



Whisker Me Away (Love Sync Mates Season Two)

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Category: Fantasy

Description: When Spencer wins an all expenses paid vacation, he's filled with equal parts excitement and anxiety, but he decides to take a chance. It turns out, he's not the only one who's won this vacation and instead of a trip for one, he's thrust into tight quarters with another omega he's never met before.

Cade is confident, sure of himself, and has never once won a giveaway in his life. After meeting Spencer, he realizes his luck is turning around. They might be forced to share a space, but as they get to know each other, they choose to share their hearts.

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Prologue

Spencer

I stare at the email for a long moment, trying to decipher if this is some sort of joke or not. Could this be a virus or scam? I read over the words again, look up the email it came from, and double check the bottom's tiny print. There's no links for me to click or fishy sleeping errors.

Huh. I think this might actually be legit.

Last month, I was listening to a YouTube video while elbow deep in a stuffed chicken. I was trying out a new recipe that ended up turning out better than I thought it would. The video mentioned they were giving away a trip to one lucky subscriber and with the high of a recipe well done, I decided to give it a try. I never win shit like this but I entered anyway. What the hell, why not? The worst that'll happen is I forget about the whole thing in a few days. Best case scenario, I take a vacation for the first time in three years!

I reread one more time, realizing this was stuck in my spam folder for a week. Surely I still have time to accept, right?

I quickly type out a response, letting them know I'd be happy to accept this giveaway. I ask them what they need from me and when this trip will be exactly. I can't stop smiling as I send off the response. I can't believe I actually won! I never win anything!

Past the excitement is a thread of anxiety. I've never been on a train trip before so I have no idea what to expect and the unknown freaks me out. What if there's special steps I need to know about? Will I need my passport? Will I need special ID? How long are we on a train? Will I be able to shower or shit in peace?

I take a steadying breath, getting my racing heart under control. I refuse to let my anxiety take away my joy.

Tucking my phone away, I quickly get to work. After washing my hands, I dice onions, tomatoes, and peppers before getting out my beloved soup pot. I add all my veggies in, letting them simmer and soften.

I'm making a giant pot of chili today with some thick, Texas toast garlic bread. It's hearty and warm and comforting. It seems like the perfect lunch for a gray and stormy day like today.

Before this job, I was a chef at a high end restaurant. I can't imagine making something like a simple pot of chili at that job. I can't help but smile as I start tossing everything in. Oh, how things have changed and in my humble opinion, they've changed for the better.

I've been at this job for four years now, cooking lunch at this private school. Instead of over-complicated plates, now I cook in bulk. There's a different type of science to cooking big batches like this, a challenge I welcome every day.

Because I've been here for four years, this will be the first time I'll watch some of the kids graduate who I've gotten to know since they were freshman. I have a feeling this graduation season I'll be a mess of emotions.

When I accepted the role of personal chef at this little private school, I thought it would be for one year and then I'd find a 'real job' in a restaurant again. I thought I

just needed a little break from the hustle and bustle of fine dining. The joke was on me because I can't see myself leaving anytime soon. I love this job. I love cooking for these kids, watching as they grow into adults.

After adding the beans, canned tomatoes, and tomato juice to the pot, I leave it alone to simmer. Time to get the garlic bread ready to pop into the oven.

There are only 50 students at the school. These kids are all incredibly talented and wickedly smart. I know they're going to graduate and find themselves doing great things. I'm glad I got to touch their lives, even if it was only briefly from behind the kitchen counter.

The rest of my morning goes by quickly, business as usual. One of the freshmen, Trent, comes down right before lunch to help me serve everyone their food. The freshmen are on a rotating schedule for helping me in the kitchen. One helps serve and two more will come after lunch and help me clean the kitchen.

I'm not sure if this is part of their tasks to help the school cut down on costs or if it's to help instill responsibility in the kids. Either way, I'm glad for the help.

Once everyone has been served, I scoop myself a bowl and grab a piece of garlic bread. I take off my apron and hang it up on the hook on the wall. Sitting at the table in the corner of the kitchen, I dig in. The flavors are exactly what I wanted them to be and the crunch of the toast is a perfect contrast to the chili. It's fucking amazing.

As I eat, I take my phone out of my pocket. I plan on scrolling through social media but before I can open the app, I remember that email from before. Opening up my emails, I see a new one there waiting for me. My stomach flutters as I see that YouTuber responded.

"Oh my gods," I breathe out, reading over the words in haste, skimming over

everything. My stomach bursts with butterflies and excitement.

Apparently my response wasn't too late! I just have to give them my information and then they'll book everything in my name. It's a train trip across the country, five days in a hotel, and then a train ride back home. Everything will be paid for and all I have to do is show up with the confirmation email and my photo ID.

Somehow, this news is both nerve-wracking and exhilarating. I've won! I've won something and it's something ridiculously fun and exciting! I can't not go for it, right?

I eat my chili and immediately start planning. I'll have to let the school know, look into everything I can expect from traveling on a train, and research the area where I'll be staying so I know exactly what I can do in that city. I find myself smiling all afternoon while cleaning up leftover food and scrubbing the kitchen.

I'm not usually someone who likes vacations or being adventurous. I'm often too stuck in my head to actually let myself relax. I'm the worst at overthinking every little thing. But there's something about all of this that leaves me smiling. I can't really put my finger on it, but I have a really good feeling about this. Instead of overthinking for once in my life, I'm going to trust that instinct and trust that this vacation is going to lead to something great.

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Chapter One

Cade

I readjust my beanie before swinging my backpack onto my shoulders and tugging my suitcase behind me. I've got my ID ready, my ticket printed and in my coat pocket, and everything ready for this vacation.

It's still hard to believe I've somehow won this trip!

I quite literally never win stuff. Every time I've bought a scratch ticket, it's like I'm tossing two dollars into the trash. Every raffle I enter leads to nothing. I'm not sure if I've just got the world's worst luck, or if something else is going on like the universe storing up all my luck so they can deliver it all at once.

Maybe all those losses were building up to give me one grand prize instead of a bunch of little things.

Five days on a train to a vacation destination, five days at the destination, and then five days on a train back. This prize includes a personal sleeper room on the train along with all my accommodations once I get to my destination.

I felt bad leaving the grocery store for that long, but they'll get on without me, I'm sure of it. Suzie is more than capable of handling everything while I'm gone.

Maybe. Hopefully. She's probably fine.

As the customer service manager, it's my job to make people's schedules and oversee all of our cashiers. I made sure everyone knew I would be gone. I made sure all the schedules were put out in plenty of time. There's enough staff to cover in case anyone is sick or calls out. They'll be fine .

The best thing I can do is simply not think about it. If I don't think about it, then it can't affect me and ruin my vacation. That's how things work, right?

Walking up to the ticket inspector, I pull mine out along with my ID. He scans the barcode, makes sure my ID matches the name on the ticket.

"You wanna head towards the back of the train. Our First Class Attendant will help you find your room and make sure you have everything you need, including your room key. His name is Matthew."

"Thank you so much!"

I carefully pull my rolling bag up off the ground by its handle before stepping aboard the train. Because of my ticket, I've gotten priority boarding so there aren't many people on the train yet. I nod at some of the staff who're all wearing dark green vests and matching hats.

Despite this being a train, everything feels so spacious and fancy. There's even a second story at the front of the train called the observation deck where people can just sit and watch the environment outside pass by. I have a feeling I'll be sitting up there at least a little bit during this trip. I want to see and experience everything this vacation has to offer.

Normally, I'd want to get my money's worth but this vacation is paid for by someone else! For once I can just sit back and fully enjoy myself without the constant nagging in the back of my head telling me to make this all worth it. For once I'm allowed to

just relax.

I find the part of the train that holds the personal cabins, looking around in awe. I've never been on a train like this before. It feels incredibly fancy. Probably far too fancy for someone like me, but hell, I'm not going to let that stop me from having the best time possible!

"If you'll let me see your ticket, I can show you which cabin is yours," one of the workers says. I have a feeling this must be Matthew.

I hold out my ticket and he gives me a wide smile. "Perfect. You're right over there," he says, pointing at a door with the number 3 on it. "Your partner is already here and has the key to your cabin."

I start to walk away but freeze. Turning back, I ask, "Sorry. Partner?"

Matthew looks startled for a moment. "Yes. I'm sorry if I misspoke. You're sharing a personal cabin with someone so I just assumed. Allow me to rephrase, the person you'll be riding with is already here."

"I'm not riding with anyone. This is a single ticket."

"I'm sorry, but the cabin you've bought is shared with another gentleman."

My stomach feels like it drops out of my ass. I stare at the guy for a long moment before nodding. "Okay," I say slowly, doing my best to keep myself calm.

Was this some sort of prank? Telling me I'd won a vacation only to have someone else be the actual winner. Or worse, is this some sort of social experiment. The two of us are stuck together while a camera watches our every reaction.

Leaning in close, I whisper, “Is this some sort of prank? Are there cameras hidden or something?”

Matthew leans away, a startled look on his face. “Absolutely not. We would never allow something like that here.”

“Okay,” I breathe out, feeling just a little bit lighter. “Okay, that’s really good to know. I’m sorry, I’m just really confused. I actually won this vacation, but they never mentioned having to share with someone else.”

“That’s rather unfortunate. I’m sorry, but based on both tickets, you will need to share with him. If it helps, he seemed very lovely when I met him just now?” Matthew says with a wince. “Or I could see if there are any other available seats?”

“No, no. Don’t trouble yourself. I’m sure we can make this work.”

I step away from Matthew towards the door that’s mine. Well, ours, I guess? I take a few seconds just to catch my breath. There’s a delightful scent in the air and I’m not sure where it’s coming from, only that I really like it. Something like a library filled with well loved books. It takes the edge off and I feel my body relaxing.

I knock on the door and a moment later, a man opens it. That wonderful scent smacks me right in the chest. He’s taller than me, lithe and thin, with shaggy brown hair, pretty brown eyes, and a look of surprise across his face. His scent doesn’t only smell amazing, but there’s something about it that tells me he’s some sort of shifter and if I had to guess, I’d say he’s also an omega, just like me.

“Hi,” I say, putting on my best smile. “This is actually kinda awkward but I’m also staying in this cabin.” I hold up my ticket in explanation.

He stares at me for a long moment, like he can’t believe what he’s seeing. My ego

puffs up just a little bit. When he realizes he's staring, his cheeks turn bright red. Then he blinks. "Sorry, what?"

I can't help but chuckle. I'm not sure my ego really needs this kind of stroking, but I'll take it, especially as the man before me is hot as fuck. It feels good to have someone so openly checking me out like that.

"I said, we're supposedly sharing this cabin."

"Sharing? What, that can't be right," he says, more of a murmur to himself than in actual response to me. He turns around and grabs his own ticket, rechecking all the details. "My ticket says I'm staying in this cabin."

"So does mine," I explain. "This is going to sound kinda weird but I actually won this vacation."

Before I can say more, the guy's brown eyes somehow manage to widen even further. "No way! I won this trip too! Did you win it from a YouTuber contest?"

I nod my head. "Yeah. Wait, so did you? Do you think they double booked us?"

The guy bites his bottom lip, suddenly looking incredibly lost. Something inside of me wells up, some instinct to hold this guy in my arms. To make sure he's okay and protect him from the world.

What the hell?

I clear my throat, doing my best to push those feelings to the back of my mind. We've only just met, I can't be acting weird around him! Especially if we're going to be traveling together.

“I know this is kinda awkward and not at all what either of us was expecting, but we can make this work, right? We have our own bathroom and shower.” I look over his shoulder into the cabin. “And it looks like we’ll each have our own sleeping space. It should be fine, yeah?”

The guy looks over his own shoulder before sighing and nodding his head. “Yeah, we can make this work.” Then he takes a step back, finally letting me into the cabin.

“I’m Cade, by the way.”

“Spencer,” he says with a little smile.

“It’s a pleasure to meet you, Spencer. Though, I’d have much rather it had been in a more pleasant fashion than me springing my presence on you like this.”

Spencer shakes his head, chuckling softly. “It’s okay,” he says softly. “It’s not really your fault.”

I set my bags on the floor next to my area. There’s a recliner right by the window that folds back into a bed. I sit down and look over at Spencer. He’s sitting in his own chair, wringing his hands in his lap.

“This is such a weird experience,” I say, trying to break the tension and help Spencer relax around me. “I have to admit, I never win things like this.”

Spencer’s eyes light up a little bit and my chest flutters with victory. “Neither do I! I actually didn’t even notice the email until later. I thought maybe they’d already given it away to someone else.” Then he winces, waving a hand at me. “Maybe they did but then I finally emailed and they thought why not give it to me too? I don’t know.”

“I can’t say I’m upset,” I tell him with a wink, watching as his face flushes again.

Vacations are fun, but vacationing with other people is even more fun.”

“If you say so. I don’t vacation very often and when I do, I try to make sure it lines up during the summer months.”

I tilt my head. “Why is that?”

“Oh, umm, I work at a school.”

“Are you a teacher?”

Spencer shakes his head, his hair falling over his eyes. He pushes it back and my hand clenches in my lap with the desire to be the one to brush his hair out of his face, to softly tuck it behind his ear. What the hell has gotten into me? It’s like his scent is making me stupid!

“I’m their personal chef. Or lunch lad, whatever you wanna call it. It’s a private school so I’m only cooking for around 60 people instead of a thousand.”

“You’re a chef? That’s incredible. You’re never gonna believe this but I actually really enjoy eating,” I say with a chuckle, rubbing a hand over my fairly thick belly.

Spencer laughs back. “Most people do.”

I hadn’t even realized that much time passed but before I realize what’s happening, the train is starting to pull forward. Spencer and I both look out the window, watching the trees and buildings pass by, both of us grinning from ear to ear.

I still can’t believe this free vacation included a plus one but there’s something about Spencer that makes me excited about the rest of our time together.

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Chapter Two

Spencer

I cannot believe this is happening. Despite the fact that I look completely at ease, my stomach is swirling around anxiously inside of me. I feel like I might actually sweat through this shirt.

I have to share my personal cabin with a guy I've never met before. What's making matters even worse is that I find him incredibly attractive! I can't talk to hot guys! I'm such a disaster when it comes to stuff like this.

Cade is shorter and thicker than me. He's got a beard that goes down to his chest that's got little braids in it. His eyes are the prettiest green color I think I've ever seen in a pair of eyes. But he's not just hot, he also holds himself with a confidence that draws me in.

That's without even thinking about how intoxicating his scent is! I'm pretty sure he's some sort of omega shifter. Though I've been wrong on guesses like that before. His natural scent has me in a chokehold. It's something like warm lemon tea. I want to drink it in and let it warm my belly.

Fuck, thinking about him warming my belly has my cheeks heating without my permission. I adjust myself in my seat, ignoring the way my cock is starting to perk up just from that single thought.

As we watch the world blur around us as the train moves forward, I clear my throat.

“What do you do?”

Cade looks over at me and smiles. “I’m a customer service manager at a grocery store.”

That weirdly does not surprise me. Cade seems like he would be good at something like that, working with people.

“That sounds awful,” I blurt out, regretting the words immediately. Thankfully, Cade just starts laughing.

“You’re not wrong. Sometimes it sucks ass to work with customers. I’m sure you can imagine the types of people I have to deal with. But I enjoy it despite that.”

“What do you like about it?” I ask, sliding my shoes off and tucking my feet up onto the chair. I lean my head against my knees, watching Cade talk. I like the way he talks with his hands. It’s very cute.

“There are bad apples in every industry but there’s something special about working with the rest. Everyone has to eat so I see all sorts of people every day. And then I get my regulars who always come say hi as they’re shopping or make sure they wait for me even if my line is super long. I just like those little connections, you know?”

I nod my head. “That makes sense. I feel that way about the kids I work with. They’re all really smart and super sweet. Because it’s a private school, they come and help me in the kitchen and with cleaning up after lunch.”

“That’s really interesting. What kind of private school is it?”

“It’s for gifted kids. They’re all super fucking smart. I’m pretty sure one of them is going to be the next President and at least three of them will come up with

groundbreaking scientific discoveries.”

Cade grins. “No pressure or anything.”

“I know they’re just kids and they have years to develop. But they truly are special. They all get personalized courses to push them where they need to be pushed, but they also get to pick some classes just because they like the subjects. One kid is taking food science courses and so he gets to come help me cook sometimes. The things he knows are astonishing.”

“Do you have kids that go to school there?”

The question startles me. I look over at Cade who’s watching me. Why is he asking? Is this just curiosity or is he interested in knowing if I’m mated with kids?

