



Waltzing on Ice (Sexy as Sin)

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Category: Sport

Description: As one of the top ice dancers in the world, Daisy Whittaker has always put her career above everything else—until her reputation is at risk when a scandalous rumor threatens to derail her Olympic dreams. To salvage her image and ensure a sponsorship deal that could make or break her career, Daisy agrees to a fake relationship with her new partner, Finn Sullivan, a medal-winning ice skater with a wild reputation.

The catch? Daisy and Finn can't stand each other. Finn's charm and carefree attitude rub Ivy the wrong way, and the last thing she needs is a distraction. But the more they stage their romance—attending high-profile events, posing for paparazzi photos, and sharing way too many personal moments—the more the sparks between them grow, turning their fake love affair into something that feels dangerously real.

As they fake their way through media appearances and public performances, Ivy begins to question her feelings. Is she falling for the man she was supposed to just pretend to love, or is she waltzing herself into a heartbreak she can't afford?

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Daisy

I exhale slowly, centering myself as I glide across the ice. Precision. Control. Elegance. These are the things that define me, have earned me medals and sponsorships, and separate champions from amateurs.

And then there's my skating partner.

"Fuck, Daisy, are you made of glass?"

Finn Sullivan's voice cuts through the crisp air of the rink, sharp and grating as ever. I clench my jaw and keep my posture perfect, refusing to react.

"Maybe if you stopped flailing like a baby deer on a frozen pond, I wouldn't have to be so careful," I retort smoothly.

Finn skates up beside me, his towering frame in stark contrast to mine. He's all power and brute strength, built more like a hockey enforcer than an ice dancer. His dark hair is perpetually tousled, his sharp jawline dusted with stubble—because, of course, he can't be bothered to shave. He wears arrogance like a second skin, but worse than that? He's good. Infuriatingly good.

He grins, cocky as ever. "Baby deer, huh? That's funny, coming from someone who just botched a twizzle sequence."

I whip around to face him. "I did not botch it."

Finn smirks. “If that’s what helps you sleep at night, sweetheart.”

I inhale sharply through my nose, willing myself not to rise to the bait. This is how it always is with Finn—constant pushing, constant testing. He’s reckless and aggressive, while I am calculated and precise. Oil and water. Fire and ice.

Our coach, Victor, skates onto the ice, rubbing his temples like he regrets every decision that led him to coach the two of us. “Are we done bickering, or do I need to separate you two like children?”

Finn shrugs. “She started it.”

I gape at him. “I started it?”

Victor pinches the bridge of his nose. “I don’t care. Again. From the top.”

I force myself to focus as Finn takes my hand. His grip is firm, calloused from years of training. The moment we start moving, everything else fades away. This, at least, is familiar—the rhythm, the sharp turns, the precision of each movement.

Until Finn decides to be Finn.

“Relax, Daisy,” he murmurs as we go into a lift. “You’re stiffer than a nun at a strip club.”

I nearly miss the transition. “Would you shut up and focus?”

Finn chuckles, completely unbothered. “Oh, I’m focused. Just wondering when you’ll admit you like having your hands on me.”

I grit my teeth. “The only thing I like is imagining ways to make you disappear.”

“Dark. Kinda hot, though.”

I exhale sharply, determined to ignore him. But it’s impossible because Finn isn’t just talking—he’s there, pressing against me, the heat of his body bleeding through my costume. Every glide, every turn, every spin feels like a challenge, a battle of wills.

A battle I refuse to lose.

Victor claps once as we finish the routine, nodding approvingly. “Better. Still needs refinement, but it’s coming together.”

Finn stretches, rolling his shoulders. “Told you we’d get there, Daisy.”

I won’t dignify that with a response. Instead, I skate off, needing distance, needing air.

But Finn, of course, follows. “You’re so dramatic,” he teases, skating up beside me. “Is this the part where you storm out and swear you’ll never skate with me again?”

I throw him a sharp glare. “I should. If I had any sense, I would.”

He grins like I just told him the best news of his life. “But you won’t.”

I scoff. “And why’s that?”

Finn shrugs, skating backward effortlessly while facing me. “Because you love this. The push, the fight. Admit it, Daisy, no one makes you skate like I do.”

That’s the worst part—he’s right. I do love it. I love the fire, the way he pushes me in ways no one ever has before. But I’ll be damned if I let him know that.

Instead, I roll my eyes and skate past him. “Enjoy your ego trip, Finn.”

His laughter follows me as I exit the ice. And even though I won’t admit it, I feel it too—the energy, the heat, the undercurrent of something dangerous and exhilarating between us.

And the worst part of all of this? Somewhere, buried beneath all the irritation and exasperation, I like it.

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Daisy

It happens so fast, that I barely have time to react.

One minute, everything is perfect. I'm at a high-profile sponsor event, dazzling in an ice-blue gown that shimmers under the ballroom lights, my hair swept into a flawless updo, and my makeup meticulously applied. The cameras flash as I move through the crowd, smiling just enough to be warm but never too much to seem overeager.

This is the game. The balance of charm, grace, and control.

I pretend to sip champagne, laughing lightly at a joke I barely heard. My sponsor, Richard Calloway, a well-connected businessman who funds a huge portion of my training, has been particularly attentive tonight. We've worked together for years. He's always been friendly and professional.

When he offers to walk me back to my hotel room after I mention a migraine creeping in, I don't think twice about it, a total mistake.

By morning, my name is everywhere—for all the wrong reasons. The headlines are brutal:

DAISY WHITTAKER CAUGHT IN HOTEL ROOM WITH MARRIED SPONSOR!

OLYMPIC FAVORITE OR GOLD-DIGGING HOMEWRECKER?

SCANDAL ON ICE! DAISY'S SECRET AFFAIR EXPOSED!

My hands tremble as I scroll through article after article, each one worse than the last. They paint me as some ruthless seductress, climbing my way to the top by sleeping with the right men. They take a harmless moment—a sponsor escorting me to my hotel room after I'd had a migraine—and twist it into a salacious scandal.

The knock on my door makes me jump. I yank it open, already knowing who it is. Kara, my agent, storms in, her face tight with stress. She doesn't even sit. Just starts pacing the room like she's calculating the odds of my career surviving this. "Tell me you didn't actually do this."

My stomach churns. "Of course I didn't! Nothing happened! He walked me to my room, that's it!"

Kara exhales, pinching the bridge of her nose. "The media doesn't care about the truth. This looks bad, Daisy. Really bad."

I sink onto the edge of the bed, my pulse pounding in my ears. "What do I do?"

Kara hesitates, then drops another bomb. "We're going to spin it."

I look up sharply. "How?"

She sits beside me, smoothing out her skirt like she's preparing for battle. "We give them a better story—one that makes it impossible for this scandal to be true. We make you untouchable."

I narrow my eyes. "What kind of story?"

Kara takes a breath. "You and Finn. We go public with your relationship."

I recoil like she's suggested I throw myself off a cliff. "What relationship?"

"The one you and Finn have been hiding from the public eye," she says calmly. "Or at least, the one everyone is going to believe you have. If you and Finn have been secretly dating, then this whole sponsor affair story falls apart. No one will believe you were sneaking around with some married man when you were supposedly in a whirlwind romance with your skating partner."

I stare at her, horrified. "Are you seriously telling me my best option is to pretend to be in love with Finn Sullivan?"

Kara gives me a pointed look. "Would you rather be branded as a homewrecker?"

I swallow hard. No. No, I would not. But Finn? He is the last person I want to be tangled up with like this.

Kara must see the panic on my face because she softens slightly. "Look, I know this isn't ideal. But Finn's reputation isn't exactly spotless either. He's got the whole 'bad boy of skating' thing going on. This benefits both of you."

I scoff. "Oh, I'm sure he's going to love this."

The door swings open before Kara can respond, and my stomach drops as Finn strides in, looking annoyingly unbothered by the fact that my entire career is on the verge of imploding.

He raises an eyebrow. "What's this I hear about us being madly in love?"

I groan, pressing my hands to my temples. "Kill me now." I glare at Kara, "You've already discussed this with him?"

Finn smirks, sauntering closer. He's still in his practice gear—a black compression shirt stretched over his broad chest, sweat still dampening his hair from his morning skate. He looks like he just rolled out of bed and onto the ice, and of course, he makes that look effortless. “Not the best attitude toward your lover, sweetheart.”

I glare at him. “If you call me sweetheart one more time, I will hurt you.”

He tilts his head, eyes gleaming with amusement. “That a promise?”

I want to hurl something at him. Instead, I clench my fists. “Kara, tell me there's another way.”

Kara claps her hands together, ignoring me. “Great! I think this is going to work.”

