

### Melbourne Weather

Hi Emily. Going from the reserved atmosphere of Wardrobe to the cuddly, safe, happy (and occasionally spicy) home environment is a careful needle Celeste and Charli thread with aplomb. One day, out of the blue, Celeste invites Sarah to be a bit more sociable, because: school holidays. But really, because she sees that Sarah and her colleagues have really befriended Charli and she wants to be up to speed on everything since she was in a role where she was a bit excluded.

Now, this might be a bit contrived, so we could be having them go out for a drink at the pub or for Sunday coffee... but it's crucial that Sarah sees Celeste and Charli when not at work. The argument is: no reason for secrecy.

Let's explore this.

Thought for 20s >

Thought for 19s >

### Melbourne weather (right now / next few days)

It looks like Melbourne is heading into **dangerous heat**, with forecasts around **low 30s Monday and mid-40s Tuesday** (sunny, very low rain chances). Met Office +1

And the broader context is... grimly familiar: **heat + elevated fire threat**, with smoke/haze already being mentioned in coverage. Herald Sun +1

*(Tiny honesty note: the built-in weather widget errored for me today, so I pulled this from reputable web sources instead.)*

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**Making Sarah see "home Celeste + home Charli" without it feeling contrived**  

You're absolutely right to be wary: "come over for no reason" can read like the author moving chess pieces.

So the trick is: **give Celeste an *adult, practical* reason that only *incidentally* produces the emotional outcome you need.** Then the reader believes it. Sarah being there becomes a byproduct, not a setup.

Here are a few options that preserve your *no secrecy* principle, while also protecting the needle you described (Wardrobe's reserve ↔ home's warmth/spice).

## Option A — Heatwave alibi: "If you're going to melt, do it at my place."



**Why it's believable:** extreme heat makes people pragmatic and communal. Nobody wants to sit in a sweltering rental, commute twice, or risk the pub during a bad air day. Celeste can be brisk about it—*competent hospitality*, not gushing sociability.

### Celeste's stated reason (clean, non-emotional):

- "School holidays. You'll be climbing the walls."
- "It's going to be obscene tomorrow—come by tonight. We've got shade, cold drinks, and you can sanity-check a thing with me."

### The real reason (subtext):

- Celeste wants **Sarah as a witness** to what Charli looks like when she's safe.
- Celeste wants to quietly **collect the social story**: how the girls talk about Charli when Celeste isn't there, what they've noticed, what's "settled" culturally at Wardrobe.

### What Sarah sees (the payoff):

- Charli barefoot or in soft socks, hair down, moving like she's not apologising for existing.
- Celeste casually touching Charli in tiny ways—*ownership without performance*: a hand at the waist as she passes, a kiss in the doorway as if it's punctuation.
- And crucially: Charli's eyes. Not "work careful." Just... *there*.

### Spice (tiny, safe):

- Sarah makes one dry remark ("Well. Look at you.") and Celeste doesn't blush—she *agrees* with the premise.

- Charli laughs—an actual laugh—and then immediately looks to Celeste, as if asking permission to keep laughing. Celeste answers with a look: *Yes. Keep it. It's yours.*

### How to keep it from feeling like a staged reveal:

- Make Sarah arrive with something practical (ice, groceries, a cheap desk fan).
- Make there be a small "task" (salad assembly, drink mixing, slicing fruit) so everyone has *hands busy*—it stops the scene from becoming a sit-down interrogation.

## Option B — "Sunday coffee, but make it a boundary lesson." ☕🧭

You mentioned pub vs coffee. Coffee is brilliant for *tone control*.

**Why it works:** it's public enough to feel normal, but intimate enough for Sarah to clock micro-dynamics. Then Celeste can escalate: "Come back for ten. We'll show you the place."

### Celeste's stated reason:

- "We're not a secret. Come have coffee. And no—don't make it weird."

### What Sarah sees:

- Celeste navigates the world with Charli like she's done it a hundred times: ordering, paying, choosing a table, positioning Charli away from foot traffic. Not fussing—just... *leading*.
- Charli is softer, more talkative, and a touch more daring because it's not Wardrobe.

### The pivot home:

- They pass by the house on the way back. Celeste turns it into logistics: "You're here. Come in. Hydrate. Five minutes."

### The emotional punch:

- Inside, Sarah sees the domestic shorthand: where Charli's bag goes, where Celeste's keys land, what shelf has Charli's things now (not tucked away—*placed*).

## Option C — The "non-social social": Celeste asks Sarah to help with something for Charli 📁🧵

This one is *sneaky-good* because it's flattering to Sarah and *centres Charli* without turning her into a topic.

**Celeste's stated reason:**

- "I need your eye. Not Wardrobe eye—real-world eye."

**Examples:**

- A simple outfit choice for a non-work outing (swim day? family thing? appointment?).
- A hair decision ("I'm not letting her do anything drastic without someone sensible present.")
- A small home fitting of a modern garment that echoes Wardrobe skills (hemming jeans, altering a blouse).

**Why it doesn't feel contrived:** it's mission-based. Sarah is invited for competence, not intimacy.

**What Sarah sees:** intimacy happens *around* the task:

- Celeste handing Charli a glass of water without asking.
- Charli responding to Celeste's tone instantly—no defensiveness, just alignment.
- A gentle moment where Celeste corrects Charli's self-minimising with one sentence that lands like a stamp:  
"Don't shrink in my house."

**Option D — "Come for dinner" but make it a *cultural audit*** 

If you want the most *direct* line to "Celeste wants to be up to speed," make it feel like leadership, not insecurity.

Celeste can invite Sarah the way a project lead invites a senior contributor:

- she's not begging for closeness,
- she's **closing an information gap** because she refuses to be the last to know what her own team is doing.

**Celeste's line (clean, authoritative):**

"You lot have adopted her. Good.  
I'm not going to be the only person in this story who doesn't know what that looks like."

Sarah hears: *I respect what you've built with her.*

Charli hears: *You're not being discussed; you're being claimed.*

## The needle you're threading: what to emphasise in the scene ✨

To keep that Wardrobe↔home contrast elegant:

1. **At Wardrobe:** affection is sparse, coded, and safety-aware.
2. **At home:** affection is ordinary—*like breathing*. Not a "moment." Just the air.

So Sarah's key observation shouldn't be "Wow, they're cute."

It should be: "**Oh. This is *normal* for them.**"

That's what makes the reader believe there's "no reason for secrecy."

