



# A BIKER ROMANCE

*MC Second Chance Romance*

JESS WINTERS

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## Prologue

It's been two years since Nicola last saw Calvin, but not a day goes by where she doesn't think about him. While other men lust after her, she's still scarred by the man who left her suddenly, unexpectedly and without reason.

As Nicola traverses life working at a diner and a best friend who's desperately in love with her, she wonders if she'll ever find love again, or if love might come back to her.

## Chapter One

My eyes snap open, and the first thing I notice is the chandelier hanging from the ceiling.

*This isn't my bed!*

Cautiously, I roll over and prod the man lying next to me, but he's sleeping face down, quite deeply judging by his snores. I hear a creaking floorboard and some faint whispering from outside the door. *It's a mum; I can tell!*

But I've been here before. I recognise those velvet plum curtains.

*Of course! This is Dylan's house.*

This must be the first time I've been in his bedroom.

I pat myself down and check what or how much, I'm wearing. But I'm in a full pyjama set; it's hideous and means I definitely did not have sex last night, thank the lord!

I carefully reach over Dylan's motionless body and unplug my phone from the socket. Dylan gruffs lightly, and I dash into the ensuite as quick as possible, my clothes bundled up in my arms.

I change and glance in the mirror, silently I open the door, creeping through the room on the tips of my feet so as not to disturb Dylan. I press my ear against the door and check that the mum isn't up here. *Now's my chance.*

I sneak through the hallway and down the stairs. I almost make it to the front door when I hear footsteps approach me. With no time to dart to the door, I quickly shut myself in the downstairs bathroom. Then I see it.

The bathroom window, just about big enough to squeeze my ever-growing hips through.

"How do I get myself into these situations?" I utter under my breath as I heave my upper-body through the gap between the glass. The door handle begins rattling, and I realise I've got to get out of here now!

I roll out of the window, thumping the ground as I hit it. I quickly brush off the grass stains and shuffle to the edge of the road where I wave down a taxi.

*I have got to stop doing this!*

## Chapter Two

“You, Nicola, escaped through the window?” Zara falls into fits of laughter at the table, while I take another sip of wine.

“I had to! I shouldn’t have even stayed there in the first place.”

“Oh, why not?” Zara picks up her wine glass. “He’d be good for you. He’s got money, and he’s...”

I cut Zara off before she can say anymore. “He lives with his mother!”

Zara giggles. “I think she lives with him?”

“Whatever,” I mumble. I cringe at the thought of sharing a bed with Dylan, let alone anything more. He’s not a bad guy, but he’s just so innocent and, dare I say, desperate.

“I know what you’re thinking,” Zara’s voice has that tone, the tone when she absolutely *does* know what I’m thinking. “You don’t think he’s enough of a bad boy.”

“What?” I scoff.

“That’s not... I mean. I do *not* want a bad boy!”

Zara tilts her head. “You would never date a guy who’s dad is a cop!”

“That has nothing to do with it. And I told you! I am so done with bad boys. I want a nice guy! But just not Dylan, you know. We’re friends, nothing more. Last night was just me drinking too much wine and needing a place to stay. Nothing happened.” I sigh a self-pitying sigh.

Zara watches me.

“I said nothing!”

“OK, OK, I believe you!”

I take another gulp of wine, checking my watch, my night shift at the diner is about to start, and I cannot be late again! You know, I don’t care if Dylan has a chandelier and a fancy fridge with an ice dispenser, I’d rather work my diner job forever than to marry someone who thinks visiting the DVD



store is a fun day out.

*OK, I need to stop being a bitch; Dylan is my friend.* He helped me through a lot last year, and that more than I can say for some people.

“I’ve got to be off; my shift is starting soon.” I grab my jacket and finish off the last sips of my drink.

“Alright gal, I hope you meet some dreamboat at work,” she winks and wrinkles her nose.

“That would be a first,” I snigger.

I make my way outside and wait for my bus. It’s still humid out even at 6 PM. As the bus approaches, I can already see that it’s stuffed with people.

I hold on to the rail, pressed between the other sweaty passengers. I feel a brush along my thigh. I squeal and turn to see wobbling man wave at me with one hand and clutch a beer with the other.

*Is this who I have to choose from?* Dull Dylan or dodgy drunk Dave over here- what a bunch!

Finally, the bus pulls up at my stop. I duck underneath the rows of foul-smelling armpits and jump out, taking a deep breath of fresh air. Crossing the car park, I begin to fasten my pinny and pin up my hair. My boss makes eye contact with me the second I open the door. Something is going on. He signals at my with his eyes and I spot him.

*You have got to be kidding me.*

Dylan sits hunched over at a table, pretending to read a menu, when really he’s waiting for me.

“I’ll deal with this,” I mouth to my boss. I put my hands on my hips, sigh a little and walk over to his table.

“You can’t do this, Dylan, this is my workplace!”

Dylan closes the menu and looks up into my eyes. “It doesn’t have to be, you know?”

I fold my arms and turn away. “Are we really going to talk about this again?”

He stands up from his chair; I can tell by the vein on his forehead that he’s beginning to get riled up.

“You act like what I’m offering you is so horrendous! The chance to give up working in this dump, to be adored and cared for; isn’t that what you need, Nicola?”

I sit down at the table and lock eyes until Dylan sits down with me.

“Love isn’t a transaction, you know?”

Dylan widens his eyes as if he doesn’t understand me, but he already knows what’s coming.

“A woman doesn’t line up her offers and accept the best one. It’s not about money, or security, or even kindness. It’s something else.”

He slides his hands across the table and clutches mine; I can feel the sweat between his fingers.

“What else, tell me! Because we talk and we laugh, and you stay in my bed...”

“That was the first, and only time Dylan. And I don’t know, but when you feel it, you know.”

Dylan’s hand trembles slightly. I can almost see me slipping away from him in the reflection of his eyes. But I have to confirm it.

“And when you don’t, you just don’t.”

I reach out an arm to pat him on the shoulder and push back my hair before getting to work.

“You’re a bitch; you know that?”

I turn and place my hand firmly on the table.

“So this is how you react to rejection, very mature Dylan.”

He shakes his head slowly, and a smile creeps across his face.

“Rejection? This is me reacting to you using me as a comfort blanket when you need it. Leaning on me, crying on my shoulder, staying in my bed, then acting all surprised when I start to get feelings for you!”

I scoff, my face burns up as I try to keep my cool, knowing my boss is within earshot.

“We have been friends for over ten years. I’m sorry if that’s been a burden for...”

I stop.

I hear it.

I feel it in my stomach- in my chest.

My heart races at a million miles an hour. My breathing gets quicker and then suddenly, I can't quite tell which way is up. I close my eyes and pray that I imagined it, that purr, that unmistakable purr that couldn't have come from anyone else. But it's there.

Staring back at me through the steamy glass windows is the all-black metal stallion, and on top of it, is him. He doesn't take off his helmet, he knows I can't see him, but he can see me. He knows that even behind a mask, the very thought of his face sends shivers across every inch of my body.