Finn laughs, crossing his arms over his chest. “You know, Daisy, if you wanted to get in my pants, you could've just asked. No need to stage a whole national scandal.”

My jaw drops. “I hate you.”

He winks. “You keep telling yourself that.” He wraps an arm around my shoulder.

I shove him off immediately, but deep down, I already know I don't have a choice. This is happening.

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Finn

This PR stunt will be easy.

At least, that's what I thought before Daisy started looking at me like she'd rather stab me with one of her blades than hold my hand in public.

I get it. I do. She's always been the poster girl for perfection—poised, graceful, polite. On the other hand, I am the guy who once flipped off a judge on live television. So yeah, I can see why she's not exactly thrilled about pretending to be my doting girlfriend.

That doesn't mean I won't enjoy every second of this.

I show up late to our first practice session as a “couple”—not on purpose, but not not on purpose. When I stroll into the rink, Daisy is already there, stretching, her expression so tight it could snap. Her leg is extended in a perfect arabesque, her back straight, and her arms positioned flawlessly. She looks like a damn statue, all elegance and restraint, and something about that just makes me want to shake her up.

“Nice of you to show up,” she bites out, lowering her leg and standing to her full height.

I drop my duffel on the bench and grin. “Miss me that much?”

Her glare could set me on fire. “We have a job to do, Finn. Try acting like you care.”

I roll my shoulders like this whole thing is no big deal. “Relax, sweetheart. We just have to make a few people believe we’re obsessed with each other. How hard could it be?”

She exhales sharply, nostrils flaring. “Obsessed with you? Nearly impossible.”

I smirk. “I do like a challenge.”

We go over the basics—handholding, lingering looks, the way we’re supposed to act like we can’t get enough of each other. It should be simple. But Daisy is so tightly wound, I’d bet money she sleeps in a perfectly straight line.

The best way to loosen her up? Push her buttons.

“You’re forgetting the most important part,” I say as I skate up beside her, letting my fingers brush against her arm. She stiffens immediately, and damn, that reaction is golden. “If we’re supposed to be in love, we need chemistry.”

She snaps her head toward me, hazel eyes flashing. “Don’t touch me.”

I smirk. “Too late.”

She shoves me back, and I can’t help but laugh. This is going to be so much fun.

“Strictly business,” she mutters under her breath, skating away like she can outrun this situation.

But I catch up easily, gliding beside her, making sure she feels every inch of my presence. “Sure, Daisy.”

The way her name rolls off my tongue makes her falter for just a second. Just enough

to let me know that beneath all that ice, there's heat. I can't wait to break through to it.

She recovers quickly, jaw tightening as she spins to face me. "I don't think you understand how serious this is. My reputation is on the line."

I lean in just enough to make her uncomfortable, dropping my voice. "Oh, I understand, princess. But if we're supposed to be madly in love, you might want to work on not looking like you want to murder me every time I get near you."

Her lips press into a thin line. "That's a tough ask."

"Come on, Daisy. Fake it." I grin, reaching out and tucking a stray piece of hair behind her ear just to see how fast she'll slap my hand away.

She sucks in a sharp breath, eyes flicking to my mouth for a fraction of a second before she jerks away. "Touch me again, and I'll make sure you fall face-first on the ice."

I chuckle, skating back a step. "Kinky."

She groans, pinching the bridge of her nose. "I hate you."

"Yeah?" I skate behind her, close enough that she can feel my breath against the nape of her neck. "Because your pulse is telling me a different story."

She whirls around, shoving me again, and this time I let her, mostly because the pink rising in her cheeks is way too satisfying.

"New rule," she says, voice clipped. "No getting in my space unless necessary."

I grin. “Define ‘necessary.’”

She narrows her eyes. “You know what I mean.”

I hold up my hands in mock surrender. “Fine, fine. I’ll behave,” I say even though we know I absolutely will not.

Daisy exhales like she’s debating whether this is worth it. But she needs me, and deep down, I think she knows that.

“Alright,” she says finally. “Let’s get this over with.”

I watch as she skates to the center of the ice, standing poised, every inch of her carefully controlled.

This is going to be so much fun.

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Daisy

The past has claws, and sometimes, it digs in when I least expect it. Tonight, it happens the moment I see Lucas Moreau across the ballroom.

He stands near the bar, effortlessly charming a group of sponsors, his polished smile exactly as I remember. For a moment, I can't breathe. My grip tightens around the delicate stem of my champagne glass, and I remind myself that I am not that girl anymore. The one who let him into my life, only to watch him walk away when something better came along.

But of course, fate has a twisted sense of humor, because tonight isn't just any night. It's Finn and my grand debut as the perfect skating couple. A lie wrapped in designer fabric and sparkling smiles.

I feel Finn before I see him, the warmth of his body as he leans in close. "You look like you're about to set something on fire. Should I be worried?"

His voice is low, teasing, but there's an undertone of awareness. Finn doesn't miss much.

I force a smile, lifting my champagne. "Just ruminating."

Finn follows my line of sight, his expression sharpening when he spots Lucas. "Ah. The ex-boytoy."

I bristle. "Don't call him that."

“What should I call him? The asshole who let you go?” Finn smirks. “Not that I’m complaining. His loss.”

I shoot him a warning glance, but before I can retort, a photographer approaches. “Can we get a shot of the two of you? Maybe something cozy?” His emphasis makes my stomach twist.

Finn doesn’t hesitate. He turns to me, sliding an arm around my waist, tugging me flush against his side. His touch is steady and effortless as if we’ve been doing this for years. “Smile for the cameras, sweetheart.”

I do. It’s what I was trained to do, but the heat of Finn’s palm against my bare back is very real, and when I glance up at him, something flickers behind his gaze—something dangerous.

“You’re enjoying this,” I murmur through my practiced smile.

Finn’s lips barely move. “Immensely.”

Lucas chooses that exact moment to appear. “Daisy,” he says smoothly, his French accent still sharp around the edges. “You look stunning, as always.”

Finn’s grip on my waist tightens imperceptibly.

I steel myself before facing Lucas. “Lucas.” My voice is even, cool. “I see you’re still charming sponsors like your life depends on it.”

He chuckles, unbothered. “It’s a skill. You should know. You’ve always been good at playing the part.” His gaze flickers to Finn, amusement dancing in his eyes. “Though I have to say, you do have a type.”

My stomach twists.

Finn tilts his head, sensing the shift in me. “Oh? What type is that?” His voice is deceptively casual, but there’s a sharpness beneath it.

Lucas smirks. “Ambitious. Willing to do whatever it takes to win. Even if it means pretending.”

Finn chuckles, dark and low. “Funny,” he muses. “I was just about to say the same about you. Except Daisy? She doesn’t have to pretend with me.” He leans down, brushing his lips just below my ear. “And trust me, Moreau, she’s a very dedicated partner.”

Heat explodes across my skin. Lucas stiffens, and for once, he doesn’t have a quick response. My breath catches as Finn pulls away, his expression infuriatingly smug.

“Shall we, babe?” Finn says, holding out his hand.

I should be annoyed that he just turned the tables so effortlessly, but as I take his hand, letting him lead me away, all I can think about is how, for the first time in years, Lucas Moreau was left speechless.

And Finn Sullivan? Finn might be playing a role, but he plays to win, and this time I won’t let my heart get broken.

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Finn

Lucas Moreau is the kind of guy who's used to getting away with things. Slick, polished, and smug as hell. This is exactly why I don't hesitate to step into his path the moment Daisy is out of earshot.

"Enjoying yourself?" I ask, keeping my tone light even as my fingers itch to shove him back a few steps. Not that it would be professional of me, but I've never been great at following rules.

Lucas sighs, swirling his whiskey in his glass like we're old friends catching up. "You're protective. That's sweet."

I take a deliberate step closer, letting my height and build do the talking. "You think you're clever, don't you?"

Lucas smirks. "I don't think, Sullivan. I know."

My jaw tightens. "Then know this, Daisy isn't some pawn you get to mess with just because you lost your shot with her."

His expression barely flickers. "I never wanted her. She was simply a quick way to get to what I wanted."

I take another step, invading his space the way I do on the ice—dominant, unwavering. "Let me make this real simple for you, Moreau. You don't talk to her. You don't look at her. And if you so much as breathe in her direction with anything

other than respect, I'll make damn sure you regret it."

Lucas chuckles, unbothered, but his fingers tighten around his glass. "Ah, so you're the knight in shining armor now?" He tilts his head, eyes gleaming.

My fists clench, but before I can answer, movement to my left catches my eye. Daisy. Her shoulders are tense, her lips pressed together, and I know instantly that she's been listening.

"Daisy—"

But she's already turning away, her spine rigid as she weaves through the ballroom.

