middle of the room. The only lights to be found were the ones in each locker, illuminating the names on the backs of our jerseys. When I found mine, I couldn't help but swell with pride. The next time I entered that space, it would be as a Major League Baseball player.

* * *

Only some of the team showed up to the bar. The older, more experienced players rushed home to soak up every bit of family time they could.

Atlanta was bumping at night, with people lining up around the corner to get into some places. Unfortunately for them, the city's dive bars were a hidden treasure. The kind of places where your shoes stick to the floor and the music was way too loud, but the cheap booze helped you forget the inconvenience. Harrison and I crowded into the space behind the guys and for about five seconds, I had every intention of behaving. I started with a mixed drink I knew I could handle but thanks to the stifling heat, it disappeared quickly. Someone bought me another, then Harrison thrust a tequila shot in my hand. It would have been rude not to take it, right?

Just one. I told myself. Unfortunately, I neglected to say that out loud. Too bad my teammates weren't mind readers either.

One tequila, two tequila, three tequila—I don't remember anymore...

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LEVI

I had a love-hate relationship with baseball. As an agent, I represented quite a few players. Watching them flourish never ceased to amaze me. Plus, they kept me busy during the part of the sport I hated: Barrett being gone ninety percent of the time.

He'd been at spring training for six weeks, and I had another thirty-two hours and twenty-four minutes before he got home.

But who was counting?

When Barrett got drafted to New York, I'd offered to move. He refused. It was one of the biggest fights we'd ever had. At the time, I couldn't imagine being away from him for weeks at a time, but Barrett was a Georgia boy at heart. He said he couldn't imagine giving up his home for something as temporary as a contract. The unpredictability of the sport was enough for him to stand firm in his decision.

Ten years later, he was one of the best players in the league. Everyone knew the name Barrett Swindon. To go with that, the name Levi Grant. If only they knew my name for more than the scandal that came along with it.

With a groan, I tossed my book onto the table with a loud thump .

I had to get out of this damn house.

After so long, you think I'd be adjusted to the quiet, but it was the exact opposite. The house wasn't the same without Barrett dancing around the kitchen with no shame in the world. Or bringing me a spoonful of his latest recipe to taste. Damn, the man could cook.

I swapped my sweats out for the jeans and t-shirt I'd abandoned earlier, replacing my old Hellbenders cap on my head.

As I sat in the back of the Uber, I let my mind drift away from my absent partner. Specifically, to the boy I'd seen earlier that day. The sports community—hell, the entire state —had been buzzing with his name. “Hometown Hero” Stetson Holloway had been drafted to the Thrashers. I'd seen him play his senior year, but another agent snatched him up before I could even blink. He'd dominated his way through college ball, easily winning the collegiate World Series title for his university.

I'd gone to the field that day to keep an eye on a few of my problematic players but instead, I spent my time there watching every move Stetson made.

I swore I'd walk away, but then the man had to go and take his damn shirt off. That idea swiftly went out the window.

The sun hammered onto the field that day. I was melting in the shaded dugout, so I knew the players had to be miserable. I watched intently as Stetson whipped his shirt off, adding it to the pile with the others. He'd looked delectable . I'd resisted the urge to lick my lips. His broad shoulders and the hint of abs teasing his flat stomach hit a spot that, outside of Barrett, no other man had touched.

We'd spent quite a few years searching for a third to bring into our relationship. I'd been head-over-heels for Barrett since the day we met but I had a special interest that Barrett didn't share, and I couldn't fault him for that.

I was a Daddy, and every Daddy needed his boy. Even I could realize that Barrett was nobody's boy. In fact, Barrett was the only person who had any power to boss me around. There had been a few prospects over the years, but none that fit.

However, when I noticed Stetson on the field with his bright blue eyes, dirty blond hair, and smile that could kill, something seemed to click into place. But I needed to calm myself down. If I came on too strong, I was sure to screw it up. Besides, I needed Barrett to meet him first.

I let myself daydream about Stetson until I arrived at my favorite dive bar. The door swung open as someone went in ahead of me, and a cacophony of noises filtered out of the place. I made my way to the counter, ordered a drink, and sought out the main source of the chaos. Then I smiled.

Half of the Atlanta Thrashers were packed into a corner, surrounding a very drunk Stetson, who had a shot in one hand and a mixed drink in the other. I chuckled to myself and shook my head, taking an empty stool to watch the show. Normally I'd intervene, but could drop the agent hat for a night.

I sat back and nursed my drink while Stetson knocked back four tequila shots. Who knows how many he'd had before I showed up? I barely contained my laughter as he climbed onto the table on a dare, belting out a drunken rendition of "I Want It That Way." I nearly choked on a mouthful of my drink and tears gathered in the corners of my eyes.

"For the love of God, will someone shut him up?"

Uh-oh.

I searched for the voice, but Stetson was faster. Before I knew it, he was jumping off the table and wobbling on unsteady legs. His teammates caught him, but they weren't

strong enough—or sober enough—to hold him back. With every thunderous step, I wondered when it would be appropriate to step in. When he came face to face with the guy who'd shouted at him, I leapt out of my seat.

Between the music, the two of them shouting in each other's faces, and the copious amounts of alcohol they'd each consumed, I couldn't make out a single word. Both faces were red, spit disgustingly flying between them, and then Stetson drew his fist back. I captured it with impressive speed and stepped close, leaning in to speak in his ear .

“You and me, outside. Now.”

“Fuck off,” he slurred in return. He tried to wrench out of my grasp, but the booze slowed him down.

“That wasn't a request, Holloway. Move .”

I pulled my head back to Stetson's icy blue eyes snapping to mine. His jaw was clenched so tightly, I was surprised I couldn't hear his teeth grinding. My body was very aware of his proximity, and I took a step back to avoid him noticing. Something in his eyes shifted. Was that obedience ?

I banished the flicker of hope sparking in my belly.

When I felt confident that he wouldn't swing, I loosened my grip. He lowered his arm, and I let out a sigh of relief. “Take him home,” I barked to the heckler's friend.

I didn't wait around for a response before dragging Stetson out of the bar, ignoring his protests. His teammates were suspiciously quiet, pretending not to see me.

We'd barely stepped out into the sticky Georgia night before Stetson tried to wrench

out of my grasp, but it didn't work. I guided him around the building and to the alley, where we'd have at least some semblance of privacy. I shoved him into a corner, slightly enjoying the grunt he made as he hit the bricks and I boxed him in. I planted my feet and crossed my arms over my chest. "What were you thinking back there, Stetson?"

He swayed on his feet. "How do you know my name?"

"The whole state of Georgia knows who you are." That made him smile, the cocky little shit. "Which brings me back to my original question: What were you thinking? You could have screwed everything up."

"He started it!"

"And a single punch could end your career. Was he worth that?"

Stetson peered over my shoulder, eyes unfocused. He couldn't even stand straight, and I was prepared to grab him at any second. I clenched my hands into fists, trying not to touch him without an excuse.

"That's what I thought. You need to get it together or you'll never have any hope in making it in the majors." I gave him a squeeze on the shoulder. "Come on, I'll get you home."

Coughing stopped me in my tracks. I should have seen it coming: Stetson doubled over, expelling the contents of his stomach. The caregiver in me kicked in. Where someone else might have left him to it, I put a comforting hand on his shoulder and waited until he was finished.

"Do you want to stay with me tonight?" I whispered.

He nodded, using the back of his hand to wipe his mouth off before leaning against me.

I managed to keep him upright until we climbed into the backseat of the car. I'd been out of the house less than an hour. Stetson squirmed next to me, whining about needing to pee before lying on my shoulder. My stomach fluttered.

"You're a big boy," I laughed. "You can hold it."

He was snoring before we turned the corner. The driver kindly offered assistance in getting the boy inside but I politely declined, also tamping down my "Daddy" tendency to offer help when I directed him to the bathroom. Once he was passed out in the guest bed, I left a bottle of water on the nightstand.

As I kicked my bedroom door shut, hands covered my eyes and panic spiked in my chest. "Guess who?"

"If you're not my boyfriend you're about to find out what I keep in my nightstand!"

The hands fell away, and I whirled on the intruder. Barrett had his hands on his hips, eyeing me skeptically. "A bottle of lube and your dildo?"

"A criminal doesn't know that," I groused.

"Good thing I'm not here to burgle you of your favorite vibrator." Barrett's hazel eyes sparkled as he stepped forward to cup my cheeks in his hands. Our lips met, and I was swept up into the familiarity of him. I moaned into a kiss that ended way too early.

"I thought you weren't getting in until Sunday."

“I caught an earlier flight. I needed to see you.” I reached forward to tuck a strand of his chin-length dirty blond hair behind his ear. Chad Michael Murray eat your heart out. His hands left my neck, brushing over my chest and snaking around my waist before clenching hard on my ass. “But I wasn’t expecting you to come home with someone. Is he?—”

“Drunk off his ass and sleeping it off in the guest room? Yes. I’ll get him home in the morning.”

“He’s okay?”

“He’ll be fine.” I kissed my partner again. “Now show me how much you missed me.”

BARRETT

It couldn't have been more than a few hours before my watch buzzed to wake me up. After a full day of traveling, followed by some... strenuous activities with Levi, I was exhausted, but I couldn't throw myself off my routine. Now that I had an extra breakfast to make, I needed to get started if I wanted to keep my gym time. I rolled over, giving myself exactly two minutes to snuggle up to Levi before my dick started to get any ideas.

The sleepy, "come back," noise he made when I got up almost served as a bungee cord to pull me right back down. I resisted, but barely. I stowed the bottle of lube away in the nightstand drawer and picked my way around the dark room, collecting our discarded clothes and putting them in the laundry basket on my way to the bathroom.

I wasn't surprised to see Levi bring a boy home. He needed someone to take care of, and we'd been looking for that for quite some time. What I was surprised to see was that it was Georgia's new golden boy. The name Stetson Holloway was seared into my brain. I was nervous enough to play against the Thrashers but combined with Stetson's impressive record, not to mention retirement looming over me, I was a mess to say the least.

But I'd give it— him —a shot for Levi.

I set my phone on the counter, soft music filling the room. With the way Levi slept, I

kept an ear out for Stetson.

As I lost myself in the food and the music, I tried not to let the severity of the season weigh on me. I'd just celebrated my thirty-second birthday and yes, there were plenty of baseball players who played well past that, but most of them had titles. I'd been playing for a decade and despite having some of the highest stats in the league, I didn't have a single thing to show for it. I was getting tired. The long days, the back and forth, and constant weeks away from home took a toll.

Before spring training, I decided that this season would be my last. It was my final shot at a World Series win, and I thought this year would be it. That was, until Stetson came into the picture. The world of college sports was dominated by his name but when the Thrashers drafted him, it was all the sports community could talk about. Especially how he had the potential to catapult the team right to their fifth World Series win. He was a firecracker, both on and off the field. I had my work cut out for me.

But in the kitchen, I moved around with ease. As much time as I spent away, this was always home. It was the place I felt most like myself. I was nowhere near professional, but it kept Levi fed and happy. Now I hoped it would do the same for Stetson. As intimidated as I was to face him on the diamond, I wasn't going to bring that tension home. Especially after seeing the look in Levi's eyes last night. I knew he'd felt that pull with Stetson and oddly enough, I'd felt it too.

A quiet chuckle broke me away from my thoughts. Plating up, I smiled. I wasn't embarrassed anymore by getting caught dancing like no one was watching. "How long have you been standing there?"

"Long enough to know that you can't fight the moonlight."

Levi kissed the grin off my face. "Coffee?" he asked.

“Already done. Is your boy up yet?”

He grimaced, joining me at the kitchen island. “He’s not my boy.”

“He could be. He’s cute.”

“You think you can handle the whole team rivalry thing?” Levi leaned back against the marble countertop, giving me room to wedge myself between his thighs. At the chance of being able to grab onto me, he abandoned his coffee and tightened his arms around my waist; mine draped over his shoulders.

“You know I never let that stuff get to me off the field.”

“What about him? Do we think he can leave that tension in the dugout?”

A wild curl tickled the corner of Levi’s eye, and I tucked it away from his face. “That’s where you come in, Daddy.” I couldn’t even get the word out without laughing.

Levi scrunched his nose. “You’re right, that feels weird.”

“Please don’t make me do it ever again.” I stole another kiss, feeling him smile against my lips.

Stetson’s plate went in the oven to stay warm, and Levi and I sat down to eat. We fell into easy conversation about training, and what he’d been up to. It was like I’d never left, and I warmed at the feeling.

“Are you still set on this being your last season?”

That question was like a bucket of ice water over my head. I chewed slowly, pushing

the rest of my food around the plate with my fork. I was set. I'd made my mind up, and I was sick of going over it. My agent knew, my coach knew, the rest of my team knew. After this year, I was done. Finally, I nodded. "Yeah, I'm set."

"You know you don't?—"

"Baby, we've been over this." I dropped my fork and took Levi's hand in mine. "I'm not retiring for you. I'm done. I'm tired. I want to be here with you more often. This choice is mine and mine alone."

Levi squeezed my fingers, worrying his bottom lip. I could tell he didn't entirely believe me. Had I chosen to quit playing for him, I would have done it years ago. Back then, Levi felt like he was responsible for ruining my career, and those feelings hadn't vanished.

I stood, rounded the table, and pushed Levi's plate back. Confusion morphed into surprise as I straddled his lap, settling my ass on the table. I twisted my fingers through his hair, guiding his head back in the process. "I promise you're not forcing my hand in this. I'm doing this because I want to."

Instead of letting him respond, I sealed my mouth over his, sliding off the table and dropping my full weight onto his lap. I tilted my head to deepen the kiss, and he groaned into my mouth. We devolved into a frenzied dance of teeth and tongues, with Levi tugging my hips onto his cock. Damn, two months is a long time to be apart. Levi hardened beneath me, causing a rush of blood to my own crotch. He slipped his fingers underneath my gym shorts and prepared to tug them down when my second alarm interrupted our intimate moment.

"Shut the damn thing off," he growled against my mouth.

I groaned, forcefully breaking off the kiss when he refused. I held him back by a hand

on his chest, which was heaving up and down with each breath. I stood to put some distance between us. If I didn't, I'd have lost myself. "Believe me, baby. I wish I could. You have no idea how bad I want to."

Whiskey-colored eyes dropped to my lap, and he licked his lips. "I think I do. And it wouldn't put you behind more than five minutes."

He leaned in, sucking a kiss to my lower belly and teasing the skin with his tongue. I tightened my grip in his hair and pulled until he was looking at me. "I can't." A noise from the second floor gave me an idea. "But there's someone upstairs who might appreciate your attention."

I leaned in for another kiss, giving him a taste of my tongue before I peeled myself away from him and adjusted myself in my shorts. "Save me some energy," I said, gathering our plates and loading them in the dishwasher. "I'll be home after practice and we can pick up where we left off."

Levi walked me to the door. As more noises poured down the stairs, he glanced over his shoulders. Stetson was awake for sure. "What if he doesn't?—"

"You'll never know if you don't try." Another kiss. "I love you. I'll be home before you know it."

"Love you too," he mumbled in a tone I knew all too well. He was pouting and as I walked away, I had to force myself not to look back. If I did, those big, brown puppy dog eyes would have me in bed faster than I could blink.

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4

STETSON

Ugh, someone turn off the sun!

Voices carried up the stairs, which made my eyes snap open. I lived in a ground floor apartment. I shot up in bed, only to groan and fall onto the pillows once more, pressing the heels of my hands to my temples. Slower this time, I sat up, and the room came into focus. Bright sunlight poured in from sheer curtains, bouncing off the walls and worsening my headache. A crisp white sheet pooled in my lap.

The hell happened last night ?

I risked a glance under the blanket. I was still wearing underwear, and the other side of the bed didn't appear to have been slept in. I then looked at the nightstand to my right. An empty water bottle held down the corner of a sheet of paper. The ache of a full bladder explained why it was empty .

I snatched the paper from the nightstand.

My name is Levi. You had too much to drink last night and were in no condition to get yourself home. Your phone is charging on the dresser. The bathroom is directly across the hall. Your clothes are clean and there's a toothbrush on the counter. Towels are under the sink. There's Tylenol in the medicine cabinet. Come downstairs for breakfast whenever you're ready—or simply sneak out the front door. The choice is up to you.

I set the note aside and crawled out of bed. Sure enough, my phone was on the dresser. I disconnected it from the charger and cringed at the texts that came through. Slowly, memories from last night flooded in. The name Levi sounded familiar. Then the image of the man who pulled me out of the bar finally formed.

Fuck .

Levi Grant was the one to tug me out of the bar. He took me home , and not for the reason I might have wanted. I scrubbed my hand over my face as I made my way across the hall to the bathroom. I heard the front door shut, and hoped it was him leaving so I could make a clean break.

I found the Tylenol and towels exactly where he said they'd be and after taking the pills—and trying to keep them down—I threw myself in the shower. Once I was dried and dressed, I had every intention of leaving, but the smell of food drifting up the stairs had my empty stomach grumbling.

Another memory surfaced of me puking my guts out in an alley, and I groaned.

Where nearly everything in my apartment creaked or complained under my weight, the steps of the grand staircase in Levi's house didn't make a sound. I padded down in my socks, shoes in my hand. I made it to the front door but with my hand on the knob, Levi coughed, redirecting my attention.

What if ...

My stomach growled again. Maybe breakfast wouldn't be a bad idea.

I dropped my shoes, then moved slowly through the entranceway. A formal sitting room sat to my left, and a closed door to my right. I passed through another small dining area before entering the kitchen. Beyond that, Levi sat curled up on the couch

with a book in his hand. The other mindlessly twirled his hair around his finger. He hadn't noticed me yet, so I took the time to drink in the view.

Damn, he was gorgeous. Even with his brows furrowed in concentration. A shadow of dark stubble had appeared on his jaw, and I got the sudden urge to know what it would feel like against my skin. His top half was bare, giving me a stunning view of a soft chest and stomach I wanted to bury my face in. I'd never been picky when it came to men but the hair that decorated his body made my stomach flip. A dangerous move in my state. I coughed against a wave of nausea, which caught his attention. The look he gave me only increased the fluttering in my belly.

"I was hoping you'd join me," he said, sticking a bookmark between the pages and setting the book down. "How you feeling?"

"Better now," I told him, returning his grin with one of my own. I took a step toward him, praying that the skin he was showing continued under the blanket spread over his legs. I extended my hand out to him. "I'm going to assume that I didn't get to introduce myself properly last night. I'm Stetson. I think I owe you an apology for my behavior."

"Levi." His strong hand slid into mine, amber eyes sparkling as he gazed up at me. "But I think you knew that already. You're good at that."

"Good at what?"

"Deflecting." He stood, letting the blanket fall and revealing muscular legs and a tight pair of black boxer briefs. I only glanced for a second, but the glint in his eyes when my gaze returned to his told me that I'd been caught. He tightened his grip on my hand and pulled me close. "You hungry?"

My stomach answered for me, and heat crept up my cheeks. Levi only laughed and

released his grip, directing me toward the kitchen. “Come.”

He parked me on a barstool and pulled a plate out of the oven. Even before he heated it up my mouth was watering. “What do you remember about last night?” he asked me, throwing the plate in the microwave.

“Three tequila shots?” I answered with a laugh. “Not a lot after that.”

Levi set the plate in front of me, bending down to a drawer for cutlery. “So, you don’t remember the four shots after that, belting out Backstreet Boys classics, then getting in the face of someone out to ruin your night?”

I grimaced. Not at the 90s boy band karaoke, that was a typical Friday night for me. But at losing my temper. Again. “No, I don’t. How was it?”

“The music or the fight?” The corner of his mouth kicked up in a grin that started up that fluttering in my gut.

“Both.”

“I personally think that Nick does it better, but you weren’t bad. As for the fight?” He rounded the kitchen island and sat next to me. “It didn’t happen. I dragged you out of there before you could do anything. What were you thinking?”

Levi pulled himself close enough for me to smell the soap coming off him from his shower. My heart pounded in my chest. Normally, I would have popped off with some smart-ass answer, but stuck in my throat at the sight of Levi’s intimidating eyes on me. Stetson Holloway never got intimidated. I took a bite of my food to buy myself some time, but no snarky reply came.

“I guess I wasn’t thinking at all,” I answered meekly.

I couldn't mistake the way Levi leaned in closer. "That's not going to work if you want to make it in the majors."

I sighed, pushing my hand through my damp hair. "I know."

"Do you have anyone to help you?"

"I've got an agent."

Levi laughed, the sound sending a shiver down my spine. I kept my attention on my plate, shoveling food into my mouth even as he pulled his stool over. Long, muscular legs spread around me, thighs closing in on my hip. I could feel the heat of his body through my shorts, and my brain wasn't the only organ to take notice. I squirmed against the pressure building low in my belly.

"I'm not looking to represent you, Stetson." He reached up to brush my hair away from my forehead. A shiver rolled down my spine. Whether it was from his touch or my name coming off his lips, I wasn't sure. His finger trailed down the side of my face, to my jaw before dropping to my thigh. My legs practically fell open in invitation, his fingers curling around the muscle and giving my leg a squeeze. "I'm talking about someone to take care of you, to keep you in line."

My stomach churned so violently that I gave up on eating, letting my fork drop to the plate. I moved to face Levi, but he clenched my thigh hard enough to make me gasp. "Finish your food."

"I'm not?—"

"Finish. Your. Food." His voice was firm, but not aggressive. He picked up the fork and put it back in my hand.

Levi was coming on strong . I loved it. Perhaps I should have been uncomfortable, but I wasn't. I was turned the fuck on, and I wanted more.

I don't know what made me obey, but I did. His grip on my leg loosened with each bite I took, and eventually his thumb started to stroke the skin. I was hard as a rail now.

"Wh-what..." I stuttered. "What do you mean, exactly?" With my plate clean, I dropped the fork again and pushed the dishes away from me.

"Your rookie year is one of the most important in your career. You need discipline. Someone to tell you when to reign it in, someone to reward you when you do as you're told—such as finishing your breakfast." As soon as I could move, Levi slid back on his stool and beckoned me with his finger. "Come here."

I eyed the space in his lap. I wasn't the biggest, but even I questioned how I would fit. Emboldened, I threw one leg over, straddling his hips and holding onto his shoulders. His strong hands squeezed my hips, and I smiled as the realization dawned on me.

"You're a Daddy," I muttered. I suppressed a moan, those tough hands massaging my hips.

"Mmhmm. Do you know much about what we do?"

I was no stranger to kink. I'd been to clubs. I'd seen the boys with their Daddies. I couldn't say I'd ever had the itch to participate myself but hovering over Levi's lap, the gleam in his eyes as he looked up at me, I was intrigued. Maybe it wouldn't be such a bad idea.

"Sort of. But what would— oh !"

Levi had pulled my hips down, granting me the delicious friction I needed. “We can talk specifics later if you want, but right now?” He arched into me, his cock hard against my own. “You finished your breakfast, so you get a reward. Stand up.”

I hastened to obey, and Levi guided me to lean back against the island, legs spread. My breathing grew ragged when He tipped my chin with a single finger until our lips touched. Sparks shot through my veins. My heart rate skyrocketed. I whined, tried to deepen the kiss but he pulled back, flatting a palm on my chest to hold me in place. “Relax, little one. I’ve got you.”

Little one . I hadn’t been called “little” anything in a long time, but my heart fluttered. Levi tucked into my neck, peppering kisses over the skin. Fingers slipped beneath my shirt and I gasped, unable to do anything but obey when he pushed the fabric up and tossed it aside.

Then he dropped to his knees.

5

LEVI

God damn this boy was gorgeous.

From my position, I paused to appreciate the view in front of me. Stetson gripped the island hard enough to turn his knuckles white. He looked at me through heavy blue eyes, chest rising and falling, desperate for oxygen. Damp, blond hair fell into his face. I reached up, running a hand down his smooth chest until I landed on the waistband of his shorts. Sealing my lips over his stomach, I lowered the fabric. He moaned, arresting my attention. His eyes were closed, bottom lip fixed between his teeth. Perfect .

“You still with me baby?” He nodded and I reached up to pry his hands away from the countertop, guiding them to my shoulders. “I need to hear you, Stetson.”

“Yes.”

“Is this okay?”

“Yes,” he snarled, nails digging into my skin.

I bit back the urge to demand more, to hear him call me Daddy. There was plenty of time for that. If I took it too fast, he’d bolt. Instead, I whispered, “Good,” and prompted him to step out of his shorts. With his feet flat on the floor again, I reached around to grab his ass. The taut flesh easily filled both my hands. I sighed, blowing

hot breath over his straining erection. Another noise made me look up. Stetson peered down at me with pleading eyes, silently begging for more.

I held him steady and helped him out of his boxer briefs. My mouth watered at the sight in front of me. Stetson was drop dead gorgeous , right down to the perfect cock bouncing in front of me. A drop of precome hung from his slit, and I lunged forward to lap it up. Not wasting any time, I used my tongue to trace the prominent vein running along the underside of his dick. The second he hit my taste buds, I knew I needed more.

The noises coming from his mouth served as fuel to keep me going. As if I'd want to do anything else. His breath hitched as I sucked his cockhead into my mouth, covering the distance with my hand. One of his hands twisted into my hair, holding me in place. Stetson writhed, and I loosened my grip enough to let him move.

The first roll was slow, calculated. When I didn't stop him, he picked up pace. The dirty, erotic sounds were music to my ears. Stetson moaning and whining, the obscene slurping bouncing off the walls. Once I was sure he was steady, I shoved a hand into my underwear, the fabric already damp.

"Holy shit," Stetson whimpered. His rhythm faltered, his hand clenched in my hair. I could feel him trying to hold out, but it was in vain. I swallowed around him, earning a bitten curse before, "I'm coming."

Stetson crashed over the edge, his cock pulsing his release down my throat. I happily swallowed, only pulling off when he pushed at my shoulders. Resting my forehead against his hip, I counted my breaths and carried myself away from my own release. This moment wasn't about me. I allowed myself a few seconds to gather my strength while Stetson combed his fingers through my hair.

"Sorry," he panted, removing his hand. "I'll stop."

I shook my head against his thigh. “Don’t be.” I picked up that hand he’d dropped and pressed my lips to his knuckles. “You okay?”

He nodded, but with a simple raised eyebrow from me remembered himself. “Yeah, I’m okay.”

He tightened his grip on my hand and helped me to my feet. His gaze dropped to my erection, and he smirked. He reached out, smoothing his hand down my chest, curling his fingers into the hair there as he trailed down my middle. I trapped his fingers before they slipped beneath the cotton. “You don’t have to do that.”

“I want to.”

“I know you do, sweet boy,” I cooed. “But I’m okay. Why don’t you let me shower you off?”

It was a loaded question. Yes, I would have very much enjoyed sharing my shower with the pretty boy in front of me, but the first game of the season was only two days away. He needed to get to practice. I could have sent him on his way, but I wanted him to have the gratification of making the decision himself.

Stetson winced, but shook his head. “I should really get home to change before practice.”

Good boy .

“If you’re sure.” I leaned in, my lips wet and dick-swollen. This time, when he tilted his head to deepen the kiss, I allowed our tongues to twist together. I bent down to help him re-dress, pulling his phone from his shorts pocket. “Unlock it.”

He did so, then handed it back. “Call me when you decide what you want to do.”

“I—”

I shut him up with my mouth on his. “Don’t decide right now. You’re not in the right headspace. What I did wasn’t conditional. Don’t let it sway your decision. Go to practice, kick some ass, then go home and get some rest. Don’t forget to drink plenty of water. Okay?”

“Yes...”

His response was clipped, like he wanted to say what I wanted to hear, but he ultimately decided against it. I walked him to the door and waited while he slipped into his shoes.

“Do you need a ride home?” I asked.

“No, my friend’s here to get me. Thank you. For last night, and for breakfast.”

“Don’t mention it.” I stole one last kiss before letting him walk out the door. I closed it, locked it, then collapsed against the wood, shoving my hand into my boxer briefs with a sigh of relief. I wiggled the fabric away, squeezing my shaft. Did I wish I’d let Stetson finish me off? That it was his thumb swiping away that drop of clear liquid? Yes. But had he stayed, I wasn’t sure I would have let him leave.

So instead, I stayed perched against the front door. I spit in my palm to lube myself up, taking advantage of the empty house.

I couldn’t get Stetson out of my mind. I’d had him now, and I wanted so much more. Damn it, he was perfect.

My head fell back with a thump as I moaned loud enough to make the windows rattle. I closed my eyes, picturing my two men on display for me and me alone. I didn’t

expect Barrett to get involved with Stetson, but that didn't mean I couldn't fantasize.

I spat into my hand, slicking up my cock and imagining those two— fuck! My orgasm crashed into me, pulling a growl from deep in my chest. Come spilled over my hand and splattered to the floor. I snatched my underwear from my feet to clean my hand, taking a brief moment to catch my breath before dragging myself to the bathroom to shower. Again.

I made a desperate attempt to keep myself busy throughout the day, but that didn't come with any less than a hundred glances at my phone, hoping that either Stetson's number or Barrett's name would light up the screen. Barrett never texted or called during practice days unless something was wrong, so I suppose I should have been happy when I was met with silence from him.

That didn't stop me from pouncing on him like a cat in heat the second he walked through the front door.

"Well, hello to you, too," he mumbled between assaults from my mouth. My hands tugged his clothes off. Eventually, he ducked out of a kiss to catch his breath. "I'm assuming it went well with Stetson."

I blushed, and Barrett crooked a brow at me. "I hope so. Bear, he's perfect. But I want him to get along with you too."

Barrett smiled at me. "Well, the game is on Monday. I don't fly out again until Wednesday, so why don't we set up some time after the game so I can meet him?"

Butterflies started to rage in my stomach. I took a deep breath. "I just want it to go well."

He thumbed my cheeks where they'd gone red. "If he's got you like this, he must be

pretty damn impressive.”

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6

STETSON

“Rookie, sit your ass down!”

There was no way in hell that was happening. Not with the energy coursing through my veins.

I paced the perimeter of the clubhouse lounge. It was the first game of the season—my first game in the majors. I was wired, buzzing with electricity.

“Someone get him a hamster wheel!” Matt called out on what had to be my hundredth lap around the room.

Those last few hours before a game were intended for us to relax. Everyone else lounged across the room, either wearing headphones or crowded around game systems. A couple had books in their hands, and Harrison was predictably taking a nap.

But I couldn’t sit still. I’d tried. The only thing I did was bounce the couch hard enough that a sleep-drunk Harrison kicked me off.

So, I paced.

I walked until my legs burned, and then I kept going. I knew I wouldn’t feel any of it once I was out on that field. The only thing to slow my stride was a knock on the

clubhouse door, and Levi walking into the room. Dressed in khakis and a white polo, he looked good enough to eat. He had his hands shoved into his pockets and a pair of aviator sunglasses on top of his backward ball cap. We locked eyes and I blushed, both of us no doubt remembering what went down in his kitchen a few days ago. I still hadn't called to give him a decision.

"How are we doing boys?"

A chorus of mumbles and half-hearted responses sounded around me, but all I could manage was an audible gulp, which caught Levi's attention. "What about you, Rookie?"

I quashed the wave of desire. That sounded different coming off his lips—hotter, and it sent a jolt through my body that went right to my crotch. "Yes, sir."

His eyes darkened. "Good luck."

With that, he backed out of the room. Someone had to have picked up on the tension between us but upon observation, everyone had resumed their pre-game rituals. I resumed my pacing, effectively pissing off all my team members until Coach came to get us to start drills.

That was when the rest of the team caught up to my energy. No one spoke, save for the few religious players mumbling quiet prayers to themselves.

I'd been placed halfway through the line, and I took a few deep breaths. My stomach flipped. The noise from the crowd that packed the stadium vibrated through my body. The New York Hellbenders were already on the field. As we made our way out to join them, a stray player far in the outfield caught my eye. As I followed the movement, I realized it wasn't just any player.

It was Barrett Swindon, catcher for the Hellbenders. The man had the accuracy of a sniper. Legend had it he could read batters like a book, communicating almost telepathically with the pitcher to strike out even the best of the best.

Well, he hadn't met me yet.

Entirely captivated by the man, I picked a spot near the home dugout to stretch while I watched him closely. Some players ran laps, but Barrett leisurely strolled over to the fence behind home plate. Someone was leaning over the railing. No, not someone: Levi. I saw those aviators glinting in the sun. Barrett approached, and his smile widened. I was interested, but I thought nothing of it.

That was, until Barrett hooked his foot into the fence, pulling himself up and planting a kiss on Levi's lips. There was no mistaking that kiss either. Levi cupped Barrett's cheeks, smiling against his mouth. My stomach churned, my blood boiled but before I could rip my gaze away, I felt the smack of a glove on my shoulder.

"Getting an eye full, Rookie? Here."

Harrison plonked a ball into my hand and backed up about five feet in front of me.

"What's the story with that?" I asked, sending the ball at him. Admittedly, it wasn't my best throw. I was a teensy bit distracted.

"What do you mean?"

"Are they together?"

Harrison raised a brow at me under his cap. "You don't know the story?"

"Clearly not"

He scoffed. “Yeah, they’re together. I’d say... five years ago now? There was a huge scandal. It was all over the place. How do you not know?”

“I was in the hospital five years ago. I tore my rotator cuff and wasn’t sure if I’d ever play again.”

Harrison nodded along with me. “Ah, so you were ignoring the headlines completely.”

I returned the ball, feeling that anger all over again. “Anything to do with baseball as a whole.”

“I think that makes you the only person in the sport that doesn’t know what happened. What’s got you all bent out of shape over it?”

Instead of answering, I looked back to Levi again, who was smiling at me. In light of recent discoveries, I found it hard to return the gesture. “It doesn’t matter.”

Harrison cast a knowing grin my way. “Ohh, you have a thing for Levi. I thought I sensed something in the clubhouse earlier.”

“And I thought you were asleep.” The next time I got the ball, I didn’t throw it back. Instead, I closed the distance between us, smacking it directly in his hand. “Say nothing.”

He studied me, something indiscernible in his eyes. “You got it.”