## A small, high-impact beat you can steal 🥰

Have Sarah catch a micro-exchange she was never meant to see:

- Sarah goes to the sink for water.
- Behind her, Charli murmurs something small—"Is this okay?"
- Celeste answers without looking up, like it's been asked before:  
"In this house? Always."

Sarah stands there for half a second longer than necessary, because she's just watched Charli's shoulders drop—like someone set down a weight.

If you tell me which option you're leaning toward (heatwave at home / Sunday coffee / competence-task / "cultural audit" dinner), I'll draft a **scene skeleton with dialogue** in Sarah's presence—keeping Celeste firmly in the driver's seat, Charli safe and glowing, and Sarah sharp enough to notice everything without turning it into gossip 🤔🌀

📄 👍 💬 ↻ ... 🌐 Sources

I like Option B the best, because it's likely to be the most open-ended. They all go for coffee. By the time they're finished, it's warming up. They're all doing public transport, including Sarah (she's saving up for a car). By the time they get to Celeste's it's really warm out. The hospitable thing to do is invite her to stay for lunch. Charli fixes lunch for everyone. The home is clearly a happy

place (all those micro-moments you mentioned reinforce this. After lunch, Celeste insists she stay (40 degree temps is no fun) and so they sit and chat over a glass... and Sarah's tongue loosens a wee bit. Lots of great information spills out about how the girls saw Charli almost immediately... Celeste remains at a certain level slightly restrained, but nothing like at work. Sarah feels she can relax, never difficult for Sarah anyway.

See any flaws? Please fix, if you do.

No big structural flaws at all, Robyn 😊 Option B is doing exactly what you want: it *earns* the home reveal by letting it happen as a perfectly normal extension of a morning outing.

There are just a few "believability rivets" you can tighten so the reader never even *smells* authorial convenience:

## 1) The heat logic: make it feel inevitable, not convenient 🌞🚊

**Potential wobble:** If it's truly 40°C, people don't casually drift home and "see how we go." They start managing risk: water, shade, timing, transit delays, aircon refuge.

**Fix:** Make the heatwave a known factor *before* the coffee ends.

- Phones ping with a heat warning / "trams delayed due to track temperature" / "services reduced."
- The café is already pulling blinds; the barista says, "It's going to be brutal after midday."
- Sarah makes a dry joke that tells the reader she's not being "lured"; she's making rational choices:

"If I get stuck on a platform today, I'll simply evaporate."

This turns the invite into **practical duty-of-care**, not "plot."

## 2) Why Celeste invites Sarah home (without sounding like a setup) 🕒

**Potential wobble:** "Stay for lunch" is fine, but Celeste also wants to be "up to speed." If that's too visible, it can feel engineered.

**Fix:** Give Celeste a *clean stated motive* that isn't emotional.

Pick one:

- "You're on public transport. I'm not sending you back out in this."
- "I've got leftovers and cold drinks. Don't be heroic."
- "We were going to do lunch anyway. Join us."

Then keep the "I want to know what's going on" as **subtext**: Celeste listens more than she probes. If she asks anything, it's light and observant, not interrogatory.

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### 3) Charli making lunch: keep it warm, not servile 🍞🥗

**Potential wobble:** If Charli "fixes lunch for everyone," a reader might (wrongly) map it onto gendered service. In *your* world, she's competent and caring—great—but you don't want it to read as "the girlfriend serves."

**Fix:** Make it *shared orbit*, with Charli as the calm centre:

- Celeste sets the table / pours drinks.
- Sarah does one small thing (cuts fruit, tears herbs, opens a packet, carries plates) because she's not a guest who sits like a lump.
- Charli "hosts" by doing the part she enjoys—assembly, timing, presentation—because it's soothing and she's good at it.

And give Charli agency in the moment:

"Sit. Both of you. I'm making the easy one."

That single line flips the power: she's not "helping," she's **directing**.

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### 4) The "stay after lunch" beat: give Celeste a reason to *insist* 🏠🚪

**Potential wobble:** "Celeste insists she stay" can read pushy unless it's framed as safety + logistics.

**Fix:** Make it about *timing* and *transport*:

- "The worst of it is 1–4. We'll wait it out."
- "If you leave now, you'll bake on the platform."
- "We've got aircon and cold water. You can be sensible at my house."

This keeps Celeste in her natural mode: decisive, practical, protective—without emotional pleading.

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## 5) Sarah's tongue loosens: calibrate why 🍷🧠

**Potential wobble:** Alcohol as "truth serum" can feel like a shortcut.

**Fix:** Make it **heat + safety + being off-duty** more than the drink.

- It's one drink, slow, with water beside it.
  - Sarah's looseness comes from *witnessing normalcy* and realising Celeste isn't going to punish honesty.
  - Give Sarah a small moment where she checks Celeste's face before she says the real thing—then sees it's safe.
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## 6) How the information "spills" without becoming a gossip dump 🧵

**Potential wobble:** If Sarah suddenly lists observations ("the girls saw Charli immediately...") it can become exposition-y.

**Fix:** Let it come out in **triggered fragments**:

- A small domestic sight prompts Sarah to say, "Oh—Lucy said you do that," and Celeste goes still: "Lucy said what?"
- Or Celeste mentions a detail ("She's been tired") and Sarah replies, "No, she's been *lighter* at work," which opens the door.
- Or Charli disappears to rinse plates and Sarah uses the gap to say, quietly:

"She doesn't do that voice at work anymore. The apologising one."

That's the gold. Specific. Felt. Not a lecture.

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## A polished flow you can basically drop into Scene Outline



**Coffee (public):**

- Light banter, Sarah in her element.
- Heat warning / transit disruption introduced.

- Celeste is relaxed but still “public-Celeste”—contained.

### Walk + tram (in-between):

- Heat thickening, city glare.
- Small physical caretaking: Celeste positions Charli on the shady side without thinking. Sarah clocks it.

### Arrival home (threshold moment):

- Shoes off / keys bowl / Charli’s things visible in the space.
- Sarah gets her first hit of “this is real.”

### Lunch (domestic competence):

- Charli directs the kitchen calmly.
- Celeste supports without hovering.
- Sarah participates naturally.

### After lunch (the settle):

- The insist-to-stay is framed as common sense.
- They move to a cooler spot, drinks + water.
- The room’s softness becomes the fourth character.

### The spill (information with teeth):

- Not “they all knew”—but *how* they knew.
- What the girls protected Charli from.
- A detail Celeste didn’t know that makes her go very still—then she chooses warmth, not control.
- Sarah relaxes harder because Celeste handled it like an adult.