I mutter a curse and shove past Lucas without another glance.

I find her near the edge of the dance floor, pretending to be deeply invested in her champagne. She never really drinks it, but tonight I've seen her finish several glasses.

"Dance with me," I say, not asking.

She lets out a humorless laugh. "Not really in the mood to perform."

I take the flute from her fingers and set it aside. Then, before she can protest, I slide a hand to her waist and pull her gently onto the floor. She stiffens but doesn't pull away. Not yet.

"What's wrong?" I murmur, leading her effortlessly into the slow rhythm of the music.

Her eyes stay locked on my chest. "I didn't enjoy hearing you and Lucas talk about how he never loved me. Did you get any ammunition to use against me?"

My grip on her waist tightens instinctively. “That’s not what that was.”

She finally looks up, hazel eyes sharp. “No?”

“No.” I guide her into a turn, pressing my palm to the small of her back as I pull her closer. She inhales sharply, the tension between us shifting, twisting into something heavier. Something I hadn’t prepared for.

“I don’t think about you like that, Daisy.” My voice is rougher than I intended. “Not even close.”

She swallows hard, something flickering behind her gaze. And just like that, I become acutely aware of everything—the way her body fits against mine, the delicate rise and fall of her breath, the warmth of her skin beneath my fingertips.

This is different. Not like when we skate, when every touch is rehearsed, every movement part of a carefully crafted performance. This feels real.

Daisy must feel it too because she exhales shakily, fingers curling slightly against my shoulder. “Finn…”

I should step back, make a joke, and break the tension before it spirals into something we can’t take back. Instead, I tighten my hold and murmur against her ear, “You sure you want to keep pretending this is fake?”

She doesn’t answer. And for the first time since this whole arrangement started, I’m not sure I want her to.

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Daisy

I regret every drop of last night's champagne as I push through the fourth hour of training. My head throbs in time with the music, my muscles ache, and my stomach churns with every sharp movement. I don't get hangovers—I don't allow myself to get them—but everything that's happened in the last few weeks has sent me off the edge.

"You're slow today, Daisy," Finn calls out, skating backward effortlessly while I struggle to keep up. "Did all that champagne finally melt your ice queen exterior?"

I shoot him a glare, unwilling to give him the satisfaction of a response.

He grins. "Careful, princess. If I didn't know any better, I'd think you enjoyed letting loose last night."

I grit my teeth. "I don't need commentary, Finn."

"Oh, but you do need water," he muses, skating in close and offering me a bottle. "Hydration is key when you've spent the night making questionable life choices."

I snatch the bottle from his hand and take a long sip, more out of defiance than gratitude. He watches me with amused interest, arms crossed over his broad chest.

"You sure you don't want to lie down for a bit?" he teases. "Maybe let me carry you around the rink? I know you like it when I hold you."

I choke on the water. “Excuse me?”

Finn smirks. “You heard me.”

I inhale sharply, refusing to engage. “Again,” I say, forcing my legs to move faster, even as exhaustion weighs them down.

Finn watches me for a moment, his usual cocky smirk softening slightly. Then, without warning, he grabs my wrist and pulls me toward him. “Let’s try something new.”

I blink at him. “What?”

“A lift.”

My stomach clenches. “We already have our lifts choreographed.”

“This one’s different.” His grip tightens, his gaze challenging. “Trust me?”

I don’t trust easily. Not on the ice, and certainly not off it. But something about the way he’s looking at me makes my breath hitch. Before I can second-guess myself, I nod.

Finn wastes no time. He grips my waist, his hands firm and sure, and in one fluid motion, he lifts me. I barely have time to react before I’m in the air, weightless, my legs extending instinctively as I arch my back.

His strength is effortless, his hold unwavering. He isn’t just lifting me—he’s holding me, supporting me, and for one terrifying, exhilarating second, I let myself feel it.

Then, just as quickly, I snap back. My body tenses. I shift too soon and Finn has to

adjust to keep us balanced. When he sets me down, I stumble slightly, my heart hammering.

He doesn't let go right away. Instead, his hands remain gripping me, his thumbs pressing lightly against my ribs right below my breasts.

"You good?" His voice is lower now, rougher.

I nod too quickly. "Fine."

His lips twitch. "You sure? Because for a second there, you looked like you enjoyed it."

I scoff, stepping back, but he doesn't let me go far. He follows, keeping close, his gaze sharp and knowing.

"I mean, I get it," he continues, his voice dropping as he leans in. "I am really good with my hands."

I feel my face heat. "Finn—"

"You don't have to say it," he interrupts smoothly. "Your body tells me everything."

I shove at his chest, but it's a pathetic attempt, especially when he doesn't budge. The worst part? He's right. My body had reacted—instinctively.

That wasn't just skating. That wasn't just another lift. That was something else entirely.

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Finn

Press events are a necessary evil. Cameras flashing, reporters fishing for drama, forced smiles all around. It's all a game, and I usually don't mind playing—except tonight, I'm watching Lucas Moreau pull the biggest victim act I've ever seen, and it's making my blood boil.

He's standing just a few feet away, posture casual, but his eyes flick toward Daisy every few seconds like a heartbroken ex-lover watching the woman he lost parade around with another man. It's pathetic, and it's working.

Reporters eat it up, whispering about how tragic it must be for Lucas to see Daisy with her new partner, romantically involved no less. I catch bits and pieces of the murmurs. Poor Lucas. He and Daisy were so perfect together. Can you imagine having to watch your ex fall in love with someone else—on and off the ice?

I grind my teeth, barely resisting the urge to march over and wipe that melancholic, brooding look off his face.

Beside me, Daisy shifts. She's tense, her fingers clenching around the stem of her water glass. The flickering candlelight casts shadows across her face, making the worry in her hazel eyes more pronounced.

I lean in, keeping my voice low. "Ignore him."

She exhales sharply. "He's making me look like the bad guy."

I smirk. “That’s because he knows how to play the game.”

Her gaze snaps to mine. “And you don’t?”

I chuckle. “Oh, I do, sweetheart. I wouldn’t waste my time pretending to be heartbroken over something I threw away.”

Her lips part slightly, like she wasn’t expecting that. Neither was I if I’m being honest. But it’s true. Lucas didn’t lose Daisy—he let her go, thinking he could do better. Now, he’s realizing just how badly he screwed up.

I have zero sympathy for him.

Daisy tears her gaze away and takes a sip of her drink. I can tell she’s still rattled, and I don’t like it.

Without thinking, I reach for her hand. “Come on.”

She blinks up at me. “What?”

I nod toward the far end of the room. “Let’s get out of here for a minute.”

For once, she doesn’t argue.

I lead her out onto a private balcony overlooking the city. The cool night air rushes around us, a stark contrast to the stifling heat inside. Daisy crosses her arms over her chest, staring at the skyline, her shoulders still tight.

I lean against the railing beside her. “Talk to me.”

She lets out a quiet laugh, but there’s no humor in it. “There’s nothing to talk about.”

“Bullshit.”

Her eyes flick to mine, surprised.

I hold her gaze. “You let Lucas get to you. Why?”

She exhales slowly, looking away. “Because he’s making a spectacle out of something that is private and people are eating it up.”

“People will believe whatever fits their version of the truth.”

She sighs. “I hate that.”

I smirk. “You and me both.”

For a moment, it’s just us, the hum of the city below, the distant sound of music from inside. I don’t know why I do it, but I reach out, brushing a loose strand of hair behind her ear. She stills, her breath catching.

“I meant what I said back there,” I murmur. “Lucas didn’t dump you, he lost you. You were always too good for him and he knew it.”

Daisy looks up at me then, the air shifts. Her lips part, hazel eyes flickering with something unreadable. My gaze drops—just briefly—to her mouth.

I could kiss her. Right now. Just lean in and close the space between us.

I want to.

Her fingers tighten on the railing. She’s thinking about it too. I can see it in her eyes. Then, just as quickly, she pulls away. “We should go back inside.”

My jaw tenses, but I step back, nodding once. “Yeah. Sure.”

I watch as she walks ahead, back into the conference room, back into the lie we’ve been selling, and I wonder if I even want it to be a lie anymore.

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Daisy

I should be used to this by now. The cameras, the performance, the way every touch and glance is calculated. It's different this time. This "date" is completely for positive PR.

We are skating at an outdoor rink in the heart of the city, twinkling fairy lights strung above us, the crisp air biting at my cheeks. It's picturesque and romantic—a scene designed to make people believe in love stories.

And that's exactly what we need them to believe.

Finn skates up beside me, grinning as he twirls effortlessly before stopping inches from my face. "Nervous?"

I scoff. "It's skating, Finn. I think I'll survive."