I shake my head. “No kids. I love that place but if I ever had kids, I don’t think I would try to get them in there unless they were actually gifted. Not to say my kids won’t be gifted, only that I know the average kid wouldn’t thrive in a place like this unless they truly weren’t being challenged in a regular school.” I snap my mouth shut, realizing I’m babbling and over explaining myself.

“I think that makes perfect sense to me,” Cade says, giving me a soft smile. “Did you always want to work in a school like this?”

“No. I used to work in a high end restaurant and I thought that was what I wanted to do, but I didn’t enjoy it as much. Too much hustle and not enough love of the food, you know?”

“You didn’t want to lose what drew you into cooking in the first place.”

“Exactly.” I say with a soft smile, warming all over as I realize Cade understands me.

“What about you?” I ask, feeling just a tiny bit braver. “Wife and kids?”

Cade snorts, shaking his head. “Nah, no kids and I’m not into women.”

I swallow. “No husband?”

“Nope. Haven’t found the right man for me. Not yet, anyway,” he says, giving me another wink.

Damn, why is his winking so sexy? Why does it make my chest feel like it’s hard to breathe but in a pleasant way?

“Me neither,” I say. When he tilts his head in confusion, I explain, carefully choosing my words. “I also haven’t found the right man yet.”

“Oh,” Cade breathes out, giving me a soft smile. “That’s good to know.”

The look in Cade’s eyes makes me hot all over. There’s a tension in the air, charged with something I can only describe as potential . It makes a shiver run down my spine and heat pool in the center of my gut. I pull my arms tightly around my shins, holding myself together so I don’t do something foolish, like make my way over to Cade’s lap.

The tension snaps in the form of someone knocking on our cabin door. Cade raises his brow at me and I flush, quickly looking back out the window. He stands up and opens the door.

“Hey,” Matthew, our personal attendant greets with a wide smile. He’s holding a notepad in his hand. “Would you like me to bring dinner to your room tonight or would you like to make your way to the dining car?”

I look over at Cade, nodding for him to make the decision. “We’ll make our way to the dining car,” Cade tells Matthew.

“Right on! Dinner is served any time between five and eight. If you need anything or have any questions, I’ll be sitting at my little station at the end of the hall.”

“Thank you, Matthew!”

Cade closes the door and sits back in his space. As much as I was hoping he’d want to just stay here for dinner, it’s for the best that we’re leaving. Maybe having other people around will help clear my head.

I take a deep breath, overwhelmed with sweet lemon tea. I shift in my seat. Cade’s scent is intoxicating and it’s making it hard to keep my thoughts straight. Maybe that’s why I’m so flustered. Maybe that’s why my mind keeps dragging itself into the gutter.

Leaning my head against my seat, I stare out the window. There’s rustling in the room and I look over, watching as Cade pulls a book from his backpack. He curls up in his chair and starts reading. I like the companionable silence between us. It’s not awkward and for once, I don’t feel a need to fill the silence with idle chat.

Cade looks up, his pretty green eyes meet mine. He gives me a little smile before looking back down at his book.

Just that glance has my entire body heating. I smile as I stare out the window, watching everything race past us, unable to keep my lips from curling up. I like the way he looks at me and the way he casually flirts. But at the same time, it fills me with anxiety and dread.

I’m not good at stuff like this; flirting, banter, being sexy. I never know if people are

actually interested unless they flat out say hey, Spencer, I'd love to maybe fuck you .

Vacations are a time to let down your hair and have a good time. Could I do that with Cade? Could I turn my brain off long enough to enjoy the flirty banter he's offering?

I'm not sure, but I want to try. What's the worst that could happen? We have some awkward tension that'll only last as long as the vacation? Then we'll just go back to not knowing each other when we get back home. No biggie.

The rest of the night is spent together, getting dinner, having more small talk as we get to know each other, before going back to our cabin for bed. I fall asleep to the sound of Cade's soft breaths and the train pulling us forward.

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Chapter Three

Cade

I wake up slowly from the most delightful dream. I was kneeling before a brunet beauty, my nose pressed to their hip while I teased my mouth against their straining cock. I swear I can still smell them despite now being awake.

I blink slowly, remembering that I'm not at home in bed but instead on a moving train. My eyes dart over to Spencer's bed, finding it empty. Disappointment hits me square in the chest, threatening to overwhelm me if I don't do my best to push it to the back of my mind. The scent from my dream wasn't some random faceless hookup, it was Spencer . Gods, his scent is starting to drive me to having wet dreams like a teenager all over again but I can't find it in myself to be upset by that.

I've only known Spencer for half a day but I already feel incredibly drawn to him, like a moth that continuously floats to a flame. There's just something about him that makes me want to get to know him, to learn all his secrets, to see what faces he makes if I suck his dick in real life instead of just in my dreams.

Good thing we have a personal shower in this suite because I have a feeling I'm going to need a cold one to get my libido in check.

I sit up, stretching my arms over my head. I'm about to get up when the door of our cabin swings open.

Spencer's eyes widen as he looks at me. "Good morning," he says softly, holding up

two cups of coffee. “I went to the dining car this morning to get us coffee. But then I had a moment of panic as I realized I didn’t even know if you liked coffee or not. I was already in line and I didn’t want to make people wait so I debated with myself on what I should do. Eventually, I just ordered two. If you hate coffee, it’s totally fine, I can just drink both. Although, I’ll probably get really hyper if I drink both as caffeine seems to hit me pretty hard.”

My chest feels like it may burst as I listen to him nervously ramble. Gods, he’s adorable .

“I love coffee. Thank you, Spencer. That was really thoughtful of you.”

Spencer hands over the coffee, waving me off. “It was nothing.”

“It wasn’t nothing to me,” I tell him softly, smiling up at him. He sits in his seat across the cabin from me. He curls up again, with his legs tucked against his chest. He’s so lanky and it really shows when he sits like that. I find it really cute. I find most things about him cute. Is this because I haven’t gotten laid in ages? Or is there just something special about Spencer? I have to admit I’m leaning towards the second.

We sit together in our room and sip our coffee, watching the window. There’s something really soothing about being in someone’s space without the need to fill said space with idle chatter. The trees blur as we pass them. A huge lake goes by and I marvel at the deer who’re sipping from the water, the birds that fly around the trees, and the stillness of it all.

It’s been so long since I’ve allowed myself a slice of peace in nature. I’m a manatee shifter but it’s been so long since I’ve actually shifted, or allowed my manatee skin to be free in a giant pool of water. He misses it, craves it even. I’ve been neglecting that side of myself by staying in the city and keeping myself constantly busy with work.

Not only does my human side deserve this vacation, but so does my animal side.

I chance a glance over at Spencer. His face looks so relaxed and at peace. There's not an ounce of tension in his body. His long fingers are wrapped around his coffee cup and I find myself staring. They're such pretty hands. Thin fingers that are almost boney at the knuckles. I want to touch them and watch them do unthinkable things. I bet they're incredibly dexterous, they must be if he's using a knife regularly at his job.

Spencer looks over at me and for the first time since meeting him, I'm the one who looks away embarrassed. I feel my cheeks heat beneath my beard. I take a sip of my coffee, doing my best to look casual and aloof.

I'm fairly certain I do a piss poor job but I don't really care. I don't mind Spencer knowing I'm looking at him, so long as it doesn't make him uncomfortable. Based on the little smiles and the way his eyes light up, I'd guess he's attracted to me, same as I am to him. But I won't know that for certain until I ask. That can wait a bit longer though. No need to scare him away so soon.

I drink the rest of my coffee and toss it into the trash by the door. Then I get up, stretching my arms over my head, groaning as my spine cracks. I sound like I'm an old man instead of 35.

Taking a few things out of my bag, I start to get ready for the day. I quickly change my shirt before pulling the braids out of my beard. I spray it with moisturizer before brushing it out and rebraiding it, this time with a different design. I add a couple charms to the end for good measure. The entire time, I can feel Spencer's eyes on me. It's a heady feeling. I like it. Once that's done, I head into the bathroom to piss and change my boxers and pants.

I toss my dirty clothes into my bag before turning to Spencer. "Do you have plans for

the day? I was thinking of heading up to the observation deck. Would you like to come with?"

Spencer nods. "Yeah, that sounds nice."

He grabs a notebook from his bag and follows me out of our room.

"Hello, gentlemen," Matthew says, bowing with a flourish that makes me smile. "While you're out, would you mind if I popped into your room for a quick tidy? Just taking out the trash, making sure you have towels, that sort of thing?"

"Totally fine by me," I say, turning towards Spencer.

Spencer nods along. "That would be great. Thank you, Matthew."

Matthew tips his cute little hat to us as we continue down the hall towards the front of the train. I have to clench my hand tight and stuff it into my pocket to keep myself from reaching over and placing it on Spencer's back as we walk. I don't know why but I just have this sensation inside of me, wanting to reach out and touch him. It's so unlike what I usually feel for people I've only just met.

It's like there's this long-forgotten instinct, buried deep inside of me trying to burst free.

As we climb up the stairs to the second floor, I get an eyeful of Spencer's ass. Maybe this isn't some instinct, maybe it's just the fact that I'm horny for Spencer. Either way, I'm not mad about it.

We find a little two seater off by itself and gravitate towards it. We sit down, tucked together, our sides touching. Spencer is warm and sparks of pleasure race through my middle and down my arm.

“It’s so pretty up here,” Spencer breathes out, staring out the window.

I say the first thing that comes to mind. “You’re so pretty.” Spencer’s eyes snap over to me and I wince. “Sorry, I shouldn’t have said that. Just because it’s true doesn’t mean you want to hear that from me.”

Spencer’s mouth opens and closes a few times before he covers his face with his hands, trying to hide the rapid blush that’s coloring his cheeks. He’s so goddamn pretty I can barely stand it.

Finally, he comes back up for air. With a shaky breath he replies, “I wouldn’t say I don’t want to hear that from you. It’s just surprising. That’s all.”

“Why would that be surprising?”

“Because you’re you and I’m me? You’re like ridiculously hot and all sorts of confident while I’m more used to hiding. You’re perceiving me in a way that’s kinda freaking me out.” Then his eyes widen and he quickly reaches over, putting a hand on my wrist. I suck in a sharp breath as sparks race across my skin where he’s touching me. “Not that it’s bad! Only unexpected! Oh my gods, I should shut the fuck up now.”

Spencer pulls away, tucking the front of his shirt over his face. He groans in frustration and I cannot stop watching him with a mixture of amusement and interest. His rambling is so fucking adorable. I think I could listen to him talk for hours and not get bored.

“Do you believe in magic?” I ask him, trying to put his mind at ease.

“In a young girl’s heart?” I narrow my eyes at him and he snorts. “Yeah, I do. Why? Do you believe in magic?”

I look around, making sure there aren't any passengers near us. I'm fairly certain there are other shifters on the train, but I can't smell any up here at the moment.

"Of course I believe in magic," I say with a grin, keeping my voice quiet so only Spencer can hear. "Otherwise, how do you explain the fact that I can sometimes change into an animal?"

Spencer leans his head closer, so close I can feel his breath against my skin. "You're a shifter?" I nod my head and Spencer smiles. "So am I! A cat!"

"Omega?" I guess and Spencer nods his head. "Me too."

"Is that umm, is that a problem for you? That we're both omegas, I mean?"

"Not even a little bit."

"Not that I'm saying we're going to like get mated tomorrow or anything. Not that it matters because you might not even be into me. No pressure or anything. Obviously I find you attractive but that doesn't actually have to mean anything." Spencer snaps his mouth shut, covering his face once again.

With a warm chuckle, I take his wrist in my hand and pull it away from his face. "There you are. No hiding," I say softly.

"Hiding is far safer."

"That might be true. But it's also far less fun. Plus, I like looking at your pretty face, Spencer."

Spencer bites his bottom lip. "You think I'm pretty?"

“Very.”

“Oh,” he breathes out, looking back out the window. He tries to hide it but he’s smiling, further proving my point without even trying.

There’s a soft and tentative understanding between us after that. We spend the entire morning side by side in the observation deck. Spencer will occasionally pull out his notebook and write something down. I pull out my book and read through a few chapters.

Sometime during the morning, Spencer scoots closer until he can lay his head against my shoulder. My stomach erupts with butterflies as we snuggle together. I’m proud of him for making the first move, for taking a chance. That must have taken him all morning to find the nerve.

I give him a soft squeeze before going back to my book. Occasionally, I’ll look down, just to watch the way Spencer’s eyelashes fall, or to count the freckles that dot his nose. He falls asleep and I can’t stop watching him. How in the fuck am I so down bad for a man I just met yesterday? We were thrust together without our permission but somehow, it feels like we were meant to meet. Is that type of magic real? Or is it just a fairy tale I’m trying to project onto the situation?

Eventually, our stomachs rumble, letting us know it’s time for lunch. Reluctantly, I gently shake Spencer awake. He blinks his giant brown eyes up at me, a soft smile stretching across his lips as our eyes meet.

“Hi,” he whispers.

“Good morning, sleepy head. Are you hungry? We could head down to the dining car.”

Spencer hums, extracting himself from me and stretching. Now that I know he's a cat shifter, the gesture makes a lot of sense. We pull away from each other, get up, and head down to the dining car.

I can't help but think that this vacation isn't the only thing that's only just started. Whatever this is between us is starting out, like a brand new flower blooming. It's refreshing and exciting, yet at the same time, it has a naive beauty to it. I want to hold my hands over it and protect it. More than anything, I want to get to know Spencer even more and see where this goes.

Lunch is BLTs with a side of chips. I get a soda while Spencer indulges and orders an orange soda float.

These feelings, at first I thought they were lust. Spencer is hot and it would be easy to assume I'd like to fuck him, just to scratch the itch. But somehow, I know it's more than that. I don't just want to fuck him, I want to watch him sleep again. I want to see what he's writing in his notebook. I want to fall asleep next to him to the sound of his soft breathing.

There's an instant connection between us, one that I can't really wrap my brain around but instead of trying to overthink this and figure out each and every facet of my feelings, I think it would be best just to sit back and enjoy it. Enjoy my vacation, enjoy the time Spencer and I have together, and of course, enjoy Spencer himself.

After lunch, we head back to our personal cabin. Before walking in behind Spencer, I turn back to the hallway towards Matthew.

"Hey, Matthew? Do you by chance have alcohol for purchase? Maybe a sweet red?"

Matthew nods his head. "I've got just the thing! I'll bring it over in a jiffy!"

“Thank you!”

Spencer is sitting on the floor, his back against the wall. He tilts his head. “What was that?”

I smile as I step into the room and close the door behind me. “I was just asking Matthew something.” I kick my shoes off and get on the floor, sitting across from Spencer. “I thought we could get to know each other better.”

“I would like that a lot.”

Matthew knocks on the door. Popping his head through the door, he gives us both a grin as he passes over the bottle of wine. Then he leaves just as quickly.

I hold the bottle up, flashing Spencer a smirk. “And I got us a little something to take the edge off while we do it.”

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Chapter Four

Spencer

A warm nervousness flutters inside my chest. Not only does Cade think I'm pretty, but he also wants to get to know me better. This isn't just some lustful feeling making us crazy about each other, there's something deeper here. I just know it!

"Okay," I say slowly, giving Cade a shy smile. "You go first. Ask me a question."

"Tell me about your family."

"My family is a pretty tight knit group. My mom and dad live in the same town as me and we have dinner together every Sunday night. I have a little brother and a little sister. They're both in college at the moment, both in different states. I don't get to see them as much as I wish but we try to get together at least once a year."

"How old are you?" Cade asks, raising his brow. "Are they a lot younger than you?"

"I'm 30," I tell him, feeling almost sheepish. "They're both in their twenties, so not a huge age gap."

"Huh. You still have a baby face but I knew you had to be older since you said you used to work in a restaurant before working at the job you have now."

"How about you? How old are you?"

“I’m 35. I’m basically an old man at this point.”

I snort, shaking my head. “You are not, shut the fuck up, Cade.”

Cade gets a soft look on his face. I tilt my head in question. “Sorry, I just like the way you say my name. It sounds so sweet coming from your lips.”

“Jesus,” I hiss out, covering my face. I can feel my cheeks flood with color and my stomach swoops dramatically. He has to stop saying shit like that or I’m going to end up passing out from all the blood running to my cheeks. Or worse, I’m going to blurt out something really embarrassing like ‘marry me’. “You can’t just say shit like that.”

“I can. And I did. Deal with it,” he says lightheartedly.

“Tell me something about yourself. Please, take the attention away from me and back onto you.”

Cade’s chuckle warms my insides. I pull my legs up, leaning my chin against my knees and wrapping my arms around my shins. My back vibrates slightly against the wall as the train continues to pull us forward but the feeling is soothing.

