Admission of Guilt

by beekudo

Summary

Laura put her friendship with Carmilla on hold for 5 months while dating Danny. Now that they're over, how will she make up for leaving Carm behind?

Notes

Hey, so this is my first fanfic...ever...so please be nice. I basically had a bunch of dialogue sitting up in my head and rattled it out for the first chapter. I have a few different ideas for this so we'll see where it goes. Thaaaanks x
Where Have You Been?

It’s official. I’ve been broken up with Danny for a month now. Yet, something still seriously doesn’t feel right.

Let me catch you up.

Danny and I dated for around 5 months before I realised I was slowly, or maybe not so slowly, going insane. She texted me before, during and after my lectures. She either cooked for me or brought me dinner, regardless of whether or not I was hungry or whether I had plans. She constantly hid her need to suffocate me behind her “naturally protective nature”.

I’d had it up to here! Here being her height and that’s a LOT.

Due to her constantly hanging over me like a giant, needy tree, I had spent barely any real time with Carmilla. And yes, Carm and I haven’t exactly been inseparable since we met but she had really started to ease up around me before Danny asked me out.

I know how hard it must have been for her to finally decide to trust me a little and not treat me like the enemy. I had just started to see how much of an actual feeling, passionate human had been hidden under that badass vampire exterior and I really liked it.

Movie marathons with her complaining the entire time until I eventually let her nap on my lap and eat the majority of the popcorn. Study sessions, bouncing questions off of one another and having her nearby when the stress became a bit much. Waking up to hot cocoa on my headboard and a note asking me to do her laundry while she was at classes...

But no, the tree came a-knockin’ and I was quickly swept into what felt like a 30 year marriage to my dad….no okay, scratch that, that’s gross.

Anyway, long and boring story short, I feel so much lighter now that Danny and I are just pals and occasional study buddies (in only the academic sense, get your head out of the gutter). However, something is still missing, and it seems to have created a broody, leather pants-wearing hole in my chest.

Carm went to visit her sister for 2 weeks after the break-up and since she came back I’ve only seen her sprinting around the apartment going from sleep, to work, to class and so on. I would say that I think she’s avoiding me, except, I KNOW she’s avoiding me.

I have no idea what I’ve done wrong but all I know is that my chest feels like someone is constantly pressing down on it, my thoughts are scattered and even when I’m surrounded by all my bizarre and wonderful friends here, I can’t help but feel the most alone I’ve felt in a long time. I ….

“Oh…uh hey cutie, I didn’t think you’d still be up.” Carmilla saunters in, clearly assuming I would be off in the dream world of Dr Who/Buffy crossovers, tucked up in bed by 3am

She avoids eye contact with me and proceeds to dump her backpack and jacket on her bed, starting to take random things out of it to look busy. I slowly shut my laptop, cutting off some of the light.

“Couldn’t sleep. Where have you been? It’s late…is everything okay?” I can’t help but wonder what’s kept her out so long. She doesn’t look like she’s been feeding and I know the library isn’t
still open at this time of night

“Huh? Oh yeah, I’m fine. Just chipper!” She mumbles, replacing one ratty T-shirt for another as she starts to climb into her bed

“Carmilla.” I practically whisper at this point. Every day she pulls away more and it’s starting to feel as though she’s tied a string between her feet and my chest and she’s running for her life

She glances up, pausing in her efforts to get comfortable. Something in her eyes changes from indifference to what looks like affection.

“Not just tonight. Where have you been?” I look at my fingers, picking at a sore hangnail that won’t budge. “I…I can’t help but feel like I’ve done something to upset you. I know after the break-up, I was sad for a while but you were gone anyway so it wasn’t like we could spend time together. Then you came back and I’ve tried so hard to get you to even look at me or tell me about your day or…”

“Laura!” She cuts off my rambling, startling me by using my real name and not an edible replacement

“You haven’t done anything, okay? I’m just stressed about school and I had a lot to deal with for Mattie, plus William is being his usual idiot self. I’ve just been busy, that’s all.” She glances away from me as she finishes her sentence and I can’t help but feel she’s looking for added excuses

“I didn’t realise. Why didn’t you just tell me about any of it? I thought we agreed last year that we could trust one another.” I sigh

“I guess I got used to dealing with it by myself more recently, sorry if you feel neglected.” She bites out. I flinch slightly at her tone and the ache in my chest only grows ten sizes.

My body suddenly feeling more drained than I thought possible drags itself to my bed and worms its way under the covers.

I knew my relationship with Danny had meant my growing friendship with Carm was put on hold but no one realised how impossible it was to try and reason with my red-headed ex. Carmilla hadn’t spoken to me in that tone for over a year, the fact we were back here after everything we’d been through together since, made a ferocious stinging appear behind my eyes

I blinked rapidly and sniffed to try and keep them at bay, not going unnoticed by my seemingly unphased roommate.

“Cupcake…” I hear her turn over in bed to look at me but I won’t move away from the wall. She can’t disappear, blame everything on me (well, fair enough) and then try to feel guilty about MY guilt, nuh uh.

“Cupcake, please…” she sounds tired, guilty and tired. I still don’t move, I don’t want her to see me cry. I don’t want her to feel sorry for me when I’m the one who left her for 5 months, I left her when I was one of the only ones she trusted.

I sniffle again as the stinging gets worse and the tears threaten to spill down the sides of my nose

I hear a muffled sound, then the rustle of sheets, then silence.

The next thing I feel is a weight on the edge of my bed behind me, she’s sat as though she’s afraid to disturb me, not saying a word.
She slowly reaches out a hand and I feel a hair being pulled away from my forehead and off my damp cheek. She continues to run her fingers so lightly through my hair that it feels like my imagination.

The last thing I remember before sleep takes over my body is the whisper of “I’m sorry Laura” and a kiss pressed to the top of my head.
I slowly blink my eyes open as the small gap between the curtains lets in some harsh daylight. I groan a little as my eyes adjust and my back lets out a few satisfying pops. I smell it almost instantly.

I sit up and turn around to face my headboard to find my tardis mug with what smells like cocoa inside, a plate on top to make sure the liquid stays warm. Carm.

The memory of last night comes flooding back into my brain before I can even think and my chest constricts slightly. I remember Carm being there as I fell asleep, her completely unnecessary apology and her fingers raking through my hair. I don’t understand why she was so nice to me, not after realising everything I’ve put her through these past months.

I glance around me and when I see no trace of Carmilla, I pad my way into the bathroom to double check.

There’s no sign of her anywhere but her bed hasn’t been made and she left me cocoa so I take it as a hint that she plans on coming back and that maybe we’re on better terms than we were yesterday.

Quite frankly, I feel exhausted. I turn back to my cocoa and take a long sip.

Naturally, Carm has made it exactly the way I like it and has added 5 marshmallows. I didn’t even think we had any in the dorm. Before I can let the fact that she was so considerate add to my already giant pile of guilt, I decide to go and have a shower.

The hot water helps my frantic mind to slow down for a minute and I just let myself breathe while the drops bounce off my head and body.

As I begin to lather my shampoo in my hands and spread it through my hair, my thoughts wander to what the hell I’m supposed to do next. I know that she needs some time to process and all but I have to make some sort of move to show her that I still care about her. I know now that my
relationship with Danny must have made Carm feel out of place but I didn’t realise just how much.

Immediately, about ten different ideas are flying around inside my brain as to what I can try in order to repair this mess of a friendship with Carm. She loves the stars so maybe I can talk to Eddy in the solarium and persuade him to let the two of us have it for a night.

Or maybe I could search for a bottle of her favourite whisky, it’ll be expensive seeing as it’s probably almost as old as she is but I have money saved from working in the café all summer.

OR maybe I could plan a trip for her. She’ll need something to celebrate finishing her exams so maybe I could use the money to fly her somewhere. It’s not like Dad said I had to save aaaall the money for an apartment…

As I’m attempting not to fall flat on my face getting out of the shower, I shake my head a little to try and get some sort of set idea in my head. I grab a towel to wrap around my body and make my way back to the room to get dressed.

Once I’m dressed “appropriately” for class (apparently onesies and Dr Who slippers are not formal enough attire for Journalism 101, as I quickly learnt in first semester), I sit down on my bed and try to relax.

This is Carmilla we’re talking about. She may have reached out but I need to be careful, I know she’s still disappointed in me and kinda mad. Maybe I should start small and not go straight for the overpriced Paris plane ticket or ancient whisky…

I grab my phone and my bag, finishing the last of my cocoa and heading out of the door. Only feeling slightly more aware of what I need to do than before. All I know is I have a lot of making up to do and it needs a lot of thought. Carm is worth that.

Ugh, Merlin help me…

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I’m sat in the quietest corner of the library, back leaned up against the shelves and my feet propped up on my backpack. I love it back here where the philosophy section meets the exotic plant section because pretty much no one ever ventures here, except that one creep Elliot who occasionally takes a plant book out and stares at me for a while. Leech.

I’m attempting to do more research for my Voltaire assignment but I can’t stop my mind wandering to the tiny, frustrating blonde that I left curled up in the foetal position this morning.

Laura Hollis. The most determined, annoying, prissy, wonderful human being I have ever come across. Naturally, at first, she hated me because I left my shit everywhere and clogged the shower drain buuuut eventually she stopped nagging as much and I stopped being as gross. Somewhere along the line we fell into step and managed to live in almost harmony.

The first thing anyone will notice about Laura is her incessant need to interrogate people and stick her nose in where it isn’t needed. Unfortunately, this means that she often comes across as a nosy weirdo, however, she’s just a curious weirdo and she even managed to learn a bit about me (after a lot of snack based persuasion).

She saw past what a lot of people saw in me and honestly, Laura has been one of the only people in my long and eventful life who has actually seemed to give a damn. She told me I deserved better when my mother decided to cancel our Christmas plans last minute (vampire duties…apparently).
She told me that she admired the way I was still learning after all these years rather than going down a darker path or using my money to do what I like.

But most importantly, she chipped away at this grumpy exterior until she found a little part of me that still shone, and she grabbed onto it. She shared her memories and thoughts with me and eventually I trusted her enough to tell her some of my own.

She listened. Even half way through a Buffy marathon when I sputtered out the story of El, she moved her focus completely to me and she listened. That’s a lot when you find out just how much Laura loves Buffy.

Then Danny happened. That gargantuan, orange blimp that just stomped her way into our dorm and right into Laura’s life.

I didn’t like her from the start. Sure, the girl has morals, but she’s a class A dickweed who towered over Laura and took control of her life.

Part of her life then being me. As soon as they started dating, Laura spent less time in our dorm and less time talking to me. I went back to living my life as a lone wolf and hoped it was just a honeymoon phase.

It wasn’t.

And for the first time since El, I had my barely-there heart broken. My first real friend in centuries, someone who seemed to care about me and seemed to think I was an interesting and important person.

I never thought Laura would leave me behind and forget about me like so many others had before. So, I did what I do best and I carried on like nothing had happened. I threw myself into my work, tried to ignore the times that Xena would be hanging around in the dorm and kept myself to myself once again. I got used to it.

When the break-up happened, I hadn’t felt so torn in a long time. There was Laura, tiny Laura, hugging her knees to her chest and sobbing quietly. I wanted nothing more than to climb in next to her and tell her it would be okay, that she’d done the right thing and that I was going to be there for her.

But I couldn’t. My stubborn ass still resented that girl for pushing me back out of her life like I had never meant anything in the first place. My rationality put up against my heart and my rationality won. I ran.

I went to see Mattie to get away from the crying and the pull I felt towards the blonde. I couldn’t let my guard down so quickly again, I trusted her and she’d let me down.

When I eventually had to come back to attend classes, Laura was better. The ginger twins were in and out of the dorm and I overheard her telling one of them that she and Danny were on okay terms again, just as friends.

Yet she still showed no acknowledgment of what she’d done. She tried to act completely normal with me when I happened to be around her, but I wasn’t ready yet. If she still had no idea, she wasn’t ready yet either.

Then last night happened.

Maybe leaving Laura to try and figure out what she had done wrong all by herself had taken too
much of a toll on her, I hadn’t seen her so dejected in a long time. I snapped because I knew how she felt, I had been ignored, avoided and left without an explanation.

But God.

Hearing those tiny hiccups, the sniffles trying to draw tears back in and the low sobs let out, I couldn’t sit by and just let it happen.

I know that what happened wasn’t entirely her fault, Danny is a controlling bitch when it comes to Laura and naturally Laura had to try and accept it and be a nice as possible. Because she’s wonderful. As previously stated.

Knowing that this time, the reason those tears were streaming down Laura’s face and the reason she was hurting was because of me…I couldn’t stand it.

I would never intentionally hurt her and I know she would never have intentionally hurt me. I refused to stoop to Danny’s level.

I needed to be cautious, take a second to think about what I need for once, before I spoke.

When she didn’t respond, I knew her stubborn side was peeking through but I didn’t have the energy to argue with her about it. So I did the only thing I could think of and stroked her tear drenched hair until she drifted off. I felt terrible for making her cry like that, regardless of what had happened.

I left her a mug of cocoa this morning to reaffirm the fact that I was sorry for that and that I don’t hate her. Not even a little bit.

I’ve been “studying” for 2 hours now but the only conclusion I’ve come to on anything is that even though I’m still hurt and still disappointed, Laura has become more important to me than I could have ever imagined and I need to check that she’s okay after last night. I need to know for sure.

I slide my phone out of my pocket, sigh, and type out a message on a chat that hasn’t been touched in months.

“I’m not ready yet Cupcake, but I want you to know that I don’t hate you. I never could. I hope you made it to class. C.”

As my professor is droning on about career options, my fuzzy mind is still stuck on Carmilla and I slowly delve deeper and deeper into memories of the times I cancelled plans with her, snapped at her when Danny and I fought or failed to listen to how her day had gone.

After about an hour of hating myself more and more by the second, my phone vibrates on the empty seat next to me.

My heart is in my throat when I see the message is from Carm.

…

Her message is short but my entire body feels warm and a small smile appears on my face without any effort.

Maybe this will work out okay. I really, really hope that this works out okay.
Did I Do Something Right?

Chapter Summary

Laura finally figures out a way to try and show Carm that she cares and the reaction she gets is unexpected.

Chapter Notes

Firstly, thanks for your kudos and comments etc! :) I almost waited until tomorrow to write another chapter but I had an idea and some free time so why not! Hope you're enjoying it so far, we've got a whiiiile to go! x

Again, -.-.-.-.- signals a POV change

The monotone professor finally starts to wrap up our lecture and I shove everything into my backpack as quickly as I possibly can, tripping over my own feet to get out of there and almost falling up the stairs in the process.

I know Carm doesn’t have class again until later today because it’s a Wednesday, but she’ll hopefully stay in the library while she’s waiting. I need some quiet time in the dorm to try and think about what I can do for her.

I need to do something, I can’t just sit around all day waiting for a miracle idea to pop into my head.

I really need to think about what she might like right now. My first instincts were to go slightly overboard but hey, it’s just who I am. However, I have the feeling that doing something outlandish will overwhelm Carmilla and I definitely cannot risk pushing her any further away than I already have.

It’s already a million miles too far.

I speed walk across the quad, well aware that I must look like the world’s smallest yet fastest dinosaur with my hunched back and hands flailing about everywhere. But I really don’t have time to care.

Passing the coffee cart that’s set up right in the middle of the green triggers a happy memory from about 7 months ago, one that could only add to my need to find a solution, and fast.

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Well, brilliant, a fucking 46% on my latest assignment and it’s starting to look like I’ll never pass this class.
I leave my lecture theatre with my feet scuffing the ground and my head so low that my chin is touching my chest.

I had to text an eagerly awaiting Carmilla when I got the news as she’d been studying in the library and threatened me that if I didn’t let her know when I found out, that she would burst into my class herself.

We both knew how hard I had worked on that paper. Countless all-nighters with my glassy eyes staring at a laptop screen and Carm waking every few hours, only to check on me and bring me some cocoa or a cookie.

She’d surrendered and given up trying to get me to sleep like a normal human after two weeks of nagging me and agreed to drop the subject as long as she could force me to eat and drink.

And now I’d let us both down. The 46% is still peeking over the top of my notebook, glaring up at me like it’s out to get me. I stop briefly to shove it carelessly into my bag and carry on.

I’m walking slowly across the quad back to the dorm room ready to crawl into bed and remain there for as long as possible when something catches my attention.

With my head still down, it’s only out of the corner of my eye that I see a pair of chunky, black boots with metal studs and silver buckles.

I lift my head ever so slightly and of course, the boots lead up to a pair of black, ripped skinny jeans, accompanied by a loose black t-shirt and a flannel tied around the waist.

When my eyes finally reach her face, Carm is already looking at me with sympathetic eyes and a small, genuine smile.

She has a cup in either hand and she waits patiently for me to approach her.

“What are you doing here?” I ask, gently taking the offered cup from her pale hand. “I thought you were in the library studying for your quiz.”

“Cupcake,” she drawls quietly “come and sit with me.”

I reluctantly follow her over to a small patch of grass under the shade of a tree and slump ungracefully near her.

After a moment of hesitation, I speak up.

“I just don’t get it, I worked so hard on that stupid paper. I don’t know how to do any better Carm.”

I can’t look at her because I don’t know if I can deal with the pity in her eyes.

“I’m sorry I wasted so many of your nights when you could have been sleeping. Clearly it wasn’t worth it, it’s my fault.” I sigh quietly, taking a sip from my cup and watching my right leg bounce underneath me.

I feel a hand creep onto my knee to stop the movement.

“Cutie, look at me.” She requests softly, so softly that I raise my eyes to look at her.

The pity that I thought I would see isn’t there. Her eyes are instead full of concern and what looks slightly like anger.
“You deserved a good grade, ok? Whoever marked that paper is clearly blind because I watched you, night after night, write and rewrite that paper and I KNOW that it was worth far more than a 46%. I think you’re brilliant and I admire how hard you worked, regardless of our combined lack of sleep and that stupid grade. I will always support you and you will never need to think that it’s a burden for me, alright?”

She still has her hand on my knee and her thumb slowly brushes along the outside as though to calm my stressed state.

I shuffle closer so that our shoulders are almost touching and we’re both leaning back against the giant tree. A slight wave of relief washes over my body and I let my head sag against her shoulder.

My eyes closed, I say just loud enough for her to hear me, “I’m so thankful for you, you have no idea.”

Her hand lightly squeezes the same knee and there’s a few minutes pause between us before she speaks.

“I don’t think I’ll be able to study anymore without my brain melting. How does Buffy season 3, all of our blankets and some of Curly Sue’s cookies sound?”

I look up at her slightly and let a smile grace my lips.

“You know, for a vampire who has managed to escape a second death several times, you sure do seem to like watching your own kind get pummelled.” I laugh slightly.

She just chuckles lightly while reaching out a hand to help me up off the ground.

“Yeah yeah, I’m a bitch, I get it.”

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By the time I’m back at the dorm, most of my previous ideas are out of my head and I am desperately trying to find a new one.

I look over at Carmilla’s side of our dorm room. Clothes are haphazardly thrown everywhere, plates and glasses of blood are strewn over her headboard and the edges of the desk, even her beloved vinyl player is covered in a combination of dust and waste paper.

During my second glance over the state of her bed, a lightbulb goes off in my otherwise scrambled brain.

Something small, something she’d like right now, something that shows her that I am thinking of her and want to show her I care.

I leap up off the bed and grab some empty shopping bags from the bottom of my wardrobe.

After tying my hair back in a loose ponytail, I stand to face my newest challenge.

I start to pick up Carmilla’s clothes from all over the floor and bed. Smelling them and giving them a quick once over before throwing them into piles. Once I’ve separated her darks from her whites and her colours (although the darks pile is Mount Everest in comparison to the pathetic other two), I shove each mound of clothes into a bag and make my way to the laundry room.

After I’ve added a significant amount of my favourite fabric softener to each machine and turned
them on, I head back to the room.

From there I fold and hang different items of her clean clothing before starting on the dishes. By the time I’ve finished cleaning, her side of the room looks almost spotless.

I fetch the clean laundry and after waiting for them to finish off in the dryers, I head back once again. I quickly iron her most precious pieces and put them away.

I put one of her favourite Led Zeppelin records on her player ready and I leave a note on her bed before grabbing my stuff to go and meet Laf after their shift.

_I hope your day went okay. I threw out the old blood so you wouldn’t get sick but there’s a box of Perry’s cookies on the counter. L_

I am about 1000% done with today. My head feels close to an explosion with the amount of reading I’ve done and I am starving. All I want is to pass out on my bed and sleep for a few weeks.

I quickly unlock the dorm room door and almost turn around to walk back out.

This is most definitely not my room….

I can see the floor around my bed and…holy shit, I forgot I had leopard print sheets…..

The room is possibly the cleanest I have ever seen it but the full bookshelf and less neglected-looking vinyl player reassure me that I am in fact in the right room.

There’s a note on my bed and after revealing the culprit, my heart twinges slightly.

Laura did this. She knows I’m stressed and she’s figuring out how to help.

She hasn’t pushed me, she hasn’t tried spilling her apologies, but she’s done the one thing I haven’t had the time or energy to do for weeks.

I have my sanctuary back and it’s thanks to her.

I flop down onto my newly mess-free bed and grab my phone from the front pocket of my bag.

I wait until I hear a small click after a few rings and immediately speak into my phone.

“Apparently I have a fairy godmother. A little concerned as to how she got into our room but she did a damn good job.” I state slowly, as though I have no idea who is behind the sudden disappearance of glasses and the appearance of my favourite vinyl.

“Carmilla….hi. Uhh, well I thought you seemed a bit stressed with all your work whenever I’ve seen you and I noticed the build-up of, well pretty much everything, all around our room and just thought it would be nice for you to come back to something tidy to clear your head. Did I move something you need? Oh god, I’m sorry, it was too much wasn’t it, you left it that way for a reason, right? I…..”

“Laura! Stop!” I have to cut her off before she loses all oxygen and passes out, “I’m calling to say thank you. I really appreciate it. You’re right, coming back to a clean dorm feels great after the day I’ve had.”

I speak softly in the hopes that she’ll be reassured that she’s done the right thing.
“So, you don’t hate it?” She sounds hopeful and I can’t help but think she’s not only referring to the tidy room.

“No cupcake, I don’t hate it.” I chuckle quietly

“Okay. Well…I’m glad I could help. I’m at Laf’s, maybe I’ll see you later?”

I can hear the hesitancy in her voice and a small grin passes over my features.

“Yeah, maybe. Have a nice night cupcake.” I start to ease the phone away from my ear and just catch her goodbye before I end the call.

“Yeah, thanks. You too Carm.”

Even though I barely caught it, the sound of her nickname for me still sends a warm feeling straight to my cold heart.

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“Dude, why have you got that weird, psycho giddy smile on your face? I’m about to beat your ass in Mario Kart.”

Laf comes back into the room with two grape sodas in hand and passes me the controller.

“I just spoke to Carm. I’m fine.” I say quietly, still unable to get rid of the lopsided grin.

Laf shoots me a knowing look and winks before turning to the screen.

I did something right, she liked it.

She called me, actually called me. And her voice sounded lighter, happier.

The flutter in my chest doesn’t disappear all night.
How Did I Forget?

Chapter Summary

Something from Laura's past comes back to tear her apart. Naturally, Carm is there.

Chapter Notes

This 4th chapter is the product of a messed up sleeping pattern and too much boredom. This is a sad one, I apologise, but there won't be many like this! Thanks for the kudos/comments etc :) If you feel so inclined, you can go and check out my tumblr - serendipityandhorchata.tumblr.com Enjoy x

--.--.--.--. POV change

After persuading Laf that they had officially beaten me at all possible Mario Kart levels and if I were to play anymore, I might fall asleep right there on their stupidly plush beanbag, I finally left their dorm room and made my way sleepily back to my own.

Even in my bleary-eyed state, the reminder of my phone call with Carm makes my body feel tingly and a drowsy smile appears on my face. I had been worried all afternoon that I had done the wrong thing but to hear how I had made her day a little bit better had put my mind at ease.