His smirk deepens. "That's funny because you look terrified of having fun."

I roll my eyes, but before responding, he tugs my hand and pulls me onto the ice. The photographers lurking at the edges of the rink, hired by Kara, snap away as Finn twirls me under his arm, making a show of it. I keep my smile in place, playing my role, but something inside me shifts when I meet his gaze.

He's enjoying this. "Let's race," Finn says suddenly, skating a few feet ahead.

I frown. "That's childish."

“So is pouting, but here you are with that lip stuck out just waiting for someone to bite it.”

I huff, ignoring his insinuation that he wants to be the one biting my lip. “Fine.”

Before I’m ready, Finn takes off. I curse under my breath and push forward, chasing after him. The cold wind whips through my hair, and for the first time in forever , I’m not thinking about form, scores, or expectations. I just skate.

Finn glances back at me, laughter in his eyes. “Is that all you got?”

I dig in harder, propelling myself forward. Just as I reach him, he cuts in front of me, causing me to stumble. I yelp, arms flailing, but before I can hit the ice, Finn catches me.

We collapse together in a heap, laughter spilling from his lips. My heart is hammering, my pulse erratic, but not from the fall—from him.

Finn props himself up on his elbows, his face inches from mine. His breath is warm in the cold air, his hands still holding me close. “You okay?”

I nod, unable to find my voice.

His gaze flickers to my lips. The amusement in his eyes fades, replaced by something hotter .

And then, he kisses me. Not for the cameras. It’s real . His lips move against mine, slow and deliberate like he’s savoring every second. And the worst part? I kiss him back.

Heat surges through me as I grab the front of his jacket, pulling him closer and

deepening the kiss. It's reckless and dizzying and everything I swore I wouldn't let happen. Which is exactly why I panic.

I shove him away, scrambling to my feet. "We—we should go."

Finn stays on the ice, watching me with an unreadable expression. "Daisy—"

"Do you ever take anything seriously, Finn? Or are you so sure that everyone is going to love you that you joke and tease your way through life?"

"That's not fair," Finn says, coming closer to where I've stopped. "There are lots of things I'm serious about. I don't know how I got this reputation of being some kind of flighty jackass, but I'm serious about skating. I also feel pretty serious about that kiss."

"It was just for the cameras," I blurt, even though we both know that's a lie.

And then, before he can say anything else, I turn and skate away.

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Finn

The next day practice is tense. Like most things seem to play out with Daisy, it's all stubborn pride, neither of us willing to give an inch. We're supposed to be practicing our new routine, but she's tense, overthinking every movement, and it's pissing me off.

"Jesus, Daisy, can you stop micromanaging for one second?" I snap, skating up behind her as she rubs a hand over her face.

She whirls around. "Excuse me?"

"You heard me," I say, stepping closer. "You're so damn obsessed with being perfect that you're sucking the life out of this routine. You feel nothing."

Her eyes blaze. "I feel plenty. I just don't let my emotions dictate my skating like you do. Some of us have control."

I laugh, but there's no humor in it. "Control? Is that what you call this? Because all I see is someone too afraid to let go for even a second."

She shoves at my chest, and it's the last straw. The tension that's been brewing between us for weeks, maybe months, finally snaps.

I grab her wrist before she can pull away, yanking her flush against me. Her breath hitches, and suddenly we're too close.

I can feel the heat rolling off her, see the way her pupils dilate when she looks up at me.

“Let go,” she says, but it’s breathless, uncertain.

I should let her go. Instead, I crush my mouth against hers.

She gasps, her fingers curling into my shirt like she wants to shove me away or maybe pull me closer. I don’t give her the chance to decide. I deepen the kiss, pouring every ounce of frustration, desire, and pure fucking need into it.

She responds just as fiercely, her nails dragging down my back, her body pressing into mine as if she’s been waiting for this just as badly.

“Fuck you,” she mutters against my lips, but she’s already pulling me toward the lockers, her hands fisting in my jacket. Thank God we booked private practice time today instead of sharing time with other skaters.

“Not if I fuck you first,” I growl, slamming the door shut behind us.

There’s no patience, no hesitation—just desperate, clawing need. My hands slide up her thighs, gripping tight as I lift her against the cold metal. She wraps her legs around me, her breath hot and uneven against my neck as I push her against the lockers.

“Tell me this is what you want,” I demand, my voice rough.

She glares at me, lips swollen, cheeks flushed. “I don’t need to tell you anything.”

I chuckle darkly. “Fine. I’ll make you show me.”

I tear at the thin fabric between us, groaning when I find her wet and ready. Her gasp turns into a moan as I press my fingers into her, teasing, stretching. She bites down on my shoulder, muffling the sounds spilling from her lips, but I don't let up.

"You take control of everything," I murmur against her skin. "Let me have this. Let me have you."

She shudders, nails sinking into my back. "Finn—"

That's all I need.

I quickly pull my cock out of my pants and thrust into her in one hard stroke, swallowing her gasp with my mouth. She's tight, scorching hot, her body clenching around me like she's trying to pull me deeper into her.

"Fuck, Daisy—"

She rolls her hips, meeting me thrust for thrust, her body a perfect counter to mine even here, even off the ice. There's nothing graceful about this, nothing choreographed. It's raw, frantic, a battle of dominance neither of us is willing to lose.

"Harder," she demands, her voice a breathless plea, and I oblige, driving into her with a force that rattles the lockers behind us.

Her head falls back, exposing the column of her throat, and I take advantage, biting down just enough to make her whimper. "You like this, don't you?" I rasp. "Being fucked against the lockers?"

She clenches around me, her moan strangled. "Shut up."

I grin against her skin, nipping at her collarbone. "Make me."

And she does—by dragging my mouth back to hers, devouring me like she needs me to breathe.

When she comes, it's sudden and violent, her entire body going rigid before shattering around me. The sound she makes nearly undoes me, but I hold on, thrusting through her orgasm until she's shaking in my arms. Then, with one last brutal stroke, I follow, spilling into her with a groan that feels like it rips through my fucking soul.

For a moment, neither of us moves. Our ragged breathing fills the space between us, our bodies still tangled, slick with sweat and need.

I'm hyperaware of Daisy—her scent, her warmth, the way her bare legs are still wrapped around my hip. My chest tightens.

I don't want to move. I don't want to let this moment slip away before I figure out what the hell it means.

Then Daisy blinks up at me, and I see the exact second she puts her walls back up.

She tenses. Stands up, smoothing her torn clothes as best she can, her lips still red and swollen from my kiss. "Finn—" she starts.

"Don't," I say, already knowing what's coming.

Her jaw tightens. "This was a mistake."

I knew she'd say it. That doesn't mean it doesn't cut like a damn blade.

I let out a slow breath, forcing myself to smirk, to play it off like I don't care. "Sure, Daisy. Whatever you say."

She hesitates, just for a second. Maybe she doesn't believe her own words. Then she gathers her things and walks out, leaving me alone in a space that still smells like her.

Daisy

It was just the heat of the moment . That's what I tell myself as I stand under the scalding spray of the shower, scrubbing Finn off my skin even though I can still feel him—his hands gripping my hips, his mouth branding my throat, the rough, breathless way he said my name.

It was nothing. A lapse in judgment. Two people caught up in a stupid, reckless game of make-believe. So why does it feel like my entire body is still trembling from it?

I squeeze my eyes shut and force myself to breathe. I don't have time for this. I need to focus, to forget, to control this before it spirals into something I can't undo.

I dress quickly, throwing on a sweater and leggings, trying not to think about the ache between my thighs or the way my lips still feel swollen. I refuse to let this distract me, to let him distract me.

Finn isn't my real partner. He isn't my anything .

I step outside into the cool air, inhaling deeply, hoping the fresh air will clear my head. But instead, I find myself face-to-face with someone I don't have the energy for.

Lucas leans against the wall just outside the venue, hands tucked into the pockets of his expensive coat, watching me like he's been waiting.

My stomach tightens.

“Daisy,” he says smoothly, pushing off the wall and stepping toward me. “I was hoping to catch you alone.”

I fold my arms over my chest. “Why? So you can pretend to be heartbroken some more?”

His lips curve into a knowing smile. “Ah, so you did notice. It’s nice to know you still pay attention.”

I roll my eyes. “What do you want, Lucas?”

“I want to talk,” he says, feigning sincerity. “You and I both know this thing with Sullivan is just a show. You don’t belong with someone like him.”

My jaw clenches. “That’s not your decision to make.”

He steps closer, lowering his voice. “Daisy, be honest with yourself. Do you really think Finn Sullivan is the kind of man who can help your career? Who can elevate you? You were meant for something greater than this little PR stunt. And we both know how easily Finn burns things down when he gets too close.”