“For a long time, it was just me and my mom. I have no idea where my father is. He left right after I was born.”

“Oh,” I breathe out. “I’m so sorry.”

Cade shrugs. “It’s alright. I can’t really miss someone I don’t even know, right? My mom mated a lovely man when I was a teenager. He brought a daughter along with him, so it went from just me and mom to a brand new family unit. My little sister is ten years younger than me which was frustrating as a teenager but now we’re pretty close. It’s amazing what some distance and not living under the same roof will do for

sibling relationships,” he says with a laugh.

“I get that. My siblings are closer to each other than they are with me, but they’re also less than a year apart in age. Cat shifters have really short pregnancies so we had to pass them off as ‘Irish Twins’ growing up.”

Cade opens the bottle of wine, passing it over to me. “New rule. You take a drink and then you can ask a question.”

I take a drink of the wine, savoring the sweet taste against my tongue. I know some people enjoy a dry wine, but the only place for that in my book is inside a dish I’m cooking. For drinking, I want the fruity taste of a sweet red wine.

“I have the most important question,” I say, passing the bottle back to Cade. “What’s your favorite dish? The one you could eat over and over and never grow bored of.”

“That’s a tough one,” he says softly, wracking his brain. “Probably fettuccine alfredo. I’ve never had an alfredo dish I didn’t like. There’s just something so comforting about it.”

I nod my head. “Great answer. Someday I’ll have to make you my homemade version,” I say without thinking before freezing.

This is what I get for trying to drink and stay chill. I throw things out there like future plans without thinking. Just because we’re having a good time on vacation doesn’t mean Cade will want to see each other when everything is said and done!

Cade gives me a soft look. His socked foot moves into my space, poking my calf. “That sounds perfect.”

And just like that, all the worries and anxiety about my blunder fall away.

It's Cade's turn to ask a question so he takes a drink of the wine. My eyes are glued to the way his lips wrap around the mouth of the bottle. Not to be stuck in a teenager mindset, but I can't stop thinking about how my lips were just touching it and now his lips are touching it and soon enough, my lips will be touching it again. In a weird, abstract way, we're kissing each other through the bottle!

Oh my gods, what the fuck is wrong with me? If Cade wasn't sitting across from me right now, I'd be burying my face in my hands and groaning in frustration. Am I really so out of touch with dating that I'm getting butterflies from sharing a bottle with a beautiful man?

"Do you date much?"

My eyes snap up to meet Cade's. I feel my face flush. "I've dated here and there," I admit softly. "Nothing ever really stuck though. My longest relationship was probably with my highschool boyfriend. We broke up because he decided to move abroad and I wanted to stay close to my family."

"Nothing serious?"

I shake my head. "Nope. A couple dates here and there, but that's about it. What about you?"

Cade raises his brow and hands over the bottle. I roll my eyes and take a drink, ignoring the way my stomach flutters at the fact that both our mouths have been on this thing now.

"I don't really date, if I'm being honest," Cade says, running his fingers through his beard. "For the most part, I've stuck to one night stands. For a bit, I had a friends with benefits thing going on, but that didn't really work out. He caught feelings and I didn't, so we broke things off."

My traitorous heart starts beating overtime, wondering if the same thing is going to happen between us. Am I just some hump it and dump it guy he's met? Do I even stand a chance?

Furthermore, why do I care? That was Cade's past, it has nothing to do with me. And we've just met. I shouldn't be longing for a future with him so quickly!

I take another gulp of wine before passing the bottle back to Cade. He gives me a look that I can't quite read before he's taking a drink as well.

"What was that look about?" Cade asks softly. "You look like you just closed yourself off. Was it something I said?"

I don't know that I like how perceptive he is. I bite my bottom lip, wondering how much of the truth I should actually say. Fuck it, what the worst that could happen?

"I'm feeling kinda insecure about your past relationships. Which I know is ridiculous. They're in the past and I shouldn't care. Plus, we're not even dating! We just met! I have no right to feel any sort of way about your past. But at the same time, I'm just worried you're hoping for something like that from me and if I'm honest there's no way I could ever do the whole 'no strings attached sex' thing. And I'm hoping that's okay with you because if it's not that's totally fine we can just go back to being regular cabin mates or whatever." I say everything in one breath and have to suck in a gasp when I'm done because oh right, I need air to live!

Cade watches me for a long moment before he cracks a smile. "I don't think I'll ever not find that adorable."

"What?"

"The way you ramble. I like it. It's cute."

I huff in frustration, letting my legs fall down into a pretzel style. I cross my arms over my chest. “I was being serious.”

“I know you were. I don’t know what this is between us, Spencer. We’ve only just met but I feel pulled to you in a way I’ve never felt before. That’s the honest truth.” He reaches out a tentative hand, laying it against my ankle and giving it a gentle squeeze. “Thank you for being honest with me about your worries but I promise you, no strings attached was the furthest thing from my mind.”

I swallow thickly. “Really?”

“Really. But that will cost you another drink because it was another question.”

With that, we both chuckle, the tension in my chest falling away. I snag the bottle from his fingers, taking another drink before passing it back right away. “Your turn. I’m starting to feel a little buzz. You need to catch up.”

“Gladly,” Cade says with a smile. He takes a long swig before setting the bottle between us. “Have you been with an omega before?”

“You’re really good at asking questions that leave me feeling flustered,” I murmur under my breath. I take a moment to cover my face with the front of my shirt, giving myself a moment to compose myself. “I’ve had crushes on other omegas before but I’ve never been with any of them. Not because I didn’t want to but because it takes me a while to get comfortable enough to be physical with people. All of my past partners who I’ve gotten past kissing with have been alphas.”

I swear Cade’s eyes darken as I tell him. My stomach swoops and it takes all of my self control not to start squirming where I’m sitting. I’ve never fucked an omega but fuck, do I want to. Just the idea of having my face pressed against a slick hole, or sliding into another omega’s body with their sweet scent in my nose is enough to

drive me wild. Sure, a knot feels really good but they make fake knots that feel just the same. There's no replacement for licking slick straight from the source.

Okay, great. Now my dick is rock hard and I'm sure my scent is turning all musky with lust.

"Sorry," I say sheepishly. "Just umm, thinking."

Taking a deep breath, I get a noseful of Cade's scent. It's somehow even more citrusy than usual with notes of extra sweetness. Like lemonade instead of tea. It smells so fucking good.

"You're umm, not the only one," he admits softly.

There's something thrilling about knowing we were both thinking about each other like this. We both want each other. It makes me feel just a little bit braver.

I nod my head beside me, gesturing for Cade to come sit by me. He grins as he moves, leaning his back against the wall, his legs out in front of himself.

It's my turn to take a drink of the wine and I realize, startled, that it's almost all the way gone. I didn't think we'd drank that much already!

"If you could be anywhere in the world right now, where would you be?"

Cade nudges me with his elbow. "Silly question. The answer is obvious. I'd wanna be right here next to you."

My stomach does a full flip inside of me. I tilt my head to the side so I can properly look into Cade's green eyes. He is so handsome that I can't contain myself a moment longer. Without thinking, I reach my right hand up in order to touch his cheek. His

beard is surprisingly soft against my fingertips.

“Spencer? What are you doing?”

“That will cost you a drink,” I whisper as I move closer until our lips are barely a breath apart. My head feels light for the first time in a long time. Nothing else matters.

“Worth it,” he whispers back.

I can’t be sure which of us moves but it doesn’t matter. One moment we’re breathing each other’s air and the next, our lips are touching. It’s everything I hoped it would be while also being so much more.

Cade’s lips are plump and soft and somehow fit perfectly against my own. His beard tickles my face in a wonderfully pleasant way. My head swims with delight and my entire body heats. The kiss is chaste, but it doesn’t matter. It’s somehow the very best kiss I’ve ever had.

I pull back and look into Cade’s eyes, making sure that was okay. He smiles at me and dives back in, giving me another soft, barely there kiss. His lips taste like sweet wine and I chase the taste, pushing my tongue along the seam of his lips.

Cade makes a surprised noise and I use the opportunity to properly taste him, pushing my tongue between his lips. I groan into his mouth as I sweep my tongue inside. Oh my gods, he tastes so fucking good. I want to crawl into his lap, press my tongue against his, and grind against his belly until I come in my jeans.

Instead, I pull away, sucking in a sharp breath that I’m hoping will clear my head.

“Gods,” Cade murmurs against my lips, a shiver going through me. Lightning runs

down my spine and this time I don't stop myself from squirming. Fuck, I want him. "As much as I'd love to pull you onto one of our beds and show you how good omegas do it, I think it's better if we stop now."

Cade pulls himself away fully. I immediately miss him being in my space. I watch as he stands up, running a hand over his bald head, his face looking just as disappointed as I'm feeling.

"I want you," Cade says, like he needs me to know. Warmth settles in my gut. "But I don't want to do anything too fast. You just admitted you don't want to be just a hookup and I agree, I want that too. So let's enjoy our kiss and continue on with our night of getting to know each other."

Jesus fucking Christ. Could this man be any more perfect? I want to fuck him raw, which in itself is a surprise because it usually takes far more time for me to get those types of wild feelings. But I also want an emotional connection with him. He's slowing things down, he wants to get to know me. He wants more than sex.

I find myself unable to keep my smile at bay as I stand up and get myself into my own chair across from Cade. He drinks the rest of the wine which should not be as attractive as it is.

"One last drink," I say, "that means one last question. Make it count."

Cade sits in his own chair, crossing a leg over the other. He tilts his head to the side and strokes his beard for a moment before finally shrugging. "Did you enjoy the kiss?"

"Yes," I say softly, doing my best to swallow my nerves. "And I'd like to do it again. If that's okay with you."

“I’d like that. Ask me again in the morning and you can have as many as you’d like.”

“I’ll hold you to that.”

Cade grins. “I hope you do.”

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Chapter Five

Cade

This morning and every morning on the train since our afternoon of day drinking, Spencer has bravely asked for a kiss good morning. And every morning, I was more than happy to give it to him.

The kisses are barely there, just the most chaste press of lips against lips, yet they feel sweeter than any other kiss I've given in the past. There's something about Spencer that makes these kisses special. I wish I could put my finger on it but whenever I'm around him, my mind feels like it's swimming in a pool of happy chemicals. It's hard to think when I'm around him, but I find that I don't mind.

We've found ourselves in a domestic routine while on the train. We wake up together, share a good morning kiss, and then have breakfast in our room. After eating, we head to the observation deck where we watch the wilderness pass by through the window while snuggled close. Sometimes we talk about random things but other times we're more than content just to be in each other's presence, doing our own things. I often read the book I've brought and Spencer will write or draw in his journal.

It's nice. It's nice in a way I wasn't expecting. In the past, relationships have been physical companionship. This is the first time something with another person feels like it has the potential to be serious.

Not that I'm asking Spencer to mate with me right here and now, only that the

potential is there and I would be a fool to ignore that. The only problem is what happens when this vacation is said and done?

Spencer packs up his things, his body practically vibrating with excitement. “As much as I’ve loved this train, I’m so excited to get off of it. It was starting to feel a tad bit claustrophobic.”

“You’ll be outside stretching your legs in no time.”

I toss my shit into my bag, closing the zipper. I put my beanie back onto my bald head, wanting to keep it warm once we step outside the train.

“Which hotel is your reservation for?”

“The Peterson. You?”

“The same,” Spencer says with an excited grin. Gods, he’s so pretty. “It’ll be nice to have a familiar face around. I have no idea what to expect when we get there.”

“We’ll stick together,” I tell him before pausing. “Well, we can stick together as much as you’d like. I don’t want to intrude or anything.”

“You wouldn’t be,” Spencer says right away.

He must notice my hesitation because he finishes packing his things before stepping over to me. With a determined look, he moves to stand between my thighs. Tentatively, so he can pull away if he wants to, I place my hands on his hips.

The air between us grows heated and by the look in Spencer’s eyes, I can tell he’s feeling it as well. There is definitely something here between us, a tether pulling tighter and tighter. It feels inescapable yet I have no desire to pull against it. If

anything, I want to lean into it. I want to see where this goes. I want to see if Spencer and I can make something real from this undeniable pull.

I'm delightfully surprised when Spencer leans down. This is the first time he's initiated a kiss between the two of us without alcohol clouding our minds. My chest warms and my stomach flutters with emotion.

This kiss is just like the others we've shared yet somehow better because Spencer is taking what he wants. He kisses me like he's on a mission, like he wants to crawl inside my chest and make a home there. We've only known each other a few days, but somehow, I already feel like I know him yet want to spend every one of my breaths getting to know him better.

All these feelings are overwhelming and confusing, so I push them away in order to enjoy this soft, gentle kiss. I want to stay in the moment instead of thinking about what ifs and the future.

"Thank you," I whisper when Spencer pulls back. He pushes his messy hair out of his eyes, his cheeks beautifully rosy. "That was just what I needed."

Spencer gives me a soft smile before he clears his throat. "I'm glad that there was a mix up, Cade."

When he says stuff like this with those giant doe eyes, I feel myself melting. How am I supposed to keep my feelings in check when he's doing stuff like this? I squeeze his hip. "I'm glad for it too." Matthew knocks on our door, letting us know the station is just ahead. We grab our things, double checking every cranny to make sure we're not forgetting anything before heading out towards the doors. It's a whirlwind of shuffling and walking and waiting. Once outside, I breathe in the fresh air, my chest feeling light.

“Share a taxi?” Spencer nods.

We find one easily enough and head to our hotel, making easy small talk as we go. Being in this little space together, I can’t help but subtly breathe in Spencer’s scent. I don’t think I’ll ever get used to just how much I like it. I wish I could roll around in it, or maybe bottle it up so I can keep it close and smell it whenever I want.

The hotel is far nicer than I’m used to. The lobby we enter has giant ceilings with the most intricate chandeliers hanging down, sparkling like diamonds.

I whistle softly. “This is way nicer than I thought it would be.”

“I know,” Spencer whispers back, looking down at our clothes. “I feel incredibly underdressed. I feel like this is the type of place we’d run into a celebrity or something.”

“Wouldn’t that be something?”

The person working at the counter greets us with a smile. “Welcome, gentlemen.”

“Hi,” I say, pulling out my paper. “We’re here to check in.”

Spencer takes his paper out as well, sliding it across the desk. The guy quickly starts typing at his computer. “Ah yes, here we are.” He looks at both papers before giving them back, handing us each a keycard.

“The two of you will be on the third floor, room 345. If you need anything, please don’t hesitate to call the front office. We offer free wake up calls, a pool room, the gym, a sauna, and of course, free breakfast and coffee every morning. You’ll also find a menu of the a la cart items we offer up in your room.”

“Sorry, the two of us? We’re in the same room?”

The receptionist looks at the computer again before nodding. “Yes. A king suite.”

I give Spencer a look, waiting to see if he’ll ask for a new room as I take the key card from the counter. Eventually, Spencer just nods. “Thank you so much.”

“Enjoy your stay.”

With my bag rolling behind me, I start walking towards the elevator. Spencer’s cheeks are bright red as he follows me. Once inside the elevator, I press the giant three and the doors close.

“I didn’t really think about the fact that they’d probably double booked us here too,” Spencer says, breaking the silence. “Is that going to be okay? Should we ask if they have another room available? I feel really awkward all of a sudden, Cade. I’m sorry you’re stuck with me again.”

“Hey,” I say softly, turning towards him. I drop the handle of my bag so I can reach up and touch his cheek. “You’re okay. Don’t be sorry for something that’s not your fault.”

Spencer looks down at me, his giant brown eyes wide.

“I don’t mind that we’ve been double booked again,” I tell him. “Are you okay with it? I could very well go down and talk to the front desk about everything if you want.”

“No,” Spencer says right away. “No, I’m okay. If you’re okay.”

“I’m okay too.”

“Okay. Cool. Awesome. Okay.”

He’s so fucking adorable that I don’t stop my impulse to pull him down and give him a quick kiss. We pull back and the doors to the elevator open, smiles stretching across our faces.

Our room is easy to find and as we step in, my breath is stolen.

“Jesus Christ,” Spencer breathes out, looking around.

Instead of a simple room, we’re apparently staying in a full suite. There’s a door to the bathroom to the left which has two sinks, a toilet, a giant claw foot tub and a shower. Deeper inside is a living room area with a full kitchenette including a little dining table, a couch, and a TV. Past that is a little half wall that separates the bed from everything else. The bed is a king.

Why has it only just occurred to me that there’s only one bed?

I turn towards Spencer, watching his reaction. He’s staring at the bed, biting his bottom lip. I wish I could bite that full bottom lip instead.