As I approach our floor, I can’t help but feel some excitement at the prospect of being so close again with Carmilla. I’d never had a friend like her before, ever really, and being around her made me happier than I’d been since I was a kid. Of course, I went and ruined that for her and for myself. Well, Danny and I ruined that. I just want everything to go back to the way it was before, like Danny had never even happened.

I’m not an idiot though, I know when there’s work to be done.

I get to our door and I can see a sliver of light peeking out from underneath. Carmilla is still awake.

I open the door quietly just in case she’s fallen asleep with her lamp on like she’s done so many times before.

But no, there she is.

Leaning up against her wall with her feet dangling slightly over the edge of her bed. Lamp on, book in hand and eyes intently focused on the words she has probably read a thousand times before.

Her raven hair has fallen into her eye line because she hasn’t cut her bangs in so long. Her brow is
furrowed in concentration, something she thinks makes her look threatening and something I think makes her look absolutely adorable.

Almost 2 years of knowing her and the sight of Carm just being herself still makes me feel instantly relaxed.

She hears the door click shut behind me and glances up to meet my gaze. She smiles gently and raises her eyebrows in acknowledgement.

“Hey cupcake, Laf been keeping you up late with another experiment?” she puts one of her fingers in between the pages of her book and lets it fall shut slightly while she shifts her attention to me.

“Unless that experiment is how many rounds of Mario Kart can Laura play before her brain turns to mush, then no.” I breathe out a small laugh “Just a games night.”

She smiles at Laf’s antics and watches as I pull a big jumper over my head and clamber onto my own bed to get comfortable.

“Thank you, again, for what you did earlier. It was very thoughtful of you.” She moves her gaze downward slightly, I can hear her genuine tone.

“You’re welcome. I just wanted to do something nice, I feel I owe you that at least.” My voice is quiet and I exhale deeply at the reminder of how I made her feel.

“You don’t owe me anything more than an apology cupcake, and you’ve already given me that.” She looks up at me, but I can see in her eyes that she’s holding something back.

“No Carm. We were best friends and I ruined it when I got with Danny. The relationship was never worth me sacrificing us, you saw how I was with her, and did I seem genuinely happy?” I nudge the topic forward slightly, maybe if I know exactly how Carm felt, I can understand how to better fix this.

Carm’s eyes glaze over for a second in thought and I worry that she’s not going to respond.

“You seemed content. She made you laugh and she took care of you, I thought you were happy enough. I didn’t want to get in the way.” She says, with little conviction.

“Content? Seriously? Carmilla, I was just going through the motions. I’m not exactly known for my long list of successful and serious relationships. I had no idea how it was supposed to be going!” I raise my voice ever so slightly, remembering just how ridiculous the situation had been.

“Well I barely saw you so I couldn’t really tell how you were seriously feeling!” She says, defeat evident in her tone. “When you stopped spending time with me, I thought it was because you were far happier spending time with her. My friendship wasn’t enough, and I get that.”

My heart feels like it is being pulled from either side. I can’t believe what I’m hearing. I had no idea that this was what Carmilla thought, the reason she thought I had started dating Danny and spending time with her. She was so wrong.

I almost laugh when I think of the reality behind the situation. The way that after every movie marathon with her falling asleep in my lap, I would resist the temptation to curl up next to her and rest her arm around me.

The way that every time she leaned over to help me with work, I would zone out and become completely focused on the way she smelled of musk and leather.
The way that whenever she would mention a date, I would feel slightly sick and wouldn’t be able to sleep until I heard her come back in to the dorm afterwards.

Little did Carm know, but when Danny asked me out, I saw a way for me to try and get rid of these overwhelming feelings I’d developed for her. Anyone would take one look at Carmilla and know that I would never be good enough for her, she’s so far out of my league it’s actually a little bit pathetic.

But Danny seemed interested and I saw my out. Carmilla was an amazing friend but I knew she would never want to be more and if I kept spending time with her that way, I would never dig myself out of the feelings-filled pit.

“Carm…” I breathe out. She picks her head up at the use of her nickname.

“You were so much more than enough.” I pause, attempting to formulate my next words without revealing too much, “It’s just that no one had ever shown interest like Danny did and I didn’t know how I was supposed to feel or act. I never thought that you would need, or even want my friendship so much.”

I pick at my cuticles while she takes her time to think of a response.

“Cupcake, you were my best friend too. Do you understand how it felt to not have you in my life anymore?” She pauses, looking torn “Don’t get me wrong, I’m glad that you are trying and want to repair this but I was hurt, really hurt, for a long time. It took time for me to trust you once and you have to understand why I’m cautious to let you in again.”

I can feel a familiar pressure building behind my eyes and I curse myself for making it obvious as to how much this is getting to me. I hurt her and yet I am the one breaking down and wanting her to be there. For some reason, I’m completely unable to maintain my control over my emotions when I’m around this girl.

My hands are trembling slightly and I can’t look up to face her as my voice breaks.

“I can’t lose you again Carm. I made that mistake once.”

Her tone is far away as she replies,

“You managed before.”

As soon as the words leave her mouth, I feel a tear fall.

I guess I deserved that.

She sees me try to wipe it away subtly and she suddenly moves from her bed to sit next to me on mine.

“Shit, look Laura…I’m sorry. I didn’t think before I said that.” She’s watching me carefully but I can’t seem to meet her eyes.

“It’s going to take some time for me to fall back into step with us okay? But I really, really appreciate that you’re trying and that you’re acknowledging how I felt. Seriously.”

She tilts my head up with a finger under my chin and waits. I blink another tear away and nod in response.
She brushes her thumb over the tear tracks and looks over my face.

My breath hitches in my throat.

Being this close to her makes my heart beat faster and my palms sweaty.

She sighs, “Just...maybe give me some time Laura.”

She abruptly stands and makes her way over to her bed again, peeling back the covers and climbing in.

“I’m exhausted after today. I’ll see you in the morning, ok?” She glances at me one last time before turning her lamp off and bringing the duvet around to cover her body.

I roll over and feel a vivid sense of déjà vu from the other night. I can’t help but hate myself for causing all of this shit for the two of us.

We’d been so good. But naturally, my way of dealing with scary things only brings negative consequences.

Whether it be a scary term paper that I avoid for weeks, eventually leading to a shitty grade. Or terrifying, heart-stopping feelings for an incredible girl that I run away from, leading to a fucked up friendship.

I toss and turn for what must be hours, my anxiety hitting its peak at the thought of not getting Carm back. I’m a happy-go-lucky girl because making others happy, makes me happy. It seems simple, right? But the idea of making her unhappy for so long and then not getting the chance to change that, makes me feel sick to my stomach.

She needs time, but how much?

Will she even want to be friends again after so much time?

Fuck. Have I really ruined this?

Eventually, my worrying must wear me out because I feel my eyelids start to droop and sleep finally consumes me.

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A bang from somewhere in the corridor causes me to wake suddenly and sit up straight in bed. Typical students on our floor, slamming doors and yelling at the butt-crack of dawn. After rubbing the sleep out of my eyes, I glance over to Carm’s bed.

Empty.

I try to ignore the churning feeling in my stomach and I take a minute to admire how she’s managed not to ruin her tidy space in the flurry of getting ready this morning, like she normally does. Although I would never tell her, I secretly liked when she would leave her clothes laying around because it meant that our room smelled even more of her and, occasionally, I could grab something to put on and stay warm if I was up late working and our shitty windows wouldn’t close properly.

I suddenly realise my desperate need to pee and head to the bathroom to start getting ready for class. I only have two more weeks before I’m officially finished, a thought that both relieves me
and terrifies me.

I pee quickly and then stumble over to the sink to wash my hands and brush my teeth, but I pause at the sight of myself in the mirror.

Well, if I was worried about people being interested in me before, I am apparently not doing anything to help myself.

My eyes are puffy and red from the tears and the sheer lack of sleep. My hair is sticking out in all different directions from the tossing and turning, I currently look like someone has stuck my hand in an electrical socket.

I’m also pretty sure I have drool marks seeping from the corner of my mouth, ever the elegant sleeper. I hurriedly wash my face to try and make myself seem a little bit more human.

After a nice hot shower, I pass my desk to get to something to wear and pause momentarily to check my schedule for today. With everything that’s been happening lately, my brain can’t remember what day or even month it is right now.

When I see the date on the planner, my heart sinks to my feet.

It’s today.

It’s come around so quickly.

How the hell did I forget?

Suddenly my brain goes fuzzy and I lose the strength in my legs, sinking to my knees, and holding on to the desk chair with one hand.

Every year this happens to me. It never seems to get any easier, especially now that I’m away from my Dad.

Last year I just spent the whole day by the lake near campus.

I know to isolate myself. I know what happens.

But with everything happening with Carm, I completely forgot.

Memories of that day flicker like a photo reel through my mind and I feel myself start to lose control of my body. My thoughts clouding over so that my limbs can’t follow my brain’s instructions to move.

All I can see is my mom, us playing, baking, and dressing up together. Then her crying, her yelling, her pills in every cabinet and her banging on walls.

Her words cutting through a younger me, a me who didn’t understand, a me who soaked up every letter as the truth.

My breathing gets faster and more laboured until I’m gasping for air and I start to shake as the silent tears begin to fall down my face.

What I wasn’t expecting was the thought of losing Carm to come into play. Amongst the images of my mother and that horrible day are now images of her. Laughing. Reading. Napping.

But then she’s turning away. She’s leaving.
They’re leaving.

I feel like I might be sick as the gasps become interrupted with heavy sobs and I shake so violently that I can’t do anything but lay there on the wooden slats of our dorm room floor.

There is such a ringing in my ears that I don’t hear the knock on the door or the people that walk through it when I don’t respond.

“Laur, seriously come on. We’re gonna be late, what are y….Laura?” Laf stops mid-rant when they see me curled up, eyes wide and unable to breathe.

They kneel down beside me quickly but I can’t seem to say anything. The buzzing is getting louder.

“Laura! Laura, what’s happening? I need you to breathe for me frosh.” They turn to Danny who is stood frozen, unaware of what she should be doing.

All that will come out of my mouth in between gasps are sobs and the words “mom” and “Carm”.

Laf turns to Danny who is now cowering over me.

“Find Carmilla.” They say frantically to her.

Danny is reluctant to move at first but when Laf raises her voice, she snaps out of it.

“GET CARMILLA, DANNY. NOW!” She runs out of the door once Laf’s words sink in and Laf turns back to me, still a trembling, heaving mess on the floor.

Black spots are appearing in my vision as I desperately try to catch my breath.

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I’m sat in my corner of the library, happily reading a textbook that has absolutely nothing to do with my course when I hear thudding footsteps coming towards me and panting.

“Carmilla?! Carmilla, are you here?!” It sounds like Xena, so I look up in curiosity when she reaches my aisle.

“Can I help you, oh giant one?” I drawl, really wishing I didn’t have to converse with her.

Danny bends over, heaving, with her hands on her knees. The only words she seems to be able to get out between her breaths make my blood run cold.

“Laura….heave….crying….gasp*…..can’t breathe….Laf said…”

Before she can finish, my bag is over my shoulder and I am going as fast as my legs can take me back to the dorm with her slowly following behind.

The only thought running through my head is Laura. I have no idea what could have happened between last night and this morning to cause this, but the idea that it might have been me almost stops me in my tracks.

I take the stairs two at a time once I reach our building and the panic inside me hasn’t decreased at all.

“Laura?! Where is she?!” I start to yell at no one in particular.
I reach our door and the sight that meets my eyes almost causes my heart to give out.

My Laura is laying on the floor in a ball, tears pouring out of her eyes, mumbling something incoherent while struggling to get air into her lungs.

I drop my bag and fall to the ground next to her, gently pushing Laf out of the way.

I barely register them pulling back and ushering Danny out of the doorway as I hover my hands over Laura’s trembling body.

“Laura…”

Unsure of what to do, I follow my instincts. As gently as I can, I pick her up and carry her over to my bed and sit her in my lap.

“Cupcake, what’s happening? Can you try and breathe deeply for me? One big one in and out.”

I glance down to watch her as she stiffly leans against me. She sucks in a deep breath but what comes out as a wracking sob causes my chest to ache.

I carefully move so that I’m facing her and I try to get her gaze to focus on mine.

“Laura, sweetheart look at me. I’m here okay. Try to breathe for me, just focus on my eyes and breathe in and out slowly for me.”

I slip my hands into hers, uncurling her fists and squeezing tightly.

I watch as her unfocused eyes blink rapidly and her breathing slows ever so slightly, now being replaced by hiccups and small sobs.

“Carm…no y-you’re gone…just like h-her….you’ve…you’ve gone.” Tears continue to fall from her eyes as her hands grip mine back.

“I’m not gone Cupcake, I’m right here. See, right in front of you. I’m not going anywhere.” I try to reassure her as she starts to move her hands up my arms as if checking that I’m real.

I cup her face to try and move her gaze to mine again and when she sees me, I smile slightly. I refuse to look away from those hazel eyes that I always capture mine.

This only seems to bring on more tears from her, so I make a decision.

I pull her onto my lap and cradle her gently against me, rocking her back and forth until I feel her body start to go limp against mine.

I drop my lips to her hairline as she starts to calm, her hand still clinging onto my t-shirt.

After about 15 minutes like this, Laura’s breathing has evened out and her sobs are much quieter than before.

Snapping me out of my concerned thoughts, she speaks in a cracked voice.

“She died today. Today, but... 7 years ago. She got ill, she couldn’t handle us anymore and she got really sick.”

I eventually understand that she must be talking about her mother, someone who she’s only briefly mentioned in passing throughout the time I’ve known her.
“We drove her insane. She overdosed......I found her.”

I feel my own tears start to brew as I listen to the frail girl in my arms. I had no idea any of this had happened to them, even more so I can’t believe she would blame this on herself. My chest aches for her pain. Her voice breaks as she gets her next sentence out.

“It was my fault, Carm. I drove her away. Now I’m driving you away.”

I wasn’t expecting that.

My heart is in my throat as I try and find the words to say to her.

I pull her as close to me as possible and bury my nose in her hair.

“Laura. You are not driving me away. What happened to your mom wasn’t your fault, she wasn’t well. Mental illness isn’t something that just goes away, she took her own life, you didn’t do that to her.”

I pause and take her hand from my t-shirt to hold it in mine. I lean down to look at her red, watery eyes.

“I am not leaving you. It’s been hard and you made a mistake cutie, but we all do. You could never drive me away like that. You’re not getting rid of me now, ok?” I try my best to smile and she just stares into my eyes like a lost puppy.

I can tell she isn’t fully with me but while I have her eyes on mine, I lean over to stroke her cheek gently, feeling the damp skin underneath and her still shaking frame.

I move myself a little and rest my forehead against hers.

“I’m here,” I whisper.

She turns and buries her head in the crook of my neck with her arms around my waist so tightly that I feel the air rush out of my lungs.

I slowly lean back against my headboard and with Laura still in my arms, I pull a blanket over the two of us to keep her warm.

I stroke up and down her arms slowly and whisper my presence into her hair until eventually I feel her breathing slow and her quiet whimpers cease.

I don’t move for fear of waking her and instead, I just reach for the phone on my headboard to text Laf, asking them to inform my professors that I won’t be attending anything for the rest of the day.

My thoughts wander to a young Laura, finding her mother like that and I feel my admiration for this incredible girl skyrocket. If I thought she was strong before, I truly had no idea.

The fact that she thought she was losing me too and that it brought on that kind of reaction makes me realise that I can’t back away from this. Even if I wanted to at this point, there is no way.

If she needs me, she has me. Maybe not in exactly the same way as before yet, and my trust may falter, but I will never leave her alone like that. Not again.
The first thing I notice when I try to move my eyes away from wherever that blinding light seems to be coming from is a shooting pain right down my spine and I let out a low groan. When I eventually manage to move my face out of the beam of the street light through our window, my neck aching after the shift, my chin hits something soft.

It’s only then that I register a familiar weight on top of my left side and take a second to revel in its warmth. Finally able to open my eyes without feeling my irises burn, I blink a few times before I recognise the waves of golden hair and putters of soft breath against my neck.

Moving my head back a little, ignoring the protest from my muscles, I look down to the hidden face of Laura. Her hairs are stuck over her eyes and cheeks from the many tears she shed earlier. I feel a pull in my chest and reach out my index finger to wipe the blonde streaks back so that they’re out of her face.

Her nose twitches and crinkles when my fingers brush past and the corners of my mouth involuntarily lift up.

It’s then that I notice she has one hand still fisted in my t-shirt and both of her legs are still bent, resting over my outstretched pair. I watch her for a while, content at the peaceful look on her face, so far from the image of her earlier on today.

I feel a slight burning in my throat and realise that I only fed once this morning before I left for the library, I’d been so caught up in Laura that I’d forgotten.

Slowly uncurling her hands and sliding as gently as possible from underneath her, I roll to the right until my feet hit the cool floor of our room. I stand carefully and feel various bones crack and muscles stretch. I glance at the clock to see that it’s almost 6:30 pm, we must have gotten at least 5 hours sleep.

I turn back around to face Laura and all the aches seem to leave my body. She’s laying with her head now on that damn yellow pillow, nose buried in it and her legs tangled up in the blanket. I
cautiously peel the blanket back bit by bit and place it back over her before bending down so that my face is level with hers.

I push back a wayward hair that’s raising from her face every time she exhales and I tuck it gently behind her ear. I let my hand fall to cup her cheek and my thumb brushes underneath her puffy eyes, illuminated only slightly by the orange light outside.

How can swollen eyes and a red nose possibly make her more beautiful?

I place a feather light kiss on the crown of her head and make my way to the kitchen to get us both something to eat.

I grab a blood bag and empty it into a clean (thanks to Laura) glass then put milk on the stove for her cocoa. I proceed to scour the cupboards for pancake ingredients, hoping that Perry left something behind from when she baked us cookies during assignment weeks.

I manage to find just enough to make some for Laura and attempt to shape the mixture into some sort of adorable animal, occasionally taking sips from my glass and huffing in frustration my half bunny, half melted mess.

Just as I’m finishing my glass and sliding the world’s worst bunny pancakes onto a plate, I hear a rustle of sheets behind me and a small whimper. I lean over the headboard and Laura is reaching out an arm, her hand seemingly searching for something, or someone.

“Carm…” she whines slightly, still mostly asleep.

I quickly turn to mix her cocoa and then I round the corner to bend back down in front of her, tardis mug in hand.

I watch her with a lopsided grin on my face as she starts to come around and attempts to register what I’m holding out in front of her.

When the smell hits her nose, her mouth quirks up a little and she reaches a hand out to grip the handle and take it from me as she starts to lean up on her elbows.

“Evening cupcake, how are you feeling?”

She blows on the steaming chocolate and takes a long sip before answering me.

“Better, my throat hurts and my chest kinda aches but I slept well.” She pauses, locking her gaze on mine and flashing me a small but genuine smile. “Thank you, Carm.”

A warm feeling floods my body and I smile back.

“Whatever you need, I’m just glad you’re feeling a bit better. Careful with the cocoa, it’s hot.”

“What time is it? It’s dark out.” She seems puzzled at our odd sleeping schedule.

“It’s about six-thirty, we slept for quite a while cupcake.”

I remember the sad looking bunny pancakes slowly going cold on the counter,

“Are you hungry? You can’t have eaten yet today. I made pancakes.”

She catches the concern in my tone and her eyes soften as she nods gently.
I slowly pull myself up to stand and take the mug from her, placing it on the headboard. I reach a hand down to help ease her out of bed and when she stumbles slightly on her weak legs, I wrap an arm securely around her waist and lead her to one of our kitchen stools by the countertop.

I place the pathetic excuse for pancakes in front of her with a bottle of syrup and cutlery before taking my place on the stool next to hers.

She lets out a quiet giggle, “Carm…what are these supposed to be?”

“Um…look, they started as really cute bunnies and then one of the ears went rogue and I couldn’t seem to figure out how to keep them in one place…”

I grumble and pout slightly, pissed off that my attempt to be thoughtful went awry.

“Thank you Carm, they’re great. Everyone has imperfections right?” She smiles at me after swallowing a bite and I let myself feel better at the fact she seems to be enjoying them.

She slows in her cutting of the next bite and keeps her head down.

“I’m sorry…about earlier. I normally make myself scarce on that day to avoid freaking anyone out. I guess I forgot about it after all that’s been happening lately,” Her hand is trembling a little as she tries to cut herself a piece of bunny ear.

“And I’m sorry for all of that too. I’m sorry for everything I guess.”

I reach my hand out to cover hers so that she gives up cutting and lets her palm turn upwards into mine.

“Laura, you don’t have to apologise for breaking down. This day must be awful for you to go through, I can’t even imagine trying to do it alone like that!” Her trembling stops and she glances up at me.

“Cupcake, promise me that you won’t disappear next time. If I’m not already here then just call me and I’ll be here as soon as I can. I know we’ve had our shit lately but I will never not be there for you, especially on big days like this. You don’t have to try and deal with it alone.”

I squeeze her knuckles reassuringly and stroke my thumb along the top of her palm.

Laura doesn’t say anything but I watch as she shuffles her stool as close as it can be to mine and drags her plate with her.

She presses her thigh against mine and the warmth that seeps through sends a small shiver down my spine.

She continues to eat her pancakes in silence, occasionally grazing her hands against mine with their movements and I’m amazed by the amount of comfort it seems to bring both of us.

I whisper quietly as she finishes up her food, gently squeezing her knee.

“If you aren’t leaving me any time soon, then I’m sure as hell not leaving you.”

-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-

Carm’s presence has always been weirdly calming for me. She’s let me get as close to her side as possible and just sits in silence with me while I finish eating the pancakes that she made for me. She occasionally runs her thumb across my knee to reassure me that she’s not going anywhere.
Every time she does, I forget about this morning and a swarm of butterflies fill my stomach.

I finish the adorable attempt at bunny pancakes but then hesitate to move and wash up. I don’t really want to leave her side, the thought of being apart from her suddenly causes an unsettling feeling to replace any butterflies that were residing in my body.

She seems to notice my pause and she reaches over to pick up the plate for me, she squeezes my hand briefly and gets up herself to wash my dishes. She does it so quickly that she’s back standing next to me within the minute, with a hand gently on my lower back.

“If you’re still tired, you can go back to bed Cupcake. I’ll even let you take mine so you can stay with the yellow pillow.”

I look up and she’s smiling softly at me, concern still evident in her eyes.

“No, no I’m actually ok. It’s only seven… could we maybe hang out, watch a movie or something.”

I’m nervous to ask her seeing as it’s been months since we spent any casual time together. I worry that she won’t want to be around me like that yet, that she was simply taking care of me out of pity.

A gentle pull on my hand brings me out of my thoughts.

She walks me slowly back over to her bed and lets me sit down while she silently goes to the desk to grab my laptop and a jumper from her newly organised pile of clothes.

“Here.” She passes me the jumper and a small smile appears on my face as I realise she’s given me one of her giant grey jumpers that she wears when she’s tucked up and reading somewhere.

I pull the garment over my head as she settles next to me and fires up the laptop.

The smell that fills my nose instantly makes my heart swell in my chest. I’m surrounded by the scent of Carmilla and my body feels tingly as a grin stretches over my mouth and I tuck my hands into the long sleeves.

“Comfortable there, cutie?”

I look up at Carmilla and my heart stops for a second when I register how close she is to me. My face burns red when I realise that she’s been watching me and my expressions while I was in my ‘Carm dream land’. She has her signature smirk on her face and simply chuckles quietly at my lack of vocal response.

I try to gather myself while she types something into Netflix and then pulls the blanket over our legs. Familiar music plays through the laptop speakers and I can’t help but laugh.

“You hate Dr Who! Carm, we don’t have to watch it!”

“Eh it’s okay. I don’t mind it, I get to watch your ridiculous facial expressions and you love it so it’s a win-win.” She smirks down at me.

“I do not have ridiculous facial expressions, thank you very much. I react accordingly, it’s a dramatic show!”

I cross my arms and furrow my brow in mock hurt until she presses her thumb to smooth out the wrinkles now on my forehead. My breath catches in my throat.
“No pouting, Cupcake. Now get comfortable cos it’s starting.”

She shuffles closer to me slightly and lays her arm over mine on top of the blanket. I feel the hairs on my forearms stand up and the familiar proximity makes me feel the most relaxed that I’ve been in a while.