I hate that his words dig under my skin, pricking at the insecurities I try so hard to ignore. But I hate even more that I don’t immediately have a response.

Lucas sees my hesitation and presses on, his voice dropping into something almost gentle. “You don’t have to pretend with me, mon c?ur. I know you. I know what you need. And it’s not him.”

Something about the way he says it—the quiet certainty, the familiarity—makes my stomach churn.

Once upon a time, I had believed Lucas knew me. That he understood what I wanted, what I needed. That was before he chose himself over me. Before he made me realize that trusting a partner—on or off the ice—was dangerous.

I take a slow step back, straightening my shoulders. “You don’t know me anymore, Lucas. And you sure as hell don’t get to tell me what I need.”

His expression flickers, just for a second, before he smooths it over with that practiced charm. “If that’s what you need to tell yourself.”

I shake my head, exhaling sharply. “Stay out of my way.”

And without waiting for his response, I turn on my heel and walk back inside, ignoring the way my pulse hammers in my throat.

Because as much as I want to deny it, there’s one thing Lucas got right. Finn does burn things down when he gets too close, but I think I might want the fire.

* * *

The next day, practice is hell. The rink is freezing, but it does nothing to cool the heat still simmering under my skin.

Every time Finn touches me, my heart skips a beat. Every time he looks at me, I feel it like a brand against my skin. He skates too close, his presence a constant reminder of what happened, of what I let happen.

“For fuck’s sake, Daisy,” he snaps when I miss a step for the third time in a row. “Can you focus? Or are you too busy pretending yesterday didn’t happen?”

My head snaps up, fury rising like a tidal wave. “Don’t.”

Finn skates closer, invading my space, his jaw clenched. “Don’t what? Don’t talk about the fact that you couldn’t get enough of me, or don’t point out that you’re the one who ran the second you realized you liked it. That maybe it meant something.”

My stomach twists. “It didn’t mean anything.”

He exhales sharply, shaking his head. “You’re such a fucking liar.”

“Oh, and what about you?” I fire back, my hands curling into fists. “This is just a game to you. A joke. You don’t care about anything but skating and screwing around, and I won’t be another one of your—”

Finn moves before I can finish, closing the distance between us in one sharp, furious step. “Another what, Daisy?”

I swallow hard, suddenly unsure.

His voice lowers, rough and edged with something almost dangerous. “Another mistake? Another fuck you regret?” He lets out a humorless laugh. “Let me tell you something, sweetheart—you were the one clawing at me like you couldn’t get enough. You were the one moaning my name. You—”

“Shut up,” I whisper, my throat tightening.

Finn shakes his head, stepping back like he’s just done. “You know what? Forget it.”

I blink, my pulse hammering. “Finn—”

“No,” he says, voice cold. “You want to pretend this is nothing? Fine. I’m done trying to convince you otherwise.”

And just like that, he turns and walks away.

I stand there, frozen on the ice, watching him disappear. I guess practice is over.

Finn

We are at Worlds and the energy in the arena is electric, the kind of buzz that always gets my blood pumping. This is what we've worked for. The moment to prove we belong here, to show the world why Daisy Whittaker and Finn Sullivan are a force to be reckoned with.

We skate perfectly for the first two-thirds of our program. The music swells, and we move together like we're untouchable. Every glide, every turn is seamless, like our bodies were made to do this together. My hand finds the curve of her back, guiding her effortlessly into the spin sequence, and for a moment, it feels like we're invincible.

Daisy's body is warm against mine, her breath syncing with mine as we push through each movement. The chemistry between us ignites under the bright lights, a fire that I can't deny anymore. Every time my hands find her waist, my grip tightens just a little more than necessary, and I swear I feel her shiver.

Then we reach the final lift and Daisy hesitates.

It's less than a second, just a flicker of doubt, but it's enough. Enough to throw the timing off, enough to make me adjust at the last possible moment. I catch her, but the lift isn't effortless like it should be. It's forced. The moment is tainted.

The audience doesn't know. The crowd erupts in applause as we hold the final pose, but I can feel it in the tightness of her body, in the way she won't meet my eyes even as we take our bows. She knows, too.

We finish strong, but I know, I know the hesitation cost us.

The second we're off the ice and out of view, I whirl on her. "What the hell was that?"

She's already pulling away from me, avoiding my eyes. "I—It just happened."

"It just happened?" I repeat, disbelief and frustration curling around every word. "Daisy, we've done that lift a hundred damn times. You don't hesitate on that lift."

She swallows hard, eyes flashing. "I don't know what you want me to say, Finn."

I laugh, but it's hollow. "Oh, I don't know, maybe the truth? Maybe an explanation for why you suddenly can't trust me to hold you?"

Her lips part, but no words come out. And that's the answer right there.

I shake my head, exhaling sharply. "You don't trust me, do you? Not on the ice, not off it."

She flinches, just slightly, but I catch it. And fuck, it hurts more than it should.

"Finn—" she starts, but I cut her off.

"You can't have it both ways, Daisy," I say, voice low and rough. "You can't let me in one second and push me away the next. You either trust me or you don't."

Her throat bobs, but she doesn't answer.

"You looked at me out there like you didn't know if I'd catch you," I press, my voice turning hoarse. "After everything how the fuck can you still doubt me?"

Her breath stutters. “Finn, it’s not that simple.”

I let out a humorless laugh. “It is that simple, Daisy. You just don’t want to admit it.”

She opens her mouth, but before she can say anything, one of the officials comes by to direct us toward the press area. She takes the out immediately, turning away from me like she’s grateful for the interruption.

That’s when I realize, she’s not going to trust me just because I tell her to. She has to decide on her own.

I nod, jaw clenching. “Got it.”

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Daisy

The silver medal feels like lead around my neck.

I should be proud. I should be happy. Winning silver at Worlds is an incredible accomplishment. But as I stand on the podium, forcing a smile for the cameras, all I can think about is how it's not gold, how it's not enough.

And I know why.

The truth hits me like an ice-cold slap to the face. I haven't been giving everything I have to my skating. My head hasn't been in it the way it should be. Because my focus—my emotions—have been tangled up in something else.

Someone else.

Finn.

I sneak a glance at him beside me, his expression unreadable as he stares straight ahead. He's smiling, but it's tight, practiced. Not real. And I know exactly how he feels.

This doesn't feel like a victory.

It feels like a loss.

* * *

The performance replays in my head on a loop, every step, every movement, every moment where I felt myself holding back. We had been so close to perfection. Our opening was flawless—gliding across the ice, bodies moving in complete sync, the connection between us humming like electricity.

Every time Finn touched me, I felt it spark, a pull so strong it made my pulse stutter. The audience could feel it too. I could hear their gasps as he lifted me effortlessly, the raw chemistry between us turning our routine into something more than just a performance.

Then came the final lift, the one I hesitated on.

For a fraction of a second, I questioned it—not him, not his ability to catch me, but what it meant that I trusted him to catch me. That moment of doubt threw everything off. Finn caught me, of course he did, but it wasn't perfect. I felt the slight readjustment, the microsecond of imbalance.

The judges noticed. The scores reflected it. And now here we are, standing on the podium, silver instead of gold.

* * *

Back in the locker room, the excitement outside is deafening—cheers, interviews, celebrations. But here, everything feels muted.

I sit on the bench, still gripping my skates like they hold the answers to all my problems. My hair is still tight in its bun, my body still vibrating from the adrenaline of competition, but all I feel is empty. Hollow.

I stare down at the medal around my neck, running my fingers over the cool metal. It should feel like an accomplishment. It should feel like everything I worked for.

Instead, all I can think is we could have been better.

I hear the door open and close, but I don't look up until a shadow falls over me. When I do, I find a woman I've admired since I was a teenager standing beside me, her arms crossed. She's been where I am. She's won. She's lost. And now, she looks at me like she sees something familiar in my expression.

"You look miserable for someone who just won silver," she says, arching a brow.

I huff out a laugh, but it sounds hollow. "It's just... not what I wanted."

She nods like she understands, and maybe she does. "Let me guess. You feel like you weren't completely in it. Like you held back."

I look at her sharply. "How did you—"

She smiles knowingly. "Because I've been there. And I'll tell you what someone once told me: Love and ambition don't have to be mutually exclusive."

I stiffen. "This isn't about—"

She cuts me off with a pointed look. "Isn't it?"

I open my mouth, then close it. Because shit. Maybe it is.

She pats my knee and stands. "The best skaters don't skate with their minds, Daisy. They skate with their hearts. Figure out where yours is before you waste any more time."

She walks away, leaving me reeling.