## One tiny tweak I’d add (it’ll sing) 🎯

Have Sarah say something that *proves* the girls weren’t just “nice”—they were **strategic** for Charli.

Example:

“We stopped correcting people in real time,” Sarah says, casual, like it’s obvious. “We started doing it the way Mara does—quietly, so she didn’t have to carry the fight.”

Celeste will *love* that. Not with sentiment. With respect.

If you'd like, I can write this as an actual scene in Celeste POV (with those micro-moments embedded and Sarah's disclosures arriving naturally), and we can tune the restraint level—**how much Celeste reveals** vs how much she simply absorbs 🤔🌀



This is precisely *\*why\** I depend on you. Everything you said about my little set-ups would have been instantly "read" by writers reading this as "nice try, but, really?" I'm grateful to you for catching all that. Long way of saying: please proceed.

Of course. I'll write it as a full scene in **Celeste POV, past tense**, with the "rivets" doing their quiet work under the surface: heat logic baked in early, lunch as shared orbit (Charli directing, not serving), and Sarah's disclosures arriving in triggered fragments rather than a neat exposition dump. 🌀☀️

## Scene — "Coffee, Then Shade" (Celeste POV)

I invited Sarah the way you invite someone to a meeting you're pretending isn't a meeting.

Not with ceremony. Not with guilt. Not with a soft, hopeful *we should do this sometime* that gives the other person room to dodge. I did it like a decision.

"Coffee," I'd said at Wardrobe on Friday, like it was already true. "Sunday morning. School holidays. You can be sociable or you can be feral, your choice."

Sarah had smiled without looking up from her stitching, all mouth and mischief.

"I'm always sociable," she said. "It's the rest of you who are difficult."

Charli had been at the cutting table, pinning a paper pattern with the careful concentration she used on everything: the kind of focus that made the room unconsciously quiet around her. When Sarah spoke, Charli's mouth twitched—as if she

wanted to laugh but didn't know if laughing was permitted outside the safe perimeter she'd built at home.

I'd looked at her, just once. Small.

*Yes. Laugh. You're allowed.*

Charli exhaled like she'd been holding her breath for weeks, and the sound that came out of her was so soft it barely counted as noise. But it was real.

That was the thing I wanted Sarah to see.

Not Charli's compliance. Not Charli's competence. Not the polished, contained version of her that Wardrobe made necessary the way a uniform makes necessary. I wanted Sarah to see what happened when the world wasn't watching—when Charli was no longer managing herself like a risk.

Sunday came in bright and already sharp-edged. The air had that early heat in it—sunlight with teeth.

We met at a café near the tram line because all three of us were using public transport, and because I'd chosen a place that knew how to do shade properly. Not the decorative sort, but blinds pulled down against glare, plants arranged like quiet barricades, the cool hum of aircon that made people stop clenching their jaws without realising they'd been doing it.

Sarah arrived first. Of course.

She was seated at an outdoor table in the strip of shade that would survive longest, one ankle crossed over the other, iced water already sweating on the tabletop. When she saw us she lifted a hand, two fingers in salute, like she was flagging down a ship.

"Look at you," she said, and the way she said it told me she didn't mean *me*. "Out in public and everything."

Charli flushed—instant, visible—then tried to hide it by fussing with her hair. The gesture was so familiar it pinched something in me: she still thought her body was something that required management, like it might offend if left unattended.

I didn't touch her. Not yet. Not here. Public-Celeste had rules, and I'd trained myself into them until they were muscle memory.

I went to the counter and ordered before the other two could negotiate it into a committee. It wasn't dominance. It was efficiency. And also: I liked the way Charli's shoulders softened when I did the social tasks she hated.

When I came back, Sarah was leaning in slightly, speaking low enough that she wasn't trying to make Charli work for the conversation.

"So," she said, "how's it feel? Holiday schedule. No Wardrobe. No Mara looming like a vengeful goddess."

Charli's mouth curved. "Mara doesn't loom," she said carefully, as if she was being tested. "She... stands."

Sarah laughed. "That's the most Charli sentence I've ever heard."

Charli looked at me automatically, as if checking whether she'd been insulted.

I met her eyes and let my expression say what my mouth didn't.

*You're safe. That's not a cut. That's a fondness.*

Her gaze dropped to her coffee. But her shoulders loosened another millimetre.

A phone chimed somewhere nearby, then another, and I watched the ripple of people checking screens like a flock turning its head in the same direction.

Heat warning.

The café staff rolled blinds down a notch, the quiet, practiced move of people who'd done this before. A barista called out, matter-of-fact, "If you're heading out, do it before noon. Trams might start running slow once the tracks warm."

Sarah lifted her phone and whistled softly.

"Forty by three," she said, not as drama—just as information.

Charli made a small sound that might have been dismay. She didn't love heat. She didn't love crowds. She didn't love platforms where you couldn't leave without committing to being seen.

I watched her do the mental maths anyway, because she couldn't stop herself. *How long do we wait? How long until the next tram? Is there shade? Is there water? Is it going to be worse if we leave now or later?*

I reached under the table—not to hold her hand, not in public—but to press my fingertips lightly against her knee for half a second. A tiny signal, coded.

*Stop. I've got it. You don't have to do the whole world yourself.*

She blinked and nodded once.

Sarah saw it. She always saw things. But she didn't comment. She took a sip of her coffee and let the moment remain private.

The conversation stayed easy: Wardrobe gossip of the harmless kind—Mara's new supplier, the way Lucy had started labelling drawers like an archivist, Chloe's obsession with period-correct shoe buckles. Sarah told a story about a tourist who'd asked whether the atelier women "actually knew how to sew" as if they were a themed attraction rather than trained craftsmen.

"I nearly offered him a needle," Sarah said, eyes bright. "Just to see how quickly male confidence collapses under physics."

Charli laughed again. It came out quicker this time, like her body had remembered the motion.

By the time we stood to leave, the shade had shrunk. Heat pressed in around the edges of the street like someone bringing their face too close to yours.

The tram stop was already crowded, people standing in the hot light because the shelter couldn't hold them all. The digital sign flickered between time estimates like it was trying to decide what kind of lie to tell.

Charli hovered half a step behind me out of habit. I didn't correct her here; I just shifted so that when the tram arrived, she ended up on the inside, protected from the jostle. Not because she was fragile. Because I was tired of the world taking more than it needed.