About an hour in, after countless sarcastic comments from Carmilla and several gasps and shrieks from me, she moves to go to the bathroom. Immediately, I miss her warmth and I run my hand over the space in the bed that she’s just left.

She comes back in having changed into a t-shirt and sleep shorts and I feel my eyes glued to her legs. She’s gone from looking badass in leather pants and a band tee to looking adorable in her pyjamas.

“The leather was getting a bit uncomfortable.” She reasons awkwardly

She climbs back into the bed and gets closer to me than before. After a few minutes, I feel her eyes on me and turn my head to look at her.

“Do you want to talk about it? You don’t have to but… it was a pretty big deal today Laura.”

I fidget with my fingers for a while and just as she’s about to give up and carry on watching TV, I speak quietly.

“I was 12. I came back from school and my dad was still in work, I thought my mom would be in bed because she spent a lot of time there in the year running up to that day. She’d gone downhill after she was made redundant from her job and was struggling to find new work.”

I take a deep breath, aware that the memories I’m sharing are still tough to think about.

“She got fed up of being in the house and I think she got depressed. Her depression just really hit her hard and she started to develop all these other kinds of problems. My dad and I tried to do our best but she became this angry, unrecognisable woman after about 6 months. She was put on medication to try and calm her down enough to get back out into the world but it only meant that she was more tired and didn’t want to talk to us.”

My hands start to shake slightly and Carm reaches over to intertwine her fingers with mine.

“During her bad episodes, she used to yell at me and my Dad, blaming us for how she was feeling. We didn’t know what else to do. When I got home that day, I just went to my room to do my homework and didn’t bother checking on her, because I knew she would just be wrapped up under the covers and she would yell if I woke her. After a while, I went to the bathroom but the door wouldn’t open very far…”

I feel Carm’s hand squeeze mine and she uses her other hand to brush a few stray hairs away from my face as my head stays down.

“She’d overdosed in the bathroom and when I eventually got the door open enough to slip through… I found her slumped against the bath. I felt sick and my entire body went cold. I ran to ring my dad, he came home and rang an ambulance, but… it was too late. She was gone. I don’t think she would have wanted to come back anyway.”

An unexpected tear falls down one cheek and I hastily wipe it away.

“It’s been hard every year, but worse without my dad. So, last year I just went to the lake and sat
on the edge crying for hours until I was numb. I still feel like I drove her to do it, I get a little more rational each year but…it never fully goes away.”

Carm unlinks our fingers to put an arm around my shoulder and pull me into her. She puts her other hand back in mine to connect us again and turns to speak into my hair.

“It wasn’t your fault Laura. She was so unwell, no one could have helped her. Sometimes people suffering with a mental illness blame the people around them because they need a reason for feeling the way they do…she can’t have understood her own mind and why her life had changed.”

I lean into her touch and a sigh escapes my mouth.

“You were so brave to deal with that for such a long time.” She pauses “You did what you could for her but you were so young Cupcake, no one expected you to know what to do. I’m so, so sorry you had to go through that. You have the biggest heart I know and you didn’t deserve to experience it.”

She lightly kisses my hairline and leans her head against mine.

My voice cracks as I speak up.

“This is probably the first year that I’ve recovered so quickly… I’m glad you were here.”

“Me too.”

We stay that way for a while before she sighs, kisses my hair once more and then presses play on the next episode.

We don’t speak anymore but our hands are still wrapped around each other and her arm is still over my shoulder, holding me near to her.

About half way through the second episode, I feel her posture change and something fall on my shoulder. Carm’s head has landed on me and her nose is lightly touching my neck. I feel her even breathing on my skin and I realise that she’s fallen asleep.

I don’t want to move for fear of her waking and shifting away from me. I carry on watching until the end of the doctor’s latest adventures and just silently enjoy the feel of Carmilla relaxed against me.

When the episode is finally over, I shut the laptop and shift it to the end of the bed while she stirs next to me.

“Cupcake?” She mumbles, sleep heavy in her voice. “Sorry, I didn’t mean to squish you. Do you want me to move so you can sleep?”

The idea of being in a separate bed to her and putting that much distance between us makes my chest feel tight, so instead I just grab her wrist as she goes to move away from me.

“No…please don’t. It’s better with you here.” Her eyes focus on mine as if she’s searching for any hint of hesitation. When she doesn’t find what she’s looking for, she just nods slowly and I turn to face the wall, pulling her arm over my waist as I do.

She tenses for a second but then I feel her relax again and shuffle up to me so that her front is pressed against my back.
Her nose buried back in my hair, she whispers goodnight, leaving her lips on the back of my neck.

It may have been the quickest and most content that I have ever fallen asleep.

And the most right things have ever felt.
--- signals POV change

“When are your exams over frosh?”

Laf is sat opposite me at a small table near the big windows in the library. We’ve been attempting to study for a few hours now and I’m fairly happy with what I’ve managed considering how little I’ve done over the last few difficult days.

Laf, however, is finding any way to distract themselves. That includes distracting me by asking me questions non-stop and occasionally throwing paper balls at my head.

“About 10 days. I am so ready for this year to be over.”

I lean my head forward onto my hands and stare out of the window to rest my eyes from staring at a screen for so long.

“That’s not that far away, at least you had majority assignments. If I mess up my labs, I am screwed, dude!”

Laf bangs their head down onto the desk, attracting the attention of some nearby students. I tug at their arm to get their attention.

“Try not to damage your brain before you can even take those labs Laf, Perry would go mad if she knew you had this attitude.”

Laf seems to roll their eyes at the thought.

“Oh god, don’t remind me, man. She is being so supportive but it just makes me panic because what if I fail and let her down.”

I place my hand on their shoulder and give them a sympathetic look. Perry loves them more than anything, the fact they think Perry could be disappointed in them makes me sigh.

“Laf seriously, Perry is going to be proud of you for making it into the labs, let alone passing them.
Maybe you should go and have a break in your dorm for a while, Per can always make you feel better in two seconds. I’m pretty useless.”

“Ha, frosh, you’ve just described how your broody vampire acts around you so...”

Laf shoots me a grin and I feel my cheeks heat up, knowing that they must be bright red right now.

“She does not.” I pause, unable to find any words to defend myself. “Shut up.”

Laf chuckles lightly and bumps my shoulder to get the embarrassed frown off my face.

“You’re right though, maybe I should go back and ask her to help me focus. Or just ask her if she can make me some of her chicken soup.”

Their eyes seem to brighten at the prospect of eating some of Perry’s incredible cooking. Just as they start packing up all of their crumpled and messy notes, my phone buzzes on the table next to me and a smile creeps onto my face when I see who it’s from.

“Who’s got you looking like a dopey idiot huh?” Laf has an evil smile on their face as they continue to shove things quickly into their bag.

Carm [17:34]: Okay so I’m THIS close to throwing my notebook out of this fucking window.

[17:34]: So studying is going well then?

Carm [17:35]: If by well you mean that I’ve managed to rearrange my bookshelf again and nap a few times then yes. Exceptionally well.

“Frosh, I’m going back.” Laf’s voice snaps me out of my haze and I glance up at them as they’re stood with their bag slung over their shoulder. “Sorry to leave you on your lonesome.”

“Actually, I’m probably gonna head back to the dorm soon anyway, don’t worry!” I mention as my phone buzzes again in my hand, making my decision for me.

Carm [17:36]: Can you come baaaack now. I need someone here to blame my procrastination on.

“Surprise, surprise.” Laf gives me a knowing look and waits for me to pack all of my books away to walk back with them to our building.

[17:37]: On my way, drama queen.

----------------------------------------

“Thank god. Please come here and hit me over the head with this book.”

Carm is leaning back in the desk chair, feet up on the surface with her book placed over her face. I’m just shutting the door and taking my shoes off when she slides it down so she can look at me.

She looks exhausted, stunning, but exhausted. There are no bags under her eyes but there is no light in them either and her brow looks as though she’s been frowning constantly for hours.

I drop my bag on her bed and walk over to her, I place my hand on her head and watch her lean into my side as she closes her eyes and sighs dejectedly.

It’s been a few days since I woke up in Carmilla’s arms and things have been getting progressively more normal every day. When I stirred that morning, she was already awake and reading while
running her hands through my hair.

I prepared myself for an awkward interaction once she realised I could feel what she was doing, but instead she just smiled softly down at me and carried on.

My heart had gone from beating quickly out of fear to beating even quicker out of affection for the girl above me.

We seem to have gone back to the easy ways of before the incident, even though I can still feel that she is hesitant to talk about things that are truly bothering her. I know she’ll still need time to open up again, I’m slowly accepting it.

Running my hand down her hair to her shoulder, I gently speak in a teasing voice.

“I know you said you were struggling but there’s no reason to resort to violence surely.”

She doesn’t move from where she has tucked her head into my waist and grumbles out a response.

“I’m a vampire. It’s what I do.”

I chuckle lightly, immediately recognising her attempt to hide her weaker side with badass vampire comments.

I move away from her chair and she whines slightly at the loss of her temporary pillow. I grab the book and I move over to my bed. I slump against the wall to try and read whatever complex literature she’s supposed to be working on.

“Okay so, something deep about love and control. Sounds riveting, can’t see why you were having such a hard time concentrating.”

She senses the sarcasm in my voice and pushes the chair backwards towards my bed, stopping the wheels just before she crashes into my headboard.

“Oh, it’s fascinating. Especially for someone as sentimental as myself.”

Her monotone voice elicits a giggle from me and I flick through some of the pages. She leans forward on her elbows on the bed and looks up at me with those dark, tired eyes.

“What’s the plan here cupcake, going to enlighten me on the topic of losing or gaining power in love?”

I narrow my eyes at her.

“Maybe I will. I have thoughts on these topics to you know, I don’t have to be three hundred years old for that.”

One corner of her mouth turns up and her eyes show a little bit of light as she continues to look up at me.

“Well, tell me. You might put some ideas in my head for essay topics, god knows I need the help right now.”

“Okay, well it says here that many noblemen took wives they didn’t know or mistresses they didn’t care for because it was thought that you lost control when you loved someone truly. First of all, that’s awfully sad for those men and women, what kind of life is that?! Also, I agree but not in the same way.”
I prop my feet up onto a pillow and notice that Carm has moved over to the windowsill while I rattle out my thoughts. She turns her head from the window at my pause.

“What do you mean? Which way do you agree then?” She catches my gaze and I notice how her eyes are gentle and her posture seems more relaxed than before.

“I guess I mean that I know we give up control when we love, but I don’t see that as a negative thing. You give your heart up to somebody for them to nourish and protect it, not for them to brainwash you. I suppose back then, women were just objects who could lure men in and they could apparently cause their husbands to be delusional but, that’s ridiculous.”

I scoff and turn the next few pages, skimming the paragraphs for anything interesting but only coming up with typical ancient misogyny about sex and women. I place the book down next to me and look over to where Carm is still staring at me. I feel the heat rise to my cheeks and I fidget with my hands.

Laura starts to play with her watch and averts her eyes from mine. What she said about hearts has made me think about how Danny used hers and I catch myself before I start to feel the anger burning in my chest.

My mind shifts to how we’ve been in the past week and I smile a little, thinking that we’ve gone from protecting each other’s hearts during the incidents to nourishing them just in the past few days. Spending time together, small reassuring touches and talks in the middle of the night if one of us can’t sleep.

My eyes then go wide as I realise that I’m comparing our friendship to giving up our hearts to one another. She gave up her heart to me to protect when she broke down and she’s been nourishing mine since she realised how neglected it had been. I feel a lump form in my throat and try to push the panic in my chest down.

I turn my attention to the window and decide to speak after Laura’s awkward pause.

“I guess you’re right but don’t you think there is some delusion that comes with being in love? Some force that means that your mind is more focused on them than on other things.”

I don’t turn away from the window and so I can’t tell her reaction but I continue anyway.

“You know, when you’re in love, you would do anything for that person. You would die for them, kill for them or do anything possible to make them happy, sacrifice your own happiness even.”

I hear a shuffle and a click and notice that Laura has turned her lamp on in an attempt to see me better as the light outside begins to fade slightly.

“I don’t know if that’s delusion. Delusion makes it sound so negative. I think wanting to do all that stuff for someone, having someone you love that much is incredible. I think anyone who has that is lucky, not crazy.”

I turn back to look at her and notice her gaze intently on me.

“And here I thought I was the ancient romantic.”

I try to diffuse what seems to be a new sort of tension around us and change my tone from serious to teasing.
If Laura has noticed, she doesn’t bother to change her own.

“I didn’t say you weren’t. Maybe there’s just more of us than you realised.”

When I look up at her from the window, she is looking down at her hands and I can practically hear my dead heartbeat in my ears.

Being close again with her over these past few days has meant everything. She was reluctant to leave much distance between us after the anniversary of her mum’s death and so whenever we were both in the dorm, we would either be sat on the same bed chatting or talking, or one of us would work at the desk and the other would pass by them every so often to help and give a squeeze on the shoulder.

I smile softly thinking about my late night essay writing last night when Laura had fallen asleep in front of Dr Who and woken up abruptly from a dream to me still awake, in the dark facing a bright screen.

She had lifted herself out of bed and sleepily walked over to my chair, standing behind me and resting her chin on top of my head. She’d asked me why I was still up and after about 15 minutes of just watching me work with her head still on mine, she pushed me out of the chair, saved my work for me and hugged me for a few seconds before nudging me towards my own bed.

It felt as though Danny had never happened. Which is great, of course, but now Danny is gone and my disappointment and anger are subsiding, my feelings are coming back tenfold.

Here is this beautiful, strong, passionate girl who manages to make me feel like I can do anything and that I deserve everything and then there’s me. I mean, Danny was an asshole, but I don’t know if I’m that far behind.

I could never bring Laura into my world of past destruction and sadness. I want to be able to make her happy, not submit her to something like that.

I suddenly notice a pair of slippers in my eye line and slowly look up to reveal a shy looking Laura, holding my book out to me and smiling softly.

“Welcome back.” She grins at me, causing me to feel the hairs on the back of my neck lift up.

“You know, you’re brilliant Carm. This stuff might make sense for centuries ago, hell you’ve lived through them, you should know. But use that to your advantage. Maybe compare what you saw love as back then to how you see love now, in the modern day.”

She shuffles on her feet a little as she speaks and my heart flutters at her sudden quiet demeanour.

I try to push any thoughts of getting closer to her out of my mind as I respond.

“Do you see now why I asked you to come back here and help me? If I’m brilliant then you’re something else entirely, cutie.”

She blushes and I see her twitch as our fingers brush when she passes me my book.

“Carm, you’re doing your trillionth degree on yet another different subject and I can barely manage one assignment without all-nighters and a hundred boxes of cookies.”

She laughs lightly and it makes my smile widen but when I look up, I see her deflated posture and my chest tugs at the thought of her thinking that she’s not good enough.
I reach my hand out without thinking to pull on her hip and bring her closer to me.

“Laura,” me saying her name always catches her attention as it usually means I’m serious about what I’m going to tell her, “you are doing your very first degree, writing for the university newspaper, running a popular online blog, ensuring Lafonbrain doesn’t lose their mind every other week, always finding time for your dad and you still make the time to take care of this hopeless idiot with a trillion degrees. An idiot who still can’t write an essay with all those years of experience!”

She laughs properly at that and hearing it leaves a ball of warmth in my stomach. I feel her relax under my hand and watch as she reaches out to play with a loose thread at the knee of my ripped jeans.

“Thank you.”

She says it so quietly that I barely hear her.

“For what, Cupcake?”

“For always knowing what to say or do. You were the one struggling to study and yet here you are complimenting me.”

I squeeze her hip and chuckle lightly.

“You don’t realise half the time when you comfort me, cutie, so don’t worry about it. Stop feeling guilty and let me care.”

She stops playing with the thread and looks up, initially jumping a little when she notices our proximity.

“Okay. I guess I’m just glad, you know, after everything that happened that you still want to care.”

“I never stopped wanting to do that Cupcake, not once.”

We don’t drop each other’s gaze for what feels like 5 minutes before a noise somewhere in the hall causes her to jump and slip slightly out of my grasp.

She pauses for a second, looking as though she is making a decision. So I just wait for her to say something.

“It’s getting late and we haven’t had dinner. I know you don’t need it but I could make the only thing my Dad taught me how to cook if you want to eat with me. Does fettuccine alfredo sound like something you might want?”

She sounds nervous for some reason and it makes me want to curl up around her and tell her she’s wonderful.

“That would be great Laura, I’d love to eat with you,” I say gently and she looks up at me with a much bigger smile on her face.

“Just try not to burn the building down!” I smirk at her and I get a face full of dishcloth as she launches one at me before turning toward the stove.

My laughing dies down as she starts to get things ready and I watch as she does her best to reach the pasta in the cupboard on her toes.
God, how I lo-

My brain stops immediately.

Shit.
How Much Trouble Am I In?

Chapter Summary

Two idiots who are completely oblivious to each others’ feelings.

Chapter Notes

Aaaaaand we’re back. Sorry for the wait but I was without wifi for a week. I attempted to piece this chapter together during my week and I’m not the biggest fan of this one, hopefully, you enjoy it anyway!
Byeee x

--- signals POV change

I sit in the stool next to Laura while we eat and anxiously twirl the pasta around my fork.

Naturally, after finishing up with the cooking, she’d plated our food and brought her stool as close to mine as humanly possible.

Normally, this kind of closeness would make my chest expand and my body feel warm, but right now I am trying my best to keep my breathing from becoming erratic and I can feel the cutlery almost slipping from my clammy hands.

“Do you not like it? I’m sorry, it’s the only thing I know how to cook and I can’t even do that very well! I can order us a pizza if you want, I think I put your favourite menu in the drawer,”

Laura goes to stand and retrieve the takeaway menu but I shoot my arm out to grab her wrist and stop her before she explodes.

“Cupcake,” I pause, suddenly hyper aware that she can probably feel the sweat on my palms, “it’s wonderful. Your dad taught you well. I guess the essay stress is just starting to affect my appetite, I don’t even feel hungry for blood right now.”

She eases herself back into the seat while looking at me carefully, eyes pinched together slightly in concern.

“Are you still worrying about that? I could be here while you write you know...if it’ll help at all. I know I’m not that brainy but I might be able to at least rub your shoulders when you hit a rough patch.”

As much as my brain is screaming at me not to look at her, I can’t help it when I hear the caring tone in her voice. This girl is going to be the death of me...well...the second death.

“Your ideas were great, cutie, really great. I don’t want to disturb your studying, don’t worry, I’ll be fine. I probably just need to get some blood in my system and bash out this essay as quickly as I
I rub my hands back and forth over my black jeans to try and stop myself from nervously gesturing around.

Laura seems to sense this as a sign of my anxiety and brings both of my hands over into her lap to run her thumb along the (thankfully) dry side of my palms.

I can feel my pulse in my throat as it tries to decide whether it should be slowing or quickening at her touch. I glance back to her eyes and hers soften as I catch her gaze. She smiles so easily at me and before my brain can get carried away with thoughts of closing the gap between us, she moves her hands to our plates and takes them over to the sink.

I exhale sharply as the distance between us grows once more. How the hell am I supposed to deal with this? Every time she gets near me, the realisation that I love this girl sinks further and further into my brain.

Holy shit, I really love her.

She quietly empties our dishes and washes them before drying her hands on the Hogwarts-themed dish towel and coming back over to my side.

“If you want to work for a few hours, I can stay. I was going to go to Laf’s to watch a weird sci-fi movie they love but I could stick around and read. Just in case you need me here. Or…you know…you might want some peace so I could always make myself scarce…”

She brings me out of my thoughts and I chuckle a little at her ability to go from calm to panic-stricken in the space of a few seconds. I lay a slightly less damp hand on her hip, relishing in the smoothness of her skin that has peeked out from underneath her t-shirt.

“I would love to have you here Cupcake, but if you want to go and watch that lame movie with the ginger nerd then I’m sure I’ll survive.”

I watch as she briefly moves her eyes to my hand placement but I don’t remove it from her side, despite the nerves floating around in the pit of my stomach.

She seems to contemplate for a moment before moving towards her bed without a word. She picks up her latest research article and leans back against her headboard, sighing lightly and opening it up to her current page before looking at me.

“Well, get to it then. That essay won’t finish itself Karnstein.”

She winks and I feel a sensation in my stomach that I’ve never felt before. That tiny powerhouse of a girl somehow makes my body more alert than it’s been in centuries, I can’t figure out whether or not that’s a positive thing.

Apparently, she’s staying put.

She turns to her article as I groan and pull myself up from my stool over to the desk. I slump down in the office chair and bring up my half-finished essay ready for a few gruelling hours.

Although, they seem slightly less daunting knowing that Laura is sat just behind me. I manage to push my mind away from the topic of my feelings for a second while I try to gather my ideas.

I briefly glance over my shoulder to her and she gives me a comforting smile before looking back
to her article.

My cold heart flutters in my chest and I turn to my keyboard to start on my next paragraph.

-----------------------------------------------

True to her word, Laura remains on her bed with her article and only moves when she hears me sigh or sees me lean back in the chair.

Every time that I get too lost in my scattered essay thoughts, she reminds me somehow that she is still there and my entire body relaxes.

At one point, I bury my head forward into my hands and let out a long sigh before groaning and slumping even further down into my chair.

I don’t hear her get up but the next thing I know, I have gentle hands running along my scalp and I’m surrounded by the smell of honey and something inexplicably Laura.

I feel the tension around my eyes subside and I tilt my head backwards so that her fingertips move to my hairline and down the sides of my face. My body involuntarily shudders at her touch and I whine slightly.

The noise startles the both of us and I dare to open my eyes to observe her reaction.

My breath catches in my throat when I see her face lingering just above mine as her hands continue to move through my hair. Her hazel eyes are shining and I can just about see the small grin on her face. My pulse is racing and yet I can’t move my eyes away from her.

“Time to take a break?” Her soft voice does nothing to help the trembling in my body and I simply shake my head a little to indicate that I need to keep going.

“Alright, soldier on Carm.”

She dips her head lower and presses a kiss to my hairline. She leaves her lips there for a few seconds before pulling away and retracting her hands from my hair.

As she’s walking back to her spot on the bed, my body is flooded with butterflies and it takes a while for me to remember that I have an essay I’m supposed to be writing.

I don’t know when I fall asleep but I must be exhausted because all I feel is Laura gently lifting my body from the chair over to my bed before wrapping the covers around my shoulders.

The last thing I remember before sleep takes over my body again is the smell of her yellow pillow as she places it under my head and strokes my cheek.

Bliss.

-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.

“What the HELL do I do?! Oh my god, oh my god. This is the whole reason I left and now I’m just making it worse for myself again.”

I’ve been pacing back and forth in front of Laf for approximately half an hour now and my mind hasn’t stopped going a mile a minute.

Last night was comfortable and I had settled down in bed happy with the idea that I’d helped Carm
But then she’d fallen asleep. Head first onto her laptop keyboard, hands still poised as if ready to type.

I’d never seen anything more adorable, ever.

I’d managed to lift her head up and carefully deposit her onto her bed without waking her fully. I also managed not to laugh too hard when I noticed the imprints of keys on her cheek and forehead.

I wrapped her in her blanket and let her have my yellow pillow. When I put it under her head, she smiled in her sleepy haze and my heart felt as though it was being squeezed from the inside. I had kneeled down next to her bed so that my eye line matched hers and I stroked out any of the stress lines on her face, just until I felt her breathing become even once again.

However, as I’d gotten myself into bed and turned to switch off the lamp, I caught a movement out of the corner of my eye. Carm had moved the pillow in front of her and was holding onto it like a teddy bear.

So many emotions flooded my body when I saw her do this, I almost burst into tears.

I’d left my lectures early today and the idea of seeing Carm again made me so nervous that I’d just run to Laf’s dorm instead and I was now slowly worrying them with my rambling.

“Frosh, you need to calm down and tell me what’s going on! Come and sit down for a second.”

I finally settle next to Laf on their bed as I catch my breath. My hands are shaking slightly and my thoughts are all screaming around my head, I can hardly hear myself think.

“I’m in love with her.” I manage to blurt out in between short exhales.