He grips tightly onto the handle and twists sharply. The engine roars once again. I turn to Dylan; his jaw has dropped even further than mine.

Nobody can believe it.

Calvin is back.

## Chapter Three

I steady my breathing and whisper under my breath, “You are over him.”

I turn back once more to face the window. He’s taking off his leather jacket and parking up the bike. Every single muscle in his arms is flexing.

*I am so not over him!*

Holding my hand over my mouth before the contents of my stomach flies across the diner, I dash to the bathroom and fall in front of the toilet, my head drooping as I struggle to keep it up.

But nothing happens.

I make my way over to the sink; my reflection stares back at me. She looks disappointed. “After all this time, he still does this to you?”

Gripping the edges of the sink, I try to pull myself together. I hope that splashing water over my face might calm the burning that courses through my entire body, but it just messes up my make-up.

Hopelessly, I try to wipe away the mascara that stains my cheeks black.

*He can’t see me like this!*

Wait, what am I saying? I don’t owe him a thing!

A banging on the door startles me, a harsh rattling of the handle follows, and I freeze, begging it to be anyone else but him.

“Nicola, it’s me, Brian.”

I throw my head back with relief. But why is my boss so desperately trying to get into the women’s bathroom? He’s not usually bothered about my personal life.

“Nicola, I think you might want to go out there, your friend is shouting at some guy in the parking lot.”

I fling the bathroom door open. “Oh, fuck!”

Dylan and Calvin- that is not a good mix.

With every ounce of confidence I can muster up, I stride through the diner door and over to Calvin. His pose is nonchalant, he stares up at the sky, ignoring the screams coming from Dylan.

“Calvin,” I state, loud and clear.

“Nicola, go back inside, I’m going to get rid of this piece of...”

I throw a stern look in Dylan’s direction.

“Go back inside Dylan. I can fight my own battles.”

Calvin cracks a smile, then quickly looks down at the floor.

“So that’s what I am, a battle?”

Each word rolls off his tongue like he’s rehearsed it a thousand times. The sunlight catches every single shade of blue in his eyes and reflects it back at me. He’s the only man I’ve ever known whose hair looks sexier after being in a helmet.

*Who, or what, created this man?*

I compose myself. I can’t hide my feelings from him, but I can control them. I can show him that even though he’s a complete asshole, he’ll never see me cry again. I press my tongue up against the roof of my mouth and hold back the tears.

“What did you come back for, Calvin? I assume it wasn’t me.”

“Why would you assume that?”

I rest a hand on my hip. “Don’t play games with me.”

Even I’m shocked at just how much sass I am serving. Calvin tries not to show it, but his heavy blinking was always a tell-tale sign of his insecurity.

“I have some unfinished business and...”

“And what?” I shake my head.

I knew he was cocky; he always has been. If anything, that’s what I loved about him. But to ride up here unannounced after two years and profess that he’s here, outside my workplace, for unfinished business. Well, it repulses me. I at least thought he had some backbone.

“And I knew that if I had to come back to town, the first thing I had to do was come and see

you.”

“Oh,” I stammer. He’s being honest. I’m too angry right now for him to be honest!

“You know, now’s just not a good time. I’m about to start work and Dylan...” Fuck, Dylan. As if this wasn’t awkward enough already.

I hesitate, and he gives me that look. The one where he knows I’m angry, but he wants me to see, he’s hurting too. It’s been so long; I had almost forgotten what that face of his looked like.

“Dylan already caused a bit of a scene, and I really can’t lose this job.”

“I’ll be around, Nicola. Just let me know when you’re ready.”

I’m giving in too easily. He can’t just have me at his beck and call after everything he did to me.

“You’d better not just turn up on my doorstep, or at my work. I’ll let you know when we can talk.”

I try to turn away before he does, but he’s stronger than me. He simply nods and fixes his helmet. Before I know it, I’m staring after the shadow that just rode away from me, for the second time now.

## Chapter Four

“Girl, I don’t want to hear another word about him!” Zara rambles some more while I take a mouthful of macaroni cheese, pretending I’m listening.

“Ah, ah, hot, fuck it’s hot!” I open my mouth and try to breathe, taking a swig of soda.

“Um, what’s hot? I hope you’re not talking about Calvin...”

“No, no. I’m just eating my lunch. It burned the roof of my mouth.” I rub my tongue across the burn. *That’s gonna hurt for days.*

“Who does he think he is? Riding up on his motorbike five years later!”

I interrupt, “It’s been two years, actually.”

“Really? Whatever,” Zara snarls. “You can do so much better than him!”

I hold the phone up to my ear, but my mind drifts. Here I am, taking my break in a toilet cubicle, eating microwavable mac and cheese from a Tupperware lunchbox.

But worst of all, I’m despairing over a man that broke my heart in the cruellest of ways.

“Nicola, are you listening? I feel like you’re not listening.”

I snap back into the room and remember that I called Zara for advice in the first place.

“I’m here. I know. He’s terrible, and I’m brilliant, and there’s no way I’m going to let him break my heart all over again. But...” I pause.

“But what?”

“But. And I know I shouldn’t and I probably won’t but if I do it’s really not a big deal. But do you think that maybe I should... have the chat? You know, just clear the air so that we can both move on.”

I can hear the stupidity. Even before Zara has a chance to answer the shame swirls around my head, shouting at me, screaming over every other feeling inside of me.

“Look,” says Zara, her tone much calmer than before. I suddenly want to pay attention to her.

“You already know the answer to that question. And I get it, it still hurts. You pushed it back and back, but you never really got over it; you just forgot about it. But he left, he was gone for two years. He moved on.”

I gulp, I don't think I'm ready for this truth bomb about to hit.

“Nicola, if you talk to him again, you're going to fall in love with him, just like you did before, just like you did after every argument because he has this power over you.

The pain. Oh, how is it so real? How is it possible, that when your heart hurts so much that you can feel it in your stomach? Not like a stabbing, but a dull ache that you just know won't go away easy, you just have to wait.

“I don't want to have to get over him again,” I sniff.

“See, you remember, don't you?”

I grumble something inaudible.

“Nicola?”

“You're right,” I admit. “But you have to agree; you never did properly see what we were like together.”

“I didn't have to!” Zara blurts out. “You were infatuated by him! I could see it, Dylan could see it too! The bottom line is, if you let him walk back into your life after what he put you through, then you're never going to live the life you want. You need to respect yourself in order to be respected.”

Zara's right. We say our goodbyes and I hang up the phone. I check my watch, I should have been back from my break three minutes ago, but I need a little longer.

The strip light flickers above me, my macaroni cheese stares up at me from the bathroom floor. It's over, just like it always was.

Back on shift, my manager won't stop raising his eyebrows at me. I continue to clean down the tables; spray, wipe repeat. I hope Brian isn't flirting with me.

I look up at him again- another eyebrow raise. I was almost sure Brian was gay, maybe I was wrong. *Ugh, men these days.* I feel a tap on my shoulder; Brian startles me from behind.