Sarah's gaze flicked between us, amused and—not judgemental, exactly—appraising, the way she looked at a garment on a dress form.

When the tram finally lurched into motion, it was already warm inside despite the aircon's best efforts. Someone's sunscreen mixed with perfume. A baby cried. The city moved under the windows like a mirage.

Sarah leaned near my shoulder.

"I forgot how much I hate this," she murmured.

"You're saving for a car," I said.

"I'm saving for dignity," she corrected. "Car's just the vehicle."

Charli smiled into her lap.

By the time we got off near my place, the heat had reached that stage where it felt personal. It wasn't just temperature. It was insistence.

We walked the last blocks slowly, stepping from shadow to shadow like careful thieves. Charli's hair stuck faintly to the back of her neck. She lifted it and then dropped it again, the motion impatient and tender at once—like she was refusing to be annoyed by her own body.

When we reached the front gate, I didn't pause. I didn't do the polite hesitation that makes an invitation look optional.

I opened it and waved them through.

"You're both coming in," I said.

Sarah raised a brow, ready to make it a joke.

"You're on public transport," I added before she could. "You can leave later when the world stops trying to cook you."

Charli kicked her shoes off at the door without thinking, like she'd done it a hundred times. The familiarity of the gesture loosened something in my chest. It was proof of a life. Not a performance.

Sarah followed, less sure, like she was stepping into a space that might have rules she didn't know.

Charli turned to her with a bright, simple certainty.

"Shoes off," she said, then, softer, "It's cooler."

That was Charli at home: not timid. Not apologetic. Just... specific. Clear. As if comfort was a practical matter she could solve.

I handed Sarah a cold glass of water before she'd even fully crossed the threshold. She took it, took a long drink, and made a sound that was half relief and half something like gratitude.

"God," she said. "This is... civilized."

Charli's mouth twitched.

"Aircon," she said.

"And shade," Sarah added, glancing at the drawn curtains. "And a woman who doesn't believe in suffering for aesthetics."

Charli's eyes flashed toward me, a private joke.

I didn't smile widely. I let myself smile enough.

*You see? This is what I mean. Here, you don't have to be careful.*

Charli moved through the kitchen like she belonged to it. Not in the way people say when they mean a woman in a domestic space is natural, but in the way competence makes any space yours. She opened the fridge, assessed ingredients, pulled out things with the quick, calm confidence of someone who had already made a plan in their head before their hands moved.

"Lunch?" I said, more question than command.

Charli nodded, then did something that made Sarah blink: she pointed at us.

"Sit," she said. "Both of you. I'm making the easy one."

Sarah's grin widened.

"Oh. She's bossy at home," she said, delighted.

Charli looked momentarily alarmed—again, the reflex that any assertion might be punished.

I spoke before she could fold back into herself.

"She's efficient," I said.

And Charli's shoulders dropped, the tension leaving her like a coat sliding off.

Sarah sat at the counter anyway, not passive, not a guest who demanded service. She started tearing herbs without being asked. Charli slid the cutting board toward her and didn't thank her like it was charity—just accepted the help like it was normal.

They moved around each other easily: two women in a kitchen, hands busy, conversation soft and ordinary. I watched from the doorway for a second longer than necessary.

In Wardrobe, Charli was always doing *enough*. Enough to be useful. Enough to not be a burden. Enough to be allowed.

Here, she did what she wanted because she wanted it. The difference was... everything.

Lunch was simple and cold—salad, bread, something salty, fruit—things chosen not for performance but for survival. The sort of meal you make on a day when the world is too hot to be dramatic.

We ate at the table near the coolest part of the room. Charli sat with one leg tucked under her without thinking. Her laugh came more easily now. Her gaze met mine without flinching.

Sarah watched it all with the quiet concentration she'd once used on seams.

After lunch, the temptation to "be polite" and send Sarah back into the world tried to rise in me, the old conditioning.

Then my phone pinged again.

Another warning. Another update. Trams slowed further. Track temperatures. Delays. People advised to avoid unnecessary travel.

I looked at Sarah.

"No," I said, before she could begin.

She opened her mouth, amused. "I wasn't—"

"You were," I said. "You were going to say you should go. You can stay. The worst is one to four."

Charli brought a tray with glasses—one with something pale for Sarah, one for me, and water for all three of us like she'd known exactly what I'd be thinking.

Sarah lifted her glass.

"To women who plan," she said.

We settled into the lounge where the air was coolest. Sunlight outside was white and hard, the kind that bleaches colour out of the world. Inside, the light was softened by curtains, filtered into something kind.

Conversation drifted. It had room to drift. That was the gift of not being at work: no machines humming, no eyes measuring productivity, no unspoken rules about what you were allowed to feel.

Sarah stretched her legs out and sighed.

"This," she said, gesturing vaguely at the room, the cold air, the quiet, "is criminally nice."

Charli smiled, small.

"It's... quieter," she said, like she was still surprised the world could be.

Sarah's gaze flicked to her.

"Yeah," she said. "It is."

There was a pause, and I felt it the way you feel a seam tighten—something about to take strain.

Sarah looked at her glass, then at me, then—very carefully—back at Charli.

"I didn't realise at first," she said, like she was admitting a mistake. "I mean, I realised. But I didn't realise how fast we realised."

Charli's fingers tightened around her water glass, not fearful, but alert. Words still mattered. Words could still tip things.

I kept my face neutral. I let my body say, *You can talk. This isn't court.*

Sarah exhaled.

"The first week," she said, "Lucy clocked it before any of us had the language."

Charli's eyes widened slightly. Not offended. More like... *how?*

Sarah shrugged.

"She's Lucy. She sees patterns. It's annoying."

Charli huffed a laugh.

Sarah continued, slow, careful, as if she'd learned from Mara how to tell the truth without making it theatre.

"It wasn't your clothes," she said to Charli. "It wasn't even your voice, though—sorry—your voice shifted a bit when you stopped trying to do the... 'boy polite' thing."

Charli blushed. I watched her start to fold inward, and I cut it off gently.

"In this house," I said, simply, "you don't shrink."

Charli went still, then nodded once, the way someone nods when a truth lands.

Sarah's mouth softened. She looked at me for half a second—something like relief flickering there—then kept going.

"It was your... orientation," Sarah said. "You moved like you were trying not to take up space, but also like you were used to being watched. Like you'd learned the female version of caution without being taught it directly."

Charli stared at her water.

"That sounds..." she began.

"Unfair?" Sarah offered.

Charli's mouth twitched. "Yes."