“Danny? But you broke up?” Laf seems to pause and think for a minute before turning me towards them gently.

I look up at them with glassy eyes as my emotions threaten to break through the surface. My lower lip trembles as I try to get a hold of myself enough to look at them.

“Oh.” Laf regards me with a sympathetic look before placing their hands on my shoulders.

“Carmilla…you’re in love with Carmilla.”

I let a few tears push past and run down my cheeks as I nod my head slightly.

“Laura, I hate to ask you this but, is this really news to you? Why is it a bad thing?”

I lift one leg up onto the bed to fold it underneath me while I try and gather enough strength to reply.

“No, it’s not news. I…I realised before Danny asked me out. I’d been struggling with it for a few weeks before she suggested a date and so I just said yes without thinking… I needed a way out.”

My voice is cracked as I try and form coherent sentences.

“Why did you want to get out of it? Surely you run towards a possible relationship with your best friend who is simultaneously the hottest girl on campus!”

Laf tries to joke and bumps their fist into my shoulder as I attempt to figure out how I’m going to relax.
explain myself.

“Because…she’s incredible Laf,”

“Again, missing the point here frosh…”

“She’s so incredible, and I’m just me. She’s this beautiful, badass vampire who has literally battled demons to get this far and yet still seems most peaceful reading a book in the corner of our room. She makes me feel the happiest I’ve been since my childhood and as much as I want to be happy with being her friend, I can’t handle it anymore... my heart actually hurts, Laf.”

I’m crying again and Laf pulls me into their side to squeeze my shoulders and rubs their hand down my back.

“I’m not good enough for her.” I sniff quickly, “That’s why I decided to try something new and when Danny asked, I said yes.”

“Laura, you’re amazing. You’re one of my best friends for a reason dude, Carmilla sees that too. Does she seem like the kind of girl who would hang around with people she didn’t think were good enough?”

“But she doesn’t feel the same way, I don’t know if I can take it being just a friend to her while these feelings are swimming around inside me twenty-four-seven.”

I hiccup slightly and bring my sleeve up to wipe my nose as the sniffles don’t seem to slow.

“Bro, that girl adores you. Anyone who sees the way she looks at you and doesn’t see love in those dark eyes is blind.”

“Don’t Laf, she doesn’t feel that way. She just looks at me like that because I make her laugh and I bring her food when she’s grumpy.”

I scoff at the idea that Carm could ever feel that way about me. She’s the most amazing person I’ve ever known and it still shocks me that she’s kept me around as her friend after all this time.

“Ok. Let’s look at this in a different way. What do you see when you look at me and Perry?”

I pause, taking a deep breath to compose myself and wiping at the tear tracks on my face.

“You and Per? I see two best friends. You’re the only one that can calm her down when she’s stressed out and she’s the only one you’ll listen to when it comes to your weird experiments.”

Laf huffs in mock offence.

“Obviously everyone sees how you two look at each other like dopey idiots half the time when you forget we’re all in the room. I see my two best friends who took too damn long to figure things out!”

We both laugh at that and I start to feel a little better.

Laf’s laughs die down and they look at me, placing one of their hands back on my shoulder.

“Laura. Carmilla makes you feel safe, right?”

“Yeah…”
“And she usually acts like a bit of an ass to everyone, except you, right?”

“Well, yeah, but…”

“And you could spend days with her without getting bored or lonely, right?”

“I guess…”

I fail to see where Laf is going with their points.

“Frosh, you know that dopey look you said Per and I give each other all the time?”

“Yeah?”

“That look is permanently on Carmilla’s face when she looks at you.”

My brain goes quiet for a second while I take in what Laf has said.

“You think that I make her happy?”

“Dude, the only time I ever see her smile is when she’s around you.”

Laf nudges my leg and gives me a small smile, waiting for me to figure out how I feel about this new information.

“I’m not saying that she’s head over heels for you frosh, but you make that evil grumps happy, really happy.”

I try not to let the smile take over my whole face but I’m helpless to stop it.

I know that I can comfort Carm when she needs it but I never notice how she watches me or looks at me, obviously.

Maybe if I make her as happy as Laf, and apparently everyone else seems to think I do, then I need to get my shit together.

I don’t know if Carm does or will ever feel the same way about me or if she’d ever fall for me as hard as I have fallen for her, but if I make her happy then I need to stick around.

Last time I ran, I’m not running this time.

My best friend needs me, and I need her.

“I need your help Laf. Do you have Eddy’s number? That solarium guy?”

-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-

The finished essay shines out of my screen at me and I finally fully relax into the chair.

After waking up late today and missing all of my classes, I managed to set aside a few hours to power through the last of my essay.

And now, it’s done.

Laura’s not here, yet all I want to do is hug her and thank her for forcing me to do this. For being there the entire time too…
It’s done. I’m done. Someone pass me the hard liquor.

Cupcake: YOU DID IT! I’m proud of you Carm!

Thank you Cupcake, for everything. I think I would have gone mad if you hadn’t been behind me, quite literally.

Cupcake: Anytime. I have plans with Laf tonight but we should celebrate tomorrow?

As long as the whole Scooby gang isn’t there, I’m in

Cupcake: Stuck with just me I’m afraid

Oh dear, what a shaaame ;)

I pocket my phone and notice that my cheeks hurt slightly from smiling so damn hard.

Laura Hollis, miracle worker.

I push the chair back from the desk and wheel it over to Laura’s side of the room.

As I’m scanning my eyes across the pin board above her bed, I notice something that has failed to catch my eye before.

Stuck up amongst a cluster of Dr Who postcards and photos from her Dad, pinned right in the middle and slightly covered by a string of lights, is a picture of the two of us.

Clearly taken by one of the nerd crew, the photo is of us at a games night last year. Laura and I are sat as close to one another as possible and we’re oblivious to the world around us. I am looking at her with a glint in my eye, smiling so big that it’s obvious I’m on the edge of laughter.

And there she is.

Looking at me and smiling so bright that it could blind a man. But she’s smiling only at me, and I’m smiling back.

On the little white strip underneath the Polaroid are a few words written in Laura’s loopy cursive.

“I made her smile!!”

A grin tugs at the corners of my mouth. Yeah, Laura, you always do.
Can I Make It Up To You?

Chapter Summary

Laura executes her plan and things get...interesting.

Chapter Notes

So, just a warning, I have no knowledge of anything star-related but it was relevant and I went with it. This has more feels and I'm sorry about it, but they're dramatic girls...what can I say? Enjoy x

--.--.--.--.--.--.--.--.--.--.-- signals POV change

“Laura, I really want to be able to tell you yes right now but it’s my job! The solarium isn’t open for students unless it’s for a class or you have project permission from your professor.”

Eddy. Sweet, kind, fucking useless Eddy.

We’ve been on the phone for about 15 minutes and after me giving my best speech as to why I needed the solarium keys for the night, he still refused to give in.

“Eddy, please! I'll pick them up from your dorm and bring them back as soon as I’m done! I’ll pay you if you want!”

My voice is desperate at this point. I’m pacing back and forth through the dorm while Carm is handing in her essay and going to a few study groups to prep for her exams.

By the time I got in from Laf’s last night she was already curled up, with my yellow pillow, fast asleep. I managed not to disturb her and when I woke up this morning, she was already gone, clearly anxious to get it out of her hair.

I have exactly 2 hours until she’s done and Eddy is really not helping me with my once great plan to help her celebrate.

“I won’t take a bribe, Laura, seriously. I could get in so much trouble if the department found out I was letting unauthorised people use it after hours!”

He sounds exhausted now and I don’t blame him. I’m being relentless. I just want to put that adorable smile on Carm’s face, the one that she insists she doesn’t have.

I sit down on my bed in defeat and sigh deeply before running my hand through my hair and trying one last time.

“Eddy, this girl does anything she can to make me happy and I haven’t been the best to her in the past few months. I want to show her that I care.”
I take another deep breath and my voice is tired as I speak again.

“I love her Eddy, I just want to show her that.”

There is a long pause and I anxiously bite at the fingernails on my other hand while I wait for some sort of response. Just as I’m about to give up and end the call, a voice comes through the phone and I almost drop it in my surprise.

“Ok fine!! Fine, come and get the damn keys. But I swear to you, if someone finds out, you are saying that you stole those keys from me! Understood?”

I shoot up from the bed and start pacing again, this time out of excitement.

“Thank you!! Thank you so so so much! I promise we will be as careful as we can and I’ll bring them to you first thing in the morning!”

“Yeah yeah Hollis, just lay low!”

Eddy abruptly hangs up the phone and I’m honestly too excited to feel offended. I actually managed to pull that off!

I have 2 hours now to get everything ready, figure out a route to the solarium aaand somehow persuade Carmilla to leave the dorm once she’s back…

2 hours….shit.

------------------------------------------------

I never truly understood what drew Carmilla to the stars so much, she always seems to be able to see so much more than I can. However, this solarium is truly something special. It has a magical feel to it.

A huge, circular room topped by an incredible glass dome that gives you a 360 view of the whole campus and some of the neighbouring town, the only other light provided by strips of soft lighting that run underneath the window panes. The old wooden floor is still fairly intact but is now slightly worn from decades of use.

I take a final spin around the room to make sure that everything is set up alright. I need it to be great but also, I really don’t want to overwhelm Carm when she’s finally trying to relax a little.

The hard wooden floor means that I had to bring both our duvets up to us to sit on, they are naturally accompanied by all the pillows I could find in our room, a yellow taking pride of place. A bottle of champagne sits in a bucket nearby and some jumpers are strewn about just in case we get cold.

I managed to swipe the champagne from Kirsch’s kitchen, leaving him a note to say that I would be his wing-woman at the next Zeta party in return. Desperate times call for desperate measures…

I see no changes to be made so I make my way back down the stairs as quickly as I can to get ready in the remaining 30 minutes.

Taking several flights of stairs at speed, with tiny legs, has left me looking just a little bit frazzled and exhausted, so I grab my small makeup bag and toss a few outfits on my bed ready to turn myself into a presentable human being.
Easier said than done.

3 outfit changes, several layers of mascara and a run through with my hairbrush later, I feel like a somewhat put together woman once again.

I’m about to grab my phone to text Carm when the door bangs open and she saunters in,

“Cupca-” she pauses suddenly, realising that I’m stood directly in front of her with a weird, anxious smile on my face.

She briefly does a once over of my small ballet flats, my dark navy dress that pulls at the waist and poofs at the bottom, my delicate gold necklace and my tamed hair. She brings her eyes back to mine and something flashes across her face quickly before her expression turns to confusion.

“What’s the occasion, cutie? Have I missed out on an invitation to a Zeta party? If so, I have a feeling that dress is a little too nice to be subjected to that booze-fuelled sweat fest.”

Her smirk inches its way onto her face and I curse my stomach for doing tiny flips every damn time she does it.

“Uh, nope!” I step back a little and try to fix my smile into something more relaxed.

“I actually planned to do something nice for you to celebrate your essay and I figured my Wonder Woman t-shirt and stained jeans weren’t exactly the most appropriate celebratory clothes.”

I twiddle my fingers a little, nervous that she won’t like my plan or that my outfit is too much. I knew I should have stuck with my nice jeans and that stupid cat-print jumper. I’m still internally berating myself when Carmilla snaps her fingers in front of my eyes.

“Earth to Cupcake, I asked what the plan was. Are you alright?”

Her brow furrows slightly in concern and I’m quick to wave it away.

“Sorry! I was in a world of my own.” I blush a little and smooth out my dress before explaining.

“We’re going somewhere on campus that I think you love, I’ve heard you mention it a few times but I may be way off. I know you’re probably tired and just want to sleep for a few days now it’s over, but I wanted us to do something, at least for an hour or two! How about it?”

I attempt to subtly bring out my puppy dog eyes and watch as her smirk turns into a genuine lopsided grin.

“Well cutie, if you have gone to so much effort then it would be rude to decline! Let me just change.”

“Why? You always look great.” I open my mouth before my brain can stop me and instantly feel the heat rise on the back of my neck. Carmilla turns from her new stance in front of the wardrobe, initial wide eyes slowly transforming into a cocky grin.

“Oh, I do? Way to make a girl feel special Hollis.” She winks and turns to change her top, causing me to squeak slightly and turn on the spot, a red hue taking over my entire body.

After a few minutes, Carmilla strolls out of the bathroom and taps me on the shoulder. I haven’t moved for fear of seeing her strip and passing out, she seems to be aware of the effect it’s had on me but doesn’t say anything.
“Laura, you ready? I kinda wanna see where you’re dragging me that’s so great.”

I remember the set-up I have waiting and smile at her.

“Yeah, of course, let’s go!”

I lightly grab her hand and pull her out of the dorm before she can change her mind, trying not to falter in my breathing as I feel her link her fingers between mine.

“Cupcake, are we on mission impossible here or something? Why are we looking around every corner?”

Laura has been ducking in and out of alleys between campus buildings for 5 minutes now and I still have no idea where we seem to be going. Honestly, this better be worth it.

“Shh, can you just be quiet until we get there!”

She turns sharply and faces me with a serious expression so I bring my finger to my lips and pretend to zip them shut.

Eventually, after a few more minutes of small lanes and gates, we reach set of steps leading up to a small door in the back of a familiar looking building.

“Why are we in the physics department?” I’m not feeling any clearer on our destination as Laura continues to drag me along through the door and up some winding steps.

Eventually, after my legs feel like they’re going to fall off, we reach a small black door. Laura turns to me and smiles nervously before twisting on the door handle.

The solarium. There is so much happening in here that I’ve never seen before and my eyes don’t know where to look first. I’ve only been up here in the evening once before for a philosophy and horoscope project but there were so many people, we were also only allowed 30 minutes. Currently, the sun is setting through the glass and I take note of everything around me.

“Uhm, so…I thought we could hang out here tonight. I convinced Eddy to give me the keys, hence the secret route here, plus I got some champagne. I don’t really like it but I figured it was celebration appropriate. It might be a really boring idea, but I thought you mentioned wanting to see this once before and I wanted to try and make your celebration special after the crappy months I gave you an…”

“Laura! Stop.”

She’s been nervously watching me as I wander over to the blankets she’s laid down, wringing her hands and gnawing on her lip. My heart is soaring and I curse the way my mind can only seem to think of lovey dovey crap right now.

“This is…incredible. I’ve never seen it so quiet and cosy looking. You broke the rules to bring me here?”

She stops fidgeting when I turn to look at her in awe. A shy smile spreads across her face and I can’t help but mirror it.

“It wasn’t easy trying to get Eddy to let me but a little guilt-tripping and I was in!”
Her light chuckle warms my chest and I gesture over to the blankets.

“Well, I guess if we have it for the night then we should probably get comfortable.”

I realise the innuendo and stammer trying to cover it up.

“I mean… this floor is hard… and uh, we have to lay back if we want to see the stars properly, right?”

Laura walks over to the blankets and sits down, smiling softly at my complete lack of articulation.

She looks beautiful. When I opened our door earlier, I was not expecting to find her in that dress with her hair flowing down, looking like a damn mermaid. Her dress is cute and elegant but she manages to look incredible in it and I’m mind blown by the fact she can pull off this as well as Dr Who pyjamas.

“You can open the champagne if you want to. I’ve never popped a cork before so you’ll have to be the big guns here, sorry.” She giggles and I reach down into the bucket of ice packs to grab the bottle by the neck.

“Do we have glasses?”

Her eyes widen and she looks all around her before whining and slapping her hands down on her legs, a giant pout forming on her lips.

“Oh for crying out loud! I knew I forgot something! Sorry Carm, I can go and find some.”

She moves to stand but I gently push down on her shoulder, keeping her in her current position.

“Cupcake, it’s fine! It tastes better out of the bottle anyway.”

I smile in what I hope is a reassuring way before aiming the bottle at the door we came through and releasing the cork with a loud bang. Laura shrieks but removes her hands from her ears when I turn back to her and sit down with my legs crossed.

I take a small sip from the bottle hand it to her, watching her face screw up slightly before she hands it back.

“How is it possible for something to be that bubbly?!”

I laugh before taking another sip and then placing the bottle down next to us. I lay back as we start to watch the sunset give way to the darkness and Laura quietly lays down beside me, as close as she can be without actually touching my side.

We sit in comfortable silence watching the sky get progressively darker until the very first stars begin to peek out in the night sky. I feel Laura turn her head towards me slowly and I don’t dare to move, completely aware of how close we would be if I did.

“Okay, so, which is your favourite star? You always watch them from our window and I can never tell whether or not you’re waiting for a specific one to show up.”

I smile gently at her question and lift my arm to point out of one of the large glass panes.

“Over here, Sirius.”

She gasps beside me and I immediately know what’s coming next.
“SIRIUS?! Like….Sirius Black? As in…Harry Potter Sirius? You ARE a nerd!”

She pokes hard at my shoulder and I feign injury, I turn slightly to look at her where she is now leaning up on her elbows.

“All right, Sirius got his name from the star cutie, not the other way around! Before you ask, no I will not re-watch the films with you because we did that 8 months ago and I refuse to be put through that again until after a year, at least!”

“You love them and I don’t know why you won’t admit it! God, you’re such a Malfoy.”

My eyes snap to hers and my mouth gapes a little.

“You take that back Hollis, I’m warning you! Snape was one thing but you’ve gone too far now.”

She grins wide and tilts her head to the side, making her look even more bloody adorable than before.

“All right, fine. I’ll take it back, only if you promise that we can watch them when exams are over.”

I huff and stare directly into her eyes hoping that she’ll back down but when I’m only met with resistance, I groan and simply nod my head. I grab the bottle to take a swig before laying back down.

A squeal erupts from her mouth and she flops back down next to me, a little closer than before so that now our arms are touching. I can feel the heat moving from her body to my cold one and a small shiver runs down my spine.

After a few minutes, she speaks again.

“Why is it your favourite Carm?”

I squint a little, separating the star from the rest in my line of vision.

“It’s the brightest. At night, it is so bright that it reminds me how insignificant everything else is. It blinds me from seeing everything crap in my world for a moment and I can just be reassured in the fact that it still exists, after centuries looking at it, it’s still the same.”

I finish to look over at Laura and she’s still watching the sky, smiling softly at my reasoning, then tilting her head when she realises I’m no longer looking outside.

Her eyes dart all across my face while I watch them and I notice her breath has picked up as I feel it bounce off my face. When her eyes finally land on mine, breathing becomes a thing of the past and I can’t drag my gaze away. The amount of squirming feelings in my stomach right now would make an old Mircalla scoff, but my level of caring is virtually non-existent.

Her small voice interrupts my thoughts.

“It’s a shame they only come out at night. Imagine if you had a Sirius to blind you during the day when the world throws all its crap at you.”

“I do.”

After a few moments of unwavering gaze and a gentle expression on my face, Laura seems to understand what I mean.
I feel a trembling hand link its fingers through mine and every emotion in my body is suddenly overflowing from the seams as I recognise that her focus is intently on my mouth.

My entire body is shaking and I find myself completely unable to look anywhere but at Carmilla’s lips. I’m her Sirius. I’m her light. Still, after everything I put her through, that’s still me. I can’t decide whether to cry or to bury myself in her arms.

When my gaze eventually tears away from her mouth to her eyes again, hers are glassy and she’s pulling gently on the skin of her bottom lip. Before I can register it, a hand has slipped from my own, up to cup the side of my face as she runs her thumb along the indent of my cheekbone. My eyes close automatically and my face tingles with warmth at her touch.

I could quite honestly stay in this second for the rest of my days and be as content as possible. The skin of her hand is somewhat rough around the edges but the pads of her fingertips are the softest things I’ve ever felt. I’m dreaming away about her hand replacing my yellow pillow each night, so deep in thought that I fail to notice the shallower breaths of the girl next to me and the way that they seem to be getting closer to me.

Then my whole body erupts into warmth as a pair of gentle lips touch mine. It is only for a few seconds but it feels like a lifetime and my heart is threatening to burst out of my chest.

As I feel her begin to pull away, I reach out a hand to bring her face back to mine. She lets me carefully take her bottom lip between mine and I hear a slight whimper in the back of her throat. My emotions are becoming so much that I feel like I’m going to explode.

Before I can take it any further, the dream seems to be ripped away from me as I’m suddenly met with cold space next to me.

When I open my eyes, Carmilla is standing stock still a few metres away, shaking like a leaf and watching me with wide eyes. I don’t understand what’s happening.

“Carm...”

“No, Laura...I shouldn’t have k-.....I’m sorry. I can’t do this. I’m so sorry.”

As my brain attempts to register what she’s saying, she turns and disappears back down the steps.

My heart shatters as I realise what just happened. She left. She kissed me and then she left. Maybe she understands now that I’m not enough for her. Maybe she did it on the spur of the moment but then her brain reminded her that I’m just an average girl and she can do so much better.

My brain is still mush and after a few minutes of thinking, I am completely deflated. I stand on unsteady legs and reach down to gather everything up in a blanket. I pick up the half full champagne bottle and glance one last time around the room before leaving.

I leave the bottle in an alleyway on the way back, no longer feeling the celebratory mood. I pick up my pace, hoping that I’ll come back to find Carmilla, waiting and having changed her mind. I drop the solarium key into Eddy’s postbox before rushing to our dorm, mind racing, heart pounding and almost losing my grip on the blanket.

Empty.
Our room is empty.

No Carmilla. No hope.

My feelings turn to those of nausea and I drop the blanket on the floor before running to the bathroom. Leaning over the sink, I try to gather myself. But as I look up at my reflection, silent tears streaming down my cheeks and my hair wildly arranged around me, I slide slowly to sit against the side of the bath. I cry for what seems like hours before I exhaust myself.

How did we manage to fuck this up again? I only wanted her to be happy.

I ran from her once, promising to never do it again. Now she is running from me. I can’t lose my best friend, not a second time.

If I did, I think it would break me.

-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.

“Darling, to what do I owe the pleasure? Have you…”

She notices my tears.

“Mattie.”
“Oh gosh, kitten, come here.”

Mattie pulls gently at my elbow to get me into her apartment. I eventually found myself here after leaving the solarium, only after wandering the outskirts of campus for hours, and I was only just becoming aware of my state.

I reach my hands up to my face and feel my soaked cheeks, hastily wiping at them to try and calm down. Mattie has brought me into her large living room and placed me delicately down onto her chaise longue. I can’t seem to look directly at her, embarrassed at my emotions having spilt so freely from me.

“Darling, what on earth happened? Are you hurt?”

She starts to move her head around as though checking me for any signs of damage, but I start to shake my head slowly and she reaches a hand over to my knee, trying to encourage me to speak. I take a breath, shuddering as I do so and begin with my broken voice.

“I…I was with Laura.”

“The munchkin? What did she do to you this time? If she has caused this, I will find her.”

Mattie’s hand has tightened its grip on my knee and I quickly try to gather myself and reassure her.

“No, no Mattie, she didn’t do anything wrong.”

I hesitate to carry on, images of a crestfallen Laura sat on the solarium floor are flashing in my mind.

“She…we…she did this amazing thing for me, to celebrate. We went to the old solarium, she’d bribed someone into letting us have it for the evening.”

“Wow, the little imp has some gumption!”

“We talked and just…lay there…in silence watching the stars come out. I said something I shouldn’t have…revealed something.”
I pause and Mattie just waits for me to explain, squeezing lightly to keep me present.

“I kissed her.”

I look up at my sister at this point and she is gazing back at me, a look of confusion on her face but gentle eyes.

“It didn’t go down well?”

“It did… that was the problem. She kissed me back, gently, like she was nervous. I almost lost myself…but then I remembered why it couldn’t happen and I panicked. I ran…I just left her there.”

My chin falls to my chest and Mattie moves her hand to my shoulder.

“She looked so sad Mattie, I did that.”

Another few tears fall from my eyes down the side of my nose and I don’t bother to wipe them away. A soft thumb gets rid of them for me.

“Why did you do that, sweetheart?”

She looks genuinely puzzled as to why I had run away, something I thought she would understand immediately.

“Mattie, I’m not what she needs. I can’t give her anything. I won’t take from her when I have nothing to give in return.”