“I'm sorry Nicola,”



I smile forcibly, trying to balance, “please don’t sack me,” with “I will never ever have sex with you, through my smile.

“That gangster was that Calvin...”

“Gangster?” I chuckle. “He’s a biker, but he’s not a gang member!” *At least, I hope he’s not!*

“Oh, sorry. Well, while you were crying in the bathroom,” I drop my head to the floor and attempt to shield him from the glare of my glowing red cheeks. I did not know he heard me crying!

“While you were out in the bathroom, he came back, and he left you this.”

Brian opens up his hands and reveals a scrunched up napkin, stained by coffee on the edges. I pluck it from him, so nervous of what might be written that I hold back from opening it.

“Don’t you want to know what it says?” asks Brian. “He was absolutely gorgeous!”

I stare at it. Without unfolding it, I can almost make out some letters scribbled in black pen, but I turn away.

“Just throw it out, Brian. I don’t need anything from him anymore.”

## Chapter Five

“Too young! Too hairy! Is that man holding a snake?” I swipe across the pages and onto the next single bachelor advertising himself online.

“Oh, he seems kind of cute, but what’s that?” My heart sinks a little, and I feel a lump in my throat.

“Please don’t bother if you’re ‘bubbly’ AKA OVER 70KG.”

It’s not the first time I’ve seen a comment like that on a dating website, but it still stings a little to read. I turn and look at my bowl of nachos to the side of me. I pinch a roll of fat and wonder what he would think if he ever saw me naked.

*You know what?* If I can bag myself a guy like Calvin, with a body carved by the gods themselves and a bum like two eggs in a hanky, then I don’t need to worry about losers like this guy.

Plus, I doubt those arms could pick me up and throw me onto a bed.

“OK, Nicola,” I say out loud. “You must stop fantasizing about Calvin!”

I shut down my laptop and take a sip of my warm hot chocolate, snuggling into my sofa. Just as I get comfortable, my phone rings.

“Hello?” I hesitate, not recognizing the number.

“Nicola! You answered!”

“Hello, Zara,” I sigh. Despite the blaring music in the background and the sound of someone talking directly at her as she speaks to me, I can always recognize her voice.

“What are you doing right now?”

I look around the room and try to find something slightly less shameful to tell her.

“I’m just talking to a friend online,” I lie.

“A friend?”

“Yep. An old friend.”

“An old friend that I don’t know about?”

I pause. Shit. If only I hadn’t known Zara my *entire* life!

“OK, listen to me. Get out of those pyjamas!” I gaze down at my outfit, the cats on my pyjama bottoms could almost be staring back at me, judging me.

“Find a cute outfit, do something sexy with your hair and come and meet me at this party.”

“A party?” I exclaim. “I’m not going to a party!”

“Nicola, stop. It’s Friday night. You never get Friday nights off work! When was the last time we danced together?”

I laugh. “There’s a reason we shouldn’t dance together!”

“Oh, come on! I promise you that I will make them play our jam!”

I release a deep breath. “Zara, we’re not twenty anymore!”

Zara drops the phone, a crowd of people cheer in the background, and I hear a can of beer being opened. I hear her pick me up again off the floor.

“You deserve to let your hair down for once. You’ve had a rough week.”

I’ve got to say; it’s hard to fight with that. After seeing Calvin on Tuesday and then having to deal with some pervert at the diner yesterday, maybe I have earned a night of girly fun with Zara.

“I’ll be there in an hour. Don’t get drunk before I get there!”

A long scream follows, and Zara announces to the room that I’ll be arriving any minute, though I’m sure most of them have no idea who I am.

I run into my bedroom and burst open the wardrobe doors.

“Right. Something that says ‘sexy yet sophisticated’ where are you?”

## Chapter Six

I make my way through the cloud of smoke disguising the front porch. Four bikers suck on cigarettes, but one pauses to wolf whistles at me. I turn and scorn him before noticing the familiar face.

“Hey there, Rocco! Long time, no see!”

Rocco leans in and kisses my cheek.

“Yeh, Nicola. You stopped coming to the bar. We wondered what happened to you.”

I look up at the three other faces staring back at me. I’ve seen them before, but that was back when I dated Calvin. He took me to that bar and showed me off to all of his friends, drinking beer until the early hours almost every weekend.

Rocco always had my back; he took a shine to me. He forced the barman to play my favourite cheesy songs on the jukebox, even though most of the guys there were metalheads.

I’ll never forget the night Rocco and I sang “Beauty School Dropout” at karaoke. Calvin was crying with laughter, watching his metalhead friend spin me around the dancefloor all while wearing leather boots and sporting a green Mohican.

I spot one of the guys checking out my cleavage; he catches me glancing at him and turns away shyly. I giggle a little. I guess I am wearing a pretty low cut top tonight; I’m not hiding any of my self today. And it’s nice to feel attractive. I always feel that way around the bikers; they all adore a bigger woman.

“I’ve been meaning to come and see you guys at the bar sometime. I will, soon.” I smile briefly, but Rocco can feel my pain.

He always said that Calvin and I were great together and I think he was hurting more than me when he left that day. But he can’t say anything about him behind his back.

They’re bikers, and bikers are brothers. No matter happens, they stick together. I guess Rocco was holding out for an explanation that would make this all better. I’m a little less naive.

“So I assume you know about Calvin?” Rocco tosses his cigarette butt and takes a swig from

his beer can. He hands it to me. At first, I retract, but I take the can anyway and swig from it.

“Yeh, I guess. He said he has some stuff to sort out. I don’t think he’ll be back for long, not if Dylan has anything to say about it.” I roll my eyes at Rocco, but he crinkles his face.

“I mean tonight; I guess you know that Calvin is here, at this party.”

I push past Rocco and his friends, as I storm through the doorway, I turn and see Calvin’s motorbike parked up against the others. *I am so stupid!*

I rise onto my toes and search for Zara. She’s here, holding a glass of something, but she doesn’t look too drunk, yet.

“Did you know he was going to be here?” I push her shoulder and turn her to face me. She recoils in shock.

“Was he here when you phoned me?”

I can see it in Zara’s eyes; she doesn’t have a clue what I’m talking about.

I drop my head. Looking down at my heeled boots, I feel stupid for even coming here in the first place.

“I’m just going to go home, OK?”

Zara grabs me by the shoulders and shakes her head.

“What are you talking about, we haven’t even danced...” Her eyes drift off behind me; I know instantly that she’s seen him. I watch her eyes as his reflection creeps closer and closer.

As I feel his warm breath behind my ear, I freeze. Every single hair on the nape of my neck stands up.

“I was hoping I’d see you here, but I didn’t think you were the partying type.”

I lock eyes with Zara; she tilts her head in sympathy. We both know there’s no escape now.

I face him. His thick black eyelashes flutter with excitement, knowing that he has me so close. He could kiss me without taking a step, and I’m motionless. I couldn’t stop him if he tried.

“We’ll talk, I promise. Just wait?” My words leave my mouth clumsily. I can’t even string a sentence together. My lips are shaking so much that two syllables at a time are all I can muster up.