I went back into the dugout, dropping my glove in my seat and heading for the clubhouse.

“Holloway! Where are you going?” Coach called out.

“Bathroom.”

“Make it quick!”

I went straight for my cubicle, grabbing my phone and perching on the edge of my chair. I pulled up a search window and typed in Levi’s name. The first few options were what I’d expected: his website and information about signing. But when I scrolled further, I found a headline that caught my eye:

Levi Grant Client Relationship Exposed .

I clicked on it, leg bouncing while the browser loaded. The article was long, but I skimmed the important parts.

Levi had been Barrett’s agent at the start of his career. Then, five years ago, one of his teammates caught them together in the locker room. He planted a camera and when Barrett refused to step down from the team, he leaked the images. Barrett and Levi were given the option to either end their relationship or end their contract. Barrett broke the contract, signing with another agent. From a quick glance at Levi’s social media—which also came up on the first page; I’m not a total creep—they were happy.

So why did Levi want me ? He hadn’t mentioned a partner at all. But why didn’t I see it? If they lived together, I should have noticed the signs of someone else calling that place home. I squeezed my phone in my hands until the cheap plastic case cracked under the pressure. I flipped it over and stared at the screen. Everything could be solved with a simple phone call, a text message even.

Instead, I slipped my phone back into my bag and tried to tamp down my anger. But the only thing I really wanted to do was march onto that field, step up on the fence exactly like Barrett did, and demand that Levi explain himself.

There was no time for that.

The clubhouse door opened and Coach stepped in. “What the hell are you doing?” he asked, throwing his arms out in exasperation. “Let’s go! You’re batting first as soon as Harrison strikes out those Hellbenders.”

I didn’t even have time to calm myself down. Coach didn’t move until I took a step forward, and he gestured for me to go ahead of him. I watched the beginning of the game from the dugout, feeling multiple sets of eyes on me and ignoring all of them.

“Strike one!”

Harrison had one hell of an arm. He refocused, and waited for the catcher’s call.

“Strike two!”

The cycle repeated itself and this time, the batter settled on his feet. Even from where I sat, I could see the determination on his face. He wasn’t letting this one get past him.

Harrison wound up, then pitched. The ball ricocheted off the bat and soared into the outfield. Matt locked in on the ball, and a weird sense of déjà vu washed over me. Matt scurried backward.

The ball started to drop.

Like he had a magnet in his palm, he reached up and the ball fell into his glove, and the home crowd went wild.

Out.

One step closer to my first hit.

Two more of those later, it was time for the teams to switch. My heart pounded in my ears.

I strapped on my gloves and my batting helmet. Hands patted my shoulders as I walked out.

“ All eyes are on number twelve, rookie player Stetson Holloway as he steps up to the plate.”

I stepped onto the field, my trusty wooden bat thrust into my hands.

Off to the side, I took a couple of practice swings while the starting catcher took the field.

Of fucking course .

Barrett Swindon smirked, mouthing “good luck,” before tipping his face guard down and taking position.

“My House” burst through the speakers, and the home crowd roared.

It was then that I gave myself the time to close my eyes and take a deep breath.

This was it. This was the moment I’d waited for my entire life, everything I’d worked for. I wasn’t going to let being played by a crush take it away from me.

Stepping up to home plate, I readied my bat and locked eyes with the pitcher. The music cut. Show time.

I was going to own this fucking field.

BARRETT

Stetson was a complete animal.

I called for a pitch that should have been an easy ball for us, but Stetson swung. The crack of the bat rang out in my ears, and Stetson easily claimed first base. One of the outfielders sent the ball hurtling toward second base, but not fast enough. Stetson slid onto the plate, and the move was proclaimed safe.

I was impressed—with more than the sport. I watched intently as our second baseman helped a dirt-covered Stetson to his feet. Stetson stood, muscles rippling beneath his uniform and my mouth watering in response. He swapped his helmet for his cap and when those baby blues came into view, my heart seemed to stop.

Goddamn . Levi was right. This boy was the one we'd been looking for. As if he could sense me staring, Stetson met my gaze. His eyes blazed and his jaw clenched. I sensed... something. Something more than the intensity of the game. But the next batter stepped up to the plate and I was forced to shake it off.

* * *

The Thrashers were good, damn good. We held our own, but by the seventh inning, impressive stolen bases and wild pitches had them two runs ahead of us. We could still come back from it, but with that Tasmanian Devil on the field, it wouldn't be easy.

As the season's star rookie, all eyes were on Stetson. Mine especially. After seeing him play, I wanted him just as much as Levi did, but I still couldn't shake the feeling that something was off.

When we entered the clubhouse for a break, I grabbed a bottle of water and fell into a chair. I'd gotten slammed in the ribs by a fastball and waited for the team's medic to make their way over. I knew Levi would come see me, but he wanted to go see Stetson first. Our teams battling it out in the first game of the season had to be serendipitous.

By the time Levi joined me, I was relaxed in my seat with my shirt off while the medic checked me over.

"You okay?" he asked, crouching in front of me.

"Fine." I leaned in to accept the kiss he offered me. "I've been hit worse. Have you seen Stetson?"

Levi's face fell. "I tried. He didn't want to talk to me."

"Why?"

The medic cleared me with instructions to ice it as soon as the game was finished, and I stood to redress.

"When I asked him over for dinner tomorrow night, he said, 'Why don't you ask your boyfriend?' and stormed off. That boy has one hell of a temper."

It dawned on me then. "Wait, he did know you had a boyfriend, didn't he?"

"Everyone knows we're together, Bear."

I reached out to touch him. “I know it feels that way, but five years is a long time. Especially in sports. I think we need to consider the idea that he didn’t know. At least, not until today.”

Levi sighed. “He was watching earlier when you kissed me. Maybe I should go explain.”

“No,” I said, pushing on his shoulders as he tried to stand. “Let him work out that anger on the field. If you go back over there and go all ‘Daddy’ on him, it might throw off his game.”

Levi smirked. “You mean you don’t want him to slip up?”

“Hell no! He’s keeping us on our toes.”

“Two minutes!”

I finished off my water and tossed the bottle in the trash. “If he’s meant to be your boy, we’ll figure it out. I promise.”

Levi at least made an attempt to relax. “Okay. I trust you.”

I leaned in for another kiss, grunting into his mouth as he reached around to give my ass a squeeze. “Get ‘em tiger,” he whispered.

The second I took to the field, my head cleared. I wasn’t lying when I told Levi I could leave the drama outside the stadium. When I was out here, my mind was centered on the game and the game alone.

By the bottom of the ninth, fatigue was evident. The game was neck and neck. The next out or the next run would settle it. The Thrashers had two outs, one person on

second, and Stetson was next to bat. This time, he didn't even look at me as he stepped up to home plate. An uncharacteristic chill shot down my spine.

I made the call, the pitcher wound up and threw. Stetson swung.

And missed.

“Strike one!”

“Get out of your head.”

“Fuck off pretty boy,” he spat.

I laughed. “Wow, you’ve got a mouth on you. You didn’t know about me, did you?”

“Sue me for thinking the man sucking my dick was single. Don’t worry; I’ll back off.”

“You’ve got it so wrong. We both want you, Rookie.”

Stetson’s head swiveled like that chick in *The Exorcist* . “What?”

The pitcher saw that opportunity and took it, hurling a curveball right at us. I grunted when it connected with my chest.

“Ball!”

“Pay attention,” I hissed. “We’ll talk later.”

Thankfully, Stetson listened. I wanted to win, but not because I was distracting the batter.

“Drop your elbow.” Stetson glared at me, but listened anyway. His next swing sent the ball flying over the outfield.

Home run.

I stood, wincing against the ache in my legs. I’d need a three-hour ice bath once I got home.

I kept my distance as the rest of the Thrashers met Stetson at home plate. He surprised me by finding my gaze through the flurry of chests and shoulders. “Later,” I mouthed.

Most players left the clubhouse after the game, some going home for the night and others retreating to the hotel. Few lingered in ice baths or the showers. I entered the home team’s clubhouse, banging on the door to make myself known.

Stetson stood in front of his section, hair damp and wearing nothing but a pair of gym shorts. He pulled on a t-shirt before facing me. “What do you want?” he snapped, snatching his phone from his duffel and pretending to forget I was there.

“I was hoping we could talk.” I rested against the wall, arms crossed over my chest.

“About what? Whatever joke you’ve got going with Levi? I didn’t know rookie hazing extended outside the team.”

“Can I sit?”

He shrugged. “It’s a free country.”

I took the seat next to him, taking extra care to keep some distance between us. “Why do you think we’re pranking you?”

“There’s no way both of you want me.”

“Why not?”

“Because you have each other.”

“And?”

“What else could you possibly need?”

“I think Levi’s already talked to you about that.” I paused to give him time to answer, but when he didn’t I continued. “Ever heard of polyamory? Non-monogamy?”

“Yeah, in romance novels. That stuff doesn’t exist in real life.”

“Actually, it does.” I felt a smile pull at the corners of my mouth. Finally, I’d learned something that wasn’t public knowledge about America’s Little Rookie. “You like to read?”

Stetson narrowed his eyes at me. “Not if you’re about to make fun of me.”

“I wouldn’t dream of it. You and Levi have more in common than you think.”

“And what about you? What’s your thing?”

“I cook.”

Stetson fell quiet for a beat, then it dawned on him. “You’re the one who made breakfast?”

“Trust me, if Levi cooked you wouldn’t be here to tell the tale.”

Finally, the boy cracked a smile.

“Don’t tell him I said that.” I rolled my bottom lip between my teeth. “You really didn’t know?”

He shook his head. “I tore my rotator cuff five years ago. At the time, they didn’t think I’d play again. I sort of swore off all things baseball for a while.”

“I promise neither of us intended to keep it from you. I think we’re so used to everyone knowing who we are that it never crossed our minds to explain it to you. I’m sorry.”

Stetson didn’t respond. Instead, he returned his attention to his phone. I took that as a sign that our conversation was over. I stood, feeling the ache settle into my muscles. “Where’s your next game?”

“San Antonio. I fly out tomorrow.”

“You should go get some rest.” He still didn’t look at me, but didn’t tell me to fuck off again either. I took it as a win. “Please don’t let our ignorance factor into your decision. Levi really likes you. I like you. You were a spitfire out there today. You really made us work.” I started to back out of the room. “Plus, you’re kind of pretty to look at.”

That was a risk, but Stetson’s signature grin curled his lips. “Hopefully I’ll see you around, Stetson.”

8

STETSON

I watched Barrett's back until he disappeared from the clubhouse.

I worked my jaw, staring across the room at a scuff mark on the wall and trying to distract myself by wondering how it got there. It was in vain. Barrett's words bounced around in my head like a bouncy ball.

“ We both want you, Rookie. ”

It just couldn't be possible... could it? There's no way both of them wanted me. Especially Barrett, since we were as good as enemies on the field.

The Thrashers and the Hellbenders had a long, long history of tension. Although, no one was sure why. It was something of an urban legend. But one thing about athletes: we're insanely superstitious.

If it ain't broke, don't fix it.

Nothing good could ever come out of a Thrasher letting a Hellbender take him to bed, but that didn't mean I wasn't thinking about it.

I remembered how it felt to be in Levi's arms, to have him on his knees in front of me. I'd felt a connection, there was no doubt about it. But could I have that with Barrett?

The last of my teammates grabbed their things and left, and I muttered a half-assed goodbye to them before doing the same.

Georgia weather was unpredictable at the best of times but in the spring, it was like rolling dice while wearing a blindfold. All things considered, it was a nice night, so I decided to walk. It was late, nearing midnight, so the streets of Atlanta weren't too busy. Busy enough, but dwindling significantly from the rush hour nightmares.

As I approached my modest apartment building, something in my chest ached. I longed for the plush mattress and silky sheets that Levi had in his guest bedroom. Then I wondered what his bed would feel like. Banishing that thought, I let myself in.

Given that we were smack in the middle of the GSU campus, the building was typically reserved for college students. But since most of them either lived in student housing or with their parents, I got lucky.

My name may or may not have had something to do with it, but I digress.

Was it the best place? Not even close, but it had everything I needed. I'd toured a few houses and fancier apartments, but none of them felt like home. I could make excuses until I was blue in the face: the water pressure sucked, no room for a gym, or too far from the stadium. But none of those even came close to the truth: they were too big. At least, too big for one person.

I wondered if Levi and Barrett ever got lonely in that house.

I made more noise than necessary unlocking the door of apartment 105. Maverick, my roommate and childhood best friend, had a habit of getting experimental with the people he brought home. It took me longer than I cared to admit to learn that a knock wasn't always sufficient.

To my surprise, Mav was lounged across the couch when I walked in. His dark, cropped hair was sleep-tousled, as if he hadn't seen a mirror the entire day. He wore nothing but a pair of sweats and cracked the top on a bottle of beer—alone. Perfect. “Got another one of those?” I asked, eyeing the bottle longingly.

“Help yourself.”

I dropped my bag by the door and grabbed a drink from the fridge, joining Maverick on the couch. Up until that moment, I didn't mind our place. It was on the smaller side, but neither of us were there much. Maverick played pro football, so his schedule could be just as rigorous as mine. All we needed was a place to eat and sleep, and the two-bedroom apartment served its purpose. Though as I sat there, listening to whatever Maverick had on the TV, I noticed things that I hadn't before. Like the outdated carpet and the obnoxious noise that the fridge was making. The wallpaper was peeling in the corner of the living room and... was that mold underneath?

My mind had to be making things up now.

I twisted the top off my beer and took a long swig of it, not realizing until I came up for air that I'd chugged almost half. I sensed that I was being watched and glanced sideways, finding Maverick staring at me. “Want to talk about it?”

Yes, I did want to talk about it, but I didn't know where to begin. I picked at the label on my bottle, shredding it to pieces. “There's a guy,” I blurted.

“Oh, I know.” I leveled him with a glare, which he ignored. “I picked you up the other day from a McMansion in Buckhead, sexed up and wearing the same clothes from the day before.”

“They were clean!”

“Not the point,” Mav teased. “So who was he?”

“Levi Grant.”

My friend finished off his beer and set the bottle aside. “The agent?”

“Mmhmm.”

“I thought he was with?—”

“Barrett Swindon,” I finished for him. “Catcher for the Hellbenders.”

“So, is that over?”

“Nope,” I said, popping the “p.”

“Wait.” While Mav paused the TV and situated himself for the tea to be spilled, I finished off my drink. He spun to face me, sitting cross-legged on the couch. “Explain.”

So I told him everything, conveniently omitting the part where my temper almost ended my career. By the time I finished the story, my beer bottle was clean and scraps of paper littered the floor. Not that the place needed any help looking messy.

“You’re leaving something out,” Mav accused.

I sighed and tossed the empty bottle to the table, the thick glass clattering against the surface. I knew better than to attempt lying to him. We’d been friends since we were in diapers. We shared every aspect of our lives: first steps, first games. All the way to coming out and first loves. Which also meant we frequented the same circles as we got older. I leaned forward, resting my elbows on my knees and scrubbing my hands

over my face. “He’s a Daddy.”

Met with silence, I peered at Maverick through my fingers. He simply watched me with scrutinizing green eyes. The refrigerator continued making that infuriating knocking noise. A low, aggravating hum sounded from somewhere else in the apartment. I pulled my hands away from my face. “Please say something.”

“I’m waiting for you to tell me what the problem is.”

“I expected a bigger reaction.”

Mav rolled his eyes. “Boy, you’re the biggest brat I know. Every time we’re at the clubs, you turn the heads of every Daddy and Dom in the place. Everyone wants a piece of you. Except for me, of course.”

I scoffed. “You think I could do it? Be someone’s boy?”

“No, I think you’ll have to be dragged into submission kicking and screaming. But you’re also the biggest thing to come out of our hometown, and your already massive ego has gotten even bigger. I think it’ll do you some good to have someone kick you into gear.”

Grimacing, I picked at my fingers. “Have I been that bad?”

“Stetson, everyone in this building knows your name because the night we moved in, you got wasted and shouted through the hallways that ‘Stetson Holloway got drafted by the Thrashers!’”

I bit my lip to stifle laughter. That was a fun night.

“You’re proving my point,” Mav said. “And if you didn’t want to do this, you would

have said so.”

“But what about Barrett?”

“What about him?”

“They can’t both want me.”

“What happened to that ego I was just talking about?” I yelped, Mav grabbing my cheeks and turning me to face him. “Listen to me, Stetson. You might be an absolute trash fire but you’re hot. You’re wicked smart and you have one of the best histories of any player in the MLB. Not one, but two equally hot, older men want you. If you don’t run with that shit, I will.”

Oh, hell no. My eyes must have reflected that, because Maverick laughed and released me. “That’s what I thought.”

He sat back and resumed his show without saying another word. Though the smug smile on his face said everything it needed to.

Fucker.

* * *

April

Two weeks later, I was no closer to making a decision.

Luckily, I had the high from back-to-back wins to distract me. Twelve games into the season and not a single loss. We’d just returned to Atlanta following an adrenaline-filled game in Washington. The rain there fit the somber mood left behind as Georgia

ran off into the sunset with the win.

That night, I found myself at Harrison's place downtown. We had a home game the next day, so we risked staying up a bit later. Unfortunately, that risk came with Harrison discovering a bottle of Cuervo in his freezer. Clearly, my last encounter with tequila wasn't fresh enough in my mind for me to turn it down.

A few shots in, I had a decent buzz going. Enough to be coherent enough to turn away the next double shot slid my way.

Too bad I didn't listen to that voice in the back of my head telling me to clean up my act. I knocked that shot back like I was getting paid to do so.

And it was that shot that had me grinning like a fool when Harrison handed me his phone, showing me a video of a dare the college students had been doing. "Fuck it," I said. "Let's do it." My slurring should have concerned me, but I was past the point of making good decisions.

Harrison's mouth curled into a wicked grin. His tolerance was lower than mine, so he was already well beyond wasted. "Hell yeah!"

I eyed the bottle of tequila on the table. There was barely anything left, but enough for one more shot each. I licked my lips, still tasting the salt from my last. Harrison nudged the bottle my way. "Dare you to chug."

9

LEVI

“Care to explain yourselves?”

I tossed my keys on the kitchen island and regarded the two men in front of me. Stetson and Harrison sat on the opposite side, soaking wet from head to toe and dripping on my kitchen floor. They both had towels around their shoulders, though the flimsy things weren’t doing much to aid the drying process.

Harrison spoke first, barely coherent. “We just wanted to have a good time!”

“By getting drunk off your asses and streaking through the fountains in Centennial Olympic Park? During the season? You’re lucky no one called the police! There could have been kids around!”

Stetson snickered, eyes in his lap.

“You think this is funny? I should call your agent and wake him up.”

Stetson’s head snapped up, and he swayed on the spot. “No!”

I knew that would get him if nothing else did. Stetson’s agent was a notorious hard-ass.

“Do either of you realize what you have to lose if you get a drunk and disorderly

charge? What about public indecency?"

Both sets of eyes went back to their laps. I was a sports agent, damn it, not a parent. But sometimes it felt a lot like wrangling children. Or chickens. Or both. Especially when I was constantly dealing with one of them getting hurt—or sick. I sighed when Harrison gagged.

"Harrison, there's a bathroom under the stairs."

"Thank you," he muttered before bolting off the stool.

Stetson pulled the towel tighter around him, shivering. I suddenly felt sorry for him. He had sat right under the vent, and my hot-blooded ass kept the air on full blast. It was spring, but it was spring in Georgia . In other words, wildly unpredictable. "Upstairs," I told him. "Take a warm shower. You remember your way?"

He nodded and rose from his seat a little more carefully than Harrison had. Out of the two, he seemed the most sober, which possibly meant that he'd been streaking out of sheer stupidity. He was nowhere near the blackout state from before. "Thank you for picking us up," he whispered sheepishly.

"You're welcome." He passed me and headed for the stairs, but I called out to him again before his foot could touch the bottom step. "Coffee or tea?"

"Huh?"

"Assuming you're not vomiting or passed out after your shower, you should come down for a drink to warm up. Coffee or tea?"

When I was met with silence, I paused. Stetson shuffled in place, tracing an invisible shape on the banister.

“What’s wrong?” I asked.

“Can I have hot chocolate?” he pouted, blue eyes shining in the dim light.

Warmth spread through my chest. How in the hell was I supposed to say no? “Is regular milk okay?”

He nodded, eyes hopeful.

“Then yes. Go. I’ll find something dry for you to put on.”

I called Harrison’s brother and once he was finished expelling the tequila from his system, I poured him into the car and raided my drawers for something for Stetson to wear.

I hadn’t heard from him at all since opening day. If I was honest, I was starting to lose hope. Then I got that call from Harrison that he’d been snatched by park security, and when I showed up to claim him, Stetson sat right next to him.

If Stetson didn’t run out of here, I’d have to thank the troublemaker.

I was heating the milk on the stove when I heard soft footsteps coming down the stairs. He stopped when he saw me, wet clothes and towel in hand. Damn, he looked good in my shirt. I indicated the door behind him. “Put them straight in the washing machine.”

I poured steaming milk into two mugs, then added the hot chocolate powder. “I have an important question for you.”

Defeated, Stetson trudged into the kitchen. “Is it ‘Do I take my career seriously?’”

“Jumbo or mini marshmallows?”

At first, his brows scrunched together in confusion, then he relaxed into a smile.

“Mini.”

I tossed them his way and he caught them midair. “Cream?”

“If you drink hot chocolate without cream, I’m leaving this house right now.”

By the time I’d retrieved the can from the fridge, Stetson had claimed the bag of jumbo marshmallows too and was stuffing one in his mouth. “You’ll get sick off all that sugar.”

“Sugar sick is better than tequila sick,” he garbled through the candy. I grunted in agreement. The shower seemed to have sobered him up, at least. “Where’s Harrison?”

“His brother picked him up. Once you finish your drink I’ll take you home.”

Stetson made a sound that could only be described as a yelp. “You okay? You don’t actually feel sick do you?”

There was a moment where I thought vomiting was imminent, and I prepared myself to leap into action. “Drink went down the wrong way,” he finally said, but those marshmallows were suddenly much more interesting than I was.

“What’s the matter?”

He ripped one of the marshmallows apart, throwing the pieces into his mug. “I don’t know how to ask.”

I stood next to him, redirecting his attention to me. The vulnerability in those blue eyes threatened to shatter my heart to pieces. It wasn't like him. "Do you want to go home tonight?"

He shook his head, fighting to break his gaze away from mine, but my grip on his chin held him in place.

"Do you want to stay here?"

I loosened my hold enough to let him nod. "I shouldn't be allowed to after you saved my ass," he whispered so softly, I almost missed it.

"It's my house and I'll make those decisions. Drink. Warm yourself up." I took a step back to let him pick up his mug.

"What about Barrett?"

"Barrett trusts my judgement. He wouldn't have a problem with you staying here."

"Where is he?"

"Boston. He comes home tomorrow for a night before heading to Fort Lauderdale."

Stetson clearly had another question on the tip of his tongue, but I let him sip at his hot chocolate for an uncomfortable amount of time. I focused on my own, taking it much slower than he was. I didn't have much of a sweet tooth, and the smell of it alone was churning my stomach.

"Is that why you asked me to be your boy? Because Barrett travels so much?"

"No." I claimed the stool next to him. "Barrett has no interest in being a boy. We

talked about it, but the only conclusion we kept coming back to was that we didn't want to break up. So, we started looking for a third."

Stetson attempted to stall with his hot chocolate, only to realize it was empty. With a grin, I swapped our drinks. He tried to mask his joy, but I was too perceptive. "Don't you want it?"

"No, you can have it."

He took down half of it before I made him take a breath. "Slow down, baby boy. You'll get a stomachache. Now say what you wanted to say."

The name slipped out involuntarily. Stetson hadn't agreed to be my anything yet. His cheeks were flushed, but there could be multiple explanations for that.

He took a deep breath. "If I agree to do this, are there rules?"

My heart rate spiked. "'This' as in..."

"A relationship, I guess. Was Barrett lying when he said you both wanted me?"

"He was telling the truth." I paused. "How much did you have to drink tonight, Stetson?"

The boy dropped his gaze to his lap. "Quite a bit," he admitted. "I-I'm sorry."

My brow furrowed, and I tilted my head. "Why are you sorry?"

Stetson set down the second empty mug, and I started to wonder if the sugar combined with tequila may have been a mistake. "It was a bad decision. To drink in the first place, and to streak through the fountains. I'm sorry. It won't happen again."

Pride swelled in my chest. He hadn't even agreed to be my boy and yet here he was, submitting to me without even realizing. As it was, now wasn't the time to have that conversation. I reached forward to brush his damp hair out of his eyes. "Why don't we talk about this later? You should rest and sober up. What time do you have to be at practice tomorrow?"

"Two."

I glanced at the clock over the stove. "Go on. Guest room is all yours. The sheets are clean and I left the phone charger. Help yourself to anything you need in the night." I gestured to the door off the dining room. "That's my room there. I'll leave the door cracked in case you need me. Don't be scared to ask, okay?"

Stetson hesitated, opened his mouth like he wanted to say something, but it snapped shut again and he settled for a nod. He collected both mugs, rinsing them out. "Where should I put these?"

I revealed the hidden dishwasher where he stored the cups away, closing the door. I was biting my tongue so hard I was surprised I hadn't tasted blood yet, but it wasn't enough to hold back the next words out of my mouth. "Good boy."

Stetson's breath hitched, but he recovered quickly. "Goodnight, Levi."

"Goodnight, Stetson."

He turned just in time to miss colliding with the corner of the island, stumbling across the kitchen, the dining room, then disappearing up the stairs all without looking back. I only let out the breath I was holding when I heard the guest bedroom door shut.

Fuck . What had I gotten myself into?

10

STETSON

Damn internal clock.

I could have slept in but nooo, my body wanted me up at five a.m. on the dot. I'd scrolled on my phone for an hour before surrendering to the demands of my bladder, and I couldn't get back to sleep. I didn't hear noises from downstairs yet, so I assumed Levi wasn't awake. Why would he be? Agents didn't have pre-dawn workout routines and few hours before lunch to enjoy their free time. He could probably sleep as late as he wanted.

I hadn't intended to bring up the whole Daddy-boy ordeal, but it was cruel of me to leave them hanging. I could have easily declined to begin with, but I didn't want to. Until now, I didn't realize I wanted it either. Then again, I suppose my ambivalence told me everything I needed to know.

I rotated again, sending up another cloud of Levi's scent from his clothes. It'd been the one thing to lull me to sleep after he'd sent me to bed. The one thing to stop my head spinning from the tequila and the sugar rush. I was grateful for the lack of a hangover. His words echoed in my head.

“ Good boy. ”

Frustrated, I shoved out of bed and opened the bedroom door. Still no noises from downstairs. As quietly as I could, I descended the staircase. Levi's bedroom came

into view, soft snoring filtering through the gap in the doorway. I hesitated slightly before nudging it open. Levi laid on the left side of the bed, one arm curled behind his head, blanket pulled up to his waist. Early-morning sunlight bathed the room in a warm glow, seeming to highlight the gorgeous man in front of me.

I stepped into the room gingerly. I didn't know what possessed me to do so, but I climbed into the empty side of the bed. The plush mattress absorbed every move I made without jostling Levi. It wasn't until I straddled his lap that he stirred, firmly grasping my hips. "Mm, you okay?" he asked. His gruff, sleep-laden voice sent my skin pebbling up into goosebumps. His hands slid up my back, and I shuddered.

"I want to do it," I finally managed.

His eyes finally cracked open. "Do what?"

"This. I want to be your good boy, Daddy." Damn, the words felt good on my tongue. The decision was easy now. I fell forward, bracing myself with my hands on the pillow. "Is Barrett a Daddy too?"

Levi shook his head, lips feathering against mine as he spoke. "No, he's not. But he'll sit down and talk with you about that."

"Will he get mad if we do stuff without him?"

"Absolutely not."

"Good."

Fed up with the teasing, I pressed our lips together. Levi seemed to melt in my arms, tightening his hold on me. His body rolled, pressing into mine from his soft chest down to his thickening cock. As soon as I felt the rigid length against my inner thigh,

I whined into his mouth.

Levi broke away with a laugh. “Desperate, little one?”

Another shiver shot down my spine. “Yes.”

“Yes, what?”

His hands crept around my hips, firmly gripping both ass cheeks. I gasped. “Yes, Daddy.”

My breath seized as he growled, “Good boy.”

Levi spun, flipping me onto my back. He hovered over me. Close, but not close enough. I wiggled, panting, beneath him, silently begging for more. “Aren’t there rules?”

Levi rose onto his knees, gazing down at me while he ran a single finger down my sternum. “You want rules? I guess we’ll have to stop what we’re doing and talk then, won’t we?”

“No!” I protested, holding him in place, although he’d made no effort to move. He laughed, and my stomach flipped.

“What is it you want right now?”

With that, he let his hips drop down to mine again, tearing a moan from deep in my chest. “I want to come,” I whined.

He hummed, nosing a trail along my jaw. My head fell back, exposing my neck to him. “Are you sure you’ve earned that after last night?”

I cried out in protest, holding onto him in case he tried to pull away. “Please,” I begged. “You can punish me for that later.”

“Careful what you wish for.” I stiffened at Barrett’s voice coming from the doorway.

“Hi baby,” Levi muttered, descending on my neck.

“Sh-should we stop?” I was so powerless beneath Levi’s tongue on my neck that even speaking was nearly impossible.

“Hell no,” Barrett said. I forced my eyes to open and watched as he advanced into the room. “I’m content to watch.”

As if Levi sensed that his partner was close, he licked a path over the bruise on my neck, then picked his head up to meet Barrett in a kiss in front of my face. Right before my eyes, Barrett’s tongue parted Levi’s lips and slipped inside. I whimpered, immediately clamping a hand over my mouth.

Barrett chuckled and cut his eyes to me. “I think he likes that, don’t you?”

Levi rose onto his knees again. “Let’s keep going then, shall we?”

My groan of protest didn’t do much to sway them; I wanted in on that. Levi threaded his fingers through Barrett’s hair, holding the man to him while his other hand tugged the waistband of my shorts down. The cold air on my dripping cock didn’t prevent me from rutting against Levi. I gripped the sheet in my fists to keep myself from losing all control.

Levi then grumbled as Barrett closed off the kiss and took a step back. “Don’t keep your boy waiting, Lee.”

“Wait!”

Barrett froze, and I could feel Levi’s eyes burning a hole through me. I hesitated, which wasn’t like me at all. But I wasn’t sure what was okay and what wasn’t.

He released my clothes, reaching up to brush sweaty hair away from my forehead. “It’s okay, boy. Tell us what you need.”

Us . That was what I needed to hear.

“Don’t you know it’s rude to leave someone out?” I teased.

Smiling, Barrett leaned over me. “I’m sorry,” he whispered. “I seem to have forgotten my manners.”

Before I could second guess myself, I stole a kiss. “Stay,” I pleaded.

“Like you’d be able to get rid of me now.” Barrett grabbed both my hands, pinning my arms above my head. He dropped his voice to a rumble, desire coating every word. My heart began to race when I took a quick peek at the outline of his erection through his shorts. “I’ll be right over there, watching while your Daddy completely breaks you.”

I gasped, and he released my hands. The emptiness was quickly replaced by Levi stretching out over me. Our lips met, tongues clashing and hands roaming each other’s bodies. “On your stomach,” he panted when he came up for air.

Levi backed off and let me sit up. He tore off my t-shirt, throwing it aside. I flipped over, sighing from the friction the mattress granted me.

Levi’s large body blanketed me again, dipping down to stamp a kiss between my

shoulder blades, peppering them across each knot in my spine as he worked his way south. He slid his fingers into the waistband of my shorts and pulled, prompting me to lift my hips. My bare cock hit the soft cotton sheets, and I moaned into the pillow.

“Feeling good, baby?” Levi asked me, grabbing an ass cheek in each hand and kneading the flesh. His fingers dug into my skin, spreading me apart. I could only whine in response. He must have liked the view, because a low hum of satisfaction vibrated his chest.

“You’re about to feel even better.”

I followed Barrett’s voice, resting on my crossed arms. He lounged back in an armchair, shamelessly palming his dick through his clothes. “What about you?” I panted.

He smiled, eyelids growing heavy. “Don’t worry about me, sweetheart. Close your eyes and relax.”

I did as he said, gritting my teeth and clenching my fists as Levi’s mouth descended on my ass. He wasted no time, lapping at my eager hole like his life depended on it. My cock wept. My hips stuttered, torn between humping the damp fabric and thrusting back into the wet heat of Levi’s mouth.

“Fuck...” I worked my knees underneath me, pushing against Levi. He slipped his tongue inside which earned a sigh from Barrett’s direction. Pleasure surged through me, leaving me unable to manage more than a string of profanities.

My cock throbbed, protesting from the lack of attention. But as Levi moved one of his hands and added a finger to the mix, I wailed into the pillow. My spine tingled, and there were two. My hips bucked, my lungs burned. Barrett sighed, the perfect distraction for Levi to curl his fingers and find that spot that had my eyes rolling back

in my head.

But then he withdrew.

“No!” I cried. “Don’t stop.”

I peered over my shoulder. Levi sat back on his heels, admiring his work. “Should I let you come?”

“Please,” I begged, rutting against the mattress. “I can’t hold it.”

Levi clenched my ass again, and my breath hitched. “Clearly you can or you would have erupted by now.”

“Daddy...”

That triggered a growl from the man behind me.

Barrett spoke up, his voice light and breathy. “Levi, let the poor thing come before you make him cry.”

“What he said,” I moaned, the sound turning guttural with the sensation of Levi’s slick finger slipping inside me. When had he grabbed the lube?

“You really want to come before I can claim this tight little ass of yours?”

“Oh, shit !” I yelped, Levi’s hand cracking down on my ass cheek.

“Watch your mouth, boy.”

I bit back another curse. More ? There was more? “Fu— hng . I change my mind. I

can wait.”

Levi chuckled, spreading warmth through my body. His hand soothed the sting from the slap. “That’s what I thought.”