“I can always sleep on the couch,” I offer, but Spencer is quickly shaking his head.

“No, that’s not necessary. It’s a king, so there’s plenty of room for the both of us.”

“Only if you’re sure.”

“I’m sure,” he says softly, giving me a shy smile and looking at me through his lashes. Fuck, he really shouldn’t be looking at me like that. It’s getting harder and harder not to toss him onto the bed and have my way with him.

Even now, just standing side by side I can't stop thinking about stripping him out of his clothes and running my tongue along every inch of his body. I want to leave him covered in my cum so that he smells like me. I want--

Fuck, I want so much. But now is not the time for all these thoughts. The last thing I want is for my scent to turn all musky with lust to the point of making Spencer uncomfortable.

"Then it's settled," I say, tossing my bag in the corner. Then I jump onto the bed, sprawling out. Spencer giggles in response, the sound warming me to my core.

"I was expecting a tiny room, not all of this. There's so much space for activities."

"Activities? Like what?"

I watch as Spencer's cheeks brighten with a blush. Oh, it's nice to know I'm not the only one who has his mind in the gutter. I'll never get used to the sight of his blush, it's so lovely. "Like checkers. Or Just Dance. Or yoga? I don't know, Cade," he finally says with a chuckle.

"What should we do first? Did you have a plan for anything you wanted to do now that we're here?"

"Not really? There's this one place I wanted to check out. You know that super tall building? I forget the name of it. But apparently you can have dinner way up there and I'd love to try that."

I nod my head, turning on my side and propping my head up on my hand. "Yeah, Skynet, right?"

"That's the one! I'd love to go there if they have space."

“I’ll call them this afternoon. Anything else?”

Spencer shakes his head. “Not really. The rest of the time I just planned on wandering. I have a fondness for just wandering and watching people.”

“I can see that. You’re adorable when you get all introspective.”

Spencer’s eyes dart up to meet mine. “You think I’m adorable?”

“Obviously.”

He sputters. “You say that so easily!”

I raise my brow, a smirk playing at my lips. “Obviously.”

“Stop it,” he says, pointing at me. “Stop being all confident and sexy. It’s scrambling my brain, Cade!”

I tilt my head slightly. His words are an accusation but they’re also a confession in a way. My heart picks up speed. “You think I’m sexy?”

Spencer’s mouth opens and closes a few times before he makes a frustrated noise. “Obviously,” he says, mirroring my words back to me, complete with a little eye roll. Gods, he’s so fucking cute.

I want him more than I’ve ever wanted another person. My entire body craves him. All the blood is quickly leaving my head, diving down into my cock. It’s a rush, feeling this overwhelming urge to have Spencer. I won’t do anything until Spencer gives me the go ahead, which means all of this lust is simmering under my skin, the anticipation making this even better. Holding myself back will only make the act of finally having him so much sweeter.

“That’s good to know. My ego needed the pat, thank you.”

“Whatever,” he murmurs, shaking his head at me. He doesn’t look upset, instead, he’s giving me a soft smile. “What should we do today? Should we find somewhere to have lunch? Check out the pool? Maybe take a nap?”

“A grown up nap or a nap nap?”

“What’s a grown up nap?”

“You know, when two adults sneak away to take a naked nap together,” I explain, wiggling my brows at him.

Spencer’s face pinkens again. “I meant a normal, fully clothed nap,” he sputters out, covering his face with his hands. “I said stop that!”

“Sorry,” I say with a chuckle. “I’ll try to behave myself.”

“You better!”

“I vote we go for a walk,” I finally say instead of winding him up even further.

Spencer finally drops his bag on the floor before turning and walking away from the little bedroom area. “Come on then. Let’s get out there before the sun starts to set!”

I get off the bed and follow behind Spencer, ready to spend the rest of the day with him. I’m man enough to admit I’m growing quite fond of this man. I really hope there’s a chance I’ll get to keep him once this vacation is over.

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Chapter Six

Spencer

We step outside and I take in a giant breath, letting the cool, fresh air wash over me. It helps clear my head from the chaos bouncing around inside of me.

I cannot believe Cade and I have been double booked again. I really should have thought of that before we got to the hotel but for some reason, all I could think about was getting into my own room so I could finally masturbate and take the edge off without worrying about Cade overhearing. So much for that plan.

To be honest, I'm not mad that we've ended up in the same room once more. Getting to know Cade has been wonderful. He's confident yet soft, dominant yet kind. He's larger than life and I'm just happy he's letting me into his orbit.

Now that we'll be sharing a bed, I can't help but let my thoughts drift. Are we going to do more than sleep together during the next few days? Do I want to have sex with Cade?

Okay, that's easy to answer. Fuck yes. But is that a good idea?

"The weather couldn't be more beautiful," Cade says beside me as we walk down the street. "I can wear a hoodie without sweating my ass off and the wind keeps me cool. I love this."

I tilt my head up towards the sky, smiling at the sunshine. "I agree. I love weather

like this. I thought it would be colder here since we're so close to the ocean, but it's perfect."

"What should we be looking for?"

I look across the street, then up at the signs ahead of us. Nothing really catches my attention so I give Cade a shrug. "I have no idea," I admit with a laugh.

"I've got an idea," Cade says before walking over to a couple walking in the opposite direction of us. He stops them. "Hey, I'm so sorry to bother you but we're new to the area and we're looking for some of the best spots. You know, the kind that locals know about but newcomers and travelers would totally overlook?"

They look at each other before looking back at us. "You have to try out Periwinkle's Penne. It's this tiny Italian restaurant."

"That sounds amazing."

"There's also Chocolate Meltdown. It's the most adorable cafe you'll ever see. It's really not far from here!"

We thank them for their time and head down the road they've pointed out for us. I startle when the back of my hand touches Cade's. He looks over at me, ready to give a soft apology but I reach over and grab his hand before he can.

My stomach is a flutter of butterflies. We are holding hands, I repeat, Cade and I are holding hands! It's such a small, simple thing, yet my entire body is sparking with excited shivers.

We hold hands the entire walk to Chocolate Meltdown. The outside has the tiniest sign. It's no wonder this isn't a tourist spot, I would have never guessed this was a

cafe without those people telling us!

Stepping inside, I look around and can't help but smile. It's obvious that most things here are chocolate themed. The tables and chairs are all a deep chocolate color, the walls are covered with different chocolate paintings, and there's a display of flavored chocolates by the counter.

We walk up to the counter, looking up at the board filled with different drinks, flavors, and specials.

"Oh wow," I breathe out, "there's so much to pick from."

"I think I'm going to get a peppermint mocha and a chocolate donut with sprinkles. Or maybe I'll get something bigger since it's lunch time? No, I'll stick to the donut. We're on vacation after all."

I hum as I listen to Cade.

"I want a donut too," I decide.

The worker comes over to us after she's finished wiping down the counter. "Welcome in! What can we make for you today?"

Cade orders and then looks at me. "I'll try the caramel chocolate donut with a vanilla iced latte please."

"Perfect," she says, taking Cade's debit card from him.

"Thank you, Cade."

He looks at me and smiles. "You're welcome, handsome."

I smack his arm in response, doing my best not to bury my face under the collar of my shirt. Damn him and his smooth lines. Why the fuck do I keep falling for them, hook, line, and sinker?

Cade puts a hand on my lower back as we walk away from the counter, finding a table to sit at. My entire body warms, the pit of my stomach fluttering delightfully. I like it when he touches me so casually.

I'll be the first to admit that I've never felt this way before, especially not with someone I've only just met. There's something special about Cade, something that's pulling me in by my lapels and not letting go. These feelings are overwhelming in the most wonderful way. I feel like I'm a fresh kitten getting his first crush. There's butterflies in my belly, warmth in my cheeks, and lightning bolts of pleasure that continue to roll down my spine every time I'm in his presence. I somehow both love it and hate it at the same time.

Cade adjusts his beanie as he sits down across from me. "So," he says, tapping his fingers against the table. "What is the scariest thing you've ever done?"

A strangled noise leaves my throat. "What?"

"What's the scariest thing you've ever done?" Cade repeats the question, looking at me expectantly.

"Okay, so that's really what you asked. What a cute little icebreaker," I say, raising my brow at him.

"Icebreaker? I think we're past that, don't you think?"

I let out a long sigh, pretending to be annoyed but in reality, I'm thrilled beyond words. What an interesting question. I think about it for a moment before smiling.

“Honestly? Probably going on a vacation all alone. I know I hide it really well, but I’m a bit on the anxious side,” I say, letting out a self deprecating chuckle.

“I never would have guessed that. You hide it so well, Spencer.”

“Shut up,” I say, reaching across the table and flicking Cade’s hand. He latches on to my hand, holding onto it. A shiver runs through me as his thumb skims across the sensitive part of the inside of my wrist.

He’s so soft with me.

“I’m proud of you,” he says softly. “You did something scary. I’m so happy you decided to come on this vacation. If you hadn’t done the scary thing, we wouldn’t have met.”

I inch my wrist forward, very obviously rubbing our wrists together. It’s something shifters do in order to purposely rub each other’s scents onto each other. I’m scent marking him. My stomach swoops as I do it and Cade watches with wide eyes before turning his eyes back to me and smiling softly.

“I’m really glad we met, Cade.”

The barista walks over to our table, dropping off our drinks and donuts.

“Thank you,” Cade says, giving my hand another squeeze before pulling away so he can take a drink of his mocha.

Picking up my drink and bringing it to my mouth, I subtly sniff my wrist. Everything inside of me lights up at the smell of our scents mixed together pressed into my skin. It’s perfect and wonderful and everything I’d want from a mate.

Wait. Fuck. Mate?

I take such a deep sip that I end up choking, cursing myself for thinking about mating someone I've only known a few days. But now that the word has been brought up within the safety of my mind, I can't stop thinking about it.

Cade would look so wonderful with my bite marking him as mine.

"What are you thinking about right now?"

My eyes snap up to meet Cade's, my cheeks flushing with embarrassment. "Nothing," I tell him right away.

"You're lying," he says with a smirk. "You're thinking about something and I'd really like to hear what it is because you've got a really dreamy look to your eyes. And now you're blushing. It must have been a really good thought."

I clear my throat. "Umm, it was just. I was just thinking. Shit," I finally say, covering my face with my hands, thankful that they're cold from my iced latte, helping to cool my face.

Cade's chuckle makes molten lava lust pool heavy in my gut. Gods, I want to hear him chuckle like that again when we're back in our room, just the two of us locked away from the world.

I want him. In the carnal sense.

Not only that, but I can admit that I have real, genuine feelings for him. Sure, the feelings are coming on hot and fast, but I don't care. They're just as real if we'd known each other for years instead of days.

Cade looks at me with a raised brow, waiting. I bite my bottom lip before blurting out, “I was thinking about how pretty you’d look covered in love bites.” Close enough to the truth.

A sly smile stretches across Cade’s face. “Oh my gods, Spencer.” He leans across the table, talking soft enough that only I can hear him, his voice deep and husky. “Hearing you say that just made me so hard my head grew light.”

“Really?”

“Yeah,” he says, sitting back in his seat, looking relaxed and at ease. The fact that he’s apparently hard but acting like nothing out of the ordinary leaves me breathless. Fuck, I want him and I’m tired of holding myself back.

Cade’s been open with me about his past, about his life, and about his interest in me. I’ve been terrified of embarrassing myself, of putting myself out there and having him reject me or making things awkward. I don’t want to live in fear any longer. I want to let myself have Cade and take everything he’s been gently offering me.

A thrill goes through me as my decision to fully pursue Cade settles within me. We finish our donuts and coffees, asking each other random questions and exchanging light touches. Someone once told me foreplay started outside the bedroom and I never really understood until now. There’s a hum at the back of my head, a simmering of lust just under my skin, burning brighter and brighter from everything Cade is doing. His teasing looks, gentle touches, and sly smiles.

Instead of going back to our hotel, we decide to keep walking around, exploring the area. We pass an adorable outdoor trinket shop and I pull Cade along, forcing him to stop and look at everything with me. There’s little keychains and buttons and stickers. Some of them relate to the area we’re at, but others are random.

Cade and I each pick up a keychain. His is the most adorable cartoon manatee I've ever seen while the one I find is a cat sleeping in the shape of a heart. We buy our respective keychains and hand them to each other, an unspoken agreement that we were buying them for each other.

"Thank you," I say, putting the keychain into my pocket right away. "I love it." Then I look down at him. "Is this because you're a manatee?"

Cade pauses. "Is that a fat joke?"

"What? Oh my gods, no ! I wouldn't joke about that. Plus, I like your body just as it is."

Cade puts his hands on my shoulders, pulling me from my ramblings. "I'm just fucking with you, Spencer. Yes, I'm a manatee shifter."

"Okay," I say, my shoulders falling away from my ears. "Sorry. I just wouldn't want you to think I'd say something mean to you. Especially because I like you. Like in a romantic way. But also in a sexy way. You're very sexy. The most sexy. Fuck, I've said the word sexy too many times in a row and now things are awkward."

The hands on my shoulders squeeze. "You're perfect," he breathes out before getting onto his tiptoes and kissing my lips.

Everything around us fades away until the only thing inside my mind is the two of us and the feeling of Cade kissing me. I wrap my hands around his back, tugging him until our bodies are pressed together.

Cade is a ridiculously good kisser and I'm swept away.

When Cade breaks the kiss in order to breathe, he doesn't go far. He runs the tip of

his nose against mine, his beard tickling my face. “I mean that, Spencer. Keep being yourself because you’re perfect. I’m so fucking glad those asshole YouTubers scammed us into taking this vacation together.”

I smile so wide my cheeks begin to hurt. “Me too, Cade. Me too.”

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Chapter Seven

Cade

Last night was everything. We'd learned we would be sharing a hotel room, spent the night walking around the area, before coming back to our hotel for the night all the while holding hands and sharing soft, chaste kisses.

Everything with Spencer feels so naive and soft, but not in a bad way. It's different than how I usually approach relationships but because it's different, this thing with him feels special . I've never felt this way about someone before. It's terrifyingly wonderful.

It takes me far longer than it should to realize I'm no longer on my side of the bed. When I went to sleep last night, I made sure to leave plenty of room for Spencer but this morning, I'm in the middle of the bed with him pressed tightly against my back.

And something long and hard is currently pressed against my lower back.

My brain goes from sleepy and just waking up to wide awake in a matter of seconds. I'm not sure how I should react. Do I playfully tease him? Do I wake him up? Do I slide out of bed before Spencer even realizes what's going on?

Before I can do anything, Spencer is taking the decision from me. He lets out a broken noise, his hips moving to slide his erection against my ass. His arm is loosely wrapped around my middle but as he slowly wakes up, his hold on me tightens.

My own morning wood throbs within my boxers and now that Spencer's cock is nudging against my ass, I feel myself beginning to slick. I clench around nothing, biting my bottom lip before I groan with frustration.

This is not what I was expecting this morning but if Spencer is into it, then I'm more than happy to see where this will go.

"Morning?"

Spencer's hips press against me harder, his cock nudging between my cheeks fully now. He's so close to where I want him but our boxers are in the way. Just when I'm about to turn around and kiss Spencer, his body tenses.

Ah, it seems someone was dry humping me in his sleep. Shit, why is that so hot?

"You okay?"

"Shit, I'm so sorry. I didn't realize--"

I grab his hand that's against my chest. "It's okay," I say right away, bringing his palm to my face and kissing the middle of it. "You felt so good against me. Keep going."

There's a long pause where I wonder if I've accidentally pushed Spencer but just before I can say more, to tell him he only needs to do what he's comfortable with, his body relaxes. His chest presses more firmly against my back, his cock fully wedging between my cheeks and pressing against my wet hole through our boxers. A surprised moan leaves my lips. Gods, that feels so good but it could be so much better if we get naked.

"Cade."

“Yeah,” I breathe out, squeezing his hand. “I’m here. What do you want, Spencer?”

“You,” he says right away. The intensity of his answer makes sparks dance across my skin. Have I ever felt so desired before? “Just you. Whatever you want.”

I need him. I need to see his face. I flip over despite how much I want his cock against my ass, knowing his lips against mine will be even better than dry humping like teenagers.

“Spencer,” I whisper before putting my hand on Spencer’s face and guiding his mouth to mine. I’m lost in Spencer, overwhelmed by the feel of him, the taste of him, the smell of him. Last night I told him he was perfect and today is no different. We slot together just right.

He feels like mine .

My head swims as the thought solidifies inside my heart. The things I feel are so deep, so strong. I want to do everything in my power to make Spencer my mate. I want to woo him and fuck him and mark him and learn how to properly love him.

