

Weddings, Pregnancies and Love

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Weddings, Pregnancies and Love

by [Writerperson100](#)

Summary

// Short Story //

A lot can happen to a family in the 9 month journey to pregnancy.

Brothers can get married, sisters can grow up and change and 2 people can realise they were meant for each other.

Notes

Polin-centric

All other Bridgertons are present but not focused on.

The Blossom in Spring

Chapter Notes

A story from April and May

The night of 3rd April

It had started the night of a wedding as these things normally do, a lot of champagne and the atmosphere of love.

Anthony Bridgerton and Kate Sharma got married in a lavish ceremony at Aubrey Hall worthy of the noble title of Viscount that had lost its allure somewhere in the 20th century. The evening was a celebration for the two oxford educated lawyers that had spent the last ten years sparing into love and as the night came to an end, the close family and friends left behind enjoyed the final moments of the festivities. Kate's supermodel sister Edwina, and caring mother Mary smiled in delight for their girl who had sacrificed too much for them, finally putting herself first. Friends from their Oxford days told loud stories of two people so well suited for each other that they had to fight their feelings for years just to give themselves some conflict.

And then there was the rest of the Bridgerton brood, Violet Bridgerton, the matriarch of the large family of 9 beamed from head to toe at her eldest child's triumph. Benedict Bridgerton stood swaying with his fiancée, relishing in anticipation of their nuptials 3 months from now. Simon Basset was trying to strategically sip his wife Daphne's champagne flute in hopes that no one would accuse the couple of stealing Kate and Anthony's thunder with a pregnancy announcement of their own less than a year after their short-gun wedding. Eloise Bridgerton stood in the corner of the room with her childhood best friend lamenting on how she was least interested in the festivities, her happiness for her eldest brother and new sister-in-law not overshadowing her general disdain for the institution they had willingly entered into. Francesca Bridgerton was enjoying her position at the piano, giving the couple the gift of the beautiful melody they were dancing to. Gregory and Hyacinth stood next to each other, a little too young to appreciate the undying love that was being celebrated but still finding themselves swept up in the joy.

Colin bridgeton was nowhere to be found.

The newly-married couple drove away at midnight to start on their honeymoon, quickly followed by the departure of all their friends to a pub to continue their night. Soon the only people left at Aubrey Hall were the Bridgertons, the Sharmas and one Penelope Featherington.

Simon and Daphne were the first to cut the night short, claiming exhaustion. They were soon followed by equally exhausted Violet and Mary and 'too young to join in' Gregory and Hyacinth. The rest remained a little while longer, drinking the leftover alcohol and sharing stories from their lives.

"I think I'm also going to go up to my room. I have to go back to London first thing tomorrow for that noon meeting." Said Eloise to the group.

Edwina nodded with her noting the time. "It is quite late, I was hoping to join you on your way back to London tomorrow so I think I am also going to bed."

That news caused a cascade of murmurs in the room as all but one stood up.

"You're not joining us, Penelope?" Asked Benedict as he noticed her continuing to sit on the floor of the massive ballroom they rarely ever used.

Penelope Featherington shook her head, "I don't think I'm tired enough for sleep, besides I don't have to be back to London till tomorrow night. I think I'm going to walk around some."

Edwina and Francesca had disappeared up the staircase to their rooms while Eloise, Benedict and Sophie looked at Penelope.

Sophie looked concerned. "Are you sure you are sober enough for that?"

"I have spent too many summers in my life here to ever not be sober enough to walk around Aubrey Hall." She laughed. "Besides, Colin is still missing, maybe I'll find him."

Eloise laughed. "I'm willing to bet he snuck back to his room right after the toasts to avoid 'you're next' comments. You won't find him here. But stay, you don't have the threat of an early train. Just please be careful."

She smiled at her best friend. "I always am."

And with that the 3 made their way upstairs and Penelope grabbed a bottle of Chardonnay, she knew it wasn't wise to keep drinking but she uncorked it anyways, walking towards the terrace of the library, her favourite place in this entire house.

"There you are!" She said as she spotted the back of the tall, brown-haired boy she'd recognise anywhere. "El thought you went upstairs to hide from the marriage questions."

Colin turned to her, surprised that she had found him there. "Nah, that's where mum would think to look first. This terrace is less used."

Penelope smiled. "Do you remember when we were kids, Eloise and I would hide out here and read for hours." She made her way to the seat next to Colin and took a swig from the bottle. "You were the only one that knew we were out here."

Colin smiled back at her. "That's because this was where I liked to write in silence before you two discovered it and polluted it with your giggles."

“Polluted it with our giggles’, you are drunk.” She laughed.

“Only a little.”

“So, what brings you back out here all pensive, hiding from your family at your brother’s wedding?” She asked.

He shrugged. “The usual, just because Ant and Ben do something, doesn’t mean I have to too.”

“Is that why you went to Cambridge?”

He laughed. “I’ll never tell and you’ll never know.”

Penelope scoffed. “Oh please, you are an open book.”

“Really Pen? Please do elaborate.”

“Fine, but you asked for it. You love your older brothers, but you feel untethered around them. Because Anthony has the title -

“That doesn’t mean anything anymore.”

“- and the responsibility and Benedict has his passion in art. You think that people expect you to be them but you are not them.”

Colin looked at her stunned. “Uhhmm.”

“But you are Colin, you travel all around the world and write about it. That is something to be proud of.”

“You really think so?”

She smiled. “I know so.” After a little pause she continued. “So, how’d I do?”

He looked at her, his eyes glistening with an emotion she didn’t recognise. “Very well, you read me and made me feel better about what has been bothering me all night in less than a minute.”

Penelope laughed. “You are so easy to read. I don’t think you can keep anything from me.”

He smiled a sad smile that left Penelope speechless, she couldn’t read that smile but his eyes wouldn’t leave hers.

It was in those moments, when he stared at her so intently she thought he was looking into her soul she felt flutters in her stomach. They weren’t the flutters of 16-year-old her having a crush on and idealising her best friend’s older brother but the flutter of her as the woman she was now, knowing that despite having done a relatively successful job of moving on, a piece of her heart will always belong to Colin Bridgerton.

She got up in a rush, feeling flustered “I- uhm- I... I think I should go upstairs, Sleep, you know, rest.”

Colin quickly followed up, standing facing her, their bodies so close her could feel the heat radiating off of her. “Don’t go.”

Her breath caught as she kept staring at him.

“Colin.” She breathed his name so softly he would have missed it had he not been as close as he was.

“Pen.” His reply matched her tone. Before she had the time to process the fact that she was making him as flustered as he was making her she saw him bend down toward her. Spurred by courage she didn’t understand, she wanted to hasten the moment and reached up on her toes to meet him as he bent down. They both hesitated for just a moment, the anticipation a culmination of longer than either were willing to admit to themselves.

He slowly kissed her for the very first time. She slowly kissed him back.

Their eyes opened after the kiss and they stared at each other. She let out a small giggle and he chimed in.

“I’ve wanted to do that since I saw you come down in this dress.” He said looking earnestly in her eyes.

She looked up at him and smiled, she didn’t know if she trusted her voice yet to speak, so she reached up and gave him a soft kiss all over again. As she broke apart, his eyes remained closed for a second longer than her. She took that moment to step away ever so slightly, her arms coming down from around him as she took both his hands in hers and took a step back.

He looked at her perplexed and she just smiled. “I think its time to go upstairs, you coming?”

He nodded like a puppy dog following her lead as they had their way into the library from the terrace still hand-in-hand. She led him out of the library and into the giant lobby and started to make her way up the stairway when he tugged at her hand pulling her back towards him. Her being two steps above him made them more eye-level than they had been before and he took that moment to kiss her again. Every kiss they shared seemed gentle and innocent, kisses between two people with so much regard for each other that they were being as cautious as they could be.

Colin looked at her with care and anticipation all in the same look. “Are you sure you wanna do this?”

She just nodded before asking him. “Are you too drunk to do this?”

He shook his head.

They both continued to stare at each other.

“Maybe we should get out of the stairway before someone catches us.” Whispered Colin.

They both shared another soft giggle as they continued to make it up the stairs before Penelope stopped them at the landing of the first floor. "My room shares a wall with Eloise's." She laughed. "I don't think that's such a good idea, not unless we want a lecture in the morning."

He laughed with her. "Lucky for us, my room only shares a wall with Ant's room and he just left for his honeymoon." She nodded in his direction and the couple turned right towards the last room in the corridor.

The rest of their night was filled with passion and desire. The two took their time familiarising themselves with each other's bodies and what makes them moan. They made that one night last, maybe it was because they were worried that that night is all that they would have. But the next morning as Colin and Penelope woke up naked in each other's arms 2 things became clear. (1) This was not a one time occurrence; and (2) They needed a way to get Penelope back to her room without anyone noticing.



14th May

Penelope Featherington felt guilty. Really her guilt had set in sometime on the 9th of April and refused to leave. It wasn't guilt for sleeping with Colin Bridgerton the night of his brother's wedding. It wasn't even guilt that they had basically woken up that morning confusion free knowing that the night wasn't a fluke or a mistake but rather the start of something. It was the guilt of the secret.

When the couple had woken up the morning after their first time, they were unable to stop looking at each other in awe.

"I can't believe we did that." Said Colin breaking their silence.

Penelope felt herself getting self-conscious. "It's ok Colin, it doesn't have to mean anything, I mean..." Before she could formulate her half-hearted reasons for why they slept together the night before Colin interrupted her.

"It absolutely has to mean something." He replied with conviction.

She was surprised. "You want it to mean something."

"I don't want it to Pen, to me it already does." He brushed her hair that was gracing her cheekbone. "I kissed the girl I haven't been able to stop thinking about for months, I had the courage to do something, it means a great deal."

She smiled and kissed him softly. "It means something to me too, more than you know."

“Great! Now that that is out of the way, how do we get you out of here before someone catches you in my bedchamber Miss Featherington.” He said in a tone hinting to scandal. They both stared at one and another and laughed again.

On the 5:00 train back to London the two decided that their wish to want to hide from his family (and hers) extended beyond the morning. They were happy to explore whatever was happening between them in the privacy of each others company but not under the watchful eye of people in their lives.

They soon discovered they rather enjoyed the clandestine nature of their relationship, sneaking into each others homes when the chances of getting caught were lower, subtle glances and touches in the presence of people they were hiding it from. It was a little exciting. The problem was that they both lived with Bridgertons, Penelope with Eloise and Colin with Benedict. They took comfort in the fact that after Benedict and Sophie’s July wedding he will have their whole place to themselves, giving them the privacy they need. Currently that was hard to find.

Penelope had been a fixture in Bridgerton sibling nights since she was a 6-year-old. She had met Eloise in playgroup and Eloise had immediately invited Penelope to come play at her house. She remembered the first time she was there like it was yesterday. She had a scarf because it was cold and the eldest 3 Bridgerton boys were running around playing when her scarf flew off into Colin’s face and he fell back into the mud. That was the beginning of the end for her heart.

Tonight was yet another sibling night, although why they had all somehow gathered at Simon and Daphne’s on this random Thursday no one was certain. Penelope was sitting in the middle of a couch with Eloise and Francesca on either of her sides discussing their latest favourite book that was to be adapted into a movie. But truthfully Penelope was not paying that conversation much heed, she was staring at the boy she had been seeing for just over a month. Colin Bridgerton sat on a chair directly across from Penelope Featherington and two of his younger sisters, he was ignoring those two sisters along with Benedict, Sophie, Gregory and Hyacinth who were involved in a highly competitive game of monopoly while Simon and Daphne chatted with returned honeymooners Anthony and Kate. No, he was staring back at Penelope, trying his hardest to make the most subtle seductive face that he could - a face seductive enough that she would want to leave with him immediately but not obvious that his siblings were suspicious of anything.

He could see his plan working as he heard Penelope clear her throat. “I think maybe I should go back. I have an article pitch meeting at 9 am tomorrow -” he knew that was a lie, that meeting was at 3, “and I wanna be rested, I think my story has front page potential.”

Before Colin could agree and make his own excuse to leave. Before Penelope could even get up Daphne interrupted “No!”

Penelope was surprised, her plans for a passionate night with Colin fading away due to the desperation in Daphne’s voice. “Is everything ok?” She asked concerned.

Daphne now had everyone’s attentions and she took a beat to collect herself before saying. “Of course it is, but it’s sibling night, you are part of this you can’t just leave.”

Colin came to her defence, still not giving up hope for his passionate night with Penelope. “Well, Daph, I’m sorry but I was also thinking of heading back, its a Thursday night I have work tomorrow before I leave for New York Sunday early morning, there is a lot to do. And this is just a normal night, I mean I’m glad Ant and Kate are back but I think we can call it a night don’t you.”

Daphne was adamant in getting everyone to stay, forcing the group to start join in on the monopoly game currently ongoing.

The youngest Bridgerton siblings left and with time more of the Bridgerton siblings started getting antsy to leave, Daphne knew she couldn’t make them stay any longer.

“I’m pregnant”

“What!” There was a collective reaction from everyone in the room that wasn’t Daphne or Simon.

Daphne took a deep breath. “Yeah its really early and I shouldn’t even be telling you guys I’m barely 8 weeks along, but I just had to tell you all.”

Simon looked at his wife. “Daphne I thought we agreed to wait till the end of the first trimester before we started telling people.”

“That’s a month from now - I couldn’t wait.”

There was silence as everyone in the room processed the information before Eloise came to a realisation.

“OMG! Is that why Simon was having all your drinks at their wedding?” She said pointing to Anthony and Kate.

“Wait, you noticed that” Simon looked at her surprised.

“Of course I did, I am Eloise Bridgerton, nothing gets past me.”

Penelope and Colin shared a look that mercifully no one noticed.

“Wait, that wedding was like 6 weeks ago” Said Francesca.

“And...?” Daphne replied.

“That was like 2 weeks into your pregnancy.” Said Francesca.

Kate chimed in. “No one knows they are pregnant at 2 weeks.”

Daphne looked between everyone she considered family. “Oh that, um we were trying and I was tracking, my period, my temperature, everything. When I took the test, the line was so faint I thought I was delusional, to confirm I used one of those digital tests and it said 1-2 weeks.”

There was a chorus of “WOW”, “YAY”, “OMG” and “Congratulations” all around the room.

Daphne looked between everyone. “So yeah, I guess tonight isn’t just a random hang out session it an important milestone. I told mum last week. You guys are about to be aunts and uncles.”

There were hugs all around after which Daphne conceded that everyone needed to go home. Anthony and Kate left for their new house dropping Francesca at her dormitory on the way and Benedict headed with Sophie to her apartment. Eloise looked at Penelope expectantly, “You ready to go?”

Penelope looked between Colin and Eloise, mentally hitting herself for the decision she was about to make. “I don’t think so El, its already past 1am, I need to workshop my article pitch before presenting it tomorrow. I think i’m going to do that at the office.”

Eloise looked at her perplexed. “You wanna go to the office? At 1:30 in the morning?”

Penelope looked at her straight-faced while she knew Colin was smirking behind her. “Yup.”

“By the time you get there it’ll be 2am.”

“Yup.”

Eloise just stared at her friend in disbelief. “You are gonna outline your front-page article pitch at 2am in your office.”

“Yup.”

“What about clothes, you can’t do your meeting in yesterdays clothes, you’ll look like you are on a walk of shame!” She exclaimed.

Colin began to laugh, Penelope didn’t dare look in his direction but Eloise glared at him. “What are you laughing about?”

Ignoring their side conversation, Penelope replied. “I have spare work clothes in the office for that reason.” In actuality she also had multiple sets at Colin’s place.

Eloise rolled her eyes. “You are a workaholic.”

Satisfied her excuse was taken, the 3 made their way to the tube stop, before separating at different lines as Eloise took the one back to their place and Colin and Penelope got on the line that goes to her office but stops at his place first.

She looked at his cocky and smug face. “Shut up!” She exclaimed as they were alone in their tube.

He put his arm around her. “No, no, no, Pen, I didn’t know you to be such a workaholic.”

She swatted his chest. “You know, one day it’ll be your turn to make a fool of yourself like that an I will revel in the moment.”

He looked back at her earnestly, “For you? Worth it.”

They both smiled at each other till they retired in his bed. There was no steamy make out session, or uncontrollable urge to undress each other, they just lay down in comfortable silence, wrapped up in each other ready for bed like this was the only way either of them had gone to sleep their entire life.

“Am I your girlfriend?” Asked Penelope as they had almost fallen asleep.

She felt his movements of comfortable laughter before she heard them. “Don’t you ever forget it.”

The Long Summer

Chapter Notes

A story from June and July

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Text messages in the month of June

... A-G Bridgertons ...