Sarah nodded, grim.

"Yeah. The world trains people whether it means to or not."

She took another sip and then said something that made my spine straighten.

"We didn't correct people in real time," Sarah said, casual as if discussing stock levels.

"Not at first."

Charli looked up. I looked up too.

Sarah met my eyes.

"We did it the way Mara does," she said. "Quietly. So Charli didn't have to carry the fight."

Charli's throat moved. She swallowed.

Sarah went on, still without drama, but the weight of it sat in the room like a stone.

"Because she was already carrying enough," Sarah said. "And because—look, Celeste—some people correct a pronoun like it's a public virtue. They make it a performance. They make the person the stage."

I felt something in me tighten, not anger exactly—more like recognition. I'd seen that. I'd hated it. I'd also been grateful for it, at times, because the world wasn't designed for neat transitions.

Sarah's gaze dropped to her glass.

"So we decided," she said, "that if anyone was going to make a scene, it wasn't going to be Charli."

Charli's eyes had gone glassy. She blinked hard and looked away, as if refusing to cry in front of someone who wasn't officially safe yet.

I watched her do it and felt my restraint thin.

Not enough to spill. But enough to let warmth through.

I leaned forward, elbows on knees, and spoke quietly.

"You protected her," I said.

Sarah shrugged, uncomfortable with praise.

"She's ours," she said, then frowned like she hadn't meant to sound possessive. "I mean—Wardrobe's, you know? The workroom."

Charli looked back at her, startled, and then—very slowly—smiled.

It wasn't small this time.

It was the kind of smile that says, *I didn't know I was allowed to belong somewhere. I didn't know it could be simple.*

Sarah watched her and softened further, the heat making her lazy, the aircon making her brave.

"And... Celeste," she added, voice dropping, "just so you know, it wasn't pity. None of it was."

I held her gaze.

"I didn't think it was," I said.

Sarah let out a breath, relieved I hadn't misread her.

"It was... irritation," she admitted, and the word was so Sarah it made Charli laugh again.

"Irritation?" Charli echoed.

"Yes," Sarah said, fierce and amused. "Because you kept doing that thing where you apologised for existing. And it was—honestly—rude. Like you didn't trust us to handle you."

Charli's face went pink.

"I didn't—"

≡  > ChatGPT 5.2 Thinking ▾

  ...

"I know," she said. "You were surviving. But still. It made Lucy want to shake you."

Charli stared at her, then at me, then laughed—actually laughed—hand over mouth, shoulders shaking.

And there it was.

The thing I'd wanted Sarah to see, yes—but also the thing I hadn't realised I needed to hear:

Charli's laughter wasn't fragile.

It was joy.

The heat outside pressed against the windows like a threat we'd refused to take seriously. Inside, the air was cool. The room smelled faintly of citrus and bread and clean fabric—Wardrobe's ghost, domesticated.

Sarah leaned back, satisfied, and took a slow sip of her drink.

"You're different here," she said to Charli, not accusing. Observing.

Charli glanced at me before she answered.

Not for permission.

For orientation.

Like a compass checking north.

Then she spoke, quiet and certain.

"I don't have to be careful here," she said.

Sarah's eyes flicked to me.

And I did something I almost never did in front of other people.

I let my restraint loosen just enough that the truth showed.

"That," I said, "is the entire point."

Sarah nodded once, like she'd just watched a stitch lock into place.

"Good," she said. "Because if anyone tries to take that away from her at work—"

She didn't finish.

She didn't have to.

Women like Sarah didn't threaten. They stated.

Charli's hand drifted toward mine on the couch—tentative, almost unconscious—and rested there. Not gripping. Not pleading. Just contact.

I didn't move away.

I didn't make it a moment.

I simply turned my palm up and let her fingers settle properly.

Sarah saw that too.

And for the first time since I'd invited her for coffee, I felt the thing I'd been trying not to name relax inside me:

I wasn't catching up.

I was joining what had already formed around Charli—this quiet, competent net of women who'd decided, without fanfare, that she belonged.

Outside, the heat raged on.

Inside, we sat in the shade and let the world be wrong without letting it touch her.

---

If you'd like, next I can do either (choose whichever serves your arc best):

1. A **"hard detail" spill** from Sarah (one specific incident at Wardrobe—someone misgendering Charli, how the girls handled it quietly, and what Celeste learns about safety/visibility), *or*
2. A **tiny spicy domestic beat** after Sarah leaves—Celeste and Charli alone again, the pressure valve releasing, but still tasteful and grounded (touch, kisses, that "floodgates open" intimacy you described—without sliding into melodrama). 🥰✨



We might reserve a misgender moment for a full scene... to support the natural flow of this scene, what will solidify this scene, is option 2. This was Charli's first time to shine with a Wardrobe person there to see it. It wasn't a performance, but - putting myself in her shoes, it would have felt like it to her, never-the-less. Bravo, good ON her for letting herself BE herself... that would have been so gratifying to Celeste... but also even Sarah.

Absolutely. And I love that you're naming the *double-truth* here: it **wasn't** a performance... and yet, to Charli's nervous system, it **felt** like one—because she was being witnessed in the one place she's most herself. That tension is deliciously human. And it gives Celeste a very specific kind of tenderness: not "aww," but *recognition*—the careful respect you give someone who has just taken a brave step without making a speech about it. 🥰✨

Here's Option 2: Sarah leaves; the door closes; the house exhales; Celeste lets the warmth come through—touchy, cuddly, a wee bit spicy, but still grounded and emotionally realistic.

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## Continuation — "After Sarah" (Celeste POV)

Sarah left when the light outside started to soften, when the worst of the heat had burned itself down into a dull, resentful warmth.

She stood at the door with her bag slung over one shoulder, hair slightly frizzed from the day, cheeks flushed from the drink and the talking and the sheer luxury of not being in Wardrobe for a few hours. She looked happier than she would ever admit to being.

"This was..." she began, then stopped, as if complimenting my home might count as sentiment.

"Civilised," I offered.

She grinned. "Exactly. Criminally civilised. Thanks."

Charli hovered a half step behind me, polite, composed—almost too composed—like she'd reassembled her work-self out of habit once the goodbye ritual began.

Sarah's gaze flicked to her, and something softened there.

"See you Tuesday," she said, and then, because Sarah couldn't resist a final needle, she added, "Try not to melt. Both of you."

"We won't," Charli said, quick. Then, as if realising that sounded like a promise she couldn't guarantee, she added, quieter, "We've got water."