“Milla, what are you talking about? If anything, you are out of her league!” She scoffs and I glare at her a little, “But in all honesty, that girl looks at you like you’ve given her the world. It’s quite disgusting actually…”

She smiles gently at me and rolls her eyes. She rubs my shoulder and her expression changes to something more serious.

“Do you really think you have nothing to give her? Darling, I see the way you are with that sprite, both of you look like idiots with your teenage grins and I don’t think I’ve ever seen you let anyone be so close to you. You normally bite anything that breaches the boundary.”

I think about how my body reacts near Laura. Her voice puts a smile on my face, her touch (usually) calms me down and being around her is infinitely better than being away from her. Still, this is my selfish, hopeless being just taking from her. She couldn’t benefit from me being in her life.

“You’re right. She makes me feel the most normal I have ever felt before. I would probably never leave her side if it weren’t for feedings and classes. But, she left me for a while and she did fine without me.”

“Ah yes, the most tiring few weeks of our friendship my sweet, you moping around here like a sad toddler.”

I move out of Mattie’s grip and shove lightly at her shoulder. She continues,

“Are you past that now? Really? You feel you can trust her again after how she hurt you?”

I sigh and run a hand through my windswept locks, pushing them out of my face as I respond.
“We’ve been through a lot but she knows how I felt. She was hard enough on herself for that, I wouldn’t let her do it anymore. She made a mistake, now so have I.”

I pick at the little nails that I have left until they’re down to the quick and eventually Mattie places her own hand over mine to stop my actions.

“Carmilla, listen. Did she pull away after kissing you back?”

“No, I was the one to leave. She seemed as though she wanted me to stay but I just couldn’t.”

“Why not?” She presses

“I told you, Mattie. She could never feel the way I do, she knows that I can’t give her anything. She deserves the world and I don’t have that. I will protect her but I will not drag her down with me.”

My voice is shaky, firm but shaky. The thought of making Laura feel as though she had to stay with me, not live her life and have adventures, the thought of her missing out on everything she could be doing because of someone like me, makes me sick.

She needs to go out there and touch other lives just like she did with mine. She has so much good to do and I would never fit in with that. I would never want her to feel tied to her pathetic best friend.

Mattie’s abrupt tone brings me back to the dark living room.

“Do you love her?”

“I…yes, with everything I have left in me. But I am her best friend Mat…”

She snaps

“Mircalla! Do you love her?”

Her gaze is unwavering, expression serious but her eyes still glimmering with a hint of compassion.

“Yes, I do.”

Her hand moves back from my hands to my shoulder and before I know it, I’m standing and being pushed down the long hallway towards the front door.

“Then get the hell out of my apartment and go tell her.”

“Mattie, wh…”

Before I can utter another word, the door is slammed shut behind me and I am left standing like a statue in the middle of a very fancy lobby.

I glance around briefly but I don’t make a move to leave.

“Go! Now, Carmilla!”

The sudden voice from behind that same door makes me jump out of my skin and I turn to glare into the peephole before making my way back towards the elevator.

Once inside, I reach into my pocket for my phone and see that I have 4 missed calls from Laura and a text message.
Cupcake [03:57]: I’m sorry. If I did something wrong then I’m so, so sorry. You’ve been gone for hours and I just need to know that you’re safe. Please come back, Carm.

My chest constricts until my heart feels as though someone is grabbing at it tightly.

She thinks she made me upset.

She’s been waiting up for me and she’s worried.

...

She’s still awake.

I frantically press the door button, using all of my speed to get back to the dorm when I picture the incredible Laura Hollis, shrunken and scared because of me.

When I reach our door, I hear soft whimpers from inside and my hands curl at my sides.

That’s my fault.

How could I have left her like that? After everything.

I gather all the courage left in my weakened body and turn the door handle.

She is laying on my bed, hands bunched up in my favourite black hoody, quietly crying into the sleeves and this is the smallest I have ever seen her.

At the sound of the door, her head whips up and I get a brief glance at her puffy, red-rimmed eyes and tear stained cheeks before I am engulfed by her smell and find my vision blocked by a mess of blonde hair.

I topple backwards slightly at the force of her embrace and once I register the muffled sobs against my neck and the tight arms around it, I quickly wrap my arms as securely as I can around her waist and squeeze her side to try and reassure her.

A cracked and quiet voice barely reaches my ears.

“You came back.”

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I have to blink a few times before I realise that Carmilla is actually standing in our doorway and when I see her dark, swollen eyes and windswept hair, I can’t stop my body from launching itself at her and holding her as close as possible.

The smell of her and her arms around my waist bring me back to reality and I start to cry again as I realise that’s she came back when I asked. She didn’t disappear.

But then my mind remembers that she did leave after we agreed we would never. Not after my mistake. I had tried so hard and she still ran.

I suddenly push away, struggling slightly as her arms refuse to let me go.

“Let go of me, Carmilla.”

My voice sounds weak and I curse myself for being so vulnerable to her right now. I finally
manage to step away and when I look at her, she looks lost and a little broken.

My chest aches at the sight but I can’t go to her, not until I understand.

“What in the hell happened? Where did you go? Why did you leave me?”

My voice gains a little volume and she seems shocked at my outburst. My entire body is shaking and she moves a little towards me.

“Laura…”

“No! I need you to explain.” She stops in her tracks, bringing back her hand that she had started to reach out to me.

“I’m sorry. I needed time to process everything that was going on in my mind. I couldn’t be around you.”

Her eyes seem sad but her words somehow make me feel worse.

“You couldn’t be around me? ...Why? Do I annoy you that much Carmilla? Did I fuck up so badly with Danny that you can’t even stand me anymore?!!”

My words are supposed to be coming out strong but instead, they sound like cries for help.

She shakes her head and brings her hands to her temples as though she is having trouble thinking.

“No, Laura! I couldn’t have stayed around you, not after…not after I kissed you.”

The memory of it floods my brain and I dwell on it for a moment, remembering the warmth and the explosion in my chest, then I snap back to reality. She regretted it. She kissed me and then she ran because I kissed her back.

My voice turns to a whisper then and the hurt in my tone is evident.

“You ran away because I kissed you back. You couldn’t be around me. Did I repulse you that much that you changed your mind?”

Carmilla turns then and pulls at the hair at her scalp a little, seemingly frustrated, but with who, I’m not so sure.

“God Laura, no! You don’t repulse me, how can you even say that?! I would have spent hours as close to you as I could get, that’s the problem here.”

My heart skips a beat.

“You meant to kiss me?”

“No…well I guess… I don’t know Laura, alright?” She sits down on her bed and buries her head in her hands while I remain standing.

“I don’t understand. If you meant to kiss me, and I kissed you back, then why did you leave?”

Raising her head ever so slightly she answers me, voice much louder than before.

“Because I was scared! Because you are fucking terrifying. I needed to get my head clear, I needed to take a second for myself, Laura!”
I step back, shocked a little at the harsh tone and I immediately fire back.

“So, you ran because you needed space. You just kissed me, messing with my emotions and then just left because you were only thinking of yourself!”

She stands to face me now and her anger doesn’t seem to be decreasing at all. I don’t back up, determined to hear what she has to say for herself.

“You ran first, Laura! You can’t stand here and accuse me when I watched you run for 5 months!”

Her tone is angry but her eyes are sad, helpless.

“Don’t you dare! I’ve tried so damn hard!”

“Laur…”

“No! You ran because you were selfish, I ran because you were the only person I could think of!”

I’m aware of the tears that are making their way back down my face at this point but I can’t seem to stop my mouth from speaking again, my heart making the decision for me.

“I ran because I was trying to do what was best Carmilla! I ran because no matter how damn hard I’d tried, I’d fallen in love with you anyway!!”

…

Her eyes shoot to mine and my breath catches at the realisation of what I just said.

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My heart jumps into my throat. She what…

“You what…?”

Laura looks everywhere but at me and seems to start muttering to herself. She paces a little in front of me and her hands won’t stop moving.

“Oh god, oh god no. No, no, no. This wasn’t supposed to happen. You were never supposed to find out. Shit. SHIT.”

I am still stuck rooted to the ground while Laura trembles and pulls at the sleeves of my hoody.

I finally find my courage again.

“Laura. Stop.”

She pauses immediately, turning her head to look at me as slowly as she can.

“What did you just say?”

I hear her audibly gulp and she brushes frantically at the tears that won’t seem to stop flowing from her eyes.

“I…I’m sorry. I didn’t mean for it to come out. I was angry and my mind just-,”

“Laura!”
She steps the smallest bit closer to me and breaths in deeply before responding in a shaky voice.

“I started dating Danny because I’d fallen in love with you. I knew…I knew you would never want me, so I had to move on before I ruined our friendship.”

The sound of my cold heartbeat in my ears is deafening and despite the sadness in her eyes and the complete confusion in my mind, my chest swells with warmth.

“You…loved me? You ran because you loved me and thought I didn’t love you?”

The sheer thought that I couldn’t love this girl almost makes me laugh. She loved me and thought I wouldn’t feel the same way. Fuck, she loved me.

“Loved? You…something changed?”

She goes silent and my heart is screaming for her to say something, to say anything.

After what feels like an age, she lifts her gaze to mine and I feel like I’ve been punched in the chest. The emotion in her eyes isn’t anger anymore.

“Love, Carmilla.”

I feel as though I could collapse just hearing it come from her mouth. The heart I thought I had lost centuries ago is beating at a rate I never thought was possible.

“But, I knew that I could never be good enough Carm. You’re the most amazing person I’ve ever known and you’ve got so much to offer someone. I needed to bring myself back down to earth and Danny was there.”

My brain eventually catches up with her words after I realise you’ve just been staring at her for a while. I still can’t quite comprehend that this tiny, wonder of a girl, actually loves me…and has loved me for almost as long as I’ve loved her.

Suddenly I notice her sad expression again and finally, I allow myself to reach out my hand to her face. I step a little bit closer, not wanting to overwhelm her.

“Cupca- …Laura. Not good enough?” I chuckle slightly and she looks up at me, nervous. “You are the most incredible thing in my life. You are actually the most incredible thing in my three centuries of life.”

Her eyes are forming tears again and so I rush to finish what I’m saying.

“You are so much more than enough, Laura. I could never deserve someone as amazing as you by my side.”

My hand goes to slip from her face but she catches it first.

“You make me the happiest I’ve been since my mom died. You make me feel brave, smart, safe… beautiful,”

She pauses and blushes slightly.

“…loved.”

As my eyes move back to hers, she waits for a reaction. I just nod my head slightly as a new kind of tear escapes my eye.
“You-“

Before she can say anything more, I move the hand on her cheek to the back of her neck and pull her in without hesitation. Her lips meet mine and suddenly, everything clicks into place.

My other hand slips slowly around her waist to pull her closer and I feel her arms go around my neck. The kiss is slow and full of emotions that I didn’t even realise I had. Her lips move perfectly against mine and my head is spinning. Her hand slides up into my hair and pulls at the base softly earning a low groan from me.

In response, I bite gently down on her lower lip and suck to ease the pain before letting it go. A whimper in the back of her throat makes me smile.

When she feels me smiling, she reacts in kind and before long we’re both grinning too much to try and kiss anymore.

I turn to place a kiss on her cheek and leave my lips there for a few seconds before I bury my nose in the crook of her neck and breathe her in. She tightens her grip around my neck and for a few minutes we just stand there, connected.

I tug backwards a little, her arms giving me enough space to see her but not to move out of her grasp. I lean up to place a kiss on her forehead before leaning my own against it. I open my eyes to meet hers and under her gaze, my body turns to a mess of warmth and tingles. I’m helpless to stop the words.

“I love you.”
How Do I Control It?

Chapter Summary

Laura and Carmilla attempt to get used to their new found feelings.

Chapter Notes

Okay so, this one is a little longer and a little more of a tease, it’s kinda worth it though. I apologise for nothing. It was too much fun. Let me know if you want me to carry on! Enjoy x

Laura quietly chuckles and takes a step back from me, sliding her hands down from the back of my neck to rest gently on my forearms. I tilt my head in confusion and squeeze her wrist.

“Well, I wasn’t expecting that reaction,” I smile a little as she looks up at me, aware of how her laugh must have come across “there I was thinking the feeling was mutual, Cupcake.”

My tone is teasing but Laura’s eyes widen a little and she starts to run her hands up and down my arms in reassurance.

“No, no Carm. It’s just,” she grins again “I can quite honestly say I never imagined those words coming from you, or at least not aimed at me.”

Resting one hand on my shoulder and running the other through her hair, her grin fades slightly and a faraway look starts to glaze over her eyes. I watch her for a second as she seems to drift off into her own little world, not able to make out the emotion behind her expression. Content yet… troubled.

“Earth to cutie?” I whisper, so as not to jolt her out of her daydream but she doesn’t seem to register my voice. I start to feel a bit worried about her silence so I slowly lift a hand from her waist, place my index finger under her chin and gently bring her back to face me, my eyes searching hers.

“Hey.” Her voice is so soft that I feel a small tug in my chest.

“Where did you go?” I shift my hand to move a stray hair behind her ear and leave it to rest on the side of her neck. Her eyes are still a little distant and her normal goofy smile has been replaced with a thoughtful frown.

“Sorry. I just…after all the crap I put you through, well, us through. I guess I’m just questioning why you’re not running for the hills at this point.” She laughs lightly but her eyes don’t seem to reflect the same humour.

“Cupcake, listen.” Her fuzzy gaze moves back to mine and she takes a deep breath. “I was angry at
you, I was pissed that the jolly ginger giant got to be around you when she didn’t deserve it. But... more than anything, I just missed you. You were the only person I could stand in this literal hell hole and eventually I realised that was because I actually really enjoyed being near you.”

Her grin lifts into more of a smile and her eyes start to show something close to affection. I smile back, wanting desperately for her to understand what I’m saying.

“I get why you ran, cutie. Believe it or not, the reason I ran from you yesterday was because I wanted, more than anything, to kiss a girl who I think is far too good for me.”

Laura’s face morphs into one of complete bewilderment and she shakes her head.

“Carm, you’re an idiot.” She giggles softly and the carpet of warmth is draped back over my body. I poke at her shoulder, not using a very convincing hurt tone behind my words.

“Hey! We both were, I guess. I don’t think I’ll ever believe that I deserve you but if you’ll have me, I’m not going anywhere.”

Her hands go back to their rightful spot behind my neck and she lightly plays with the small tuft at the base of my scalp. I purr in response and hardly realise when my eyes slide shut.

After a minute of silence and her soft touch easing me into a dreamy lull, she stops and I open my eyes lazily to see her. She’s been watching me and a small, soft smile graces her lips. Her eyes are shimmering as she stares and when she notices that I’ve been brought back to the present, she blinks a few times, pushing back what was seemingly a few stray tears.

I move my hand back to her face and rub underneath her puffy eyes gently with the pad of my thumb, attempting to ease out any of the leftover sadness. She doesn’t close her eyes and simply moves her gaze across my face as she watches my creased brow intent on comforting her.

A small hand comes up to stop mine in its tracks and I snap my eyes to hers, wondering whether I made things better or worse.

Her look is loving and her grin is lopsided as she holds my hand.

“I’m so irrevocably in love with you...in a way I didn’t even know was possible before I ran all those months ago. Even if you did plan on going somewhere... I don’t think I’d hesitate to stop you this time. I want you here now, with me.”

My heart has swelled to twice its size and I struggle to find anything but utter adoration for her in my body. I wrap my hands back around her waist and she gets the hint, quickly moving to bury her head in my neck and her arms wrap around tightly.

After just breathing her in for a second and willing my emotions not to get the better of me, I manage to get out a response.

“My heart feels as though it’s finally beating after three centuries. I have a feeling that even if I wanted to go, my heart would remain with you. It’s found its place, Laura.”

She just tightens her hold around my neck and I slip my hands underneath the back of my hoody that she’s wearing to hold her by the waist and feel her skin.

With her warmth moving into my body and her smell surrounding me, I’ve found my bliss.

We stand like this for what must be thirty minutes before I feel her start to go limp in my arms.
Moving her gently away from me I see her head loll a little and so I pick her up and place her onto her bed, looking a lot more peaceful as to when I found her earlier.

I move to grab the yellow pillow from my own bed and feel a hand around my wrist. A half-asleep voice breaks through her covers.

“Stay, Carm.”

“Wasn’t going anywhere, cutie.”

I clamber in behind her, pillow now resting under my head, and move towards her back. She brings my arm around her waist with a limp hand and sighs as if to signal that she’s ready to finally sleep.

I rest my nose on the side of her neck and breathe her in and out until I’m joining her in the land of dreamers.

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I don’t think I’ve ever met anyone who sleeps as much as Carmilla does. For someone who has no real need for her 8 hours, you would think that she would use her time in other ways but, nope! I rolled over this morning and had to stop a screech from escaping my mouth before it woke her, I hadn’t been expecting to have her face as close to mine as humanly possible first thing in the morning.

Getting up had been…a serious effort on my part. She had no creases on her forehead, no tiny frown on her face like usual, just a content expression as she slept like the living dead. I had managed, after several minutes of struggling, to get free from her persistent grip on my waist and I got up to make breakfast as some of us have revision classes to attend still.

I’m quietly off in my own world waiting for my toast, when I hear the light pad of feet and a weight on my shoulder.

“Why?”

I giggle at the gruff voice from behind me and the feel of her chin moving against my collar bone.

“Why what? Good morning to you too, by the way.”

She turns her head lazily and nuzzles her nose into the space behind my ear in the form of a greeting and then huffs out another response.

“Why are you awake? It’s before ten.”

I move my toast from the toaster to my plate and reach up for the peanut butter. Seeing an opportunity, Carm places a gentle hand on my now exposed hip and draws circles, not moving her chin from its position.

“I have my last journalism study group with the 9am tutor, I have to go or I’ll end up missing out on something important knowing my luck!”

She chuckles lowly and reaches over for a piece of my toast, ignoring my cry of protest.

“Fair enough Cupcake, will you be gone long?”

“An hour, maybe two.”
She groans and flops back onto my bed and swallows a bite of MY toast before continuing.

“Well, I guess I should go and study now you’ve woken me up.”

My mouth gapes open slightly and I start to argue.

“Hey, I di-“

“I’m gonna go to the library, attempt to get some last minute notes done.”

I give up trying to go up against her and instead simply walk over to the bed to glance down at her where she’s laying. She eyes me carefully and reaches up a hand to play with my fingers.

“You sure I can’t convince you to come back and sleep more?”

Although there is nothing I would rather do than crawl back around her and nod off, I want to try and ease into this, maybe a few hours apart will help. I squeeze her hand and let go slowly.

“Sorry ‘cupcake’ but it’s a must. I’ll see you later though?”

She smiles a little and nods, bringing my hand back so she can kiss it lightly before dropping it. I grab my bag and my last piece of toast, yelling a muffled ‘bye’ on my way out of the door.

After a completely useless study group, I’m making my way to the campus café to meet Laf and Perry for a quick catch up before Perry’s shift.

I’m sure the content of my lecture was super interesting and informative but I wouldn’t know. The entire time my mind was replaying last night and this morning, like my brain and body were protesting the fact that I’d left that dorm. My only thoughts were “wouldn’t it be great to nap with Carmilla right now?”, “it would be cool to watch a movie with Carmilla now” or “I could be making out with Carmilla right now, idiot”. Not so helpful in the focusing department.

I get to the café and Perry starts frantically waving from the seats she managed to score out on the terrace.

“Hey guys, how’re things?” I take my place opposite Laf and pick up the mug of hot chocolate they got me in preparation.

“How’re things? Seriously, dude? You go AWOL for 24 hours, no texts or anything, after I helped you plan the ultimate date?!”

Laf is significantly more pissed than I thought they would be, I’d been so caught up the whirlwind that was the last day and a half that I had forgotten to let them know.

“Shoot, sorry! It’s been…an interesting time. Also, definitely wasn’t a date!”

“Shit, things go badly? Sorry frosh.”

Perry places a hand on my shoulder prepared to comfort but I smile genuinely at her and quickly reassure them both.

“At first, yes. Things escalated and we argued over feelings but…things have resolved themselves.”
Laf looks at me quizzically and raises an eyebrow as if waiting for me to elaborate.

“So…I may have accidentally told her I was in love with her.” Laf’s eyes widen comically “But after some rambling and a bit of communication, she said it back sooo…”

“Oh honey, how wonderful!” Perry is beaming from ear to ear and Laf gives me a quick wink.

“Thanks guys. Nothing else has really happened except a few kisses, I don’t want to rush anything. The last 24 hours has left my brain in a mess. All I can think about is her but... I’m attempting to leave a little distance between us.”

I take a long sip of my cocoa and watch as Laf makes an unimpressed face.

“Dude, you spent months pining over the girl, dated Danny in the fallout, then went through a week of hell to try again and now you won’t touch her?!”

“Lafontaine! Leave Laura alone, she has her reasons!” Perry rubs my shoulder and glares at Laf, causing them to shrink slightly.

“Laf’s right in a way. I guess I’m worried that if give all of myself this quickly…I won’t be able to handle her leaving again.”

I wring my hands and glance up at a sympathetic Perry.

“From what I’ve seen, and from what Lafontaine has told me about you two, I don’t think she’ll be going anywhere soon, sweetheart.”

My mind runs back to Carmilla’s speech and a calm comes over my mind.

“Yeah, maybe not. Anyway…I have to get going, research cramming and last minute stress is calling. Thanks for the hot chocolate Per, I’ll text you guys later! We need a movie night soon.”

I stand to grab my bag and give them both a small wave before heading the rest of the way back to the dorm.

I’m sat on my bed flicking through a research paper for a measly 5 minutes before my phone buzzes on the headboard behind me.

Carm [12:06]: That leech of a boy is here again. It’s been an hour and he has passed my table at least 20 times. Please come and save me before I rip his tiny bug head off his body.

[12:07]: Now Carm, be nice! I’m sure he just has a little crush on you, who can blame him? ;)

Carm [12:07]: Cute. But not helping.

[12:08]: Sorry! Just come back and study, I’m reading anyway. I won’t disturb you.

Carm [12:09]: Oh, if only you knew, cutie. I’ll be there in 5.

I throw my phone to the end of my bed and settle back against my pillows to read.

Carm comes in through the door a little while later and collapses onto the desk chair, books in hand and small bags under her eyes.

We simply sit in silence for about an hour, no words needed, just the comforting presence of the other while we’re working. I actually find myself getting through my first research paper quicker
than ever. It feels just like the old days.

I shuffle to dig around in my bag for the next one. Carm turns at the noise and eyes me for a while. When I eventually pull the pages out and start to relax back into the bed, I notice her gaze on me. Her eyes are intense until she realises I’m watching her too. I smile softly.

“Hi there.”

“Hey, Cupcake. You doing okay?”

I hum in response and grin at her. I look back to my paper but I can still feel her watching me. Determined to get more work done, I stare intently at the page and try to get my eyes to focus on the sentences in front of me. Her eyes seem to be burning holes in my head and I can feel the heat creep up into my body under her gaze.

She picks up her book but doesn’t turn the chair back, preferring instead to face me. I can see her out of the corner of my eye as she places the book between her bent knees, not really reading. I try my best not to look at her, knowing how flustered she’ll make me if I do.

I manage ten minutes. Ten minutes and I can feel myself literally sweating. What is she doing?! I go to stand.

“You know what,” I start a little shakily as she looks up at me, “I’m going to take a shower, I feel like I deserve one after that paper.”

I rush through the bathroom door before she can respond.

Yeah, a shower. A damn cold one.

I should never have come back to the dorm. I managed an hour of studying before thoughts of the girl laying behind me took over my brain. Ever since she left this morning I’ve been thinking about her. Is this what we were missing out on the whole time? The desire to be with her all the damn time, hating be apart from her, the itching in my hands because I need to touch her somehow.

This is ridiculous. I’ve never been so unable to control my emotions.

And now she’s in the shower. Good god, she’s in the shower. Naked.

I just spent hours in the library wanting nothing more than to be back in bed with Laura, innocently enough. And now…well the images are not so innocent.

Before my mind can get carried away with the visuals, Laura emerges from the bathroom, wet hair falling into her eyes and dressed…in a towel.

My mouth goes completely dry.

“Sorry! Forgot my dressing gown.” Her face is bright red as I’m watching her and she practically sprints back into the bathroom.