14:32, 1st june

benedict: yo @Colin remind me again your travel plans for the month

benedict: we got a bachelor weekend to plan.

eloise: and you wanna plan this bachelor weekend on a group chat with all your sisters too

eloise: solid plan ben

benedict: nah, i've been thinking of doing a non-nefarious, sibling drinking weekend in the country

hyacinth: that's code for sophie is making you

benedict: such little faith you have in your brother. OUCH!

benedict: I just thought it would be fun

daphne: I'm sorry brother, but you'll have to count me out. Not only can I not drink but this pregnancy is giving in all-day morning sickness.

eloise: all-day morning sickness? remind me to never have children.

anthony: This sounds like a sane, and dare I say respectable plan

anthony: Since you aren't getting married there, maybe at Aubrey Hall?

20:13, 1st june

benedict: Colin?

06:32, 2nd june

colin: sorry all, I had just returned from a 2 day backpacking stint in ireland, the result of which were a dead phone battery and an asleep me.

colin: i'm going on one trip in june from what I know, but it is a rather long one

colin: a trip to vietnam from the 11th to the 26th june

... Penelope and Eloise ...

10:47, 2nd june

eloise: Pen, were you home last night

eloise: I don't remember you coming in

penelope: I had after work drinks with coworkers, ran long.

penelope: And I had to go into the office early for this Rosenthal investigation

penelope: It's the grind

eloise: you workaholic, come home sometime

... Bridgerton sibling night peeps ...

17:19, 5th june

benedict: itinerary! itinerary! hot of the desk of Benedict and Sophie

benedict: the ben and soph stag and hen weekend will commence from 28th june through to 1st july and you all are invited.

benedict: come up to aubrey hall however you like and 2 days of splendid drinking and food in a noble manor bc why not

sophie: I approve that message 👍👍

kate: Anthony and I are in

daphne: I'm still not, sorry guys but simon can go

simon: and leave my pregnant wife at home, no

simon: i'm out too, sorry

gregory: hell yeah!!!

gregory: let's get drunk

hyacinth: sounds fun

benedict: amendment, no G and H

gregory: heyy

hyacinth: tough but fair

gregory: what's fair

benedict: that 2 people not yet in uni aren't old enough to drink the days away with people in the 20's and 30's

gregory: i'm at uni next september

anthony: maybe next time brother

gregory: I hate everyone

eloise: hell yeah let's drink,

eloise: i'm in too, so is Pen

penelope: El!!

eloise: what? like you wouldn't be?

penelope: I can answer for me you know

eloise: fine, I just figured we live together, we can answer for each other

penelope: i'd love to be there

colin: i'm in too

francesca: and so am I

benedict: my party is gonna rock

... Colin and Penelope ...

16:26, 7th June

colin: so am I seeing you tonight

penelope: Unfortunately I think not

penelope: Tonight I really have to work late

penelope: We have been sifting through records to find any possible witnesses and bystanders associated with this thing and it's very tedious work

penelope: Noah and Logan are also pulling an all nighter

colin: my investigative journalist girlfriend, I am so proud

penelope: Yeah i've learnt that the career is over glamourised

penelope: The reality is document sifting and a lot of cold calling, it's no travelling around the world

colin: you love it

colin: all the meticulous work and attention to detail

colin: it's what you were born to do

penelope: Look at that, you can read me too

colin: besides the travel can get tiring sometimes

colin: anyways, anyways if you can't come to me maybe I can come to you

penelope: I don't know how late we will be working tonight honey

colin: I know, but you lot have to eat

colin: I'll come over with chinese takeaway and we can have a little dinner date around your paperwork

colin: and bring enough food for the guys too

penelope: I'd love that, but let me just ask them

penelope: They are in, Noah misses his wife's cooking and Logan has asked for moo shoo pork

colin: consider it done

penelope: Ooh and kung pau chicken for me please

colin: and I won't forget your kung pau chicken

penelope: You know me well

colin: that I do m'lady

colin: see ya at 7

penelope: See you then

... A-G Bridgertons ...

21:35, 9th june

eloise: something suspicious is afoot

anthony: What?

eloise: i'm telling you

Daphne: El, we need context before you start rambling and never stop

eloise: Penelope

daphne: Penelope, what about Penelope?

eloise: something is suspicious

benedict: what are you talking about El?

benedict: and why?

eloise: because something is going on and we need to figure it out

eloise: @Colin back me up here

colin: I have no idea what you are talking about

eloise: come on, she's missing a lot, the late nights, the "i'm working late"s

anthony: So she's working late, people do that

benedict: why do we need to figure it out?

eloise: because she has a secret

eloise: and she's keeping it from us

eloise: she has been "working late" at the office for the last like 4 nights

eloise: a few days ago I heard her come in at 5am, freshen up and leave again

francesca: maybe she's just working late

hyacinth: maybe she had a boyfriend 🙄🙄🙄

... Colin and Penelope ...

21:42, 9th June

colin: you are the topic of conversation on the bridgerton singling group chat tonight

penelope: fun?

penelope: too swamped to care, tell me about it at lunch tomorrow?

colin: you got it

colin: it is entertaining

penelope: can't wait

... A-G Bridgertons ...

21:45, 9th june

eloise: if she had boyfriend, I would know

daphne: let me get this straight, you think she's sneaking around and she has a secret and it has nothing to do with a boy

eloise: yes

daphne: you are oblivious

eloise: nah, I know Pen

eloise: i'm worried about her

colin: maybe she's just working

colin: we've been talking about this Rosenthal investigation and it seems serious

eloise: et tu Colin?

benedict: i'm with you El

benedict: could be suspicious

benedict: we can tail her

colin: what?

daphne: oh no

gregory: I have spy equipment

francesca: are you guys ok?

anthony: ABSOLUTELY NOT

anthony: in case the capitalisation didn't make it clear you are not to spy on a young woman because you think something is suspicious

anthony: out of the question

colin: I can ask her at lunch tomorrow

eloise: you are having lunch with her tomorrow

colin: yes

eloise: why

colin: you know we work in the building when i'm in london

colin: same media group, different entities

colin: sometimes we get lunch

eloise: ok you do that

eloise: just try and be subtle about it

eloise: the rest of us won't tail her, but observe her for the next few weeks

francesca: I just wanna say for the record, this is dumb

eloise: oh shut it

benedict: I think Francesca is right, but this might be entertaining either ways

eloise: i'll take that help

... Bridgerton sibling night peeps ...

15:59, 10th june

kate: have a safe trip Colin

sophie: right you are leaving tomorrow, have fun in Vietnam

hyacinth: bring me back something nice

gregory: me too

eloise: I would also like a gift

colin: you guys got it

colin: i'll see you all at Ben and Soph's drinking weekend

anthony: I know you'll do great

colin: thanks brother

... Colin and Penelope ...

01:08, 12th June

colin: wanted to let you know just got to my hotel room

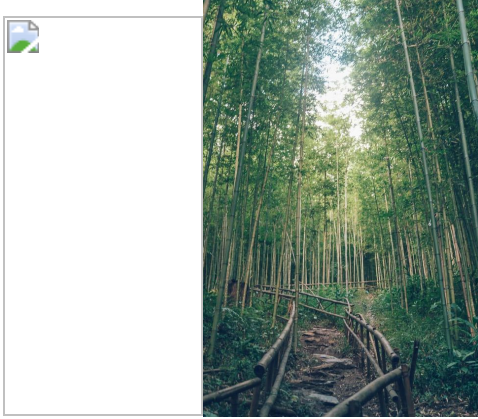
colin: long journey must sleep

10:16, 12th June

penelope: yay

02:46, 13th June

colin: went on a guided morning walk today



colin:

colin: the forest reminded me of you

13:11, 13th June

penelope: it's funny that a forest reminds you of me

penelope: the mountain of paperwork on my desk reminds me of you



penelope:

15:32, 14th June

colin: the forest makes me feel peaceful, lol you do

colin: you like my dinner?



colin:

penelope: would you look at that, we actually caught each other at a semi convenient time

penelope: my boring lunch



penelope:

colin: I miss you

penelope: I miss you too

00:51, 15th June

penelope: I miss you next to me when I can't sleep

05:32, 15th June

colin: you do something to me when you say these things

16:16, 15th June

penelope: I think we finally caught a break in this investigation

12:25, 16th June

penelope: your brother and sister seem to have taken this ‘follow Penelope’ thing in great enthusiasm

penelope: they are driving me nuts

14:48, 17th June

penelope: we went to a dress fitting for Sophie for the wedding

penelope: she looks great

penelope: El hates the bridesmaid dress Soph picked and daphne and Francesca love it

penelope: also Ben and Sophie need you to do to your tux fitting as soon as you come back

18:35, 19th June

penelope: I miss you

03:55, 21th June

colin: I miss you too

colin: so much

colin: i’m sorry about the unanswered messages, I was in parts remote with barely any reception

colin: I missed you

colin: but there is also something great about that unplugged feeling

08:05, 21th June

penelope: that’s ok you know

penelope: I know you aren’t always available when you travel

penelope: I just like to tell you what I did in my day, even if you see it 5 days later

02:14, 22th June

colin: I have so much to tell you about my trip

colin: I can't wait to see you when I do tell

you my adventures

colin: you get this little smile on your face when I tell you

colin: it's the thing I most look forward to when I come home

16:12, 22th June

penelope: I can't wait for you to come home

12:47, 24th June

penelope: Eloise is going up for some seminar tomorrow and will directly join the festivities at aubrey hall on the 28th

penelope: Benedict and Sophie have already left to 'prep' Aubrey Hall for our arrival whatever that means

penelope: so i'll come pick you up from the airport and we can spend the next 2 days before going to aubrey hall in my bed

penelope: we do have to go to your tux fitting though

colin: that sounds absolutely perfect

colin: I cannot wait

07:34, 26th June

colin: just landed

penelope: perfect, i'm just heading out the door

colin: can't wait to see you

colin: terminal 5

penelope: be there as soon as I can

••• A-G Bridgertons •••

13:45, 26th june

anthony: the prodigal brother has returned

anthony: sorry your welcome party was so sparse, Kate and I have court all day today

eloise: i'll see you at Aubrey Hall brother

benedict: can't wait for you to get here

benedict: btw you have a tux fitting at 2 tomorrow

colin: thanks guys

colin: it's good to be back

colin: yeah Pen told me about the tux fitting, i'll be there

colin: speaking of Pen, whatever happened to your observing

gregory: a bust

benedict: nothing out of the ordinary

benedict: she was just working late

eloise: I still think something is afoot

eloise: proof or no proof

daphne: El it's time you let it go

daphne: Colin those of us here are having dinner at mum's tonight

daphne: be there

daphne: it'll be me Simon, mum, Greg, Hy, Frannie, Kate and Anthony

daphne: and Penelope if she can make it

anthony: this dinner is in your honour

anthony: be there brother

colin: I will be there 7:00 sharp

... Bridgerton sibling night peeps ...

08:59, 28th june

anthony: Kate, Francesca and I are on the 9:40 train up

anthony: what about you guys

anthony: Colin? Penelope?

penelope: I can't make that train, I haven't even fully woken up yet

colin: I still have to do some packing and unpacking, I was thinking of taking the 11:40

penelope: I might join you on that

benedict: great

benedict: but we aren't sending cars to the station twice, you and Penelope get here by yourself

colin: you know uber exists right

eloise: great

eloise; Pen I need you to get here asap, I am losing my mind

penelope: haha, i'll be there soon



The weekend of 11th July

Everyone was gathered in the hotel Benedict and Sophie had chosen for their rehearsal dinner and wedding. Despite the wedding being held in London, where the entire of the Bridgerton family resided, they had all decided to take up rooms in the hotel for the upcoming 2 nights to ensure a stress free weekend.

Sophie Beckett was seated in the hotel room the girls had lovingly dubbed the bridal suit, preparing for the easier event of her weekend. A Daphne whose pregnancy was yet to start showing was enjoying stuffing her face with the unlimited ice-cream that had been provided

to the room. Eloise, Francesca and Hyacinth were seated on the bride's bed, dressed and ready to go, discussing the past antics of the brother that was to get married the next afternoon. Kate Bridgerton, the new viscountess alongside Penelope Featherington was helping add the finishing touches to the bride's look before they were to join the party.

"You look beautiful Soph!" Said Kate in awe of her sister-in-law to be.

"Thanks for your help, both of you." She replied looking between Kate and Penelope. "I can't believe I'm about to marry a Bridgerton Boy."

Both the girls laughed behind her, while their relationship still hidden from the rest, Penelope knew that they were the three girls that had the privilege of being reciprocally intoxicated by the Bridgerton Boys.

"There is no other family I would want to join." Said Penelope with smile.

Eloise overhearing their conversation walked upto the mirror and put her hands around her best friend. "I'd marry you and make you a Bridgerton in a heartbeat, all you have to do is ask."

She smiled back and hugged her friend. "If nothing else works out." She replied with a wink.

She never thought she would be one of those girls that would be dreaming of weddings and marriage barely 4 months into a relationship. And for the large part she wasn't, she was rather enjoying dating Colin, but the part of her that had harboured some form of affection for the boy and his entire family her whole life thought about how easy it would be, like she was born to be a Bridgerton.

When the girls finally did wander to the room where the rehearsal dinner was to be held, they were relived to see that they were in fact on time, the only people present before them being all the Bridgerton brothers, including Simon and Violet. Like there was a gravitational pull, all the couples quickly found themselves walking towards each other, that was no different for Colin and Penelope, who started making their way to each other the moment their eyes met.

"You look beautiful, I don't know if I've ever said it before, but emerald is your colour." Said Colin with a gentle smile.

Penelope smirked back at him. "You know, I had a hint." Their thoughts drifting back to the last formal event she wore a dress of a similar colour. "You clean up well yourself."

Before their conversation could go on, Eloise came and joined the pair. "Everyone here is in a couple and I'm annoyed." She said rolling her eyes. "At least I have you lot."

The couple shared a glance with each other that the bubbly girl remained oblivious to.

"Yes," smiled Penelope, "The 3 of us can get drunk together without a care in the world."

"And hook up with random strangers." Said Eloise, excitement joining her eyes.

“I don’t know if we can do that tonight El,” said Colin, trying to seem nonchalant. “this is Benedict’s wedding rehearsal, we have to give toasts.”

“After then.”

“We are related to half the people here.”

“There is always Sophie’s family.”

“And bartenders.” Chimed in Penelope looking at the bar. “Cute one's at that.” She said and pointed Eloise in that direction.

“Dibs!” Shouted Eloise, briefly calling the attention of the few guests that had begun to trickle into the event.

Eloise made her way towards the bar and Colin turned to Penelope, “You have a thing for bartenders do you?”

Penelope smiled at him, “Me, not unless it’s Colin Bridgerton failing at mixing drinks for me he has tired in the rest of the world. But I know that's Eloise’s type to a T.”

He smiled back at her. “Trying to get me alone Miss Featherington?”

She was about to reply with a smile when something else called her attention. “I was, but I think looking at the way your mother, bother, and sister-in-law are walking towards us I think duty calls, how about a rain check for later.”

Just as she finished her statement they were indeed surrounded and taken away to tend to the many guests of the evening. After hours of small talks and unnecessary introductions it was finally time for everyone to be seated and give some toasts.

Eloise was first up. “Being the 5th child in a family of 8 is not the easiest thing in the world, I love my older brothers and sisters to death, but my god can they be annoying. And Benny, you annoy me more than most, but you are also the person I trust with my deepest thoughts and emotions. Because you listen, you don’t judge and you take me as I am. You take all of us as we are. I don’t really know what you did to get Sophie to look in your direction, but my god, be good to her like I know you can be. I may not agree with marriage but I love you both and know you are gonna be so happy. Congratulation,” she turned to the rest of the room “To Benedict and Sophie!”

The next few speeches were made from Sophie’s friends and loved ones who praised her kindness and tenacity along with Anthony who waxed poetic about his mischievous younger brother and how glad he is he found peace. The honour of the last toast of the night unsurprisingly went to Colin, the best man.

“I was surprised when Ben asked me to be his best man because I could have sworn he was going to ask Anthony, or even Eloise. I have spent the majority of the last 5 years galavanting around the world, only coming home in chunks. I consider myself lucky to have been in this fine city and in fact in the room that st. Patrick’s day when Benedict met Sophie. The

moment he lay his eyes on her, I knew he was gone. They spent that whole evening clinging to each other, which isn't out of the ordinary on that night of the year," that earned a laugh in the room. "but they stuck it out after." She didn't know if anyone else in the room saw what she could see most vividly, but Colin Bridgerton looked in Penelope Featherington's eyes for the rest of his speech. "That courage, to have faith in what you felt and carrying it forward is what my brother has done whole life, and as we stand here today, Benedict and Sophie about to get married, I know that my brother has inspired that courage in me. For love and life." He raised his glass. "To Benedict and Sophie, I am so happy for you both."