I shouldn’t be feeling these things so soon but I don’t care. I know what I want and I don’t plan on shying away from these feelings just because they’re scary.

“Fuck, Spencer.” Spencer licks his lips. “Is that what you want? To fuck?”

I can’t help but smile. “Yeah,” I whisper, stealing another kiss. “But only if that’s what you want too. We go at your pace, Spencer.”

“I want to be inside you more than I’ve ever wanted anything ever. Please? Can I?”

Instead of answering, I shimmy out of my boxers, tossing them onto the floor.

Spencer's hands are on my chest, pulling my shirt up. "This too. Please. Need to see all of you."

I chuckle at his enthusiasm. I like seeing him like this, taking what he wants without worrying about being embarrassed. He's beautiful like this, lost in his lust.

Once I'm naked and on my back, Spencer hovers over me, his eyes devouring me. His eyes are like a physical caress against my skin, making me shiver. I tug at the front of his shirt.

"You too, Spencer. Let me see you, sweetheart."

There's that beautiful blush I find myself falling for. Spencer sits back on his heels, his thighs spread. I can see the way he's hard, the front of his boxers tenting in a way that has my mouth watering. I want my mouth on him, I want to taste him. Fuck, I can't wait to feel him inside me.

Once Spencer is out of his clothes, I can't help but stare. His body is thin yet strong, his skin the prettiest pale color. His cock is thin and long, just like the rest of him.

"I think I might be dreaming," I murmur, looking him up and down. "Because there's no way such a beautiful angel is in my bed right now."

Spencer slaps my hip, the sting only adding to my arousal. He rolls his eyes at me and affection blooms in my chest, bright and light. "Stop it. You don't have to sweet talk me, I'm already here."

"I'll never stop sweet talking you, Spencer. You deserve to be wooed and praised. I want you to know just how much I want you until it's impossible for you to doubt. This isn't just a quick fuck, it's the start of something."

Spencer blinks a few times before a shy smile brightens his face. “Okay,” he says, leaning down on his arms and pressing me against the sheets. “I’ll allow the sweet talking, because it’s you and I know you mean it.”

My arms wrap about his back, my nails sliding down his spine. Spencer raises up, chasing the touch not unlike a giant cat. The smell of our combined lust fills the room, making my mouth water. I’m slick, aching to be filled and I can tell I’m not the only one.

One of my hands goes to the back of Spencer’s neck, tugging him down into a kiss. As my tongue passes his lips to press against his tongue, my other hand moves lower, caressing his ass. The sound that Spencer makes against my lips sets a fire burning inside me.

The hand on his ass moves to his crack, skimming a finger against his wet hole. He gasps and I can’t help but smile.

“Please,” he begs against my lips.

“Anything you want,” I tell him, pressing my middle finger inside. Holy shit, he’s so wet and hot. I pull out, rubbing the pad of my finger over his hole before pushing back in once more. I do that over and over until Spencer is practically vibrating above me, sweat dripping down his spine. As much as I’d like to sit here and tease him, I think that can wait for another day. Today, we both need .

I swing my leg around Spencer’s hip, pulling him down. “Get inside me, Spencer. Come on, sweetheart. Take your pleasure from my body.”

Normally, I’d expect Spencer to argue or at least ask if I’m sure, but he’s so far gone in his lust, he moves without thinking. I love it. His desperation is addictive.

“Cade,” Spencer breathes out, his body tensing as he pushes the tip into my ass. I do my best to steady myself, relaxing my body so the intrusion isn’t too much for me. He pushes slowly but surely, stretching me open, hitting all the best spots within me as he goes. “Fuck!”

“So good,” I tell him, tossing my head back against the pillows. “So good, Spencer. Keep going.”

As his hips connect with my ass, impaling me fully, our mouths find each other once more. Having Spencer inside of me feels more right than words can describe. We are exactly where we’re supposed to be, with the person we’re supposed to be with.

I’m not sure if I believe in destiny or true mates or soulmates or any of that, but feeling Spencer inside of me, rearranges all of my beliefs. Those things might be true if it means that’s why we’re here, right now, like this.

Spencer pulls away just enough for us to breathe each other’s air. His hips pull back before sliding back inside. He’s so fucking long, he feels so fucking good moving inside me.

“Harder,” I tell him, nodding my head. “Please, Spencer. Harder. Come on, I’m a big boy, I’m not gonna break.”

“Yeah, okay,” he says, finally letting go. He chases his pleasure, using my body to get himself off. He fucks into me with long, hard strokes, the sound of our bodies slapping together filling the room.

My nails dig into his back, holding him tight, wishing there was a way we could somehow get even closer. There will be long, red marks down Spencer’s spine by the time we’re done but I don’t care. The opposite actually, I hope they stay on his skin for awhile. I want him to be marked, I want him to be mine.

Spencer closes his eyes, burying his face against the side of my throat. He murmurs against my skin, whimpering softly as he pistons his hips forward, fucking into me quicker and quicker. Gods, he's beautiful like this, chasing his pleasure with abandonment.

"Keep going. Please, Spencer. Come inside me. Mark my insides with your cum."

I get a drawn out whine in response. Our movements are animalistic, nothing more than instincts taking over, yet at the same time, despite fucking roughly, there's still an underlining of softness.

"Fuck, Cade," Spencer gasps out, "I'm gonna come. I'm gonna come. I'm so close."

"Let go. Go on, sweetheart. I've got you."

Spencer groans as his hips still, his cock throbbing inside me as he comes. He bites down against my shoulder, not enough to break skin but even so, I feel my body break out in goosebumps. So close to the real thing that I can practically taste it. I hope the bite bruises so it'll last longer.

"Wow," Spencer breathes out, pulling away so he can look down at me. "That was intense."

I raise my hand to his face, cupping his cheek. "Yeah, it was. You were magnificent."

"Really?"

"Yes," I breathe out. "You were stunning, chasing your pleasure like that and feeling you come inside me was hot as fuck."

Spencer blushes before kissing me, shoving his tongue into my mouth. I moan, long

and hard, shoving my hips up into the hair, brushing my cock against Spencer's stomach.

"Fuck," he says, pulling back and looking between us. "You didn't come. Let me just," he starts to say, crawling down my body. I quickly stop him, pulling him back up. "Don't you want?"

I smirk before flipping the two of us over. Spencer goes willingly, giggling as I shove him onto his stomach on the bed. I straddle his ass, letting my cock slide between the globes of his ass. Jesus, he's so fucking wet, so much so I can smell it in the air.

"Is this okay?"

"Fuck yes. Please, Cade."

Despite the fact that Spencer just came, the result of that still dripping down the back of my thighs, he seems ready to go again. One of the perks of being an omega is our refractory time. Instead of needing to wait for a knot to go down, we can just keep going and going and going.

I run my fingers down Spencer's spine, my hips sliding through his wet crack. I watch as goosebumps rise up on his skin. He raises his hips, whining wordlessly for me to get inside him. Instead, I continue to tease him until he finally breaks.

"Jesus, Cade. Get the fuck inside me before I lose my mind!"

I chuckle as I finally point the tip of my cock against his hole. I push inside, watching as his pretty pink hole swallows the tip of my dick. I stay right there, stroking the bottom half of my cock while the tip is warmed by his slick ass.

"Oh my gods," Spencer gasps out. "More. Please, Cade."

“Just the tip,” I tell him with a laugh. “Do you really need more than the tip?”

“Give me the entire thing before I flip us over and ride you until you see stars!”

Oh, I love seeing this side of Spencer. Part of me is tempted to continue the teasing just to see more of this side of him. Lucky for Spencer, I’m so fucking desperate that I don’t have time to tease a second longer.

In one long thrust, I push my entire cock into Spencer’s body.

We fit together so perfectly it steals my breath and by the little whimpering coming from below me, I think it’s safe to assume that Spencer feels the same way. I start slowly, fucking into him softly, stretching this out as much as I can handle.

“Feels so good,” Spencer says, burying his face against my pillow, breathing in my scent. “So good, Cade. Please. Make me come. I’m so close. Just a little faster. Fuck!”

I pull Spencer’s hips up off the bed, reaching beneath him so I can get my hand on his cock. I stroke him quickly while fucking him with that slow, sensual pace. It doesn’t take long before his body is tensing below me, his ass a vise grip around my dick, milking my orgasm right out of me without my permission.

I let out a broken noise as I come, painting Spencer’s insides, marking him in a way that’s both hot as hell, and intimate, something I’ve never done with another person.

That’s when it hits me what we’ve just done. We were washed away by our lust and instincts that we didn’t think about grabbing a condom. Fuck.

My heart races as I pull out, watching as my cum drips from Spencer’s hole, covering the back of his balls. Fuck that’s hot, but it also makes me worried as fuck. We

should have talked about this before we did it, but it's a little late to try to put that cat back into the bag.

I flop down onto the bed beside Spencer who quickly readjusts himself, tucking himself against my chest. I wrap my arms around him, kissing the top of his head.

A soft rumbling begins to emanate between us. I look down in surprise, finding Spencer hiding his face against my chest. It's like a soft growl except it's not, and I'm pretty sure it's coming from Spencer's chest.

"Sorry," he whispers shyly. "I can't help it."

"What is that?" That's when it hits me. A grin stretches across my face and my chest feels like it might actually burst with affection. "Are you purring?"

"Yes! But I can't help it! I'm sorry if it's weird."

I tighten my arms around Spencer. Just a moment ago, I was ready to start panicking, wondering if all of this was too much, worried I'd gone too far only to have each and every one of those worries melt away at the sensation of Spencer purring against me.

"It's not weird," I tell him right away, my voice soft. "It's wonderful. It means you're happy and safe, right?"

"Yeah. It means my inner cat is happy." Spencer swallows before leaning on his elbow in order to meet my eye. "You make me happy, Cade. You make me feel safe. You make me feel," his words cut off and he looks away, biting his bottom lip. "You make me feel a lot of things."

I caress his cheek. "You make me feel those things too, Spencer. I'm not someone who's ever wanted a relationship but with you, I find myself wanting all those things

and more.”

Spencer’s face softens as he leans fully against my hand. He’s so adorable. “I’m so glad because if I was the only one feeling these things, I’d be really sad.”

“We wouldn’t want that,” I whisper, pulling him down into another soft kiss. It feels so good to be on the same page about this. We’re both in uncharted territory and navigating this together.

We stay like that all morning, holding each other as our cum cools and leaves us stuck together, the soft purring lulling us in this bubble of intimacy. I never want this bubble to pop.

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Chapter Eight

Spencer

Nerves nip at my belly as I reach over and take Cade's hand. He gives me a squeeze of encouragement as we walk into the building. This place is way nicer than I'm used to. Sure, I used to work in fine dining but that was work. I wasn't actually dining in high end places like that outside of work.

"You look incredible," Cade says, murmuring into my ear. "I told you that already, right?"

"You did," I tell him with a shy smile. "But that doesn't mean I mind hearing it again." I run a hand down the front of his dress shirt. "You look wonderful as well. I can't believe we somehow packed matching dress clothes."

"Just another sign that the universe meant for us to be together," he says with a wink that leaves me breathless not only with lust but also with affection.

We're both wearing black dress pants with button ups. Mine is black with dark purple accents while his is the opposite, purple with black stripes. We look amazing together and my inner shifter thrills with the fact that Cade looks taken. We look like we belong together.

Cade's words play over and over inside my head, bouncing around like an overactive ping pong ball. Is it possible that the universe pushed us together? That there's some sort of higher power pulling the string, helping me find the person destined to be

mine?

If that's true, I can see why the universe would bring me Cade. He's outgoing in a way that brings me out of my shell. He's gentle and kind to everyone around him. He's good with people, allowing me to fade into the background as he takes over the conversation while also making me still feel like I'm part of the picture. We fit together like two puzzle pieces.

We step into an elevator and press the button for the top floor. I turn towards Cade as we start moving up. His beard is braided and I can't help but smile, remembering the way I helped him braid it this morning, something so intimate yet so simple.

"Do you really believe that?" I blurt out.

Cade stares at me in surprise, tilting his head. "Believe what?"

"That the universe pushed us together?"

"Yes," he says right away, my stomach swooping at the certainty of his answer. "Without a doubt. I've never felt anything like this before, Spencer. I'm drawn to you in a way that logical thought can't piece together. We've just met and yet, I can't imagine just going back to life without you in it."

"Oh," I breathe out.

"Too much?"

I shake my head, putting both of my hands on Cade's face. Then I lean down and kiss his lips. "That wasn't too much. It was perfect," I say against his lips. I can feel the way he's smiling.

“Perfect, just like you.”

I can feel my face heat but I don't really mind. Cade seems to love my blush and that helps me love it as well. He kisses my cheek before pulling away, just in time for the elevator to come to a stop. A moment later, the doors open and we step out onto the top floor.

I stare around the restaurant with wonder. The pictures online were incredible but It's even more astonishing in person. Cade booked us for the perfect time, it's less than an hour from sunset and we'll be getting the most stunning view of it from up here.

“Welcome in,” the hostess greets us. “Can I get a name please?”

Cade gives her the details and she takes us to our table. We sit down with our menus and instead of opening it up and taking a look, I stare out the window. Looking down, my stomach swoops. We are so far up that it's dizzying.

“Wow,” Cade says, pulling my attention from the window. “I'm so glad you wanted to come here. This is absolutely amazing, Spencer.”

“I'm really happy we're experiencing it together. This is beautiful and I would have enjoyed myself alone, but the fact that we're doing it together makes it even more special.”

“I know exactly what you mean. This vacation has completely changed my life.”

Cade reaches across the table, taking my hand. Emotions slam into me full force and I feel tears well up in my eyes. I blink them away as best as I can.

“Hey, what's going on in that beautiful mind of yours?”

I shake my head, letting out a wet laugh. “I’m just really happy.”

Cade gives me a soft smile. I get control of my emotions just in time for the waiter to come to our table. We both order a soda to drink and an appetizer to share, cheesy artichoke dip with homemade toasted bread. Once we get our drinks, we order our meals right away. Cade is getting salmon with roasted potatoes and brussel sprouts while I’ve decided on getting a spicy pasta and shrimp dish.

“Can I ask you something that might be a tad on the serious side?”

Cade’s fingers continue to rub my palm, a soothing gesture for the both of us. His eyes are soft but the lines of his face are serious.

“Of course,” I say, ignoring the way my heart is speeding up inside my chest.

“Where do you see this going? Or rather, where do you hope this thing between us is going?”

I swallow thickly, looking out the window at the stretching landscape below. If I squint, I swear I can even see itty bitty people walking across the street but we’re so far up it’s hard to tell.

“I don’t want to say anything that’ll freak you out,” I say slowly. Cade squeezes my hand, giving me the confidence to keep going. “Is it wrong if I said I want to mate you?”

Cade shakes his head. “I don’t think that’s wrong at all. It’s exactly what I was hoping to hear.”

“Really?”

Cade smiles. "I find it really endearing that you always do that."

"Do what?"

"Ask 'really' whenever I say something about you, like it's hard for you to wrap your head around the fact that I feel the same way about you that you feel for me."

I narrow my eyes at him. "How dare you perceive me like this, Cade. What the fuck."

We both chuckle softly, a genuine understanding passing between us. I feel like my brain is melting with how happy I feel. Cade feels the same way about me. He cares about me. He wants to mate with me despite the fact that we've only met a week ago.

Is it possible to fall in love so quickly?

"I'm sorry," he says before stopping. "Wait, I'm not sorry, not really. I'm perceptive because I want to perceive you. I wanna know everything there is to know about you. I want to spend mornings wrapped together in bed with you purring against my chest. I want to learn how you take your coffee so I can always have a mug ready for you before you have to go to work. I want domestic evenings and anniversary dinners and little kittens or little calves running around underfoot. I want the whole nine yards and I want it all with you."

Is it suddenly hot in here? I pull at the front of my shirt, suddenly breathless.

Oh. My. Gods.

This time, the tears slowly fall down my cheeks. I'm unable to keep them in check, too overwhelmed by Cade's words. They're everything I've wanted to hear, yet so much better now that they're real.

“I feel the same way, Cade. I want all of that and more. Is that crazy? Are we being foolish with how quickly this is all happening?”

Cade shrugs. “Maybe a little but I don’t care. It’s how I feel and I’m too old to pretend otherwise. Why hold ourselves back when we both feel the same way?”

The only reason we pull our hands away from each other is because our waiter is here with our cheesy artichoke dip. The type of cheese this restaurant uses complements the artichoke and spices just right and the toasted bread adds the perfect crunch. The food is downright divine, made only better because we’re sharing it with each other.