“Shit.” Barrett muttered from beside me. This time, I spared looking in his direction. I might have lost it if I had. The slick glide of his hand shuttling over his cock was torture enough.

Levi momentarily brought me back down to earth, rubbing a soothing path over my back. “It’s time to talk safewords baby. Is the traffic light system okay with you?”

“Mmhmm.”

“Can you tell me what that means?”

How in the hell did he expect me to form a coherent sentence right now? But he leaned over and whispered my name softly in my ear. “Yellow to slow down, red to stop,” I strained.

“Good boy,” he cooed, straightening once again. I rocked backward, dying to have something inside me. “Do we need a condom?”

My head thrashed side to side. “I was clear at my last physical.” I swallowed, my throat dry. “I want to feel you.” My hips lurched again. “ Please , Daddy.”

Barrett moaned, and Levi spat out a curse. “You’re going to kill me, Stetson.”

This time I heard the click of the lube bottle. Levi drizzled the cool liquid over my heated skin and I gasped, clenching around his fingers. Two slid in easily and just when I thought he’d show me some mercy, he added a third. Levi was relentless,

tapping my prostate until I was nothing more than writhing, whimpering mess beneath him. I squeezed my eyes shut, trying like hell to hold on. My fists clenched tight beneath my head, nails biting into my palms.

“You ready, baby boy?”

“ Yes ,” I keened with another bump to my sweet spot. Fuck, I’d never been so close in my life. It felt like one move would completely unravel me. “Yes, Daddy. I’m ready.”

Barrett panted, and I tried to banish the mental image. I hadn’t known that being watched was something I needed but damn, it did something to me.

Levi’s cock lined up with my entrance. All of a sudden, those three fingers didn’t feel like enough.

I didn’t care.

“Breathe, baby,” he instructed.

I did and as I exhaled, Levi pushed through the first ring of muscle. My dick was getting impatient. I was so close to relief, tears painted my cheeks. I was going to come hands free but I’d be damned if I wasn’t going to take all of Levi first.

Eager, I rocked onto him, stealing another inch. His hand flattened on my lower back, and his laugh vibrated my skin. “Impatient little boy,” he muttered, though he pushed in deeper.

I shouted, the string ready to break. I felt like I’d been edging for hours.

“Fuck, you’re tight...”

With a breathless smile, I clenched around him. Levi snarled and slammed home, fucking the air right out of me. A delicious burn spread through me and I took a deep breath, holding it until the feeling swelled to full. God, I never wanted this to end. Though my dick had other opinions. My hips swiveled of their own volition, rolling over Levi's cock. He didn't try to stop me, and I didn't think I'd be able to if he did. A low groan sounded from my side, and Barrett's hand picked up speed.

Levi withdrew until just the head of his cock was left inside me. I braced myself. He thrust hard, slamming into me so roughly that I hooked my hands around the mattress to keep from crashing into the headboard. The only sounds in the room were our heavy breathing, Levi's steady grunts behind me and soft whimpers coming from Barrett.

Holding on with everything I have, I found Barrett's eyes. He smirked. "Make your boy come, baby."

All it took was the ghost of Levi's hand on my oversensitive dick to throw me over the edge. I writhed and bucked, coming so hard that my vision returned in spots. Levi worked me through the release, pounding my prostate until I trembled like a leaf beneath him.

Levi fell next and I gasped, the hot rush of his come bursting through the deepest parts of my core.

Beside me, Barrett's breathing picked up and when I heard his breath hitch, I pried my eyes open in time to see him reach his own climax, spurts of white liquid spilling through his fingers. He caught me staring and smiled again.

"Good boy," Levi huffed, soothing the sore spots on my hips where his fingers would definitely leave bruises. Much to my dismay, he withdrew and helped me sit up. Conversation happened around me, but I was too come-drunk to participate. "Let's go

get in the shower and I'll start breakfast. Someone's got a gym session to make."

"I will start breakfast, thank you very much."

"Bear, you've been traveling all night."

"Bear ." That was sweet.

"I don't think your boy wants food poisoning for breakfast," he quipped.

I snickered, which drew Levi's stern gaze to me—and that only made me laugh harder. "Laugh all you want, boy," he told me. "I can only spank one of you."

Somewhere deep down, I found the energy to crook a brow at him. "You say that like it would be a punishment."

"We'll see about that." Levi helped me off the bed. "Now let's go, both of you."

BARRETT

Upon entering the ensuite bathroom, Stetson's eyes widened. We'd had the space renovated when we moved in. When I got drafted to the Hellbenders, my workout routine had taken a step up. The standalone shower was definitely big enough to fit three. The star was a jacuzzi bathtub situated in the middle of the room.

Levi warmed up the shower and guided us inside after I'd stripped out of my clothes. "Give me a minute and I'll join you."

Stetson wobbled, and I chuckled, supporting him with a hand on his waist. "Let me help," I chuckled. "Turn around."

He happily spun so we were chest to chest. He tipped his head back and I brushed his hair away from his face to get it wet. "You okay?" I asked.

"Mmhmm. I don't really know how to describe what I'm feeling."

"Splayed open for the world to see?"

He laughed, the sound spreading warmth through my chest. "That sounds about right."

"That was a pretty intense scene. You need aftercare," I explained. "I'll start, but your Daddy will want to do most of it. It's his favorite part."

“I get aftercare for that?” At my instruction, he closed his eyes as I poured shampoo into my hand and massaged it into his blond locks. “All I did was lay there.”

I captured Stetson’s jaw between my thumb and forefinger, forcing him to look at me. “You get aftercare whenever you want. If anyone ever tells you otherwise, run. Run fast.”

The shower door opened again and Stetson sidled closer to me. “Cold,” he complained.

Levi laughed, leaning in to give me a kiss. “I’ve got it from here.”

We swapped places, and I handed his boy over. I admired the way Stetson settled right into his arms. In his element, Levi oozed confidence, wrapping his arms around Stetson like the boy couldn’t take him out in a single swoop. He was a little softer around the edges than me and Stetson. His muscles were less defined, but no one would ever hear a single complaint out of me. I loved his body. Stetson’s only complimented it.

I started washing myself, enjoying the laughs coming from Stetson when Levi tickled him with his hands or his lips. Once I was clean, I kissed them both and stepped out of the shower. “I’ll wait for you two in the kitchen.”

Instead of going straight into cooking, I started brewing coffee. From past experience, I knew that Stetson might crash soon, so food may have to wait.

I’d gotten lucky enough to snag a flight home in the early hours of the morning. Not wanting to wake Levi, I camped out on the couch. I’d grown bored of the game I was playing on my phone when Stetson tiptoed down the stairs. I thought for sure he would see me, but he went straight to the bedroom door. He hesitated briefly, but pushed it open and slipped inside.

I didn't intend to intervene, but when I heard the soft voices trailing from the room I stood up. Then once I heard my name in the mix, my feet carried me to the door. Seeing Stetson on Levi's lap? Well, I grew lightheaded from the rush of blood south, and I knew I had to join in.

I didn't like to admit it, but Stetson Holloway made me nervous in a way I hadn't been in a very long time. He was a damn good ball player, but he was also a new complication standing in the way of me and a title. Having him thrown into my life both on and off the field was something I never saw coming.

I wouldn't change a thing. I hadn't even laid hands on him yet, but I already knew that I'd spontaneously combust the moment I did.

My thoughts faded away as the bedroom door opened and my two men walked out, smiles on their faces. "You two hungry?" I asked, though I was already starting breakfast.

"Starving," came from Levi. He pecked me on the cheek, doctored up his coffee, and took a seat at the table.

Met with silence from Stetson, I peeked at him out of the corner of my eye. "What's wrong?" I asked, taking out the chopping board.

"Can I kiss you?"

The knife slipped and if I'd been any more careless, I could have taken one of my fingers off. I dropped it to the counter and took a step toward him. "You don't have to ask."

With a cocky grin, Stetson stepped forward. I relaxed into the kiss, tugging on his clean t-shirt to pull him closer. His hands threaded through my hair, and a shiver shot

down my spine. He'd found my kryptonite without even trying.

"Why don't you join me for my workout today?" I asked, returning to the abandoned vegetables. "I know you two have a lot to talk about, but I think we do too."

Stetson glanced back at his Daddy, waiting for his approval. "I think that's a good idea. It's up to you."

"Sure," Stetson finally agreed. "Can I help you with anything?"

Levi murmured, "Good boy," under his breath, and Stetson coughed to cover his gasp.

"I've got it. Sit down," I said, amused. "But I do have one very important question for you."

He eyed me curiously, slipping into a chair next to Levi. "What?"

"How do you like your eggs?"

The boy visibly relaxed, slumping into his seat. "You two really like teasing me don't you?"

"You ain't seen nothing yet, Rookie," I laughed.

* * *

By the time breakfast was served, we were too hungry to keep teasing each other. We made small talk as we ate, Levi asking me about the game in Boston and Stetson about his next game in Louisiana. Then I questioned Stetson about his current workout routine. It felt nice, natural even. We'd never had this sort of comfortable

environment with anyone else.

Then again, we'd never tried it with another athlete .

Stetson was completely enamored with Levi. I practically had to peel the two of them away from each other to get him out the door. Levi followed us out, buckling his boy in before giving us both a kiss and retreating . Stetson eyed me as I reached for my own seatbelt.

“Why didn't he buckle yours too?” he asked.

“If I wanted him to, he would.”

“How did he know I wanted him to?”

“You didn't tell him otherwise.”

Stetson shifted uneasily, eyes forward. “Do you think it's weird that I let him?”

“Not at all. If it's something that you enjoy and he's happy to do it, who am I to judge?”

He scoffed. “His boyfriend.”

I decided not to address the attitude. It wasn't my place. Besides, I could read between the lines: Stetson was worried about being singled out, that I would be the one to bring an end to things. I stayed quiet the rest of the drive, trying to find the best way to voice my emotions. Once the car was in park, I grabbed his arm to keep him in his seat.

“Stetson...” Blue eyes fell to the hand I had resting on his wrist. “When I told you we

both wanted this, I meant it. If there was any doubt about us bringing you into our relationship, we would tell you.”

He sighed and let his head fall back. “I’ve never done anything like this before. It’s not even all the Daddy stuff. Managing a relationship on top of the game is hard enough. How am I supposed to do it with two people?”

I chuckled. “Your guess is as good as mine. You’re the first boy Levi’s been serious about.” My hand slid down until our fingers laced together, the feeling of his palm against mine sending me into overdrive. I’d been content to sit back and let Levi take charge that morning, but touching Stetson was electric. My heart raced with the promise of more. “We’ll figure it out together—all three of us. You can always talk to us about anything. And if you want a private conversation with one or the other, all you have to do is say so.”

Stetson stared at our fingers, giving my hand a slight squeeze and brushing his thumb over my skin. “I feel like you’re holding something back.”

I smiled, letting my head roll on the headrest so I was looking at him. “You’re perceptive.”

“What is it?”

“Doesn’t matter.” I made a move to get out of the car, but it was Stetson who stopped me this time.

“Barrett.” Damn it, even the way he said my name made my head spin. “This whole communication thing has to go both ways if it’s going to work. Well, three ways.”

Damn he was good. No wonder he was labeled as the MLB’s “One to Watch.” He was quick, he was bright.

I let the feeling of Stetson's thumb brushing my skin soothe me as I readied myself for my confession. With a deep breath, I said, "I'm intimidated by you."

"What?" Stetson spat in disbelief. "Me ? Why? You're one of the best players in the majors."

"And I have yet to win a title. You breezed your way into the collegiate World Series without even thinking about it. You're a natural on the field. That kind of skill can't be taught, even with all the hours I've put in. Not to say that you haven't worked hard, but I've had to fight my entire life, and I've got nothing to show for it."

"You've got an impressive ten-year career behind you. Your stats are incredible. I spent my entire college experience killing myself to get numbers like yours."

I let the silence linger between us, not ready to let him know that I was retiring. "Maybe having you on the field will be the inspiration I need."

He shrugged, flashing me his signature grin. "I could probably teach you a thing or two."

I tugged on his hand, bringing his mouth to mine. As if he knew what he'd discovered, those damn fingers twisted into my hair again. Our lips pressed together, slowly, gently, as if he were scared to break me. The boy was so damn submissive, even if he was a brat. A part of me wondered if I'd ever get to see him frantic, so desperate for a release that he'd ravage my mouth like an animal.

Stetson hummed, the sound buzzing against my lips as he tilted his head to deepen the kiss—and that was my cue to pull back, extracting a whine from him. "You'd better get that pretty little ass out of this car and in the gym before I throw you into the backseat and take you right here."

“Is that supposed to be a threat?” he panted, trailing his tongue over his swollen, reddened lip.

“Yes.” I leaned across the center console, making him think I was moving in for another kiss, only to grab a fistful of that blond hair to hold him in place as I spoke against his mouth. “Because the first time I get ahold of you, I’m sure your Daddy will want to watch. Now get inside before you make me lose all control.”

I let go and Stetson collapsed into the seat, fumbling for the door handle. I sat back for a second, amused with the way his legs shook. He paused before entering the gym, glancing around and discreetly adjusting himself. I took advantage of the privacy of the car to do the same, making a mental note to do exactly as I said at the first opportunity that came my way.

12

LEVI

I couldn't focus on a damn thing that day.

Barrett promised that he'd get Stetson lunch before seeing him off to practice, and I knew I'd see them both that night. I had so much work to do that I sadly had to decline invitations to both dinner and Stetson's game. Though as I sat in front of my computer, one frustrating email away from smashing my head to the keyboard, I regretted that decision.

I abandoned endless emails in favor of watching footage of a college player from Memphis I was set to meet in a couple weeks, but even his impressive skills weren't enough to keep my mind from wandering.

Waiting for the front door to open was painstaking. I glanced at the clock—barely nine-thirty. I knew not to expect Stetson until close to midnight. That was if he even chose to come to my house at all. He did have a place of his own, after all. Though I selfishly wanted him in my bed.

Finally, the front door opened. As usual, he straightened up the kitchen before heading upstairs.

I didn't particularly enjoy having my office on the second floor, but sometimes it was the only way I could leave work behind and get some decent sleep.

Happy to give it up for the evening, I closed everything down before Barrett could even knock. “Come in.”

The door crept open and Barrett stepped inside. Even after a decade together, the man never failed to make my heart flutter. “You’re still working?”

“Just stopped. It was the only thing I could do to distract myself. How was dinner?”

“Fine.” He bit the inside of his cheek, shoving his hands in his back pockets and pulling his shirt tight across his broad chest. “I have an idea.”

“What’s that?”

Barrett stepped between my splayed legs, situating himself between my thighs. I knocked his hands out of his pockets, clenching tight onto his ass. He stifled a moan as I kneaded the taut flesh, letting his head drop back. “I won’t be able to tell you if you don’t let me think straight.”

I rested my chin against his belly, peering up at him through my lashes. “I’m not doing anything.”

Barrett cracked an eye open and smirked at me. “You know exactly what you’re doing.”

“Well I can’t latch onto your hair from down here so I have to grab something .”

“I can’t believe Stetson figured that out.”

“Just makes two of us that can tease you now.” I gave his cheeks a squeeze. “What’s your idea?”

He leaned over, licking into my mouth before trailing his hot, wet tongue down my neck. Finally, his knees kissed the carpet. “Think you can manage to hold your phone steady through an orgasm?”

“I can sure as hell try.” I twisted my fingers through Barrett’s hair and he damn near purred. “What’s your plan?”

He snatched my phone from the desk and thrust it into my palm. “You wanted to discipline your boy for acting out last night, right?”

“Mmhmm.”

“I have a better idea than a spanking.” Lust thickened his voice. “Start recording.”

Barrett’s hands slipped under my shirt, pushing the fabric up my chest. I hit record, and he tossed the garment to the floor. The dim lamplight painting the room was just enough to see. My hand already trembled, but I squeezed my phone tight. Barrett on his knees was a gorgeous image, and he was right: Stetson missing out would be the perfect punishment.

Barrett undid my belt, letting it fall to the sides. Popping the button, he spread the denim apart with his hands. When prompted, I lifted my hips so he could slide them off and throw them aside. With only my boxer briefs separating us now, Barrett mouthed over the dampened cotton. I was already hard as a rail—typical when Barrett walked into a room.

“Come on, baby,” I breathed, combing through Barrett’s thick, wavy locks. “Don’t make me wait.”

He hooked his fingers behind my waistband and tugged, pulling my underwear off my legs. The way my cock sprung free was almost comical, but we were too turned

on to find anything funny about it. Barrett steadied me with a fist at the base of my shaft, and I hissed at the contact. He licked his lips, mouth watering. Lust-filled hazel eyes gazed up at me, silently begging for permission. I made sure the camera captured that glossy-eyed stare.

“Go ahead.”

Barrett traced the vein along the underside of my cock, sucking the head into his mouth. He flicked his tongue across the sensitive skin, dipping into my slit for a deeper taste. His hand stroked upward with a firm squeeze, milking more clear liquid out of me. He moaned as the taste hit his tongue.

My head fell back against the chair, eyes heavy, but I refused to let them shut. The sight in front of me was too stunning to miss.

Barrett took his time, sucking me deeper down his throat. The noises he made were music to my ears. Saliva dripped down my length in the dirtiest, sexiest way possible. I wiggled lower in the chair and spread my legs. My hips bucked, and Barrett coughed. As incentive to keep going, I softly brushed through his hair, then clenched onto a thick fistful.

“Come on,” I encouraged, urging his head forward. “I know you can take more than that.”

The next time his cheeks hollowed out, he dropped his hand and swallowed me to the hilt, coughing around his gag reflex. I spat a curse. A low hum of satisfaction vibrated my skin. Barrett hooked his hand behind my left knee, pushing back until my foot rested on the chair. He then brought that hand to my mouth, pushing two fingers against my lips. He sucked my cock, and I returned the gesture to his fingers. I swirled my tongue around them, making sure they were nice and wet before he withdrew from my mouth with a pop .

He wasted no time dipping slick fingers between my legs. He teased around my eager hole and I sighed, waiting on the muscles to relax.

“ Fuck .” He’d just pushed through. I had a death grip around the phone now, making sure it stayed in place. My entire body shook, my back arched off the chair. For a second, I squeezed my eyes shut and succumbed to the pleasure before prying them open again. I readjusted the angle, then tilted my hips to give Barrett easier access.

I didn’t bottom very often but damn, Barrett never failed to remind me how much I loved it. He worked slow, pulling off occasionally to spit onto his fingers. Saliva dribbled over my balls and down my taint, and he replaced his mouth over my cock. Everything was hot and wet. The air was thick and it was sending my body into overdrive.

By the time he had both fingers deep inside me and his nose buried in my crotch, I was at the end of my rope, and it hadn’t even been five minutes. Then Barrett crooked his fingers, found that magic little bundle of nerves. My hips jack-knifed toward the feeling. Barrett choked and I cried out, alternating between thrusting forward to fuck his mouth and spearing myself onto his fingers. When that all too familiar chill crept down my spine, I managed to turn on the flash.

“Don’t swallow,” I instructed, voice hoarse.

I didn’t have to tell Barrett I was close. When my balls drew up and I tightened my fist in his hair, I leaned into the orgasm. My thighs trembled. My heart raced. I gave into the need to let my eyes shut. Barrett coughed around me, the first drops of my release hitting his tongue. I shot again, feeling it trickle out of his mouth and down my shaft, pooling in my groin and dripping down to the chair. With each pulse, I loosened my grip on Barrett. Still reeling from aftershocks, I pried my eyes open. Barrett wore a faint grin on his dick-swollen lips.

It widened into a smile as he sat back on his heels, wiping the come off his mouth, then licking his hand free. I ended the recording, letting my phone clatter to the floor. I fisted Barrett's t-shirt, pulling him into a messy kiss.

"Are you okay?" I asked when I came up for air.

He nodded, lips brushing mine. "Stetson likes being watched." He swallowed, panting in an effort to catch his breath. "Tell him to text you when he gets in the shower after the game, then send him that video. What happens next, I'll leave up to you."

I smiled, pride filling my chest that—combined with the effort of remembering how to breathe—was ready to burst. "God damn I love you," I snarled, tugging him to his feet. I stood on wobbly legs, and shoved him down in the chair that nearly tipped backward under his weight. "Switch."

13

STETSON

We were at the bottom of the ninth inning, two runs away from beating the Oklahoma Twisters. Like their namesake, they were destroying the field. They were absolute beasts , making us work for each hard-earned run.

Sweat stung my eyes. My walk-up music was drowned out by the pounding in my head. The Thrashers had two outs, and one man on third. Either I kept this game going, or I was going to be the one to end it. I raised my bat, locking eyes with the pitcher. I tightened my grip on the handle and counted my breaths, along with the pounding of my heart. I wasn't the only one feeling the effects of a long game. I hadn't mistaken the way the catcher wobbled in his stance before I put my back to him, or the pitcher taking an extra second to roll out the aching muscles in his neck. When he readied himself to wind up, I dropped my eyes to the ball in his hand. He tried to hide it, but I could see the position of his fingers.

Splitter.

I aimed low and swung.

Hit.

The crowd roared. My heart matched each heavy footfall. The cheers got louder as my teammate hit home, tying the game. I rounded first, hearing the ball slap into the baseman's glove. I knew his move before he made it and slid to a stop, pivoting to

race back to first, only to see the ball fly over my head again. I hovered between the two bases, the thundering in my ears growing louder.

I was stuck.

One coach yelled at me to get back on first. Another one screamed, red-faced, for me to take second. I couldn't see a way out. Either way, I'd get tagged. The Twisters were too good. In a split-second decision, I faked back to first, then spun and dropped to slide into second. The baseman took a step off the plate. A glove touched my ankle. I squeezed my eyes shut, hours seeming to pass while the umpire came over to make his call.

The only sounds to be heard were the deep, heavy breaths from myself and the player standing above me.

“Out!”

I was too tired to even groan. Throwing my helmet aside, I took the hand that was offered to me by the guy who'd tagged me out. “Good game!” he called, squeezing my shoulder before heading off to celebrate with his teammates.

I trudged toward the line-up, then we collected our things from the dugout and walked silently into the clubhouse. Losses always sucked, no matter the circumstances.

Losses on home turf, however, sucked a different kind of suck.

The clubhouse was dead silent. No one had anything to say. There was nothing to say. We'd played our asses off and everyone in that room knew it. Still, our head coach paced by the door, fumbling for words.

He finally settled with, “Good game. Rest up. See y’all in the morning.”

A chorus of grumbles and “Yes, Coach,” followed, then the team dispersed. Some left, heading home to spend the night with their families. A few players headed for the clubhouse showers. I plopped myself down in my seat and dug my phone out. I was nasty, sweaty, my white uniform streaked with grass and red Georgia clay.

This was my first loss of the season. Hell, it was the first of my pro career, and there was only one thing I wanted, one thing I needed. I pressed the call icon with a shaking finger and lifted my phone to my ear, cringing at the sweat-slicked screen sliding along my cheek. It rang once, twice, three times.

“Hey baby... Barrett’s here. You’re on speaker.”

I shuddered, instantly feeling better. I glanced around, making sure I was truly alone. “Hi Daddy,” I whispered, running a hand through my hair and pushing my cap off in the process.

“Uh-oh, bad news?”

“What happened?” came from Barrett.

“We lost. Barely, but we lost.”

The call fell silent for a beat, and I started to undress.

“What do you need?” Levi finally asked.

“I need to get out of my head. I can’t let this throw me off my game tomorrow.” I stripped down, wrapping a fluffy white towel around my waist.

Levi— Daddy —chuckled, the sound tranquilizing my tumultuous thoughts. “Lucky for you, I have just the idea.”

I let out a sigh of relief. “Thank God. I’ll be home as soon as I shower.”

“Don’t hang up yet, baby boy. I need you to start there.”

My heart picked up speed again, for a different reason. “What do you mean?”

“Are you alone?”

I ducked out of the way of the last few stragglers. “In the showers, yes. But there are a few guys getting dressed.”

“You’ll have to keep quiet, then. Think you can do that for me?”

My dick twitched under the towel. “I can try.”

“Do you have your headphones?”

“Yes.” I spun and rushed back to my cubicle, retrieving my Bluetooth headphones from my bag.

“Yes, what ?” Levi growled.

I dropped my voice to a whisper, cheeks burning. “Yes, Daddy.”

“That’s better. Turn on the shower and let me know when your headphones are connected, but keep your phone nearby.”

I shuffled in place, cock hardening to full mast between my legs. “What now?” I

asked with a shaky voice.

“Now we have to have a quick talk. What we’re about to do might get intense for you. Do you remember your safewords?”

“Yes, Daddy,” I whispered. “Yellow to slow down, red to stop.”

“Good boy. Can you position your phone where it won’t get wet, but only you can see it?”

I looked around. A waist-high wall separated the showers. I pulled my towel free as I stepped around the wall and bunched it up on the edge, creating a pillow where I could prop up my phone. I had my back to the spray, hot water pelting my sore neck and shoulders. Steam filled the space around me.

“Color, baby?”

“Green.”

“Good. I’m going to send you something. Once it starts to play, I want both your hands on that wall. Don’t move until I say so. Understood?”

“Yes, Daddy.” I waited for the video to come through, and it was then that I realized that the other man in the room had gone quiet. “Barrett?”

“I’m right here, Rookie— ah !”

My dick throbbed. I knew that sound. “Are you two...?”

“Play the video, baby.” Whatever Levi did made Barrett moan, my skin pebbling up in response. “Hands on the wall. Don’t touch yourself.”

I pressed play, then flattened my palms on the top of the wall. I swallowed a groan of my own as I realized what was transpiring on the screen. Barrett was on his knees between Daddy's legs, mouthing over the shape of his hard cock behind his underwear.

"Fuck." I squirmed, squeezing my thighs together against the pressure. "Can I?—"

"No," came Daddy's stern voice.

"Come on baby. Don't make me wait."

I bit my lip, whining. "Please, Daddy."

"I said 'no.' Not until I say so." Barrett spat another curse. "Keep going and you won't come at all."

I waited in anticipation, ears blessed by the combination of erotic noises. Barrett's glossy hazel eyes peered up at the camera.

"Go ahead ."

Daddy's cock sprang free from his boxers, and mine throbbed. Barrett whimpered. I stifled a sound of my own. Outside the showers, the few voices faded away and the door to the locker room shut. I bit my lip, waiting and hoping...

Fucking finally. Complete silence.

I let a single, quiet moan escape, clenching my fists tight on the tile. Barrett worked Daddy's length like a pro, meeting his lips with his fist before dropping his hand and sinking all the way down.

I danced in place, desperate to put my hands on myself.

A wet slurp and pop sounded through the call, then Daddy said, “Remember baby boy: no touching.”

“I-I’m not,” I strained, hoping that my restraint was evident in my voice.

Another sloppy noise, and Barrett sighed again. “I’m close,” he huffed.

Fuck, so was I.

“Come on. I know you can take more than that. ”

I’d never been so close to blowing without even touching myself. The obscene sounds coming from Barrett’s mouth, the pornographic ones coming from Daddy in the video

Oh, shit.

My eyes glued on my screen, Barrett slipped two fingers between Daddy’s legs and when his hips tilted, I knew where they’d gone. I whined, ass clenching at the thought of being filled by one of them.

Or both.

Throwing caution to the wind, I begged . “Please, Daddy.”

There was an animalistic snarl that I assumed came from Barrett. “I said no, boy.”

“Stetson,” Barrett panted, “if you make him stop sucking my cock one more time, I’m going to punish you. Have I made myself clear?”

“Y-yes...”

“Sir,” he finished for me.

“Yes, sir.” My fists tightened on the towel, hands beginning to go numb .

“Don’t swallow. ”

Oh, God I didn’t think I’d make it through that. My balls drew up, hanging heavy between my legs. Both sets of sucking, slurping sounds increased. I fought the urge to close my eyes, to?—

“Fuck, I’m coming,” Barret cried.

In the video, Barrett gagged and creamy white liquid poured down Daddy’s shaft. I wondered how those lips would feel around my own dick, remembered what Daddy’s felt like. Was that what I would get if I held out? I wanted to be good, I wanted so badly to obey but when Barrett roared on the other end of the call, I folded.

“I can’t take it.” My left hand shot between my legs, fingers wrapping tightly around my cock. I sighed, and my hand moved of its own accord. The water pounding my back and streaming down my shoulders provided a slick surface for my palm and simultaneous groans graced my ears.

It didn’t take more than a few pumps of my hand for me to spill my release, bursts of come splattering against the wall in front of me. I stifled another groan. The video had stopped playing. Daddy had gone quiet and Barrett panted, grasping for each breath.

As I came down from my high, I realized what I’d done. I shivered, and it had nothing to do with aftershocks. “I-I’m sorry, Daddy,” I stammered, my voice barely a

whisper. “I’m really sorry.”

Barrett chuckled.

“Wash up and get home, Stetson.”

“Damn, you sound good when you’ve been throat-fucked,” Barrett whispered.

He wasn’t wrong. My cock made a feeble attempt to twitch at the sound of Daddy’s hoarse, raspy voice, but the knowledge that I’d just disobeyed him was enough to whisk that feeling away. I stammered and stuttered, fumbling for something to say

“Color, Stetson.”

“Green,” I said without hesitation.

“Good. Then we’ll talk when you get home. Shower off, and drive safely. I’ll see you when you get here.”

“Yes, Daddy.”

“Good boy.” And then he hung up.

I swallowed against the lump in my throat and rinsed myself off. As I pooled water in my hands and washed the evidence of my crimes off the wall, I wondered exactly what I was in for.

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Source Creation Date: July 23, 2025, 6:21 am

14

LEVI

Late May

Little did I know how long it would be before the three of us had any private time. It had been nearly a month since that night. Making two busy schedules work was hell, but three was damn near impossible.

That was all going to change tonight though.

I'd been looking forward to this game all season. The Thrashers were facing off against the Hellbenders again, but this time the Hellbenders were hosting. With both my men in New York, I didn't hesitate to jump on a plane. A two-hour flight was nothing when it meant I got to see them at the end of it, even if I did have to sit through a grueling game first. The change of scenery was just what I needed. With Barrett in practice and Stetson still on his flight, I leisurely strolled through Central Park.

My phone chimed, and I stepped to the side to check it.

Daddy, please...

I smiled. That night Stetson got bold and jacked off without permission, we all crashed the second he got home. We hadn't had a chance to discuss punishment, much less act on anything. One thing I could control, however, was making sure it

didn't happen again.

Stetson had been under strict instructions for three weeks: no orgasms. He could touch himself enough to edge, but only if he let me watch—and I controlled the moment his hand stopped. It didn't take long for me to recognize the signs. The way he bit his lip, the way his thighs trembled. Most importantly, how he begged. Damn, my boy could beg.

At first, I thought he'd break instantly. But he surprised me. I guess the feeling of knowing he'd broken the rules was enough to keep him from doing it again, but he still tested his limits. The video that followed his text proved that. I connected my headphones and hit play. Stetson was hiding in an airport bathroom. He whimpered, grasping the bulge that tested the thin material of his suit pants.

The sight was mouth-watering.

Not yet, sweetheart.

He had a game to play first, and the sexual frustration would make him even more of an animal on the field. I had faith that Barrett could keep up, but I wondered if the rest of the Hellbenders knew what they were in for. I responded to the pouting emoji he sent me with a kissing one of my own, telling him I'd see him after the game.

In a stroke of luck, both men had the next day off. We had nothing stopping us from squirreling away in our hotel room and spending the night tangled up in each other. The past few weeks of fleeting visits and stolen moments between flights had only given me more time to plan.

I slipped my phone back into my pocket, biding my time until I knew I could enter the stadium unnoticed.

When the news broke of my relationship with Barrett, our pictures were plastered everywhere. I could hardly leave the house without being interrogated or glared at. But five years was a long time in the world of sports and since Barrett terminated our contract, everyone had all but forgotten that our relationship was ever forbidden in the first place.

However, that didn't stop me from being tagged as Barrett Swindon's boyfriend. Being arm candy for the Hellbenders's most popular player came with its own set of challenges.

Did that also come with perks? Hell yeah, it did. And as I entered the stadium and made my way to my seat behind home plate, I welcomed every single benefit. I would have a perfect view for the entire game. Both teams were already on the field warming up. Like a beacon, each of my guys drew my attention. Barrett first, the number ten on the back of his jersey seeming much bigger than the others. He was tossing a ball around to a teammate without actually looking at the other player or the ball. Noting the way his brows knit together, I followed his gaze right to Stetson. My boy jogged in the opposite direction, and the twelve on his back seemed just as prominent. He hit the edge of the field and as if he could sense me staring, his eyes found mine in the stands. I let my lips curl into a grin, earning a heart-stopping smile in return. I swore that even from the distance, I saw his blue eyes sparkling.

I found Barrett again, and blew him a kiss when I saw him watching. Thankfully, the small gesture seemed to relax him. He took a deep breath, and the tension melted from his body. Navigating a polyamorous relationship was tricky enough. Managing a workplace relationship? That spelled trouble. But when two of those people were as good as enemies in said workplace? Well, needless to say I respected both of them, but didn't envy them at all.

It went without saying that they had to be careful. The three of us weren't exactly hiding anything, but we weren't offering up the information either.

Stetson could let his temper fly at any given moment. He spoke his mind, and he didn't care much who got caught in the firing zone. Barrett could wear his heart on his sleeve, but was also incredible at masking. The moment you asked him what was wrong, that charming smile was in place, convincing you that nothing was ever wrong. And as he suited up and took his position behind home plate, that's exactly what happened. There was no more room for emotions.

With a sigh, I sat back in my seat and buckled in for what was sure to be a wild ride. But even I couldn't have predicted the tension that game would bring.

For a full nine innings, it was anyone's game. Just when it seemed like the Hellbenders would be able to pull ahead, the Thrashers would throw in their secret weapon: Stetson. When he was at bat, he locked onto that ball like Harry Potter with the golden snitch. Usually resigned to outfield, this time he was pitching. And when he was on the mound, he had an arm that rivaled Babe Ruth himself. You could feel the energy in the stands, with each and every fan practically holding their breath every time the ball was in the air.