I groan and fall back into the chair, its back creaking in protest. I pick my book back up in an attempt to distract myself and when Laura eventually comes back out, she just moves over to her bed to start drying her hair.
I lean over the desk, desperately trying to concentrate on the words and not on the fact that my…
love interest…girlfriend…whatever she is now, is naked under a fluffy dressing gown a few feet
away from me.

And I haven’t been close to her in hours.

Knowing she feels the same about me now, it’s making it increasingly more difficult not to lose
myself in her at every chance I get. I guess my body feels as though it should be making up for lost
time. It doesn’t help that now knowing her feelings just makes her even more attractive, if that was
possible.

Official torture. Great.

The hairdryer stops suddenly and I see Laura’s reflection in our window as she turns around and
leans back, picking up that damn paper again and starting to read. Her still damp hair framing her
face and her dressing gown not covering an awful lot.

She is actually trying to kill me further.

I give it about ten minutes before I finally give up. Turning around and letting my eyes drag from
her bare feet, up her tiny legs, over the unfairly low opening of her dressing gown and up her neck
to her beautifully concentrated face. God fucking damn it.

I leave my book on the desk and quietly make my way over to the foot of her bed. She doesn’t see
me, clearly now invested in what she’s reading.

I place my hands down and bring my knees up one by one onto the bed. Slowly, I crawl towards
her, staying out of her line of sight by hiding behind the paper.

She feels the shift on her mattress and glances over her page to see what it is. When her eyes meet
mine, I smirk at her and her eyes widen.

“Carm…what are you…what are you doing?” her voice cracks a little and she tries to clear her
throat.

I lean down and lay my weight on top of her legs. Looking up at her with innocent eyes but a
slightly evil grin, I just stare and rub my thumbs along her sides.

“Nothing. You carry on, I just can’t be bothered to read anymore. I’m quite comfy riiiight here.”

She shudders when I move my thumb to stroke where gown meets thigh.

“I bet.” Her voice is low and weak

After a few minutes of just enjoying her skin, I feel her move. I look up at her from where my head
rests on her stomach and I’m met with dark eyes. She’s put her work down.

“Paper getting boring, cutie?” I try to control my tone as it threatens to waver under her watchful
eyes.

“Carm?” Her voice has lowered to a level I didn’t know she had and the heat that normally covers
my body when I’m around her, all pools to my stomach.

“Yeah Laura?”

I’m lifted onto my elbows and my breath has quickened embarrassingly.
She reaches a hand down to the neck of my t-shirt and pulls a little. I take the hint and move forward.

She meets me halfway and kisses me languidly. I completely melt inside at the feel of her tongue inside my mouth, running along the back of my teeth and wrapping itself around mine.

I growl without realising it, causing her to smile and bite down softly on my lip.

Like a light bulb going off in my brain, I remember her lack of clothing. Without warning, my hand moves from the side of neck, down the middle of her chest slowly, relishing the heat of her skin underneath me. I reach the knot in the ties of her dressing gown and pull away from her slightly.

Breathing heavily, she gazes up at me with heavily-lidded eyes. A small nod of silent permission and she’s pulling me back in to connect our lips.

I pull at one tie and feel the material fall away slightly, my hand meets warm stomach and I pull back to look down. My heart is in my throat at the sight of her form under me and as my eyes meet hers again, my entire body is on fire.
How Does It Feel?

Chapter Summary

Two idiots finally realising what they've been missing.

Chapter Notes

Okay, so this is literally just smut. I'm no prude but writing smut for the first time is a little awkward so bear with it. Enjoy and let me know what you think. x

--- signals POV change

Carmilla’s body is shaking all over, I can feel her hand running over my now bare stomach and her fingers are trembling. My heart is pounding in my ears as I kiss her and I take a second to pull away, concerned that her movements mean something I’d rather not think about.

My lips separate from hers gently but I only move a few inches away from her face, my hand cupping the side and a thumb stroking her cheek. She doesn’t open her eyes and my concern only grows.

“Carm?”

Her eyes open quickly and the darkness I’m met with leaves me speechless.

“Mm?” She hums in response to me, clearly unaware of her shaking.

I glance down to where her legs are between mine and her hand is still placed on my ribs. I attempt to clear my throat and raise my eyes again.

“You’re…you’re shaking.”

She lifts her hands from me and brings them to her face so she can see for herself. Her eyes widen slightly at the force of the vibrations running through her arms and she tilts her head down, pulling her hands back with her and sitting up so that she is straddling my hips, a knee either side of me. She puts her hands behind her back and keeps her gaze on my stomach. My heart begins to sink from my chest to my feet and I try to make my voice as strong as I can before speaking.

It still cracks

“Carm…do you not…I understand if you don’t want to.”

She raises her head then, a crease forming between her eyebrows.

“If you don’t want…me. I’m not exactly model material…I know that.” I can’t look at her as I begin again
“If you want to go back…I get it you know. Danny didn’t seem to wan-“

“Danny was a fucking idiot.”

Her harsh tone interrupts me and I immediately look back to her. The whites of her eyes have almost been swallowed completely by black and her hands reach back out to hover above my waist, she’s still unsure.

She sighs and instead moves them to rest on either side of my face. Her frown turns into a small, insecure smile and I breathe in slowly.

“Cupcake, I’m shaking because I don’t know what to do.”

I almost laugh at that and she catches my small chuckle that appears before I can stop it.

“I’m sorry, sorry! It’s just…I have an infamous seductress above me and I’m struggling to understand how you don’t know what to do. Surely, you know better than most.”

Her small smile disappears and her eyes glaze over as she speaks quietly.

“No, I mean… I have so many emotions running through my veins…I have no idea how to handle it. I want nothing more than to be with you in every sense right now, but it’s still surreal to me that I get to experience you like this.”

“Carm…I hate to ruin your fantasy but I don’t think I’ll live up to expectations.” I try to laugh it off and forget about the times Danny would ignore me after sex, leaving me to feel unwanted.

“Laura,” She chuckles and shakes her head, moving a hand back to grip my waist tightly.

“Just touching your bare skin is making me shake… what terrifies me is what you could do to me if I keep going.”

I want to argue again but then I notice how serious her expression is and how her hand is still vibrating against my hip. She looks at me and I feel it in the pit of my stomach. Her voice is lower than I've ever heard it.

“I want you. More than I think I’ve ever wanted anything.”

I can feel my eyes burning and my breath is in my throat so I do the only thing my mind can think of and pull her in by her neck.

She kisses me back without hesitation and my breath comes back into my chest like I’ve been hit by a truck. I feel her tongue run against my bottom lip and I let her in, sinking further into the bed at the feel of it.

Sensing that she is still hesitant to touch me, I lean up onto my elbows, mouth still attached to hers. I manage to shrug my dressing gown off, one shoulder at a time and realise that it’s going to be a little more difficult to remove it from underneath me.

Before I can move again, Carmilla pulls away and smirks at my attempt to subtly get rid of my only clothing. She wraps her left arm completely around my lower back and lifts me up so easily that I squeak a little.

I forgot she was stupidly strong. This should be interesting.

Without moving her eyes from mine, she pulls the garment from under me and pushes it onto the
floor below.

Lowering me back down slowly, she follows me and attaches herself to my neck. The feel of her tongue making a path from my collarbone to my earlobe makes my breaths turn ragged and I lift a hand to hold her head in place. I feel her chuckle deeply against my skin and scrape her now protruding fangs across the same path.

She could kill me now and I would have no complaints.

Her fingers start to move slowly up from my waist to the top of my ribcage and I suddenly realise that I am the only one not wearing any clothes. I think back to Carmilla’s shaking and speech and make my decision.

I run my own hand up from the waist of her leather pants, over her toned stomach and around the side of her t-shirt to start slipping one arm out of its sleeve. She catches on and once both are freed, allows me to lift it over her head.

She grins at me and the butterflies turn to lava. Throwing her t-shirt onto the floor with my left hand, I use my right to slide down her back from her hair and snap open her bra.

Removing it fully with my left hand, she raises an eyebrow at me in surprise and I manage to pull off a wink before pulling her back into me.

Her bites on my lip bring a soft moan out of my throat and I bring my hands around from her back to touch her. Something snaps in my brain at the feel of her skin, real under my hands, and I move to sit up, meaning she is now effectively in my lap, her chest in my eye line. I move forward and take one nipple into my mouth without warning, bringing a hand up to massage the other.

I hear a gasp from above me and smile around the bud before taking it between my teeth. What sounds like a growl erupts from her mouth and I move my attention to the other.

After a few minutes of messing with Carmilla, I pull on her knees and push backwards so that she’s underneath me. I reach for the zip in her leather pants and pull it down, lips now back on hers. I pull away to bring them down her legs and with one last look of understanding between us, they’re gone, along with the tiny black underwear that she might as well just not have worn.

After depositing them on the floor, I look back at her and have to stop because I feel winded.

She is absolutely flawless and yet under my gaze, she looks almost bashful and I am overwhelmed all of a sudden with adoration for this woman.

I can’t move.

-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-

After a torturous undressing, I’m waiting for Laura to move but she’s just staring at my body. As much as I enjoy being admired, especially by someone as incredible as her, I’m starting to feel a little uncomfortable so I adjust and her eyes suddenly move to mine.

She looks like she’s about to cry and I’m overcome with panic. Maybe she’s too nervous, maybe I rushed her.

“Cupcake, hey. Hey, what’s wrong?” I’m sat up now, my arms wrapped around her bare waist and one hand cautiously rubbing her lower back.
She quickly wipes at her eyes before any tears fall and smiles at me.

“No Carm, I’m happy…I think. It just hit me that you’re here and this is happening and it’s not just my mind playing tricks on me an-“

I place one hand carefully over her mouth and she stops, eyes softening and her shoulders relax.

“Cutie, as much as I love you and your rambles, how about I show you that I’m not just in your mind?”

Laura smiles and nods, leaning forward to capture my lips in a kiss.

I hold onto her back as I lay her down again. Moving my mouth down her neck and across her chest as slowly as I can, enjoying the taste of her skin.

After paying due attention to her breasts and relishing in the sound of her erratic breathing above me, I lick my way down her stomach to where she needs me the most.

I wait for a moment, gently pushing her legs a little further apart and taking in the sight before me.

“Carm…please.”

I need no further instruction.

I slowly lick through her folds and groan at the taste. Suddenly I have a feeling that my normal menu will change from here on out.

Unable to pull myself away now that I’ve experienced it, Laura grabs onto my head, fingers tugging on my hair at the scalp and pushing me closer.

Moving my focus from long and exploring strokes, I tug at her clit with my teeth lightly before sucking.

“Fuu-uuck, Carm.”

Her hand grips harder in my hair and her hips buck upwards.

Laying my hands across the flat base of her stomach, I hold her hips down, not letting her move.

Lowering slightly, I slide inside of her with my tongue and a low guttural sound comes out of her mouth.

Feeling the heat pool in my stomach, I eventually move back to her clit and refuse to move. I lift her legs over my shoulders, and run my hands down her thighs, up across her abs to reach all of her.

The combination has Laura thrashing a little above me and she has stopped holding back on the noise.

As her moans become more high pitched, I can feel her start to shake. In a last minute move, I pull away.

“CARMILLA!”

I get a glare from the beauty and I wink up at her. A short slap to the back of my head with her hand and a cry of protest from me, then my lips are back wrapped up where they belong.
One scrape of my teeth and she’s coming undone. Back arched off the bed and a strangled cry coming from the throat. Her thighs are shaking around my head and I watch her. She looks incredible.

I bring her down slowly and lower her legs from around my neck. I kiss my way back up to her mouth and lazily let her taste herself.

She moans quietly into the kiss and when I pull away she has her eyes closed.

“You still with me, Cupcake?”

“Hmm?”

I laugh at her inability to form a sentence and pepper kisses over her face until I hear her chuckle softly.

She opens her eyes and stares at me with something glimmering softly in her eyes.

“I want to say that it’s your turn now but…I honestly don’t think I can move any of my limbs. At all.”

I grin at her and kiss her softly before winding a hand into her messy hair.

“Sleep, Laura. We’ll have plenty of time for that later.”

She smiles sleepily at me before shuffling closer and resting her head on my collarbone, nose tucked in behind my ear.

She mumbles before placing a small kiss on my neck and dozing off.

“Love you.”

Leaving my hand in her hair, I roll both of us so that I’m lying on my back and smile at the ceiling.

“I love you too.”

Laura is still asleep after a few hours and it’s about five o’clock when I decide to sneak out of bed and try to work, seeing as I got about half of what I was supposed to do done earlier.

I ease out from under Laura and replace my body with a pillow. Pulling my t-shirt and underwear back on, I watch her as she shifts a little in her sleep.

Her hair is all over the place and her mouth is letting out small, quiet snores but she still looks amazing. Smooth, tanned skin and a peaceful expression leave me staring at her, forgetting what I got up to do.

I resist the urge to get back in next to her and wander over to the desk to fire up the laptop.

About an hour goes by without interruptions and I’m almost halfway through a practice paper when I feel hands on my shoulders. They slide down the front of my t-shirt and wrap around my chest, a familiar weight settles next to my face.

“The bed is not nearly as comfortable without you in it.”
Her voice is still hoarse from her yelling and it makes me shudder slightly in her arms.

“Well well, so nice of you to join us here in the land of the hard-workers.”

I swivel in my chair and grin at her offended expression.

“I work hard and you know it. It’s not my fault you exhaust me, and I’m not talking about the great sex.”

I ignore her insult and pull at her hips so she’s closer to me.

“Great sex, huh? Lucky you.”

It’s then that I realise that she’s still naked and I have to fight the urge to bring her down onto my lap. Instead, I lean forward and place a soft kiss just below her belly button, stroking her hips with my thumbs.

“I only have the last bit to do but then I’ll come back, or we can make dinner. All that ‘great sex’ must have made you hungry.”

She rolls her eyes and it reminds me of myself.

“Ugh fiiiine, hurry up though. I’m starving.”

She drops a kiss to my head before moving over to the kitchen to get a glass of water. I watch her walk away and almost leap from my chair after her, but manage to turn back to the screen.

Damn stupid trillionth degree. Why am I doing it again?

I don’t hear any noise from behind me for about ten minutes and assume Laura has dozed off again. As I’m writing out an answer to one of the last questions, I feel the desk shift. Confused, I look around but nothing has fallen. I assume it’s a movement from someone slamming a door or moving heavily downstairs, so I carry on.

Before my fingers can reach the keys, I feel a jolt of electricity run straight to my core. There is a tongue…on my thigh…moving…

I move back in the chair and look down.

Laura is kneeling between my legs, on the floor and looking up at me with something in her eyes that makes my heart stop.

“Cupcake, what are you doing?”

She runs her hands up my thighs, placing a small kiss on the inside of each one, before hooking her fingers into my thong and pulling it down over my knees to the wood floor below.

“I told you, I’m starving.”

If it still worked, my heart would have given out at that moment.

-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.

Carm goes to speak but before she can, I move my mouth to her centre and lick generously. She chokes on the words she was going to say and a hand falls to the top of my head.
I bring my hands to her back and lower them to her ass, pulling her forward slightly on the chair. She doesn’t object and simply puts her other hand on the desk to steady herself.

I keep my hands where they are and grab at the flesh underneath them while circling my tongue upwards. Her growls are turning into whines as I suck relentlessly where she needs me the most.

Playing her at her own game, I slow down with my movements, rewarded with a louder whine in protest.

As she goes to complain, I lift my eyes to her and she must sense my gaze because a second later her eyes look down to meet mine. She opens her mouth but stops short as she realises where my hand is going.

As I gently move inside, I watch her face, eyes closing slowly. I curl my fingers gradually and move my mouth back to where it wants to be.

“Lauraaa” her low moan stirs something inside me but I refuse to lose my concentration

I slide back out again and she whimpers at the loss, cutting herself off when I replace one with two and suck a little harder.

She moans loudly and her fingernails scrape at my head.

My other hand moves to her stomach and I can feel a thin sheen of sweat over her.

I slow my movements again, instead making them deliberate, punctuating each one with a curl at her g-spot. She cries out each time and I watch in adoration as her mouth drops open.

As I pick up my pace again, I feel her start to tighten around my fingers.

“Frosh, did you- Oh hey Carmilla, have you seen Laura?”

Oblivious to Carmilla’s state and the fact I’m under the table, Laf stands in the doorway.

A voice a little more high pitched and flustered leaves Carm’s mouth.

“No! No idea! Leave please, lots of…work.”

“Jeez fine, tell her I’m looking for her if you see her.”

The door clicks shut behind them and a heavy sigh comes from above me.

Her head lolls forward and she opens her eyes.

“Laf is looking for you.”

I grin at her and immediately return to what I was doing.

A shout erupts from her mouth and I shake my head to tug harder at her clit. A few more curls and I feel her clench before she cries out and bucks her hips into my face. After leisurely riding it out, she slumps in the chair.

I slowly pull out and clean my fingers before wheeling her chair back.

She registers the movement and opens her eyes lazily to watch me. I sit on her lap and wrap my arms around her neck, resting them on the back of the chair.
“Thanks for letting me know.”

I lean down and kiss her languidly as she chuckles softly.

I could definitely get used to this.
A drunken Danny suggests she's not quite as cool with it all as Laura had thought.

Sooo, I had intended on ending the story once the smut was done but I had a few more small ideas and might roll with them. Let me know what you think cos if you enjoy this one I might carry on! Thaaanks x

--- signals POV change

“Pleeease Carm, we don’t even have to stay the whole night, I just want to go for an hour or two to celebrate with everyone!”

Exams are finally over. After last week’s dramatics, Laura and I are finally free from stress and I’ve been looking forward to plenty of (naked) days in bed with her.

She has other plans. The science nerd informed Laura that the Zetas are throwing a bonfire party to celebrate the end of exams and obviously, she is now dying to drag me. Forgive me, but I’m not exactly desperate to spend the evening surrounded by sweaty, rowdy, drunk frat boys.

Laura is currently pacing the dorm, attempting to persuade me into going. So far, she’s changed into just one of her giant Buffy t-shirts to try and distract me, promised me a fresh blood supply from Laf’s lab and told me I can keep her yellow pillow when she visits home.

That particular plan backfired when she suddenly remembered she’d forgotten to mention her little trip to me.

“How many times do I have to apologise for that, we weren’t speaking when I told Dad I’d come back next week! You know I would rather stay here with you!”

I’m sat on the kitchen counter munching through a cookie that Laura let me have, albeit reluctantly, in order to try and twist my arm.

“How many times do I have to apologise for that, we weren’t speaking when I told Dad I’d come back next week! You know I would rather stay here with you!”

She looks at me pleadingly and comes to rest her hands on my knees. Her puppy dog eyes are frustratingly effective but I manage to keep my resolve.

“Then you should just stay here with me…”

Her frown deepens and I cup her face to run my thumb over her dimple, still grinning at my restraint.
“Carm, I just want to celebrate for a while with my friends. I know they exhaust you but I’ll be there…that helps a little doesn’t it?”

I’m well aware that I can tolerate just about any situation as long as Laura is by my side but my visions for the weekend had been considerably different.

Her frown turns into a pout and I flick her bottom lip with my thumb, trying to get her to smile instead. She doesn’t let up and eventually, her expression starts to make my chest ache a little so, naturally, I give in.

“Fine!”

She beams at me, her pout and sad eyes quickly forgotten.

“But we are staying a maximum of two hours and if you leave me with the ginger squad or one of those gigantesque sweat machines, I will leave without you.”

Her beam doesn’t falter and she inches up on her toes slowly, waiting until I break and smile back before kissing me softly.

I pull away and slide off the countertop to head for the shower, tapping her butt as I walk past.

“You owe me a pillow, Sundance.”

She traces her fingers in the shape of a cross over her heart and smiles at me.

I was clearly never going to win this argument.

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Fifteen minutes later and I’m stepping out of the shower, grabbing one of Laura’s towels to wrap around me before pulling the door open and stepping back into our room.

Laura is nowhere to be seen but the wardrobe seems to be spitting out a dozen t-shirts and dresses.

“Why do I have NOTHING to wear?! This is stupid.” She’s on her knees in front of the doors, frantically searching through an assortment of animal print jumpers and Dr Who themed merchandise.

“I don’t know... I’d say you look pretty good in what you’re wearing.”

Hearing my drawl, Laura looks up, about to scold me and undoubtedly roll her eyes, but her words catch in her throat and I suddenly remember I’m wearing a towel, with my hair dripping onto the floor below.

She stands, gathering herself before stepping closer and playing with the hem of the only thing covering me. A shy grin graces her lips and I can’t decide whether to be turned on or enamoured by her.

“I’ll wear the t-shirt if you wear this…” her eyes look up to meet mine and I try not to get lost in those hazel orbs.

“As tempting as that is, there will be other people present so we should probably find some clothes, cutie.”

I lean down teasingly and kiss underneath her ear, enjoying her shiver in reaction before moving
“Just borrow something of mine if you can’t pick something, they always look better on you anyway.”

“I beg to differ, but thanks, Carm.” She comes to rummage through my clothes until she eventually finds something remotely colourful.

I pull my leather pants on over a black bodice with a criss-cross back and chuck on my boots. After a quick makeup application in our now-messy bathroom, I make my way back towards the door to reach for my leather jacket.

I stop in my tracks and admire the view in front of me. Waiting against the door is my usually adorable girlfriend, clad in my black ripped jeans, heeled booties and a blue, skin tight tank.

She is moving her thumbs quickly over her phone screen, probably letting the leprechauns know that we’re on our way, failing to notice as I approach her slowly.

By the time she registers that I’m back in the room, I have a hand against the door and I’m gazing down at her, about an inch from her face.

“I told you, you look damn good in my clothes.”

A blush covers her neck and cheeks as she tries to grin in response.

“Cupcake, I’d advise you to open that door before I change my mind and you’re pressed against it.”

She takes a second to stare at me, breathing slightly quicker than before, before turning abruptly and leading me out of our dorm to the stairs.

---

The bonfire is still fairly mellow when Carm and I finally arrive.

We may have stopped a few times along the way…she just looks really good in those stupid leather pants!

I immediately spot a sea of orange and tug on Carmilla’s hand to direct her, rewarded only with a slight growl. She manages to swipe a few beers from a table as we pass and opens one with her elbow before handing it to me. I simply raise an impressed eyebrow at her and kiss her gently on the cheek in thanks.

“Frosh! You came! Broody one, welcome.” Laf nods in acknowledgement at Carmilla and she lifts her hand in a small wave before planting her butt in the seat next to mine around the huge fire pit.

“That thing seems…aggressive. Do the gangly bros know what they’re doing with it?” She seems more amused than concerned and leans back to place an arm lightly around my waist.

“We hope so, there haven’t been any casualties yet.” Laf chuckles and Perry swiftly slaps them on the arm.

“Don’t assume the worst Lafontaine, I’m sure Kirsch has everything under control.”

Just as Perry finishes her sentence, a cape-wearing Kirsch throws something into the pit causing the flames to rise high into the sky and a few nearby girls shriek.
“Yeah Curly Sue, really seems that way.” Carmilla laughs with Laf and the conversation turns to exams.

After a few exam horror stories and a tale involving Laf, a raccoon and some damages to the science labs, the yard is packed full of people. Carmilla is still sat comfortably against my side and turns to face me.

She leans her head down slowly and kisses my bare shoulder, a shy smile appearing on my face. She mumbles something against my skin and can feel the goose bumps on my arm.

“Do you want another drink, Cupcake?” I shake my head slightly and she narrows her eyes at me in wonder. I’m quick to reassure her.

“I just don’t feel like drinking much tonight, I’d rather spend some sober time with you when we get back.”

She gives me a genuine smile and leans up to press her lips against my cheek. They stay there for a few seconds and my body manages to feel even warmer in front of the bonfire.

She whispers an “ok” in my ear and suddenly a violent barfing noise comes from my not-so-subtle friend.

“If you two are quite done being nauseatingly sweet, we should go and watch the beer pong. Summer Soc girls versus the Zeta dudes, my money’s on the ladies.”

I glance to Carm and she seems fairly content so we slowly stand and wander over to the chaos that is the beer pong table. Students are surrounding either side and there is a lot of aggressive cheering, for which team I can’t figure out.