By the time our main courses arrive, the sun is setting. The sky is a shimmering mix of purples and pinks and blues. It’s the most stunning sight I’ve ever seen.

Cade scoots his chair beside mine and pulls out his phone. We take a selfie together with the setting sun behind us. I watch with warmth in my stomach as he immediately changes the background of his phone to that picture.

I’ll be the first to admit that everything is happening quickly, but Cade is right. We know what we feel, so why push those feelings away? Why pretend it’s not there and real and genuine? Why not just embrace them?

We each take a few bites from the other’s plate, wanting to experience everything our dinner has to offer. By the time all of our food is eaten, the sky is dark and a few stars are starting to twinkle overhead.

I’m not sure tonight could have been any more perfect.

“Can I interest the two of you in some dessert tonight?”

I put a hand on my stomach and look over at Cade. “I’m pretty full but I really want

some tiramisu,” I confess softly.

Cade looks up at our waiter with a grin. “One tiramisu with two spoons, please.”

“Great choice. We make it fresh every night so you’re in for a treat. Would you like a cup of coffee to go with it?”

“That would be perfect,” Cade says with a nod.

Once the waiter is gone, I whisper, “if we both have a cup of coffee this late, we’ll be up all night.”

Cade smirks. “Tiramisu isn’t the only thing I plan on having for dessert.”

All of the blood in my body rushes in opposite directions, half of it going to my cheeks and the rest going to my cock. Cade’s warm chuckle only serves to ramp my arousal even higher. I hate how effortlessly sexy this man is, but at the same time, I love it so much.

“If that’s something you’re interested in, of course.”

I narrow my eyes at him. “Of course I’m interested. If you hadn’t mentioned it I would have. Except I would have waited until we were in a place where people wouldn’t be able to see my tented pants!”

“Gods, you’re adorable,” Cade says with a grin. “And for some reason that I cannot comprehend, you’re all mine.”

My stomach swoops violently at the soft confession. “It’s true,” I tell him. “I’m yours.”

Chapter Nine

Cade

In the blink of an eye, our vacation is coming to a close. I haul my backpack onto my back before carrying my rolling bag and Spencer's bag as well onto the train. We make our way towards the back where our private cabin is located.

This feels so bittersweet. On the one hand, I'm excited to be on our way back home and see what life will be like now that I have Spencer by my side. On the other hand, I don't want the excitement of our vacation to end.

"I think I need to lie down," Spencer murmurs, following behind me.

For the last few days, Spencer has been looking a little green around the whiskers. At first, we thought maybe he'd eaten something that's given him food poisoning but I've eaten everything he has and I've been feeling fine. Better than fine actually.

He's either caught a bug or something else is going on. All I know for sure is that my instincts are going wild, begging me to take care of Spencer as best as I can. Which is why I'm carrying all our bags so Spencer can walk through the train without an ounce of strain.

"Welcome back," Matthew greets us with a wide smile. "You're in the same personal cabin on the way back."

"Thank you, Matthew."

I usher Spencer into the cabin, helping him sit on the bed. I toss our bags down before working his shoes off and helping him out of his jacket.

“Comfortable? Do you need an extra blanket or something?”

“I’m perfect. Thank you, Cade.”

I lean down and kiss his forehead to give him some comfort but to also check his temperature. He’s not warm so that rules out a fever.

“I’m just gonna ask Matthew something and then I’ll be right back, okay?”

Spencer hums, letting me know he heard me. He closes his eyes, cuddling with his pillow. He looks so soft like this. If he wasn’t sick, I’d say he looks adorable. I’m worried about him. Why does he feel so pukey and why can’t I seem to fix it?

“Hey, Matthew?”

Matthew perks up, turning towards me. “Is there something I can do for you?”

“Yeah. My partner is feeling sick. Is there anywhere I could get some crackers and maybe some soup?”

Matthew’s brows furrow and his lips tick up into a little smile. Shit. Has he noticed the change in our relationship? I suppose it’s obvious with the way I’m doting on Spencer.

“Absolutely. I’ll bring an extra bucket as well, just in case.”

“Thank you. You’re the best.”

Matthew gives me a little nod before heading off towards the front of the train where the kitchen is located. Warmth spreads through me as I think about referring to Spencer as my partner. We've talked a lot lately about what's going to happen once we're back home but the fact that I get to call him my partner leaves me breathless. This is the start of something truly special and it's wild to think it happened because some asshole YouTuber messed up booking this giveaway.

I should stop referring to them as an asshole since everything worked out in my favor.

Ducking back into the cabin, I find Spencer curled up on his side. If his feet were pointed a little higher, he'd look like a cat curled up like a shrimp. The thought makes me chuckle softly and Spencer looks up at me with confusion.

I shake my head. "Don't worry about it, just thinking about how cute you are."

Spencer pouts at me. "Really? Even when I'm all pukey?"

"Even so," I tell him softly, coming to sit beside him on the bed. I run my fingers through his hair, massaging his scalp. "I'm sorry you're not feeling well, sweetheart. I wish I could take this away or do something to make you feel better."

"You just being here is helping. You smell so nice, Cade. It's soothing."

"I'm glad," I tell him, running my fingers down his spine, just the way I know he likes. If the pattern continues, Spencer will lay here feeling miserable for another hour or so before he starts to feel better. By the time darkness falls over our personal cabin, he'll be feeling like himself again.

It's so strange. I don't think I've ever seen an illness quite like this before.

A light knock on the door lets me know that Matthew is back. I squeeze Spencer's

shoulder before going to the door.

“Here you go. I hope your partner feels better,” Matthew says softly, passing a tray over.

“Thank you again.”

Matthew winks as he turns back towards his station. I close the door before looking down at the tray. There’s a sleeve of crackers, a bowl of brothy soup, a container of ginger tea, and a box. There’s also a little note from Matthew: I wear scent blockers but my nose told me maybe you needed these.

My eyes stop on the box, staring at it for a long moment, my mind going completely blank.

It’s a pregnancy test.

I wrack my brain for everything I know about cat pregnancies and come up short. Maybe they’re super short and that’s why Spencer is already feeling sick? Right, yeah. I remember him mentioning his siblings were so close together they had to pass them off as Irish Twins! It’s not a wild assumption to make. We’ve fucked once and cum was put into places that would certainly make a baby possible. It would explain why Spencer isn’t actually sick all day or why he doesn’t have a fever. It would explain why I feel fine.

Is Spencer pregnant?

How do I even feel about that? Am I happy? Upset? Scared out of my mind?

I continue to stare at the box like maybe it holds all the answers. When it doesn’t, I let out a long breath. This is all happening so fast but that doesn’t mean it’s a bad thing.

“Cade?”

Spencer’s voice startles me out of my frozen state. I turn around slowly, giving him my best smile. “Sorry, I was lost in thought.”

“That’s okay. Are you alright? Is something wrong?”

“Nothing’s wrong,” I say right away. Carefully setting the tray down, I kneel before Spencer, reaching up and caressing his cheek. He smiles at me and the sight would bring me to my knees if I wasn’t already here. “I just want to tell you something real quick.”

“Okay,” Spencer says slowly. “I’m listening and not going anywhere.”

“Like you could run away right now anyway,” I say with a chuckle.

“Even if I could, there’s no place I’d rather be.”

I lean forward and kiss the tip of his nose. “I care about you so much, Spencer.”

Spencer’s face softens. “I care about you too.”

“I want to be with you. When we get back home, I’ll move in with you or you can move in with me, I don’t really care. All I care about is that you know you’re it for me.”

“Really?”

I grin at the familiar response. “Yes, really.”

Spencer’s eyes begin to water and a moment later, tears are falling down his cheeks.

Despite the tears, he's grinning from ear to ear. "Okay."

I kiss him again. And then again. And then once more just because I can.

That felt easy. Now it's time for the hard part. Reaching back to the tray, I grab the pregnancy tests, setting it on the bed in front of Spencer.

"I don't think you're sick, sweetheart," I say softly, just barely above a whisper. "I think you might be pregnant."

Spencer's eyes widen. He stares down at the pregnancy tests before looking up at me and then back down again.

"Holy shit," he hisses out. "Are you serious?"

I lean into him, burying my face against his hair and breathing him in. There it is, the twinge in Spencer's scent that I didn't notice before. Spencer's scent has changed, something slightly sour.

"Yes," I say simply. "Are you okay?"

Spencer looks like he's in shock and I wait, petting him softly as he processes the news. Just when I'm about to properly get worried, Spencer smiles.

"I'm okay. Holy shit. I can't believe this is happening. We only did it the one time!"

I can't help but laugh. "That's all it takes. At least that's what I heard in health class."

Spencer smacks my chest before freezing. "Oh my gods. What about you? You could be pregnant too!"

“Probably not. What’s the likelihood of that happening?”

Spencer grabs the box of pregnancy tests, opening it and passing one to me. “Wanna test together? You can hold mine and I can hold yours.”

A startled giggle leaves me and suddenly, despite the tension that was there just a moment ago, we’re both giggling until we’re breathless. This feels so serious but there’s something beautiful about being able to get through this together.

“Absolutely not,” I tell him, kissing his nose. “But I will take a test. Just in case.”

We both take turns in the bathroom, peeing on the stick before setting them on the counter in the bathroom. Spencer lies back down and I decide to lie with him, holding him against my chest. My hand wanders down his side, finding its way beneath his shirt. I feel him shiver against me as I caress his stomach. I know I shouldn’t be doing this, not until we know for sure but my instincts are taking over, wanting me to mate, protect, and comfort.

My brain might be telling me to pump the brakes but my animal instincts are overwhelmingly in agreement that Spencer is my mate.

The fifteen minutes it takes for the test to give a result somehow feels like a second and a year at the same time. When the time has finally passed, we walk to the bathroom, hand in hand.

“Oh,” Spencer breathes out. “You were right.” Then he looks over and starts giggling all over again. “But so was I!”

“You’re fucking kidding me,” I say, staring down at matching pregnancy tests, both of them with double blue lines.

“I know I shouldn't be laughing but oh my gods! What the fuck are the chances?” Spencer is laughing so hard he's practically wheezing, tears streaking down his face. “You kept saying being with an omega had its perks, was this one of them?”

“This is not what I had in mind,” I tell him, swinging him around so we're face to face. I push his hips against the counter, pinning him in place. Spencer starts to sober as he looks down at me. “But I don't mind, not even a little bit. My partner pregnant with me at the same time? It's every omega's dream, isn't it? Having someone who loves and understands?”

Spencer's fingers run through my beard. “This is all very scary and sudden and overwhelming,” Spencer confesses softly, a surreal smile on his face. “But I'm so fucking happy, Cade. I came on this vacation feeling terrified and anxious and I'm leaving this vacation with a man I'm quickly falling for with two babies on the way. It feels fake, like someone is going to jump out with a camera any second telling me it was all a prank.”

“If that happens I promise you I'll punch them straight in the dick.” Spencer snorts, shaking his head. “I'd punch so many dicks for you, sweetheart.”

He pretends to swoon and I catch him, keeping him pinned against the counter. I kiss him before pulling him into our cabin.

“You seem to be feeling better.” “I am. I think the worst of it has passed for now. Would you like to go to the observation deck?”

“I'd love to,” I say and realize with a start that the three words I wanted to say were actually I love you . I take Spencer's hand in my own, kissing the back of it, feeling warm from the top of my head to the toes of my feet.

I love him and I plan on showing him just how much with every breath I take. I want

every single one of our days to be just as wonderful as this vacation. Spencer won't regret taking a chance on coming on this vacation. This is the start of the rest of our lives.

Chapter Ten

Spencer

The last two and a half months have been a whirlwind. Cade has moved all his things into my house. It's incredible that we've somehow lived in the same town but only met when we both took a vacation away! Having him here has been the most wonderful change. I love having him here, I love having him in my space, I love that he's made this place into our home .

I've had to take an extended break from work because I'm already fucking huge. I love being a cat but right now, my body isn't the happiest with me. My pregnancy will only last another couple weeks so my body is rapidly forming another person inside of me, stretching me to my seams. Thankfully, the school was incredibly understanding and I'll be back at the beginning of next fall.

I walk through the hall, following the sound of Cade humming to himself. I find him in our baby room, putting together our second crib.

To say it was a shock to find out we were both pregnant was an understatement but at this point, the news has already sunk in. I can't imagine being happier than I am right now. But that happiness doesn't stop me from being jealous as hell at the sight of my mate.

I lean my hip against the doorframe, pouting. Cade looks exactly the same even after two months. Apparently manatee pregnancies take a year which means he won't be showing for months . He's still able to do everything he could do before getting

pregnant and he hasn't had a single symptom so far. I love that for him, but I'm still jealous. I was so fucking sick for the first month, this month I'm growing super fucking huge. Who knows what I'll be dealing with next before the baby comes.

Cade finally looks up, finding me watching him. "Hey, sweetheart. What's got you looking like that?"

"You," I tell him, giving him an even bigger pout. "How dare you look so good while being just as pregnant as me."

Cade chuckles softly, standing up and putting the tools down. He steps over to me, wrapping an arm around my waist. My swollen belly bumps his, further proving my point.

"I still have ten months," he says softly. "Just you wait. I'll be looking like a beached manatee in no time."

"You better," I tell him with a whine. "I wanna be the one to take care of you for once."

"You will," he says, leaning up and stealing a kiss. "You look beautiful today."

I shake my head. "I'm huge."

"Yes, you are. That doesn't stop you from being beautiful. And your scent is growing stronger every day. I can't get enough of it."

His praises wash over me. A moment ago, I was annoyed and pouting, but suddenly, all of that fades away, leaving a warmth in the pit of my gut. How can I be upset when Cade is looking at me like that?

“You’re so fucking beautiful, Spencer. When you’re doing day to day things, I have such a hard time keeping my eyes off of you. Your body is a temple and if you ever need a reminder, I’m more than willing to get on my knees and worship it as thoroughly as it deserves.”

I tilt my head back, letting out a whimper as my body sparks with excitement. The motion draws Cade’s mouth and I lift my hands, cupping the back of his head, making sure he’s not planning on going anywhere.

I suck in a sharp breath as his teeth dig into my skin. My stomach quivers with arousal and everything I was worried about simply slips away.

“Fuck,” I gasp out as Cade works on sucking a mark into the sensitive skin at my throat. “Fuck, Cade. That feels so good. Mark me.”

“Mine,” he rumbles in response, digging his teeth even harder. My cock is rock hard in my pants and I can already feel my ass begin to slick. How is my libido on such a hair trigger? Why the fuck do my hormones have me hornier than when I was a teenager so quickly?

“Gods, Cade. I want you.”

“I want you too. Always. Want to worship you.”

I nod my head. “Then do it,” I tell him seriously, pulling his face away from my throat so I can look down at him.

Cade grabs the back of my hair and pulls me down into a fierce kiss. I whimper into his mouth, opening my lips so our tongues can touch. My stomach flutters so wildly it makes my knees weak and I’m overwhelmed by how much I want him. I clench around nothing and whine in frustration. I need him inside me.

“Cade,” I murmur against his lips between hurried kisses. “Cade, please.”

“What do you need, sweetheart?” Cade asks, nipping at my bottom lip and making me whimper.

“I need you.”

“Need me how, Spencer?” Cade’s hand runs down my body, caressing my round stomach before slipping lower, cupping my erection through my pants. “Use your words.”

I can’t fucking think when he’s stroking me like this. It feels so good. I could close my eyes and hump against his hand until I come so easily. But I also want more. A war rages inside of me, forcing me to choose between coming now and coming with Cade inside me.

“I want you inside me. I want you to fuck me,” I finally gasp out, making up my mind.

“But what if I wanted you to fuck me?”

“Don’t tease me!”

Cade kisses me again. “I’m not teasing. Do you trust me?”

“Always,” I say without even needing to think about it. The next kiss is just as heated as the rest, but I can feel the way we’re both smiling against each other’s lips. Even when we’re both out of our minds with lust, there’s still that level of affection in all of our movements.

Cade makes me feel things I’ve never felt before. I love him. I love him so much and

I can feel the way he loves me too through every touch, every kiss, and every soft word. He's the parent to my children and the man I plan to exchange mating bites with. It's time that I finally told him that.

I open my mouth to whisper love into his skin when his tongue pushes past my lips. I moan into the kiss, swept away by Cade's passion. Who am I to stop a man on a mission?

Cade takes my hand and tugs me out of the room, down the hall, and into our bedroom. He gently nudges me towards the bed and tells me to get naked. A full body shiver runs through me at his commanding yet gentle voice. I'm breathless with how fucking horny I am.