Penelope and Colin kept their eye contact up for the rest of dinner. They were not seated at the same table, but Colin's role sitting next to the groom did keep suspicion away from the couple, everyone assumed that Penelope, like most others, was looking at happy couple about to be married. That was all but one.

"You know you don't have to stand at the edge of the dance floor by yourself sipping that drink, you can join in." Said Violet Bridgerton as she approached her third child later that very night as wedding guests enjoyed in the merriment of casual dances.

He turned to look at his mama and smiled. "I quite like watching people dance in a setting like this."

"Formal?" Asked the mother curious

"Carefree, they all look like they are having the time of their life." He said looking back at the dance floor where his girlfriend was dancing in carefree joy with her best friend, both slightly intoxicated and rowdy.

Looking in the same direction her son Violet sighed. "Do you remember when Anthony used to say about you that chair doesn't equal happiness."

He looked back at his mother quizzically and nodded.

"I've seen you this year, be more happy and less charming. Do you know what that might be?"

He looked at his mother, he knew why he had been happy, the last 3 months anyways but didn't necessarily want to bring it up. "I don't know if I can answer that."

There was a minute of silence between the pair before Violet broached the subject she came to talk about. "Your father and I were friends for years before love blossomed between us two. I have since discovered that it is rare to be friends and for both parties to feel more."

Colin listened to his mother intently, to him it felt like she could see into her soul.

"The only way to know if those feelings are reciprocated is gathering the courage to ask." She replied now looking so earnestly at her son she was hoping he was picking up what she was putting down.

In that moment Colin Bridgerton decided that someone in his immediate circle, someone he cared about so deeply should be aware of what has been going on between him and Penelope. He looked his mother in her eyes. “And what if I gathered that courage months ago?”

Now it was Violet’s turn to be surprised. “Months ago?”

“At Kate and Anthony’s wedding to be precise.”

“And was the result disappointing?”

He smiled a small smile looking back at Penelope. “Not in the slightest bit.”

“Then why dearest am I only hearing about it today?”

Colin replied pensively. “Because this is not about the family and what they think or what they want for me or for her. Its about me and its about her. And we want to keep it that way.”

Violet nodded.

“Will you keep our secret?” He asked.

“Are you happy?”

“Happier than I’ve known before.”

Violet smiled at her son and kissed his cheek. “Then I’ll keep your secret. But you have to go dance with her.”

He smiled back at his mother and joined his sister and girlfriend on the dance floor. The dance that night wasn’t romantic or sensual, it was fun, jumping up and down surrounded by family and even some friends and the smiles of Penelope Featherington. They danced till Benedict and Sophie left to get a goodnight’s sleep before their big day, till Eloise left to hook up with the cute bartender she met that night, till every member of his family were gone. He then kissed his inebriated girlfriend and walked her to his room where he tucked her in and knew he could do this for the rest of his life. He was madly in love with Penelope Featherington after all.

The next morning she watched as he stood at the end of that alter watching Benedict get married, his eyes finding hers whenever they could in the ceremony. He stood next to her at the bar as the married couple danced their first dance. A minute after the DJ invited other couples to join the newly married one and several couples had already made their way to the floor, Penelope’s heart ran a mile a minute and she felt Colin grab her arm and lead her to the dance floor. This dance was definitely more romantic that the one the night before, if anyone in the room noticed the couple in a love trance they didn’t know. All she had eyes for was her boyfriend and as she danced in his arms she knew that he was the only partner she wanted to dance all her dances with. She was madly in love with Colin Bridgerton after all.

Chapter End Notes

All images from Pinterest

Next 2 chapters coming soon

Fall Falling

Chapter Notes

A story from August and September

Midday on the second saturday of August

Penelope Featherington was glad to have the day off. Halfway through the fifth month of her relationship with Colin Bridgerton some things had become easier and others much much harder. For starters, Benedict had, after getting married moved into Sophie's west end apartment - *closer to the art scene* - he claimed, giving the secret couple some freedom meeting at the apartment he once shared with his brother. Their relationship wasn't as secret as it had once been either, after Colin shared the news with her that his mother had indeed wrestled the truth out of him at Benedict and Sophie's wedding, she had relented into telling her own family. It was about time they knew, Penelope may not always like her family and how they have treated her, but she still deep down loved them. Her mother had taken surprisingly well to not only her relationship with a Bridgerton but also the secret nature of their relationship, not telling a soul that Penelope hadn't told.

But keeping this secret was starting to weigh on her. She liked her secret relationship bubble, where everything was happy and shiny, but as time went on she found it harder and harder to both spill the secret to and keep the secret from her best friend.

"I can't believe we are still doing this?" She said, her naked body covered with Colin's very high thread count sheet.

"Dating each other?" He asked with a smile. He knew she wasn't unhappy in their relationship but he was also aware that there were some days she hated keeping the secret.

"No that part I'm actually clear on," she said giving him a little kiss. "Its the whole sleeping with Eloise's brother in secret part."

"So I'm just Eloise's brother now?"

She laughed. "Oh yeah, if she every found out that I was sleeping with you, that you and I were..." She gestured back and further between them. "This, she'd killed me."

He grabbed her hand and kissed it. "But we are this, as you so lovingly put it."

"I know" she said with a blush.

"And where does she think you are exactly? Because its not in her brother's bed."

She got a sheepish look on her face. "Running errands. She thinks I run a lot of errands."

He laughed.

She rolled her eyes. "You know its unfair."

"What is?"

"This, you?" She said, moving her face closer to him.

"Me why me?"

"Because," she said, punctuating the word with a kiss, "You make me want you," another kiss "make me lie to my best friend of nearly two decades" yet another kiss, "make me break girl code."

He stopped her before she could kiss him again. "Girl code?"

"You know that thing you guys have, not sleeping with women you friends dated or are into or are related to them."

"Yeah..." he replied kissing her once again.

"We have that too." She said once again punctuating her sentence with a kiss, "And I am totally sleeping with a guy she is related to," she kissed him one last time. "And I can't and don't want to stop."

He didn't know what it was about this afternoon, but they were blissful, despite the content of their conversation they seemed just like any normal couple. Basking in each other's presence on a lazy Saturday, it truly lowered his inhibitions. "Its always a relief to know that the girl you are in love with wants to kiss you as much as you want to kiss her."

And with that statement Penelope froze. "What did you say?"

Colin smiled down at her. "The 'I'm in love with you' part?"

She nodded "Yeah, the 'you're in love with me' part"

He looked intently into her eyes, hoping he could convey how much he meant what he was about to say. "I'm madly in love with you Penelope Featherington."

She had tears in her eyes as she ran her hands through his hair and kissed him deeply.

After pulling away she replied in the same tender tone he used with her moments before. "You know I'm madly in love with you too right?"

He nodded, kissing her. "I know now."

Lying in the bliss of their happy relationship, neither of them were really truly sure why this was still a secret, but they were both afraid of when it wouldn't be.



The night between 17th and 18th September

Despite living together, Penelope and Eloise had started seeing much lesser of each other over the last few months. They were both young women in their mid twenties, both with burgeoning careers in journalism and advocacy respectively. As a way to make it up to each other, the two girls decided to grab drinks at their local pub once a week.

This particular night conversation was slight, while Penelope suspected the reason being a culmination of her long kept secret from her best friend, Eloise's hesitation to participate this particular night came from elsewhere.

"You remember that bartender I hooked up at Benedict and Sophie's wedding?" Said Eloise finally unable to keep it to herself.

"Sure, Theo right? He was cute." Replied Penelope recalling vaguely the wedding rehearsal night.

"I ran into him, at a political event." Eloise confessed rather quickly.

"Really?"

Eloise nodded. "We got drinks after."

"Wow."

Eloise kept explaining. "We have a lot in common"

Penelope, understanding her friend, asked the only question there was. "Are you guys like dating?"

Eloise shrugged. "Nothing super serious or anything, but yeah, maybe? We've had drinks a few times after but no one has said anything official."

Eloise made a face that Penelope recognised in herself too well. "You like him!"

Eloise nodded sheepishly. "I really do." And that's when the characteristic Eloise Bridgerton rambling began. "I mean I didn't think I was a relationship girl, you know single girl power and all. But he makes me swoon. Me! Eloise Bridgerton! Swooning, I've been swooning Pen."

Penelope tried interjecting but it was no use as Eloise continued. "He is so smart and he challenges me to think and broaden my perspective and listen to other's perspectives. And oh my god Pen, if it was just intellectual I could compartmentalise it, but it's also when he smiles, especially when we are arguing, it makes me melt."

Penelope let out a small involuntary laugh. "You really like him."

"I really do." She sighed. "What do I do?"

"What do you do?"

"I've never had a boyfriend before, i've never liked or wanted to like someone before. I honestly don't know what to do."

Penelope gave it a thought. "Call him."

"Call him? Just like that?"

Penelope smiling thinking back at her relationship, "If there is one thing I've learnt about like, love and relationships it's that two people can feel the same thing and not know it because none of them makes a move."

"You think I should make a move."

Penelope nodded. "You are Eloise Bridgerton, any person would be lucky to have you make the first move. And if they don't appreciate, they aren't for you."

Eloise nodded. "Ok, I'm gonna call him."

As Eloise excused herself to call Theo, Penelope sat thinking about Colin. She had loved him from afar for so long that she didn't know not loving him. She had also since learnt that Colin had an awareness of his feelings for her from the night of Daphne and Simon's engagement party nearly a year and a half before Anthony and Kate's wedding. And yet they spent that time not being together. And what a shame that was, because the love she felt for him, the one that grew from fostering a relationship for the past 6 months was so much greater than anything she felt before. It was such a shame they wasted that time before getting the joy they both craved, she hoped better for her friend. She knew that Eloise was braver than both her and Colin, she was able to demand what she wanted and do anything she could to get it. And if that happiness wasn't in romance she had vowed to support her friend, but she also knew that if it was romance her friend wanted she'd support that too.

Eloise made her way back to their booth about 5 minutes after she left. "We talked some, he asked me to come over and discuss it." She looked at her guiltily, "Sorry I'm ditching catch-up night."

Penelope smiled. "I think we've caught up enough. Go get your man or whatever." Eloise laughed as Penelope continued. "Let me know how it goes good or bad. I'm here for you."

Eloise gave her a brief kiss on her cheek before rushing out.

She was happy for her friend, she'd get her chance to tell her about her own romance sometime down the line, she was sure of it.

15 minutes later she found herself knocking on Colin's door. He opened the door, apron on and a ladle in his hand, surprised to see her. "Aren't you supposed to be at drinks with Eloise

tonight?”

Penelope shrugged. “She had to leave early, think you can let me in?”

Colin kissed her before opening the door to let her in. “I wasn’t expecting company, but I am making stew for dinner.”

“Stew?” She said with a grimace.

Colin nodded. “You know some people like stew, especially with fresh baked bread.”

Penelope looked surprised as they walked the short walk to the kitchen. “You baked bread?”

He nodded as he went back to the stew pot and Penelope sat on the kitchen island admiring the bread next to her. “Focaccia. It’s a recipe I got from that food tour of Italy, I was testing it before writing about it.”

“It smells incredible.” She said.

“Thank you.”

“Also food tour of Italy? You have a charmed life Bridgerton!”

He covered his stew pot and turned to face her on the counter. “It’s just travel Pen.”

She laughed as she pulled him towards her such that he was between her legs and they were eye level. “As a person who hasn’t done any travelling, trust me it is charmed.”

He shrugged. “Oh we can change that, let’s go somewhere.”

Penelope was shaken. “You wanna travel with me?”

He nodded.

“I thought you were much more a solo traveller?”

“That’s work travel, and I do quite like solo travel don’t get me wrong. But going somewhere without the stress of our life or work, with you, sounds amazing. Less travel more vacation.”

“Are you sure showing me around places you’ve been before won’t be tiresome.”

He shook his head. “Not even a little, but we can go somewhere I haven’t been yet and explore it together.”

She smiled. “I would love that.”

“I’ll plan it.”

She looked into his eyes suggestively. “So, how much longer does that stew need to, well stew?”

Picking up what she was implied his eyebrows danced. “10 minutes, maybe 15. Whatever are we gonna do with all that time?”

“I might be able to think of something.” She said kissing him at the end of the sentence.

They moved rather quickly, almost unaware that they were in a kitchen with food around them. The first thing to come of was the apron Colin adorned followed immediately by his grey t-shirt. Not to be outdone, as he kissed her down her neck, Colin pulled Penelope’s dress down exposing her bare chest to the open air. As Colin’s hand inched up Penelope’s dress skirt and her hands pulled on the belt on his jeans they were so lost in the delectable sounds they were coaxing from each other they did not hear anything.

Not even when a key turned in the lock.

But they did hear a distinct voice and its loud exclamation. “And what’s going on in here?”

Colin and Penelope broke away in an instant.

“OH MY GOD!” yelled Penelope, startled by the recognisable voice coming from a figure behind her she couldn’t see.

Colin on the other hand, also shaken up, looked straight in his now smirking brother’s eyes. “I’m gonna turn around and give you guys a minute to put your clothes back on.”

As he did what he said the mortified couple put their clothes back on.

“Fancy seeing you here little Penny.” He said still not facing the pair.

“Hi Benedict.” She replied in a small voice.

After waiting another minute Benedict spoke again. “You two decent?”

Hearing the mumbled “Yeah”’s he turned around still smirking. “So... what’s going on in this kitchen?”

At this Penelope turned completely red and Colin expressed his irritation at his brother.

“What are you even doing here, you moved out 2 months ago?”

“I came to get my back-up easel I left here, the real question is what are you doing?” He said moving towards the couple till there were face to face with only the kitchen island between them.

Colin ignored his brothers question. “Why do you still have a key?”

Benedict smirked, enjoying his brother’s failed attempts at deflection immensely. “Clearly so I could walk in on you doing Miss Featherington on the kitchen island.”

“Oh my god!” Exclaimed Penelope after her silence so far. “This is the most mortifying moment of my life, I can’t even remember anything that even comes close.”

“Of course it is,” Said Benedict “you were making out with Colin.”

“Shut it.” said Colin throwing a dish towel at Benedict who caught it with ease.

“I am going ask you guys again, what’s going on?” He said slightly more seriously.

Colin sighed. “We are dating.”

Benedict seemed genuinely surprised by the news. “Wait what?”

“DAT-ING. You know that thing two people who love each other do.” Said Colin exasperated.

Benedict was still utterly flummoxed. “Two people who what now?”

Colin once again sighed. “Love each other. Seriously are you ok Ben?”

“You guys are dating and in love with each other?”

This time it was Penelope who replied. “Yes, it’s all true and a little surprising.”

Benedict’s response surprises the two, “Fina-FUCKING-ly!”

This time it was the couples turn to be confused which was vocalised by Colin. “What?”

“I mean, the way you two were dancing at my wedding, I swear I wanted to lock you guys in a closet till you sorted your shit out.” Benedict explained. “How no one else in the family was catching on I’ll never know.”

It was now the couple’s turn to smirk. “Actually, we’d already been dating sometime by your wedding.” said Penelope.

“Oh and mum did catch on and confront me the night before.” Said Colin adding salt to the wound.

Benedict looked carefully between the couple, waving an accusatory finger. “So how long has this been going on exactly?”

Penelope sighed, she knew they have to answer. “Since Kate and Anthony’s wedding.”

“Six months impressive.”

Penelope looked at him pleadingly. “No one really knows besides our mothers, especially not Eloise. Could you maybe…”

“Keep it to myself?” Completed Benedict.

“Please.” Came from Colin. “We don’t know if we are ready to deal with telling everyone, you know how they can be.”

Benedict smiled at the pair. He didn't really know the reason before the night, but he had clocked his younger brother being sickeningly happy the past 6 months and he didn't want to take that away from him in any shape. "Don't worry, your secrets safe with me. But if you want it to stay hidden I'd say be more careful."

They both nodded, and then Benedict made his way to his old room and came out less than a minute later with his easel. He then turned to the couple.

"Here," said Benedict tossing his copy of the apartment key to Penelope which she by some miracle caught. "This key is yours now." And with those words Benedict Bridgerton exited.

Escaping the Chill

Chapter Notes

A story from October and November

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

The Last Week of October

On the last Monday of October, Daphne Basset first time mother-to-be, who in her 7th month of pregnancy was showing prominently invited every female she considered a member of her family to her London residence.

All the women that were actually family - Violet, Eloise, Francesca, Kate and Sophie - were joined with Penelope in the sitting room as they all had excited conversations about the upcoming first member of the next generation of Bridgertons. The only person missing was Hyacinth due to being at boarding school, but she had video conferenced in a while before to share in her excitement of being an aunt.

“I know you are not due till the first week of January but we have planed an early baby shower just in case on November 9th. I sent out invitations on Friday.” Said Kate.