Laf finds a log seat close enough for us to still see what’s going on, so we clamber up and eventually, I make out a very excited Theo chanting at one of the girls to down her drink.

“Ahh, the mature and educated students of Silas.” Carm drawls sarcastically next to me and I let out a small giggle.

The next Summer is called forward to take her shot and I tense slightly when Danny makes her way through the crowd. Carm must feel it because she brings me closer to her and slips a hand underneath my tank top to rest it against the dip of my back.

“D-bear, you don’t stand a chance!” Kirsch is bright red with excitement and can’t seem to keep his feet still. Danny just looks amused as she lines up her shot and takes it, sinking it into one of the cups in the back row.

The Summers erupt into cheers as Kirsch solemnly chugs his beer and Danny’s eyes scan the crowd before landing on me. She winks and turns back to her friends, joining them as they high five her and offer her a shot. Something about her look scares me and I suddenly feel as though we may not be quite as amicable as I’d thought. My body feels cold and unusual and Carmilla’s circles on my back are the only thing keeping me grounded. Her soft words break me out of my thoughts.

“You wanna go dance, creampuff?” I turn to face her and she’s smiling gently at me, eyes kind. I press a chaste kiss to her lips and hop down from the log, pulling her with me to the dancefloor, trying to shrug off any unpleasant feeling Danny left in my chest.

A few upbeat songs have me and Laf dancing around like idiots while Carm watches with a grin plastered on her face. My body starts to feel tired as the songs slow a little and Carmilla makes her
way over to me, wrapping her arms smoothly around my middle from behind and placing a loving kiss on the side of my head.

“Looks like someone danced themselves out. You feeling okay?”

I hold her arms in place with my own and lean back against her, enjoying the way all of my curves fit perfectly against hers.

“I may have gotten carried away. This is nice though, don’t move please.” She chuckles at the blissful tone in my voice and just tightens her hold on me, brushing her nose behind my ear and nipping at the skin causing me to hum.

A few more songs go by before I start to wish we were just back in the dorm, curled up on my bed and talking about random crap until I inevitably fall asleep against Carm’s stomach. I turn in her arms and her eyes move from glazed over and content to focus on me.

“I think we’ve had enough fun. Can we go and say bye to Laf and Per then go home please.” I lean up and rub my nose against hers, grinning as she scrunches her brow but lets me do it anyway.

“Of course, I’ll get your jacket and go find them. Stay put, oh tiny one.”

Knowing her terms of endearment are not meant patronisingly, I smile at her and squeeze once more before letting her go and watching her saunter away.

I’m enjoying my view of her perfectly sculpted ass when a pair of legs get in the way.

“So, you and Vampira huh? A match made in fucking heaven!”

Danny.

She’s looming over me and can’t seem to stand up straight, clearly, she’s knocked back a few more shots since beer pong.

“Danny, leave it. Please.”

“No, no, I’m just saying. You two make an adorable couple! Her not giving a shit about you and you tolerating her bad attitude, it’s sweet, really.”

She’s slurring her words and the smell of alcohol on her breath fills my nostrils in seconds.

“Just enjoy yourself, Dan, we didn’t come here to make you uncomfortable. I thought we were okay?”

Chuckling humourlessly and stepping a little bit closer, she hiccups before whispering

“Well, maybe if you use her the way you used me, she’ll run for the hills and I’ll have another shot in the sack, hey Hol-“

She’s stopped midway as her head is yanked backwards, her mouth agape and a hand attached to her ponytail.

“I suggest you leave my girlfriend the fuck alone before I shove my foot so far up your ass, you’ll feel it in your skull.”

Carm’s mouth is as close to Danny’s ear as she can manage and she lets go of her hair to push her backwards, immediately coming to my side.
“Oh, the knight in shining pants! How ironic!”

Danny rubs the back of her head and stumbles before smirking in our direction.

“Watch it, Xena. We’re leaving, maybe you can think about maturing a little when you’ve sobered up.”

We move to head towards the door before Danny shouts out after us

“Funny how she thinks she’s got you now Hollis, after months of you saying you couldn’t stand her and hated how she latched onto you! Pathetic!”

I freeze and glance sideways to Carmilla who has stopped in her tracks. She turns back and grabs Danny by the collar before speaking harshly.

“Insult her one more time and I won’t hesitate to come after you.”

She shoves Danny away and turns back, stomping through the front door and out onto the path back to central campus.

Something tells me those comments didn’t go unnoticed.

I run down the steps and start catching up to Carm who seems to be seething slightly.

“Carm, wait! Please look at me.”

I almost crash into her as she stops suddenly and turns on her heel to face me.

“Did you mean those things? You couldn’t stand me, you hated that I wanted to be close to you?”

She may be scowling but the look in her eyes shows heartbreak and my chest aches for her.

“God, no! Carm, no. I said those things because I was trying to convince myself I didn’t need you. Danny always thought there was something between us and it just helped to avoid any arguments with her.”

I grab at her hands and bring them to my chest, holding them in place over my heart and lean up to try and meet her eyes.

“You were my best friend Laura, are my best friend, you weren’t tired of me?”

Her voice is dejected and I squeeze at her hands, bringing them to my lips to kiss her palms lovingly.

“I could never be tired of you, I could spend my entire life without leaving your side once and I would be perfect.”

Her defeated expression lifts into a small smile and I wrap my arms around her neck, bringing her as close to me as possible.

“Carm, I’m so in love with you that I don’t know what to do with myself.” I laugh lightly and she leans her forehead against mine

“So…you’re not going anywhere then?” her voice is quiet against my lips

“Only to our dorm, with you…or anywhere with you for that matter.”
She closes the gap between us and softly kisses me, pulling me in further with a hand behind my neck. She sucks gently on my lower lip before pulling back.

“Our dorm will do, for now, I’ve been admiring your ass in those jeans for three hours and I’m about two seconds away from admiring it outside of those jeans.”

Laura is writhing against our door, my lips against her neck and my hands down the back of her jeans, gripping her ass with my fingers.

As much as I would love to undress her and take my time right now, after the night we had, we both need this to happen as soon as possible.

I lift her shirt over her head and bring my face back to hers, teasing her mouth open with my tongue and bringing a guttural moan out of her throat.

She lifts one leg up to my hip in an attempt to get some friction.

“Allow me.”

I bend down to my knees and place kisses above the waistline of her jeans before pulling on the zipper and tugging them down off her feet, throwing them behind us.

I drag my hands up the sides of her thighs, moving to the inside as I get higher and scraping a finger over the damp patch on her underwear. She hisses in response and grabs at my hair to pull me back to her.

She kisses me with so much passion that it almost knocks me off balance and a whimper escapes my mouth. I get so lost in Laura’s lips that it takes me a second to remember her state of undress. I trail a hand back down her stomach, pausing to pinch lightly at her nipples through the thin fabric of her bra and making her shudder.

I slip her underwear to the side and run my fingers through her folds, sighing raggedly at the wetness I find. My index finger finds her clit for a second and a small, strangled sound leaves her mouth as I move my attention back to her neck. Lifting her leg back around my waist, I tease for a few more seconds before dipping two fingers inside, keeping her steady as her legs buckle under me.

“Carmilla…” she breathes out, it never fails to gather heat in my stomach

I pull back from her neck, to look her in the eyes. Her pupils are darker than I've ever seen them and her mouth drops open a little each time I slowly pump back in.

I push the pad of my thumb onto her clit as I pick up my pace inside and she cries out. I can’t take my eyes off her as I watch her slowly fall apart in my arms, panting heavily and moaning a bit louder on each thrust.

I pull my thumb away from her clit, continuing with the movements inside her but still earning a whine in protest. Her whine becomes a shout when I attach my lips to her clit and suck hard.

Tensing my fingers at each stroke and using the tip of my tongue generously against her, it isn’t long before I feel her weight start to drop onto my shoulders and her legs shake.

“Laura, look at me.”
She slowly opens her eyes and she sees me. It hits me in the chest and something switches in her, her cries becoming louder as I feel her walls clench around me.

When her orgasm finally hits her, her knees give out and I manage to catch her before she drops to the floor.

Still trembling with aftershocks, her eyes closed, I pull her into my lap and lean us against the door. After a few minutes of my hands raking through her hair and the other stroking her bare leg, she gazes up at me and pulls back to hold my face in her hands.

“Every time, it’s perfect….and I never thought it could be like that.”

Her hands are still shaking slightly so I lean forward and capture her lips between mine, gently kissing her until it subsides.

“Something tells me that it’s always going to be like this with us, Cupcake.”

She smiles lazily at me places herself more solidly in my lap, resting her cheek against mine and stroking my back softly.

“Good.”
Is It Always This Hard?

Chapter Summary

Laura and Carmilla attempt to cope with being apart again, even if only for a week.

Chapter Notes

Hoping everyone is alright after the awful events going on this week. This chapter is mostly just fluffy rubbish so it might put a smile on your face! Enjoy x

--.--.--.--.-- signals POV change

“I still don’t understand why you need so many pairs of socks and underwear for a week, Cupcake.”

Carm is reclined on her bed, nose in a pretentious book as per usual, while I attempt to fit all of my clothes into the stupidly small travel suitcase I have. I’ve tried taking a few sweaters out but I can still barely close the lid, let alone zip it up. I’m resorting to sitting on it in order to try and get it done up when Carmilla huffs and throws her legs over the edge of her mattress to stand.

Without a word she reaches out for my hand and gently pulls me to my feet, pressing a kiss to my forehead before moving around me, zipping it in mere seconds. She flips it back onto its wheels and rolls it towards the door, turning back to me and smiling as a stare at her in disbelief.

“You’re telling me that you watched me struggle for a hellish thirty minutes to get that thing shut and you could have used your ridiculous vampire strength this whole time!”

My arms fold across my chest and I glare at her a little as she looks at me with that smug smile, she strolls back over to where I’m standing and brushes a wayward hair out of my eyes before her hand finds mine.

“You are always so capable, Cupcake. Normally you wouldn’t need me, I didn’t see the point in interfering.”

I can’t help but let my stubborn frown turn into a small smile at her confession. I spent five months with someone who would organise all my plans, walk me absolutely everywhere and even try to cut my food at times…

And here she was, the whole damn time, encouraging me to be my determined self yet still not being too far behind so that she could catch me if I needed her. Confessions like this are what make my heart fill with warmth and my eyes shine.

“Well, thank you. For doing that and for helping too, anyone ever told you that you’re pretty great Karnstein?”
I move a bit closer to her and watch her eyes as they fill with affection and I feel the familiar swelling in my chest.

“Hmm, not nearly enough obviously.” She smirks and leans down slowly to kiss me. I melt into her hold and wrap my hands around the sides of her neck to stroke the back of her scalp as I pull back.

Just watching each other for a minute, I feel the atmosphere shift slightly as I anticipate what’s coming.

“What time is your train?” Her voice is quiet but not sad, she gave up on making me feel guilty when she realised that I was genuinely considering ditching my dad.

“In about 20 minutes. I need to get going.” I don’t move to pull back from her and eventually she is the one who unclasps my hands and holds them as she brings them to her lips, kissing each one softly before kissing my forehead again and moving to get my bag for me.

“Walk you?”

Her smile is small but her outstretched hand suggests that she’s okay with me finally going.

“Please.”

I grab my phone and put my jacket on before taking her hand and letting her lead me out of the dorm, already dreading the moment where I no longer feel the warmth of her palm against mine.

----------------------------------------------------------------------

The station is full of people bustling about, searching for their platforms or trying to calm excited children. My train is announced as pulling into the station while we’re watching a little boy trying to reach his hand into a vending machine to reach a chocolate bar.

I glance up to the screens and see that I have to head up the escalators to reach my train. I turn to Carm as we both stand and her gaze is far away, staring at the screen.

I reach up my fingers to grasp her chin lightly and pull her to face me. Her expression is lost and my heart quite literally aches in my body.

“I’ll see you Saturday morning, right?”

My gentle smile eases one out of her too and she nods before cupping my jaw and bringing my lips to hers, kissing me softly before leaving a small one on my hairline and pulling my jacket fully over my shoulders where it’s slipped.

“I’ll be here.”

I lean up and press a lingering kiss to her cheek, whispering in her ear before grabbing the handle on my bag.

“I love you. Don’t growl at Laf while I’m gone.”

She laughs lightly and lifts her hand in a salute as I start to walk towards the escalator.

“I’ll try. Don’t make friends with weirdos on the train.”

“I’ll try.”
I smile at her and step onto the machine, making my way up to my platform. As I look back at her before she disappears from view, I see her mouth at me and it leaves me feeling a little better.

*I love you too*

It’s been three days.

Three days and I am slowly sinking further and further into my Laura-less world of self-pity.

The ginger twins have been by a few times in an attempt to bring me out of the dorm and involve me in ridiculous activities, undoubtedly after pleading texts from Laura.

It’s not just the fact that I’m missing Laura like a limb has been ripped from my body, but I’m also frustrated. Frustrated that my body and brain have become weaker than I’ve ever known them in the absence of my tiny ball of sunshine.

I haven’t needed anyone for centuries, not even Mattie. But to both want and need someone at the same time, then to have them away from you after so long in each other’s space constantly, it’s unsettling. I want to be able to compartmentalise like I normally do, but with Laura and my feelings, that doesn’t seem to happen.

I found myself making cocoa the other day instinctively and when I picked up the mug, I realised there was no one to give it to and got so annoyed with my inability to exclude her from my routine that I almost broke her tardis mug. (It is intact, don’t worry)

I’m sulking against my headboard, Laura’s yellow pillow clenched between my arms, when a small bang and black smoke appears in our dorm.

“I’ve been having the most annoying sense of discomfort in my body for several days now darling and something tells me it may be your fault.”

Mattie is stood before me, looking bored for a second before landing her eyes on me and switching to an expression of concern. She glances at the pillow and over to Laura’s side of the room, seemingly understanding my problem.

“Thumbelina performed yet another disappearing act?”

I growl slightly at her reference to Laura’s past avoidance and only hold onto the material tighter.

“She’s visiting her dad for a week, planned it before we…happened.”

Mattie tilts her head in sympathy and only receives an empty glare from me. She doesn’t move to sit but does edge closer to where I’m lying.

“My, my, quite the lost puppy without her aren’t we? What happened to my unaffected, uncaring sister?”

“Laura happened.”

I place the pillow down in my lap and run a hand through my hair, breathing out an exasperated sigh.

“It’s pathetic I know, alright? You don’t think I’m already beating myself up enough about it, I can’t seem to do anything without wishing she was here. She’s managed to get in here somehow
and she’s set up camp.”

Tapping my chest and allowing my hand to flop back onto my legs, I hear Mattie chuckle above me and lift my eyes to look at her in confusion.

“Sweetie, as much as I know you want to be independent and free from that aching need for a person, the fact that she’s gotten in this deep means you shouldn’t be trying to get her out.”

My brows knit together and she places a hand on my shoulder.

“You love her, Mircalla, you will always want her near to you, especially when she cannot be. Learn to embrace it because it very much looks like she’s here to stay. I’m sure the little munchkin will be missing you just as much, call her, and look after yourself.”

She squeezes my shoulder gently and narrows her eyes in emphasis, disappearing once again in a cloud of smoke and I roll back. I grab my phone off the headboard and dial Laura’s number, a smile instantly appearing on my face when I hear her voice on the other end of the line.

“Carm! I’m literally just about to go out to a family dinner but I’m so glad you called. I need to hear your voice before I go and face the usual interrogation from each and every person on all aspects of my life.”

I chuckle at her greeting, an ease settling over my body at the familiar sound of her voice in my ear.

“Perfect timing then, cutie. How did your spring cleaning go with your dad today?” I relax on the bed and close my eyes, imagining Laura searching for the right shoes to wear and I sigh in content.

“It was…long. I never realised we had so much stuff, a lot of it was my mom’s too so that was more difficult. We didn’t know what we had the right to throw away or keep, ya know?”

A twinge in my chest makes me long to be there with her, at her side for support, but I know this is something her and her father need to do together and it makes me glad I decided not to tag along.

“Yeah, cupcake. I’m sure you’ve made the right decisions, she wasn’t in the right frame of mind to organise anything how she wanted it. You can only do what you feel is best in these situations.”

I hear her sigh deeply and wait for her to speak, concern behind my thoughts.

“I miss you and your endless insightful comments and support. How are you? Holding up better than me no doubt.”

I really laugh at that, assessing my current state of absolute hopelessness and my new tragic image.

“Trust me, cutie that is highly unlikely. I’m okay, tweedle-dum and tweedle-dee have come to visit a few times, annoyingly, but aside from that I’m usually sleeping the day away so I’m doing alright.”

“Carm, you can’t just sleep until I get back! Go and do something, take a walk, have a coffee with Lafontaine!”

She sounds worried, so I calm her quickly

“Okay sweetheart, I’ll join the mad scientist for an espresso one day, I promise. But I still can’t promise a lack of naps…”
She grunts quietly and mumbles in acceptance.

“And I miss you too, Laura.”

Her line goes quiet and we both seem to be comfortable just sitting in silence, knowing the other is there. What feels like a few minutes go by before I hear a faint shouting on her line.

“Carm, I have to go, our ride is here…”

“Tell them to drive safe, they have precious cargo.”

She laughs fully before speaking fondly

“I love you, you idiot.”

“Love you too, stay safe.”

She ends the call and I hold my phone to my chest for a second, then rolling over to clutch at the pillow again, eventually drifting off. This time, there’s a small smile on my face.

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Five long days at home and I’m definitely about ready to get back to Carm. Don’t get me wrong, I love being with my Dad and the rest of my family, in the place I grew up with all these familiar faces. The thing is, hardly any of these familiar faces bring me the same amount of happiness as they used to, not now I know what it feels like to be around someone like her.

The last few days have been great aside from missing her. I’ve been to my favourite ice cream place almost every day, I’ve helped out in the local bookshop where I used to work on weekends, plus I got to spend one day with my little cousin playing Harry Potter make believe so…

But it’s too early. I’ve only just got Carmilla and being away from her already doesn’t feel right. Every time I try to fall asleep, I feel strange without the presence of her arm pressed against my side or draped over my stomach. I felt her absence the most when my family came for dinner and everyone was updating me on their lives. I had one cousin recalling her adventures in Thailand, my uncle Graham telling me why university is nothing compared to hard work and labour and lastly, a slightly homophobic aunt asking if I socialised much with the ‘hunky’ Zeta boys.

All I wanted was Carm’s hand rubbing my lower back and her look that tells me everything is fine, and if it’s not fine, she’ll hurt whoever is making it worse.

It’s almost ten and I really should get some sleep ready for my last full day here tomorrow but I’m reluctant to shift from the sofa. The thirty minutes before sleep hits me is the most difficult time.

My dad strolls in from washing up the dishes and places a hand on my head, I don’t look up from my phone where I’m just scrolling through Carm’s morning messages today.

“Okay spill, muffin.”

I glance up at him where he has now perched on the edge of our coffee table, facing me. I pull my eyebrows together in question and he raises one of his own.

“You’ve been odd all week, today I don’t think I saw you really smile once. What’s on your mind kiddo, or who?”

I feel my eyes widen and I clear my throat, about to scoff at his suggestion, but I see the look of
knowing in his eyes and understand he isn’t taking any crap from me. I sigh and let my head fall back down onto the arm of the sofa under me.

“It’s Carmilla.”

“Your roommate Carmilla? She disappeared from the scene for a while, didn’t she?”

I flinch at the reminder of our months as strangers, even thinking about it makes me feel ill.

“That was my fault. But, everything is back to normal. Well, not normal, cos we sorta realised we liked one another and things were hard for a while but I think she’s my girlfriend now and I know it’s only been 5 days but it feels weird without her and maybe that’s weird. I don’t know Dad, but I know I love her and I miss her and that’s stupid because I see her soon and…”

“Honey! Calm down.”

My dad places a hand on my knee and looks at me with an understanding smile and soft eyes

“I used to miss your mother when she left a room! Loving someone truly is like that. You have to embrace it, sweetie, because if you love someone with your whole heart every minute of the day, you’ll never waste a moment. Even if they leave.”

I feel a prickling in my eyes and smile at him, he squeezes my knee gently before dropping a kiss on my head and wishing me a goodnight.

Eventually, I drag myself upstairs and collapse onto my cold bed. I turn on my side and like every night, I stare at the brightest star I can see and think of Carm.

[22:18]: Miss you x

Carm [22:19]: Funny, I was just thinking about you too.

Carm [22:24]: Cupcake?

Carm [22:25]: Is everything ok? Or have you just fallen asleep?

[22:26]: Sorry, I’m awake

My phone starts to buzz in my hand and a picture of Carmilla sleeping on my yellow pillow appears in front of me. I accept the call and relax into the mattress.

“Hey, Carm.”

“God, it’s nice to hear that voice.” I smile softly and press the phone a little closer to my ear.

“Likewise.”

“Why are you awake, cutie?”

“Little more difficult to sleep here than I’d anticipated. Just watching Sirius.”

I hear her sigh on the line and picture her in our dorm, a longing feeling filling my chest.

“Well, it’s no easier over here if that makes you feel any better, even the pillow isn’t quite replacement enough.”
I chuckle lightly and then go back to silence.

“I can see it too. It’s nice to think of you a little closer with the stars.”

I smile and then realise Carm can’t see me.

“Yeah, it is. No matter where you are in the world, the stars will always be in the same place... the same size, the same light.”

She hums in response and waits a few minutes before speaking again.

“They’re the one constant we all have.”

I want nothing more than to be watching them next to her and the familiar ache settles near my heart.

“Carm?”

“Yeah, Laura?”

I pause before exhaling and whispering into the phone

“I’m not going anywhere.”

I don’t remember falling asleep but when I wake up, my phone is stuck to my face and I have a text from Carm

Carm [23:36]: You fell asleep so I hung up...eventually. I love you, I’ll see you soon.

I feel like a complete idiot, standing near the entrance to the platforms with a large piece of card in my hand. I used my old calligraphy pen and wrote ‘Cupcake’ on it to make a welcome sign and I instantly cursed myself for doing it, but… I’m here now.

Suddenly something hits my legs with a thump and when I look down, about to yell, I see a little girl with huge eyes clutching onto a teddy. Something makes me think of Laura, so I just watch the girl as she opens her mouth to speak.

“Sorry lady, I lost Georgie when we got here and he was just by your feet! Thank you, sorry!” She rambles a little and I find myself not being annoyed by her presence. Familiar.

“It’s fine, kid, where are your parents?”

She moves her head around a little and eventually points to a frantic looking couple near the welcome desk. I ruffle her hair and turn her around to push her in their direction, any longer and I feel like they might be making an announcement over the loudspeaker. She runs towards them and I see relief wash over their faces as they catch a glimpse of her through the small crowd.

I smile to myself and shake my head in amusement. When I look back up, my eyes land on the escalators and I see that the screen has announced Laura’s train arrival. I must have missed the call when I was helping that kid, damn it!

I go to check the stairs but something catches my eye as I make a move.

Laura is standing at the bottom of the escalators, staring at me with her head tilted and a lopsided
grin, most likely at my stupid sign.

It instantly feels like my heart is going to beat out of my chest and I can feel an idiotic smile spread involuntarily across my face.

She starts to walk towards me, dragging her huge bag behind her. She gives up and ditches it about half way, running the remainder of distance and launching herself at me.

Before I can register it, I have arms tight around my neck and I’m completely engulfed in Laura’s familiar scent. Anything that felt out of place before has fitted right back together.

A small whisper is caught by my ear and I squeeze gently at her hips, my arms around her back.

“I missed you.”

I grin at her confession and turn to press small kisses from her jaw to her forehead.

“I missed you too. More than you can imagine. It’s kinda embarrassing, actually.”

Laura leans back and presses her lips to mine, kissing me a little harder than normal and I make no move to pull away.

When she eventually moves back, I grab her bag without a word and interlock her fingers with mine, dragging her to my side so we can make our way back to the dorm.

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Once we’re back at the dorm, a feeling of comfort floods my body and Carm moves to the kitchen to make me a drink.