My hands are shaking as I slip out of my pants, shimmy out of my boxers, and pull my shirt over my head. Then I hop up onto the bed, sliding myself back until my head is on my pillow. I open my thighs and touch my cock, wanting to show myself off for my mate.

Cade ducks into our closet before pulling something out. My stomach tenses at the sight of a double ended dildo in his hand. Oh. My. Gods. My mate is a fucking genius.

"Yes," I say, holding out my hand for the dildo. "You're brilliant."

"I know," Cade says, giving me a wink. But he doesn't hand over the toy. Instead, he keeps it away from me as he gets out of his clothes.

What a fucking tease. As much as I'd like to growl and demand my mate hurry up and fuck me, I sit back and enjoy the sight of Cade getting naked instead. Maybe if I focus on that I won't die of frustration!

“Come on,” I say with a whine. “Hurry up, Cade.”

“You’re so impatient.” Cade lets out a chuckle, finally slipping out of his clothes. Fucking finally . “It’s adorable.”

I narrow my eyes at him and it makes him laugh even harder. Cade reaches across the bed and grabs my ankle, giving it a gentle squeeze. Then he crawls onto the bed, leaving soft kisses against my skin as he goes.

As much as I want to be a brat, the only thing coming out of my mouth right now is whimpers and pleas for more.

“So perfect. So responsive. All mine.”

“Yes,” I say, nodding my head. “Yours, Cade.”

Thick fingers touch my hole and I cry out in pleasure. If I’m not careful, I’m going to come as soon as he gets this dildo inside me!

“You’re so fucking wet, absolutely soaking for me, sweetheart. Let’s get you stuffed full, shall we?”

As Cade brings the dildo to my hole, I let out a shaky breath before gritting my teeth, doing my best not to instantly come. I really don’t want this to be over yet. I want to see Cade ride the other end of this toy. I need it more than I need air.

My hole stretches around the dildo beautifully and I take it into myself without much effort, the slick does its job. I moan in pleasure as I’m stuffed full, just the way I wanted, just the way I needed.

“Look at you. Taking it so well,” Cade whispers, pulling the dildo out before pushing

it back in, nice and slow. It's a tease of what's going to come.

"Now you," I say breathlessly. "Please, Cade. Wanna see you take it too. Need it."

Cade nods his head before moving. I'm not sure what I'm expecting but it's not this. Cade turns around so his ass is turned towards me. While kneeling, he slowly backs up until he's straddling my left leg which is stretched out in front of me. Then he reaches back and grabs my right leg, pulling it over his left shoulder so I'm on my left side. I can still look down and watch him while making sure I'm not on my stomach or uncomfortable with how round I am.

Cade moves the dildo, pushing it deeper inside of my ass before bringing the other end of it to his own. He pushes it into himself, groaning in pleasure as he does so.

"Oh. My. Fucking. Gods!" Sweat drips down my spine as I whimper. This is so fucking sexy. This is so fucking good. I know for a fact that I won't be able to stay in this position for very long but in all honesty, I don't think either of us need very long to get off, not with how keyed up we both are. Pregnancy hormones are making us even more desperate than usual.

Cade begins to move, swiveling his hips and riding back against the dildo. As he moves, the end inside my ass jostles, massaging my inner walls. It's not as much movement as I would normally want but the visual of Cade fucking himself makes up for it.

"Keep going," I gasp out, clenching around the dildo inside me. "Fuck, Cade. Do you have any idea how fucking hot you look like this?"

"I have an idea," he says with a chuckle, his voice strained as he rides the dildo. His cock presses against the inside of my left thigh. Cade grinds against me, humping my leg as he moves against the dildo. Jesus fucking Christ, that's so hot.

Cade's back and ass are covered in dark hair. I reach down as best as I can, slapping his ass cheek just because I can before running my fingers over his spine, feeling his hair against my fingers. I watch as the dildo moves in and out of his hole, my mouth watering as the scent of his slick hits my nose.

I pull my hand away from Cade in order to reach behind myself as best as I can, grabbing the dildo somewhere in the middle. I start to move it back and forth, fucking both of us with it. The sounds Cade starts to make drive me wild with lust, little whimpers and groans of pleasure.

"Fuck, Spencer. Keep going. Faster. I'm so fucking close, sweetheart."

My wrist is starting to cramp but I don't fucking care. I'm also so close and I'm not even touching my cock. I could come just from this, just from hearing Cade, just from the both of us fucking on this dildo together.

"Cade," I gasp out as I pick up speed, fucking both of us faster. "Cade. Fuck. I love you!"

Cade makes a startled noise before my thigh is splashed with warm liquid. His body locks up as he comes, covering my leg with his cum.

"Fuck! Jesus Christ!"

Feeling him come is the last piece I needed. Lightning runs down my spine as I fuck myself even faster, shoving the dildo in and out of my hole as fast as I can. I clench around it as the pleasure builds and builds and builds before crashing over me. I come with a high pitched whine, my cock completely untouched.

I'm panting as I lay back on the bed, doing my best to catch my breath after that mind melting orgasm. Cade moves first, sliding off of the dildo before standing up on

shaky legs. He pulls the other end out of me, tossing the dildo towards the bathroom and getting back into bed.

“Turn on your side, sweetheart,” Cade whispers, sliding against me from behind in order to spoon me. I shiver as his naked skin touches mine, feeling safe and warm in his arms.

I could fall asleep like this, but Cade’s voice keeps me awake. “Can I ask you something?”

“Of course.”

“Did you mean it?”

I think back to what we’d just done and startle as I realize I told Cade I loved him. Oh my gods, that’s so embarrassing! I said it while we were fucking!

A shaky breath leaves me and I nod my head. “Yeah, of course I meant it, Cade.” I flip over so that we’re face to face. Cade deserves to hear those words while eye to eye.

“Oh,” is all he says, watching me closely.

I touch Cade’s cheek, bringing our faces close so I can kiss him. Then I tell him, “I love you, Cade. I should have told you at a better time but I was so caught up in the moment, I couldn’t hold it back a second longer.”

Cade’s face breaks out into a wide smile. Gods, he’s so beautiful like this. “That’s okay,” he whispers. “I’m just happy you said it, I’m happy to hear it anytime, anywhere.” He takes a little breath. “I love you too, Spencer.”

“Really?” Fuck, I should really try to break that habit.

Cade just chuckles at the response he’s gotten used to by now. “Really. I love you so much. I’m so fucking happy we’re together. You’re mine and I’m yours through vacations and kids and everyday bullshit. I want to do it all with you by my side.”

I smile so wide that my cheeks hurt. “Okay. I think we can make that happen.”

“I know you can. We’re in this together. Hopefully forever.”

My stomach warms at the thought of spending the rest of my life with Cade. That sounds perfect to me.

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Chapter Eleven

Cade

I turn the radio on in the kitchen, swinging my hips back and forth as I move from the fridge to the stove.

“How does pancakes sound, sweetheart?”

Spencer steps into the room wearing nothing but a towel, low on his hips. My eyes drift down to his round belly, following the line of his treasure trail down to where it’s hidden by the towel. My mouth runs dry. Jesus, my mate is so hot.

Finally, my eyes snap up to Spencer’s face. He’s watching me with amusement, his eyebrows raised like he’s waiting for me to answer him.

“What?”

Spencer chuckles. “I said, pancakes sound amazing.”

“Oh. Right. Yes, that’s what I was working on!”

“Your brain is stuck in the gutters, love.”

“Can I blame pregnancy hormones?”

“Absolutely,” he says, stepping over to me and wrapping his arms around my neck.

Instinctively, my hands go to his hips. He leans his body against mine and we begin to sway to the music. Spencer lets out a sigh, his entire body relaxing as we slow dance in the kitchen together.

“Hey, Cade?”

“Yes?”

“I love you,” Spencer says, his voice almost dreamlike. I tilt my head up and kiss the bottom of his chin.

“I love you too.” Then one of my hands moves to his stomach, cupping it gently before patting my own stomach. The pregnancy has done nothing but heighten Spencer’s beauty. I can’t get enough of him. “And I love you both,” I say to Spencer’s stomach. “Daddy can’t wait to meet you both.”

Spencer gasps and before I can ask what’s wrong, something splatters across the floor and over my feet. My socks are suddenly soaked.

When I said I couldn’t wait to meet the babies I did not mean they had to come right now !

We stare at each other for a long moment before I’m moving. I turn off the stove, usher Spencer to the bathroom to clean up, and call our midwife. Once I know she’s on her way, I go back to Spencer, rubbing his back while he sits under the hot stream of the shower, not caring that I’m getting soaked from the water. All I care about is taking care of my mate and helping him usher our child into the world.

“You okay, sweetheart. Everything feeling okay?”

“Hurts. But not too bad. I’m okay. Don’t leave me.”

“Wouldn’t dream of it, Spencer. I’m here. I’m not going anywhere. I love you so much and I’m so proud of you.”

Spencer whimpers as he leans his face against the tiles of the shower, one hand rubbing his stomach, the other pressed against his face. Right now I’m watching exactly what’s going to happen to me in a few more months. Fuck. It wasn’t that long ago I was waxing poetic about how wonderful it is that we get to experience this together as omegas but now, I’m not so sure it’s as beautiful as I tried to make it sound. Or maybe I’m just suddenly scared shitless!

I’m not sure how long we stay like that until I hear our doorbell ring.

“Are you okay? Can I go let Shelby in?”

“That’s fine but you have to promise you’ll come right back.”

“I promise. I’ll only be a moment.”

I run down the hall, allowing Shelby into our home. “Hi,” she greets me with a wide smile, looking more excited than I’m feeling. “It’s the big day! Are you excited?”

“Umm?”

She snorts with amusement. “Having a bit of a panic? Don’t worry, that’s super normal. I’ll take care of you both. Lead me to Spencer, Cade.”

“Right! Yes. He’s in the shower, this way.”

I lead Shelby to the bathroom, doing my best to keep my panic at bay. I have to be strong for my mate. I have to be calm for Spencer.

“Spencer?”

“I thought you’d never come back! What took you so long!”

I step over to the curtain, peeking inside. “I’m right here,” I tell him softly. He looks up at me through wet hair, looking more miserable than I’ve ever seen him. My poor mate.

“I feel like a wet cat,” he says with a whine, sticking out his bottom lip in a dramatic pout.

As much as I’d like to tell him he looks like a wet cat too, I don’t think it would make him chuckle like usual. “What do you need?”

“You. Just need you, Cade.”

I look over at Shelby and she gives me a nod, letting me know I can get into the shower. She’s busy getting blankets and towels ready for when our baby is finally free.

Stripping down to my boxers, I get into the shower with Spencer. He turns his back to the water, colliding with my front. I wrap my arms around him, massaging his back just the way he likes. He lets out the tiniest sigh and my instincts slowly calm, knowing I’m helping my mate.

“We can do this,” I whisper into Spencer’s wet hair. “More importantly, you can do this, Spencer. Just try to relax, your body will know what to do.”

Spencer nods his head, whimpering against me. We stay like that for a long time, our fingers and toes pruning from being wet for so long, but I don’t care. If this is where Spencer is most comfortable then this is where we’re staying.

“I think it’s time,” Spencer murmurs against me. “Feels like I need to push.” “Okay. Do you wanna get out of the shower? Do you want Shelby to squeeze in here?”

“No,” Spencer says, shaking his head. “Gonna turn around. You can catch them.”

I make a startled noise but before panic can set in, Spencer puts a hand on my head and pushes me down to my knees. Spencer turns around, putting his hands on the shower wall and starts making pained groans.

I can’t do anything but stay right where I am and catch our baby as they leave Spencer’s body. Just as I said before, his body knows exactly what to do and somehow, so do I.

“Well done, gentlemen,” Shelby says, opening the curtain and turning off the shower. “That was incredibly beautiful. Thank you for allowing me to be here to experience it with you.”

Spencer gives her a tired smile. “Thank you, Shelby.”

I stare down at our baby, unable to pull my eyes away. They’re so incredibly beautiful. A little girl with a patch of dark hair on her head. She’s perfect.

“A girl,” I say breathlessly, tears wetting my eyes. “We have a little girl.”

I look up at Spencer. He holds out his hands and I carefully stand so I can place her in his arms. He lets out a wet laugh, overwhelmed just the same as I am.

Shelby helps us get dry before wrapping our baby up in a soft blanket. She helps support Spencer as we make our way to our bedroom, getting him comfortable in bed. I double check that he’s warm and okay before getting into the bed with him.

I can hear Shelby in the bathroom, cleaning everything up for us, giving us a moment as a family unit alone.

“I can’t believe we made this beautiful baby, Spencer. She’s so perfect.”

“She is,” he agrees with a tired smile. Bringing her head to his nose, he breathes her in. “I think she’s a manatee just like you.”

“She’s so tiny for a calf,” I say with a chuckle, “but perfect all the same.”

“I love her so much already and I’ve only just met her,” Spencer says, just barely above a whisper. I lean over and kiss his forehead.

“The same can be said for you and me. Maybe that’s just how this family does things.”

He chuckles, nodding his head. “I think you’re right.” His hand reaches over, caressing my stomach. “I love you in there as well, little one.”

I squeeze his wrist and hum happily. Shelby comes back into the room, passing me a bottle of formula and Spencer a glass of water.

“Have you named her?” Shelby asks as I bring the bottle to our daughter’s mouth. I look to Spencer.

“Yeah,” he says between giant gulps of water. I’m glad to see him drinking, the birth was hard on his body and this will help restore some of his strength. “Her name is Amery.”

Shelby looks down at Amery with a little smile. “That’s beautiful. Your entire family is beautiful, you’re both really lucky.”

I give Spencer a smile. “Yeah, we really are.”

Chapter Twelve

Spencer

Strong arms wrap around my middle from behind and I let myself fall back, leaning against Cade's strong chest. I'm not sure I'll ever get used to this, to having Cade as my mate. His presence is a bright light in life.

Thinking of the word mate , my stomach turns a bit sour.

Despite living together, having a baby together, along with a baby on the way, we still haven't exchanged mating bites. Everything has happened between us so quickly, we've been so caught up in getting everything ready to move in together and once that was done, we were swept up in baby prep, and now we're anxiously waiting for the baby inside Cade to come into the world. It's been something after something after something.

I love Cade so fucking much and not wearing his bite is really starting to get to me. But how do I bring that up?

Cade nudges the back of my head and I tilt it to the side, letting him have access to kiss the side of my throat. A shiver runs through me at the feel of his hot breath and the tickle of his thick beard. His plump lips press into my sensitive skin over and over until my shoulders are relaxing and a grin is stretching across my lips.

He's so good at this, taking my worries away and allowing me a safe place to let go of my anxieties. I love him so much which is why I so desperately want to have his

mating mark scarring my skin.

“She’s so perfect. When she was first born, I loved her so much and somehow that love has grown deeper every single day since.”

I hum softly in agreement. I turn my head in order to give Cade a kiss over my shoulder that’s just a tad awkward from this angle. His arms squeeze me tight in response. He makes me feel so safe, so loved.

“That’s how I feel about you,” I say softly, making sure to keep my voice down so Amery doesn’t wake up. “My feelings came on so quickly that I thought they’d eventually start to simmer out. But that hasn’t happened. In fact, it’s been the opposite. The feelings I have for you somehow continue to grow hotter and deeper. I love you so much, Cade, and the most incredible thing is knowing that you love me too.”

Cade is the one to hum happily this time, the sound rumbling through his chest. I can feel it against my back and it reminds me of the sensation of purring which happens quite a bit when it’s just me and Cade snuggling.

“I love you too, my whiskered mate.”

I smile at the silly nickname. But it does bring up those worries once more. Cade must sense something is going through my head before he pulls away, taking my hand instead and pulling me out of the room.

Cade doesn’t say a word as he leads me into our room. Once the door opens, my breathing stops. I look around in wonder at the sight of our room lit with candlelight. It flickers beautifully, an intimate bubble for just the two of us.

“Spencer,” Cade says, turning towards me and taking my hand into his own. “I love

you and can't imagine my life without you. I know it hasn't even been a year since we met, but you're it for me, sweetheart." He leads my hand to his mouth, kissing my knuckles.

My chest is a whirlwind of emotions. This wonderful, amazing man somehow knew exactly what I needed.

"I know our lives are busy right now with everything, but I don't want to spend another day without wearing your mark. Will you bite me, Spencer?"

"Oh my gods, I've been feeling the same exact way," I blurt out with a broken noise at the back of my throat, pulling Cade into my arms, kissing him with so much force our teeth knock together. We giggle for a moment before I moan into the next kiss which is all passion and tongue and emotions. We kiss until our lips are tingling and our heads are spinning.