Daphne smiled at her. “Thanks Kate, I’m actually quite looking forward to it.”

Penelope looked sheepishly around the room. “9th November you say?”

Kate nodded.

“I’m so sorry Daphne, but I won’t be there for it.”

“What, why?” Daphne said a little upset.

“I’m going on vacation from 4th to the 10th.” She replied.

“Wait a minute,” said Francesca stunned. “You are going on vacation?”

Eloise smirked. “I was surprised too when she brought it up, my little workaholic.”

“Yeah, I mean we just finished the big investigative project we had been working on for like half the year and I just thought why not.”

Daphne smiled at the girl she had known her whole life. “Penelope, you have never taken a vacation a day in your life. It’s ok, even if you miss my baby shower. You will still be aunt Penelope.”

Penelope smiled at Daphne and got up to hug her. “Thanks Daph, you’ll still get my gift in the mail.”

“Wait,” said Sophie stunned. “You’ve never taken a vacation?”

Penelope shrugged. “Not really, I never saw the point. As soon as I stopped living at home I liked my life and didn’t have to ‘escape’ it so to speak. But this year has been really stressful and I just thought ‘what the hell’.”

“Hear! Hear!” Yelled out Eloise in support.

Violet Bridgerton smiled at the girl and gave her a look she didn’t recognise. “It’s good to take these breaks, allow yourself to be happy.”

She smiled in gratitude. “Thank you.”

That night, Penelope returned to her apartment alone as Eloise made plans to stay over with Theo. However, she wasn’t alone for long as Colin knocked on her door just as she freshened up for the night.

“Hey honey.” She greeted him with a kiss. “You hungry?”

She shook his head. “Anthony had a ‘my best friend is about to be a dad’ spread. It was great.”

“How was your night with the brothers?” She asked as the two made their way to her room to get ready for bed.

“It was nice, probably one of the last nights like that we’ll have before everyone starts having babies I suppose.”

She changed into her pyjamas as Colin stepped into the open bathroom to brush his teeth. “Speaking of babies, did you know we are missing Daphne’s baby shower.”

He walked out, mid brush, looking surprised. “No, I didn’t know that.”

Penelope continued as she finished changing and got into bed. “Yeah 9th November, by the time we are back it’ll be the 11th. I feel really bad, this is your sister and the first person we know well who is having a baby, we are missing an important moment.”

Colin came out, ready for bed and lay down next to her, brushing the hair off her face. “It does suck, but you deserve this vacation, 5 days of laying on the beach with no stressors. Don’t even think about rescheduling it because I know that’s where your mind is going.”

She looked at him sheepishly confirming his thought process. “But it’s your sister, are you sure?”

“And you are Pen, we are going on this vacation because you deserve it.” he laughed. “Hell so do I. We can do this whole baby shower thing when it’s our turn.”

Penelope looked at him stunned. “Our turn? To have babies?”

“Don’t tell me you haven’t thought about it?”

“Not explicitly.”

“Valid.” He replied no malice in his voice. “But if I were to ask you the cliché ‘where do you see yourself in 10 years?’ what would you say?”

Penelope thought about it for a moment. “Like career wise, as a journalist who gets to keep on working on these stories that matter, sharing the truth, no matter what.”

“And in your personal life?”

“Holding your hand.”

They both smiled.

“What about you? Where do you see yourself in 10 years?”

Colin answered without missing a beat. “Still writing, still travelling. Seeing every corner of the world and writing about it. Taking you with me to every new place I visit.”

She smiled and was going to interrupt but he had more to say. “I also wanna be your husband 10 years from now, maybe even with like 3 kids, daughters that have your beautiful red hair and a son with my appetite. And we are both happy together.”

Penelope looked at him with tears in her eyes, she liked where he wanted to be. “I’m sorry my dreams are less vivid than yours.”

“That’s ok, as long as I am there we have the same dream.”

“You are always there. You’ve always BEEN there.”

He smiled and kissed her so earnestly. “I love you.”

“I love you too.”

It was Thursday evening later that week, Colin was wrapping up the article for his latest trip to Gibraltar, Penelope and her team had just published their long awaited Rosenthal investigation and Eloise was actually home after spending the week at Theo’s place. This was the time.

“I’m sleeping with your brother.” Blurted out Penelope as her and Eloise were sitting on the couch watching Bridget Jones Diary again.

Eloise turned to her, eyes wide, unsure of what exactly was being said. “Which brother?”

“What do you mean which brother, there’s one brother.” Penelope replied confused by the direction this conversation was taking.

“I have 4.”

Penelope rolled her eyes “One viable brother, 2 of them are married and old and the last one is a child.”

The brain fog that had engulfed Eloise at the start of this conversation started to clear. “Colin? You’re sleeping with Colin?”

Penelope half nodded her head. “Well, more like dating Colin.”

“You’re dating my brother?” She asked

“Yup.” Penelope replied in a monotone.

Anger began to seep into Eloise’s voice. “How long?”

“A little while.”

“And what’s a little while exactly?” Eloise pressed.

Penelope looked back at her best friend sheepishly. “Uhm... since Kate and Anthony’s wedding.”

This time Eloise moved her whole body to face Penelope. “I’m sorry, you’ve been boinking my brother since Kate and Anthony’s wedding!?”

“Yup.”

“That was in April.”

“Yup.”

“It’s the end of October.”

“Yup.”

“That’s 7 months.” She said nearly yelling.

In contrast Penelope’s voice was much softer, guiltier. “I know.”

“You’ve been dating someone for 7 months and you didn’t tell me?” The first time that evening Penelope detected a sliver of hurt in her best friend’s tone.

“I’m so sorry El, I wanted to tell you so bad, It’s been awful keeping this from you but I didn’t know how to tell you.” Penelope started defending herself.

Eloise retorted with an attitude. “I don’t know maybe say hey, I’m being an awful friend and fucking about with your brother behind your back.”

“We aren’t ‘fucking about’,” said Penelope raising her voice for the first time. “we fell in love.” she added more softly.

Out of everything she had heard that night, this left her the most awestruck. “You’re IN LOVE with Colin?”

Penelope nodded. “Yeah, I’m in love with and Colin, and he says he’s in love with me.”

Eloise rolled her eyes. “Of course he’s in love with you, look at you, you are the best person that I know.”

Penelope smiled back at her friend. “Right back at you.”

Eloise thought about everything she had heard for a moment before remembering a text conversation from months prior. “So Hyacinth was right? You did have a secret boyfriend and that’s why you were acting suspicious.”

“Yeah, and back in June when you guys were ‘tailing’ me the reason you didn’t get anywhere was because...”

“Colin was in Vietnam” Eloise said harmonised with Penelope’s “Colin was in Vietnam.”

“And you knew about the tailing?”

“Colin showed me the group chat.”

The two girls let out a small laugh before the silence fell.

Eloise grabbed both of Penelope’s hands. “I’m not mad at you for sleeping with my brother, I’m just hurt you didn’t tell me something so important was happening in your life.”

Penelope looked genuine as she said. “I’m sorry.”

They put there heads together like they used to when they were children. “So tell me about it.”

Penelope was confused. “Tell you about it?”

“Yeah, I wanna know how my best friend fell in love, even if it’s with my idiot brother.”

Penelope smiled, something that had become an involuntary reaction every time she thought about Colin. “There’s always just something that’s been there between us, beyond my stupid teen crush. And I don’t know, the night of Anthony’s wedding after you all left, I went to that terrace in the library where you and I used to read when we were like 14,”

“The terrace where only Colin would find us” Eloise interjected.

“That one, and he was there and we were talking and he kissed me, or maybe I kissed him and then...”

Eloise cringed just a little, quickly saying. "I don't need to know those details."

"Anyways," Penelope nodded stretching out the word. "when we woke up the next morning we kinda wanted it to continue and we've been sneaking around ever since."

"And no one knows?"

Penelope once again had the sense to look guilty. "Some people know, most of our colleagues, my sisters, my mum, your mum, Benedict but I don't think he's told Sophie."

"Wait, my mum? Benedict? How? When?"

Penelope laughed a little. "Those are actually funny stories, your mum at Ben's wedding cornered Colin about having feelings for me and how he must act on them, I'm pretty sure he told her in irritation."

"That sounds like mum."

"Yeah and Ben walked in on us while we were having sex like a month after."

Eloise laughed. "He what?"

Penelope began to turn red at the memory. "El, it was mortifying, he forgot something at Colin's apartment and came over and he had his key still."

"I'm afraid to ask this, but what state were you guys in?"

Penelope covered her face in her hand. "Mostly naked on the kitchen island."

"Wow." She said with a laugh.

"Yeah."

Comfortable silence set between the two till Eloise spoke up again.

"So, you've been dating Colin Bridgerton since April?"

"Yeah."

"And he makes you happy." Penelope could hear the genuineness in her friend's question and it thrilled her.

"Happier than I've ever been." She replied truthfully with a smile.

"Then I'm happy for you," Eloise resolved. "I still reserve the right to beat him up when I see him next though."

Penelope laughed. "Go for it. Just don't beat him up too much, I kinda like him all whole and unbroken."

"You got a deal."

Penelope pressed play on the movie she had paused to talk to Eloise however she still couldn't shake a thought in her head. The whole reason she had to bring this up tonight.

"This vacation I'm going on is with Colin." She blurted out.

"Well," Said Eloise in her most pragmatic tone. "he is a seasoned traveller, that's going to make it easier."

"No, you don't get it El."

Eloise looked perplexed. "What's there to get?"

"I THINK HE'S GOING TO PROPOSE" She shouted out saying out loud the doubts that had been festering in her brain all week.

Eloise looked at her in utter and complete shock. "Why do you think that?"

"Just little things, we had this talk about our future recently where he said he saw us married, when we were at Daphne's your mother kept giving me this look. And most damning, my silver ring with the half diamonds is missing."

Eloise knew that ring. "The ring you wear everyday?"

Penelope nodded vigorously. "He spent Monday night here, and when I woke I couldn't find my ring but I could have sworn I had it the night before."

"Colin is going to propose." Eloise said matter of factly.

Penelope shook her head. "Or maybe I'm delusional, your mum was looking at me because she knows we are dating; your brother is thinking about marriage and babies because Anthony, Benedict and Daphne are on those paths; and I lost my ring like an idiot."

"Do you want him to propose?"

"Yes!?" She said in wearily, "No, I don't know, maybe, probably I guess. Yeah."

Eloise looked at her. "That was a lot of words that don't mean the same thing."

"I'm just confused. I mean a proposal on a beach vacation is basically textbook. But am I just reading into this because I want to, or because I'm scared or because..."

Eloise interrupted her by violently shaking her shoulders. "SNAP OUT OF IT!"

She took a deep breath. "Right."

"Enjoy your vacation, if he proposes he proposes, if he doesn't he doesn't."

"Just enjoy it?" She asked tentatively.

"Just enjoy it." Eloise replied nodding.

On the last night of the week, Eloise found herself feeling particularly confrontational, knocking on Colin's door in a rather unruly fashion.

"I'm coming, I'm coming. Jeez Benedict..." he said opening the door. "You are not Benedict."

"No, I reckon I am much nicer to look at." Replied Eloise forcing her way into his house.

"Is everything ok?" He asked, the slight panic in his voice wondering if Penelope was hurt.

Eloise rolled her eyes. "Yeah calm down, no one is hurt. But you are about to be."

Colin just looked back her confused.

"I'm SO mad at you!" She half-yelled and started chasing him around the room. Colin, in possession of the family's shared brain cell began to run such that the siblings were chasing each other around the living room couch.

"What is your damage sister?" Colin yelled exasperated.

"YOU'RE ONLY SLEEPING WITH MY BEST FRIEND!"

At that Colin froze, turning to look at his sister in surprise. "Pen told you?" He asked in a soft voice.

Eloise, also seemingly calmer replied. "Well, yeah she told me. I think the guilt of keeping the secret was eating her alive."

Colin sighed. "I didn't make her keep the secret ok, it was much more her idea than mine."

Eloise looked confused. "Why would she want that? She loves you."

He could not control how wide his smile got at that moment. Colin knew Penelope loved her, he knew because he felt it and because she said it. But the fact that she had told someone else made his heart soar. Eloise cleared her throat bringing Colin back down to earth.

"Because of you, you lunatic." Colin replied. "You are chasing me around my house."

Eloise took a deep breath. "I'm sorry, its a low blow ok, to know that two of the people closest to you in the world are keeping something from you. Something that makes them so happy."

"Sorry El." He said said sheepishly.

"And mum knows? and Ben? Why not me?" She asked with a little tear in her voice.

Colin went up to his sister and gave her a hug. "Mum and Ben found out. You are the only person who was told. We were just scared I guess, of all the looks and the judgment and then

‘Oh my god!’s.”

“I do understand you know. Our family can be rather overwhelming.” Said Eloise. “But anything that happens from here on out, I’m the first to know.”

Just as Colin began to nod, there was another knock on the door. Colin silently went to open the door, “You know next time, I’m not coming over to do you a favour.... EL!” Exclaimed Benedict as he entered the house not expecting to find his sister there.

She smiled. “Hey Benny.”

Benedict looked at Colin. “Did I know El was also gonna be here?”

Colin gave a small laugh of relief. “I didn’t know El was gonna be here.”

“I needed to talk to him about something.” She shrugged.

Looking between his two younger siblings no one could claim Benedict Bridgerton was not perceptive. “Ahh, and perchance does this something have to do with out favourite little red-head?”

That statement made Eloise redirect her irritation to her other brother. “I can’t believe you knew for months and didn’t tell me!”

“Wait a minute, I only found out last month. It’s mum you should be mad at.”

“She’s not here.”

Colin looked at his sister earnestly. “Come on El, are you really mad?”

She turned her glare back at Colin. “I don’t like not knowing things.”

“Well now you know El, before most of our siblings.”

Eloise looked at Colin. “You won’t lie to me again?”

Colin shook his head and Eloise smirked just a little bit. This was the moment she had been building to. “Are you planning to propose to El?”

The second the word ‘propose’ was out of Eloise’s lips Colin began to seemingly choke on nothing as Benedict began to laugh.

“Why brother do tell us. And remember you promised our sister here no lying.” Said Benedict in a sing-song voice.

Just as Colin began to compose himself so he could say something that came out in English, there was someone else at the door, but this time they had a key.

Penelope entered the already crowded living room with a pizza in hand and started in a loud voice. “Hey, I brought some Pizzaaaaa.....” She looked around the room not expected anyone

and finding herself surrounded. “Hey?”

The first person to break the tension was Benedict. “Hey little Penny.” His mannerisms mimicking the night she’d sooner forget, Penelope glared at him.

“What are you guys doing here anyways? Don’t you have a wife?” She looked at Benedict. “And I thought you had a date with Theo tonight?” She asked Eloise.

Colin was next to break out of his stun and walked up to Penelope, giving her the smallest kiss. “I wasn’t expecting you tonight either?”

“Well, you did all those Chinese takeaways nights when I was working late, thought I’d return the favour with Pizza.” She looked around the room. “I also wanted to tell you that I told El about us, but clearly she beat me to it.”

Eloise smiled at her best friend. “Well, we did agree I could beat him up.”

Colin looked down at his girlfriend. “You were gonna let her beat me up?”

“Only a little.”

Benedict looked up. “I’m here on the insistence of my brother.”

“I wanted to discuss taking care of some stuff for we when we go away.”

Eloise and Benedict looked at each other. “Sure” he said dragging out the word. “We can discuss it another time, I will leave you be.”

As he started to make his way out Eloise followed, “I’m leaving too, Theo’s waiting.”

As the door closed behind them and Penelope made a barb about the siblings being weird and continuing her night, the conversation outside was more interesting.

“He is totally proposing isn’t he? She said looking at Benedict as they were about to go their separate ways.

“I do not know of what you speak.” With that he turned towards his car walking way.

“I hate you.” Said a sing-song voice behind him as laughed.



After the night Penelope had unexpectedly found Eloise and Benedict at Colin's, they had a long conversation where they decided that maybe their relationship could come forward. However there was no harm in having some fun before they came forward, fun like going on a vacation together and confusing the hell out of his family.

It started innocently enough, with 2 instagram stories in the airport posted an hour apart, one showing feet resting on a carry-on, waiting for a boarding gate and the second of boarding gate B27 with the words "finally" sprawled over the image. They thought that may be inconspicuous enough but it had already started.

... A-G Bridgertons ...

12:42, 4th November

daphne: Colin, you leaving the country again?

francesca: What! No! Did you forget Daphne's baby shower?

benedict: HOW COULD YOU BROTHER?

eloise: too dramatic don't you think?

colin: I'm sorry guys, last minute work assignment

colin: I'll try and be back for the baby shower but no promises

colin: this was supposed to be Liam's assignment but he is vacationing with his girlfriend

... Benedict and Colin ...