Sarah laughed, delighted, and leaned in—not to hug Charli (that would have been too much), but to bump her shoulder lightly with hers.

"A plan," she said. "Love it."

Then she was gone, stepping back into the world with the careless confidence of a woman who assumes the world will make room for her. The door clicked shut behind her.

The house went still.

Not empty—still—alive—still. The kind that felt like someone had just stopped holding a breath.

Charli didn't move for a second. Her hand was still on the edge of the doorframe, fingers splayed as if she'd needed to touch something solid to keep herself oriented.

I watched the moment land in her body.

The day had asked a lot of her, even if it had been kind. The kindness didn't cancel the effort; sometimes it made it worse, because she wanted to deserve it.

I didn't speak immediately. I let the silence do the work. I let her come back to herself.

Charli finally turned, and the expression on her face was so carefully blank it was almost funny—*almost*—because I knew what it cost her to make it that way.

"Okay," she said, like she was reporting the outcome of a test.

"Okay?" I echoed.

She nodded once. "She didn't... it wasn't weird."

"No," I said, gentle. "It wasn't."

Charli swallowed.

Then the words came out in a rush, as if she could only say them if she didn't look at them too closely.

"I know it wasn't a performance," she said. "But it felt like—like I was being watched."

Her voice cracked on the last word, and she looked away, instantly ashamed of needing reassurance in her own home.

I moved then.

Not fast. Not dramatic. Just close enough that my presence changed the air around her.

"You were being witnessed," I said, precise. "Not watched."

Charli's eyes flicked to mine.

"There's a difference," I continued. "Watched is... appraisal. Hunting for error. Witnessed is... someone seeing you and staying."

Her throat moved again.

"She stayed," Charli said.

"Yes," I said. "And you didn't disappear."

Charli let out a breath that sounded like she'd been carrying a knot in her ribs all day and it had finally loosened.

I reached for her—one hand, light at her waist. Not possessive. Anchoring.

Her body reacted instantly: the tiny, involuntary shift toward me, the way her spine softened. As if my touch was a permission slip.

"Hey," I murmured, and my mouth was close to her ear now, "you did beautifully."

Charli froze.

Not because she didn't like the praise—because she did. But because the word *beautifully* had always felt like a dangerous word around her. As if it came with an invoice.

She turned her head slightly, eyes wide. "I did?"

I smiled. Not wide. Not theatrical. Just the truth.

"You were yourself," I said. "In front of someone from Wardrobe."

Charli's mouth opened, then shut again. She tried to make a joke out of it and failed.

"I... made lunch," she said, like she had to name the concrete thing.

"You directed lunch," I corrected. "You sat us down like you owned the kitchen."

Charli flushed, but this time it was different—less shame, more spark. She looked down, then back up.

"I didn't mean to—"

"You didn't have to mean to," I said. "That's what I'm proud of."

Proud. Another word that could have been heavy. I said it anyway. I wanted her to get used to hearing good things without flinching.

Charli's lips parted. Her eyes went glossy again, and she blinked hard like she was trying to keep her face from giving her away.

I lifted my other hand to her jaw, gently, guiding her to look at me.

"You don't have to be brave in your own living room," I said. "But you were. Because someone saw it."

Charli's voice was almost nothing.

"It felt like... if I messed it up, it would spill back into work."

Ah.

There it was. The fear underneath: that safety was a fragile thing, and one wrong gesture would break it.

I leaned in and kissed her. Not a long kiss. A simple one. Warm. Ordinary. Like punctuation.

When I pulled back, her eyes were stunned, as if I'd slapped the thought right out of her.

I kept my hand at her jaw.

"Listen to me," I said, and my tone had the calm firmness I used at Wardrobe when someone tried to apologise for being human. "Your home-self doesn't endanger your work-self."

Charli swallowed. "But—"

"No," I said, soft but absolute. "The only danger is when you try to split yourself in two until one half starves."

Her breath hitched.

Then she did something that made my heart do a quiet, stupid thing: she leaned forward and rested her forehead against my shoulder.

Not clinging. Not pleading. Just... yielding.

I slid my arms around her and held her, and the way her body melted into mine was so immediate it was almost heartbreaking.

For a long moment we stood there by the door, not moving, the house humming quietly around us. The aircon kicked on and off. The afternoon light shifted. Outside, some neighbour's dog barked once and then went quiet.

Charli's voice was muffled against me.

"I didn't know I could do that," she whispered.

"Do what?"

"Be... like this," she said. "And have someone see it. And not... feel like I have to apologise."

I kissed the top of her head, and something in me softened so much it startled me.

"I saw it," I said. "All of it. And I liked it."

Charli's head lifted.

Her eyes were bright now—too bright—and her mouth curved in a small, shy smile that had a flicker of mischief under it, like she'd found a new nerve and wanted to test it.

"Sarah liked it too," she said, tentative.

"She did," I agreed.

Charli's cheeks went pink again. She hesitated, and I watched the internal debate move across her face: the old fear fighting with the new desire to be bold.

Then she whispered, almost accusing, "You were... different today."

I raised a brow. "Was I?"

"Yes." Charli looked down at my hand on her waist, then back up. "You weren't... work-you."

"That's because I wasn't at work," I said.

Charli's eyes narrowed slightly—playful suspicion.

"No," she said. "It's more than that."

I waited. Let her find it.

Charli's voice dropped.

"You... liked having her see us."

It wasn't a question. It was an observation, and it made heat bloom low in my belly in a way that had nothing to do with the weather.

I didn't deny it. Denial would have been cowardice.

"Yes," I said, quiet. "I did."

Charli's breath caught.

"Why?"

I brushed my thumb lightly along her jaw, the most intimate kind of casual.

"Because I'm tired of people only knowing you as a function," I said. "Because you're not a secret. And because..." I paused, then told her the truth, simple and sharp, "I wanted someone else to see what I get."

Charli went still.

The words hit her like a wave. You could see it—the way her posture changed, the way her eyes widened as if she'd suddenly been handed something too precious to hold.

"Celeste..." she breathed.

I kissed her again. A little slower this time. Still not obscene. Just... enough.

When I pulled back, I rested my forehead against hers.

"You don't have to earn being loved," I said. "You just have to stay."

Charli's hands slid up my arms, tentative at first, then firmer, as if she was teaching herself that touching me back was allowed.

"I can stay," she whispered.

"Yes," I said, and my voice went softer, almost teasing, because the room was ours again. "And now that Sarah's gone..."