By the bottom of the ninth inning, one run could make or break the game. Everyone was exhausted. Stetson walked onto the mound, rolling out his neck. The Hellbenders were down by one, and the bases were loaded. It all came down to one batter: Barrett. He stepped up to the plate, and their eyes locked. I didn't miss the slight quirk of Stetson's lips before he schooled himself. No one around me suspected anything more than a tense baseball game, but I felt like I was watching a Western standoff. I didn't need to see Barrett's face to see the determination there, the same heat that matched Stetson's. It wasn't unlike the way they looked at each other off the field. Only this time, there was much more at stake. Each of them had a nearly thirty-man team counting on them and with the playoffs in sight, the pressure was on.

Stetson was young, but he was skilled. He didn't get to this point based off luck alone. But where Stetson had skill, Barrett had experience. I had to admit that

watching the two of them face off had my stomach twisting in a way I never expected.

And regardless of the outcome of the game, I couldn't wait to get them both alone.

Stetson wound up, and the ball flew to home plate.

Barrett missed.

He shook his head, no doubt muttering a curse and readied himself for the next pitch.

Refocused, Stetson shifted the ball around in his hand, masked by his glove.

Swing.

Strike.

Every Hellbender fan in the place let out a groan, and Barrett paced around in a circle. This was it. Either Barrett hit the next ball and the Hellbenders had a fair shot, or he missed, and the Thrashers would win once again.

The stadium was so quiet you could hear a pin drop. Stetson was laser-focused on the catcher's glove. He closed his eyes and took a deep breath. When he opened them again, the intensity there sent a shiver down my spine. I sat forward, elbows on my knees. I felt... lost. I wanted both of them to win, and it hurt like hell that it wasn't an option.

Stetson took a moment to steady himself. His gaze fell to the catcher. The ball rotated in his hand. Every eye in the place was on the two most important men in my life.

I didn't have time to pause and think about what that meant for me and Stetson.

He wound up, and pitched.

Time seemed to slow. The ball moved in slow motion.

Barrett swung.

And the ball thunked into the catcher's glove.

Strike three.

Barrett was out, and the Thrashers had beat the Hellbenders once again.

I stood with the rest of the New York fans but instead of applauding, I shoved my hands in my pockets. Barrett found me, giving me a soft smile that didn't quite reach his eyes. When he took his hat off and ran his hand through his hair, I knew it had nothing to do with peeling it away from his face. Behind him, the Thrashers celebrated. Stetson found me as well, beaming ear to ear. I did my best to return it, but it was bittersweet.

Around me, fans started to gather their things and leave. I waited until the players disappeared into their clubhouses, and then went in search of my men.

15

BARRETT

I trudged into the clubhouse, throwing my hat into my seat. With each button that came undone on my jersey, I forced myself to relax. The tension in the locker room was so thick you could cut it with a knife. Just when I started to think that losing couldn't suck any more, Stetson Holloway had to burst into my life and tear things up.

It may have been easier if the Thrashers were simply better players, but we held our own. We'd given it our all and in the end, we weren't good enough.

I wasn't good enough.

Arms wrapped around my waist, and I banished the feeling. I was not going to sulk. The three of us had only shared fleeting moments over the last few weeks, and I was eager to spend some time together. Levi tickled my sides, and I wiggled in his grip. "I'm disgusting, Lee," I laughed, grateful nonetheless to have some of the stress melt from my body.

"I know, trust me." That earned him an elbow to the ribs. "Hose off and get back to the hotel. I've got plans, remember?"

At first, I thought he meant Stetson's punishment. I'd been amused that night, knowing from the beginning that the boy wouldn't be able to hold out. He'd likely never been told "no" in his life. Levi and I had spent weeks coming up with the

perfect way to teach him a lesson. But as I sat in my chair, exhaustion hit me like a freight train. “As much as I would love to help you torture that boy, I’m tired.”

Levi knelt in front of me, running his hands up my thighs with a firm grip. I bit my lip to stifle a moan, the pressure firm enough to ease the ache that came with crouching for hours on end. “That’s not what I meant, Bear. We’ve got all day tomorrow to do that. Stetson’s already on his way to the hotel, so shower and meet me there.”

He straightened to his full height, then leaned over to give me a kiss. Skeptical, I crooked a brow at him. “Why does your voice have that suspicious lilt to it?”

A cocky grin, and Levi shoved his hands in his pockets as he backed out of the clubhouse. “Guess you’ll just have to come find out.”

Baffled, I laughed and shook my head. Levi still had the ability to surprise me.

But I couldn’t help but hope that the surprise was a long, hot bath in a tub big enough for three.

* * *

I smiled all the way to the penthouse suite. Levi truly had pulled out all the stops. When I was alone, all I needed was a place to shower and sleep but with him, nothing but the best would suffice. That’s what he thought, anyway. As the doors dinged and opened, I yelped. A hand snatched me out of the elevator and into a bruising kiss. Stetson. I grunted into his mouth, cupping my hand around his neck and holding him close. Damp hair tickled my fingers. He tasted like toothpaste and smelled like soap. He grabbed my hips and pulled me closer but before he could grind his pelvis against mine?—

“That’s enough, boy,” Levi said from my side.

Stetson whined, but broke off the kiss. I licked my lips in the hopes that his taste would linger.

It did. “Hello to you too,” I whispered. I brushed my thumb along his swollen bottom lip, and I could sense him fighting the urge to suck it into his mouth. “Congratulations on your win.”

Stetson grimaced but before he could say anything about my loss, I silenced him with a finger to his lips. “I don’t want to talk about it.” I wrapped one arm around his waist, and reached for Levi with the other. “For the next twenty-four hours, I don’t want any baseball talk. Understood?”

Levi happily agreed, and I looked to Stetson for his answer. His eyes were trained on my mouth but with a gentle guide from Levi who tipped his chin up, he found my gaze once more. “Yes, sir.”

“Now,” I said, pulling them closer. “Tell me about these plans.”

I already had an idea. I knew Levi better than he knew himself sometimes. The smell of bubble bath wafted in from the bathroom but when Stetson told me to close my eyes, I did. He took one hand, and Levi took the other. Together, they led me through the suite and into the bedroom, where they sat me down on the bed.

“Keep your eyes closed,” Levi instructed.

Nimble fingers slipped beneath my shirt. I hummed. “Don’t worry. I’m all good here.”

My shirt came off, and I kicked out of my shoes so the rest of my clothes could

follow. They took me by the hands again and led me closer to the enticing smell of lavender. I did my best to hide my grin until they pulled me to a stop and directed me to open my eyes. I couldn't have fought my smile then if I tried.

The jacuzzi tub had been decorated with fake candles and rose petals littered the perimeter, dipping into the water. Steam rose off the surface, calling to my aching muscles. And yes, the tub was big enough for three. I regarded the men standing to either side of me. "Why aren't the two of you undressed yet?"

They stripped in record time, with Stetson grumbling, "If I had it my way I'd have met you at the door naked."

"And take an eye out with that erection?" That earned Levi a glare, to which he answered, "Look at me like that again and see what happens."

"Enough," I interjected, nudging them toward the tub. "Get in."

They stepped into the water, settling to either side and leaving space for me in the middle. While I nestled between them, Levi activated the jets. I couldn't help the moan that pushed past my lips. The hot water bubbled around me, soothing all the aches and pains—even the emotional ones. Stetson wiggled, whining as he rested against my chest. Levi tucked in close behind me, reaching around to turn the boy's chin toward him. Their mouths met in front of my face, Stetson instantly opening up for Levi's tongue. I watched for a moment before deciding I wasn't going to be left out. Our mouths met in a messy, three-way kiss. It was sloppy and inexperienced, but it was perfect.

They were perfect.

* * *

We awoke tangled in each other the next morning, with Stetson starfishing out across the bed. He had one leg thrown over Levi's hips, and his arm splayed across my chest. When my eyes opened and met Levi's, all we could do was laugh. "We're going to need a bigger bed," I commented.

Levi gazed down at the boy, stars in his eyes. Stetson snored away. "He's worth it." Then he scrubbed a hand over his face. "I hate that I'll have to leave the two of you to scout that game today."

"You sure you don't want us to come with you?"

"Absolutely not." Levi sat up, gently repositioning Stetson's leg without waking him up. "You said no ball talk for twenty-four hours and I intend to let you have that."

"Well if we can't have any ball talk, we might have a very disappointed boy on our hands," I quipped.

Levi shook his head and searched for his clothes. "Stetson's been a bad influence on you."

I gazed down at the man sleeping on my shoulder, and my heart melted. He stirred, settling right on my chest. His arm squeezed around my waist in an attempt to pull me closer. His dirty blond hair tickled my bicep, still damp from our late bath the night before. Dark lashes fluttered against his perfect cheekbones. I gently brushed a piece of hair out of his eyes to get a better look, as if I hadn't already committed every inch of his body to memory. "He's definitely something."

I was absolutely smitten with the boy.

"Have you two talked about what he called you last night?"

I shook my head. Between busy schedules and our limited downtime being spent with roaming hands and mouths, there hadn't been time to talk about much of anything. But that was about to change. It had to if we had any chance of making this work. I'd told Stetson that communication was the most important part of all this, and I'd seriously been slacking.

"I'll talk to him," I finally said, lowering my voice in case the boy was only pretending to sleep. "Today. It's his first time in New York. I planned something special for us."

Levi smirked. "PUBLIC?"

Damn it. A grin tugged at the corner of my mouth. "Of course."

He pulled that old Hellbenders ball cap onto his head. I grimaced. I'd been after him for years to replace the thing, but I'd given it to him as a gift when I'd gotten drafted and he refused. He walked around my side of the bed and leaned over. I hummed when his lips met mine. He stretched over me to press another gentle kiss to Stetson's temple, and only then did the boy stir and open his eyes. "What time is it?"

"Time to get up," I responded. We waved Levi goodbye and Stetson rolled into my chest to steal a few more minutes of snuggle time. "Or not."

"Five minutes," he whispered against my skin. "Then you can commence with your torture."

I didn't have to ask what he meant. I'd have an indent of his cock in my hip for days. "Don't worry, baby," I whispered, free hand disappearing beneath the blanket.

Stetson gasped and tried to wriggle away. "Don't, I'll come."

“No you won’t.” I leaned in, stealing his lips in a passionate kiss as my hand gave his cock one slow pull. “Because deep down, all you want is to be a good boy, don’t you?”

I let go, allowing my fingertips to linger as long as possible. Stetson’s only answer was a soft whimper against my lips and when I pulled back, he had his eyes squeezed shut. When they opened, the only evidence of that beautiful blue was a thin ring around his blown pupils. “I’m not sure which one of you is more evil.”

I kissed him again, soft and gentle, without an air of any sexual tension. That time, he melted into it. My fingers locked into his hair and held him against me. Fuck , I didn’t realize how much I’d missed him. When his tongue prodded for entry, I was the one cursing Levi for this damn punishment. Reluctantly, I pulled away. “Go shower, Stetson,” I told him. “We’re leaving in half an hour.”

His brow furrowed. “To go where?”

“It’s a surprise.” And his eyes lit up. “Now get up, before I break my own rules.”

Stetson had a dimple in his right cheek. How did I know? Because when he gave us his trademark cocky smirk, it popped—just as it did in that moment. “Is that supposed to motivate me?”

I stood myself, taking the blanket and its warmth with me. “Up. Now.”

Stetson shivered. “See? Evil.”

I watched his perfect, perky little ass disappear into the bathroom and only once the door shut behind him did I let out a breath.

That boy had me wrapped around his little finger.

16

STETSON

Was it possible to die from lack of orgasms?

It had to be. I felt like I was going to explode. Not even a cold shower could completely erase the fact that I hadn't come in almost a month. And as Barrett watched my every move, it undid everything I'd tried. He perched on the desk, studying me like he'd be tested on it later. It made the gray slacks I was pulling on that much tighter. I closed my eyes and forced myself to take a few deep breaths. If I couldn't get a grip, I was sure to be arrested for public indecency. The thin fabric of those slacks hid nothing.

I tucked in my white long-sleeved shirt and as I was doing up the buttons, Barrett appeared behind me in the mirror, wrapping his tattooed arms around me. The ink scrawled up and down his arms brought color to an otherwise bland outfit.

It also wasn't lost on me that he had yet to get dressed. Making me look at all that beautiful skin on display when I could do nothing about it.

Bastard.

As I fastened the last few buttons, swift fingers came behind me and snatched them open again. "There we go," Barrett said, voice low and rumbling in my ear. "Damn, Stetson; you look good enough to eat."

I shuddered. “We don’t have to go out.”

Barrett laughed, and my stomach flipped. “Yes, we do. Because we have to talk and if you stand there any longer looking like that , talking will be the last thing on my mind.”

“Uh oh, that doesn’t sound good.” Barrett and I swapped places so he could get dressed. Forget me looking good enough to eat, Barrett was a five-course meal. I licked my lips, holding onto any hint of his taste lingering there. It was in vain, so I was forced to sit and watch the tattoos on his thighs disappear behind navy dress slacks.

“It’s not bad,” he said, pulling my attention away from his crotch. “But you and I haven’t had a lot of time to talk about this arrangement. Besides, I know this is your first time getting to enjoy New York so I wanted to show you one of my favorite places.”

“Where’s that?” I asked, locking onto his fingers delicately fastening each shirt button.

“You’ll see.”

My stomach fluttered again. I loved surprises, and somehow Barrett had figured that out.

I behaved while he finished getting ready. Sort of. He didn’t stop my wandering eyes. Barrett could fill out a pair of slacks like no one I’d ever seen. His white shirt was sheer enough to tease at the ink hidden beneath, and I found satisfaction in knowing that trailing every inch of that marvelous art with my tongue was a privilege that belonged to me.

After our rare sleep in and our dawdling as we got ready, it was late afternoon by the time we left the hotel.

Back home, I was the superstar. I was used to being trailed everywhere I went. In New York, however, Barrett was the main attraction. I'd noticed it before the game yesterday. So when we got down to the lobby, I was surprised to find it empty. Barrett nodded to one of the employees, who led us down a back hallway. He pushed open a side door, where a car waited for us. "Wow," I muttered, sliding in ahead of him. "I'm getting the VIP experience, aren't I?"

Barrett took his seat and raised the privacy screen, throwing his arm around my shoulders and tugging me close. I settled into the plush bench seat, Barrett's warmth permeating my clothes and seeping into my skin. Everything felt so... luxurious. For a moment, I almost felt like I didn't belong. Then Barrett hooked a finger under my chin to redirect my attention. The moment his lips touched mine, the whole world faded away. As we kissed, I prayed to whatever God was out there that our upcoming conversation wasn't going to make this feeling end.

It was Barrett's mouth separating from mine that made me realize the car had stopped. I peered out the windows for any sign of where we were: Times Square, The Empire State Building, or Rockefeller Center, but nothing appeared familiar. The door opened, and Barrett took my hand. We both thanked the driver, and Barrett led me through a private entrance of yet another building. There, we were approached by a lady in a pantsuit and her hair in an elaborate French twist. She gave Barrett a smile that, had he been interested, probably would have charmed his pants right off.

"It's wonderful to see you again, Mr. Swindon."

Barrett tsked and welcomed a socially acceptable kiss on the cheek. "Vicky, what have I told you? Call me Barrett."

Vicky's eyes landed on me, and the smile faded. "Is your boyfriend not joining you today?"

"He is." In the privacy of the back room, Barrett wrapped his arm around my waist. Vicky was apparently trusted, because we'd been extremely careful about public displays of affection. "Levi had to work, so Stetson and I thought we'd sneak off for a little alone time before he joins us later."

Vicky's eyes widened slightly before she caught herself and that smile returned. Only now, it was a little less genuine. "Right this way, gentlemen."

We followed her to a service elevator, where she pulled out a keycard. One of those that accessed parts of the hotel that most ordinary people couldn't get to. Barrett's hand squeezed on my waist and he crooked a brow at me. "I'm fine," I whispered, answering the unspoken question in his eyes.

I was no stranger to five-star treatment, but it was the first time someone else had gone out of their way to make sure I got it. In Georgia, it just kind of happened. Sometimes, all I wanted was to be treated like an ordinary twenty-three-year-old. But standing there with Barrett, I realized that he made me feel extraordinary. Butterflies raged in my stomach. I'd had my fair share of hookups over the years, but I couldn't remember a time where anyone made me feel the way Barrett and Levi did.

The elevator dinged, and the doors opened. Vicky stood aside and let us exit. Instead of following, she stepped back into the car. "Enjoy your evening."

I was still gathering my bearings when Barrett took my hand and led me across the rooftop.

The place was deserted. Despite the afternoon sun, dim candle light flickered across each table. The crisp white furniture stood out against the wooden tables. A lone

mixologist busied himself behind the bar, and the balcony overflowed with lush greenery. Beyond that was a breathtaking view of the Manhattan skyline. What was even more striking, was the view of Barrett beside me, studying my face and awaiting my reaction. “How long do we have here?” I asked, my voice barely a whisper. I didn’t want to interrupt the intimate moment we were sharing

“Long enough for you to see that at night.” He gestured toward the view. “Trust me. It’ll be the best thing you’ve ever seen.”

He took a step away and led me over to a table, pulling out the white cloth chair for me. As I took my seat, I thought of a thing or two I could imagine would be prettier than the Manhattan Skyline.

We started with drinks—sparkling cider, since I was under strict instructions not to have any alcohol. Not that I needed it. Between the greeting I got from Levi last night and Barrett treating me like a prince now, I was drunk off of those two alone. I sipped at my sparkling rosé, wondering how in the hell I got so lucky, when Barrett reached across the table and took my hand. “Don’t,” I pleaded, giving his fingers a squeeze. “Don’t tell me if it’s going to ruin this. Let me enjoy it a bit longer.”

Barrett smiled, rosy cheeks complimenting the image. “I’m glad you’re happy.”

I shrugged, bringing my glass to my lips. “The company’s not bad either.”

We paused as a server came by and dropped off a bowl of salad. “What I have to ask you isn’t a bad thing, Stetson. I promise.”

Not entirely believing him, I smirked. I set my drink down and drew an “X” over my chest. “Cross your heart?”

Biting his lip, Barrett returned the gesture. “Cross my heart.”

“Okay.” I cleared my throat. “Let me have it.”

Nerves etched their way across Barrett’s features. It was almost as if I could see the waves of emotion cross before he steeled himself. “You’re okay with this, right? Us?”

“Do you think I’d be here if I wasn’t?”

“Fair enough.” He brushed a lock of hair behind his ear. “But I meant the whole dominance thing; calling me ‘sir.’ I know I kind of dropped that on you in the heat of the moment.”

We chuckled to ourselves as clattering echoed behind us. Hopefully that poor bartender learned his lesson about eavesdropping.

Another smart comment sat on the tip of my tongue, but I choked it down.

See? Improvement.

“Barrett...” I admired our entwined fingers, skimming my thumb across his knuckles. “I’m asking you this as seriously as I can: do I strike you as someone who does anything he doesn’t want to do?”

“I guess not.” Then he sighed. “But when Levi brought you in, I know you might not have expected to enter such a dynamic with someone else. Most boys, they have their Daddy and that’s it.”

I shrugged, dropping my voice to avoid listening ears. “So I happen to have a Daddy and a Sir. I’m one very lucky boy.”

“But,” Barrett started, “you know this could get messy, right?”

“Mmhmm.” I took a deep breath and sat up a little straighter. “But I also know that I really like you. I think I can handle messy. I couldn’t handle losing either of you for some ancient, mysterious baseball rivalry.”

A smile teased the corners of Barrett’s lips. He kissed my fingers, then dropped my hand to serve me some food. “You know your safewords apply at any time, right? And that you can get out of this whenever you want?”

“I’ll agree to that as long as you do the same. You were right: this needs to go three ways if we want to make this work.”

“Deal.”

From that point on, we simply enjoyed the rest of our date. I’d never truly gotten to know anyone beyond what they looked like naked. But Barrett? There were so many layers there, and the longer he talked the more he revealed. He had a big family—six siblings, and he was the only athlete. The rest were doctors, lawyers, and music prodigies. He said his parents were the kind to encourage them to go after whatever they wanted, no matter how bizarre. He wasn’t rich growing up, but his parents worked hard to make sure he and his siblings had the life they deserved.

His favorite color was purple, his favorite movie was *Ramen Girl* , and his ultimate goal in life was to settle down with the man—or men—he loved.

I could listen to him talk for hours, and I did. Our salads were whisked away, replaced by one of the best steak dinners I’d ever had. Finally, during dessert, the sun slowly sank behind the horizon and the city came to life. I paused with my fork halfway to my mouth, watching the lights flicker on and light up the night sky. “Wow...” I breathed.

“Beautiful, isn’t it?”

I regarded the man across the table, and the light in his camouflage eyes put Manhattan to shame. I let my gaze roam Barrett's body until he squirmed under the attention. Only then did I answer him. "Stunning."

Suddenly, the twinkling skyline in front of me and the warm cookie dough weren't enough. Heat pooled low in my belly, and I'd reached my limit. I dropped my fork with a clang that reverberated throughout the quiet space. After making sure my mouth was chocolate-free, I stood. "Can we go?"

Barrett laughed, but threaded his fingers through mine. We didn't stop moving until the bartender let us into the service elevator and it was plummeting toward the ground floor. I pounced, and Barrett hit the side of the car with a surprised grunt. With a leg wedged between his thighs, I tipped my head back, humming in satisfaction when our lips met. His tongue speared through my lips, and I welcomed the taste of him. The tart flavor of the sparkling wine on his lips, the bitter coffee from his tiramisu, and something so uniquely him that it nearly had me bending over right then and there.

But with my cock grinding into Barrett's hip, he gathered a fistful of hair and tugged me back. "Can't wait, baby?"

I emphatically shook my head. "No, sir. I can't wait anymore. Please."

When the elevator doors opened, I practically dragged him out behind me. I no longer cared that I was hard enough to punch right through my pants. I had two gorgeous men at my disposal, and I was going to take advantage of every second. As we broke through the back entrance and I yanked open the awaiting car door, Barrett crowded in close to my back and whispered gruffly in my ear. "Good thing your Daddy knocked out of that game early."

I stifled a groan and the moment the car door was shut, I dove into Barrett's lap.

17

BARRETT

Rile him up on the way here. Make sure he's ready to combust by the time you get through this door. And power down your phones.

Already done.

I turned my phone off and slid it into my pocket, instructing Stetson to do the same. Levi hardly made it through half that game. We'd been planning this for weeks, and I knew it was hard for Levi to leave us that morning.

Stetson was feral. His hands roamed my body, seeming to be everywhere all at once. He no longer cared for modesty, hauling me through the lobby of the hotel and into the elevator. The doors opened on the top floor and we tumbled out, mauling each other like wild animals. "Fucking finally," Stetson muttered. He ripped my shirt open, sending buttons scattering across the floor. I found Levi's gaze over the boy's shoulder, managing to bring him back to earth long enough to register his Daddy's presence.

"Hey baby boy," Levi whispered, ducking down to lick a stripe up the back of Stetson's neck.

Stetson sighed. "Hi, Daddy." He broke away from my mouth, keeping one arm tight around my waist while the other linked around Levi's neck to bring their lips together. Stetson sucked on Levi's tongue eagerly, hungrily. My mouth watered.

Levi's hands squeezed his hips, drawing a precious little noise right out of him.

Moaning drowned them out, and it took me a moment to realize that the sound came from me. Stetson leaned back on Levi's shoulder. Snatching the opportunity, I nibbled a path up Stetson's neck and to his ear. I tugged his soft lobe between my teeth, and Stetson's mouth separated from Levi's with a hum of pleasure. "Please Daddy," he begged, sending a surge of blood directly to my cock. "Please tell me I get to come tonight."

Levi and I smiled at each other, and I worked at the buttons on Stetson's shirt. "Oh, you will," I said as Levi reached around to undo Stetson's belt. He finished the thought for me.

"But first, we have to get these clothes off."

With Stetson's belt hanging open, Levi undid the clasp of his pants and popped the button with one well-practiced move. He was so hard the zipper practically fell down on its own, and I shoved my hand beneath the fabric to help. While I cupped Stetson's cock, Levi worked his pants down his hips. He rutted into my palm, chasing his release.

"Shit, Stetson," I panted. My own impatient dick throbbed, demanding attention.

The last button unfastened, and Levi helped me slide Stetson's shirt off. The boy stood between us in nothing but tiny boxer briefs that left nothing to the imagination. "Stay right there," Levi commanded, coming to a stop next to me. Together, we admired the sight of what was ours .

The boy's hands trembled by his sides in an effort to stay still. His face was flushed, cheeks red and glowing. His chest heaved with each breath, and his straining erection tested the integrity of the skimpy fabric. A wet spot darkened the cotton, evidence of

how desperate he was.

I slipped his hands beneath Levi's t-shirt, and Stetson clenched his hands into fists. With a pleased smile, Levi reached out for his boy. He came without hesitation. "Are you ready for your instructions?"

"Mmhmm." Stetson nodded emphatically. I tossed Levi's shirt aside, arresting Stetson's attention.

"You want to come tonight, right?" Another nod. "That last orgasm you had, it felt good, didn't it?"

"Yes, Daddy."

"Was it worth losing your orgasms for a month?"

The only response Levi got was a whimper. Stetson's battle with his inner brat was visible. He wanted to say yes. When Levi's hand moved, I grinned. He reached between the two of them, giving the boy's erection a firm squeeze. "Was it, Stetson?"

Eyes watering, Stetson finally nodded. I watched, mesmerized as Levi leaned in, ghosting his lips across Stetson's. Judging by the way his mouth fell open on a silent cry, Levi had added more pressure. "Don't worry baby boy. You have permission to come tonight."

But as Levi let go and stepped around him, Stetson groaned. "Why do I feel like that's too good to be true?"

"Because it is," I said, joining Levi by the side of the bed.

"Come stand over here," he commanded. He obeyed, and only then did his eyes

travel to the objects spread out on the mattress. We had the expected toys and lube, but there were a few things that—based on his reaction—were new to him. “Color.”

Stetson’s gaze slid over the items, then he looked at his Daddy, eyes blazing. “Green.”

Levi smirked, crooking his finger to beckon his boy closer. Stetson gravitated like he was being pulled by a string, entranced by one of the items on the bed. I followed his line of sight, landing on the one thing that may have been our personal favorite. Levi hooked a finger behind the waistband of the electric blue lace panties. As he picked them up, Stetson’s breaths quickened. He licked his lips, rolling the bottom one between his teeth.

“Have a thing for lace, Stetson?” I taunted. My arms crossed over my chest. The boy’s cock visibly throbbed, milking another drop of precome into his underwear. He leaked like a faucet, and it was fucking hot.

Stetson, however, had his gaze locked onto the panties. He nodded slowly, swallowing hard.

Levi’s next move had me shuffling on the spot. He draped the fabric over his hand, brushing the soft material against Stetson’s cheek. His eyes fluttered shut, and he leaned into the sensation. “I don’t want to ruin them,” he whispered. “I’m going to blow the second you touch me.”

“Oh, baby boy,” Levi cooed, kicking even my heart into gear. “That’s the point.”

Levi brought the panties to Stetson’s mouth, nudging until he took them between his teeth. A muffled groan sounded around the silk and lace, Levi’s fingers teasing behind Stetson’s boxer briefs. I coughed around the urge to groan. I’d always gotten off on watching Levi with his boys, but this experience was something else.

Exposed to the cold air, Stetson took in a sharp breath, but the hot blood coursing through his veins and feeding his erection quickly warmed him. Levi worked the fabric down his hips, knocking it to the ground where Stetson kicked it away.

“Good boy,” Levi praised, taking the panties once more “Tonight, I want you to ruin these for me, sweetheart.”

“Oh, fuck,” Stetson cursed.

Then he handed them to me. “Put them on him so I can watch?”

“Happily.”

Levi cleared a spot and sat on the bed, leaning back on his hands. I guided Stetson backward a couple steps by a hand on his chest. The boy’s gaze darted from me to Levi, unsure of where he should be looking. “Close your eyes, baby,” Levi instructed him. As much as we loved those beautiful blues, we needed him grounded.

I knelt before him, guiding him through the leg holes. With both feet planted firmly on the ground, I slid the silky fabric up his calves and his thighs. Stetson shivered, widening his legs to allow me to situate the lace perfectly over his ass. With a few adjustments to make sure his cock was nestled perfectly, I sat back to admire my handiwork.

And it was breathtaking .

Stetson strained the material, precome instantly darkening the silk. Under the attention, his cock pulsed. He clenched and unclenched his fists by his sides, desperate to touch something .

“Put your hands behind your back,” Levi told him, and he did.

Stetson had no problem being the center of attention. But standing there, hard as a rail and wearing nothing more than a pair of lace panties, he seemed... nervous. Or he was so close to orgasm that a strong enough wind would send him over the edge. I smiled over my shoulder. "Are we ready?"

With proud eyes, Levi rose from the bed. "We're ready."

Stetson whined again. Levi stepped up to him and put his hands on his shoulders, stroking down his biceps and back up again. "All right, little one. Relax now." With a deep breath, Levi's hands returned to Stetson's sides and some of the tension left his body. "There's a chair behind you. I want you to take a couple steps back until you can sit down. Can you do that for me?"

Stetson backed up to the edge of the chair and dropped into the seat.

"Do you trust us?" I asked.

An instant bob of Stetson's head. "Both of you."

"Remind me of your colors, baby." Like clockwork, he recited the three colors back to us. Levi and I shared a look. It went without saying that the safewords applied to me too. Any one of us could back out at any time and each person needed to know that. "Good. Keep your eyes shut for me."

18

STETSON

Every muscle in my body quivered from the effort of holding myself back. I thought I'd lose it the moment those panties slid up my legs. I shifted in the chair, and came dangerously close again. My dick was cradled by a pocket of silk so soft, I didn't know if I wanted to come or cry from the overstimulation. The lace, just as smooth, kissed my skin with each movement.

I was in so much trouble.

Even more so when leather straps touched my thighs. I gasped, instinctively flinching. Levi was quick to soothe me, combing his fingers through my hair. "You okay?"

My eyes were still shut. Levi's voice came from my left side, and I knew Barrett was kneeling by my right. He hadn't moved since dressing me. "Fine," I said, breathless. "I wasn't expecting that."

A pair of lips brushed my forehead, chased by a scent of Levi's cologne. "I'm sorry, sweetheart. I should have asked. Are you okay with being restrained?"

Another emphatic nod. Those two men could rip me apart and I'd thank them for it.

"Your shoulder?" Barrett questioned softly.

“Fine.”

“Tell us if they’re too tight.”

I relaxed into the chair, lifting my thighs when instructed to do so. The straps were secured to the chair, spreading my legs wide. I felt both men move, their commanding presence solidifying behind me. Directed to place my hands behind my back, I locked my fingers together. Another strap wound around my chest, crossing over my sternum and hugging my waist. My breath hitched when it was pulled taut, and a silk ribbon secured my wrists. I wiggled, testing the restraints. My chest wasn’t budging. Neither was my wrist, or my right leg. In fact, they were so tight that they pinched when I moved. My left, however, had room to spare. Enough for me to slip out of the belt if I really tried. “The left is loose,” I told them.

“We know,” they said in unison. Had I not been so fucking turned on, that would have been creepy.

“Can I open my eyes?”

“Of course you can,” came from Levi.

I slowly blinked my eyes open, the scene in front of me unfolding as my vision adjusted—and it took my breath away. My men were both shirtless, erections tenting the front of their pants. Barrett in his slacks, and Levi in his jeans. They were as different as night and day. Where Barrett had tattoos dancing over his arms and winding down his chest, Levi’s was covered in a thick layer of hair. His body was softer compared to Barrett’s athletic frame, but both of them drove me wild. They both studied me with smiles on their faces.

Curious, I followed their gazes. Leather belts restricted the movement of my legs, snaking around my thighs and secured to the chair. A matching harness crossed over

my chest, keeping me from moving my upper half. My hands were cuffed behind my back. And fuck me, the panties they put me in should have been illegal. I moaned at the sensation of the soft silk brushing my oversensitive cock.

“Feel good, baby?” Levi asked me, eyes sparkling.

“Mmhmm...”

Barrett spoke next. “Ready for the next step?”

When I nodded, Levi stepped around the bed and snatched a toy from the mattress. It was huge, easily the size of my forearm, a deep green with a single on button at the bottom. Oh ! Levi slid the wand beneath the leather band on my left leg, positioning the head flush against the underside of my cock and tightening the restraint to hold it in place. The vibrations from that thing were likely to kill me in five seconds flat.

Then Levi picked up a matching remote.

I was fucked.

My responding whine transformed into a yelp when Levi pressed the power button. Squirming, I tried to find the words to beg him to turn it off. It was too much, I was too close. “Daddy!”

“It’s okay, baby,” Levi cooed. “You’re allowed to come tonight, remember?”

I did remember. Oh, trust me; I remembered. But we’d only just gotten started. I writhed in the seat, hips attempting to buck away from the wand, but the restraints were too tight. My belly tightened and tingle zipped down my spine. I squeezed my eyes shut. Levi bumped up the intensity, and that was it. “I’m coming!”

Climax slammed into me, and I shouted. Come drenched the silk pocket of my panties and spilled through the lace. My body shook, my head spun. The release went on and on, the aftershocks as strong as the orgasm itself. When I looked up again, Barrett and Levi stood there watching me. Slowly, the blood rushing through my ears quieted and the loud buzz of the toy echoed off the walls. As if that sound was what my body needed to register the wand's presence, overstimulation hit me like a freight train.

“ Fuck! Turn it off, turn it off, turn it off,” I begged. I tried to wriggle away, but it was in vain. Damn it, Levi cranked it up. Tears pricked the corners of my eyes. It didn't hurt. It tickled , in the most intense way. I felt like I was going to cry. Or explode. Or both. My hips rocked, with no escape from the powerful vibrations of the toy. I growled, biting down on my tongue to keep from screaming. It was too much. I couldn't take it.

But just when my safeword formed on my lips, Levi lowered the setting and the torturous feeling subsided. The vibrator still hummed, but I wasn't as desperate to get away.