I take Zara's hand and march her off to the kitchen.

"I'll be right here when you get back," he calls after me.

I pull Zara close to me. "Grab a bottle of whatever you can find, and tuck it under your jacket. I need a drink before I do this."

Zara swigs the vodka and screws her face up in disgust.

"You really couldn't find anything nicer than vodka?" I chuckle.

"I was hurrying for you!"

Zara pulls back a section of my hair as she stands behind me. We both stare back at our reflections in the mirror.

"You're beautiful, you know?"

I look away.

"I'm serious!" she insists. "If I were a man, I'd be crazy about you."

I giggle under my breath. "You *are* crazy about me."

Zara passes me the bottle, and I heave just at the smell. "I've had enough, my head already feels... strange."

"Go out there, and show him that he messed up bad!"

I reapply my lipstick, smudging the corners no matter how hard I try. I've drunk enough already.

"He's going to regret leaving me for the rest of his life," I affirm. I love my new drunk confidence. I smile at Zara.

"Come and grab me half an hour! OK! I want to get this over and done with and then dance!"

We high five and bump our matching big bums into each other. Zara almost falls over, but she grabs the sink just in time.

Staring up at me, she winks. "Go get 'em, tiger!"

Back at the party, I stand in the corner for a while, observing Calvin as he waits for me on the sofa. There are so many girls staring at him.

His hair is pushed back by his headscarf, but a few dark curls fall across his face. One girl sits beside him and strokes his arm; I feel a stab in my stomach. Calvin smiles but shuffles away an inch.

*He wants me.*

I stride over, burping a little as I walk, but doing my best to seem confident and unphased.

“Do you want to talk here, or somewhere else?”

Calvin’s eyes light up as he hears me speak.

“Let’s go outside,” he suggests, reaching for my hand that I sharply withdraw.

He smiles awkwardly. His heavy blinking signals to me that he’s nervous- maybe even more nervous than I am.

## Chapter Seven

“I didn’t come here to hurt you again, you know.”

Looking up at the night sky and seeing the moon so big tonight, I wonder if the world is testing me. It wants to know if I’ll succumb to romance, alcohol and fate while I sit side-by-side with Calvin upon this wall.

Calvin had to lift me up here, I thought I would be too big for him to lift, but his strength never fails to surprise me. My mind flutters back to the dating website, and I couldn’t help but compare him to the losers I came across there.

“It doesn’t really matter why you did anything,” I reply. “You hurt me, and you can’t take that back.”

“Every day for the last two years, I’ve thought about how much I hurt you, and how it was the last thing I ever wanted to do to you.”

I turn and face him and shake my head gently.

“Then why, why the hell, did you do it?”

“I... I...” Calvin stammers and the words fail him.

“If there was another woman...”

“Never, there was never anyone else; you were the only woman I wanted, I swear, Nicola!”

“But if there was, I could have moved past it. You could have told me you’d fallen out of love with me; that you didn’t see a future; that our worlds weren’t suited, and although it would have broken my heart, it would have been better.”

A tear rolls down Calvin’s face. There was one sentence he always repeated to me, “I’ll keep you safe.” And now, despite all the pain he has, he knows that I can never believe those words again.

“And Dylan? You know he hates you now! He won’t leave me alone because he thinks you’re dangerous and that you damaged me somehow. I can’t even bring up your name in this town without everyone looking at me apologetically. They hate you for what you did.”



Calvin bites his lips and exhales fast through his nose.

“I wanted to tell you everything, but you would never have let me go.”

He lifts his hand to touch my face, but stops himself, knowing that I’m not his anymore, that the unquestionable access he once had to my body is gone.

“I think about you all the time, you know?”

I watch as a shooting star crosses our path.

“Do you think about me sometimes?” Calvin nudges me with his shoulder; I giggle a little.

“Don’t ask me that!”

“Why not?” he chuckles.

“Because you know I’m awful at lying! Especially to you!”

Calvin smirks, and I slap his leg to show that I’m not impressed, but I can’t help the little grin creeping across my own face.

“So you *do* think about me. Hmm, interesting.”

I roll my eyes and look away.

“Do you think about me naked?”

“Calvin!” I exclaim.

He places a single finger on my thigh and continues to walk up my leg softly with his hand.

“Do you think about the way I used to kiss that freckle right here?”

He stops, with his index finger just above that very freckle. I can’t see it, but just his touch brings back memories of having his face between my legs, loving every inch of my body, but he always paid extra attention to my freckles.

I feel a tingle running through me; my whole body becomes sensitive to his touch.

“Do you remember, Nicola?” he pants. “Because sometimes, I can’t even stop myself from thinking about it.”

He turns and puts his other hand on my other leg and grips tightly. He pushes down firmly on

my thighs until his fingertips slip beneath my skirt.

I exhale deeply, my head screams out to me to make him stop, but I can only lean my head back and open my legs just a little, savouring the feel of his hands on my soft skin.

I beg for him to reach higher and higher. I quiver as he touches the crease at the top of my leg. But a voice interrupts us. Calvin pulls away, and we both watch as Zara appears from the darkness and heads towards us.

“Let’s go,” he gushes.

I gasp in excitement, “Where?”

Calvin jumps down from the wall and holds out his hand to me, as I clamber down, he catches me in his arms, spinning me around and holding me in the air for just a second.

As I land, we kiss. It was so instant that I didn’t even have time to question whether it was right or wrong. After so many kisses shared, I never knew that just the pressing of our lips would excite me so much.

His lips are cold, and despite my short skirt and my low-cut top, the rest of my body feels numb to the night. His tongue gently caresses my own overpowering every other sense in me. He pulls away quickly but leaves me reaching for more.

He takes my hand and pulls me across the road. I can do nothing on my own. My legs, my mouth, and my impulses are no longer within my control.

“Here,” he whispers. Somehow it’s like since we kissed, we’re connected, and I have to hold myself back from repeating his words out loud.

He places a helmet on my head, fixing it by pushing back my hair and wiping the glass so I can see clearly.

“Guys, are you leaving?” Zara holds a drink in her hand, it sways with every step she takes, and I know that she’ll barely remember this in the morning. And right now, I’ve got more important things to think about.

Calvin lifts me onto the back of his bike and pulls my arms around his waist. Pushed so tightly against him, I can smell the cologne stuck to his hair.

“Nicola!” Zara yells as we drive off into the night. I hold on tightly and think about nothing

else.

We arrive at my apartment, he takes off his helmet and turns to me.

“I’m staying with Rocco; I thought it’d be best to come here. My warm breath turns to steam in the icy night sky.

“Do you mind me being here?” he asks. I don’t reply. I can’t reply. I can’t even understand what I’m thinking. Almost every voice in my head is telling me that this is going to hurt in the morning.

My mind flicks to images of Zara repeating ‘I told you so,’ but a voice follows- one that comes from deeper than my head. It’s not even a voice, it’s a feeling in my blood, in my veins, so intuitive that I can’t ignore it.