13:05, 4th November

benedict: Really?

benedict: LIAM is vacationing with his girlfriend???

colin: SHUT IT!

And with that final message and a giggle the couple were off for their 9 hour flight to Miami. Travelling with a frequent flier had its benefits, especially the seat upgrade that Colin had sprung for. Penelope had never been on a 9 hour flight before but she certainly felt spoiled, because she could not imagine ever taking one of these in the cramped seats in the back.

"You relaxing yet?" Asked Colin sipping his complimentary champagne.

She reached over and kissed him. “So much so. Wake me when its meal service.”

Meanwhile on the ground in London suspicion hadn’t started but it was about to.

••• A-G Bridgertons •••

18:02, 4th November

daphne: did anyone know that Colin was about to go on this vacation?

anthony: work assignment

anthony: he does travel all the time

daphne: and you don't find it a little suspicious that we didn’t know about it

daphne: that we found out using instagram stories?

anthony: you know how he is, he doesn’t remember to tell his family things

francesca: Daph, I think you are going a little stir-crazy with this whole bed-rest, baby-is-coming mood

daphne: nah, something suspicious is going on, i’ll prove it

21:29, 4th November

benedict: you know Colin can see these messages right? he is in the group chat.

daphne: oops!

Arriving in Anguilla nearly 22 hours later, Colin and Penelope were both very exhausted and made their way to their hotel room to crash immediately.

“What would you say if I said I wanted to document this trip?” Asked Colin as the couple lay in their soft hotel sheets.

“Like travel blogging?”

“More like vlogging.”

“I thought the whole idea was that this was a vacation?” Said Penelope, not understanding why he would want to work.

“It is, but I have never travelled with another person that wasn’t a coworker, let alone a beautiful woman I love. I want to record it, if thats ok with you?”

She smiled back at him and gave him a kiss. “As long as it doesn’t become work, remember you need this vacation just as much as I do.”

``CBridgertonTravels’ Instagram Post``

14:24, 6th November

Pictured a beautifully constructed sandcastle on the beaches of Shoal Bay.

Caption: New travel region unlocked, welcome to the Caribbean.

``PenFeatheringington’s Instagram Post``

21:18, 6th November

Pictured sunset on a white sandy beach.

Caption: Never have I ever taken a vacation.

``CBridgertonTravels’ Instagram Post``

06:05, 7th November

Pictured footprints of 2 walking the beach.

Caption:  

``PenFeatheringington’s Instagram Post``

15:16, 7th November

Pictured a collection of seashells laid on a hotel bedspread.

Caption: There is something so relaxing about spending the morning collecting seashells.

... There is something sus ...

20:21, 7th November

[daphne added simon , anthony , kate , benedict , sophie , eloise , francesca , gregory and hyacinth]

francesca: how bored are you daphne?

daphne: I am not bored

daphne: I am certain that there is something to be suspicious about

eloise: and you have made a new group chat?

daphne: without Colin or Penelope

simon: Honey, I thought we talked about this

daphne: I am not going stir crazy!

daphne: okay, maybe I am, but something is going on

daphne: Colin and Penelope have been posting very similar things

kate: what are you talking about?

daphne: look at their instagrams

sophie: Oh my god!

sophie: are they in the same place?

hyacinth: Colin and Penelope sitting in a tree

gregory: K-I-S-S-I-N-G

francesca: you 2 are disgusting

kate: this definitely calls for some investigation

anthony: I agree with Kate, its not un-suspicious

benedict: of course you agree with Kate, you are whipped

daphne: you don't find this suspicious ben?

benedict: that Colin is traveling? Nope.

daphne: and Penelope?

benedict: what about her?

daphne: she's there

simon: I think you are reaching honey

daphne: I'm not reaching Simon, she's there i'll prove it.

daphne: El, where exactly is Penelope vacationing?

eloise: Caribbean island

eloise: couldn't tell you which one though

daphne: see!

daphne: I will prove its the same one if its the last thing I do

••• Benedict, Colin, Eloise and Penelope •••

20:53, 7th November

eloise: they are onto you

eloise: or well Daphne is

eloise: there is a secret group chat without you and everything

benedict: Kate and Sophie are definitely catching on

benedict: it was what Sophie wanted to talk about all through dinner

colin: fun

``C Bridgerton Travels' Instagram Post``

14:19, 8th November

A series of pictures showing an assortment of Anguilla's famous roadside BBQs.

Caption: Why did I never know that Anguilla was the food capital of the Caribbean?

``Pen Featherington's Instagram Post``

21:18, 8th November

Pictured Penelope in snorkelling gear waving at the camera.

Caption: I chose adventure today.

``C Bridgerton Travels' Instagram Post``

15:35, 9th November

Pictured a view from a yacht.

Caption: Is an island vacation ever over without a cruise?

The Bridgerton family had been gathered alongside all of Simon and Daphne's friends in the Basset house to celebrate the incoming baby Basset. After a long afternoon of cringy baby-related games followed by the opening of very many presents and a respectful goodbye to all, not many were still left at the Basset house. All parents and friends had taken their leave while every Bridgerton sibling but the last 2 and their partner stood back for clean up and gossip.

"So we know where Colin is." Said Daphne as she continued to sit and scroll other phone while the others cleaned up, not letting her lift a finger.

"And where might that be?" Asked Eloise as she handed Theo the pile of plates she had just collected. After a late-night phone conversation with Benedict, the two agreed that their lack of contribution to the conversation at hand might add onto their siblings suspicions, so they had decided to participate only in the form of questions that may not lead anywhere.

"Anguilla."

"Anguilla?" Asked Francesca

Daphne nodded. "A British virgin island. Famous honeymoon destination."

"Colin went to a honeymoon destination? Why?" Asked Anthony confused. "You don't think he's on his honeymoon do you?"

Simon, confused at the behaviour of the Bridgertons had to interject, something he swore he wasn't going to do. "I'm sorry, the new theory is that Colin and Penelope somehow eloped and are on their honeymoon?"

"I wouldn't put it past him." Said Benedict feeling particularly mischievous. "He does have a track record of being impulsive."

Sophie sighed. "Yeah, but Penelope wouldn't do that. She seems sensible."

"Not to mention this is her first vacation." Said Kate.

"I still think this is just a coincidence. We don't even know if they are in the same country, let alone vacationing together." Said Francesca.

"El, did you find out more about where Penelope is?" Asked Daphne.

Eloise shook her head. "She hasn't really been on the grid the last few days, we have texted here and there but no conversations. Her instagram posts are what I know about her trip."

Daphne nodded excitedly. “And aren’t those instagram posts telling.”

Sophie, opening up her phone enthusiastically agreed with Daphne. “Since you mentioned it, I’ve been tracking their posting and I have to say its the strongest evidence of something. On the 6th, they both had sandy beach photos that could have been the same beach. On the 7th there was the beach walk and seashell collecting, slightly different but not necessarily separate. But yesterday’s don’t seem to align, Colin’s post is about food -”

“Shocker” muttered Eloise under her breath.

“- and Penelope’s is her in snorkel gear.”

Kate looked thoughtfully. “And who took that photo?”

“Couldn’t it be anyone on the beach?” Asked Eloise.

“Do you not think they are there together Eloise?” Asked Daphne.

“I don’t know what to think.” Eloise replied.

“I don’t think they are.” Said Francesca. “We’d know wouldn’t we if they were?”

Eloise and Benedict shared a look that was luckily ignored by all in the room.

“I agree with Frannie, if they are together on vacation or otherwise, why would they just not say it?” Asked Anthony. Nobody said anything to him as they pondered his words.