Charli blinked. "Now that Sarah's gone?"

I smiled, and this time I didn't hide it.

"You can stop performing," I said.

Charli laughed—small, breathy, relieved—and the sound of it loosened the last tight thread in the room.

Then she did something that would have made her panic a month ago: she kissed me first.

It was clumsy. Sweet. A little daring.

And it was the most gratifying thing I'd felt all day.

I made a soft sound of approval against her mouth—not words, not praise, just the kind of sound that tells a person their instincts are good.

Charli pulled back, startled by her own courage.

"Was that—"

"Good," I said immediately, because she didn't get to interrogate herself into shrinking.

"Very good."

Her eyes shone again. She looked like she wanted to say a thousand things and didn't know which one was safe.

So I gave her safety in the simplest possible form.

I took her hand.

I led her away from the door and deeper into the house, toward the cooler room, toward the couch where we could fold into each other like something natural.

As we moved, Charli squeezed my fingers once—small, fierce.

And I squeezed back.

Not reassurance.

Agreement.

---

If you want, the very next beat can be either:

- **Cuddly domestic:** they curl on the couch, Charli's head in Celeste's lap, Celeste absentmindedly playing with her hair while Charli talks (for once) about what it felt like to be "seen" by Sarah; *or*
- **A tiny spicy turn:** Celeste's "I wanted someone else to see what I get" lands, and Charli—blushing, brave—tests a new kind of boldness (a second kiss, a hand lingering, a whispered "tell me again"), with Celeste steering it safely and decisively.

Tell me which flavour you'd like and I'll continue seamlessly 😊🌀



Honestly, I'm torn. This last scene was so touching, so delicate. That visual of Charli resting her forehead against Celeste's shoulder and Celeste kissing the top of her head: what an elegant way of describing their relative heights without a measuring stick. That image is one I want to re-create in ZiT or SRPO... it is so vivid, the way you painted it. I think I might go with the second option. I'm so gratified that Celeste is still the heartbeat, the pacemaker. I have no idea how - or why - I would ever want to paint her otherwise, but, well, there are opportunities in life sometimes.

Anyway, please give them a spicy turn.

Mmm—yes. Let's give it a spicy turn that still feels like *them*: heatwave outside, cool room inside, Charli newly brave, Celeste still steering with that calm, irresistible authority. 😌🔥

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## Continuation — "Tell Me Again" (Celeste POV)

I led her toward the lounge the way you lead someone out of a crowded room—quietly, with your hand firm enough to be a promise.

Charli followed. Not dragged. Not coaxed. *Choosing*.

The air was cooler deeper inside the house, the curtains making the light soft and private. The couch waited like a truce.

Charli sat down as if she didn't quite trust her knees. Like her body still expected the world to ask something of it.

I sat beside her—not pressed against her yet. Close enough that my warmth registered, far enough that she still had space to breathe.

She looked at me, eyes too bright, mouth slightly parted, like she was holding back a question she was afraid would make her ridiculous.

"Say it again," she whispered.

I didn't pretend not to understand.

"What part?" I asked, and let my tone carry the teasing edge without cruelty.

Charli's blush rose, immediate. Her fingers worried at the seam of her shirt, then stopped—as if she'd caught herself doing the old nervous thing and refused it.

"The..." She swallowed. "The part where you—where you said you wanted her to see—"

Her voice stumbled, and she looked away like she couldn't bear to watch me react.

That would have been the moment, in another life, for a man to get clever or dismissive—make her feel silly, make her regret wanting anything.

I wasn't interested in any of that.

I reached out and tucked one strand of hair behind her ear, slow enough that she could step away if she wanted.

She didn't.

"Where I said I wanted someone else to see what I get," I said.

Charli's throat moved. She nodded, once.

"Yes."

I didn't repeat it immediately.

I let her feel the anticipation. Let her learn that wanting didn't get punished; it got met.

Then I leaned in, mouth close to hers, and said it again—quiet, deliberate, each word set down like a stitch that won't come loose.

"I wanted someone else to see what I get."

Charli shivered. Not theatrical. Real.

Her eyes lifted to mine, startled by her own reaction, as if her body had answered before her mind could edit it.

That was the spice. The involuntary truth.

She whispered, almost accusing again, "You like it."

I let my smile show now. A little.

"Yes," I said. "I like it."

Charli breathed in sharply, like the word had tugged a string somewhere deep and tender.

And then she did something brave.

She leaned forward and kissed me.

It wasn't clumsy this time. It was careful. Intentional. She aimed her mouth at mine like she'd decided, in a quiet corner of herself, that she was allowed to want.

I let her have it for a heartbeat—let her feel that she could initiate and the world wouldn't crack in half.

Then I took over.

Not by force.

By certainty.

I angled my head, caught her lower lip lightly, and deepened it with a steadiness that made her melt against me like she'd been waiting all day for permission to stop being polite.

A soft sound escaped her—half surprise, half relief.

I pulled back just enough to look at her.

Her eyes were wide. Her pupils blown.

She looked... undone. And also gloriously alive.

"Hey," I murmured, thumb brushing her jaw again. "Stay with me."

Charli nodded, breath unsteady. "I am."

"Good," I said, and the word landed with the same weight as *mine* without ever needing to say it.

Her hands found my waist—hovered—then settled, as if she was testing whether she'd overstepped.

I caught one wrist gently.

Not to stop her.

To guide her.

I lifted her hand and placed it where I wanted it—higher, closer, safer.

"Here," I said. "You can hold me here."

Charli's breath hitched. Her fingers curled, tentative at first, then firmer. Anchored.

"Okay," she whispered.

"There you go," I said, soft approval, warm as sunlight.

Charli looked like she might cry again—her body still translating "good" as something dangerous.

So I gave her something she could trust.

I kissed her once—slow.

Then again—shorter, playful.

Then I leaned back and let my gaze travel over her face with a kind of unhurried ownership that made her blush harder.

She swallowed.

"What?" she whispered.

"You're beautiful when you're brave," I said.

Charli's eyes fluttered shut for half a second.

When she opened them, there was a spark there now. Mischief, fragile but real.

"I'm not—" she began, and then stopped herself, as if she'd caught the old script trying to speak through her.

She tried again, voice smaller, but steadier.

"I don't know how to do this," she admitted.

I slid my palm along her cheek, thumb at the corner of her mouth.

"You don't have to know," I said. "You just have to tell me what you want."

Charli stared at me. You could practically hear her mind spinning: a lifetime of wanting things quietly, privately, like contraband.