I take him by the hand and lead him to my door. I rummage through my bag, searching for my keys. I feel his hands on my hips from behind me.

They caress me slowly and just as my key slots into the lock, he grabs me and spins me around, kissing me hard and pushing me up against the door.

With one hand, he turns the handle, and we step through the doorway, still locked in our embrace. In the hallway, before we can even make it into my bedroom, he lifts my shirt over my head.

I stand still, helpless to him. My skin tingles as his lips make their way from my breasts down to my stomach, pausing at my nipples.

He takes his time; he enjoys it just as much as I, and as he pulls away, he can’t help but go back just to taste them once more.

He tugs at my skirt with one hand, the other slides up to the top of my leg and slips underneath my panties. With his teeth, he pulls down my skirt and nestles his face in between my legs.

His hand pushes into me, slowly, yet firmly. His tongue caresses me rhythmically, and my legs begin to shake as he does everything just as I had imagined over and over again, alone in my bed.

He feels me tremble and takes one of my legs and brings it around his body, resting it on top of his shoulder. I try to resist at first, knowing that my thighs can’t be easy to support.

But he wraps his arm around it and pushes his face deeper into me. I release and let him take full control of me. As his fingers move faster, and his tongue continues stroking, I call out his name

through pants of breath.

“Calvin...”

He looks up at me with his eyes without moving his head. He keeps going, feeling that I’m so close.

“Don’t stop, Calvin.” I sink my fingers deep into his thick, black hair, and my toes begin to curl. He knows how to handle me, remaining intense and strong, yet listening to my quivers as I become ever more sensitive.

“I’m coming,” I gush, but he doesn’t stop. I keep coming, harder than ever before, my body soaking his hand as it pushes in and out of me. It lasts so long.

But as his lips pull away from me, I sigh. I couldn’t take more, but somehow I still want it.

Calvin stands up and looks into my eyes as he takes my hand and presses it against his crotch. I feel him, beneath his jeans, hard and throbbing, my eyes light up in excitement when I realise his fingers were just a taste of what was to come.

He kisses me again and leads me into the kitchen. He undoes his belt, and I reach into his pants, stroking him and watching as his head leans back with pleasure.

Suddenly he turns me around and pushes me against the tabletop. I hear a clink as his trousers hit the floor and our two bodies come together, our skin touching for the first time in two years.

I can feel his excitement, it’s rubbing between my thighs, and he creeps higher and higher, teasing me while he kisses my neck.

Then he enters me, slowly but thrusting hard each time.

I yelp quietly.

I haven’t been with anyone in so long. Calvin reaches deep and touches every side of me. He breathes deeply and brings his hands around me to rub my nipples between his fingers.

His head drops onto my shoulder, and I turn to kiss him, our tongues rub each other’s, but our mouths stay open, both of us catching our breath between firm thrusts.

He pushes harder and faster, and I have to scream, “Calvin!”

He covers my mouth with his hands, but I lick his fingers, and he lets them slide into my mouth

where I suck them and tickle them with my tongue.

Calvin whimpers helplessly. I feel so sexy that I turn and push him towards the table. Calvin steps back with me and throws everything from the table onto the floor.

While kissing him, I take his head in my hands and lean him back so that he's lying naked on the wood. I climb on top of him and take him with my hand, putting him back inside me.

I rock gently, letting my clitoris rub against his crotch, easing him in deeper and deeper until I can take all of him. I lean forward and press my hands onto his chest.

I kiss his tattoos and continue to slide him in and out of me. I linger over my name, Nicola, tattooed just above his left nipple. He takes my hand and holds it firm against that spot.

I ride him hard, the sweat falling from my cheeks and racing down my body, dripping from my hard nipples onto his skin. He runs his hands through my hair and pulls it back.

"I'm so close, Nicola," he murmurs, barely able to string his words together. His eyelashes flicker and his lips part.

I lean over, sucking his earlobe. I haven't forgotten his sensitive spots.

"I want you to come," I whisper and with a groan, Calvin grasps my hips tightly and pulls me towards him. We move together, in sync with our pleasure.

I close my eyes, Calvin rubs my clitoris, his deep cock is almost too much to handle, but I carry on pushing, using the strength of my thick thighs.

Calvin stiffens, I scream, and the two of us come together.

"Nicola," he pants. "Nicola!"

I hold him deep inside me, as we both throb with satisfaction.

"Calvin!" I call out.

## Chapter Eight

The alarm startles me and my eyes sting as I adjust to the brightness seeping through the crack in the curtains. I groan.

My head pounds and my stomach swirls round and round like an old washing machine. *This is going to be one bad hangover.*

I feel around the bed, but Calvin isn't there anymore, my heart sinks as memories of him leaving come flooding back to me.

But the sizzling of oil that I hear in the distance and the smell of pancakes seeps under the crack in my doorframe and tells me that Calvin is still here. I sit upright.

"Calvin?"

"Yes, baby?"

I exhale a little sigh of relief. I guess the pain of being left has turned me a little paranoid. I try to tell myself that this is a new chapter and that I can stop panicking.

"What on earth are you doing out of my bed?" I call out.

I hear him chuckle, and he walks into the bedroom still holding the frying pan. He's wearing his boxers that wrap tightly around his legs; I glance momentarily at his manhood tucked away but still able to give me butterflies just thinking about it.

"I owe you two years of pancakes," he grins. I bite my lip, unable to control my excitement for the romance to come.

"Are you going to flip the pancakes then?" I say. "I won't be impressed unless you flip them." Calvin rolls his eyes.

"Didn't anyone tell you I'm superman?" He fixates on the pan and with one hand, tosses the pancake into the air. He reaches out to catch it, but misses, the pancake falls onto the edge of my bed and then flops onto the floor.

Calvin and I look at each other before erupting into laughter.

“Some Superman!” I tease.

“Come here, you!” He climbs onto the bed and begins tickling me all over. I scream with delight but pretend that I want him to stop.

“Hold on, I don’t want to accidentally hit you with this,” he announces, holding the pan high in the air so as not to touch me with it.

“I’ll be back in a minute with more pancakes,” he winks. I fall back onto the bed. *Shit!* What time is it? I’ve got work at the diner today.

Calvin goes back into the kitchen while I rummage around the room naked, looking for my phone. I spot Calvin’s on the bedside table. I reach over and press it.

*‘7.43 AM. OK, I need to get in the shower and go!’* Then, just underneath the numbers, I spot Rocco’s name. Eight missed calls?

I look around the room. I listen and hear Calvin humming from the kitchen, the sound of a eggs cracking follows, and I know I’ve got time if I want. I slide open his phone and read the messages.

*Calvin, answer me.*

*Zara says you left with Nicola, is she drunk or are you serious?*

*Calvin, call me.*

*I thought we decided you weren’t going to do this to her?*

*Calvin, Dylan’s here and he’s looking for you. You need to sort out this fucking mess now. I won’t do it for you.*

*Dylan knows you left with Nicola and he’s pissed. He’s threatening to tell everyone, everything.*

*Nicola deserves the truth too, you know.*

I drop the phone and sit on the edge of the bed in silence. I feel the sun hitting down on my naked back, and I turn to see my pile of clothes neatly folded and left on the chair in the corner of my room. *Is all of this a game to him?*

I throw on a pair of jeans and a jumper and walk into the kitchen. I try my best to fake some happiness.