Oh, shit. This was my consequence. I was going to get to come, but couldn't stop until they said so.

Well, if that's how they wanted to play it.

I closed my eyes and took a deep breath, hips kicking against the toy. Things were wet and sticky now, escalating the feeling. I gulped. “Are you going to watch me all night?”

They answered together. “Nope.”

“ You're going to watch us, ” Barrett clarified.

My gaze then fell to the remaining item on the bed: lube. Waves of pleasure surged through my veins, and I grew hard again. Confident that I'd be able to last this time, I relaxed in the chair and crooked a brow at them. "What are you waiting for?"

Barrett shook his head. "You have no idea what you're in for, Rookie."

He climbed onto the bed on his knees, situating himself in the middle and patting the mattress in front of him. "Have a seat, Lee."

Oh, hell. Levi was about to get fucked? My cock punched against the panties, and I told it to go the fuck back to sleep. But with the vibrator assaulting me at full speed—surely it had to be at full speed—it didn't get the memo. So I took a deep breath, and willed myself to drag this one out.

Levi sat, and Barrett moved in close behind him. With a pleased hum, Levi let his head fall back against Barrett's chest. Barrett ran his palms over Levi's biceps, smoothing over the front of his chest and combing through that hair I wanted to bury my face in. He paused, rolling Levi's nipples between his fingers. The resulting moan buzzed through my veins and sent a surge of blood to my cock. I forced myself to look down. The evidence of my first orgasm was quickly drying on the silk, but precome rivaled it and created a puddle behind the fabric. Determined, I bit my lip and refocused on my men.

Levi watched me. He pressed a button, switching the toy to a pulsing rhythm, and I gritted my teeth. Levi leaned further into Barrett's arms, and tattooed hands continued their path down his stomach, stopping on his belt. It fell open expertly, as did the button and zipper on his jeans. Levi lifted his hips and let Barrett push the fabric off. Levi helped the process, tossing his clothes aside. I didn't see where they went. I didn't care. My Daddy was naked in front of me, and that was a sight I wasn't going to miss for the world.

Another button pressed, and the vibrations heightened. My eyes rolled back in my head, but I forced my gaze forward. I was not missing this.

Metal clinked behind him, and the next thing I knew, Barrett was naked in all his tattooed glory. I focused on my breathing, fighting the urge to buck against the vibrator again. It droned on, buzzing torturously and combating the sound of my pulse in my ears. Levi backed onto the bed, situating himself on his knees and reaching back to hold Barrett close. Barrett mouthed over the side of his neck, peppering kisses to the skin that Levi leaned into. Slowly, an inked-up arm crept around Levi's chest and skated down to the erection protruding from his thighs. My hips wiggled of their own accord. I wanted to know what that hand felt like.

Levi upped the vibrations, and I squeezed my eyes shut. The threat of a second orgasm crept in, and I willed it away. No, not yet. Judging by the intensity of the fire coursing through my veins, another orgasm would likely kill me.

Barrett met my eyes over Levi's shoulder and flashed me a sinister grin. His free hand laced through Levi's hair and clenched. Levi hissed, wincing against the pain. But the drop of precome that dripped from his cock said that he loved it. Using that grip, Barrett gave Levi a gentle push until he braced himself on all fours. He lowered onto his forearms, presenting his gorgeous ass to Barrett. I whined, thrashing against my restraints again. I wanted to be over there. Fuck, I wanted to come again.

My dick jumped at the opportunity. I gritted my teeth, but a pathetic noise pushed through anyway.

"Ready to come again for me, baby?"

At the breathy tone in Levi's voice, I pried my eyes open.

Oh, shit...

Levi's thighs were spread wide. One of Barrett's hands flattened on Levi's lower back. Fuck me . The other disappeared between Levi's cheeks and based on the obscene squelching noise—and the way Levi's eyelids fluttered—Barrett was at least two fingers deep. My hips rocked of their own accord, my body no longer mine to control.

Everything I had belonged to the two men in front of me.

Sparks danced in my vision, and a second orgasm ripped through me. I fought it tooth and nail, but that damned vibrator sped up even more. My hips hitched, my pace falling uneven. Come spurted through the material once more, drenching the toy and dribbling down my thigh. In anticipation of the uncomfortable sensation, I gritted my teeth, biting my tongue to keep myself from begging.

But it didn't last long.

"Oh, fuck! Please, Daddy!" I shouted, no longer caring if anyone on the floor below heard. "Turn it off. Please turn it off."

He didn't. Levi's growl matched mine as I assumed Barrett brushed his prostate.

In fact, the vibrations got even stronger. I screamed, the sound rattling off the walls and making my throat sore. "Fuck," I panted. "Fuck, fuck, fuck."

My eyes burned with the threat of tears... and then it was over. The vibrations slowed, and I sighed in relief. The sensation was barely a tickle now, but still enough to make my hips kick in their confines. "Please," I begged. "Please, Daddy. Can I have a break?"

My breaths came in heavy pants, my lungs aching and desperate for oxygen. The vibrator didn't slow, but Levi spoke. "Are you using your safeword, Stetson?"

I thought about it. I truly thought about it. But the overwhelming tickle faded, and the vibrations felt good again. Considering the fact that I may have lost my mind, I shook my head. “No, Daddy.”

LEVI

I struggled to keep my eyes open against Barrett's assault on my prostate. He tapped the sensitive gland, my hips jerking and my cock leaking precome all over his hand. But I kept my gaze on my boy. Stetson's lust-filled eyes peered at me between sweat-drenched locks of blond hair. Rings of bright blue framed blown out pupils, and I grinned.

"No, Daddy."

Then, as I upped the intensity of the vibrator again, his head rolled back and his eyes squeezed shut. "Then you'll take what you're —ah, shit— given."

With that, I dropped the remote. Stetson would live with a steady buzz for a few minutes. I clenched the sheets in my fists, rocking back onto Barrett's fingers. "More," I demanded, sighing when I was graced with a third digit. It had been too long since I'd let Barrett take me for a ride. When we were deciding what to do with Stetson and the idea of post orgasm torment came up, we thought what better way to tease him than with his own live porn shoot right in front of him? One he couldn't join.

I looked back to my boy. The panties I'd put him in were already soaked, the blue silk on the front darkened with his come. A smile curled the corner of my mouth. I could see his dick twitching behind the fabric from the repeated vibrations. Clear liquid seeped through the lace, further darkening the color. I knew it would be perfect

for him. When I'd seen them, the first thought I had was that it matched his eyes, and I couldn't click the purchase button fast enough. Trembling, muscular thighs framed the bulge between them and I didn't need to see to know his perfect little ass was cradled gorgeously by the lace on the back. His chiseled stomach tensed with the threat of another orgasm, and his toned chest heaved up and down with each hard-earned breath. His skin, glistening with sweat, flushed that beautiful pink from his cheeks all the way down his torso. Oversensitivity had him fighting the restraints, the leather biting into his skin and turning it red. Fuck, I couldn't wait to see the marks left behind.

Barrett crooked his fingers again, and I squeezed my eyes shut. My cock was already desperate for release, but I was nowhere near finished. I needed at least one more orgasm from Stetson to make this worth it, and Barrett still had to come. "I'm ready, Bear," I said, voice thick with desire. The words had Stetson centering himself and peeling his eyes open to look at me. When Barrett pulled his fingers free and lined up behind me, Stetson's eyes widened. A desperate, keening cry pushed past his lips and his body tensed. The restraints cut into his muscles, and his cock erupted once more. As Barrett pushed through, I watched pulse after pulse of sticky, white liquid seep through the panties. Right on cue, Stetson's baby blues widened. He bit his tongue and slammed his eyes shut but it was to no avail. I grabbed the remote and lowered the speed, knowing that no matter what, any sensation against Stetson's poor dick would be too much. With each orgasm, he grew more sensitive, and I was eating it up.

"Turn it off!" He yelled, seeming to give no fucks about anyone overhearing. He shouted then, a low, guttural scream ripping from deep in his chest. "Daddy, please! I ca-I can't take it anymore. Please!"

I didn't hear the word "red" in there, so I obviously didn't give in. I did play with the settings, finding a pulse that seemed to drive him wild. He wiggled in the chair, hips trying to escape the abuse. This time, tears broke free and poured down his cheeks in

salty rivers. Now the red in his eyes matched his cheeks and the stripes across his chest. I imagined the silk tie digging into his wrists, and my cock jerked in Barrett's hand. Having bottomed out, he paused to let me adjust and gave me a squeeze. "Damn, baby," I said, unsure which man it was directed to. But I made damn sure my next words were clear. "You look so pretty when you cry for us, Stetson."

The response was another choked sob and with a hand on my back, Barrett got to work. I groaned as he withdrew, and grunted when his hips snapped forward. Stetson keened through gritted teeth. The remote fell to the bed and I let the toy run. Stetson was reduced to nothing more than an overstimulated mess. He could no longer form words, instead spitting out a string of incoherent babbles. When his hips went from jerking to swiveling, I knew he was climbing toward another climax. Tears fell in a steady stream now, and he writhed and thrashed against the restraints so violently that I half feared they would break the skin.

"That's it, baby boy," I praised. "Let it happen."

My voice hitched, Barrett's cock grazing my prostate. My fists clenched again, my orgasm becoming harder and harder to keep at bay. But I couldn't— wouldn't... not until both of my men did first. Barrett moaned behind me, fingers digging into my hips. He propped one leg onto the bed next to me, angling his hips to thrust deeper. I was the one to cry out that time, my resolve wearing thin. Sweat beaded up and dripped down my face, splotching onto the white sheets beneath me. I reached for the remote once more, turning the vibrator to the max setting in one swift movement.

Stetson damn near jolted out of the chair. My spine tingled in that telltale way it did just before I lost control, and I pulled a move that I knew would drive Barrett wild... and right over the edge.

I rose onto my knees, forcing him to bury himself all the way to the hilt. "Oh, fuck," he growled, wrapping a strong arm around my chest to hold me upright. His nails dug

into my shoulder, giving me a delicious sting of pain. He nailed my prostate with one thrust after another, constant and relentless. Then he went rigid, a snarl clawing from deep in his chest as his orgasm tore through his body. His cock swelled, pulsing deep within me. The hot rush of come in my ass sent me careening over the edge before I could do a damned thing about it. Thick ropes of come shot out, painting Barrett's hand and my chest.

But as I came down from the high and Barrett pulled out, a whimper caught my attention. When our eyes locked... Damn , my boy was completely and utterly wrecked. His hair soaked through with sweat, he struggled to even keep his eyes open. Breathing? What was that? He was reduced to nothing more than shallow pants. His cock strained the soiled material of his panties, but he was close to another release. I could tell in the way he trembled so violently his body almost blurred. Barrett withdrew, disappearing into the bathroom and I grabbed the remote and crossed the room to tend to my boy.

I approached with cautious steps, Barrett's release dribbling down my thighs. "One more time for me, baby," I whispered, bending at the waist and bracing myself on the arms of Stetson's chair.

He shook his head. "I can't." His voice was nothing more than a whisper, the words catching in his throat. His body twitched and jerked, desperate to get away from the wet, slippery toy abusing his oversensitive cock.

I hooked a finger under his chin and lifted his gaze to mine. Beautiful, glossy eyes gazed back at me. A lone tear escaped and trickled down his cheek, following the trail of others before.

He was fucking gorgeous.

"Yes you can, baby boy," I coaxed. "I know you can give me one more." This time, I

turned the vibrator off. Stetson sighed in relief, but it was short-lived. I dropped my hand between us and cupped his cock in my hand. He wept, but accepted the torture. I rubbed him through the soiled silk as I slowly lowered to my knees. After working the vibrator free with my other hand, I slowly lowered the panties and exposed his red, overworked dick. He was still hard as a rail, and I didn't hesitate to wrap my fingers around him.

Stetson shouted, but Barrett was quick to rush to his side. He positioned himself behind the boy and tipped his head back, pacifying him with a kiss.

"You are so perfect," I whispered. "Can you snap your fingers for us?" It was faint, but I heard a weak sound from behind the chair. "Good," I praised. "Snap if you need to tap out."

Without waiting, I leaned over and swallowed his poor cock to the back of my throat, eliciting another muffled cry. I swallowed, and the constriction of my throat sent a burst of precome washing over my tongue. Their kiss ended with a sloppy-sounding smack, and Barrett made me fall in love with him all over again. "You can do it, baby," he whispered to Stetson. "You've been so good. One last time."

Stetson whimpered. "It'll break me."

"And we'll be right here to pick up the pieces."

I groaned around Stetson's girth and he wriggled beneath me. He was so close and it wouldn't take much to work that fourth orgasm out of him. With a gentle press of my tongue against the underside of his cockhead, I did. The chair left the floor, and I held it down. He let out one last choked cry that Barrett happily swallowed with another kiss. A final, weak pulse of come shot onto my tongue, which I eagerly swallowed. I pulled off gently, already undoing the restraints while Barrett untied Stetson's hands and released the chest harness. Finally, I removed the panties from Stetson's hips.

The leather and soiled lace was tossed aside, and I rose and took my boy in my arms.

He could barely stand, relying on my grip around his waist to hold him up. His fingers dug into my shoulders. “Thank you, Daddy,” he whispered, surprising me. Curling into the crook of my neck, he pressed kisses over the skin there. “Thank you.”

“You’re welcome, sweet boy.” I chuckled and pressed my lips to his temple. He still shook in my arms, coming down from the adrenaline that had been coursing through his veins for hours—for weeks .

“I’m sorry I ruined those panties. I liked them.”

“Good thing I bought more.”

He gave me a weak smile and swayed on the spot. I steadied him, Barrett’s hand meeting mine on his waist. “I’ve already run a bath,” he said softly, earning a hum from the boy between us.

“Bath nice,” he mumbled, so deep in subspace it wouldn’t surprise me if he didn’t know which way was up. It would have to be a quick bath. I couldn’t have him falling asleep in the water.

Despite Stetson’s protests, Barrett and I only kept him in the tub long enough to get him clean and rinse the sweat from his hair. After hastily drying him off and convincing him to eat something, he collapsed into bed. He was asleep before his head hit the pillow. I laid to one side of him, and Barrett on the other. This time, Stetson laid on my chest with his right leg tossed over Barrett’s hips. Barrett winced. “I should have used the bathroom first.”

I snorted. “I can move him.”

“No. I’ll be fine for a while. Let him rest.”

I didn’t respond, content to watch our boy sleep. The moonlight streamed through the window, highlighting wet lashes on his cheekbones. He snored softly, fast asleep, but the ghost of a smile still twitched his lip. “He’s it, Bear,” I whispered.

“I know.” Barrett reached across Stetson’s back and grabbed my hand. “I’ve known since the day you brought him home.”

He laced our fingers together over Stetson’s hip and we fell silent. Something changed that night. I couldn’t quite place what it was, but I knew that no matter what happened going forward, this moment right here would be my solace. Stetson curled into my side was my light in the darkness, and Barrett’s hand in mine the anchor that grounded me in a storm. With that thought, I rested my head against Stetson’s and fell into a deep, sated sleep.

20

LEVI

Three Months Later

August

In some parts of the country, the temperature would have shifted by now. The leaves swapped their vibrant green for the warm oranges and reds that accompanied autumn. A cool wind would blow in the evening, causing that nervous person to take that step closer to their crush.

Georgia said to hell with that.

As if it were some competition, midday in Georgia climbed well over ninety degrees, pushing one hundred in some places. It was miserable, to say the least. Throw in some typical downtown Atlanta traffic, and it's a recipe for disaster. My car's air conditioner deserved a serious pay rise. My temper was nearing the end of its rope and I began to question turning around and going back home when the traffic finally cleared.

I didn't go into the office very often, especially since my hands had been full in more ways than one. Major League Baseball was in the final rounds of games before the playoffs, and the tension could be felt throughout the community. If Barrett and Stetson weren't working themselves to the bone in the gym, they were in our bed, driving me wild with every little move they made.

Our bed. That was a new development. Stetson had moved in with us. Barrett brought it up and surprisingly, it was me who hesitated. The World Series was within eyesight, and neither of them needed any distractions. But we sat down and talked it out, ultimately deciding that it was time, even if it was soon. The two of them were up before the sun every morning, hitting the gym and running laps at a local little minor league field. Off the diamond, they were inseparable. Sometimes they were so tangled up together in the mornings that Barrett's tattoos were the only indicator of which limb belonged to which man. In work mode, however, they challenged each other to be their best. The baseball gods knew what they were doing when they put those two men on rival teams. They would be far too powerful on the same side.

Even the short walk from the parking deck to my building had me drenched in sweat. I stepped through the rotary doors, pausing to welcome the chill from the overhead air conditioning. As I looked up from my phone, I noticed people staring. It didn't faze me; I simply thought they wondered why some guy was stopped right in front of the door. Ignoring the stares—and the rest of my notifications—I pocketed my phone and took the elevator to the tenth floor. With Stetson and Barrett both out of town, the house was just too damned quiet. I couldn't get anything done.

Though the oddities continued once I stepped into my suite. There were three offices, one off each wall. In front of the typically closed doors were two desks facing each other for our assistants. Today, my door was the only one shut. The other two were wide open and as the glass door shut behind me, my colleagues rushed out of their offices. They halted when they saw I hadn't moved, and the assistants stopped what they were doing to glance between the group of us. I slipped my keys from my pocket. "Good morning?" I said quizzically.

The young assistants seemed just as lost as I was. Confused, they returned to their work, but that didn't stop them from glancing my way. My two coworkers were sports agents as well: hockey and football. Our paths didn't typically cross outside of friendly office chat. I unlocked my door, still feeling eyes on my back. Frustrated, I

spun to face them. “What’s the problem?”

The two men shared a look. Mikey, the football agent, was the one to speak. “We didn’t think you’d be working today.”

I crooked my brow. “Why’s that?”

He shared another look with Kit, the hockey one, who strangely hadn’t said a word. “Quiet” wasn’t a word one would use to describe Kit Graves. “W-we thought?”

“Spit it out, Mikey.”

“We saw the news,” Kit blurted.

That didn’t clear anything up. “What news?”

Mikey sighed and raked a hand through his salt-and-pepper hair. He tapped his assistant, Jay, on the shoulder, offering them a credit card. “Go get yourself some coffee.”

“It’s a hundred degrees outside,” they argued.

“Then make it an iced coffee. And take Miranda with you.”

Okay, was the apocalypse happening? Jay and Miranda tossed me a look as they went for the door. I shrugged, and they disappeared. Mikey waited, watching through the glass until they were safely behind the elevator doors. He waved his hand to his office door. “Come in, have a seat.”

“I’m not one of your athletes, Mike.”

But that didn't stop my legs from carrying me across the room. He let me in first, and I plopped myself into one of the chairs. I felt like I was in some sort of interrogation. Kit stood in the open doorway as if I'd make a break for it. Was I in some kind of trouble? Neither of them were my bosses, though, so I wasn't sure what the hell could have been going on.

Mikey rounded his desk, sat down, and typed some words into his computer. He flipped the monitor around. Oh, shit.

On the screen was a news article.

Barrett Swindon: Player On and Off the Field

Beneath it was a picture of Stetson and Barrett, loved up on the rooftop restaurant of The PUBLIC Hotel in New York City. Their faces weren't visible, but Stetson was leaning in for a kiss and the hand cupping his chin was definitely Barrett's. His sleeve had slipped, revealing the snake inked around his wrist. My stomach roiled. I didn't even continue to read the article. I simply leaned back in the chair and stared at the picture. There was no mistaking it. Instead, I focused on trying to identify the angle of the photo. The restaurant behind them was empty. There wasn't a soul in sight, so clearly no one there took the photo. Besides, the camera was on the other side of the railing, which meant that someone would have to have been suspended 300 feet in the air.

Fuck, it was a drone.

I couldn't speak, couldn't breathe. The playoffs were weeks away, and something like this would throw a wrench in both teams' plans. The problem wasn't two men on a date. The MLB instated a rule years ago that a player couldn't be discriminated against for their sexuality. Sure, you had the odd fan that had something smart to say but not too many people paid much attention. It was 2023, and if the league got

caught singling someone out because of who they chose to have in their bed, it would only end badly for them.

No, the problem lied in the teams themselves. Part of the fun in baseball was the tension, and I didn't mean sexual. The Thrashers and The Hellbenders had a long history of rivalry. Why? No one was exactly sure, but it made for a fun game. There was never any deep hostility between the players, but baseball fans could get rowdy, especially where alcohol was involved. Mikey offered to scroll down so I could read the comments, but I declined. I didn't want to. I came out in a world where people were less accepting, and I didn't want to see that happen to either of my men. With my eyes closed, I took a deep breath, hoping that it would calm me down.

It didn't work.

"When?" was all I could manage.

"It broke this morning," Mikey admitted. When I opened my eyes, he'd spun the monitor to its rightful position and was looking at me with sad eyes. "You had no idea?"

I shook my head. Our phones had been off all night. We had an unspoken agreement that when we were together, our phones were the last thing on our minds. It started with me, but slowly Stetson and Barrett followed. We even had a designated phone drawer in each room. With them having early flights, and me not wanting to deal with anything that didn't involve pulling them both back into bed, it went missed.

"I'm uh..." Kit stuttered from behind me. "I'm sorry, Levi. Sucks to be cheated on. Especially so publicly."

Oh. Oh, fuck.

“No,” I said, dropping my head into my hands. To be honest, all I could do was laugh. My world was falling apart, and not for the reason people thought. The ESPN headline flashed behind my closed eyes. Everyone thought Barrett was cheating on me with the enemy. I laughed for so long and my giggle fit grew so violent that now I couldn’t breathe for a whole other reason.

“Levi?” Mikey asked, concern in his voice.

I took another moment to center myself, then wiped tears from my eyes. “Barrett’s not cheating on me.”

His eyes flicked to the computer screen, then back to me. “If he’s not I’d like to know why he’s that close to another man’s mouth. Was he choking?”

I groaned, scrubbing my hand over my face. People in my office knew I was gay. Hell I knew for a fact that Mikey was likely the only straight person there, but they weren’t entitled to all the details of my private life. Polyamory and kink was even more taboo sometimes than anything else. I had to be careful who I told. I was trying to figure out how to form the words in my head when Kit dropped into the seat next to me, fascinated. “They’re both yours.”

A goofy grin plastered itself across my face, and I couldn’t do anything to stop it. “Yeah. Things are new with Stetson but he’s mine too.”

Mikey let out a sigh of relief. “Thank fuck. I don’t have to take out Georgia’s Little Superstar.” Some of the tension in the room eased. Slightly. “Where are they?”

“Stetson’s in Orlando kicking some Florida ass, and Barrett’s in Minneapolis.”

“I’m assuming they don’t know.”

I checked my phone—not a peep from either of them. “One of them would have called me by now.”

Just then, Miranda and Jay returned, the ice from their coffees rattling around in the cup as they muttered quietly to each other. “Will one of you come here please?” Mikey called.

Between the two assistants, neither was specifically assigned to one of us. They both had their strengths, and their efforts combined kept the place running smoothly. I didn’t turn once I sensed Jay’s presence behind me. I was busy trying to text my guys.

“Can you clear Levi’s schedule for today?” With one look at the frantic way my fingers dashed across the screen, Mikey corrected himself. “Hell, for the week.”

“Sure,” Jay said. “Is there anything in particular I should say?”

“Family emergency,” I muttered. Without a single reply, I rose to my feet, thanking Jay and dashing out of the office. Where I was headed I wasn’t sure, but I knew I needed to get the hell out of there.

21

BARRETT

The locker room was quiet that day.

Silence was typical before a game but after the news, tension sizzled in the air. Not only did my entire team think I was cheating on my partner, I'd been caught with the enemy. I didn't have it in me to tell them the truth, nor did I know if it would matter. We all knew what a publicity nightmare it was. With the World Series within arm's reach, it was horrific timing.

We'd lost both games against the Thrashers, but still had a chance. If we worked hard enough, we would have a straight shot into the Division Series.

There was way too much pressure for me to waver now.

The coaches and team managers had gotten ahead of the drama, and we were under strict instructions not to discuss anything related to that picture until after our game against the Minnesota Bobcats. The last thing we needed was to get in our heads, but it was too late for me. The image was seared into my brain. I'd stared at it for hours, analyzing every detail, pouring over everything from that night.

Vicky and I went back to my rookie days, and I had full confidence that she hadn't leaked anything to the press. It had to be someone else. I'd been so wrapped up in Stetson that I hadn't even heard that damn drone. I hadn't read the article long enough to see the name of the journalist. I hadn't wanted to. If I had, I was liable to

hunt them down and make their life a living hell. I didn't need my name in the press any more than necessary.

I couldn't say any thing to any one without talking to the teams publicist first. Hell, without talking to Stetson . And God, Levi. What was Levi going to think?

I smiled to myself. Thinking that Levi would be anything but concerned for me was laughable. He'd never made me feel like anything less than his top priority. Only now, I had to share that spot. Looking down at my cleats, my grin faded. Either this whole ordeal would send Stetson running for the hills, or off the rails. I glanced at my phone hanging out of my jacket pocket. Worrying my bottom lip, I contemplated calling him, but he'd already be on the field. So I grabbed the phone and called the only other person who could make me feel better in that moment.

“Bear...”

Eyes closed, I melted in his voice. That gruff, rumbling sound alone calmed the hornets shredding my stomach to pieces. “Hi,” I said softly, trying not to draw the attention of my teammates.

“Are you okay?”

I considered lying, but I didn't have it in me. “Not really.”

“I can be on a plane in an hour.”

“No,” I answered instantly. “As much as I hate to admit it, it might make things worse. The whole baseball community thinks I'm a cheater.”

“We could tell the truth.”

“We can’t, Lee. Not without talking to Stetson.” Levi groaned, and I imagined him tugging at the ends of his hair like he tended to do when he was stressed. “If you’re going to go anywhere it should be to Orlando. If someone crosses him the wrong way?—”

“He’ll combust,” Levi finished.

“And I’d hate to be the people caught in the blast zone when he detonates.”

Levi sighed, admitting that I was right. I’d already heard some of the terms that were being thrown around about Stetson, and while “homewrecker” was among the milder ones, it still wasn’t nice. I didn’t imagine he would take kindly to someone saying it to his face. “I love you, Bear,” Levi said. “And I’ll say it to anyone who asks.”

A grin tugged at my lips. “I love you too, but maybe you should keep your head down until we meet with the publicists.”

We hung up, and I tucked my phone away. Rolling my neck and squaring my shoulders, I tied the laces on my cleats and stood up. It was time for me to put my game face on. A few players hung around, staring at me. “Can I help you?”

Every single one of them flushed a bright shade of red and suddenly found something more interesting to do.

God, this was going to be a long game.

* * *

We lost. Horrifically.

That wasn’t even the worst part. I couldn’t turn one way or the other without seeing

the flash of a camera, or having some reporter jam a microphone in my face. It didn't matter how many "No comments" I threw their way, they were relentless.

I hated journalists.

My teammates wanted nothing to do with me, and I couldn't blame them. I'd be pretty pissed if the tables were turned, but I knew I had to be careful. Polyamory was beyond one of the most misunderstood situations in the world.

Back in the locker room, I collapsed into my seat and pulled my hat off my head. I needed a shower, desperately, but I found myself torn between braving the clubhouse showers or finding myself a hotel and holing down for the night. I didn't want to stay with the rest of the team. Though getting anywhere unseen would be difficult without the team's security.

Though I didn't necessarily want to see the backlash, I grabbed my phone and scrolled through the seemingly endless notifications. There was only one name I wanted to see and there, buried amongst all the other bullshit, was a text from Stetson. Needing nothing more than to hear his voice, my finger hovered over the call icon.

"Swindon!"

Startled, my phone clattered to the floor. I glanced over my shoulder to see one of my coaches coming my way. It was odd, having a coach that was so close in age to me. Younger, actually. He'd retired after a career-ending injury, but his love of the game kept him in it. He was still fit, his black polo pulling tight across his chest. He tugged his Hellbenders team cap off his head and removed his sunglasses. "The publicist is ready for you."

Of course she was. But I wasn't ready for her, not ready to face the fire. Exhausted

and no longer concerned about the shower, I grabbed my duffel and slung it over my shoulder, then retrieved my buzzing phone from the floor. It was Stetson again. “Later,” I said to my coach.

“Barrett, I wasn’t?—”

“I said, ‘later.’” Fuck, I wanted to cringe away from the tone in my own voice. I didn’t get mean or snappy very often, but it had been a long, exhausting day, and the last thing I wanted to do was figure out a statement. I wasn’t even sure what I’d say and in my eyes, putting out a lie was worse than hunkering down until I was ready.

Even my teammates had stopped what they were doing, gathering around to watch the show. “I’m exhausted,” I said in a much calmer tone. “In the last twelve hours, my private life has been exposed to the world for the second time in my career. Sue me if the only thing I want to do right now is hide. That’s exactly what I’m going to do. The publicist and those vultures crowding around outside the clubhouse doors will get their statements when I’m damn good and ready to give it to them.”

As I moved to leave, a hand found my bicep to hold me in place. I sighed, defeated. I should have known better. I closed my eyes and took a few deep breaths, then motioned for Coach to leave the clubhouse ahead of me. Ignoring the skeptical look he threw me, I trudged behind him.

Like I’d actually try and make a break for it.

Ten years ago I would have. Hell, the urge lingered now. This whole ordeal had brought up old feelings that I thought had been long buried.

It was a jealous teammate that broke the news about me and Levi. True, I’d gotten bold. I’d been traveling so much that we hadn’t seen each other, and I thought everyone had gone home for the evening. I swept Levi into a dark corner of the

clubhouse to steal a kiss... or five, and what do you know—someone hid in the locker rooms. As luck would have it, that player thought I'd stolen his spot in the starting lineup, and he wanted revenge.

I don't think we made it to the car before our phones were lighting up with news alerts. Levi, being the saint that he was, took complete control of the situation. I'll admit that I didn't react in the best way possible. My solution was to hunt down the asshole who did it and put my entire career on the line to retaliate.

Lucky for me, Levi could read me like a book from day one. He put a stop to that before I could make a single move. Within twenty-four hours, he approached me with a lawyer and a suggestion to terminate my contract, signing with another agent immediately. The paperwork would be backdated to a week before the incident, and both Levi and I would have to give official statements that no inappropriate relationship was in place before the end of my contract.

The player that sold us out was removed from his team, and blacklisted in the world of pro sports.

As I trudged behind Coach to the press room, every single one of those heightened emotions sizzled beneath my skin. It took a lot of recalling my breathing exercises to keep my temper at bay. Thankfully, no press had been allowed inside the clubhouse. Outside of the last few players, the place was desolate.

Just before he opened the door, Coach paused and lowered his voice to avoid listening ears. "Do you want me to stay? Help with damage control?"

I shook my head, though I was grateful for the offer. "Thanks, but I got it." I took a deep breath, silenced my phone, and slid it into my pocket. I would call Stetson back after this. I promised myself. "Hopefully this is quick so I can get out of here."

Without another word, he pushed the door open and shut it behind me once I'd entered. The click echoed throughout the quiet room. Britney sat at the large table in the midst of the space. Engrossed in her tablet, she paid me no mind. I hovered near the door and waited to be addressed. I'm sure I wasn't standing there for hours, but it sure as hell felt like it.

Britney had been with the team for a few years now. When you spent so much time in the public eye, scandals were anticipated. Whether the rumors were true or not, it was up to her to build the perfect image for the team. Standing at five feet tall— with the heels that I could hear clicking up and down the hall in my nightmares—you wouldn't think much of her. Her blonde hair was always perfectly styled, and her makeup not a smudge out of place. The suits she wore were always impeccable. Then again, when you spend most of your career on camera, you invest in your appearance.

Though no one should have ever let Britney's appearance fool them. Black widows envied the webs I'd seen her spin.

"Have a seat, Barrett," she finally said, setting her tablet down. She removed her red-rimmed glasses, lightly dabbing at her eyes so as not to ruin her makeup. Then she surprised me, reaching behind her head and untwisting the tight bun at the nape of her neck. Soft, blonde waves fell over her shoulders. I could only watch as she combed through them with her fingers, breaking through the heap of product that glued the strands in place. She shifted, and the back-to-back thunks that sounded under the table had to be her shoes hitting the floor.

"We could always do this tomorrow if you're tired," I said, hoping she'd take the bait but knowing all the same that she wouldn't. As I thought, icy gray eyes met mine across the table. I forced a laugh, shrugging my shoulders. "Worth a shot."

"Trust me," she finally said. "The last thing I want to do is still be at this clubhouse. I think even a straight woman would get tired of seeing your faces all day."

In spite of everything, I snickered. Britney slid the tablet across the table and flipped it around to show me the screen. I fought the urge to look away. That photo would haunt me for the rest of my life, and the thought wrecked me. The image wasn't a bad one. In fact, under different circumstances, I'd have it printed and framed. I cupped Stetson's chin in my hand, pulling him in for a kiss. The snapshot was taken the moment before our lips touched. My mouth was quirked into a satisfied grin. My stomach flipped.

"Put it away please," I said, my voice hoarse. I cleared my throat and shoved the tablet across the table.

She obeyed, shutting the screen off and sliding the device to the side. "I've had a tech digging all day. We figured out who it was."

"I don't want to?—"

"It was Vicky."

"What?" Nausea roiled my stomach. Every single blood cell drained from my face.

No, that wasn't possible. Certainly I heard her wrong. It was late, and I was exhausted. I glanced at the clock on the wall. I'd been awake nearly twenty-four hours. Having Stetson in the bed meant that I wasn't getting nearly as much sleep as I needed.

"Are you sure?" I asked, already knowing what the answer would be.

Britney nodded grimly. "I'm sorry, Barrett. Off the record, I went to the journalist who published the article. They said they received an anonymous text saying that you were at the rooftop restaurant with someone who wasn't Levi, and it was clearly an intimate occasion. I had a friend in IT track the text, and it led back to Vicky. I've

already informed PUBLIC. Vicky's been fired and the hotel is accepting full liability."

"What's the point?" I spat, temper flaring. "The damage is already done."