My fingers find themselves in Cade's beard, running through the soft strands. Pulling back, I look down, carefully pulling a tie from his beard. I run my fingers through the braid, carefully unpleating it. It's wavy compared to the hair around it and that little detail makes me smile.

I take my time, carefully pulling each of Cade's beard braids free before brushing the hair with my fingers.

"What do you think?" Cade whispers, smirking up at me. "Should I shave it?"

"Absolutely not," I say right away before pausing. "Well, it's your hair so you can do whatever you want with it, but it seems a shame to shave it off now that you've got it so long and beautiful."

"You're so cute," he says with a grin. "You love it but if I wanted to shave it, you'd

let me. Such a wonderful mate of mine.”

My cheeks heat from the praise. “Wonderful mate,” I breathe out. “Make me your mate, Cade.”

“Where do you want it?”

A shiver runs down my spine at the question. There’s something so sexy about the way he’s asked me, wanting to know where I’ve been dreaming about wearing his mark.

“My wrist,” I say, holding my hand out for him. “Please.”

Cade runs his fingers from my elbow down to my wrist. He cradles my hand in his own and my breathing picks up, my heart hammering against my ribs with anticipation. He kisses the inside of my wrist, his eyes never leaving mine.

“Do it,” I whisper and a moment later, Cade opens his mouth, rests his teeth against my wrist, and bites down.

A sharp hiss leaves my lips as he bites down, breaking the skin and marking me as his. I close my eyes, overwhelmed with how happy I am. I can feel our mating bond sliding into place, resting at the back of my head right above my spine. I’m taken. I’m claimed. I am Cade’s.

When I open my eyes, Cade is standing there, staring at me. He’s got a little smile on his face, his lips red from my blood. He’s marked me and now it’s time for me to do the same for him.

“Would it be fucked up to have you bite my pec, so your mark rests right above my heart?”

I chuckle softly. “I’m into it. Take your shirt off.”

“Buy a guy dinner first,” he says with a low whistle, teasing me. I slap his shoulder and roll my eyes which makes him laugh even harder.

I bite my bottom lip as Cade pulls his shirt over his head. He’s about ten months along which means he’s finally starting to show. Just two more months and the baby inside him will be here with us. I can’t wait.

My eyes sweep over Cade’s body and my mouth runs dry. Jesus fucking Christ, my mate is hot. Cade might be bald but the rest of him is covered with hair that I find I love running my fingers through.

“Right here,” he says, touching his left pec.

Instead of going straight for biting him, my fingers skim over his pecs. They’re furry and soft. I’m tempted to squeeze them but instead, I run my hands lower, petting his stomach. Two of my fingers run down into his boxers and he yelps, catching my wrist.

“You’ll have time for that in a moment. Bite first, then you can have your wicked way with me,” Cade says, his eyes sparkling with excitement.

I give him a little pout before nodding. “Fine. But once I’m done biting you, I’m sucking your dick. You wouldn’t deny your mate what he wants, would you?”

“Of course not,” he says with a smile.

Wrapping a hand around the back of my head, Cade guides me to his chest. My hand cups his pec, squeezing the soft mound gently as I bring my mouth to where his mating bite will go. After giving his chest a soft kiss, I open my mouth and bite

down.

“Fuck,” Cade hisses out, a mixture of pleasure and pain. His fingers tighten in my hair before he’s pulling, bringing my mouth away from his chest up to his mouth. When our lips meet, our blood mixes on our tongues.

Our mating bond solidifies. Where once there was Cade and Spencer, now there’s us .

“Mine,” I say, pushing Cade backwards. With a chuckle, he crawls back onto our bed. My chest rumbles with a pleased purr, thundering through our otherwise quiet room. I follow him onto the bed. “You’re mine,” I say, punctuating the words by kissing him again.

I have a feeling we won’t be getting much sleep tonight.

Chapter Thirteen

Cade

I stare at our bed, wondering how much weight it can take before it breaks when Spencer steps into the room. I hold out my hand and he takes it, allowing me to kiss the mating bite I left there a few months ago. It's scarred over in the most beautiful way.

"What's that face for?"

"I'm wondering if our bed can handle a manatee."

Spencer slowly blinks at me a few times. "What?"

"A wild manatee. Do you think one could jump on the bed without it breaking?"

A smirk slowly stretches across Spencer's face. "I mean, a wild manatee has been jumping on the bed for months now and it's seemed to handle the job just fine."

I roll my eyes and flick Spencer's ear. "For some reason, I really wanna shift and rub myself all over our blankets but I'm not sure our bed can handle it."

Spencer hums. "Could we put all the blankets on the floor? Would that satisfy your instincts or do they have to be on the bed?"

It makes me weak in the knees when I think about the fact that Spencer understands

me. He gets me in a way that other people just don't. I'm so fucking lucky to call him my mate. I love him more than words can say.

"I think that will work. Thank you, Spencer."

He gives me a little smile. "It's like you always say, just another perk of having an omega mate. We get each other."

The two of us make quick work of pulling our bed apart. The corner of our room becomes my nest with blankets and pillows and old clothes. Once the corner is properly stocked, I get naked. Heat runs through me at the look Spencer gives me as he takes in my naked body. I don't think I'll ever get used to how much he wants me.

I give Spencer a quick kiss before shifting. One moment I'm a man on two feet and the next, I'm a manatee, flopping into my nest and burying my nose against Spencer's dirty clothes. Everything smells more intense with this nose. I feel so much more comfortable, like for one reason or another, I needed to be in this form.

Spencer gets on his knees, petting my head. I wrinkle my nose and my whiskers twitch against my face, making him chuckle. He leans down and kisses my nose.

I close my eyes and a moment later, I can hear Spencer leaving the room. I drift in and out of sleep. I'm not sure how long I was out but eventually, I hear Spencer come back into the room.

"Amery is already in bed," he explains, holding up the baby monitor. My eyes dart over to the window, surprised to see it dark outside. "Do you want me to spray you down or are you okay? One blink for 'make me wet', two blinks for 'I'm okay for now'."

I give him two blinks, feeling fine. My chest is soft with affection but my stomach

hurts something fierce. It's easy to ignore though, thankful just to have my mate with me.

"I'm gonna shift and snuggle with you. Is that okay?"

I nod my head, scooting over slightly so that Spencer can join me in my nest. His little grey kitty form leaps onto my back, kneading me softly. I rumble with affection at the feeling before his little paws are spinning in a circle as he gets comfortable on top of me.

Spencer is a warm presence on me, his fur soft against my skin. His wet nose pokes me before I feel his head rest against my back. A moment later, he begins to purr, the sound soothing me down to my very core.

I don't think anything could be more perfect than this. Someday, when the kids are older, we'll make nests in the living room together so we can all snuggle together. Spencer will purr all of us to sleep, but for now, this is fucking perfect. What more does a man truly need?

When I pictured my life in the distant future, I imagined some faceless mate and maybe a couple kids, but it was always distant and vague. Nothing could have prepared me for all of this. I never knew it was possible to be this happy.

Snuggled up with my mate, I continue to drift in and out of sleep, woken up periodically by cramps in my stomach. They progressively get worse and worse until I can't seem to fall back asleep. The cramps race through my midsection, pain lancing through me. The pain radiates through my back and down my flippers. Fuck, why does it hurt so bad?

I make a broken noise, the moan sounding strange since I'm in my manatee form. Spencer quickly wakes up, pressing his cat nose against my face. I make another

noise of pain and he shifts into his human skin.

“Hey, what’s going on? Are you okay?”

I flap my flipper against the nest, shaking my head as best as I can in this form. I know it would be so much easier to shift back into my human form so I have proper lips to form words, but for some reason I feel compelled to stay exactly as I am. I want to be in my manatee form. I want to stay right here in my nest.

“Can you shift for me?”

I shake my head, making a wailing noise. Spencer pets my face, making gentle, soothing shooshes in response.

“You’re okay. You don’t have to shift if you don’t want to. I’m just trying to understand what’s going on, Cade.”

I lean my face against Spencer’s stomach, letting his scent wash over me. It soothes me until I’m relaxed in our nest once more. Sure, there’s pain coursing through me, making my middle tense, but with Spencer here beside me, it doesn’t feel too bad. I can handle this. I can get through this.

It dawns on me slowly that I know exactly what’s going on. Our baby is getting ready to enter the world. I should shift and tell Spencer to call Shelby, but I just can’t get myself to change. I’m comfortable in this form and the idea of switching now causes too much stress. It’s better for me and the baby to just keep doing what feels right.

I slap my flipper against my stomach, trying to wordlessly explain to my mate what’s going on. His eyes widen and I hear his sharp intake of breath.

“Fuck. The baby?”

A rumble comes from my throat and I do my best to nod my head without jostling Spencer too much. My chest lightens, knowing my mate understands what's going on. I have full confidence in him. I know he'll take care of me and our baby.

Spencer finds his phone and quickly sends a message before turning back to me. His fingers skim over my back and I relax into his touch. I want to tell him how thankful I am, how much I love and adore him. I want him to know how excited and happy I am to have another baby with him.

I nudge his face with my nose and lick his cheek, hoping that the gesture conveys all the emotions I'm feeling.

Spencer gives me a soft smile. "I love you too," he whispers, "and I'm so proud of you. You're doing so well, Cade. Our baby is almost here."

The praise skims over my skin, just as much a physical sensation as Spencer's fingers. As my middle tenses with pain, instead of fighting it, I lean into it. This is my body preparing a way for our baby. My body knows what it's doing and I need to trust it.

I'm not sure how long we sit like that, my pain wracking stronger and stronger as Spencer murmurs soothing words and pets me. It could be a minute or it could be three days. I'm lost in it, the only thing keeping me grounded is Spencer.

When my body tells me it's time to start pushing, I do exactly that. My bottom half feels like it's on fire. Pain surges through my body like I've never experienced before. It's too much. I can't do this. I can't fucking do this.

"You're almost there," Spencer says and I latch on to his voice like a lifeline. "You can do this, Cade. Just keep pushing."

If I could whimper with this mouth, I would. Instead, a mournful wail leaves my lips. I grit my teeth and push with all my might. Everything hurts so fucking badly. I'm not sure I can take this. A moment passes. Pressure builds, things stretch, everything tenses. And then another moment. Just when I'm ready to stop and catch my breath, I feel our baby slide free.

My entire body sags with relief.

Spencer is there, picking up our baby with the biggest grin. His eyes are wet with tears and he lets out a wet chuckle.

"Cade," he breathes out. "You've done it. You did so well. And look, you've birthed a kitten!"

The logistics of that are lost on me and I'm too fucking tired to actually think about it.

I close my eyes, letting out a long breath through my nose before allowing my body to shift. My bones and skin change until I'm no longer a manatee but instead a man once more. I wrinkle my nose and ignore pretty much everything happening below my belly button at the moment, focusing instead on the little bundle of joy in Spencer's hands.

Once I shift, so does our baby, squirming as he becomes a human. He's beautiful.

I hadn't even noticed Shelby's arrival but there she is, passing over towels to help clean the two of us up. I grab the towel from her but don't do anything with it, too preoccupied by looking down at our son.

He's come out without a speck of hair, bald just like me. He's got big cheeks and a birthmark on his shoulder that looks like a heart and I love him so fucking much. I look up at Spencer with tears in my eyes.

“I’m so proud of you,” he says when he finds me looking at him. “I love you, Cade.”

“I love you,” I say back right away. “Thank you for this, all of this.”

“You have nothing to thank me for.”

“I do. Without you, I would not have this life. I wouldn’t have Chucky or Amery. I wouldn’t have this home. I love you so much and I’m so fucking thankful for that dumbass YouTuber mixing up our vacation.”

Spencer chuckles, running a hand over my face and wiping the tears from my cheeks. “You’ve gotta stop calling him a dumbass.”

I lean into his palm and smile. “He was a dumbass but the best kind because he led the two of us together.”

Eventually, we get out of the nest and make our way to the bed. Shelby gets us a bottle for Chucky before cleaning up my nest and taking it to the laundry room. Having her around has been the best decision, she’s made all of this so much easier for us and if there are any more kids in our future, I wouldn’t trust their births with anyone else.

I sit against the headboard with Chucky in my arms, feeding him a bottle. I’m overwhelmed with how much joy is springing up inside of me. These feelings only grow impossibly stronger when Spencer grabs Amery, bringing her into the room as well.

The four of us stay like that for a long time, holding each other and getting used to the new scents. Our little family is perfect and I can’t imagine having this with anyone other than Spencer.

Leaning over, I kiss his cheek. He smiles at me, a pretty blush dusting his cheeks. He brings his hand to my face and I softly kiss the mating bite I left there.

“I love you,” I tell him, whispering the words into his skin.

“I love you too, Cade.” Then he kisses Amery’s head. “And I love you .” He moves to Chucky, kissing his bald head. “And I love you.”

If this is how I spend the rest of my life, it’ll be a life worth living. I’m content. I am loved. I am satisfied. I lean my shoulder against Spencer as we spend the rest of the night like that.

Source Creation Date: August 4, 2025, 5:17 pm

Spencer

My bottom lip begins to wobble as I look at my mother holding Amery and Chucky. Chucky recently turned one and it still boggles my mind that it's already been a year since he was born! It feels like it only just happened yesterday.

The only time I've been away from the kids is to go to work. Cade has cut back his hours at the grocery store. As much as he adored his job as a manager there, he's enjoying being a dad even more. He's at home with the kids while I'm at work at the school and then we swap so he can work weekends at the grocery store. We've found a really perfect balance.

I never imagined life would be like this but somehow in the span of two years I've gotten myself a mate and a family. I feel blessed beyond words.

Which brings us to today. As an anniversary present, my parents have gifted Cade and I a weekend away. Well, away as in booking us a hotel room on the other side of town. Can I handle being away from the kids for an entire weekend? What if something happens? What if I miss something while I'm gone? Will they be okay without me?

"I can see the look on your face," my mom says with a knowing smile. "They'll be fine, Spencer. You have to make time for you and Cade. You're more than just a dad."

"I know that. But still, I'll miss them," I admit softly. I'll only be gone for two days but I'm going to miss having them attached to my hip so much!

My mother puts the kids down and they immediately run away towards the room my parents have just for them filled with toys. They know exactly where my parents keep all the best play things. They've already got my parents wrapped around their tiny fingers. When did they get so old? When people used to tell me kids grew faster than you realize, I didn't think they meant it quite like this!

"I was the same way," she says, leaning forward and kissing my forehead. Her scent washes over me, that familial bond helping soothe some of my anxiety. "If anything happens, you're a phone call away. And you're only staying in a hotel in town. You'll be here in like ten minutes if there's an emergency. Go. Enjoy yourself and that wonderful mate of yours."

I look across the living room where Cade is talking to my dad. I can't help but smile. "He is pretty wonderful, isn't he?"

My mom squeezes my shoulder, hiding her giggle behind her hand. "If you keep looking at him like that, you'll be coming back from vacation with more grandbabies for us."

"Mom!"

She giggles so hard tears start to fill her eyes. I cross my arms over my chest, huffing with fake annoyance. I hate to admit it but she's not far off. I wouldn't mind having a couple more kittens or calves if Cade is up for it.

I take my time saying bye to the kids who are not paying attention even a little bit, too caught up in the toys that their grandparents have for them. I've been so worried they'd be upset by us leaving but apparently we're chopped liver compared to the race car track my dad recently bought for them. With one more hug to my mom and dad, we're on our way out the door. Cade waves at my parents before we're getting into the car.

For a moment, we both just sit there, like we're both doing our best to process the fact that our car is child free.

"Why is this so hard?" I whisper, turning my giant sad eyes towards my mate.

Cade turns towards me, giving me a soft smile. He cups my cheek and I lean into the touch. "Your heart is so soft. It's one of the many things I love about you, Spencer." I turn my head and bite his palm gently, making both of us chuckle. "This is supposed to be a fun little staycation," Cade says softly. "It's our anniversary so the decision is completely up to us how we spend it. If you really hate this, we don't have to go. We can grab the kids and head back home for the weekend instead."

I think about it for a long moment. I grip Cade's wrist, giving it a squeeze. "No. I want to go. I want to order room service and experience the soft robe and have hot hotel sex."

"Excellent choice," he says with a laugh. "Especially that last thing. I'm a big fan."

"Of course you are," I say with a shake of my head. "Maybe this vacation, we'll leave without all the life changing news that we had during our last vacation."

"I don't think we'll ever top meeting our mate and both finding ourselves pregnant but we can certainly try. Kinda sounds like a challenge."

I snort with amusement. "Don't push your luck." I pat his thigh. "Let's go, Cade. Whisker me away."

The End