“I need to get to work now,” I tell him. He turns around from the stove and wrinkles up his face.

“I thought we were going to have breakfast?”

I swallow the spit gathering in my mouth.

“Another time, yeh?” Calvin puts down the pan and walks towards me. I quickly leave the kitchen and walk into the bathroom, shutting the door behind me as fast as I can without raising suspicion.

I don’t want him to follow me in here. He taps on the door, and I hear his head rest gently against it.

“I’ll just get my stuff, and I’ll see you tonight?”

I hold back the tears. “Yeh, I’ll call you later.”

I wait for him to get dressed and walk out the door. It’s just a few minutes before he leaves. Staring back at me in the mirror is a clown.

I’m a fool who let temptation win. I didn’t even ask the questions I needed answers to. He cracked a few jokes, made me smile a couple of times and got what he wanted, without a proper apology.

I feel like breaking down, like bursting into tears and curling up on the floor. But he’s already done that to me so many times. I have to work. I have to keep moving. I’m so ashamed.



## Chapter Nine

“Wow, you look like you had a rough night,” Brian opens the diner door for me and wipes a lipstick smudge from the side of my face.

“Did someone get lucky last night?”

I don’t answer, but the stare I cast him tells him not to ask any more questions. I pick up a cloth and begin wiping down the tables, fighting to push the negative thoughts out of my mind. But it feels like a black cloud hanging over me.

Every beat of my heart thumps with pain, I feel faint and dizzy, but the thought of eating makes me want to be sick. Somehow, time passes me by quicker than ever before, and the next time I look outside, the sun is already setting, the sky is washed with oranges and reds. They probably look beautiful.

Although I never called, I can’t help but turn every time I hear a motorbike pass. *Isn’t he even going to try?*

It’s him who hurt me, but somehow, I still want it to be him who comforts me.

I want him to hold me in his arms and to listen to me tell him how I fell for a man like no one else before, how we came from different worlds but still connected. How he left me and broke my heart into rough shards of glass, and how I still took him back the first chance I got, thinking it was divine fate and a sign of our unconditional love.

Really it was uncontrollable lust and too much vodka. I ride the bus home, and waiting for me outside my front door is Zara. She’s sitting on the floor, and it looks like she’s been there for some time.

“Zara, what the hell are you doing?!” I shout as I get down from the overcrowded bus.

She stands up. A sting of guilt hits me. How will I ever explain to her that after all her advice, after two years of crying to her that I went back to him and she was right?

A tear rolls down my face, and as I brush it away, another falls. But she isn’t angry. She holds out her arms, and I hold out mine too. We hug tightly, our heads wrapped around each other’s necks

like two swans.

I hold her for as long as I can. I can't bring myself to let go of her knowing that she's all I have right now.

"You don't need him, Nicola," she mumbles, her head still buried into my shoulder.

"I feel like an idiot," I whimper. She wraps her arms around me even tighter.

Cuddled up on the sofa, Zara tries to make sense of everything I tell her.

"Dylan's going to tell everyone everything?" she repeats.

"It has to be another woman, right? Rocco said 'we decided we weren't going to do this to her' he did something bad, Zara. He did something really bad."

Zara takes a deep breath. "And Dylan knows?"

I shake my head. "Do you remember how Dylan disappeared for a few weeks after Calvin left?"

Zara nods, and I watch as her eyes think back to that moment two years ago.

"He must have felt guilty. No wonder he's obsessed with me, he knew what Calvin was like."

Zara stands up to get another drink. "We all knew what Calvin was like, Nicola. You were blind to it. But he wasn't good for you."

I close my eyes. "I really thought everyone else was wrong, and that only I could see the real him."

Zara raises her eyebrows and tilts her head. She doesn't need to say anymore. She knows I've learned my lesson.

## Chapter Ten

“I always liked the sound of Calvin, you know?” Brian stares off into the distance as he wipes down the coffee machine.

“Please, can we not talk about this?” I steal a marshmallow from the tub, Brian scolds me, but then reaches into the container himself and quickly shoves a marshmallow into his own mouth.

“Imh forth he wash shoundes egshiting.” I screw up my face at him.

“I have no idea what you just said,” I reply.

“I said,” Brian swallows and clears his throat. “I said, I thought he sounded exciting.” I chuckle and shake my head. “Well, you would say that. You love a bad boy!” Brian snorts and then turns his head in reflection.

“Is your friend Rocco single?”

“Rocco isn’t gay, Brian!”

He tuts and takes out some cleaning spray. “The good ones never are.” He pauses, looking out the window. “Now *he* could be gay!”

“Who?” I reply.

“Your friend, what’s his name, David?”

I throw my head back and shout into the air. “Don’t tell me that Dylan is...”

The bell rings, and Dylan walks into the diner. Brian pulls a face; I smile a little before pointing two fingers at my head and imitating a gun.

“I’ll give you a shout before I leave, OK?”

“OK,” I mouth back to him. I make my way over to Dylan.

“Everything OK?” I ask with minimum enthusiasm. If there’s one person I don’t need to see, it’s Dylan. He’s most definitely here to rub last night in my face.

Dylan shakes his head, still staring down at the table.

“I can’t believe you slept with him.”

“Wow!” I scoff. “That’s not exactly your business!”

Dylan bites his lip signals for me to sit down in front of him. I take a seat and decide to hear him out.

“So did Zara tell you?” I run my finger around the rim of the coffee pot.

“I need you to tell him to leave.” Dylan opens his eyes wide. He’s rehearsed these lines.

“What, Clavin? I’m not telling him to do anything. I won’t have anything more to do with him. I just want to forget this whole thing.”

Dylan drums his fingers against the table.

“Dylan, I know you know something. You’re probably trying to protect me, but honestly, it just makes me kind of angry. You know why he left, don’t you?”

“He’s dangerous, alright? He doesn’t love you, he never did and someone like him, a biker who has nothing going for him, well, he’s just going to end up hurting you, again!” Dylan raises his voice; his lips tremble with anger.

I see the vein again; it throbs hard as the blood flows through it, and I feel the room getting more and more tense.

Brian looks over to me as he zips up his coat. I nod back at him, letting him know that I’ll finish up here tonight. He glances back at me one last time as he walks out the door.

“Look, I don’t know what Calvin did, or said to you. But him being a biker isn’t the problem. It’s the fact that he lied.”

Dylan laughs, and with every passing second, his attitude winds me up even more.

“If you’re not going to tell me what you know, then you can just leave, OK? I need to clean up here.” I get up from my seat, but Dylan snatches my arm, stopping me from moving.

“Tell. Him. To. Leave.” Every word that slithers from his lips is over-pronounced. The look in his eyes fills me with disgust. I try to prise my arm away from him.