"I know." Britney sat forward, folding her hands and resting her chin on her fingers. "I've been sitting here all night trying to figure out how to do this. We need you to put out an apology."

Was she serious? "No."

She scoffed. "What do you mean 'no?'"

"Is there any other meaning of the word? I don't know which way you want to spin this, Britney, but I'm not brandishing myself as a cheater."

Confused, she tilted her head. "If that's not the case then you have one hell of an explanation to make, Barrett. Because after the public scandal that was you and Levi Grant, you've now been caught kissing the most sought-after rookie in the entire league. It's up to you to explain this, sooner rather than later."

"Not without talking to them."

"Who is 'them?'"

Exasperated, I scrubbed my hand through my greasy hair. Ew . "You're smarter than that." I didn't entertain her further conversation. It was well past time for me to leave. "No one is entitled to what I do in my private life. That was the case with Levi, and it's the same now that Stetson's in the picture. It's not just my reputation on the line anymore. I'm not putting out any statement until I've talked to them first. We're done here."

I pulled my cap back on and put on my sunglasses. As a kid watching the tabloid shows, I often wondered why celebrities wore them all the time. Now I understood. When you had a million cameras flashing in your face, you did good to see six inches in front of you. Even glasses only did so much, and I used my hand to shield myself from the offending lights.

Names cycled through their onslaught of questions. “ Barrett, Levi, Stetson... ”

I ignored them, pushing through the crowd until I sat in the back of a car. Naturally, the driver went toward the team’s hotel.

Fuck it.

I fished through my bag and pulled out some cash, reaching forward to hand it to him. “Could you take me to the airport instead?”

“Sure thing.”

I could shower in the airport lounge, and sleep on the plane. It would be easy to hop a flight to Raleigh for our next game.

I wanted to go home.

22

STETSON

This was bullshit. This whole fucking situation was absolute bullshit .

We'd been on the plane to Orlando when the news broke. Like something off of a TV show, our phones pinged one after the other. I'd been trying to sleep, and the noise woke me. In my groggy state, I was the last person to check my notifications. By that time, my whole team was staring at me. When I saw that private picture of me and Barrett, I wanted to crush the device in my hands.

Vicky. It had to be Vicky.

I saw the look she gave us. She was clearly less than impressed that night. I guess it proved that money can't buy everything.

Low murmurs started through the plane, but the coaches and managers were quick to shut them down. Each and every one of us had a job to do, and worrying about some tabloid headline wasn't going to help us.

My team was less than concerned with the fact that Barrett was "in a relationship." In their eyes, I'd been caught red-handed: I was sleeping with the enemy.

The Stetson from six months ago would have spat the truth out with a smile on his face, but the new and improved me knew better. I wasn't the only one who had feelings invested here. Even I knew that polyamory could be more unmentionable

than cheating. Hell, there were people who would swear on their life that polyamory was cheating, no matter how you painted it.

So I gritted my teeth and sat through the rest of the flight.

When we deboarded in Florida, I was immediately uncomfortable. My suit was itchy, and my tie was way too tight. I tugged at the offending fabric, following close behind the team managers. Though the moment we stepped out of the airport doors, I was ambushed. Camera's flashed left and right, and I couldn't tell which way was up. There were so many different voices around me that I couldn't distinguish one from the other. Finally, someone grabbed me by the bicep and tugged me through the crowd. I didn't see who it was, but they let me go with a slight shove.

Practice was awful. We were forbidden on addressing the situation, and that infuriated me. We shouldn't have had to spin anything . Barrett and I were just two men who were sharing a private moment, and that had been invaded. The simple thought had me reeling. I could practically feel my blood pressure rising by the second. I hadn't read the whole article. I couldn't. The longer I stared at it, the more red flooded my field of vision.

Fuck, I was supposed to be practicing my curveball.

I reared my arm back and threw the ball, and it wasn't until I heard a groan of pain that I snapped back to the present. My opponent clutched his side, and I knew I'd gone wide with the ball. Damn, that thing must have been going eighty miles an hour. I cringed, but before I could open my mouth to apologize, I was told to take a break.

Defeated, I trudged toward the clubhouse. I felt eyes on me the entire way, but I resisted the urge to meet them. I was barely keeping a handle on my temper, and I could practically hear Levi's voice in the back of my head.

“ You need to get it together or you’ll never have any hope in making it in the majors.
”

I needed to be careful. I was a professional baseball player, and I had a lot of eyes on me. Nearly everything I did was televised. There was no going back if I screwed up now.

That was easier said than done. I was too in my head, and it affected my game. I wasn’t pitching as I should, and got swapped by the second inning. Unfortunately for me, the batting lineup didn’t change. I was back at home plate before I knew it.

The catcher spat something out behind me, but I couldn’t make out what it was. Only that it wasn’t anything good. At my wit’s end, I dropped my bat and turned to face him. “What was that?”

I couldn’t make out too many features behind the catcher’s mask, but two dark eyes peered back at me. “I said, ‘slut.’”

Damn, he was bold. My bat hit the dirt, and I ripped off my helmet. Everything around me faded away. “Want to try that again?”

He raised his mask and stretched to his full height, accepting the challenge. Like most other players in the MLB, he towered over me, but that didn’t mean anything. I could hold my own. I ignored the umpire’s hand attempting to keep space between us, and I stared the other guy down. “You heard me,” he snarled, his chest bumping mine.

I wiggled a hand between us, giving the guy a shove. “Oh, come on. You can do better than that.”

“You’re not worth it, Rookie .”

My hands were on him before I could think of doing anything else. I hauled him up by the straps of his vest and slammed him against the fence. But before I could get in a swing, another arm grabbed me—a familiar touch. My fists loosened, and my mind registered a broad chest behind me. Warmth crowded against my back. I let go of the catcher. “Stetson, remember where you are.”

Daddy !

“Time out, Holloway! Now !”

A coach approached to my left, and I realized I was in trouble. Levi’s grip tightened, and I let him pull me out of the situation. I couldn’t even muster the nerve to listen to the announcer, nor did I care to hear whatever Coach had to say. I was tuned into one thing and one thing only, and when Levi asked everyone to give us some space, I was relieved.

“Where’s Barrett?” I asked once we were alone in the clubhouse.

“Minnesota,” Levi responded in that warm, soothing voice that seemed to be one of the two things I wanted in that moment. I wanted Barrett. “He already knows, and he’s dealing with it there.”

I wiggled out of Levi’s grip and moved for my things. “Why are you here with me?”

“Because only one of you has the shortest fuse in existence.”

I stopped in my tracks. Heat bloomed up my cheeks, but I couldn’t even argue. My actions on the field only proved his point. “He needs you,” I muttered.

“He needs us , baby. And we need you.” I turned, my body seeming to find his like a magnet. Buried in his chest, I relaxed. Sort of. His arms wrapped around me, and I

fought the urge to break down. I wasn't sure if I wanted to cry or trash the place. Possibly both, but neither would make me feel any better. "He'll be on the field right. There's no sense in trying to call him."

"He shouldn't be playing."

"Then neither should you."

I tipped my head back, resting my chin on Levi's sternum to look at him. "I can't leave."

"No, you can't," Levi agreed. "So you're going to go back out there and wait this out on the bench. After, I'll take you home. Barrett will meet us there as soon as he can."

Since there were no real punches thrown, the umpire didn't label my little meltdown as a fight, and neither team was penalized. I was benched, which worked in our favor. I took my anger out on a plastic water bottle while I watched my team conquer Florida. They all went out to celebrate, and I wasn't invited. I had better places to be anyway. After rushing through a shower, I met Levi outside the clubhouse, where he led me through a back entrance and into a car. I'd never been more grateful for anyone in my life. I at least got the door shut before the press figured it out.

Levi executed everything, even a security guard to escort us through the airport and onto the flight. Being so late at night, it was a quiet one. The entire journey, I continued to try and get in touch with Barrett. I was met with silence, which only stoked the fire in my belly. Why was he ignoring me?

By the time we landed in Atlanta, I was a panicked mess. For what felt like the thousandth time, he reached over and stilled my bouncing leg. He squeezed my knee, hard. "Don't worry, Stetson," he repeated. "Minnesota is two hours behind us. Barrett called while you were on the field. He's fine, he doesn't blame you. He just needs to

meet with his publicist.”

“Why did he tell you that and not me?” I whined, looking at the multiple messages I’d sent him that had all gone unopened.

“Because you’re also a pro athlete and he knows how time-consuming game days can be. Besides, I told him I would take care of you so he could process. It’s been a long day for everyone, baby; his phone may have died. There’s no need to panic.”

Levi’s words went in, my brain processed them, but I didn’t want to deal with them. I wanted both of my men. The only thing time accomplished was sending me into a spiral. What if Barrett blamed me and didn’t want to say? Barrett had gotten comfortable in his relationship with Levi and I tore into their happy little life. His name was in the headlines because of me.

I tried calling him again when Levi was in the bathroom. There was no answer. Damn it, why wouldn’t he just talk to me?

When he came out, Levi took my phone and stashed it away in my bedside drawer. “You need to rest.” As I opened my mouth to protest, he shushed me, brushing a stray lock of hair behind my ear. “I know. I promise we’ll face this tomorrow and Barrett’s not going to get away with his lack of communication. But tonight, all you can do is try and sleep. It won’t do you any good to be tired.”

Instead of letting me answer, Levi pulled the blanket back and gestured for me to get into bed. I did, reluctantly, and let him kiss me goodnight. He climbed in himself, not giving me a chance to protest the gap between us before closing in behind me and wrapping an arm around my waist. He took my hand and between his thumb brushing along the back of mine and his lips on my neck, I quickly lost my body’s fight and dozed off.

I awoke sometime later, only coherent enough to realize it was still dark outside. Levi was no longer cuddling me, having turned in the opposite direction. Snoring echoed throughout the room. Free from my restraints, I eased the nightstand drawer open, feeling around for my phone and pulling it free. Nothing from Barrett. The device fell to the bed, and I rolled onto my back and stared at the ceiling. I didn't know what to do. Barrett wasn't speaking to me, Levi wanted me to drop it.

Maybe I was out of my element.

Suddenly, that big, empty house felt... claustrophobic. I needed to get out.

I needed my men.

They had to realize that I needed them to get through this just as much as they needed to process in their own way.

My screen lit up again when I shifted in bed. It was creeping past one in the morning. My options on leaving were limited, but I knew at least one place I could go.

I grabbed my phone and crept out of bed, thankful that the extra plush mattress didn't disturb Levi. Before I called anyone else, I tried Barrett one more time. I would give him one last chance to answer the phone.

Straight to voicemail.

My worst fear was confirmed: he never really wanted me to begin with.

Snatching my keys from the hook, I drove across town. As I'd hoped, Maverick was still wide awake. I could hear the TV from outside the door. I knocked, and gentle footsteps approached. The chain rattled and the door flew open. "What are you?—"

“I don’t want to talk.” I shoved past him and into the apartment, beelining toward my goal: the liquor cabinet.

23

LEVI

Soft lips on my cheek stirred me from sleep. I hummed, turning into what I thought was Stetson's touch. "Hm, someone's feeling better."

"I am now."

My eyes shot open. I rolled, spearing my fingers through Barrett's hair and tugging him into a deeper kiss. "What are you doing here?" I asked. "I wasn't expecting to see you until morning. You could've called!"

"I'm sorry." Another kiss. "My phone died on the way to the airport and I lost my charger. I just wanted to get home."

Barrett's voice cracked, and I wrapped him tight in my arms. He wasn't much of a crier, so I didn't comment. I held him while his body trembled softly. Muffled sniffles were the only indicator of his feelings. Tears or not, I didn't need to ask. I knew exactly how he felt. This situation did nothing more than dredge up feelings from the past that we preferred to keep buried.

Our relationship almost ended Barrett's career— both our careers. I put on a decent front, but it was all for him. Since I had to be the strong one for Barrett, Mikey had been the one to hold me together. He was the one to introduce me to the lawyer, and it was his idea to end my contract with Barrett and have him sign elsewhere. We got lucky, solving the situation rather quickly. By the time the hammer would have come

down on us, the storm blew over.

Slowly, Barrett's sniffling faded away to soft breathing. My eyes shut, but I didn't go back to sleep. I wasn't sure how long we lied there wrapped up in each other, but I started to wonder if Barrett had fallen asleep. When he stirred some time later, I let my eyes flutter open. "Where's Stetson?" he asked groggily. "I thought you'd bring him home after what happened."

"What do you mean?" I sat up, finding the other side of the bed empty. The bathroom door was open, the space beyond it dark. "Was he in the kitchen? Or the living room?"

Barrett shook his head. "No, the house is empty."

Then it hit me. "Your phone died."

"Yeah..."

"Stetson's been trying to call you all night."

Barrett attempted to shake off the haze of sleep. "You don't think he went to Minnesota, do you?"

I grabbed my phone, found Stetson's contact, and called him. Voicemail. "I don't think he'd go that far to get your attention."

Barrett scrubbed a hand over his face. He tossed the blanket aside and got out of bed. "I thought that incident on the field would be the worst of it."

"So did I." I tapped my phone against the palm of my hand, trying to figure out where he could be. It was two in the morning. All the bars were closed, even the ones in the

city.

Barrett re-entered into the room with his phone in his hand. I hadn't even realized he'd left. "He didn't answer for me either."

"I thought you said your phone was dead."

"It was." The device in his hand was buzzing practically nonstop, and he threw it down on the bed in frustration. "I didn't want to deal with all of that, so I charged it in the living room. "Where do you think he is?"

Our options were limited but thankfully, my phone rang. Thank fuck . "Baby, are you okay?"

There was a nervous chuckle on the other end of the line. "Wrong person." The guy cleared his throat. "It's Maverick."

I closed my eyes and let out a deep breath. Why the hell didn't I think of that? Of course he'd want to run to his best friend. "I'm going to assume he's with you."

The bed dipped behind me and Barrett's hard body molded to my back. His hands landed on my shoulders, and I relaxed into his touch. Maverick confirmed that Stetson was there, and the tension in my body melted away—somewhat. "Is he okay?"

There was a muffled commotion in the background, and a conversation that I couldn't make out. "He's uh..."

I sighed. "Is he sober?"

"Far from it. He asked me not to call you, but I don't know what to do. I've never

seen him like this.”

My heart twisted so violently that I felt sick. “I’m on my way.” My throat was so tight that I doubted Maverick heard me, but he ended the call. I let my phone fall to the floor and found Barrett’s hand on my shoulder. “I need to go get him.”

“I’ll come with you.” Barrett scrambled off the bed after me, stifling another yawn.

“You’re exhausted. Stay here and get some sleep.”

“You’re just as sleep deprived as I am. Stetson is our responsibility now. You might be his Daddy, but he’s acting out right now because of me. We do this together.”

Had the situation been any different, I would have kissed Barrett silly for saying something like that. When we set out to find a boy for me, Barrett was happy to sit on the sidelines. Watching him fall for Stetson as fast as I did had been a bonus.

I didn’t argue further as we dressed and climbed into the car. Judging by the timing, Stetson slipped out minutes before Barrett walked through the door. If he’d gotten pass-out wasted in that short amount of time, I knew we were in for one hell of a ride. Drunk Stetson was rowdy on the best of days. Drunk, angry Stetson was a different story entirely. Something needed to be done about this kind of behavior, but I couldn’t worry about punishing a boy tonight. Tonight, Barrett and I would have to work hard to comfort our partner.

We drove into the heart of the GSU campus, and Barrett put his hand on my thigh. “Will you let me handle this one tomorrow?”

“What do you mean?” The car came to a stop outside of Stetson’s old apartment building.

“I’m not trying to step on your toes but if this is all a way for him to get my attention, it can’t keep happening. I want to see him thrive as much as you do, even if it means the death of my career. You do your Daddy thing tonight. Tomorrow, when he sobers up, let me handle it. I’m the one that can show him what’ll happen if he doesn’t clean his act up.”

I brought my hand down to cover his, twisting our fingers together. “Are you sure? He might not take to it very well.”

“I know. I’ll tag you in if I need you, but at least let me try. If we’re in this together, we need to be all in.”

The decision was easy. I nodded. Barrett was right: another athlete might be able to get through to Stetson better than I could. I was his Daddy, but we were both his partners. “Come on,” I said, brushing a kiss across Barrett’s fingertips and unclicking my seatbelt. “Let’s go see what the damage is.”

We could hear the music the second the car door opened. Granted it was a college town, but even the students were fast asleep. Barrett and I shared a look, bracing ourselves. We were immediately buzzed through and the music grew louder. Maverick must have been waiting nearby, because he stood in the doorway as we approached. We’d briefly met him when we helped Stetson move, but it was without the fatigue painting his features. Despite being the middle of the night, he was dressed for an occasion.

“I’m really sorry,” I told him once I realized it was game day.

He responded by shaking his head. “There’s no need for that.” He allowed us to enter the apartment while he moved to cut the offending music. My ears almost hurt from the absence of noise.

I looked past Maverick to the shape on the couch. Stetson laid on his side, fully dressed and softly snoring. The dim light from the TV illuminated his booze-flushed cheeks. An empty bottle of vodka laid on the floor next to him. As if on autopilot, my legs carried me across the room. I knelt next to the couch, hearing soft voices behind me.

“Do you want us to lock up for you?” Barrett asked. “You shouldn’t miss your shuttle time.”

Maverick let out an audible sigh of relief. “Are you sure?” I was sure Barrett nodded. No matter the sport, athletes understood a schedule like no other. “Stetson’s got a key if you can work them out of his pocket. Good luck. He’s dead weight when he’s this drunk.”

“Trust me; I know,” I said with a chuckle. “Thanks for calling me, Maverick.”

A few more hushed words, and the front door clicked shut. Only then did I stroke my fingers along Stetson’s cheek. He whimpered, knocking my hand away and curling further in on himself. A universal sign that meant, “Leave me alone and let me sleep.” I tried again, this time giving his arm a squeeze. “Baby, it’s time to wake up.”

The sound of my voice seemed to do the trick. Those beautiful blue eyes fluttered open, shining when they landed on me. Had I not been so damn scared, it would have made my heart burst. “Daddy?”

“The one and only.” He let me take his hand and help him sit up. “Barrett’s here too.”

Stetson swayed, dropping his head into his hands. “I don’t feel so good.”

“I’m not surprised. Why don’t we get you home and in bed?”

He happily agreed to that, and Barrett and I helped him to his feet. “I’m s-sorry.”

“Shh,” Barrett whispered, pressing a kiss to his temple and looking to me for guidance.

“We’ll deal with it later,” I told him. “Let’s go home.”

Stetson folded himself into my arms, leaving Barrett to fish for his keys and lock the front door. We didn’t so much walk Stetson out to the car as we did carry him. The alcohol hindered his movements, seeming to weigh his legs down. Barrett helped me pour him into the seat and get him buckled in. By the time I started the ignition, he was fast asleep again. The half-hour ride home was silent, save for Stetson’s soft breathing in the back seat. When we parked, Barrett went to open the front door while I rushed to deal with the vomiting disaster that ensued. I got an odd sense of déjà vu guiding Stetson into the house. Only this time, he allowed me and Barrett to help him change and brush his teeth. When we slipped into bed, it was with Stetson between us.

Despite knowing that one hell of a conversation was coming, I found a sense of comfort in that. I combed through Stetson’s hair while Barrett’s arm wrapped around the boy’s waist, his hand softly stroking my arm. “You know we’ll have to wake him up soon, right?” I whispered.

Barrett nodded. “You go have your coffee. I’ll do it. He’ll need a couple hours to sober up.”

I leaned over, giving Barrett a soft kiss. After pressing my lips to Stetson’s temple—and resisting the urge to fall asleep with him—I slipped out of bed and went to the kitchen.

24

STETSON

I couldn't remember the last time I'd been awoken by cold water to the face.

Turns out, it never got pleasant.

I shot up, coughing and sputtering as I tried to clear the ice water from my field of vision. My chest burned until my lungs remembered how to function. Once I could see, Barrett's figure came into view. He stood in the bedroom doorway with his arms crossed over his chest and an empty glass in his hand.

"What the hell?" I choked.

"Get up. Shower. We're leaving in fifteen."

I groaned. "What time is it?" I was no stranger to being up before the sun, but something didn't feel right.

"Time to get up and get in the shower. Now. You smell like a distillery." With that, he left the room.

With my surroundings coming back to me, I noticed that Levi wasn't in bed. A pounding headache slammed into my temples, coupled with broken memories of the night before. Right, that's why I felt like I'd been hit by a truck: alcohol.

I really needed to stop drinking.

Hoping the shower would revive me, I trudged out of bed and into the bathroom. After I'd washed and brushed my teeth, I dressed in my gym gear and tiptoed into the kitchen. Barrett and Levi stood at the counter, having a hushed conversation that ceased the moment they noticed me.

Levi greeted me with a warm smile, which eased my nerves. Slightly. "Morning, little one. How you feeling?"

"Rough," I admitted, bashful under the Daddy voice. His attitude was a complete one-eighty from Barrett's. So vastly different that it was almost jarring.

Grinning, he walked over to me and handed over an electrolyte drink and a protein bar. "Eat this, and drink up." With a soft kiss to my lips and Barrett's cheek, he added, "I'll see you two later."

He grabbed his coffee from the island and skirted around me to the bedroom, leaving me alone with Barrett. Once again under his scrutinizing gaze, I fought the urge to squirm. I'd never seen that sort of stare from him. Not off the field anyway, and never directed toward me. His hazel eyes were dark, angry even. My head throbbed again, and I winced. "What are we doing?"

Instead of answering my question, he grabbed his keys from the counter and tossed me a bottle of painkillers. "Let's go."

Confused, but not daring enough to challenge him, I swallowed a couple pills, chasing them with the electrolyte drink as I followed him out the door.

He was silent on the drive, leaving me to my makeshift breakfast. "Where are we going?" I finally asked.

“You’ll see.” He nudged the bottle to my lips again. “Drink. You’ll need it.”

I obeyed, willing those painkillers to kick in fast. The clock on the dash read 5:52. I must have been awake for half an hour at that point. When the first bite of the protein bar churned my stomach, I threw the rest of it to the side.

Then it clicked: I’d acted out, and now I was facing the consequences. Only, I wasn’t sure why Levi had stayed behind. But the tension rolling off Barrett’s body let me know that he was Bad Cop today, so I sat back and waited. I let my eyes shut, only opening them again once the car stopped.

We were at the stadium.

The Thrashers and the Hellbenders had the best stats of the season. So while other teams battled it out for a spot in the playoffs, we were automatically through to the second round. Which meant we had a few days until the wildcards were chosen and the Division Series began.

“I thought we were going to the gym.”

“We’re not.”

I could typically run circles around Barrett, but my hangover left me struggling to keep up with his long strides. “How did you get access this early?” I asked as we pushed through the gate.

For the first time that morning, he smirked, and it sent a shiver down my spine. “Oh, Rookie; don’t you know a name can get you whatever you want?”

We emerged onto the field, and frost-covered grass crunched underfoot. I shivered. The sticky, humid air let me know that the day would quickly warm up, but even

Atlanta fell victim to the early-morning autumn chill. The sun barely crept over the horizon, illuminating the stadium in a faint, golden light. I'd never seen the place so quiet. It was almost creepy.

Barrett's voice cut through the silence as we walked across the field. "Do you have to use the bathroom?"

"What?"

"Answer me, Stetson."

Skeptical, I did. "No, I'm good."

Barrett came to a stop behind home plate. "All right. Laps. Let's go."

"How many?"

"Until I say 'stop.'" Barrett stepped back and leaned against the fence, propping one foot up against the links. I chose to ignore how gorgeous he looked bathed in that warm light that seemed to highlight every aspect of his perfect body.

"Okay," I agreed, stepping up to home plate. I ran five miles a day without breaking a sweat. Laps around a field? I could do that in my sleep. So what if Barrett wanted to be a bit sadistic? I could easily prove him wrong.

Five laps around the field was a little over a mile. Keeping at a light jog, the first passed effortlessly. Barrett stayed in his spot, watching me. Every time I risked a glance, our eyes met. He stayed silent, for the most part. When I closed on the second mile, my stomach lurched, slowing me around home plate.

"Keep going," he commanded.

Not one to back down without a fight, I swallowed against the nausea and pushed through.

Despite wearing shorts and a tank, the thick, humid air quickly had me working up a sweat. Halfway through mile two, my clothes were drenched and sticking to my skin. I swore I could smell the vodka seeping out of my pores, which only made my stomach roil. Barrett watched with a smug grin on his face. I knew what he was doing. Or, trying to do. He wanted to teach me a lesson about getting drunk. If for no other reason than to prove him wrong, I kept going.

Mile three had my legs burning. Approaching four, my chest ached. That time when I hit home plate, my mouth started to water in the ominous way it did right before I started spewing my guts. I'd hit my limit. I slowed to a stop, clutching my midsection.

"Did I say you could stop?"

I shook my head, less in response to Barrett's question and more as a warning. Still, he approached me. "What's the matter? You're Stetson Holloway, remember? You're invincible. Keep running."

"Can't," I strained.

Barrett moved in closer, his chest brushing my arm. "What was that?"

Bile rose in my throat. "I can't."

"Why? Because you spent the night getting wasted?"

My eyes burned, but I nodded. "I'm sorry."

“For what?”

“Getting wasted,” I gagged.

Barrett laughed. “No, that’s not what you’re sorry for. You acted out so I’d notice you. You want my attention? You’ve got it!”

“Red.”

Vodka won. I vomited into the dirt at my feet, bracing myself with my hands on my knees. Instantly, Barrett’s demeanor shifted. He softened his tone, rubbing soothing circles over my back while I expelled the alcohol from my system. “It’s all right,” he whispered.

No, it wasn’t. Far from it. Hot tears fell down my cheeks, splattering to the ground. Once my stomach was empty, I fought to catch my breath.

Finally coming to my senses, I knocked Barrett’s hand away. “Leave me alone.”

“That’s not going to happen, Rookie.” I straightened, and he pointed toward the clubhouse. “Let’s go get you cleaned up and we’ll talk.”

I was drenched in sweat from head to toe, my headache had returned, and now I tasted vodka-flavored vomit. I wanted another shower, my Daddy, and my bed—in that order.

Fuck. I was never drinking again.

I followed Barrett into the clubhouse, relieved to see Levi sitting there. My eyes watered, and he wrapped an arm around me despite my protests. I was disgusting . With his other hand, he peeled my sweat-soaked hair away from my forehead.

“You’re okay, little one,” he whispered. “Let’s get you cleaned up.”

Levi grabbed a bag at his feet and led me to the showers. After dropping the bag to the floor and setting the water to warm, I kicked out of my shoes and he undressed me. I shivered, and it had nothing to do with the temperature. Levi took notice and stripped himself down, nudging me into the shower stall. Strong arms wrapped around me from behind, and he guided me beneath the spray. The moment the hot water touched my skin, I broke. Sobs wracked my body and tears poured from my eyes. Levi’s arms only tightened around me, but not enough to prevent me from rotating and hiding my face in his chest.

“I’m sorry, Daddy,” I wailed. “I’m so sorry.”

Levi gently shushed me, combing through my wet hair. “I know, baby. I know.”

He seemed to know what I needed without me asking and held me as I cried, letting me get it all out. I flinched when he started to wash me, but he soothed me with gentle whispers and light brushes of his fingers along my spine. Eventually, I was able to pull myself together. My head cleared, and I realized my mistake. When I spoke, my voice was nothing more than a whisper. “I should have just talked to Barrett.”

Levi directed me to tip my head back so he could rinse my hair. “It’s never too late.”

“He hates me.”

“He doesn’t hate you. If you talk to him, I think you’ll learn that much.”

Once I was clean, Levi took his time drying me off. He reached into the duffel, pulling out a cozy-looking tracksuit. As he helped me into it, I let the feel of the soft fleece against my skin ground me even more. Georgia didn’t always get cold enough

for such things but in that moment, it was exactly what I needed.

Socks next, then shoes. Another rummage through the bag produced my toothbrush and toothpaste. He'd truly thought of everything. "Go brush," he said, pressing a kiss to my temple. "Barrett's waiting for you with breakfast. Can you go out there and talk to him for me?"

I swallowed hard, throat sore. "Yes, Daddy."

"Good boy."

And with another kiss, he was gone.

BARRETT

I sat on a stool in the clubhouse kitchen, leg bouncing a mile a minute. I'd texted Levi the second I realized I might have gone too far, and that Stetson might need a different approach to aftercare. The boy could want nothing to do with me and I'd deserve it. The fury in his eyes wasn't anything new; I could handle that. But when he used his safeword and those baby blues looked at me utterly broken, I knew I'd fucked up.

I hadn't intended on pushing him to that point. Truthfully, I thought he'd fold way sooner.

Then again, I was dealing with Stetson Holloway. I should have known better.

Levi emerged from the showers first, beelining for me and pulling me into his arms. "I didn't mean to," I whispered.

"I know that, Bear." Levi splayed his fingers through my hair and kissed my neck, instantly soothing me. "But he doesn't. He's agreed to hear you out but you need to tell him everything."

"I will."

I caught movement out of the corner of my eye: Stetson. His wet hair tickled his chin, dripping onto his tracksuit top and darkening the gray fabric. His eyes were red, his

cheeks flushed. He watched me warily, like I was going to lunge across the room and attack him. His gaze darted to Levi before returning to me.

“Do you want me to stay?” Levi asked.

Without breaking eye contact, Stetson shook his head. “We’ll be okay.”

He crossed the room, folding into Levi’s outstretched arm. He pressed a kiss to Stetson’s lips, then mine before taking a step back. “I’ll see you two at home.”

Stetson and I stayed frozen in our spots until the clubhouse door shut. Stetson fidgeted with the tie on his sweats, seemingly waiting on something.

Oh, right. I was supposed to be the authority figure. Look where that had gotten me.

I offered Stetson the stool I’d been sitting on. “Sit down. You should eat.”

Instead of immediately reaching for the plate, he grabbed the bottle of Gatorade I’d set out, chugging almost half of it before coming up for air. He eyed the food, still not saying a word. I rounded the island to give him some space and nudged the plate closer. “Eat,” I told him, resting my elbows on the counter. “There’s ‘I’m Sorry’ bacon, ‘I Was an Ass’ fruit salad, and ‘Please Don’t Hate Me’ protein pancakes.”

The boy snickered, and my stomach fluttered. “How long did it take you to come up with all that?”

“Longer than I care to admit.” It wasn’t until he took the first bite that I realized I’d been holding my breath. With a long exhale, I said, “I’m sorry, Stetson. I never intended to push you so far.”

“It’s okay. I shouldn’t have gone out drinking last night. I knew that before I did it.”

“Then why did you do it? We’re about to go into the most important games of the season. You have the whole world watching you right now.”

“Except for one of the people I want the most.” Stetson spoke into his plate, refusing to look at me

I didn’t need him to elaborate. His behavior had proved that he wanted my attention, and I’d been too wrapped up in my own shit to see it. I had tunnel vision, and the only thing I could see at the end of it was that stupid trophy. It was standing there, looking at the broken boy in front of me that I realized I’d fallen for him. I loved Stetson, and it killed me inside to know that I’d been the one to break him.

But there was so much that he didn’t know. It was time to tell him the truth. I took a deep breath, steeling myself, and blurted out. “I’m retiring.”

“What?” Stetson chewed on the last bite of his pancakes.

“I decided before this season even started that it would be my last.”

“Who else knows?”

“I told Levi first. Then my agent and my coach. And now you.”

Stetson’s eyes hardened. “So I’m officially the last person in your life to know.”

I blew out an exasperated breath. That type of reaction was exactly what I was trying to avoid. “It’s not like that, Stetson.”

“Then what is it like? Because from where I’m sitting, it certainly seems that way.” Stetson’s voice increased in volume with each word, and I was grateful for the early hour that ensured we’d be alone.

“That’s...” I groaned, pushed off the island, and started to pace. “This wasn’t part of my plan. None of this was part of my plan.”

“None of what?”

I stayed silent, trying like hell to fight the words sitting on the tip of my tongue. Stetson continued his interrogation.

“For the love of God, Barrett. Stop treating me like a child. I know I haven’t been the most responsible lately, but I am an adult, a pretty successful one. I promise I can handle whatever it is.” He stood in front of me now, halting my movement.

I swallowed hard against my suddenly dry mouth. Stetson peered at me through his lashes, and I was a goner. I had been from day one, and I kicked myself for ever thinking I stood a chance, for not telling him the first chance I got. I thought I was doing this for Levi but this man had me hooked from the first word out of his bratty little mouth. He was soft and sweet when he needed to be, but a beast on the field, challenging me in ways I’d never been tested before.

“Barrett—”

“Falling in love with you.” It came out as nothing more than a whisper, but Stetson’s breath hitched. He’d heard me loud and clear. “Falling in love with you was never part of my plan.”

“I...” he huffed, chest heaving. “Um.”

“You don’t have to say it back. You don’t have to say anything at all. Not until you’re ready.” I took a risk, letting my fingers trail over his jawline and cup his cheek. He leaned into my palm, and my heart warmed. “Right now you need to eat, and I’ll take you home so you can rest. I pushed you way too far today.”

Instead of returning to his seat, Stetson moved in closer. He tipped his face up, and I knew what he wanted. “You brushed, right?”

He rolled his eyes. “Shut up and kiss me, you dick.”

Well, how could I refuse that?

I leaned in, tentatively sealing my mouth over his. Stetson sighed into the kiss. His arms wrapped tight around me. When his tongue licked over my lips, I happily granted him entry. I hummed, the taste of him washing over my tongue. Sickly sweet syrup from his pancakes nearly dominated the mint from his toothpaste, but neither taste hid the true flavor of Stetson, not from my eager tongue. I plunged it deep into his mouth, threading my fingers in his hair to hold him close. He whimpered and tugged, telling me without words that he wanted to take this elsewhere.

Reluctantly, I broke off the kiss. “Not right now,” I told him. My cock throbbed in protest, but it wasn’t the time. “You’re not in the right headspace. Finish your breakfast, and maybe you’ll have time for a nap before practice.”

He licked his lips, as if he were soaking up every taste of me he could. “Only if we can do that some more later.”