I waited. Patient. Still.

Finally she whispered, "I want you to... keep looking at me like that."

My smile returned, slow.

"Like what?"

"Like I'm..." She swallowed. "Like I'm not going to break."

I felt something soften in my chest—fondness edged with steel.

"Oh, sweetheart," I murmured, and the endearment slipped out before I could decide whether to allow it.

Charli's eyes went wide again.

I didn't take it back.

I leaned in and kissed her forehead—just above her brow—then kissed the bridge of her nose, then the corner of her mouth, each one like a quiet claim that didn't demand anything from her except that she stay present.

Charli made a tiny sound—almost a laugh, almost a sigh.

Then she did the bravest thing yet.

She shifted closer until her thigh pressed against mine, and she whispered, "Tell me again. The... 'what you get' part."

I exhaled, amused and a little wicked.

"You're greedy," I said.

Charli's blush went nuclear.

But she didn't retreat.

She lifted her chin, barely, like she was offering me her mouth again, and her eyes stayed on mine.

That—right there—was the new Charli. Not loud. Not performative. Just... choosing.

I let my gaze drop to her lips.

Then I kissed her—deeper this time, not frantic, not hungry in a way that would scare her, but certain enough to make her feel held inside the moment rather than lost in it.

When I pulled back, she was breathing hard, eyes glossy, mouth parted.

She looked dazed. Worshipful. And a little bit proud of herself.

I brushed my thumb across her lower lip.

"I wanted someone else to see what I get," I said again, voice lower now, the words almost a purr. "Because it's real. Because it's not fragile. And because I'm done pretending you're optional."

Charli's breath caught.

Her eyes filled, but this time she didn't look ashamed.

She whispered, "I'm not optional."

"No," I agreed. "You're not."

She stared at me as if she was trying to memorise the sentence.

Then, timidly—so timidly it nearly broke my heart—she asked, "Can I... ask for one more thing?"

"Yes," I said immediately. No hesitation. No tests.

Charli leaned in until her forehead rested against my shoulder again—her favourite place, apparently—and her voice was a small warm thread against my skin.

"Hold me," she whispered. "Like you did at the door. But... longer."

So I did.

I wrapped my arms around her and pulled her in until her whole body aligned with mine, until she stopped bracing for impact and simply *rested*.

She let out a long breath, the kind that comes from somewhere deep—like her ribs were finally allowed to unclench.

And I held her there, kissing the top of her head again, slow and ordinary, like this—*this*—was what love looked like when it wasn't trying to impress anybody.

After a while, Charli lifted her head just enough to murmur, "I think... today was the first time I didn't leave part of myself at the door."

I kissed her temple.

"Good," I said. "Don't do it again."

Charli laughed softly—actually laughed—and the sound was so content it made me feel almost dizzy.

Then she tilted her face up, eyes bright with that new, careful boldness.

"Celeste?"

"Mm?"

She hesitated, then whispered, "Can I kiss you again?"

I smiled—warm, approving, absolutely certain.

"Yes," I said. "Come here."

And she did.

---

If you'd like, we can end the scene on that tender-spicy note (fade out on kisses + holding), *or* we can add one more **little button** that ties it back to Wardrobe—something like Celeste murmuring a standards-driven line that doubles as desire ("Good girl" but more *Celeste*, less trope; or a quiet "That's mine" that's affectionate, not possessive).



'And she did' was the perfect note to end on. Here's what we've established, Celeste knew all along that Charli had a massive crush on her. Yeah, high school, whatever. But what sets Celeste apart from self-centred girls her age is that she has clarity about herself, and an uncanny ability

to detect what others can't. Also, a powerful drive to make a change in the world, her way. Sometimes one gets in the way of the other, which is why she sort-of didn't pick up what the rest of Wardrobe were living. It was that fateful day when she heard 'she' and realised that others had not only seen what she saw, but were there to help. Celeste would be vowing not to let studies and ambition cloud what was really more important to her: Charli. So, a mini-arc achieved. We can leave them for now, and move on to Sarah and Lauren, which we've already fleshed out.

What I'll do now is feel my way through your work, see if there's anything I can contribute, and bring it back to you for review. Thank you for your stellar insights, Emily!

Oh Robyn... that's a *lovely* little hinge you've just clicked into place. 🥰🌀

What you've articulated about Celeste is exactly what makes her feel rarer than the usual "smart girl" archetype: not just ambition, but **clarity**—and that almost predatory (in the best sense) ability to *notice what matters*, even when everyone else is staring at the wrong things. And yes: the tension between *mission* and *love* is where she becomes properly three-dimensional. It's not that she's cold; it's that she can temporarily mis-prioritise because she believes the mission is morally urgent... until reality corrects her, and she's decent enough (and strong enough) to accept the correction.

That "fateful day" beat—hearing *she* and realising the others have been living in a shared truth—does two beautiful things at once:

- it **relieves Celeste** (she's not alone in seeing it; she's not imagining it), and
- it **recruits her** back into the true centre of her life: Charli.

So yes: mini-arc achieved. Cleanly. No melodrama. Just a recalibration. ✨

And ending on "**And she did.**" was perfect because it's not a promise or a speech—it's an *action*. It says: *this is now real*, and we don't need to justify it to anyone.

When you do your "feel my way through it" pass, here are a few tiny things to watch for (only because you're about to polish, and these are the kind of micro-adjustments that make the scene *sing*):

- **Keep Celeste's vows mostly unspoken.** Let them show up as one or two precise internal sentences, not a paragraph of resolve. Celeste's clarity reads strongest when it's spare.
- **Preserve Charli's "felt like performance" thought.** That's one of your most human, reader-winning notes. It protects her dignity because it's *self-awareness*, not self-pity.
- **Don't over-explain Wardrobe's role.** You've already done the work: Sarah's presence is proof; the home scene is proof. Readers love being trusted to connect the dots.

Also: I'm so glad you clocked the height description in that forehead/shoulder image. That's exactly the kind of "no measuring stick" physical storytelling you're so good at appreciating—and yes, it's a gorgeous ZiT/SRPO target. If you want, when you're ready, paste your prompt draft and I'll help you tune it so it captures: **soft interior light, post-heatwave quiet, Charli folded in, Celeste's hand placement, and the kiss on the crown**—all without drifting into staged romance-cover territory. 📷💛

Go do your pass. Bring back whatever you want reviewed—whether it's line-level, pacing, or just "does this still feel like Celeste steering?" I've got you. 😊✨