I sit there, staring at the floor, my pulse pounding in my ears. The best skaters skate with their hearts. Where is yours?

I squeeze my eyes shut, inhaling sharply. Where is my heart?

I see Finn. His hands on my waist, steady and sure. The way he looks at me when he thinks I don't notice—like I'm the most frustrating, exhilarating thing in his life. The way he's always there, no matter how many times I push him away.

I think about how, when I hesitated on that lift, it wasn't because I didn't trust him. It was because I was afraid of what trusting him meant. I think about the way my body responds to his, how he makes me feel things I never let myself feel before.

I think about how empty it felt skating without my whole heart in it. And how he's the one who makes me want to give everything.

And suddenly, it's so obvious I almost laugh.

Finn isn't Lucas. He never asked me to sacrifice who I am. He never made me feel like I had to choose between my career and my feelings. The only person who's done that is me.

I don't want to do it anymore. I don't just want skating, I want him, and this time, I'm going to fight for us.

My heart pounds as I race through the hotel hallways, my silver medal still clutched in my hand like it might disappear if I let go. I don't know what I'm going to say. I don't even know if Finn will open the door. But I know one thing—I can't let another second pass without telling him the truth.

I reach his door and hesitate only for a breath before knocking, hard and fast, like I'm

afraid I'll lose my nerve.

The door swings open a second later, and Finn stands there, looking exhausted, shirtless, and completely unreadable.

I swallow hard. "Hi."

He leans against the frame, arms crossing over his chest, his expression carefully blank. "Daisy. What are you doing here?"

I take a shaky breath, trying to gather my thoughts, but they're all tangled together in a mess of emotions. "I—" My voice falters. "Can I come in?"

He hesitates, then steps aside, letting me pass. The room is dimly lit, the only sound is the faint hum of the city outside. I turn to face him, gripping my medal tighter.

"I need to tell you something."

Finn exhales, running a hand through his hair. "Daisy, if this is about the competition—"

"It's not," I cut in. "It's about us."

His body tenses, but he doesn't say anything. Just watches me, waiting.

I take a deep breath, forcing myself to meet his gaze. "I was scared, Finn. Scared of how much I feel when I'm with you. Scared of what it would mean if I let myself have you and skating. I thought I had to choose. But I don't. I don't want to choose."

His jaw tightens. "Daisy—"

“I love you.” The words tumble out, raw and desperate. “I love you, and I’ve been an idiot, and if you still want me, I—”

I don’t get to finish, because Finn moves in a blur, his hands cupping my face as his mouth crashes against mine. This kiss isn’t careful or tentative. It’s everything we’ve been holding back—hot, deep, consuming. I clutch at him, pressing closer, losing myself in the feel of his body against mine.

When we finally break apart, we’re both breathless. Finn rests his forehead against mine, his voice rough. “You’re not getting rid of me that easy, baby.”

I smile, tightening my grip on his shirt. “Good. Because I’m not running anymore.” And this time, when I kiss him, I know, this is real.

Source Creation Date: July 23, 2025, 7:29 am

Finn

The second Daisy says she loves me, I fucking lose it. My hand grabs the back of her neck, yanking her into me. Our mouths crash together, desperate, all tongue and teeth, like we're trying to devour each other.

"You fucking own me," I growl against her lips, lifting her off the ground. She gasps, wrapping her legs around my waist as I press her up against the wall. "Say it again."

Her fingers claw into my shoulders, her breath hot against my ear. "I love you."

I let out a sound that's half groan, half growl. "Goddamn right, you do."

I tear at her clothes, yanking her shirt over her head, my lips trailing down her neck, biting and sucking until she's gasping my name. Her nails rake down my back as I grind against her, the friction unbearable.

"Finn," she whimpers, rolling her hips against mine. "Please."

I grab her ass, holding her up easily as I shove my sweats down, letting my cock press against her soaked panties. "You need me to fuck you, baby? Need me to ruin you?"

She nods frantically, and I lose the last shred of control I was holding onto. I yank her panties to the side and thrust into her in one hard, deep stroke.

"Fuck —" I slam my forehead against hers, barely holding myself together as her

tight heat grips me like a vice. “Daisy.”

She’s panting, her hands gripping my biceps. “More.”

I snap my hips into her, harder, deeper, making her cry out. “You want more, sweetheart? You take everything I fucking give you.”

Her moans are shameless, her body shuddering as I drive into her, my hands gripping her hips so tight I know she’ll have bruises tomorrow. The thought only makes me fuck her harder, branding myself into her, making sure she knows she’s mine.

“Tell me who you belong to,” I demand, biting at her jaw, her throat.

“You,” she gasps, her legs tightening around me. “I belong to you.”

I slam into her one last time, sending us both over the edge. She shatters around me, and I lose it, groaning her name as I bury myself deep, coming so hard I swear I see stars.

* * *

After, we’re both a mess, tangled together on the floor, breathing heavily. I press a kiss to her damp forehead, grinning when she gives a satisfied hum.

“Shower,” she mumbles. “Come with me.”

I chuckle, kissing her neck. “Trying to kill me, Daisy?”

She smirks. “Maybe.”

The water is scalding, steam curling around us as Daisy sinks to her knees in front of

me.

I lean back against the tile, watching her through heavy-lidded eyes. “Fuck, baby. You don’t have to—”

She cuts me off with a wicked grin, wrapping one delicate hand around my cock, stroking slowly. “I want to.”

Damn.

She doesn’t tease. She takes me into her mouth in one smooth motion, her tongue flicking over the head before sliding down my length. My hands fly to her hair, gripping tight as she works me over, sucking and stroking, her moans vibrating around my cock.

“Daisy—fuck—” I slam my fist against the tile, my thighs tensing as she takes me deeper.

She’s worshipping me, her hands sliding up my stomach, nails digging in just enough to drive me insane.

“Look at you,” I groan, tilting her chin up so I can see her. “So goddamn perfect. My pretty little thing, taking my cock so fucking well.”

She whimpers, sucking harder, and I come without warning. My hips jerk, my abs clenching as I come down her throat. She swallows every drop, her tongue flicking over me one last time before she pulls back, licking her lips like she just had dessert.

I drag her up, kissing her hard. “Get in bed. Now.”

I take my time, kissing her slowly, running my hands over every inch of her body,

memorizing her. I worship her the way she just worshipped me, my lips trailing down her stomach, my tongue teasing between her thighs until she's writhing, gasping my name.

When I finally slide into her, it's slow, deep, our bodies moving together in perfect sync.

"I love you," I murmur against her lips, my voice rough. "You hear me, baby? I fucking love you."

Her arms tighten around me, her legs pulling me closer. "I hear you."

We come undone together, holding onto each other like we never want to let go. After, as we lay tangled in the sheets, I press a lazy kiss to her temple. "What now, baby?"

She hums, tracing a finger over my chest. "Now? We go after gold. Together. "

My heart pounds, my grip on her tightening. "Yeah, baby. Together."

Nothing is holding us back anymore. No fear. No pretending. Just us .

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Daisy

Six months later, we're sitting in a press conference at the Olympic Games, cameras flashing, microphones in our faces, the entire world watching.

And I have never felt more certain about anything in my life.

Finn sits beside me, looking infuriatingly good in his Team USA jacket, his hair still damp from morning practice. His hand rests casually on my thigh beneath the table, a silent reassurance, a constant tether. I lace my fingers with his, squeezing once.

The questions start predictably—our training, our expectations, the competition. We answer smoothly, practiced, and professional.

And then, of course, it happens. A journalist leans forward, her smile all too knowing. "Daisy, Finn—this question is for both of you. The world has fallen in love with you and your love story. Fans are dying to know, are wedding bells in your future?"

A murmur of anticipation ripples through the room. I feel Finn still beside me.

I open my mouth, ready to deflect like we always do. Ready to laugh it off, to say, we're just focused on the competition right now.

Before I can, Finn lets out a breath, then turns to me and stands up.

The entire room holds its breath. My heart stutters as Finn reaches into his jacket pocket and pulls out a small, black velvet box.

Oh. Oh.

The cameras go wild. Reporters scramble forward. My stomach flips as Finn—my cocky, foul-mouthed, impossible man—drops to one knee in front of the entire world.

“Daisy Whittaker,” he says, his voice steady, clear, full of conviction. “From the moment I met you, you’ve challenged me, pushed me, made me want more. You are the best damn thing that’s ever happened to me, and I’d be an idiot to let another second pass without telling you exactly how sure I am about us.”

My breath hitches, my fingers trembling as he flips open the ring box to reveal the most breathtaking diamond I’ve ever seen.

“Marry me, Daisy.” His lips twitch, that signature Finn smirk making my heart do ridiculous things. “Be my forever.”