I tried not to let on how much my body loved that idea. “Yes, we can do that some more later.”

As he reclaimed his seat, pushing fruit around his plate, he squirmed. “Does Levi know what you just told me?”

To have something to do with my hands, I grabbed his Gatorade and picked at the plastic label. “About me retiring? I told you he was the first to find out.”

Stetson laughed. “Wow, I thought you’d be better at deflecting than that.”

I crooked a brow, keeping the act up. Truthfully, I felt vulnerable, and I hated it. It had only been a couple of months. I hadn’t planned on falling in love with Stetson at all, definitely not so soon. “I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

He leveled me with a glare.

“Okay, okay.” I slid his drink across the counter. “He does. I haven’t said it in so many words but I think he knew you were perfect for us before I did.”

Stetson blessed me with a rare sight then. He ducked into his plate, and a beautiful pink spread across his cheeks. He didn’t let that cocky demeanor fade very often. “You think I’m perfect?”

“Let’s get one thing straight, Stetson Holloway...” With a newfound confidence—and the reassurance that he didn’t hate me—I stepped into his space. My chest bumped his shoulder, his body heat seeping through my clothes and warming me from my sternum down my midsection. I watched, amused, as his breathing increased and his chest rose and fell in rapid succession. I placed my hand on his lower back, and he shuddered. “I know you’re perfect, Levi knows you’re perfect. Hell, you’re one of the cockiest brats I know: you know you’re perfect. Anyone who doesn’t see your perfection is a fool.”

Stetson let out a shaky breath, and I took a step back. “You’re set on retiring then?”

I sighed. “I am. It’s not a decision I came to lightly, but most pro athletes retire by the age of thirty, and I passed that years ago. The pressure, the traveling, it’s all too much. I want to be home more. Especially since I’ve got two of you keeping me on my toes now.”

Stetson smirked. “So I only get one chance to kick your ass in the World Series?”

I returned the gesture, and his mouth widened into a full smile. “Better make it a good one.”

Once he finished his breakfast, I sent Stetson ahead of me to the car with the excuse of cleaning the kitchen. Of course it was an excuse. The moment I heard the clubhouse door shut, I called Britney. Being so early in the morning, I wasn’t sure she would answer, but I was relieved when she did. “I have a plan.”

LEVI

I stood in the doorway, watching my men sleep. By the time they walked through the door, they were both dead on their feet. I barely got Barrett in a shower of his own before the two collapsed into bed. They were cuddled close, Barrett curled against Stetson's back with his arm over the boy's waist. They'd been that way for a couple hours now, not having moved once. With a sigh, I finished off my fourth cup of coffee for the day and went to the kitchen to deposit the mug in the sink. I desperately wanted another, but I wanted my men more. Things had been tense in the house and I hated it, especially after that morning. When Barrett asked to be the one to deal with Stetson's outburst, I didn't think twice. I also thought I could trust Stetson to know his limits.

We all learned a lesson.

I returned to the bedroom, settling in the armchair. Barrett was awake now, one arm tight around Stetson while the other combed through his hair. He gave me a lazy grin, but the guilt in his eyes was evident. We didn't need to speak; silent words hung in the air between us. I knew how he felt. I knew how I felt the first time someone used their safeword with me, and the hurt was unimaginable.

Stetson stirred then, wiggling back into Barrett's arms. Judging by the way Barrett's eyes widened, Stetson had brushed his perfect little ass right across Barrett's dick. I smiled, and Barrett waited on my guidance. Navigating sex following a safeword was tricky, but it wasn't unheard of. Barrett had told me he'd drawn a line with Stetson in

the clubhouse, which had been the right decision then. Now, though, Stetson seemed to know what he wanted. He needed to feel that connection with Barrett; he needed to know that he could trust him.

My boy shifted again, and this time Barrett sighed, holding him close. “He’s telling you what he needs, Bear,” I whispered. “He needs you .”

“What he said,” Stetson whined sleepily. He clasped Barrett’s hand, pushing it beneath the blanket.

“Safewords, baby boy.”

“Yellow to slow down.” Stetson’s eyes opened, baby blues meeting my gaze. “Red to stop.”

“Good boy. Go ahead, Bear.”

Barrett’s strong hand squeezed and Stetson gasped, hips jerking. Needing no more permission, my men were entirely focused on each other. I settled in my seat, widening my legs to make room for my rapidly growing erection. I’d always enjoyed watching but until then, I hadn’t gotten the pleasure of seeing Barrett with someone else. He gave Stetson his undivided attention, leaning down to kiss the boy’s neck and humming when he got the reaction he wanted. Stetson arched into his touch, rolling onto his back.

“Move the blanket,” I commanded.

It vanished. Barrett’s hand returned to Stetson’s crotch, and he attempted to nudge the collar of Stetson’s sweatshirt aside with his mouth. When it didn’t work, he growled and yanked the fabric up and off Stetson’s head, throwing it aside. Stetson collapsed onto the pillows, shoving Barrett’s hand south once more. Barrett’s lips found

Stetson's collarbone and latched on, sucking a mark onto the skin. My cock throbbed, and I fought to keep my hands still.

Not yet.

Stetson grew impatient, but he didn't have to tell Barrett what he wanted. My man shoved Stetson's sweats out of the way, wrapping his long fingers around the boy's shaft. His soft whimper of approval was music to my ears. Barrett pulled off Stetson with a pop, and looked to me for further instruction.

"Take his pants off."

Stetson lifted his hips eagerly, and Barrett tore his pants and boxer briefs away in one swift move. Our gorgeous boy lied in front of us, naked as the day he was born, and I took a moment to drink him in.

He panted, chest rising and falling with each expansion of his lungs. When he blushed, his skin brightened to the most beautiful shade of pink and arousal extended the flush down his chest. I watched Barrett's hand tease down the hard planes of Stetson's stomach before brushing the pink head of his cock. Stetson writhed, desperate to be touched. My pulse raced, pumping hot blood through my veins. "Please, Daddy," he pleaded.

I met Stetson's bleary blue eyes. "Please, what, boy?"

"Can he touch me?"

Instead of answering Stetson, I decided that Barrett was wearing too many clothes. "Strip, Barrett."

And damn, did he obey. His shirt flew across the room, and I heard the stitches in his

shorts rip as those came off as well. Daylight strained around the curtains, but what little sun poked through illuminated my men in the dark. Stetson, with his smooth, flawless skin complimented the art etched into every inch of Barrett's body. Without asking, Barrett stretched over Stetson, fusing them together from head to toe and as he claimed the boy's mouth, Stetson surrendered. Barrett's confidence was back in full swing. I sat back and watched the show unfold.

Stetson latched into thick fistfuls of Barrett's hair, holding him close. The boy loved to kiss, and Barrett was going to give him whatever his little heart wanted. I smiled, knowing that Barrett's hair was his Achilles heel. Barrett speared his tongue into Stetson's mouth, earning him a low rumble of approval. Expertly, Barrett used one hand to yank open the nightstand drawer. The bottle of lube found his palm like a magnet, and he flipped the cap open and had his fingers drenched before I could blink.

Stetson's hips rocked, chasing the friction of Barrett's abs against his straining erection. Dragging his teeth across Stetson's bottom lip, Barrett broke the kiss. He ignored Stetson's protests, slipping his hand between their bodies and teasing those slick fingers over Stetson's balls and between his legs. Our boy sighed, bending his knees to give Barrett room to work. Stetson clearly loved the position, moaning—but I couldn't see.

“Straddle him, Stetson.”

Barrett rolled onto his back, and Stetson happily threw his leg over the man's waist and rose onto his knees, letting Barrett's hands slip between his thighs. Barrett clenched Stetson's ass cheek in one hand, spreading him apart and letting me see my boy's eager little hole. Stetson fell forward, bracing his hands to either side of Barrett's head. Barrett held him place with that single hand on his ass, working him open with the other. Stetson fought against the tight grip, but my man took his time, slowly circling Stetson's entrance until the muscle relaxed and his finger slipped

inside.

“More,” Stetson demanded, like I knew he would. He was nothing if not impatient.

Barrett looked at me. “Take your time, Bear. Make sure you work him open really well.”

Stetson cried out, fisting the pillowcase beneath Barrett’s head.

Barrett smirked. “I’ve got you, baby,” he whispered, leaning in to press a tender kiss to Stetson’s cheek. The boy trembled, and Barrett gave me a sneaky look over Stetson’s shoulder.

I knew exactly what he was thinking. “Do it.”

Barrett curled his fingers. Stetson’s resulting shout reverberated off the walls, shooting fire through my veins. The next time Barrett pulled back, he added another digit and dove back in. Within seconds, he had Stetson reduced to a whining, whimpering mess. He tried to speak, but words were nothing but a string of incoherent babbles.

And that’s when Barrett added a third. Our boy moaned, and I shoved a hand in my pants to stave off my orgasm. I wasn’t coming until I had Stetson’s pretty lips wrapped around my cock. The mental image alone was nearly enough to send me over the edge. Giving the base of my shaft a firm squeeze, I returned my attention to the bed, where Barrett was whispering soft encouragements in Stetson’s ear.

“He’s ready, Barrett.”

Knuckle-deep in Stetson with one hand, Barrett searched for a condom with the other. Stetson snatched his hand out of the air. “No,” he panted, the sound transforming into

a cry when Barrett tapped his prostate. "I'm clear."

Two sets of eyes found me, awaiting my approval. When I nodded, Barrett didn't hesitate to remove his fingers and slick up his cock. The sound had Stetson biting his lip and rocking back, desperate to be filled. He lifted to allow Barrett to line himself up. He didn't waste any time in sinking down, taking Barrett to the hilt like a pro. The skilled move pulled a groan from deep in Barrett's chest. Knowing how that hot, tight ass felt strangling my dick, I smiled. Sweat beaded across Barrett's hairline and his brows furrowed. He was hanging on by a thread.

Good. So was I.

"Take it, baby," Barrett growled, shocking the hell out of me. He grabbed tight onto Stetson's hips. "Take what you need."

Fuck, holding off would be difficult now.

Stetson gave one slow roll of his hips, testing his limits. When neither I or Barrett stopped him, he planted his hands on Barrett's chest and began to move. With tears breaking free, his nails dug into Barrett's skin. By the time this was all over, Barrett would be sporting thin, red reminders of who Stetson was to him. He matched Stetson thrust for thrust, leaving matching red fingerprints on the boy's hips and ass.

I moved from my seat to stand at the foot of the bed. "Slow down, boy."

His pace faltered, and he peered over his shoulder at me. "What?" he whined, too close to the edge to think.

My pants hit the ground, my shirt following. "You heard me, boy. If you want to come tonight, you'll listen."

With one more whimper of protest, Stetson obeyed. Barrett cast a confused glance over Stetson's shoulder, slowing his own movements. I knelt on the mattress, slowly stroking my cock with one hand while the other found the lube. Once my fingers were slicked up, I tossed the bottle aside. Matching groans from both of them nearly triggered my orgasm, but I wasn't losing it before I felt Stetson around me one way or another. As I settled between Barrett's legs, he practically read my mind. With a tighter grip on Stetson's hips, he slowed the boy even more.

Cool, slick fingers found the spot where Barrett railed into my boy, and Stetson's movements stuttered. He peered over his shoulder. A satisfied smile, and he got the hint. "Color."

"Green," he panted, head falling against my chest. "So green."

The next time Stetson lifted up, I lined a single finger up with Barrett's shaft. Just one, but my boy took it like a champ. He swiftly begged for more, and I added a second. Three, and tears ran down his cheeks like rivers. "Please, Daddy," he begged. "I need you. Please, please, please..."

He chanted like a prayer, slamming his hips down on my fingers and Barrett's cock. I glanced at Barrett, and he had his bottom lip fixed between his teeth. Neither of us would last much longer. "I need one more color from you, little one," I growled into Stetson's ear.

He pried his eyes open, wet lashes glittering in the light. Then the corner of his lip quirked into that bratty smile I'd come to love. "Green."

With that, I placed a hand over Barrett's, using my other to guide my cockhead to Stetson's entrance. Barrett's thighs quivered to either side of me, and Stetson shook like a leaf. My thumb rubbed more lube into Stetson's stretched skin. "Slowly," I instructed.

Though when he sank down and my tip pushed through, I was the one gritting my teeth. Stetson let out a low, guttural groan, stealing inch by inch. Barrett muffled a curse. The drag of his shaft against mine inside Stetson was almost too much to bear. I dropped my hand, and Stetson was fully seated. With Barrett's hands on his hips and mine laid over them, we both resisted the urge to move until Stetson adjusted. "How's that feel?" I asked him.

"Good." He licked his lips and twitched in our hold. "So good."

Barrett took a deep breath before speaking. "Think you can come this way?"

"You're both lucky I haven't blown yet."

I brought one hand to Stetson's throat, holding him close to me. Barrett twisted his fingers through mine with the other hand. "Time to give us a show, baby boy."

Stetson needed no further permission. He started slow, but quickly lost patience and rode us both relentlessly. I bit my cheek so hard that I tasted blood and upon hearing a curse, I knew Barrett had done the same.

Our eyes met, and we both had the same thought:

This boy had our hearts.

Stetson broke first, coming on a cry. Hot, sticky spurts painted his chest, my arm, and Barrett's stomach. The sensation seemed to trigger a domino effect. Barrett next, mouth falling open on a silent scream. Stetson's hole clenched around us, pulling my orgasm right out of me. My knees buckled, and I fought to stay upright. With nowhere else to go, come seeped out of Stetson's ass, trickling down both my thighs and Barrett's. Barrett and I rode out our climaxes, easing Stetson through the aftershocks that still shook his body. I was the first to pull out, and Barrett gave our

boy a second to breathe before he did the same. I brushed tears away from his cheeks, while Barrett soothingly stroked his thumb over Stetson's belly.

When prompted, Stetson turned his head to meet my mouth. "Thank you," he whispered. He turned to Barrett, repeating himself and stealing a messy kiss from him as well. With my senses returning, I tightened my arm around Stetson and pulled him off the bed. I held on until he was steady on his feet.

"I love you." I froze, simply looking at the boy in my arms who still panted for each breath, eyes darting between the two of us. "Both of you."

Barrett seemed rooted to his spot kneeling on the bed. I moved first, cupping Stetson's jaw in my hands and hauling him in for a bruising kiss. "I love you, too, baby."

When our mouths parted, he looked over his shoulder again. Barrett's face softened, his lips kicking up in that lazy half-grin that drove me wild. "I love you, Rookie."

STETSON

Absolutely nothing could bring me down from my high. I never imagined that I'd be one to fall in love. At least, not yet. I wanted a career under my belt first. But with Barrett and Levi, it felt... natural. Nothing like falling at all.

We'd been existing in our own little bubble since that intense day at the field. The Division Series was less than twenty-four hours away and given that we were in different leagues, Barrett and I wouldn't face off unless we both made it into the World Series. Home field advantage went to the team with the best stats, so we had less than a day together before we fought the biggest battle of the season. I intended to spend every waking moment in bed, wrapped up in my men, but I wasn't so lucky.

At least they made me come again before I was pulled from bed and thrust into the shower—alone, for the first time. The only thing I concluded was that the space was way too big for one person. I rushed through washing and after wrapping a towel around my waist, returned to the bedroom. There, my gray slacks laid across the bed along with a matching sports coat and a white button-up shirt. Remembering the last time I'd had to dress up outside of a game, my heart raced. Levi stood off to the side, fastening the cuffs on his own shirt. "What's going on?"

He smirked at me, and I willed my dick to go back to sleep. "It's a surprise."

Cue the stomach-churning nerves. I approached the bed but scanned the room, noting that we were down a person. "Where's Barrett?"

The spike of panic in my chest made me recognize my triggers surrounding recent events.

And Levi picked up on it. He dropped what he was doing, leaving his pants hanging open. “He went ahead of us to make sure everything was in place.” Soft, warm lips pressed against my forehead, and I relaxed. “It’s okay. I promise. All I need you to do is put those clothes on.”

Levi fastened his pants and buckled his belt. I eyed the ensemble on the bed, and still hesitated. Despite everything, I hated feeling insecure. My brat simmered beneath the surface, and I worked hard to tamp him down. I’d learned my lesson in letting him run the show. Walking to the dresser, I bent down to the bottom drawer where Levi kept all of our sexy stuff. After rummaging through, I finally found what I wanted. “What are you doing, sweet boy?”

I chose not to answer the question. I was nervous, and I didn’t like being nervous. I needed to feel grounded in the moment, and I needed Daddy to be the one to do it.

I took a moment to focus on the black lace in my hands, then hooked them onto my finger and turned to face him. Instantly, his eyes blazed. “Will you help me, Daddy?” I asked, hamming it up by batting my lashes.

Levi tossed his jacket aside and rushed across the room to take the lace panties from my hand. “You really want to do this knowing these will be under your clothes the whole time?”

I couldn’t nod fast enough, picking my hand up to run the soft material through my fingers again. “It’ll help remind me that you’re there.”

Heat flared across Levi’s eyes. “Well, how can I argue that?”

Slowly, he lowered himself to his knees. He pressed a kiss to each hip bone and with a flick of his wrist, my towel hit the ground. Ignoring the semi I was sporting, he brought the panties to my feet and directed me to lift each leg. When the lace slid up my legs, I let out a sigh of relief. They'd done exactly what I needed them to.

My shirt came next, Levi slipping it over my arms and settling it on my shoulders. He took his time with each button, kissing my wrists when he fastened the cuffs. Slacks next, and he carefully did them up. He threaded my belt through the loops, and buckled it just right. By the time he straightened and reached for my sports coat, I was in a much better mindset.

Although not much could keep my impatient side from showing. We'd been in the car less than ten minutes and I was getting antsy. "Levi, where are we going?"

"You'll see, baby." His hand caressed my thigh, thumb brushing where boxer briefs should have been. I shivered. "We're almost there."

I couldn't see a thing. I'd been blindfolded. Unfortunately, it wasn't for anything fun. At least, not that I could tell. Daddy seemed all business. I slumped back in the seat, but then the car slowed to a stop. I heard chattering outside the doors, and hornets stirred in my belly. "Where are we?"

Levi fumbled at the back of my head, and the blindfold fell away. In his hands were two pairs of sunglasses, and he offered one to me. "Trust me?"

I looked past him to the swarm of paparazzi outside the car. Even the deep tint to the windows was pointless against the onslaught of cameras. My mouth went dry. My outburst in Orlando was still the talk of the community. I wasn't proud of my behavior. I'd been instructed to apologize to the catcher, but I stood by the idea that he deserved it.

“Baby boy,” Levi cooed, pulling me from my thoughts. I tore my gaze away from the sunglasses. “Can you trust me?”

I glanced toward the driver, and Levi followed my line of sight. “That man is being paid a lot of money to be deaf right now.”

With a smile, I took the shades and put them on. “Yes, Daddy. I trust you.”

“Okay, let’s go.”

Levi put on his own glasses and offered his hand. The driver pulled the door open for us. Flashes instantly blinded me. I relied on Levi to lead me through the crowd of reporters and it was only when we climbed a flight of stairs that another hand hooked a finger under my chin and lifted my gaze. I almost couldn’t believe what was in front of me. Up here, the flashes were far less damaging to my eyes. I yanked the glasses off. “Barrett?”

“Hey, sweetheart.” He leaned in to brush a kiss across my lips, and I stiffened. The clicks of the cameras intensified.

“What are we doing?” I faked my best smile.

“I have something I need to say,” Barrett told me, “and I’m ashamed that it took me this long to do it. I’ll never be able to apologize to you enough. Right now, the only thing you need to do is what you do best: stand right over there and look pretty.”

When I didn’t answer, Barrett looked at me expectantly. My attention darted to Levi, who gave me a reassuring nod. Lowering my voice, I turned back to Barrett. “Yes, sir.”

The smoldering look in his eyes sent a burst of warmth through my veins. There was

a podium in the dead center of the stage with a ridiculous number of microphones clipped to the edges. There was a sheet of paper there, but I was too far away to make out any of the words. While Levi and I moved to the far corner of the stage, Barrett stepped up to the podium. Lights flickered so violently that I wondered how he was able to see anything. Then again, I supposed nothing mattered more than the words in front of him. Movement from the front row caught my eye and with that signal from his publicist, Barrett started to speak.

“Good evening, everyone. I would assume that all of you know who I am, so I’ll skip to the formalities and get straight to why we’re all here tonight.”

I couldn’t help the smile that tugged at the corner of my lips. Barrett’s voice oozed confidence, and it was sexy as hell.

“A few weeks ago, a photo of me surfaced. Since, I’ve been called some pretty unsavory names that I’d rather not repeat. I’m here tonight to set the record straight, but first I have to say how appalled I am by the public’s reaction.”

Barrett clearing his throat was the only sign of nerves. Well, to the audience. From my angle I could see the way he fidgeted with the corner of his page. I itched to step forward and show him some sign that he wasn’t in this alone. As if Levi could sense it, his hand found my lower back and he gave me a subtle shake of his head. Not yet .

“Polyamory in humans can be traced back to ancient times. Sure, it might be considered taboo in Western culture, but it’s most certainly not new. I’m not surprised that me being seen with another man was a shock to some of you, but I’m outraged that the first thing people jumped to was the negative. People were so quick to paint me as a monster, to label Georgia’s own Hometown Hero a homewrecker. Frankly, I’m disappointed, but we move on. My sexuality has never been a secret, but I never considered that I’d spend the rest of my life coming out of the closet again and again. Tonight, for the first time, I’d like to reintroduce myself. My name is

Barrett Swindon, I'm a Georgia native, and I'm a polyamorous gay man. I have not one, but two wonderful partners who, for whatever reason, decided that I was worthy of their love and affection." Barrett paused and looked at us over his shoulder. "Would the two of you join me, please?"

Damn . I'd sure as hell try. As Barrett talked, my eyes had begun to burn. When he asked me to move, my legs turned to jelly. He was really going to stand up in front of the whole sports community and claim me ?

Levi gave me a gentle nudge, and I took a few steps forward. I toppled into Barrett's left side, and Levi stood to his right. Instinctively, Levi put a possessive hand on Barrett's back. I didn't move—I couldn't. My hands were frozen in my pockets. I'd been to dozens of press conferences. Hell, being in the spotlight was my thing. But this felt different. It felt like I'd been ripped open and put on display for the world, and every single pair of eyes was zeroed in on me.

I didn't get too much time to panic though, because Barrett's arm snaked around mine, and he tugged my hand free. Our fingers laced together, and I let out a breath I hadn't realized I was holding. Finally, I turned toward the sea of cameras and plastered on my classic Stetson Holloway smile. Only this time, I meant it. My cheeks had to be bright red, but I didn't care. Barrett tugged me closer and wrapped his arm around my waist. I curled into his side, accepting the kiss he pressed to my hair. "You all right?" he whispered in my ear.

"Perfect."

The reporters started with their flurry of questions, and Barrett faced them yet again. He singled out a single person in the middle of the crowd. A woman with curly red hair. "The World Series is right around the corner," she stated, as if anyone who knew anything about baseball wasn't already aware. "How do you see your relationship affecting your ability to perform on the field?"

Before I could even think about getting defensive, Barrett had a response ready. “I don’t,” he answered, sure of his words. “Stetson’s more than earned his place in the majors. If we’re both lucky enough to make it into the World Series, I’ll shake his hand and wish him the best just as I would anyone else.”

“What if the Thrashers win?” another voice called.

“Then I’ll shake his hand and congratulate him,” Barrett said, a little more firmly. “Let’s get one thing straight: my relationship with Stetson Holloway has nothing to do with what happens when we step foot on that field. Up to this point, we’ve kept the game separate from our private life and I intend to keep it that way. The fact that someone else felt they were privy to that information doesn’t change a thing. May the best team win.”

28

BARRETT

September

Things had been much easier since the press conference. They weren't perfect, but the amount of insults hurled my way had gradually decreased. My teammates were less hostile toward me as well. A couple of the more relaxed ones still picked at me, but it was all easy jealousy. They didn't mean any of it.

With the drama out of the way, it was finally time to focus on the playoffs. Even though our few days' break was filled with tension, it was still nice to get some rest before the Division round began.

The playoffs were divided into a bracket-type system. The Wildcard Round—the one we got to bypass—was a series of four games, and the two winners were pushed through to the Division Series. Those games were a best three out of five and lasted only a few days. The winners from the Division Series went to the Championship Round, which was best four out of seven, spanning over ten days. Those games dwindled it down to the best of the best: the two teams that would face off in the World Series.

It was best four out of seven, with the home field advantage going to the team with the best season record, regardless of the playoff games.

It had been a few years since the Hellbenders had even made it to the playoffs, much

less a World Series. I'd played one myself, and the loss was soul-crushing.

Which is why this would be the last time I would ever do it.

I was more than ready to sit on the sidelines for a change, cheering on Stetson while he led his team to victory. Until then, I was going to give the game everything I had.

I was just as invested in Stetson's progress as I was my own. Every time I stepped off the field, he was the first person on my mind. If he couldn't give me an update himself, I'd call Levi. Since the Thrashers held the best season record, they had home field advantage. Levi offered to split his time between Atlanta and New York, but I talked him out of it every time. The plane tickets would add up and it would take too much time to fly back and forth. Besides, I would be meeting both of them in Georgia one way or another.

Between games, the clubhouse was eerily quiet. "Nervous" wasn't the word I would use, but the air was definitely charged. Typically, the clubhouse was buzzing. Music could be heard or the sound of a TV, or the clacking of pool balls from a game going on in the corner.

However, once we got through the Division Series, all of it stopped. It was like the only thing we could stand to do was... sit. TVs went silent, no one played music out loud. The balls on the pool table lay dormant, waiting for someone to strike them.

It was the final game of the Championship Series. We were tied with the Rhode Island Harlequins and tonight, we'd either sink or swim. Everyone had their way of preparing, and mine was cooking. Even if no one ate anything, I filled the clubhouse kitchen with whatever I could. Our diets typically consisted of high protein and high carbs, but that didn't stop me from plating up a tray of cupcakes. Sometimes you just need a little bit of comfort food.

As I suspected, few came forward to pick at the trays. Others eyed them longingly but if the hornets in their stomachs were anything like mine, they would admire from afar.

A somber undertone was the only thing to press through the evident nerves. My team was already well aware that this would be the last championship I would ever play. To be honest, I felt it too. I scanned the clubhouse. When I'd first started, it was nothing more than some couches surrounding a flat screen TV. Over the years, the league made more improvements. TVs got nicer, the house itself was expanded to include the full kitchen. More space was made for the pool table and instead of benches, we got luxurious leather chairs that was like something straight out of *The Godfather* . And the team? God, the team. We'd become as close as a group of men could be. Awkward silences turned into a steady hum of conversation that you missed when it was gone—like now. When you spent so much time in a place like this, you couldn't help but think of it as your home away from home.

Though my true home called to my heart more than New York ever did. It was time for me to return to it.

As we walked to the field, I thought my heart would burst out of my chest. I'd made my decision, but it wasn't until that moment that the weight of it all hit me. Tonight's game was it. Either this would be the last time I would walk through that tunnel, or we would go on to play as one of the two best teams in the world .

I paused behind home plate, pretending to stretch my muscles when in reality, I was taking in the crowd. There wasn't an empty seat in the place. Even if half of them were there to root against us, I had to admit that it was impressive. My mouth dried out. It wasn't like me to be so nervous.

The visiting team always batted first, so I suited up in my catcher's gear and took my position. The first batter approached, and his walkup music sounded muffled in my

ears. I couldn't have told you what the song was if you paid me. After a moment of thought, I made my call. Our pitcher readied himself, wound up, and pitched.

The crack of that bat against the ball would echo through my ears for all eternity.

Show time.

The Harlequins ate up the field. There was a reason why we were left to battle it out for that spot in the finals. Those few hours were the most stressful of my entire life. Tension simmered through the air. There were no playful jabs between the team. Every man out there knew how serious this game was. Hell, even the coaches were oddly quiet.

We'd already gone into extra innings, and you still couldn't guess the outcome of the game if you tried. The score was five to five. The board hadn't changed in what felt like days, and the two "out" lights taunted me. The guys were tired, every single one of them, and it was starting to show. Number thirty-eight stepped up to the plate and lifted his bat. The pitch...

Strike one.

My hands tightened around my water bottle. I'd emptied it ages ago, but I needed something to do. Tossing the crumpled plastic aside, I stood and went to the edge of the dugout.

Our batter cursed and set up for his next attempt.

Strike two.

One half of the crowd cheered, while the other groaned. Even from a distance, I could see the look of mutual disappointment and determination on my teammate's face.

When he raised his bat again, his eyes blazed.

I clenched onto the railing in front of me so fiercely that my knuckles turned white. The stadium was so quiet you could hear a pin drop. Not even the opposing crowd heckled the batter. There were no phones out. I didn't even think anyone was breathing.

And then there was the final pitch.

Strike three.

We were in sudden death.

None of us blamed the batter who'd struck out. We all knew what kind of an arm the Harlequin's pitcher had. That didn't stop him from kicking himself, but we didn't have much time to think about it. Two sets of coaches huddled near the pitcher's mound, and we knew what was happening.

In the event of sudden death, the home team picked either offense or defense. Offense being the ones to bat, and defense on the field. Offense would start with a runner on first base, and they had three outs to either get in a run, or the defense would walk away with the win.

I glanced around at my team. We couldn't let the Harlequins get their pitcher on the mound again. If we did, we were screwed. I swallowed against a lump in my throat, hoping that my apprehension didn't show on my face.

When the head coach turned around and locked eyes with me, I knew.

"Swindon, you're up!"

“No,” was my first thought. “Hell to the no,” was my second. I didn’t want that pressure. Especially since he knew what this game meant for me. I didn’t want the weight of the World Series on my shoulders. If we didn’t make it, it would go down in history that I was the one to screw it up.

But I also knew my coach: you took what you were given and you didn’t argue.

If he wanted me up to bat, then he must have seen something in me that I didn’t see in myself. So I sucked it up, grabbed a drink to wet my dry mouth, and snatched up my batting helmet.

Despite my nerves, fatigue hit me like a freight train. Halfway to home plate, I paused in my tracks. Something trickled in through the sound of blood rushing in my ears, followed by... laughter . Music played, but it wasn’t my usual Guns N’ Roses. When the sound registered, I couldn’t help but smile ear to ear.

“Diva” by Beyoncé.

Well played, Rookie.

Tongue in cheek, I continued to home plate.

I swear two strikes happened before I could even blink. Despite the autumnal chill in the air, my blood boiled. Heat surged through my veins, sweat drenched my clothes. I pushed up my long sleeves, took a deep breath, and raised my bat. The pitcher had a gleam in his eye, and that was it.

I was determined now.

I squared my feet and dared that motherfucker to challenge me. I was not going to be the one to screw this up for my team. He rolled his neck, and I saw movement behind

his glove that indicated he was rolling the ball around, more than likely trying to determine the perfect pitch to take me out. My eyes stayed laser-focused on that mitt. I wasn't looking at the pitcher, I wasn't looking at my coaches, and I definitely wasn't looking at the crowd. The only things on that field were me and the ball.

Pitch.

Swing.

29

STETSON

The suspense was killing me.

Having to sit through this game was killing me.

We were crushing the Mayflowers. To give them their credit, they'd kept us on our toes for those first games; they'd made us work for it. But they'd burned themselves out. Now, in the final game, they didn't have the energy to keep up.

Luckily for everyone else, I did.

Things calmed down in the tabloid world after Barrett's press conference. We had the odd person who didn't quite understand and of course there was always the handful who refused to accept it no matter what, but we didn't let it stop us. After Barrett kissed me in front of what was essentially the entire world, I felt unstoppable. Levi offered to split his time between Georgia and New York, but Barrett insisted that he stay with me. He said one way or another, he would be joining us in Atlanta soon enough. I only hoped that it would be on the field, and not in the stands.

Not knowing either way was going to make me combust.

It was the seventh inning stretch, but the last thing I wanted to do was rest. We'd already debriefed, and energy simmered through my veins. I paced in the hallway outside the clubhouse. I think I was the only person in that entire stadium that didn't

want a break. The first game of the playoffs started a race, and I didn't want my feet to stop moving until I crossed the finish line.

On what must have been my hundredth path across the narrow hallway, I crashed face-first into a hard chest. "Easy, tiger."

I hummed. That low rumble was exactly what I needed. I wrapped my arms around Levi and leaned into his embrace. The soft fabric of his light knit sweater caressed my cheek. "Hi, Daddy."

He pressed a kiss to my hair. "Why aren't you inside resting?"

"Because I don't want to!" I whined, cringing at the tone of my own voice. All it was missing was a foot stomp and it would be a full-blown temper tantrum. "I want to get back out there."

Levi chuckled, vibrating my cheek. Okay, maybe I could stand to chill out for a second. So long as it was in that precise spot and no one dared to move me. "Well, we can't all be Energizer bunnies, can we?"

"I'm not that bad." But I smiled anyway. I could be, and everyone knew it. I tipped my head back and rested my chin on Levi's sternum. "Have you heard— mmph."

Levi silenced me with his mouth. I sighed into the kiss, folding instantly. Damn it, the man was just too good. "I told you that we wouldn't tell you until after the game, little one."

That meant that he knew. Another whine. "But?—"

"No buts." Levi threaded his fingers through the damp hair at my nape. My stomach flipped. It was like he couldn't resist getting his hands on me, no matter how

disgusting I was. “The three of us agreed on this for a reason. You need to be giving it your all out there.”

I scoffed. “We’ve— mm. ”

If Levi thought cutting me off with kisses was a way to teach me a lesson, then he had another thing coming. I fisted his sweater in my hands, tugging him closer. For those few moments, we were the only two people in the world. Our lips separated with a smack that rang out in the quiet hallway. “Don’t jinx yourself, Stetson,” he whispered.

My eyes fluttered open to deep brown swirling pools of melted chocolate that I could easily get lost in. “What were we talking about?”

The corner of Levi’s mouth curled upward. He opened his mouth, but a commotion behind us had him changing his tune. “It’s time to kick some ass, baby.” He pressed one more passionate kiss to my lips, and after the hollers and wolf whistles from the rest of the team, he took a step back. “Good luck.”