“OH MY GOD!!!!!!” Yelled Sophie nearly dropping her phone.

```PenFeatherington’s Instagram Post```

19:21, 9th November

Pictured a beautiful set dinner table overlooking the view of the ocean from the top deck of a rather large boat.

Caption: 🥂🥂

“PenFeatherington just posted to instagram. And it mirrors a certain CBridgertonTravels’ post from earlier today.” Sophie continued.

This was immediately followed by 4 more phones being pulled up as the rest scrambled to look at the posts that were being opened. Even Theo, the newcomer was invested in this admittedly weird obsession of the Bridgerton family.

“Wasn’t Colin on a yacht according to his post today?” Asked Kate and 2 excited heads of Daphne and Sophie nodded along.

“I think its time for a good old fashioned Bridgerton wager.” Said Kate her eyes sparkling.

••• Bridgerton sibling night peeps •••

11:13, 10th November

kate: @Colin and @Penelope since you guys missed the baby shower yesterday we were thinking that we could do a little family vacation up to Aubrey Hall before the baby comes

kate: everyone in this group chat

eloise: I have an important deadline in a few days :(

daphne: how about the weekend then?

eloise: sure

penelope: Colin you didn’t make the baby shower either?

colin: last minute work assignment

penelope: sucks

penelope: I’ll totally be there daph

penelope: sorry about missing it again

colin: If I have to

daphne: you do

colin: I’m there

sophie: us too

francesca: I’m sorry, I can’t get away from uni, with end of term near deadlines are fast approaching

hyacinth: I’m still at school remember

gregory: same here

daphne: no worries

daphne: so no Francesca, no Gregory, no Hyacinth

daphne: that leaves A-E along with Kate, Sophie, Simon and Penelope

daphne: I'll expect you all there.

Colin and Penelope's second vacation of November began on the 1 and a half hour train ride up to Aubrey Hall on the 16th of the month. Unlike the last time they had made the journey up, they were not alone on the train. Somehow the entire party, barring Kate and Anthony who had to get the house ready, were all on the same train. Colin suspected foul play at hand. The group was sitting across 2 table seats in the train car, Penelope, Eloise, Daphne and Simon on one table and Colin, Benedict and Sophie on the other.

"How was your vacation Penelope?" Asked Daphne starting what she thought would be a successful weekend of interrogation.

"It was a lot of fun." Pen said smiling as she shared a look with Eloise. "I just lay on the beach for 4 days."

Sophie chimed in from the other side of the aisle excitedly. "I saw on your instagram that you also went snorkelling."

Penelope nodded. "Yeah, I'd never done anything like that before, I was so nervous, but everyone was so calming and helpful and offered to hold my hand. I would have never done it on my own but it was an awe-inducing experience."

Daphne smirked having seemingly caught Penelope in a lie. "Wait, you weren't on your own? Did you go on vacation with somebody?"

There was a brief silence by the girl in question as others reacted to Daphne's lack of subtlety. Simon rolled his eyes at his wife, but also increased the attention he was paying the conversation; Sophie leaned closer towards Penelope and Daphne while Colin sunk a little in his seat. Meanwhile Eloise and Benedict tried their very best to not burst into laughter.

Penelope however remained unfazed. "Oh no, but they take you out on these little boats to reach the place where there are better things to see underwater and those boats take 5 or 6 people. I went with this lovely family of 4, their two 12 and 10 year old daughters were just as scared as me. I was in good company."

"Oh." Came a deflated sound from Daphne as it was accompanied by a small laugh from her husband.

Penelope continued talking about her vacation as if she was unaware of what Daphne had tried to deduce only moments before. "I also got to eat a lot of great food, there was this prawn bbq that I have to recreate the next game night."

"Food!" Perked up Sophie. "Colin, weren't you in the food capital of the Caribbean?"

"Yes I was." He replied nodding. It was too bad for his family that he and Penelope had somewhat prepared their answers the night before boarding the train knowing that might

come. "Liam was supposed to go there for an article with his girlfriend about it being the perfect honeymoon spot but she didn't want him to work on their vacation so they sent me down there with the food angle."

"So no romance for you?" Asked Daphne.

"Oh plenty." He said with a smirk as Penelope tried her best to ignore him in order to prevent her own reaction as her best friend wriggled her eyebrows to her. "Is there a greater love story than me and food?"

Benedict smiled at his brother and gave him a pat. "Not that I can think of."

"I need snacks!" Blurted out Eloise. "I think I will go get some from the cafe car. Pen? Come with me?"

"Uhm, ok" She said hesitantly as she followed her best friend.

"Your trip was romantic?" She asked the second they were out of earshot of her family.

Penelope happily sighed. "Yea, it really was."

"Is there something you need to tell me?"

Penelope lifted up her left hand to reveal a bare finger. "Nope." She said popping the P.

"No proposal?" She asked as the 2 girls reached the cafe cart and placed an order of crisps and chocolate.

"No proposal."

"How do you feel?"

"Honestly?" She asked and Eloise nodded. "A little disappointed. On that last night we went on this really romantic cruise, on a yacht, and there was dinner at sunset..."

"Yeah, we saw that at the baby shower." Interrupted Eloise.

"And it was the perfect moment... Wait! It came out when everyone was together. We couldn't have planned that."

Eloise rolled her eyes. "Back to the point Pen."

"As we were finishing that romantic dinner, it was the perfect moment. He got up, took my hand and lord help me, I thought that was the moment. But all he did was ask me to dance. And in that moment I was disappointed."

"I'm sorry Pen."

Penelope shook her head. "Don't be. It was still a great moment. And maybe he was never planning on proposing and I was reading into things. The one thing that I know now for a fact

is that, if he does ever ask me, all that hesitation is gone. I would say yes so fast.”

“Oh my god! We are gonna be sisters.”

“I still haven’t been proposed to El.” Penelope let out a little laugh.

“Who cares if its now or 10 years from now, someday you are gonna be my sister and thats enough for me. Not that you already aren’t.”

“You have a lot of faith in our relationship.”

Eloise rolled her eyes. “My brother’s an idiot, but he’s not that big an idiot. You’re so far out of his league, he’s lucky you look at him. He isn’t letting that go.”

And with that they made their way back to their seats and spent the remaining train ride engaging in idle conversation about the weather and the upcoming holiday season.

At Aubrey Hall Kate and Anthony had prepared a welcome as if they were anticipating an event. But what took place was better than an event, it was camaraderie. The massive drawing room was where everyone found themselves, food had been arranged, buffet style, on 3 tables across the room. The family was spread everywhere in the room yet never too far apart. Daphne was lounging my herself on a blue love seat, needing the place to rest her swollen ankles. Simon sat on the ground right in front of her, feeding them both out of his plate. Kate and Anthony were seated together on a sofa enjoying their dinner and sharing weary glances while Benedict and Sophie sat on the couch across from them laughing with the three people seated on the floor between the 3 pieces of furniture.

“You guys have really outdone yourselves for the rather small celebration.” Mused Penelope talking to Kate and Anthony.

“Well, Daphne did deserve a baby shower where you and Colin were present, we couldn’t possibly skimp.”

“You know what Daphne deserves,” She piped up. “For this to be over. I’m excited to be a mother and all, but pregnancy is the worst. I am both constantly hungry and cant tolerate many food smells, my feet and always swollen and I wade around like a penguin. This baby needs to come out of me.”

“You are not painting a pretty picture sister.” Chimed in Benedict.

“Because it is not a pretty picture. My back hurts constantly, I’m always tired. And you don’t even wanna know about my poops.”

Eloise dropped the potato she had just picked up off her plate. “Eating! Daphne.”

Kate looked horrified. “You are making me not look forward to anything for the next nine months.”

Immediately everyone turned to Kate as she didn’t quite pick up the implications of what she just said.

“The next nine months?” Asked Sophie.

“Are you also pregnant?” Exclaimed Daphne.

“You guys are having a baby?” Said Benedict.

Kate looked between everyone. “Crap.”

She shared a look with Anthony who nodded. “Yeah, Kate is pregnant, we are having a baby.”

A series of “Oh my God” and “Congratulations” fell across the room very reminiscent of the moment 7 months ago.

Kate looked embarrassed. “I’m so sorry Daphne, I wanted to wait till after the baby was born, I didn’t wanna steal your moment.”

Daphne waved her off. “Nonsense, my baby is gonna have a cousin. How far along are you?”

“10 weeks. We only 2 days ago went for the first ultrasound.”

Simon got up and hugged his best mate. “Congrats man! Look at us both having kids.”

“What a great boat to be in.” He replied.

Penelope looked around the room and sighed. “Do you guys remember when we were kids, El, Daph and I must have been between 10 and 13, and the three of you,” she pointed at Anthony, Benedict and Colin. “had been home for break from school and uni and we were all in this room playing that ‘Game of Life’ board game for the first time that my cousin Marina had given me.”

All the Bridgerton siblings smiled at the memory as Penelope continued.

“And in that game we all got married and had those peg kids.”

“Eloise spent the whole night claiming she wants to skip the marriage and kids part of the game.” Added Benedict in his reminiscing.

“Yeah, and you and Anthony spent the whole time talking about how no woman would want to deal with the other.” Said Colin with a smile.

“And you,” Penelope pointed at Colin. “Took the piss out of Daphne for having 6 kids.”

“You had 6 kids in the game of life?” Asked Simon laughing.

“Luck of the spin.” She replied. “I also remember saying Colin was never gonna get married.”

“And now you guys are actually married and having kids.” Said Penelope.

“Life is nuts.” Said Eloise.

“Colin isn’t.” Retorted Anthony causing laughter in the room that was louder coming from Eloise and Benedict.

“We don’t have to do everything in alphabetical order you know.” He replied.

“You guys don’t know how thankful I am.” Said Penelope. “For having my childhood here, not just Aubrey Hall but with you guys.”

Eloise hugged her. “You are an honorary Bridgerton Pen, there is no thank you.”

“Hear, hear!” Exclaimed Benedict. “To Penelope!”

“To Kate!” Countered Penelope. “Congrats.”

“To Kate” Said a chorus as she blushed.

“To Daphne!” Said Kate. “After all she is going to be a mother a little before me.”

“To Daphne!” Said another chorus.

“I think that’s enough toasting for the evening. Daphne and I are going to go upstairs and sleep the night off.” Said Simon and Daphne nodded getting up.

“I’m gonna need my rest to beat you lot at game night tomorrow.” With that she was off.

Kate and Anthony shared a look. “I think the second pregnant lady is also going to need her rest for the games tomorrow.” Said Kate. “Good night all.” And with that they were off too.

Sophie, Benedict, Colin, Eloise and Penelope stayed for a bit longer. They drank to their siblings pregnancies and futures. They drank to funny stories from when Colin and Benedict shared an apartment. They drank to Eloise and Penelope’s exploits as gossip-mongering teenagers. They drank to stories of Benedict haplessly pursuing Sophie. They drank till Sophie decided to leave the group and go to bed.

Almost immediately Colin readjusted his position on the floor such that he was seated directly behind Penelope as she leaned into him, resting on him as if he were the back of a chair.

“You two disgust me.” Said Benedict rolling his eyes.

Penelope smirked at the Bridgerton brother before turning around and giving her boyfriend a small kiss. “I missed you.”

“You’ve both been in this room the entire time.” Said Eloise.

“I’m so glad you know this now.” Said Benedict. “Watching them be this sickly in love without being able to tease any of them in front of anyone has been torture.”

“Oh shut it you two.” Said Colin. “Besides, you may not have to keep this secret for very long.”

“Really?” Asked Eloise.

Benedict shook his head. “They have tricked me before. Don’t buy it.”

Penelope looked at the two. “We’re serious. We are gonna tell the rest of your family at New Years.”

“Dammit! That’ll mean Francesca will win.”

“Win what?” Asked Penelope confused.

“Well,” explained Eloise. “While you guys were on your vacation enjoying your ‘messaging with Bridgertons’ instagram games there was a wager started as to what was going on.”

“Ooh, interesting. What’s everyone’s bet.” Asked Colin rubbing his palms together in front of Penelope.

“I’m not telling you lot that.” She exclaimed. “You’ll use it to cheat.”

“Its not like I can win.” Said Colin exasperated.

“Still.” Said Eloise.

“I’m with our sister.” Added Benedict.

“They do have a point, honey.” Colin looked indignantly at Penelope. “You are very competitive.”

“So tell us,” started Benedict changing the topic. “How was your vacation actually?”

“It was great.” Said Penelope smiling. “It was a week of no hiding and just enjoying each others company.”

“Dancing.” Added Colin.

“Oh that song.” Penelope said rolling her eyes.

“What song” asked Eloise.

“Elvis Priestly, Can’t help falling in love.” Replied Penelope.

“Cheesy” Said Eloise.

“Absolutely.”

“It a good song.” Defended Colin.

“Romantic.” Benedict added, half in support of his brother and half in jest.

“Who can’t help falling in love with someone.” Retorted Eloise.

“Everyone.” Replied Benedict.

“Me.” Stated Colin.

Penelope turned in his arms almost instantly. “You can’t help falling in love with me?”

“Some things are meant to be.” He replied causing her to giggle and kiss him.

“Maybe I do like the song.” She said in between kisses.

“You two are officially nauseating.” Said Benedict getting up. “I’m leaving.”

“Wait for me.” Said Eloise getting up. “I don’t wanna throw up my lunch all over this floor either.” And with that the two disappeared.

Penelope looked at Colin. “Do you think that we should go up too. After all tomorrow is a competitive day.”

Colin stood up and grabbed Penelope’s hand dragging her up too. “I was thinking we could do a little walk.”

“Colin, its freezing.”

He shrugged and grabbed both their coats from the rack, draping hers on her shoulder, letting her put it on while he did the same and then took her arm. He guided her, not out to the gardens, but back on the terrace where their relationship changed 8 months prior.

They both stood there in the silence, rather enjoying the crisp November air looking at the gardens before Penelope broke the peaceful silence turning to Colin.

“You know I used to insist El and I read here because I knew you would be the one to find us out here.”

“What?” He asked his eyes shining.

“Yeah, I saw you sneak out here once when you thought no one was in the library. And then I waited and during dinner came out and saw what this terrace was and told Eloise about it.”

“Really?”

“I was a 10-year-old with a crush.”

“An adorable 10-year-old.”

“Having out kiss out here was straight out of her fantasies.”

She looked up at him and he looked down at her intently. She saw in his eyes, him making a decision. Before she could say anything he spoke up.

“I lied to you.”

“What?” She asked confused.

“That night, at Kate and Anthony’s wedding when you stumbled out here with that bottle of wine and I told you I was hiding from the expectations. I was hiding from you.”

“Me?”

“When you are in a room all I find myself looking at is you. I know its pathetic but I can’t stop, its like gravity, my eyes are drawn to you. Earlier that day I remember when you and El walked into the church I knew I was a goner. I was avoiding you because I knew in that moment I loved you, that I couldn’t remember a time I didn’t love you but your presence in my life was too important for me to jeopardise by doing anything about it. So I was hiding.” He smiled down at her brushing some loose strands of hair behind her ear. “You have no idea how eternally grateful I am that you found me that night.”

“Colin...”

He stopped her. “Wait there’s more. I know that this may seem like I haven’t thought it through, that I’m rushing or that I’m being classically naive, but its the thing I’ve felt most sure about.” And with that he got down on one knee stunning Penelope in the process. “I love you and I will always love you Pen. And as much as I love our secret love bubble of happiness I want to declare how I feel to the entire world, preferably with a microphone. I thought about doing this on that yacht, but we both know this terrace is more meaningful. So what do you say? Will you marry me, Pen?”

Penelope continued to be dumbfounded by what was happening in front of her. She looked down at Colin Bridgerton, on his knee asking for her hand; she looked up to the lounge chairs on the terrace where she spent so many years reading with Eloise, the same chairs where she kissed Colin for the first time; she looked around to see the Aubrey Hall gardens in clear view of the terrace sparkling in the moonlight. Her eyes shifted between every possible part of this night sky that she could observe, she committed to memory every detail of the moment, the moment Colin Bridgerton asked her to marry him.

After waiting for nearly 2 entire minutes, Colin grabbed onto Penelope’s left hand. Noticing her being pulled out of her trance he smirked and rolled his eyes. “For god’s sake Penelope Featherington, are you gonna marry me or not?”

“Yes! Yes, yes yes! Of course I’m gonna marry you.” She said, grabbing his hands and pulling him up, their lips meeting a kiss.

The kiss the couple shared no where near fit the definition of a good kiss, no they were smiling through the moment and it was their favourite kiss they ever shared.

“We are getting married.” She whispered as they broke apart, foreheads still touching.

“We are getting married.” He replied matching her tone.

They both stood there in silence before he spoke up again. “We have to tell people.”

“Or we could just elope.” She said with a laugh.

“Our families would literally kill us.”

She sighed. “True”

“So we should start telling them” Colin said, his words sounding unsure to his own ears.

They both seemed unenthused with the idea.

“We have kept it from them for so long,” Said Colin with a shrug. “what’s one more month, we did tell Ben and El we are waiting till New Years.”

Penelope nodded. “We can enjoy our engagement in peace for one more month before telling them.”

Eventually they made their way upstairs and as Colin tried to lead Penelope towards his room, when she made an unexpected turn towards the lady’s hallway. “Are you really gonna sleep in your assigned room on our engagement night!?” Exclaimed Colin, lightly pulling her towards him.

Penelope gave him a little kiss. “I’ll see you in your room soon.” She started walking away from him and he followed.

“Go,” She laughed.

“Where do you think you are headed Mrs Bridgerton-to-be?” He said still in their playful mood.

“I promised her she’d be the first to know any new developments.”

Wordlessly understanding Colin gave her a sweet kiss and wink before making his way to his room.

That night around 1 am Eloise heard a knock on her door, she walked up irritatedly and opened the door only to be blinded by the precious stone gleaming on her friend’s finger.

“Ahhhhh!” The girl yelled in joy.

Next morning the whole family was told Eloise thought she saw a spider in her room as Colin and Penelope smile at each other over their coffee mugs.

Chapter End Notes

Any comments are appreciated

The Journey to Scotland

Chapter Notes

The last month of the year brings new beginnings

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

The week before Christmas

Colin and Penelope had spent everyday since the 18th November planning for this. After having a frank conversation with Eloise, Penelope had slowly begun to move out of their shared flat to the 2 bed Colin had been living in by himself since July. Colin had before the proposal consulted his mother about Penelope joining their family, asked Portia Featherington for her daughter's hand in marriage and taken Benedict's help in choosing a ring. Yet in the spirit of enjoying their engagement, no one but Eloise was aware that they had officially been affianced.

On the night of the 17th of December, Penelope had been living with Colin for over 2 weeks and they had been adjusting very well. Well enough that the crazy plan they had set in motion no more than a month ago with no intention of follow through was now being acted upon. Two suitcases stood in their doorway as both Colin and Penelope made a very important phone call each.

"I need you to do me a favour." Said Penelope on the phone with Eloise.

"I don't know, the last time you said that to me I had to go to the most boring concert of my life."

"I promise you this will be less boring than that. It needs an overnight bag."

"An overnight bag?"

"Yeah, for 2 nights. And maybe a nice dress for a fancy dinner."

"A fancy dinner?" Eloise was confused. "What are you talking about Pen?"

"Can you pack and meet me at Euston in 2 hours?"

"It's the middle of the night! Why would we go to Euston?"

"An overnight to Scotland." Said Penelope.

"An OVERNIGHT to SCOTLAND."

“Stop yelling. Are you coming or not?”

“An impromptu trip to Scotland? Why not. But you better have a good reason for me by tomorrow.”

And with that Penelope thanked Eloise and hung up the phone before confirming that they will see each other soon.

Meanwhile Colin had a more succinct conversation with Benedict. “Yo, meet me at Euston in 2 hours.”

“Colin?” Benedict asked into the phone confused.

“I have tickets on an overnight to Scotland and I need you on it with me.”

“I have a wife.”

“Tell her I need you to go to Scotland for an urgent, important thing. You’ll be back in less than 2 days.”