“He won’t listen to anyone else,” he continues. “If Calvin stays in this town, taking whatever he wants from whomever he wants, then I’ll have no choice.”

“You’re supposed to be my friend,” I grunt, still tugging at my arm, unable to release his grasp.

“You think I spent all these years hanging out with you, taking you to lunch, listening to your whining to be your friend? You’re delusional, Nicola.” He stands up. I step back from him, but he follows my every move.

“If Calvin doesn’t leave this town, I’ll tell my father to arrest him. I’ll have him dig up every piece of dirt he can find on him and Rocco and all the others. A gang of numbskulls like them is bound to be hiding something.”

I shrink away and hunch my shoulders, but Dylan keeps pushing me into the dark corner of the diner.

“I thought that with him out of the picture, you’d finally see what you could have. The kind of man you could be with. I was patient. JESUS CHRIST I WAS SO PATIENT!” I scream at Dylan’s roars.

There’s no one around.

Maybe I’m stronger than him. Perhaps I can get past him and out of that door.

But he’s so full of rage; I know that he’ll put up a fight.

“Dylan, maybe we can... try?” My eyes well up, and I hide my hands behind my back while they tremble with fear. “Calvin and I are over. I need someone else. It could be you. We could try.”

Dylan breaths heavily, staring into my eyes, but they continue darting around the room like he’s looking for someone. He raises his hand and strikes me across the face.

My cheek sears with pain and I fall to the floor.

“Do you think I’m stupid, bitch?”

“Noo, no, Dylan.”

“It took you twenty minutes to leave with Calvin at that party. Twenty minutes to talk the panties off of you. Do you think I would want a slut like you? If I’m going to have you, I’ll take you.”

I crawl along the floor, my feet skidding as I desperately try to reach the door. He looms over me and bends over, snatching my feet and dragging me across the floor.

I look up at him and cry, “Dylan, no! We’re friends.” He runs his hands up my leg as I lie on the floor paralyzed but still whispering no, tears blurring my visions.

I turn away, unable to stomach the sight of his face, smirking while his hand reaches my thigh and continues moving upwards. I steady my breathing and try to block everything out.

Somehow, I think of Calvin. How gentle his touch felt, how much I wanted it. And now, Dylan’s hands feel rough and scratch against my skin. I just want it to stop.

But it does.

A short, dull thump fills the air, and Dylan’s body flops down beside me. I look up, opening one eye and it’s Calvin, reaching his hand out to me, the other shakes as it holds a baseball bat.

I want to hold him, but my body is still in shock. I stare at him and try to speak, but when I open my mouth, only cries fall from it.

“Calvin,” I whisper. He drops to the floor and scoops me up into his arms- the two of us sit in silence, intertwined through mind and body. As I weep, Calvin weeps too, stroking my hair quickly, yet softly.

“Did he hurt you, Nicola? Did I get here in time or did he already hurt you?” I lift my head and show him my cheek. He gasps and touches the swollen red skin, but it stings, and I pull away.

“Just that,” I utter. “I was just scared.”

“I’m here now,” says Calvin. “I’ll keep you safe,” he repeats, rocking me in his arms.

## Chapter Eleven

The wind rushes past me, and Calvin's motorbike twists and turns through the windy roads. I would ask where we're going, but I feel safe, and that's all that matters.

Calvin lifts me down when we finally stop, taking my hand in his, only touching me when I silently give him permission.

It's still hard to believe he would do anything to hurt me, but the more I think about it, the more I realise that he left because he became the person he never thought he would.

We plonk down into the sand and let the water almost touch our feet. We sit for a while, just listening to the waves crashing in the distance. Calvin turns to me.

"I had to wait until I could forgive you, you know?"

I almost stand up and walk away, but my sheer confusion keeps my hands dug into the sand.

"I, I..." It's impossible to muster up the words, I'm so baffled, but he continues.

"I forgave you for sleeping with Dylan," the pain resonates in his voice. He pauses between every word, finding the courage to accept what I did without ever hearing me say "I'm sorry."

I shake my head. "No." There's no other word. I can't believe what he's saying to me after what he just saw.

"No, not Dylan. It never was, it *never* will be."

Calvin gulps and closes his eyes.

"I told Zara that I wanted to marry you. I had a ring and everything."

I slip off my shoes, letting my feet sink into the icy water. For a moment, the cold takes away the shock. I can barely listen to Calvin, yet I grasp on to every word he says.

"I knew from her face that something was wrong, she didn't say a lot, but her reaction spoke volumes."

"Zara knew?" I utter under my breath.

“That night, Dylan showed up at the bar. He pulled me away from the group and told me that you two had been together, just once, but that was enough.”

I grab Calvin’s shoulders and force him to look at me. “That’s not true, Calvin.”

He turns away. “That’s what I said. We had a fight; I broke Dylan’s nose pretty bad and his face was covered in bruises. I didn’t mean to lose control like that, but he wouldn’t stop grinning like a fucking Cheshire cat.

He tried to say he came to tell me the truth, but I knew he was enjoying every second of my pain.”

“And you just believed him?” I stutter, still coming to terms with the betrayal from Dylan. After everything I’ve learned about him tonight, I feel disgusted to have ever let him into my life.

He’s the reason Calvin left, and he pretended like he was the one suffering while I tried to comprehend Calvin’s disappearance.

“I didn’t believe him. I couldn’t, Nicola. I was ready to marry you, to whisk you away on the back of my bike and run away from everything- you and me against the world. But then I asked Zara, and she told me it was true.”

“That lying bitch!” I scream. “Please Calvin, you know now, right? You know that’s not true!”

Calvin purses his lips. “I know, Nicola. But for so long I didn’t.”

“So you just left?”

“I wasn’t going to.” Calvin drags his fingers through the sand, watching it slip through his hand.

“But Dylan started saying shit about his dad, that he could get me arrested. Rocco threw a few punches as well, and I knew he’d be in trouble. I told Dylan that I would leave and never come back, as long as he left Rocco alone. He agreed.”

Our hands touch, communicating all the things we want to say, but just can’t.”

“I cried for you so many nights, Calvin.”

Calvin turns my head towards him. “Last night was the first time I slept peacefully in two years.”

He kisses me, but not passionately like yesterday; it’s like we need it, we can’t pull away from



each other. We just want to be as close as possible. Calvin stops himself.

“I came back a few times. I drove past the diner, sometimes you seemed sad, but other times, you were happy. I knew you’d be able to move on. A couple of times, I spotted Dylan. He held your hand and stroked your hair, and I just wanted it to be me.”

“*I* wanted it to be you!”

“I couldn’t tell if you were together or not, and honestly, I couldn’t stomach thinking about it. But the longer I was without you, the easier it became to convince myself that you would be better off without me anyway. That maybe you needed someone like Dylan.”

“And Rocco knew everything?” I ask.

“Rocco never believed Dylan, but after we beat him up, he got scared. When I came back here, I told Rocco that I wanted you back, but he wasn’t sure. He thought you’d suffered enough and telling you the truth meant you finding out about Dylan and Zara. But then when I saw what he was doing to you in that diner, what he was going to do to you...” His words trail off, traumatized by what he had seen.