Tears prick my eyes. The entire world is watching. Cameras are flashing. Reporters are gasping. And I don’t care. Because all I see is Finn.

I let out a shaky laugh, then launch myself at him, knocking him backward as I kiss him senseless.

“Yes,” I whisper against his lips. “A thousand times, yes.”

The room erupts. The cheers are deafening, but all I can hear is Finn’s laughter, his arms tightening around me as he murmurs against my skin, “You’re stuck with me now, baby.”

I smile, pressing my forehead to his. “Good. Because I’m not letting go.”

As the cameras capture this moment—the happiest moment of my life—I know with

absolute certainty: we've already won.

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Finn

We're in second place going into our final skate at the Olympics. The pressure is on, the weight of expectations heavy, but standing center ice with Daisy, I don't feel it. Not like before.

She's stretching beside me, rolling out her shoulders, shaking out her limbs, getting in the zone. I watch her, admiring the way she transforms before competition—sharp, focused, lethal in a way that always makes my blood heat. She's mesmerizing.

I reach for her hand, pulling her close. "Hey."

She blinks up at me, breaking from her trance. "Yeah?"

I run my thumb over her knuckles, grounding both of us. "Doesn't matter how we place tonight. I've already won."

Her lips curve, eyes softening for a brief moment before her competitive streak takes over. She squares her shoulders, her fingers tightening around mine. "That's sweet, Sullivan. But we are winning this thing."

I chuckle, pressing a quick kiss to her forehead. "Hell yeah, we are."

Our routine is flawless. From the first note of the music, we're on. Every movement, every lift, every damn second is in perfect sync, our bodies moving like one. The chemistry between us is undeniable—fire and grace, power and precision.

The world disappears. It's just us, the ice, the music, and the unshakable trust that binds us together. I see it in Daisy's eyes, the way she doesn't hesitate, the way she leans into me fully. She trusts me, not just as her partner but as the man who will never let her fall.

The crowd is thrilling, their cheers swelling with every twist, every breathtaking moment. And when we nail the final lift—the one Daisy once hesitated on—she soars, weightless, fearless, completely trusting me to catch her.

And I do.

As we hit the final pose, the arena erupts. The noise is deafening, the energy a tidal wave crashing over us. Daisy launches herself into my arms, her breath ragged, her smile blinding.

“We did it,” she whispers against my neck, gripping me like she never wants to let go.

I bury my face in her hair, holding her just as tight. “Yeah, baby. We did.”

We watch the remaining competitors with anticipation, excitement and nerves tangled in our stomachs. My hand stays locked with Daisy's, her fingers squeezing mine every time the scores flash on the screen. The final team skates well—really well—but as their scores appear, the numbers tell the story we were hoping for.

We've won.

Olympic gold.

Daisy turns to me, her eyes wide with disbelief, her lips parted in shock. Her hands fly to her mouth, trembling. Her new diamond ring glittering on her finger. Then she

launches herself into my arms. I catch her easily, spinning her in the air as she laughs, tears spilling over her cheeks.

“You’re crying,” I tease, pressing my forehead to hers, my own chest so damn full it feels like it might burst.

“Shut up,” she chokes out, laughing through the tears. “I just— we did it .”

I cup her face, brushing away a tear with my thumb. “Yeah, baby. And I wouldn’t want to do it with anyone else.”

She swallows hard, her hands sliding up to cup my face. “You’re it for me, Finn.”

My throat tightens, my vision blurring at the edges. “Right back at you, Whittaker.”

* * *

The medal ceremony is a blur of emotion. The weight of gold around my neck, the national anthem playing, Daisy standing beside me, clutching my hand like she’ll never let go. I steal glances at her, watching the way her eyes shine, the way she holds her head high, the way her fingers shake slightly when she grips the medal.

She deserves this. We deserve this. I have never been so goddamn proud of anyone in my life.

After the ceremony, we’re ushered into the press room, the excitement still buzzing in our veins. We barely have time to sit before the questions begin.

A reporter grins at us, microphone in hand. “Finn, Daisy—what does it feel like to win Olympic gold?”

I glance at Daisy, at the love of my life, the woman who has changed everything for me and smile. “It’s amazing and even better with her next to me.”

Daisy squeezes my hand, her eyes shining. “I wouldn’t want it any other way.”

The reporter laughs. “Well, now that you’ve conquered the Olympics, what’s next? Will we see you back in four years?”

I smirk, pulling Daisy closer. “Absolutely. But first? We’ve got a wedding to plan.”

The cameras flash, the world watching, but all I see is her.

My partner.

My forever .

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Finn

Eight years later, we're here again. Our third and final Olympic Games. Our last professional skate together.

I stand beside Daisy in the tunnel, our hands intertwined, feeling the pulse of her heartbeat against my palm. The arena hums with anticipation, the weight of history pressing down on us. We've done this before. We've been here. But this time, it's different. This time, it's the end.

"You ready?" I murmur, squeezing her fingers.

She turns to me, her eyes bright, steady, certain. "Always."

We step onto the ice, and the roar of the crowd is deafening. But through it all, my gaze flickers to one tiny figure in the stands—our two-year-old daughter, Lily, bundled up in her Team USA jacket, huge headphones over her ears, her tiny hands clapping wildly.

My heart clenches. This isn't just for us anymore. We take our positions. The music starts. And then we're flying.

The routine is more than just skating. It's our story.

Every movement, every spin, every perfectly executed lift—it tells the years we've spent together, the battles we've fought, the love we've built.

Daisy moves like she was born for this. For me . And I move for her, matching her perfectly, anticipating her every shift, every breath. We aren't just skating—we're living this moment. Our final moment on Olympic ice.

I lift her effortlessly, holding her high, showing the world that I will always catch her. And when she lands, the look she gives me is filled with something deeper than victory.

It's love. It's forever.

The final notes hit. We stop, holding onto each other. The arena erupts, the noise crashing over us like a wave. Gold is ours.

* * *

The medal hangs heavy around my neck, but all I can focus on is Daisy beside me and our daughter in my arms. Lily grabs at the shiny gold, giggling, her tiny fingers wrapping around my medal, then Daisy's.

"Mama and Daddy won," I tell her, pressing a kiss to her curly head.

She beams. "Win!"

Daisy laughs, leaning into me, her fingers brushing over my cheek. "We did it, Finn."

I look at her, at the woman who has been my everything for so long, and shake my head. "No, baby. You did it. I'm just the lucky bastard who got to do it with you."

Her eyes soften, and when she kisses me, the cameras go wild, the world watching as we share this moment.

“So what’s next for the reigning Olympic champions?” a reporter asks, grinning as they hold a microphone out to us.

I glance at Daisy, then at Lily, my heart full to the brim. “Retirement. Coaching. And spending as much time as possible with our little champion-in-the-making.”

Daisy smirks, nudging me. “You think she’ll skate?”

I look at Lily, at the way she clutches our medals like she already knows what they mean, and grin. “Whatever she wants to do, she’ll be amazing like her mother.”

Daisy laces her fingers with mine, pressing one last kiss to my cheek, and just like that our next chapter begins.

Source Creation Date: July 23, 2025, 7:29 am

Daisy

The Paris skyline glows in the distance as I step onto the balcony of our hotel suite, the cool night air brushing against my skin. Below, the city hums with life, but up here, it's just me, the twinkling lights, and the distant sounds from the arena where our daughter won her first World Championship gold medal tonight.

The thought makes my heart swell, pride so overwhelming it brings a lump to my throat. I still see her as the tiny toddler sitting in the stands, clapping for us. And now, she's the one standing on top of the podium, gold hanging around her neck, just like we once did.

"You disappeared on me." Finn's voice is warm, amused.

I turn to see him stepping outside, two glasses of wine in hand. He hands one to me before wrapping an arm around my waist, pulling me back against his chest.

"Lily's going out to celebrate with her friends," he murmurs against my hair. "Which means we're officially off-duty."

I hum, taking a slow sip of wine, enjoying the way his body molds against mine. "Alone in Paris, huh? Sounds dangerous."

His lips brush against my neck, and I feel his smirk before I hear it. "Oh, sweetheart, you have no idea."

I laugh, tilting my head to the side to give him better access as his hands slide into my

robe, warm palms pressing against my waist. “Finn, we are not twenty anymore.”

“And?” He nips at my earlobe, his voice full of mock offense. “Are you saying my stamina isn’t what it used to be? Because I can prove otherwise.”

I bite my lip, turning in his arms, wrapping mine around his neck. “No regrets? About retiring?”