“Is it really urgent and important?”

“Yup.”

Benedict sighed. “See you in 2 hours.”

The first 2 at London Euston Station that evening were Eloise and Benedict, both surprised to see each other and equally disappointed for not figuring out the other would be there.

“So how’d you get roped into this.” Asked Eloise as she sat next to her big brother.

“I was told it was urgent and important.”

“Penelope said that?”

Benedict looked back at her confused. “Penelope? What does Penelope have to do with it, Colin called me.”

Eloise pointed at herself. “Penelope.”

Benedict looked confused. “I thought this was a work thing? Urgent, important, an overnight train to Scotland.” When Eloise still looked confused Benedict continued. “Colin travels for a living.”

“Penelope said she was asking me for a favour.”

“A favour? No wonder Colin didn’t start with that, the last favour he asked me led to perusing jewellery stores for hours on end only for me to have to store a ring I couldn’t hand over when I was supposed to because YOU were at his house.”

Eloise pointed at her brother accusatorially. "I knew you knew he was gonna propose. The ring was on you that day!"

"Yup."

"Its a nice ring."

Benedict looked perplexed. "He showed it to you?"

"Not exactly."

Before she could elaborate, the couple that had arranged this impromptu trip made their way toward them on the platform.

"Hey guys." Said Penelope with a smile.

"Hey guys?! Don't 'hey guys' us. What is going on?" Said Eloise irritated.

"We are going to Scotland." Colin said with a shrug.

Benedict looked at his brother. "You made it seem this was an important work thing, but is this just a couple's retreat you invited your siblings to."

"It is important, I never said it was work related." Colin replied. Before anyone could say any further, their train pulled into the station.

"Ok, we have two 2 people sleeper rooms in the train, the girls take one and us the other." Said Colin and Penelope nodded, taking 2 of the paper tickets from his hand.

"What's going on?" Asked Eloise. "Why do you guys need us?"

"And why aren't you sharing a room?" Asked Benedict almost in tandem.

"Witnesses." Said Penelope as a response to Eloise in tandem with Collin's "Because its bad luck." response to Benedict.

"I'M SORRY WHAT?" Said Eloise

"THE FUCK?" Was Benedict's exclamation.

Colin and Penelope smiled before Colin said. "Oh, we're eloping was that not clear?"

"No!" Said Eloise her expression matching Benedict's.

"Well we can talk about it on the train lets go." Said Penelope.

Too awestruck to do anything, the intended witnesses made their way into the train quietly, loaded their luggage and set up their rooms before all 4 met in the dining car for a little dinner and clarity.

"You guys are already engaged?" Asked Benedict as their dinner arrived.

Penelope lifted up her left hand, a gesture she had done on a train a little over a month ago, but this time the ring Benedict had helped pick out glistened on her finger. “Yeah, at Aubrey Hall.”

“Aubrey Hall?”

“That night, before Daphne’s make up baby shower game day. After you two got ‘disgusted’ and left us alone.”

Benedict turned to Eloise. “That night, there was no spider.” He said connected the dots.

Eloise shook her head.

“So you knew.”

Eloise nodded.

Benedict turned to Colin. “I helped pick out the ring man, why didn’t you tell me?”

Colin sighed. “That night, after we got engaged and realised we had to start telling people we also realised we wanted to enjoy our engagement in peace for one more month before the shit storm began.”

Eloise looked between her brothers and then addressed her best friend. “What I don’t understand is why we are eloping. I thought the plan was that you were gonna announce that you are engaged at the New Year’s party.”

Penelope nodded. “It was, I had only jokingly suggested we elope. But then the next day when we were all embroiled in the chaos that comes with Bridgerton family games, we thought that maybe we didn’t want that on our wedding day, we wanted it to just be about us.”

“I did some research when we came back.” Colin continued. “Apparently you can’t just decide to elope today and get married tomorrow, not in the UK anyways. Even Scottish elopements need a 29 day notice at the local registry office. We decided to fill out all the forms on a whim the next day.”

“Living together just made us realise how badly we wanted to get married.” Said Penelope. “We didn’t wanna wait for New year’s, for telling people, for planning a wedding. We just wanna be married.” She looked at Colin who was already looking at her.

“So we decided to elope to Glencoe.”

“Glencoe? Why not Gretna Green?” Asked Benedict.

“Because, highlands.” Said Colin in a tone indicating the word ‘duh’.

“So we are going to Glencoe so you guys can get married?” Asked Eloise.

“We are going to Glencoe to get married.” Said Colin with a smile.

“Are you okay with this El?” Asked Penelope holding her best friend’s hands. “Because if you are not, we stop. We go back.”

“Hey!” Protested Colin but Penelope ignored.

“I’m not gonna marry Colin without your blessing or whatever. I know that you already approve, but we are springing this on you. Colin may be the love of my life, but you are my favourite Bridgerton.”

“Hey!” Colin protested again and was yet again ignored.

“Till you have kids.” Said Eloise. “Your kids will be Bridgertons”

Penelope let out a laugh. “My kids will be Bridgertons.”

“Pen,” said Eloise with all the love and compassion in her body. “I am so so delighted that you’re marrying my idiot brother.”

Penelope smiled and looked at Colin for the first time since this conversation started.

“I’ve known you a long time and never seen you, either of you this happy. You don’t need my blessing but you have it.”

Benedict interjected the emotion moment, bringing back the much needed levity. “Not to be the odd one out, because you have my blessing too. Whatever that means.”

They never answered him but it meant a lot.

Colin and Penelope had a beautiful and private wedding ceremony in the freezing cold on the 18th of December. Penelope refused a coat with her simple white dress and Colin was dressed in a suit. At the tip of Glencoe, the couple exchanged beautiful and private vows in front of the registrar and their 2 witnesses, sealing their union with a kiss.

Eloise and Benedict drove the 2 hour drive back to Edinburgh to get on yet another night train that took them back to London. 18th December was a blur that passed them by as they saw two people they loved declare their love for each other for the rest of their lives.

Colin and Penelope stayed back. A honeymoon in the Scottish highlands in the depth of December when the sun set at 14:30 wasn’t the wisest idea they ever had. And they would make up for it with a real honeymoon someday, but for now the 2 day extension on their elopement made them sufficiently happy.

The truth is that it was supposed to be a 3 day extension, but in the evening of the second day, Penelope got a phone call from one of the two people that knew exactly where she was.

“You guys have to come back.” Said Eloise the second Penelope picked up the phone in lieu of a greeting.

“What! Is everything ok?” Penelope answered in a panic, causing Colin to look up from his dinner right into her eyes.

“Daphne’s in labour.” Said Eloise.

“Daphne’s in labour!” Penelope screamed and Colin immediately picked up his phone, noticing for the first time the series of messages behind do not disturb.

“Yeah, I figured you guys would be on do not disturb or something so I thought I’d call.”

Looking at Collin, Penelope replied. “Thank you. We would hate to miss this.”

“The doctors and mum both think that there might be a minimum of 8 hours of labour left.” Said Eloise

“8 hours of labour left.” Penelope repeated for the benefit of Colin.

“Do you think you guys can get here in 8 hours? Everyone does think you guys are still in London.”

Penelope looked at Colin. “Can we get there in 8 hours?”

“There is a 10-o-clock flight we can make from Glasgow if we leave in the next hour.” Said Colin already booking their tickets.

“We’ll be on the 10-o-clock flight from Glasgow.” Said Penelope into the phone. “Can we drop our bags off at yours since its on the way to the hospital?”

“Of course.” Said Eloise “See you guys tonight.”

The couple rushed to pack their belongings and settle all bills before heading on the drive to the Glasgow airport in the back of a cab.

“You’re about to be an uncle.” Said Penelope looking at Colin. They were snuggled so close to each other in that back seat as though there was only room for one.

“And you will be an aunt.” Colin countered.

“I can’t believe we actually got married.” Sighed Penelope.

“I still feel like I am in a dream. I have been waiting for this for so long.”

“I gave up waiting on this, I never thought you’d ever want me like that. Which in your defence a 21-year-old wanting a 16-year-old is creepy and not to mention illegal.”

Colin laughed. “Well, I was a gentleman and an idiot at the same time. That night of Daphne and Simon’s engagement party almost 3 years ago, you danced with me, kissed my cheek and changed my life. You are all I have thought about since.”

“And now we are married.” She said with a small kiss to his cheek.

“And they are having a baby.” He replied. “Life changes so fast sometimes.”

Arriving at the hospital at nearly 1am, Colin and Penelope made their way to the waiting room where his entire family was seated. Every member and spouse of the Bridgerton household was seen either sitting or pacing around a cluster of 8 chairs in the massive labour and delivery waiting room with the exception of Simon and Daphne.

“Colin!” Exclaimed Anthony first to spot the couple. “Where on earth were you, we have been trying to reach you since 4pm.”

Colin shrugged. “I was at a writers retreat in Scotland.”

“What were you doing in Scotland?” Asked Anthony perplexed.

“Yeah brother, what were you doing in Scotland?” Added Benedict amused as he winked at Penelope.

“What part of ‘Writer’s retreat’ do you not understand?” He asked his brother raising an eyebrow. “My phone was turned off till dinner, when I saw the messages I hopped on the first flight out and asked Pen here to pick me up because I figured you lot would be at the hospital.”

“Also we brought sausage rolls.” Said Penelope, raising the bag and causing a brief pause in the conversation as everyone scrambled to get some food.

“How’d you guys get Greggs at midnight?” Asked Hyacinth thrilled with her food.

“Airport.” Replied Colin.

Their snack break ended when Kate looked Colin up and down. “Colin, where are your bags?”

“Um, I left them.”

“You left your bags... in Scotland?” Asked Eloise joining in on the amusement.

Colin looked around the room. “How does any of that matter? How’s Daphne? Where’s Simon? What’s the update on the baby?”

Violet looked at her son. “Oh she’s fine dearest. The first child usually takes time, she has been in labour for 13 hours.”

“Geez!” Exclaimed Penelope.

“Another thing I am not looking forward to.” Added Kate.

“It should be any minute now.” Violet continued.

Just as she said that Simon emerged from the hallway and made his way towards the family and everyone stood up to crowd him. “She’s fully dilated. They sent me out here to get some air but I have to go back in. The baby is coming. Violet, she’d like you in the room.”

With that rushed update Simon walked back the way he came along with his mother-in-law while the rest of them found themselves seated again.

“I can’t believe Daphne’s having a kid. Just yesterday she was a kid, sneaking into my room in the middle of the night to try and fail at jumpscaring me.” Said Colin with a smile.

“You’re not that much older than her you know.” Francesca mentioned smirking.

“I can’t believe she’s the first one of us to have a kid.” Said Benedict.

“Can’t you?” Said Anthony. “She’s basically wanted to be a mother since she realised she could be one.”

“I guess I just had a little more hope in us 3 elder brothers for going first.”

“Hey, my wife’s pregnant. I’m close.” Said Anthony with a huff.

“At least Ben is married.” Said Hyacinth. “Colin is no where near close. If he keeps going like this he’ll be after Greg and I.”

“I am right here!” Colin exclaimed at his little sister.

“She has a point.” Benedict smirked. “If you aren’t careful you are gonna end up sad and pathetic.”

“With no wife to speak of.” Added Eloise laughing.

Sophie chimed in. “Don’t you think we are being a little mean.”

“That’s the Bridgerton way.” Replied Gregory earnestly.

“Its alright.” Said Colin with a shrug. “Besides if I’m still single when its old and pathetic to be so, I’ll just marry Pen here.”

Penelope smacked the back of Colin’s head hard, adding the rest of the Bridgerton family’s laugh to Benedict and Eloise’s pre-existing laughter.

“You’re an idiot.”

August Basset was born at 01:21am the morning of 21st December in the city of London. His grandmother rushed out of the delivery room to her remaining 7 children and 3 daughter-in-laws to give them the good news. Two-by-two they entered the new mother’s room and took the chance to hold their nephew, Eloise was least interested and Kate was most. Daphne and Simon Basset were glowing with their joy.

At 03:15am it was decided, Violet Bridgerton would stay with Simon and Daphne at the hospital till they were discharged in the afternoon while everyone else would make their way to the Basset household and help set it up for the new mother. They all piled into 3 cars, Anthony and Kate took with them Francesca, Sophie who had made their way to the hospital

in a separate car from her husband took Hyacinth and Gregory while Colin, Penelope and Eloise piled in with Benedict.

“So how was the honeymoon?” Asked Benedict as he drove out of the hospital carpark to the couple sitting in the back.

“That wasn’t the honeymoon.” Colin replied.

“I don’t know, you got married, you stayed at a hotel, you presumably consummated your relationship. Sounds like a honeymoon to me.” Replied Benedict.

“Who says we consummated our marriage?” Said Penelope defiantly.

“Oh please. You two have no self control.” Said Eloise rolling her eyes. “I bet you consummated that thing before we reached Edinburgh.”

“Before you got in the cab that took you to Edinburgh.” Colin said with a smile.

Penelope swatted his shoulder. “You are being very cheeky today.”

“I’m a happily married man.”

“And cheesy.” Added Penelope as Eloise fake gagged in the passenger seat.

“So how long exactly are we gonna have to pretend that there is no this.” Asked Eloise gesturing between the couple.

“A week maybe, 10 days.” Said Colin.

“The plan hasn’t changed, its New Year’s eve.” Added Penelope.

“But you guys have gone from dating to engaged to married.” Said Benedict.

“Isn’t that how it normally works?” Asked Colin.

“Families usually know about it.” Was the reply.

Before the conversation could continue further they has arrived at the Basset residence and joined the rest of their family.

Over the course of the 21st of December, there was a lot of bustle in the Basset household. While the couple that resided there had not returned form the hospital, Kate and Anthony Bridgerton had stepped upon into their roles as the leads of the Bridgerton family, giving orders and ensuring the preparation of the household for the baby. Given the time of the year, every Bridgerton family member was in town and present. While the nursery was set up, they Bassets had assumed they still had a few weeks before they needed to use it and so required some finishing. Kate and Anthony were taking point on that alongside Francesca and her boyfriend John, who were doing final laundry for the baby’s clothes. The chaotic combination of Eloise, Gregory and Hyacinth were making a ‘welcome home’ sign for the baby and new parents, a task that was going too slow for how simple it truly was. Eloise had

invited Theo sometime in the morning hours and he was feeling out of place in the gathering, largely relegating himself to be the person that actually did the task the 3 chaotic siblings were fighting over. The kitchen was populated by the last 2 couples as they cooked food, not just enough food to feed the large group that had defended over the house but also food that could be frozen to make the first weeks of parenthood easier.

“I don’t think we have enough ingredients for everything.” Said Colin looking around at the food as Penelope and Sophie were making a list of what they could make. “We are gonna need a lot more flour and vegetables. Maybe even chicken.”

“This is their entire fridge Colin, not everyone eats like you.” Said Benedict rolling his eyes as all four of them surrounded the ingredients on the kitchen table.

“No he has a point.” Said Sophie. “There are already 12 of us here, plus Simon and Daphne and your mum. And if I know the Bridgertons, which I do, we are all probably spending the night here to help out. All of this food may not last till end of tomorrow, and I wanted to make some lasagne and pie and freeze it so they have things to eat for after we leave.”

“Not to mention its Christmas in 4 days.” Added Penelope.

“Wouldn’t that just be at Bridgerton house like always?” Asked Sophie.

“Who knows, new baby.” She shrugged.

“Okay, so we need more ingredients. Colin can go to the shops.” Said Sophie.

“You wanna send out best cook out to get the groceries?” Asked Benedict confused.

Sophie immediately protested. “Hey! I am an excellent cook.”

“Yes you are.” Said Benedict kissing her forehead. “But his travels have made Colin too good.”

Colin chimed in. “Its ok I don’t mind. I like having control over the ingredients. Makes cooking prep easier.”

“Hurry then Colin.” Said Benedict and Sophie nodded.

“I’ll go with him.” Said Penelope. “I am only mediocre in the kitchen and if we need all that stuff he’ll need help.”

Benedict smirked over his wife’s head. “Sure.” He tossed his car keys. “Hurry back you two.”

Colin and Penelope had found themselves at the nearest large Sainsbury’s they could find and were browsing the aisles with their trolley, that was 3/4ths filled in the 45 mins they has been there. For the newlywed’s this was the most domestic thing they had done since they got married, a grocery shop for the family and they were revelling in it.

“Do you think we should take some Salmon too? Daphne likes fish.” Said Penelope looked through the meat, poultry and fish sections.

“Can she even eat fish?”

“I’m sure she can. I know you can’t have sushi if you are pregnant but that’s not the same thing.” Replied Penelope picking up the pack. “Do you think we have everything.”

“We should take a few more bags of frozen chips.”

Penelope looked shocked. “We have 2 massive bags!”

“I think we need more like seven.”

“SEVEN?”

Colin shrugged. “We are a big family.”

Penelope threw up her hands in exasperation as Colin added the bags to their trolley. “What have I married into?”

“The craziest family in London.”

“I should have given it more thought.”

“Its too late now.” He replied with a smile and shrug as he leaned down to give her a small kiss.

“I guess its a good thing I love you.” She replied and then started walking towards the checking counter. “Let’s pay and get back to the crazies.”

They used one of the manned payment counters to pay for their excessive groceries and made their way back to Simon and Daphne’s house in Benedict’s car.

“I kinda don’t wanna go inside.” Said Colin as he parked the car in the driveway. “I just want to make out with my wife for a little while.”

Penelope smirked back at him. “Oh, well that can be arranged.” She moves herself closer to kiss him as he pushes his seat back and grabs onto her waist, pulling her away from the passenger seat and into his lap.

Meanwhile inside the kitchen Benedict and Sophie’s patience in awaiting their ingredients is waining.

“What is taking them so long?” Sophie asks her husband as the 2 are preparing a series of meals for the family.

“Shopping for a family of more than 10 takes time.” Benedict shrugs

“Its been more than an hour and a half since they left, the grocery store isn’t that far.”

“Want me to investigate?” Benedict asked.

“Yes please,” she said making the cutest face he had ever seen. “I can continue without you for a little while.”

Outside in Benedict’s car, Penelope was still in the lap of a now shirtless Colin. Her own top had been pulled down and his hands were too far up her skirt of either of them to notice the vibrations coming from their silent phones’.

There was a sharp knock on the window.

“Oh my God! Colin! Colin.” She shrieked surprised, her face turning to the window.

“What?!” He replied dazed and confused.

“Your brother, we should...”

“Right.” He replied as the two of them scrambled to get dressed.

“Seriously you two? My car? Why?” Benedict asked the second they opened the door.

Still seated in their compromising position, the couple looked at each other and burst into giggles. They laughed for a minute before Penelope got off his lap and stood on the floor followed shortly by Colin.

“You guys just had to get groceries, can you really not be trusted?” Benedict chastised his brother and sister-in-law as he began to unload the groceries. “Help me with these.”

They silently helped Benedict pick up grocery bags as the three of them made their way to the kitchen.

“There you guys are!” Sophie exclaimed.

“There are more in car, we’ll do another round.” Said Colin as they kept the bags on the kitchen island.

Once outside again Benedict continued. “Also car sex in my drivers seat? I sit there.”

Penelope rolled her eyes. “It wasn’t sex.”

“Well little Penny, we don’t want to start the conversation about where my brother’s fingers were do we.”

The couple sheepishly shook their heads. “Just not in my car ever again please.”

Later that evening Violet, Daphne, Simon and baby August made returned to a spotless house with a complete nursery and enough cooked meals for a month. The entire family sat together in the living room enjoying their first dinner with the new baby. Soon after Eloise, Theo, Francesca, John, Colin and Penelope decided to bid everyone goodnight, promising they would be back the next morning while Kate, Anthony, Benedict, Sophie, Gregory, Hyacinth

and Violet decided to stay over at the Basset household to help out with anything that the new parents could possibly need.

Penelope and Colin stopped over at Eloise's with Theo to pick up their bags.