“You realized I would find out eventually.”

Calvin turns to me. “You’re my peace, Nicola.”

I hold his face in my hands.

“And when the pain didn’t go away, I started to question everything I did. When even after two years, I was still waking up sick, staring at the empty space in my bed where you should have been, when I was starting to forget what you looked like I asked myself, “Could she be feeling this too? I had to come back to you.”

I climb onto him, he lies back into the sand and lets me kiss him, from his lips to his neck. I tug gently on his shirt, and he looks up at me.

“Are you sure?” he whispers?

## Chapter Twelve

I unbutton his shirt, caressing him gently with every inch of skin that I expose.

“If you promise me,” I whisper into his ear. I run my hands across his torso, circling my name when I reach his chest.

“If you promise me never to believe anyone else over me.” Calvin pulls my ear towards his lips and talks to me.

“I promise.”

I untie my pinny and lift my jumper over my head, revealing the black lingerie beneath, Calvin gushes with lust as he caresses my breasts.

“And you promise me that you’ll talk to me, that you’ll tell me what’s going on, you can’t keep me in the dark like that again.”

He reaches around my back and unhooks my bra, letting my breasts fall onto his face. Between kisses, he utters, “We’re a team, Nicola, from now on, we do everything together.”

I bring my hands down to his crotch and slip one finger below his jeans. “You have to promise me as well, Calvin, that you’ll never leave me again.”

Calvin sits up, wrapping my thighs around his waist. He pulls the hairband from my hair and holds my head between his hands. “I can’t imagine even one day without you. I never want to feel that pain again.”

He places his hands on my shoulders and pushes me down to the ground, climbing on top of me, pushing against me from beneath his clothing. I feel him get harder and harder. I sigh, and Calvin stops.

“You do want this, right? After what happened with Dylan?” I press my finger against his lips.

“Nothing that you are doing to me feels anything like what Dylan tried to do to me.” I unzip Calvin’s pants and rub my hand against him.

“Stand up,” I demand. Like a soldier, Calvin follows my requests. I pull his pants to the floor

and get onto my knees. He looks around. It's dark, and we're hidden by the caves, but I can sense his nerves.

"No one can see us," I mumble in between licks, taking time to feel and massage every sensitive part of him.

"It's exciting," he replies, rubbing my head, guiding me with his hands, groaning with pleasure. I suck hard and take him in my mouth as deep as I can, but I can only take so much.

Calvin is gentle with me, and when his thighs begin to tense, he gets down on the ground with me. We roll over together, and my leg dips into the water.

"That's fucking cold!" I scream.

Calvin dips his leg in too.

"Fuck! You're right!" he laughs.

He submerges his hands into the water and turns me over onto all fours. I quiver as his frozen hands touch my warm body.

He crawls beneath me, sucking on my nipples and massaging my breasts with his hands. He shuffles along the sand and pulls my body towards him.

I sit on his face and let his tongue slip in and out of me, rubbing against my clitoris. He pulls himself up, still kissing me everywhere, sliding his tongue across every part of me.

He kneels behind me. With his hands he rubs from my feet, up to my legs and all the way along my back, pausing in any areas he can't resist. His fingers and thumbs tempt me and tickle me. The sensitivity is hard to handle.

He surprises me with sensations I never knew I'd like. I hear him lick a finger, and he slowly places it inside. Then comes another, then another.

"I want you now!" I exclaim, reaching around my body and holding him in my hands, rubbing him along the creases.

He puts his hands on my breasts and pulls me up, so we're both kneeling. He puts himself inside and following the rhythm of the beating waves, he thrusts into me, getting deeper and harder every time.

I reach my arms around, running my hands through his hair as he bites my neck, releasing just before it hurts too much. I drop down to the floor, digging my arms into the sand, my buttocks pointed high, my chest touching the floor.

He fills me deeper like this, and I moan with pleasure, louder and louder as he rubs my g-spot over and over again.

He moves faster and his breathing heavies.

His own excitement fuels me, and I come, feeling the moisture drip down both our legs.

Calvin cries out my name, pushing himself inside repeatedly until I hear him moan.

He stops, holding me tightly with his manly hands.

He rocks, back and forth, releasing a few last groans before we both collapse onto the floor in a sweaty mess.

“It’s going to take forever to get this sand off,” I pant, stroking his chest. Calvin looks over his shoulder.

“I’ve got an idea!”

Before I can stop him, he stands up and dives into the seawater.

“You’re crazy!” I call out. His head bursts through the surface.

“You’re next,” he screams, running towards me. I try to stand up, but my feet slip through the sand, Calvin grabs me by the waist and pulls me into the water.

I shriek as my naked body submerges into the coldness. But Calvin goes under with me, and we kiss beneath the water. We embrace for as long as we can until we break through the water and inhale as much air as we can.

Calvin picks me up and wraps my legs around his waist.

“You’re a lot easier to carry in water!”

My mouth drops wide open; I splash him in the face with a handful of water.

“I’m only kidding,” he winks. “Actually, holding you like this is making me kind of horny again!” I giggle and wiggle my hips against him to tease him. But then I wrap my arms around his neck

and look into those blue eyes. The ocean has nothing on them.

“I think we’ve got some things to sort out back home, don’t you?”

“I need to resolve this Dylan situation,” he sighs.

“The diner is filled with cameras. I don’t think he’s going to be threatening you after what happened tonight,” I reply.

“What are you going to say to Zara?” Calvin kisses each cheek and slowly spins around while I clutch onto him still.

“What she did was awful, and I won’t forgive her easily. But I think she never really knew you; she never knew how happy you made me. She fucked up bad, but she saw how much that hurt me, and I think that probably hurt her too.”

Calvin smiles at me, sincerely. In the blacks of his eyes, I can see the moon.

A chill runs across my body, reminding me that I’m naked and exposed, but I feel exposed to Calvin too. And for the first time, he’s baring himself to me.

And even here, in the middle of nowhere, holding each other in the open water of the nighttime sea, I feel protected. I know he’ll keep me safe.

## Epilogue

“Calvin,” I pant through heavy breath.

“Promise me something.”

Calvin smirks and takes my hand.

“Anything, babe.”

“That you’ll never make me climb up a hill like this again!” I lean over and grab onto my knees. When I look up across the hillside, the sun is just setting, still peeping over the edge of the horizon, but painting the sky a hue of pink and purple. I turn around and look at Calvin; he’s tying his laces. I look back to the sky again. Calvin coughs.

“What?” I scoff.

“Could you turn around again?”

I roll my eyes, fold my arms, and face Calvin.

“Oh, Jesus. You’re not trying your laces!”

“I was hoping that you might marry me...”

I freeze. *Is this really happening to me?*

“Well?” asks Calvin.

“Calvin!” I run into his open arms, both of us tumble onto the floor. Calvin pulls me on top of him. “I guess that’s a yes then?”

**THE END**