I hated to see Levi go but damn I loved watching him leave. Most of the team filtered around me in the tunnel, so I stayed in place and admired how Levi’s jeans hugged his perfect ass and muscular thighs.

“Ready for this baby ?”

I cringed, a grimy hand clenching the back of my neck. Harrison.

“Ew!” I knocked his grubby fingers away from me. “Call me that again and I’ll carve you up and display you on my porch for Halloween.”

He walked backward out of the hall, crooking a brow at me. “Promises, promises,

little one . Next time you jack off in the showers, make sure the clubhouse is empty first”

That had me taking off after him. “You eavesdropping asshole!”

Harrison’s eyes widened, and I chased him right out of the tunnel and onto the field.

* * *

Those Mayflowers were going down.

By the later half of the seventh inning, we’d gotten under their skin. The stress was evident on their faces. We were up by three, and that number didn’t budge until the ninth. I was on the pitcher’s mound, and it was up to me to strike out this batter. Once I did, we were through to the World Series.

The guy stepped up to bat, trying like hell not to make eye contact with me. He lost in the end, though, because he simply had no other choice. If he had any chance of taking this home for his team, he had to look at me. Anyone else would have missed the signs, but I didn’t get to be the league’s top pick by being just anyone. I noticed. There was a slight tremble in his hands. He was unsteady in his stance and when our eyes met, his Adam’s apple bobbed up and down. I bit my tongue to keep myself from grinning.

I had this game in the bag.

Three strikes, and I was home free.

I inhaled deeply through my nose, wound up, and pitched.

Strike one.

The guy shook it off and returned to his position. The ball came back to me, and I watched closely for the catcher's call. It was all I could do to keep myself from smirking.

Wind up, and pitch.

Strike two.

A chorus of groans from the Mayflowers's fans echoed through the stadium. Thrashers fans began chanting, trying like hell to distract the poor guy in the batter's box. The catcher called out, and I shook my head. That was way too easy.

But he was determined. He called for the same move, and I could see the annoyance in his posture. I gritted my teeth, considered it, then told him no again.

There was no way I'd strike the guy out with such an easy throw.

But when he directed for a third time, I knew I'd lost the battle. It was either give in, or hold up the game. I rotated the ball in my hand, meeting the batter's eyes once more. My gut twisted. I knew this was a bad call. We still had room to work with if it ended in a hit, but we were so close.

Shaking it off, I wound up and pitched before I second-guessed myself too much.

And the crack of that bat made me feel sick.

The batter seemed frozen in place, almost as if he didn't expect to hit it. It took more than a few shouts to get him moving.

I whipped around to see where the ball ended up: left field. The outfielder tossed it to second base, who sent it flying to first—a little too late.

The batter rounded first, beelining to second. The ball flew through the air, and I couldn't bear to watch. I closed my eyes, losing myself to the roar of the crowd. The stadium fell quiet. Seconds seemed to stretch into minutes as the umpire studied their call. When nothing happened, I slowly pried my eyes open. Our second baseman crouched over the opposing team's player. I couldn't see anyone's faces, only enough to notice that the batter had slid into second, but no one could be sure what happened—even the umpire.

My stomach sank as he called for a review. Our player helped the batter to his feet, and the umpire went to the sidelines to replay the cameras. I stood with bated breath, unable to meet anyone's eyes. The announcers talked, but their voices were muffled in my ears.

Everything after that seemed to move in slow motion.

The umpire turned around and walked onto the field.

Was this taking as long as I thought it was?

He raised his arm, shoulder-height, and made a fist with his hand. I swayed, lightheaded.

Then he punched forward. "Out!"

The roar from the stands combined with the shouts from my teammates was deafening. I'd done it. We'd done it. We were playing the fucking World Series. I found Levi behind home plate. He seemed to stand out in the crowd, brown eyes shining like diamonds. Those large hands clapped together, and a proud smile curled his lips.

I went through the obligatory celebrations with the team, but the only thing I truly

wanted to do was call Barrett.

The energy in the place was something else. Some players swept tears away, pretending that they'd never been there in the first place. Others prayed, thanking their respective deities. I sat in my chair, leg bouncing a mile a minute. I was disgusting, in desperate need of a shower, but I was rooted to my spot. Typically, we'd be rushing to find the results of the other games. Either that, or the coaches would have come in and told us. But given the circumstances surrounding me and a certain catcher, no one did anything.

Surprisingly, outside of the quiet celebrations, it seemed to be like a typical game. Maybe for some of the more seasoned players, it was. But not for me. I felt like my heart was going to explode.

Finally, Levi walked through the doors. As usual, business came first when we were at work, and he made his rounds to congratulate his players. By the time he got to me, I was practically vibrating in my seat. Although instead of telling me what I wanted to know, he extended his hand. I didn't hesitate to take it, but I wondered what the hell he was doing. "What's?—"

"Shh." Levi pressed a finger to my lips. "Just trust me."

He tugged me to my feet, keeping quiet as we walked through the hall, passed under the tunnel, and back onto the field. Considering the noise that had been reverberating through the place all night, it was eerily quiet. The stands were nearly deserted. The only people to be found were the cleaners. Levi led me past home plate and to the middle of the field. On top of the pitcher's mound, he gripped my jaw tight in both hands. "I am so fucking proud of you," he said, right before crushing my lips in a toe-curling kiss.

Unable to find the energy to care about where we were, I melted into him. I held him

close, spearing my tongue through his lips. All too soon, he pulled away and reached into his pocket. Confused, I whimpered and leaned in again. Levi stopped me with a hand on my chest, pulling his phone out. I watched as he scrolled, then put the phone on speaker. The ringing seemed to echo through the empty stadium and finally, Barrett answered. “Is he there?”

Levi smiled, eyes on me. “Yeah, Bear. He’s here.”

Silence, and my heart thudded in my chest. What the hell was going on?

“Killer game, Rookie. I’ll see you on the field.”

30

LEVI

October

I thought that the energy in our house would match that of the field during the World Series.

Turns out, I was wrong.

Stetson and Barrett were closer than ever. They launched into pre-game prep, pushing each other to be the best versions of themselves. Both of them were up before the sun to spend hours in the gym. Shocking the hell out of me, Barrett took Stetson under his wing in the kitchen, teaching him to cook and how to use his smartwatch app to track his macros, whatever those were. I wasn't even allowed in the kitchen when he was cooking.

You ruin one white sweater...

The night before the first game, I stood in the entryway watching them make dinner. It was the closest to the stove Barrett would let me get, but I didn't mind. It provided the perfect view. Every now and then, one would hip check the other, or reach over to steal a kiss. Even facing down the biggest moment in their careers, they couldn't keep their hands off each other.

Lucky for us, their respective teams making it through to the final round worked in

our favor. The press shifted gears and instead of focusing on Barrett being a no-good cheater or Stetson a homewrecker, they were instead calling the two of them inspirational. Our love story had been labeled a modern-day Montagues versus Capulets—with some tweaks of course.

Barrett's press conference had been all the sports community could talk about. Major League Baseball, along with most professional sports, had been open and accepting of queer players for years. Every league had their own version of a zero-tolerance policy for any sort of harassment or discrimination. But this was different.

Fortunately, the league supported us at every turn. I had a few concerned clients come to me with questions but for the most part, things couldn't be better.

If someone had told me six months ago that this would be my life, I would have laughed in their face. I loved Barrett with every fiber of my being, but even after so many years together, we couldn't shake the fact that something was missing—either of us. Watching him fall in love with Stetson along with me made all the pieces fit together. It felt as if we'd been walking along in a daze, and Stetson put everything into focus. He slotted into our lives like a needle in a groove.

“Daddy?”

“Hm?”

I snapped back to reality to see both my men staring at me.

“Where'd you go?” Barrett asked me.

Before I answered, I stepped into the kitchen, ignoring Barrett's warning glare. His lasagna would survive. I walked around the island, moving in close behind them. I put an arm around each of their waists, nuzzling into Stetson's hair. He was small

enough to fit perfectly under my chin, and I loved it. “Just thinking about how lucky I am to have both of you.”

I kissed Stetson’s temple, and Barrett leaned in to stamp his lips to my cheek. “What brought that on?” The question was followed by a dish being thrust in my direction, a silent instruction to carry it to the table.

“Things could have gone in a whole other direction when I met a certain someone.” I succeeded in my mission of getting the food onto the table without dropping it, then pulled out their chairs for them. As Stetson dropped into his seat, I ruffled his hair. “But the two of you fell for each other even faster than I could imagine, and I couldn’t be happier.”

“How did it go when you first brought me home?”

Barrett answered for me. “It didn’t. You were passed out drunk in the guest room.”

“Bear...”

“What? It’s true!”

“All right,” Stetson interjected. “Like the two of you never had any wild nights out.” Then he looked to me, eyes sparkling with mischief. “Or can you not remember that far back?”

Barrett choked, and I narrowed my eyes. Stetson gulped. “Uh oh?”

“Yeah, ‘uh oh’ is right.” Filing that little remark away for later, I turned to the other man at the table. “Don’t think you’re off the hook either. Do I need to tell him the D’usse story?”

Barrett sobered, the blood draining from his face. “Don’t you dare!”

My lip quirked. “Want to try me, sweetheart?”

Stetson’s attention ping-ponged between the two of us, fork poised halfway to his mouth. I don’t think he’d ever seen Barrett drink. Likely because he hadn’t picked up a bottle since that fateful night. “Wait! Now I have to hear it!”

“No you don’t,” Barrett argued.

I sat back in my seat, amused. It wasn’t often that Barrett let things get under his skin, and seeing him nervous was fucking adorable. “What if I let you punish our boy for that age comment?”

Barrett took a bite of his dinner, narrowing his eyes as he weighed the risk. Truth be told, the night in question wasn’t that bad, but it was definitely out of character for Barrett. Everyone loved it, but when he woke up and saw the evidence the next morning—not to mention the horrific hangover he nursed for days—he swore off alcohol.

Stetson piped up, ignoring my offer to Barrett. “Was it better or worse than belting out nineties music and puking your guts out in an alley?”

“Worse,” Barrett and I both said in unison.

“He threw up all over me ,” I continued.

“You did not!”

“Levi! Oh, my God.” Barrett groaned and hid his face in his hands.

I took that as permission to launch into the story. Despite every weird twist and disgusting turn, Stetson latched onto it like a kid at story time. Barrett turned a deeper shade of red as the minutes passed. He tried to distract himself with his food, but eventually shoved his plate away.

I met Barrett when he was a college player, and he was a bit of an underdog. I was warned left and right not to sign him. He wasn't on anyone's radar, his stats weren't good enough, he wasn't determined enough. At least, that's what some said. Everyone seemed to have their opinions on why he wasn't good enough for the majors.

But he was perfect for me.

I took a chance and offered to represent him. He graduated college, and the Hellbenders took interest. He'd be the first to admit that his rookie year was a struggle, but he made it. He proved himself and soon enough, he was their star player. "The D'usse Incident," as we would come to know it, happened once he finished that first year. It mortified him to even think about that night, but I could pinpoint the precise moment I started to fall in love with him.

It was the first time I saw the rookie nerves fade away, and the true Barrett emerged into the spotlight. As I talked, I studied the ink winding over his arms and around his wrists. Those weren't there when I met him but by the end of that night, he would have his first tattoo.

* * *

We hadn't intended on going out together that night. I didn't even realize he was in town. Most pro athletes relocated to their team's state, even in the off season. I was meeting a coworker for drinks, and Barrett happened to be in the same place. After a few, my coworker left to go home to his family. With nothing better to do, I ordered

another and, feeling emboldened, sent Barrett one as well. When the bartender set a large shot glass in front of him and filled it to the top with cognac, I was impressed. I didn't know many cognac drinkers, much less ones who drank it by the shot. But Barrett met my eyes over his shoulder, winked, and threw it back like it was nothing.

He slammed the glass back down on the counter, wiped his mouth, and pushed off the stool. I barely had time to process what was happening before he plopped down across from me and blurted, "I'm into you."

Stunned, all I could offer was. "Excuse me?"

The cocky little shit crooked a brow at me. "Am I not speaking English?"

In the grand scheme of things, eight years wasn't all that much of an age difference but back then, it felt four times as drastic. Desperate to have the attention off me, I changed the subject. "How many have you had?"

He scoffed. "Irrelevant. I was attracted to you the moment we met. You want to get out of here?"

My face was on fire. I'd met some confident men in my life, but I could honestly say I'd never been propositioned so... openly. And from a client at that. I cleared my throat and spun my drink around on the table. "Um, Barrett, I'm flattered but I'm your agent."

"So?" He slid his chair around the table and moved in close. Our thighs brushed and he dipped a hand between my legs to tease at the seam in my jeans. Heat trailed behind his finger, lighting up my nerve endings like the Fourth of July.

Damn, he was not making this easy. I shot a hand down, stopping his fingers before they found my very evident erection. Gently, I placed his hand back in his own lap, as

much as it pained me to do so. “Let me clarify,” I told him. “This isn’t me saying I don’t find you attractive, or that I don’t want to. I’m your agent, and any sort of intimate relationship between us would be inappropriate. I didn’t mean to insinuate anything by sending you that drink and if I did, I apologize. Do you understand?”

Bleary, hazel eyes searched mine. His tongue darted out to wet his lower lip and damn it if my gaze didn’t snap right down to watch. I felt pressure on my hand, and it was then that I realized I was still holding his in his lap, dangerously close to his— “I understand,” he finally said, releasing my hand and getting to his feet. “But don’t think I didn’t see that. I’ll have you before you know it, Levi Grant.”

I was too shocked to respond. Instead, I dipped my gaze into my drink. I definitely wasn’t watching his ass as he strutted away from the table.

* * *

“I got a call about an hour later from the owner of a tattoo studio.”

“What ?” Stetson snapped his attention to Barrett. “Tell me you didn’t.”

“Oh, he did. Show him, Bear.”

His cheeks still tinged pink, Barrett smiled at me. As embarrassed as he was about that night, he remembered it just as fondly as I did. He’d been shredding his napkin to pieces, and he dropped the scraps to the table. “You owe me so much for this.”

Barrett rolled up his shirt sleeve and moved in close to Stetson. Over the years, Barrett had covered nearly every inch of his body in ink. His first tattoo was buried in the intricate lines and swirls decorating his upper arm. Stetson searched the tattoos and I knew the moment he saw it. He smiled wide, and that precious dimple popped out. “Oh, my God.”

There, nestled between a tribal tattoo and a realistic-looking moth was a small word in shitty script: my name. Considering most artists won't tattoo someone if they've been drinking, Barrett stumbled into a pretty shady place that night. He was so drunk, he practically bled all of the ink out. It was faded and blue, but still there. The artists working around it were creative in making it part of their art without covering it up.

"He won't let me cover it," Barrett said. "I've tried so many times."

Stetson traced over the lines with his finger, and Barrett shivered. "What happened when the artist called you?"

Barrett met my eyes across the table, returning to his meal. "Would you like to do the honors?"

"Happily. He passed out in the chair and refused to wake up. The artist fished his phone out of his pocket, searched for my name, and said if I didn't come get him that he would call the police. I knew that night that I was done for."

That time when I met his gaze across the table, Barrett gave me that grin that made me fall for him in the first place. "The rest is history," he said, reaching out for my hand. I slid mine into his palm, and he held the other out for Stetson. "Then we met you. Stetson, no matter what happens on that field, please know that we want you here. We need you here. You took an amazing love story and gave it the most beautiful epilogue. We love you, and the outcome of a baseball game isn't going to change that."

Damn, Barrett took the words right out of my mouth. My two men shared a look over the table, and my heart soared. Stetson then crooked a brow. "Even if that game is the World Series?"

Barrett gave his hand a squeeze. "Especially then. Baby, we've already made it. No

matter what the outcome is, we're the best players in the league. When we walk into that stadium tomorrow, all eyes are going to be on us."

Our boy relaxed, his mouth easing into a soft smile. "About that. I had an idea."

BARRETT

Stetson's idea was a bold one. It had never been done in the history of pro sports. Not to my knowledge anyway, but I didn't hesitate to agree. And as I stood in the clubhouse suiting up, I only felt more secure in my decision. Though that did little to ease my nerves. There was still a chance that this could go horribly wrong. These seven games were the last ones I would ever play in the majors. Given that we had yet to win a game against the Thrashers, it was likely that they'd murder us on the field instantly.

The clubhouse was dead quiet, but you could feel the energy throughout the place. The opening ceremonies were already underway. The thumping of the music rattled the walls. I placed my cap on my head and turned as the door opened and Britney stepped in, covering her eyes. "Is everybody decent?"

"Like you'd care if we weren't."

She dropped her hand. "You're right. It's not like I can become any more of a lesbian." Arms crossed over her chest, she leveled me with a glare. "Are you sure you want to do this?"

"I am." I thought I'd feel differently as I suited up for what would be the final games of my pro career, but I didn't. The entire morning, all I could think about was doing it with the men I loved by my side. It felt almost serendipitous that we'd made it here together. The entire team filtered out of the clubhouse, but I stayed behind. "Is

Stetson ready?”

Britney smiled, a rare, genuine one. “He’s had to be closely monitored so he doesn’t tip off the press too early.”

With my heart fluttering in my chest, I grabbed my cap. “Then I guess we’d better put the boy out of his misery.”

Every other member of the team went right, while I went left. I wouldn’t be announced with everyone else in the starting lineup. Stetson approached from the opposite direction, gracing me with a smile that could light up the darkest of rooms. When we’d first met, that cocky grin of his was etched into my memory. I’d seen countless press conferences, his contract signing, and numerous news reports with the same smirk on his face. But the closer we got, the more I got to know his real smile. The one that made his eyes sparkle and seemed to melt every ounce of tension from his body—and mine. That was a gesture that had to be earned. It was reserved for a select few, and my heart swelled knowing that I was one of them.

Despite the overwhelming success of the press conference, we’d been careful about PDA. Vicky had truly done a number on us. But there, in the privacy of the tunnels, I didn’t hesitate to step into Stetson’s open arms. He demanded a kiss, to which I happily obliged. “You ready for this?”

“Hell yeah, I am,” he answered instantly. There was no hesitation.

I held him there, soaking up some of his confidence while we waited. Home team was announced first, then the away. Tension built with every name called, knowing that ours wouldn’t be among them. The announcer reached the end of the home list and switched teams. Even over his thundering voice, murmurs of confusion echoed through the stadium. I glanced at Stetson, who beamed up at me with a twinkle in his eye. Who could possibly be nervous when you’re being looked at like that? So I

inhaled a deep breath and took his hand, lacing my fingers through his.

It was then that I noticed we were alone in the tunnel. Both publicists had disappeared. The team coaches and managers were already on the field. It would truly be all eyes on us.

After the starting lineup for each team was announced, the first pitch was thrown. Historically, the person to do it was an MVP from previous seasons. This year, with the help of our teams' publicists, the league decided to switch things up.

“ In light of recent events, our ceremonial first pitch is going to be performed differently this year. Since its creation, baseball has been widely known as America's favorite pastime. We, as a nation, are changing, but there's one thing that won't: baseball. From Babe Ruth to Glenn Burke, the MLB has been widely diverse. Today is no different. On behalf of The Atlanta Thrashers, The New York Hellbenders, and the entirety of Major League Baseball, we extend our support to these two players. Today, the first pitch will be thrown and caught by two-thirds of baseball's newest power throuple.”

My palm started to sweat, creating a slick glide along Stetson's. Considering I was rooted to the spot, he took the first step toward the opening. When he threw that grin over his shoulder, my legs remembered how to move.

We emerged onto the field, and the noise was deafening. My plastered-on smile eased into something much more genuine. The stadium was decorated in color. Pride flags lit up the stands, bright, shining rainbows commanding the attention of anyone who dared challenge them. I blinked against the burning in my eyes. Stetson and I shared a quick, knowing glance. We'd done it. We'd truly done it.

We'd made a difference.

“ From The Atlanta Thrashers, batting second, pitcher, number twelve, Stetson Holloway !”

With the ball in his hand, Stetson gave my fingers a squeeze before heading to the pitcher’s mound. I accepted my glove and took my position.

“ From the New York Hellbenders, batting fourth, behind the plate, number ten, Barrett Swindon !”

The roar from the crowd was so intense that I couldn’t hear myself think. Almost as if in the distance, music filtered through the speakers: Brooke Eden’s “Outlaw Love.” The ground beneath me seemed to vibrate. I crouched behind home plate and locked eyes with Stetson. He winked, then he leisurely threw the ball in my direction. It smacked into the glove, and the screaming around us intensified. Stetson stepped off the mound and made a clear path to me. One voice stood out amongst the thousands, and I searched for Levi in the stands. Tears shamelessly danced down both cheeks. He made no move to wipe them away. I blew him a kiss, which he caught and returned. Mouthing an “I love you,” I met Stetson halfway. It was time to switch gears. I ignored the heat behind my own eyes, but reached up to brush Stetson’s cheekbones dry. I kept the PDA to a minimum, taking his hand in mine for a handshake. Shutters clicked and video cameras moved around us, capturing every angle of the two most popular men in baseball.

With a newfound confidence, Stetson and I joined our respective teams. With the first pitch out of the way, the start of the game was almost uneventful. Every bit of pressure I’d felt up to that moment faded. It no longer mattered if I got this ring or not. The only thing that did was that I got to play the game I loved, and I got to go home to the men I loved afterward. Some of my teammates may have felt differently, but I didn’t care. We got here by playing our best, and I would do nothing less now.

The first inning passed easily. The Hellbenders caught up to the Thrashers at the last

second, with me crossing over home plate just as our fifth batter was tagged out at second base. I paused briefly to catch my breath, then we switched for the second inning. I had every bit of faith in my team, but that never stopped the self doubt from creeping its way in. Though as we prepared to take the field, that one run up gave me a boost of confidence. When the first batter struck out, that hope flourished. Stetson sauntered up to the plate, and I watched out of the corner of my eye. Though the chuckle from the umpire told me I wasn't being as subtle as I thought. He let it slide, and Stetson gave me a not -so-subtle once-over as he took his place.

I made my call and when our pitcher didn't shake his head, I considered it accepted. "Ready for me to kick your ass, Rookie?" I muttered.

He shot a look over his shoulder, and my heart flipped. "Yes, sir."

32

STETSON

One Week Later

I thought I knew what exhaustion meant.

I thought I knew what it felt like to feel so tired that you'd fall over at any given second.

I was horrifically wrong.

Heading into the final game of the World Series, we all felt it. The silence in the clubhouse wasn't charged. There was no lingering tension. It was understood. We didn't need to talk. Each of us knew what the other was thinking.

When we entered the final seven games, we'd beaten the Hellbenders a couple of times already. I held out hope for Barrett's sake, but I think the rest of the team got one hell of a wakeup call.

We were tied. This last game would decide everything. Either we would be world champions, or we would fall second to the Hellbenders.

The thought of Barrett losing had my gut in knots. The outcome of tonight's game didn't matter: it would be his last. This was his final shot at getting that championship ring.

We agreed not to see each other once we were at the field, Levi included. We had a private moment before we left the house that morning, and then we separated to get into our individual mindsets. The last thing we needed was to distract each other.

Suddenly, I felt the need to move. Not that it came as a surprise to anyone. When I shot to my feet, not a single person said a word. They'd grown accustomed to my high energy level by now, even without the added stress of boyfriends and Daddies and...

Ugh!

I found myself in a long hallway, pacing back and forth. On the wall were four picture frames: one for each World Series win the Thrashers had, even from before they moved to Atlanta. The photos dated all the way back to 1914, the most recent being just a few years old. Standing there, something switched inside me. I couldn't pinpoint what it was, but it made me feel uneasy. I studied the frames hanging there in front of me. Four titles compared to the Hellbenders's two.

Did we really need a fifth?

I instantly shook off the thought. What the hell was I thinking?

The door to the locker room opened and the team filed out to the field. I'd run out of time to think about anything. It was exactly what I needed. I could barely hear myself think over the crowd and the thundering sound of "We Will Rock You." The noise worked as a distraction while I settled on the pitcher's mound and shook away the unexpected nerves. I'd been so sure of myself. I couldn't waver now.

I struck out the first batter easily. Barrett stepped up to the plate and flashed me that heart-stopping grin, and that's when I started to falter. That smile had my stomach doing somersaults. I swore my arm moved before I could even think, sending the ball

right into Barrett's path.

It wasn't until he made contact that I realized what I'd done: I'd given him an easy pitch. Even if my brain hadn't caught up, my heart had made its decision. I was only in my first season. There would be so many more chances for me to get this. It was Barrett's last shot.

Whether I did it consciously or not, I began to play my worst game ever. It was like playing while my body was trapped in cement. I couldn't think straight, couldn't seem to remember how to make my legs move, or make my arm toss. My coaches and so many of my teammates yelled at me to get my head in the game, but no matter how hard I tried, it wouldn't work.

Even the players on the Hellbenders started to give me dirty looks. The Thrashers held their own without me though and by the fifth inning, the game was tied. My feet seemed to drag in the dirt as I shuffled to home plate. Barrett attempted to meet my eyes, but I refused to look at him. I raised my bat, and it felt like it weighed a thousand pounds. I was only half paying attention to the pitcher as he threw the ball?—

And I swung too early.

"Stetson, what's going on with you?" Barrett muttered, lobbing the ball back to center field.

I ignored him, readying myself for a second attempt.

"Strike two!"

Barrett spat a curse from behind me and after returning the ball, yanked off his mask and called for a time out. I dropped my bat and moved to walk away, just to have his

hand stop me in my tracks. “You’re not going anywhere, Holloway.”

Both sets of coaches met us at home plate, along with the umpire. It was the Hellbenders’s head coach that spoke first. “What’s going on?”

Barrett was already dragging me toward one of the tunnels, away from the coaches and the cameras. “We need a minute!” he called over his shoulder, not giving anyone a chance to protest. The announcers cut to commercial, and the teams filtered into their respective dugouts for a much-needed break.

Barrett shoved me against the wall, and a surprised grunt forced its way out of my chest. “What the hell is going on with you?”

I squared my shoulders and held my chin high. It was pointless. I didn’t stand a chance when he went dominant. When he crooked a brow and crossed his arms over his chest, I shrunk back. The sleeves of his undershirt slid up, revealing his tattoos. He was forgoing anything professional and going full Sir on me, and it was working. When I spoke, my voice cracked. “I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

“You’re playing like shit, Stetson.”

“Every player has bad days.”

Barrett’s eyes hardened. “You’re throwing the game, aren’t you?”

I squirmed. “I wanted to give you your win.”

Finally, the tough facade cracked. The ghost of a smile tugged at Barrett’s mouth, but he stifled it by biting his lip. “Stetson, that’s not how I want to get it.”

“But it’s your last cha?—”

Barrett took another step, closing the minimal distance between us. My breathing picked up, the rapid movements of my chest causing us to brush against each other. The heat of his body seeped through my clothes, seeming to course through my veins and warm me from the inside out. “You want me to have this?” Barrett asked, lips so close to mine that his hot breath washed over my skin. “You want me to win?”

It was all I could do to nod.

“Then the least you can do is give me a fair shot. I don’t want handouts, not even from my boyfriend.” His hand came up between us, his thumb and forefinger finding my chin and holding my attention on him. “Get back out on that field, and give me your worst. Let me earn that ring fair and square. Do not throw this game on purpose. If I find out you did, there are going to be serious consequences. Have I made myself clear?”

“Crystal,” I croaked.

Barrett tightened his grip, the look in his eyes daring me to challenge him.

“Yes, sir.”

“That’s better.” I wanted a kiss, desperately, but Barrett let go of me and took a step back before I could lean in. “Get out there and give me something to work for. Then you’ll get what you want.”

Without another word, Barrett left the tunnel. I shook off the feeling and followed behind him on wobbly legs. One of my own coaches met me at the entrance to the tunnel. “You good, kid?”

Barrett peered over his shoulder, crooking that brow at me. A spark of electricity flickered in my gut. “All good here, Coach.”

The team returned to the field. I collected my bat from where it had hit the dirt and took my position. Barrett's commanding presence behind me served as a reminder of what I was playing for. He had a point: I wouldn't want him throwing the game for me either. I'd worked my ass off my entire life to get where I was. The next time I locked eyes with that pitcher, it was with fierce determination. The concrete surrounding my limbs had been blasted away, and I found my energy again.

The crack that echoed through the stadium when my bat connected with the ball seemed to kickstart my heart, and the game was on.

My horrible playing would be chalked up to a fluke. Some Hellbenders fans would call it a trick. Whatever the reason, Stetson Holloway was back.

The end grew nearer, and my nerves heightened once more. It all came down to one run. Bottom of the ninth, we were tied. The Thrashers were at bat, and we had two outs. Harrison was on third. All I had to do was hit enough of a run to send him home, and the Thrashers would be world champions for the fifth time in history. The only thing I could hear as I stepped up to the plate was my heartbeat thudding in my ears. My hands tightened on the bat, and I locked eyes with the pitcher. My gaze zeroed in on that ball as if I had X-ray vision and could see straight through the guy's mitt.

Then, the thing was flying at my face. Time slowed.

Swing.

Crack.

I didn't care where that stupid ball went.

It didn't matter.

Harrison crossed home plate, and the counter moved. “We Are The Champions” played before being drowned out by the fans.

Tears blurred my vision, and while my team converged at the pitcher’s mound to celebrate, I faced the catcher. Barrett straightened to his full height, and I snatched his mask off before he had the chance. He caught me with an arm around my waist. “I’m sorry,” I told him, barely audible over all the noise.

I grabbed him, not caring what anyone had to say in return. He promised me a kiss and damn it, I wanted it. Even if the whole world was watching. Our lips met, and his arm tightened around me. I clenched onto him for support as my feet left the ground. The world around me faded away. Barrett was the only thing of interest to me in that moment.

My lungs ached and reluctantly, I came up for air. “I’m sorry.”

“Don’t be.” He shook his head, and what he said next lit me up like a bottle rocket. “Make it up to me next year.”

LEVI

Christmas

Three Years Later

“Lee, what the hell is taking you so long?”

Aha! I leapt up, snatching what I wanted from the back of the cabinet. I knew I’d hidden another bag from Stetson. “Trying to make sure someone has enough marshmallows!”

Ripping the plastic open, I poured a handful onto Stetson’s hot chocolate. I loaded the three mugs onto the tray, then grabbed the bag at the last minute. Now that he knew they were in the house, he wouldn’t stop until he found them.

In the living room, my heart warmed at the sight in front of me. There was a fire crackling in the corner. Georgia rarely got cold enough to warrant lighting it, so it was a nice addition to the frigid December morning. Barrett sprawled out on the couch, arms wrapped tightly around Stetson, who lounged on his chest. They wore matching green pajamas, decorated with candy canes—Stetson’s insistence. He wanted all three of us to wear them but with two human space heaters in the bed, I’d have burned to death. Barrett’s hair sprawled across the cushion beneath his head. He’d been growing it out, letting it get long enough to brush his shoulders. Stetson’s had more or less remained the same: not long enough to get in his way, but enough to let us latch onto it when we needed to.

I set the tray down on the table, handing Stetson's over first. "I'm surprised all your teeth haven't fallen out, boy."

He sat up slightly, taking the drink in both hands. Batting his lashes, he gave me those bright blue eyes that tended to earn him whatever he wanted, every single time. "Thank you, Daddy."

I groaned inwardly. That. That was why we went through so many marshmallows in a week that I often joked we should buy stock in the company. Barrett pulled himself to sitting, allowing Stetson to get comfortable before taking his own mug. He inclined his head toward me, and I leaned down accept the kiss he planted on my cheek. "Thank you."

With my own drink, I sat down and admired the picture the two of them made. I'd always been happy with Barrett. Seeing him equally enamored with someone else was the icing on the cake.

It had been three years since we brought Stetson into our lives. Barrett, in fact, didn't retire. When the Thrashers won that World Series, it reminded him why he fell in love with baseball in the first place. One thing that did change, however, was Barrett leaving the Hellbenders after ten years with them. After the traction the league got from the World Series, the Thrashers gave him one hell of an offer. The dollar amount combined with the fact that he would be home more was something he couldn't refuse.

My men made a pitcher-catcher duo that would make history. There'd never been anything like it, and there likely never would be again. I thought they tore up the field all on their own but together, they dominated the damn thing. They'd led the Thrashers to two more World Series wins. The one they lost? That was to the Hellbenders.

My gaze traveled to the matching trophy cases we kept in the living room. One held

Barrett's memorabilia, traced all the way back to his first game. The other was filled with Stetson's, complete with his trophies from his college days.

In the middle was my pride and joy. I'd put that one together, and they weren't allowed to touch it. Inside were their collected World Series rings. Behind them was the ball that Stetson threw during the ceremonial pitch that first year, signed and in a case to be preserved forever. Behind it was my favorite feature. A framed photo of the two of them. Stetson had just hit the winning home run and instead of taking his bases, he ran to his man. Barrett captured him around the waist and hauled him into his arms. Stetson's feet barely touched the ground, but he didn't care. The rest of the team celebrated with each other in the background, but Barrett and Stetson stood at home plate, lips locked as if they were the only two people in the world. Confetti rained down on them, looking like the league was celebrating them and not a World Series win.

I was okay with that.

"Daddy?"

Stetson's voice pulled me out of my thoughts. "Yes, baby?"

"You okay?"

My boy watched me, his hot chocolate already gone and the mug discarded on the table. He now had his hand buried in the marshmallows—which were also disappearing. He'd be fighting a stomachache later, but it was Christmas so I let it slide. Barrett nuzzled into the boy's neck, sharing a knowing look with me. We had our hands full, but we knew that from day one. "Yeah, baby. I'm great."

My life was hectic now with chasing two pro athletes around, but I wouldn't have it any other way. I watched as Barrett trailed his nose along the shell of Stetson's ear, where he whispered, "Want to join me in the shower, Rookie?"

A visible shudder passed through Stetson's body. "Can I, Daddy?"

A wave of need coursed through my veins and surged south, pooling in my lower belly. "Only if I can watch."