"Wait, so you two are like together?" Theo asked as they all sat on the couch for a night cap.

"How did you?" Asked Eloise looking at her boyfriend.

"There's two bags here." He shrugged. "Besides, their loved-up eyes aren't difficult to notice."

"Yeah, we are together." Said Colin with a shrug.

"Cool."

The two couples talked till they finished their drinks after which Colin and Penelope bid a farewell and made it back to their house.

By 9:30 the next morning, all three couples had made their way back to the Basset house and were all seated together for breakfast with the exception of Violet and Daphne.

"Thank you guys so much for everything." Said Simon looking at his wife's family. "Daph is so tired, we don't know what state we would have come back to this house in if it wasn't for you guys."

Anthony looked meaningfully at his best mate. "What else is family for?"

"We Bridgertons take care of our own." Colin added.

"Just ask Penelope," Hyacinth continued. "she has been one of us since I was born and she is more liked than me sometimes."

"That's because you Hy, are annoying." Stated Gregory matter-of-factly.

"Not as annoying as you." She replied back.

"Seriously, are you guys five?" Anthony asked rolling his eyes. "Behave at the table."

Hyacinth stuck her tongue out at her eldest brother.

"Do you want us to stick around for today as well Simon?" Asked Kate, attempting to sidestep the Bridgerton banter.

"You don't have to, Violet said that she will stay till we ask her to. But none of you have to leave." He replied thoughtfully.

"I think we are gonna stay." Said Francesca with a smile. "It is after all the eve of eve of eve of Christmas."

"What?!" Said Colin befuddled.

“22nd December Colin. Its basically Christmas and with the arrival of the baby we are clearly not gonna have the most traditional Christmas and so I think we should all stay here, or at least spend the days here up till Christmas. That way we can help out and get some quality family time.” Francesca explained.

“That sounds like a wonderful idea Frannie.” Said John smiling at his girlfriend.

Everyone at that table agreed and even though Simon never expressed it, his gratitude for the Bridgerton family and their help, support and love was glaringly evident on his face. They ate the rest of their meal in characteristic banter, after which Simon excused himself making his way upstairs to check on his wife and baby while the rest of the family retired to the large drawing room. An hour later, Daphne, Simon and Violet joined the rest of the family after putting Auggie down for a nap with baby monitor in hand. They all sat around the room, making conversation and enjoying each other’s company.

Halfway to lunchtime, Colin was hungry and ignored all jests as he went down to the kitchen in search for something to tide him over. He was soon after followed by Penelope who had made the unnoticed excuse of needing the bathroom.

“Find something to eat?” She asked as he turned around to face her, a bag of crisps in his hand. He reached the bag forward and Penelope grabbed some.

“You hate salt and vinegar crisps.” She said as she ate the food he had shared.

“I prefer cheese and onion. I don’t hate any crisps.” He replied as he continued sharing.

“Two words, Roast Chicken.”

“That’s not a flavour that’s a mistake.” Said Colin glaring.

Penelope just laughed.

“Hey don’t laugh at me, you hate pickled onion monster munch.” Colin said as he handed Penelope the last of the crisp bag.

“It’s an abomination!”

“It’s a loved delicacy.”

“I can’t even look at you right now.” Penelope raised her hand between them to accentuate her point.

They both paused for a moment before Colin let out a little laugh. “This is out first fight as a married couple, crisp flavours?”

“When you continue to call pickled onion monster munch a delicacy, yes!”

He just continued smiling and pulled her closer. “I guess its a good thing I have the rest of my life to convince you of the merits of pickled onion monster munch.”

Before she could say anything in response, he closed the gap between them and kissed her. The couple that has very successfully hidden their relationship from most everyone they knew had become increasingly callous in the light of their recent marital bliss and they continued to make out and lose clothes in the kitchen of a house that wasn't theirs. They were tugging and moaning till they were interrupted yet again.

"Oh my god!" This exclamation came from Eloise as the couple immediately separated and readjusted their clothes. "Now I know how Benedict felt that day in your kitchen."

"Or yesterday." Muttered Colin under his breath

"Yesterday? What happened yesterday?"

"Um, he kinda caught us, in his car." Said Penelope looking at her best friend.

Eloise had a horrified look on her face. "Good god what were you two doing?!"

"Not just making out like we were right now." Came the reply.

"I don't wanna know." She said raising her hands. "But you do realise if you two keep going like this the next person to catch you won't be Ben, me or even mum?"

Colin rolled his eyes. "Cut us some slack, we are newlywed's."

"Newlywed's or not, right now you are sneaking around like teenagers. Control yourselves!"

And with that final warning Eloise left the kitchen without the water she came for.

"She's not wrong." Said Penelope with a sigh.

"You think we need to control ourselves?" Colin said looking down at her.

She took a deep breath. "I think we should tell everyone."

"Are you sure?"

She nodded "Yeah, I think I wanna do this. What about you?"

He held her hand and smiled. "Let's go."

Colin and Penelope walked back into the drawing room hand in hand, a gesture that went largely unnoticed by everyone not in the know besides Kate and Sophie. Colin cleared his throat loudly to get his family's attention in which he succeeded, however they still did not notice the symbolism of his and Penelope's joint hands. Colin sighed and looked at Penelope who gave him the subtlest 'okay' as they let go of each other's hand and closed the distance between them, kissing in front of his entire family.

"What is going on in here?" Hyacinth voiced the thoughts of every stunned person in the room.

“Would you believe me if I said I was giving her CPR?”

Hyacinth starred at Colin in disbelief. “No, no I wouldn’t.”

“I don’t think you can charm your way out of this one, Bridgerton.” Said Penelope with a smirk.

“I’m in love with Penelope Featherington.”

There was a chorus of surprise in the room by all but 4 that generally sounded like the word “what”.

“Someone very smart once told me that if one finds themselves lucky enough to be in love, they should declare it, assuredly, fervently, loudly. I am in love with Penelope Featherington.” Declared Colin, a smug look still on his face.

“I can’t believe you remember that, that was from my ‘I am a literary intellectual’ phase in sixth form.” Said Penelope momentarily distracted. Remembering where they are, she turned to everyone in the room. “What he’s trying to say is that we’re together. We have been for a while. I’m kinda in love with Colin too.”

There were slow smiles that were appearing on everyone’s faces.

“I knew something suspicious was going on. They were on that Caribbean vacation together!” Said Daphne with glee. “And you lot tried to make me think I was a crazy pregnant lady.”

“Oh you don’t even know the half of it Daph.” Said Benedict with a smirk.

“Oh my god!” This time the exclamation came from Sophie. “You knew didn’t you? You knew this entire time and didn’t tell me. You didn’t tell your wife. Your wife, Benedict Bridgerton!”

He looked sheepishly at the ground. “They made me promise not to tell.”

“Wait, so how many of you knew?” Asked Kate surveying the room.

“I did.” Said Violet Bridgerton, surprising everyone in the room that wasn’t armed with that information. “As did Benedict and Eloise as per what I know.”

“Mum!” Eloise exclaimed.

“Oh Eloise who cares? Now it’s out in the open and now I can be thrilled for you two out in the open. And this family can be thrilled for you out in the open too.”

Penelope felt guiltier than she ever felt before. “There’s more.”

Everyone looked at the couple expectantly and Colin suddenly felt very nervous. “Okay,” he turned to look at his family. “well, I did go to Scotland, but not to a writer’s retreat. You see this thing started nine months ago... and... um.”

“What are you trying to say Colin?” Asked Daphne confusion evident on her tired face.

“This is not how I wanted to tell you guys, but, um.” He looked at Penelope next to him.
“We, um...”

Watching her husband struggle, Penelope grabbed his hand and faced everyone. “We got married.”

“What?” There was a soft whisper from Violet Bridgerton as the rest of the family was too stunned to speak.

Gaining confidence from Penelope’s words Colin spoke up. “We eloped. Pen and I went up to Scotland with Eloise and Benedict and we got married 4 days ago.”

“YOU DID WHAT?” Came the yell of Anthony Bridgerton, who had stayed silent throughout this entire conversation.

“We got married.” Said Colin in a voice challenging his elder brother.

“And you two,” He said turning in his anger to Benedict and Eloise. “knew about this?”

Before his siblings could protest Colin spoke up in their defence “We needed two witnesses and we asked them.”

No one in the room had a pleasant expression to speak of. Anthony Bridgerton was fuming, he looked like he could murder someone despite his wife’s attempt at a calming hand gesture, which was also failing due to her own hurt. Violet Bridgerton looked somewhere between shock and hurt, an expression that was mirrored with a reduced intensity on the faces of Daphne, Francesca, Gregory, Hyacinth, Sophie and even levelheaded Simon. Of the two newcomers, John felt out of place, like this was a private event he were intruding on and Theo didn’t dare admit he knew part of this already. Eloise and Benedict had the wherewithal to look extremely guilty, sharing looks with only each other. Colin was ready to fight, while he was not expecting an entirely negative reception, he was prepared for it guns blazing. Her hand held firmly in his, Penelope could not stand to the face the family that had showed her such kindness her whole life now showing anger and hurt, she averted her gaze from everyone, keeping it fixed on their joined hands.

“You are a child Colin.” Said Anthony in a rage that was beyond anything his family had seen from him in years. “What you did it was naive and reckless and stupid and CHILDISH. Penelope I will never understand what you were thinking...”

“DON’T.” Yelled out Colin in a register no one knew he possessed. “Don’t even think about whatever you were gonna say next. Say anything you want to me, NEVER attack her. We’re leaving.”

With that he turned around and started making his way out of the room, Penelope’s hand was still firmly gripped in his such that she could feel the cool metal wedding ring he had slipped back on.

“Colin, stop.” Said Penelope pulling at his hand and turning him around to face her as she spoke to her husband candidly in front of his family.

“Anthony has a point. What we did, it was wrong. We were together for months and we didn’t tell anyone. We got ENGAGED and we still hid it. We hid it from your mum and Ben who helped you plan for it. We eloped Col. And it was reckless and stupid. It was also romantic and we did it because we love each other, but we hurt them. We also did it because we were scared, we had gone too far down this rabbit hole that coming in here and announcing we were getting married was terrifying.” She turned to his family that was also now hers. “I’m sorry Lady Bridgerton, you supported us even when you wanted to yell at us and we didn’t think to include you in our Scottish excursion. I’m so sorry Benedict and Eloise, we made you witness moment after moment that you couldn’t discuss freely with anyone else and put in a terrible position for months. And everyone else, I am so so sorry, I lied to you for months and then kept you from being a part of Colin’s wedding.”

As she looked around, tears were pooling in her eyes, threatening her vision, she looked up at Colin who looked in her eyes, wiped her tears and turned to his family.

“I’m not sorry. I’m not sorry that we dated, that we fell in love and that we got married. I’m also not sorry that I hid it from you, I’m not. This wouldn’t have been such a success if everyone knew, I believe that.” Said Colin matter-of-factly, all his anger dissipated.

Penelope shook her head at that. “Colin, you have to apologise to your family.”

“Pen...”

“We got married Colin. Without them, they deserve much more than a simple apology.”

He looked around his family, for the first time being able to grasp the true emotion prevalent amongst them all. He looked at his eldest brother, whose anger was doing a terrible job of masking the true hurt he felt inside. “I am sorry I hurt you. But Penelope is my wife. That’s done. This decision was not naive, or reckless, or stupid, or childish. I have loved Pen for so long that I can’t pinpoint when it started because the day I realised I loved her, I couldn’t reminisce on a single moment we shared and not feel that love. We first kissed at Kate and Anthony’s wedding 9 months ago, and we have been together since that night. I first told mum that I was planning on proposing in September and went ring shopping with Ben in October. I was going to propose on that yacht in Anguilla but I decided to do it at Aubrey Hall instead. The legal paperwork for getting married takes 30 days to process, we chose to fill it out and again decided to go to Scotland and get married. I have thought this through. I’m going to spend the rest of my life with Penelope Featherington.”

“Actually, the paperwork came through in the last post before Christmas this morning. I am officially, legally Penelope Bridgerton.” She looked around the room, coming out of her momentary distraction. “This is terrible timing, sorry.”

“When did you have time to file the paperwork?” Colin asked her.

“I did it before we left.” Penelope shrugged. “And the registrar sent over the documents as soon as we were married. I just didn’t wanna wait.”

“You’re Penelope Bridgerton?” Colin asked awe in his eyes.

“Well, not professionally because Penelope Featherington has an extensive journalism portfolio, but in every other way yes, yes I am.” She replied.

In his joy, he forgot his family was in the room as he lifted her up and spun her around twice before plating her feet back on the ground.

“I feel like we just got married all over again.” He said with a smile.

“I love you.”

“I love you too.”

“See,” Exclaimed Eloise loudly to her entire family. “At least you lot didn’t have to witness that constantly the last 9 months. I mean I have only known for about 2 months and it has been nauseating.”

Benedict nodded. “Watching them be all couple-y gets old fast. They really have no self control.”

“We have self-control.” Colin interrupted annoyed.

“You had sex in my car yesterday!”

“What?!” Came from Sophie.

“Almost!” Replied Colin. “We ALMOST had sex in your car yesterday.”

“COLIN!” Exclaimed Penelope swatting his chest rather loudly.

“So you guys are really together and married?” Asked Anthony much calmer as the couple shared a look.

“Yup.” Came the simultaneous reply.

“And you are happy?”

“Very much so.”

“Happier than I’ve ever been.”

“Then I am sorry Penelope, Sorry for lashing out...” He started as Penelope stopped him.

“You don’t have to apologise to me, you actually didn’t say anything to me. You do owe Colin an apology though.”

He looked guiltily at his brother. “I am sorry for calling you a naive child Colin.” Said Anthony with utmost sincerity. “You are neither of those things, I was just shocked and surprised and I took it out on you. In fact, we both know you couldn’t have made a better decision than choosing to marry Penelope.”

“Damn straight.” Eloise muttered under her breath.

“It’s ok brother.” Said Colin with a smile and bro hug after which he turned to his mother.

“Mum?” He asked, the questioning tone evident.

“You two are married.”

“Lady Bridgerton...” Penelope started before she was interrupted.

“You know Penelope, you’ve always been like a daughter of mine. When I found out you two were dating I thought it was amazing that you might be actually become one of my daughters someday.” Penelope’s eyes welled with tears as Violet continued. “You have to stop calling me Lady Bridgerton now that you are, I will accept any variation on mum.”

Before either of the pair could say anything she reached out and gave them both a massive hug. “I am so happy for you both. Yes I would have liked to have a big wedding and be there to watch you two get married, but I am happy if you are.”

“Thank you.” Came from Penelope as the three pulled out of their embrace.

Daphne looked around the room waiting for any other reaction that didn’t seem to materialise before she spoke up. “Now that all the emotional reactions are over I just have to say, I knew it, I knew it, I KNEW IT. You all tried to convince me I had ‘crazy pregnancy brain’ but I knew it, I knew it, I knew it!”

Simon nodded. “You did know honey.”

“I told you Eloise,” she said pointing at her younger sister, “Penelope’s suspicious behaviour in June was boyfriend related.” She turned to the rest of her family. “And I told you guys they were on that stupid vacation together. I told you so, I told you so, I TOLD YOU SO!”

“I was with you there.” Said Kate.

“Me too!” Remarked Sophie. “What I can’t believe is that these two bozos knew.” She said pointing at her husband and Eloise.

“We actually also knew they were on that vacation together.” Eloise shrugged.

“EL!” Exclaimed Benedict.

“Benedict Bridgerton!” Came from Sophie. “You knew they were on that vacation together, I was speculating about those instagram posts with you.”

“Sorry?”

“Oh, just wait till we get back home.” She said menacingly.

“And we kinda posted those on purpose to mess with you guys.” Said Colin with a small smile.

“It wasn’t just the kids, I knew they were on that vacation too.” Said Violet with a smile.

“Mom?” Said Daphne madly offended. “And you didn’t confirm my suspicions.”

“You didn’t discuss them with me.”

“And if I had?”

“I would not have confirmed your suspicions Daphne. I need to keep all my children’s confidence.” Said Violet with a small smile.

“I have a question.” Said Kate causing all the people in the room to turn to her. “We know that you guys have been together since our wedding I guess, but how long have the rest of you known?”

“I found out at Benedict and Sophie’s wedding in July.” Said Violet. “I noticed something was happening between them and suggested to Colin he should do something about it and he told me they already had.”

“Wait a minute, you guessed?” Asked Eloise to which her mother only nodded.

“Are you saying that if I just discussed by suspicions with one of you, you would have told me?” Daphne asked the couple question.

“Maybe.” Said Penelope. “I think it also had to do with the fact that back then no one knew, so it was nice to tell someone, made it more real.”

“My story is more interesting, I walked in on them having sex on the kitchen counter like 2 months after my wedding.” Said Benedict, slightly deviating the topic of conversation.

“For the last time, we were not HAVING sex on the kitchen counter!” Said Colin while everyone else looked scandalised.

“You minutes later and I would have caught you mid-thrust.” With those words Penelope’s face turned as red as her hair and everyone was rendered speechless with the exception of Violet who loudly chastised her second child.

“They really have no self-control, I walked in on them having sex on the kitchen counter like 5 minutes.” Eloise added.

“5 minutes ago?” Said Simon piecing the situation together. “Do you mean 5 minutes ago in OUR kitchen?” Daphne looked equally aghast as Penelope sprung to the couple’s defence this time.

“We were just kissing.” She sighed. “Also can we please stop talking about this.”

“I agree,” chimed in Gregory. “I wanna discuss who won the wager.”

This peaked Colin’s interest. “Oh, yes I am dying to know.”

Hyacinth pulled up her phone and started reading. “Ok, Daphne, Kate, Sophie and I win 100 quid each because they were on that vacation together. Plus an additional 25 for Daphne and Sophie because of the romantic yacht ride. No one wins the ‘when it started’ part of the wager, Gregory and I get 50 quid each for quote ‘they doing it’, Francesca and Anthony get 20 quid each because they revealed what was happening before Christmas. Simon, Eloise and Benedict are rewardless.”

Colin looked at Eloise and Benedict surprised. “How did you guys lose so spectacularly? You knew what was going on!”

Eloise rolled her eyes. “I didn’t participate because I am a good friend and Pen asked me not to tell anyone.”

Penelope smiled and gave her best friend a hug. “Thanks El.”

“And I bet that if you guys were together it’ll be something crazy like getting engaged. So I would have won if it wasn’t for your stupid beautiful wedding.” Benedict said disappointed.

There was laughter around the room before Colin spoke up again. “Okay, now that all of this is done, can we just celebrate.”

And with those words the family indeed did. They had had a long and happy year that had ended in 3 weddings, 2 pregnancies, 1 baby and a lot of love to go around. Finding a quiet moment together in the family’s celebrations Colin smiled at his wife.

“Regretting the choice after witnessing the all new level of Bridgerton crazy tonight?” He asked with a small smile dancing on his lips.

“The choice of being with Colin Bridgerton?” He nodded and her face broke into an earth-shattering smile. “Not even for a second.”

Chapter End Notes

And with that this story comes to an end.

I really struggled writing an ending and I hope it wasn't too disappointing.

There is also a small little Derry Girls reference for any eagle-eyed interested people.

This version of these characters have been living in my head as a way to ease the break between part 1 and 2 that is now almost over. I do have some potential ideas for certain interludes for this story in case anyone is interested - (for now they are 1. a Featherington family dinner with Colin and 2. a 5+1 of almost getting caught where there +1 is Benedict catching them in the kitchen).

Hope you enjoyed it, any and all comments are always welcome.

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!