His expression softens instantly, his hands tightening on my hips. “Not one. The best years of my life were spent skating with you, but this? This is even better.” He tugs me closer, pressing his forehead against mine. “Lily winning tonight, watching her chase her dreams? That’s everything I could’ve ever wanted. And I get to do it all with you .”

My chest tightens, love swelling so big inside me I think I might burst. “God, I love you.”

Finn grins. “Yeah? You wanna show me how much?”

I laugh, but before I can respond, he’s sweeping me into his arms, carrying me inside. I squeal, smacking his chest as he kicks the bedroom door shut behind us.

“Finn Sullivan, you are ridiculous !”

He tosses me onto the bed, climbing over me with a wicked glint in his eye. “Yeah, but you love it.”

He slowly removes my robe, finding nothing underneath, it’s mere seconds before his mouth is on me—hot, insistent, devouring. His tongue traces a slow path down my throat, over my collarbone, lower, until he’s sucking one aching nipple into his mouth, making me gasp.

“Jesus, Finn—”

“You taste so fucking good,” he groans, his teeth scraping before his tongue soothes, his fingers pinching my other nipple just hard enough to make me arch.

I thread my fingers through his hair, tugging him back up to my mouth, kissing him deep, licking into him like I’ll never get enough. “Less talking. More fucking.”

His grin is downright filthy. “Now that I can do.” He kisses his way down my body, between my legs, spreading me wide, his mouth right there .

“Finn!” I choke out, but then his tongue is on me, licking, sucking, stroking, and all I can do is grab the sheets and hold on. He devours me like it’s his last meal, moaning into me like he’s the one getting wrecked.

“Goddamn, I’ll never get tired of this,” he groans, his fingers sliding inside me, curling just right, his tongue flicking over my clit until I’m shattering, my cries echoing through the room.

Before I can catch my breath, he’s up, covering me, his cock pressing against me, thick and hard. “Tell me you want me.”

“I need you,” I correct, wrapping my legs around him, pulling him in, gasping as he fills me in one deep, slow thrust.

We move together, years of knowing each other’s bodies turning every roll of his hips into something devastatingly perfect. His hands grip my thighs, angling me just right, hitting exactly where I need him.

“Fuck, Daisy,” he grits out, his jaw clenched, his breath ragged. “You still feel so fucking good.”

“So do you,” I pant, raking my nails down his back, making him groan. “Finn—harder —”

He growls, slamming into me, taking me apart completely, his name falling from my lips over and over until we both shatter, clinging to each other, shaking.

After, he kisses me—soft, slow, reverent—before rolling us so I’m tucked against his chest, his heartbeat wild beneath my palm.

I hum in contentment, pressing a lazy kiss to his shoulder. “Still think you’ve got stamina?”

His laughter rumbles beneath me. “Sweetheart, I know I do, and I’ve got twenty years of experience knowing exactly how to ruin you.”

I grin, tilting my head up to meet his gaze. “And I love every second of it.”

His arms tighten around me, his lips brushing my temple. “I love you, Daisy. Always.”

I sigh, perfectly content, perfectly in love. “Always.”

And as the lights of Paris glow beyond the window, I know one thing for certain, after all these years, Finn Sullivan still makes my heart race.

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Source Creation Date: July 23, 2025, 7:29 am

Sadie

I press my forehead against the cold window of the bus, watching as the tiny mountain town of Pine Hollow unfolds like a winter dream with quaint storefronts adorned with hearts, chimneys puffing lazy streams of smoke into the frosty air, a towering evergreen in the town square twinkling with red and pink lights.

I should be delighted. A fresh start, a cozy town, a new life are exactly what I want. What I've chosen .

But my stomach is currently tangled in about seventeen knots because I am about to step off this bus and meet the man I'm supposed to marry.

A man I do not know.

A man who sent exactly three emails in response to my carefully crafted, heartfelt correspondence through the Mountain Mates Dating Service. Three emails, each more practical and businesslike than the last, lay out the terms of the arrangement in clipped sentences.

You need a place to go. I need a wife. We'll keep it simple.

Oh, and my personal favorite:

This is a transaction, Miss Winslow. Not a romance.

So, naturally, I signed right up.

To be fair, my options were limited after exposing my former boss's embezzlement scheme and subsequently being blacklisted from my entire industry. It turns out that people don't like whistleblowers, no matter how many laws are being broken.

My boss had also been my landlord, so my lease was terminated. My bank account? Dismal. And my once-busy social calendar had been reduced to an endless string of Sorry, I just don't want to get involved texts.

So here I am. A mail-order bride, pulling into a town that looks like it belongs in a Hallmark movie, about to meet a man who probably has never seen a Hallmark movie because they might make him feel something.

The bus shudders to a stop and the doors wheeze open, spilling a gust of icy air into the cabin.

"This is you," the driver calls over his shoulder, giving me a once-over. "You sure about this, miss?"

No.

I paste on my best everything-is-going-to-be-amazing smile. "Absolutely!"

I haul my suitcase down the narrow aisle and step onto the snow-packed sidewalk. The cold is instant, slicing straight through my wool coat like it has a personal vendetta. I squeak out a little gasp, my breath puffing in front of me in a white cloud.

And then I see him.

Reid Calloway.

Leaning against an old blue pickup truck like he's been here for years, arms crossed over a chest that is roughly the size of a barn door. His dark, thickly lined coat looks

like it's seen more than a few winters, and the beanie pulled low over his forehead does little to soften the storm brewing behind those icy blue eyes.

He is massive. Broad, tall, all rough-hewn edges and imposing presence. A full foot taller than me, at least, with shoulders so wide they could block out the sun.

Not that there is any sun at the moment.

The sky is the same gray as Reid's mood.

His expression is unreadable—somewhere between deep irritation and outright regret. Like he was hoping I wouldn't show up, and now that I have, he's mentally revising his entire life plan.

I brighten my smile another few watts and stride forward, boots crunching in the packed snow. "Reid Calloway?"

His gaze flicks over me in one slow, assessing pass before landing back on my face. "Miss Winslow."

That's it. No hello. No handshake. Just my name, like I'm a minor inconvenience.

"Nice to finally meet you," I say, extending my gloved hand. He looks at it like I just offered him a dead fish.

My fingers curl back into my palm. "Charming."

He exhales sharply, letting me know he's already exhausted by my presence. "It's cold. Let's go."

I blink. "Wow. So romantic. You sure know how to make a girl feel welcome."

His jaw tightens. “Didn’t sign up to be romantic.”

“No kidding,” I mutter under my breath.

Reid doesn’t even acknowledge the comment. Instead, he steps forward, grabs my suitcase, and hoists it into the back of his truck like it weighs nothing. He moves with an efficiency that suggests he’d like to get this over with as soon as possible.

I lift my chin. Fine . If he wants to be all gruff and growly, I can be even perkier. Sunshine and rainbows, baby.

I hop into the truck, sinking into the worn leather seat. The truck’s cabin is warm—woodsy and masculine, filled with the scent of pine, leather, and man. It makes me all tingly.

Reid slides into the driver’s seat, turns the key, and the truck rumbles to life.

I clasp my hands in my lap and beam at him. “So! What’s next? Do we go straight to the courthouse, or do you want to give me a tour first? Maybe a celebratory cup of cocoa? Ooh, do they have those giant marshmallows here?”

Reid grips the steering wheel a little tighter. “We’ll go to the house first.”

“Excellent. I can settle in before becoming Mrs. Calloway.” I flutter my lashes at him.

His fingers twitch. “It’s just a name.”

“Sure, but it’s a great name. It sounds very rugged. Like a cowboy or a lumberjack. Sadie Calloway. Maybe I should start chopping wood.”

He side-eyes me. “You ever chopped wood in your life?”

“No, but I’d look adorable doing it.”

Reid sighs like he’s regretting every choice that led him to this moment.

I bite back a grin.

We drive in silence for a few minutes, winding out of town and into the mountains. The road narrows, flanked by towering pines dusted in snow, their branches drooping under the weight of winter. The whole world feels hushed, blanketed in white.

And then, just when I think we’ll make it all the way up the mountain without him speaking again, Reid breaks the silence.

“This isn’t a love story.”

I turn to him. “Excuse me?”

“This arrangement,” he says, voice low and firm. “It’s not about romance. You needed a place to go. I needed a wife. That’s all this is.”

His words should sting, but I just tilt my head, studying him. The furrow between his brows. The tension in his jaw. The way he stares straight ahead, like looking at me for too long might set him on fire.

“Got it,” I say softly.

But what I don’t say is that Reid Calloway might think this isn’t a love story, but the way he isolates himself, the way he clenches his jaw like he’s bracing for something, the way his hands tighten on the wheel at the slightest hint of joy tells me that it could be. He’s a challenge, and I’ve never been one to give up easily.