I roll my bag to my side of the room and flop down on my bed to rest my feet. I glance over to Carm’s messy bed and my heart swells at the sight of my creased pillow and my favourite Buffy t-shirt which has clearly been used as pyjamas for the past week.

I look up at Carmilla as she’s waiting for the milk to warm and I can’t stop the stupid smile from forming on my face. All of my crappy feelings from this week wash away just watching her.

I approach her from behind and place my hands on hers to stop their movements. I turn her slowly and don’t say anything before leaning in to kiss her slowly. She doesn’t question it and just slips her strong arms around my waist, letting me relax into her body.

If anything, this trip has taught me that I hate the feeling of being away from her, just as much as I did the first time.

I pull back and lean my forehead against hers, whispering against her lips

“Don’t let me leave again, ever, please. I love you.”

She smiles and my heart soars a little more

“Gladly.”
What's In It For Me?

Chapter Summary

Perry suggests a cabin trip and Carm is less than enthused.

Chapter Notes

Okay so, mostly a fluffy/kinda smutty mess that ended a little differently than I'd planned. But it happened in my mind sooo here it is. See you in the next chapter, enjoy x

PS - The fact they go to film this week is making me so BLOODY EXCITED. Hope you're all feeling it too.

I wake up to light streaming through our open curtains and hiss in pain as it burns my eyes. I turn my head in the other direction and reach my hand out to the space next to me, only to find it empty and cold. My brain registers that the familiar body that is usually curled up against mine is gone this morning and I sit up slowly. Glancing over my shoulder to the clock on her headboard, I see that it’s gone 10 am and Laura hasn’t woken me like she normally does.

Just as I begin to feel a hint of concern in my body and scan the room for a note, the door opens slowly and quietly, an oblivious Laura clearly trying not to wake me. As she closes it behind her as gently as possible and goes to turn around, I speak up, grinning as she almost jumps out of her skin.

“Where did you disappear to at such an ungodly hour?” My voice is crackly from lack of use and I watch as Laura walks over to sit on the edge of my bed, a hand still on her chest from the shock.

“I thought you’d still be asleep.” She looks me over and smiles at the ratty Buffy t-shirt covering my torso.

“My body seems to sense when you’re gone and so it rudely woke me up.”

She smiles softly at me and I smirk up at her, reaching out a hand to pull her closer to me from where she is sitting. She shuffles up and allows me to curl around her waist to place my head on her lap, luckily she doesn’t pick at my cat-like qualities as she usually does.

“Sorry, I’m back now.”

I sense that something seems a bit off and without moving my head from under her delicate, stroking hands, I ask again.

“So, where were you so early?”

Her hand stops its motions and she lifts her head to look across the room, avoiding my gaze. I
move to sit up and place my hand on her inner thigh, not ignoring the shiver this sends through her body.

“Cupcake?”

She bites her lip and cautiously turns her head back to me, hesitating before responding

“Ok, promise you won’t hate me…”

“Laura…”

My voice carries a slight warning tone but I remain patient as she pauses again before she blurts out

“I agreed to go to Perry’s sister’s cabin with her and Laf tomorrow for a few days, it’s free for the summer so Perry was planning on taking advantage of it and asked if we would join…”

“Woah, hang on…we? As in, you, me and the ginger twins for a few days… in a confined space?”

I move my fingers to the bridge of my nose and pinch slightly.

“Cupcake, this isn’t sounding appealing to me.”

I flop back down on the bed and cover my eyes with an arm but before I can get comfy, she is pulling it back and looking into my eyes pleadingly.

“Please! Perry will be baking goodies all the time!”

As much as I’ll agree that the curly one’s cookies are delicious, that is not enough to sway me and I try to pull my arm back to cover my eyes. Laura is far from done, however.

“You can just sit and read your books while we go and do things if you want!” Her voice is getting whiny and I don’t dare to look up at her, knowing that my resolve will crumble if I do.

“It’s supposed to be warm,” the look in my eyes tells her that this is not the way to persuade me, “aaand I’ll be packing two bikinis…”

I don’t quite meet her eyes this time but my eyebrows raise in interest. The image of her in a two-piece is suddenly everywhere in my mind and I can feel a familiar fluttering in my stomach.

I remain silent and she pauses, frustrated that the last one wasn’t as effective as she’d hoped. She perks up suddenly and I move my gaze to her, she has a smug look on her face and moves to lean down, hovering over my face.

With the look in her eyes and her proximity, my breath catches as I wait for her to say something. She moves further down, lining her mouth up next to my ear and whispering gently.

“Every bedroom as a double bed…”

Well, shit.

I sit up quickly, bringing her with me and looking her up and down before smirking.

“I’m driving.”

---------------------------------------
An hour into this journey and I’m about ready to jump out of the moving car. Ginger 1 and Ginger 2 have been playing stupid card games and trivia quizzes at the loudest possible volume for the entire trip so far. Laura had joined in at first but quickly became tired and was now just contributing some answers over her shoulder to the back seat.

We only have about thirty minutes left to go but that’s thirty minutes too long with these goons. I could easily have spent the hour watching Laura slip in and out of sleep, twitching her nose and whining occasionally when the air-con got too cold. Instead, I had to just catch glances at her when she faced forward again and leant her head against the cool window.

My annoyance at the ginger duo in the back must not have been as subtle as I’d thought. I feel a sleepy Laura slide her hand onto mine over the gear stick and rub softly along my knuckles.

I look sideways towards her in question at the action but she just smiles lazily and brings the knuckles to her lips, kissing them before placing both of our hands back atop the gears. She mouths a ‘thank you’ to me before I turn my attention back to the road, anger significantly more controlled than before.

After another half hour of drowning out the idiots, I finally pull up a long gravel driveway surrounded by trees. When we reach the clearing that opens up onto the cabin, Laura gasps next to me and Lafontaine holds nothing back.

“Holy shit Per! Why have we not been here before?!”

While Perry scolds Laf for their language and begins an explanation of how her sister got the place, I park the car along the side of the cabin and kill the engine. All three of them are out of the vehicle before I can even open my door and I just roll my eyes, making my way to the trunk to get the bags.

“No, don’t you worry about me, I’ll just carry these on all 6 of my magical arms that you seem to think I have!”

Laura and Laf have made their way down the grassy bank in front of the cabin porch and they are running towards the decking that leads out onto a clear lake. Perry quickly runs over to me, taking her own bag, Laf’s and one full of food supplies while I take the rest and we wander inside.

Dumping the emergency kit bag on the floor by the door, I move slowly into the main room. An open plan kitchen/living room greets me and is flooded with sunlight from the large glass windows surrounding the porch doors. I won’t tell Laura, but this place doesn’t actually seem too bad for a few days away.

Perry emerges from a smaller hallway attached to the kitchen, making her way to the fridge with the supplies bag ready to unpack.

“You and Laura can take one of the 2 rooms at the very end of the hallway Carmilla. Lafontaine and I will be staying in the one next to the main bathroom on the left. You’re welcome to choose!”

However she stays permanently perky, I will never understand.

“Thanks, I’ll let Laura pick, whenever she decides to actually come inside.”

Perry turns to smile in empathy, walking over to one of the kitchen windows and shoving it wide open before leaning out of it just enough to shout.

“LAFontaine! COME INSIDE AND HELP ME UNPACK BEFORE I HIDE YOUR DIVING
EQUIPMENT!

She slams the window shut again and looks at me with a satisfied smile as I furrow my eyebrows in confusion.

“Nope, you know what, I’m not even gonna ask, Curly Sue.”

The danger twins come bursting through the porch doors a minute later and Laf walks straight to the kit bags, kissing Perry on the cheek as they pass.

“Sorry Per, I’ll help.”

“Sorry, Perry! We just wanted to check out the deck.”

Laura makes her way to me and wraps her arms around my middle from the side, resting her chin on my shoulder.

“Do you want me to unpack your bag as well as mine, Carm?”

I turn my head to place a kiss on her hair and rub her arms with one hand.

“You’ll have to choose which room they’re going in first, cutie.”

She pulls back and looks at me with glimmering eyes, clearly excited that I’ve passed the choice onto her. She sets off down the hallway in the direction I’m pointing and I hear her squeal as she finds the one she wants. She calls me inside and I grab the bags, setting off in the same direction.

When I get to the open door, Laura is standing in front of a huge floor to ceiling window that looks out onto the bank and lake. The room itself is modest, a comfortable looking double bed sits in the middle with the window to its left, a small dresser to hold our clothes and a mirror standing in the corner. A small door leads off to a more basic bathroom than the main one but the privacy is a major perk. I throw the bags onto the plush bed and wander over to where Laura is standing, the sunlight drenching her in a soft yellow glow and the reflection of the light in her eyes making them shine.

I face her side-on and pull her hair back from her face, planting small kisses along her jawline. She hums in content and leans her side into me. Wrapping an arm around her shoulder, I pull her into me and take in the view for myself.

“This one then?”

“Yup. This one.”

“A fine choice, Hollis.” I kiss her head one last time before moving to unpack the bags, Laura reluctantly tearing herself from the window to do the same.

About 3 hours, one amazing meal cooked by Perry (plus a blood bag for me) and a few horrific games of charades later and we are all gathered around a tiny fire pit that Laf is tending to. They found the dish around the back of the cabin and insisted on a small bonfire with marshmallows. Naturally, Laura was drawn in by the mention of sugar and is currently attempting to roast hers without burning it to a crisp.

After realising that one of our camping chairs had a broken leg, Laura was left to sit on my lap (not that I’m complaining…at all), as she refused to bring one of the lovely dining chairs outside onto the grass.
Even though I had my doubts about the relaxing nature of these few days, I find myself sinking deeper into my chair, bringing a deliciously warm Laura with me while she munches ungracefully on her slightly too brown marshmallow.

Abandoning her skewer, she looks ridiculous as she tries un成功fully to get rid of the sticky, pink goo all over her hands. Laf throws her a box of napkins from opposite us and I watch in amusement as she gets more and more frustrated, still finding small sticky patches just when she thinks she’s got them all.

I glance over to Laf and Perry where they're deep in conversation about tomorrow’s activities before I wrap my hand around Laura’s wrist and bring one of her fingers to my lips, sucking on it lightly while she watches in shock, a hint of desire flashing across her eyes. I let it go with a pop and sink back into the chair.

“All clean, Cupcake.”

She clears her throat, pulling her hand back into the pocket of my black hoody that she insists on wearing constantly nowadays. She stands quickly and looks at me pointedly before announcing to Laf and Perry.

“Guys, we’re gonna head to bed, Carm is pooped after the drive. Thanks for dinner Per!”

She hardly waits for a response before making her way back up the bank to the porch steps.

“No problem. Sleep well!”

“Night, Frosh. Broody.”

“Cupcake, I am not pooped, I-“

I go to correct her but she doesn’t seem to want to know.

Laura tugs on my arm harshly and brings me inside after her, storming her way down the hallway to our new room and making her way to the window to lean against it, looking out.

I close the door behind us and move to walk towards her. She senses my movement and turns sharply, holding an arm out to stop me.

“No! If you come closer, I won’t be able to stop it from happening.”

I am constantly surprised at this girl’s ability to confuse the hell out of me.

“Stop what from happening, Cupcake? What are you talking about?” I go again to step closer but she steps back, her spine pressed up against the window panes.

“Carmilla. We are in someone else’s house, someone we don’t even know outside of Perry, with our friends sleeping a few doors down. If you touch me like that again, I won’t be able to hold back and I do not feel like blushing my way through the next few days.”

Her expression is serious but I almost laugh at her announcement.

Watching her chest rise and fall heavily for a few seconds, I continue to walk forward, ignoring her outstretched hand and warnings of “Carm”.

I press a hand to the window beside her head and lean in, hushing her protests and kissing her as softly as I can, capturing her bottom lip between mine and resting my other hand underneath her
hoody, caressing the skin on her hip.

She sighs into my mouth and responds to the kiss immediately. Reaching a hand up to cup one of
my cheeks, she holds me in place while we kiss languidly. She whines a little in the back of her
throat and I chuckle, breaking the kiss to lean down and lift her up onto my hips.

I turn and place her gently on the bed, following her down and shifting us both up to the head of
the bed. She looks at me for a while with dark eyes, a small hint of a smile on her face for second
before it’s replaced with a grin and she pulls me back into her lips by my neck.

Minutes later and all clothes have been shed. Laura is straddling my hips, kissing from my
protruding hip bones to my rib cage and licking her way back up to my mouth before capturing my
lips. After enjoying her like this for a while, I place my hands to cup her butt cheeks, nudging them
slightly forward and becoming more persistent when she doesn’t catch on. Breaking away from
me, she looks down and after seeing the smug smile on my face, she gets the hint and blushes a
deep crimson.

She shuffles her knees up to place them either side of my head and she becomes almost bashful,
waiting for me to tell her what to do. Instead, I stroke my hands up and down the backs of her
thighs, revelling in the pleased hum that vibrates from within her.

I slowly pull her thighs down a little so that her centre hovers right above me and with one last
nudge to her inner knee, she lets out a surprised squeak, quickly replaced by a ragged moan when
she lands on my tongue and I enjoy the path from her entrance to her clit.

I continue to drown in her taste for a while, bringing her closer to the edge and then bringing her
back down to earth with slower strokes, wanting to draw out her pleasure.

A bang from the hallway stops me mid-lick and Laura turns her head quickly to the door,
attempting to stifle a whine that almost escaped. After waiting a minute and hearing some small
chatter in the house, we figure it must be the ginger twins heading to bed and Laura looks back
down to me. She places a hand over my mouth to stop me from laughing at our current
predicament and after a few tries at biting my way out of it, she replaces it with her core again and I
groan lowly at the taste back on my tongue.

When her orgasm finally hits, Laura slumps forward to bite on my shoulder and muffle her scream.
It only partially works and I have to stop myself from yelling as her bite sinks into my skin.

After regaining some strength, she uses the headboard to push back and roll over on her side next
to me. One of her legs is draped over mine and I can still feel it trembling. I lower my hand to run
along it in slow strokes as she rests her sweaty forehead against my chest.

“And I thought I was the vampire.” I chuckle gently and she swats at my stomach half-heartedly in
return.

“Shut up.” I laugh at her sleepy voice and pull the covers over both of us, not wanting her to be
cold when she soon drifts off.

I feel her breathing even out and am close to sleep myself when I feel a faint kiss on my chest and a
quiet voice

“Love you, Carm.”

No matter how many times she says it, every time she does it feels as though a tiny mariachi band
are going wild in my stomach and I tighten my hold around her, planting a firm kiss to any part of
her I can reach at the moment.

“I love you too, cutie. Get some rest.”

She curls up even more against me and the last thing I feel before sleep consumes me is the upwards quirk of her lips against my collarbone.

Carm has been surprisingly complaint-free about the lake since last night’s…activities.

She agreed to get up and have breakfast with me after half an hour of pestering and eventually me climbing on her back to tickle at her sides. She gave in quickly after that but insisted that it was because she was hungry and not because she’s incredibly ticklish.

I woke up a few hours before Carm, just after sunrise, and I had just sat in a small chair near the window watching the lake for a while. I was so happy to be here, I had no idea this was the serenity that would meet us when Perry mentioned a trip away. Carm seemed to be content here too and that means I am in heaven. If we’re both happy, fed and warm, we’re a delightful couple.

I’d snuck back into bed after I heard a rustle and a small whimper from behind me. When I turned I saw a passed out Carmilla with her hand placed where my body should be and a deep crease of a frown above her eyebrows. Instantly wanting to get rid of the reason that frown was there, I had slipped out of the chair and snuggled back into her embrace, readjusting the covers and watching happily as she began to sense that I was next to her again.

It’s moments like these that shock me because every day I think about how much I love her and yet, every day, she does something else that makes me fall that little bit deeper.

She’s now sat, relaxed in a deck chair on the boardwalk next to the bank, book in hand and sunglasses in place. Laf and Perry are both sat on the edge of the deck with their feet dangling in the water, looking like love struck teenagers while they talk to each other about their summer plans. I came back inside to get more sunscreen and as I walk out, Laf sees me and waves madly.

“Laur, come jump in with us. It’s too damn hot to be sitting around and not doing anything about this lake.”

I laugh and nod at them, lifting a finger to signal that I’ll be right there. I lean over the back of Carm’s chair and place a kiss on her cheek that she accepts with a smile. I pass her the lotion and rub her shoulders slightly before whispering to her.

“You coming in? Get ourselves a different kind of wet, Karnstein.”

She chuckles at that but just shakes her head.

“No, I’m good cutie. You go, I’ll watch you guys be idiots from afar, thanks!”

She doesn’t lift her head from her book and so I give up, pecking her on the lips before making a point to undress right in front of her, prepping for my bikini jump into the water.

I lower my shorts and step out of them before grabbing the hem of my t-shirt and pulling it swiftly over my head. I throw the ball of clothes at Carmilla, watching as her expression goes to one of annoyance at the disturbance to lust when she lands on me.

“Oh, I see…”
Her lips quirk up slightly but go back to a serious, unavering expression when she takes in my whole body. I pull together my Hollis charm and wink in what I hope was a seductive way before turning and running down to the deck. I hear her shout slightly as I reach Laf and Perry.

“You’re killing me, Hollis!”

I smile and take my place next to the others ready to jump in.

I scream when I hit the water because it is absolutely freezing. When we resurface, we’re all sputtering and shrieking slightly.

I can hear Carmilla laughing and think of a way to get her in.

“If you think we’re so pathetic Carm, why don’t you hop on in and try it!”

We bring our gazes together and she tries to glare at me until I back down. I resist and after a few moments, she seems to give in and stands from the deck chair. All three of us are now happily treading water and she makes her way to the deck, shedding her top and shorts to reveal a barely-there black bikini.

She looks incredible, smooth porcelain skin and dark unruly locks falling over her shoulders. My little heart beats manically in my chest as she approaches the end of the deck.

“Warning you cutie, when I’m in that water, your head is being dunked straight under.”

I squeal and back away from the edge a little, watching as she gears herself up to dive in. Instead of diving, however, she just does a small run and jumps directly off the deck into the water underneath it.

There’s a problem.

She didn’t seem to calculate the distance right and on her way down, I hear an audible bang as she hits her head on the wooden decking as she falls into the lake.

Concern fills my mind as she in enveloped by the water. Laf looks at me with worry, clearly having heard the noise too and we all wait for her to resurface to see if she’s alright. I really wouldn’t feel like hearing her complain of a headache all day and night, let alone her be really injured and me not being able to do anything for her.

About thirty seconds have gone past and Carmilla still hasn’t come back up

I panic.

I start to swim over to where she landed and look around under the water.

That’s when I notice a floating black sea of hair under the surface and realise it’s Carmilla. Some relief washes over me before I realise what that actually means.

All that leaves my mouth is a strangled cry before I dive under the water.

“CARM!”
How Could I Leave You?

Chapter Summary

The gang deal with Carm's fall. (The drama doesn't last, don't worry).

Chapter Notes

Soooo, I think this is where I might leave it, or at least before an epilogue anyway. Let me know what you think! Sorry for any vampire technicalities, I did my best to research but they are complicated beings. Also, thank you for all your lovely comments on my very first fic and thank you for continuing to read my drivel! If you have any other ideas or prompts for future fics then send them my way on tumblr - http://serendipityandhorchata.tumblr.com/

----- signals POV change

I can’t see very clearly under the water as my eyes try adjusting to the change, so I wildly grope around for Carmilla’s body and eventually manage to find an arm. I reach my other arm around to scoop under her armpits and try to kick my feet, pushing us back up the surface. My chest feels tight from the lack of oxygen and the panic in my body isn’t helping my ability to hold my breath. I suddenly feel the weight of Carm lift slightly and as my head breaks through the barrier of water into the open air, I see Laf spluttering next to me, hands wrapped around Carmilla’s wrists.

Before I have a chance to process what is happening or to thank Laf for their help, I hear Perry yelling something from the edge of the bank where she is now stood surrounded by clean towels. My brain clears from its haze and my blurry eyes refocus on Perry, waving frantically to bring Carmilla over to her and so Laf and I begin to pull her limp body to the shore of the lake. With the lasting adrenaline and help from Laf, we manage to get her to Perry quickly and we all work to lay her flat. Her chest is rising and falling but slower than I’ve ever seen it.

“Frosh, we need to get any water out of her lungs, vampire or not, she still needs space in there to breath. Once the water is out, she’ll revive but it might take a while, okay?”

After my lack of response, Laf gently pushes me aside to perform first aid and I sit back on my heels watching, paralysed as my fearless, badass, indestructible girlfriend lies still in front of us.

My mind snaps back into action when I hear a cough. Carmilla is rolled onto her side and after a few chokes, water is dribbling out of her mouth. I scramble closer and place my hand behind her head as Laf rolls her back onto her back.

“Okay, that should be all of it. But there is a huge lump on the base of her skull so she might have a concussion on top of everything, I don’t know exactly how this works with her freaky self. Either way, we should give her time to come back.”

I barely hear what they’re saying as my misty eyes are trained on Carm, aware that she’s breathing
at a fairly normal rate again but her eyes are closed and her body is still limp.

A pair of fingers are clicking in front of my face and I shake my head, moving it in the direction of Laf.

“Huh?”

They place a solid hand on my shoulder and look at me intently, ensuring I can hear them.

“I said, we need to move her inside so she can warm up and rest until she comes around. I don’t think vampires can get pneumonia but I don’t want to take that risk.”

They nod to Perry and the two of them start to lift Carmilla up, one at either end of her. I follow close behind, silently watching her neutral expression and soaked, black locks as we climb up the bank and approach the porch doors.

I open them ahead of the trio and watch as they lead her towards our bedroom.

Once she’s laying down in her usual spot, Laf runs to get the emergency kit and Perry mentions something about a warm drink but I’m zeroed in on Carm’s face. Laf comes in and does a variety of tests to check a bunch of levels that I don’t understand and then waits for me to catch their eyes. When I do, I see sympathy there and they walk towards the door, turning slightly before leaving.

“Laur, she’ll be alright, she just needs time to come around. I’ll keep checking on her, but she’ll probably want you there when she wakes up so we’ll bring you dinner later.”

I just nod in acknowledgement and slowly climb onto the bed next to Carmilla as they leave the room. I lie carefully on my side, facing her and move wet strands of hair out of her face, watching as her pale skin seems to gather a hint of colour.

I can’t help but feel as though this was my fault. I forced her to come in when she didn’t want to, if she’d had just stayed with her book on that bank, everything would be fine. I reach out a hand and lay it over her chest, reassured by the feeling of it still moving up and down slowly.

I must watch her for an hour before the rhythm of her breathing lulls me into a sleep next to her. I sit bolt upright when Perry shakes my shoulders gently a little while later, holding out a tray in front of her.

“Sorry Laura, I didn’t mean to scare you. I just brought a warm face towel for Carmilla and some dinner for you. It’s just soup and bread but I figured you might still feel chilly.”

I manage a weak smile in return and let her rest the tray in my lap.

“Thanks Per, I don’t know how long she can go without blood before it makes her weaker so I guess we’ll just have to leave it.”

She tilts her head with a sad look in her eyes

“Lafontaine will come and check on her again before we go to bed, I’m sure she’ll be back to her less than chipper self before you know it.”

I hum in agreement and wait until Perry has left the room to start trying to eat the soup. I only manage about half the bowl as my stomach is mostly full of nervous butterflies and a little dread. I’ve never seen her this weak looking and it’s terrifying.
My heart aches when I look back to her after placing the tray on the small wooden table near the bed. She looks almost normal with her mostly dry hair and less grey skin but my mind feels unsettled, knowing that she doesn’t really have a presence in the room right now.

As the hours go by, I alternate between the window chair and my place beside Carmilla, not wanting to be far from her in case she wakes. As the sunset comes and goes without a noise from her, I give in to my own exhaustion and drag my body from the armchair to the bed.

I slowly pull my bikini top off and replace it with her hoody, luckily still smelling of her even with all the times I’ve worn it. I pull the covers over the both of us and make sure that her body isn’t too cold before moving away to turn the lamps off. Rolling onto my back again, I shuffle as close to her as possible and lay my head where my hand had been for the majority of this afternoon, wrapping my arm around her waist.

I place a gentle kiss to her breastbone and let the pattern of her breath fill my mind until I find sleep again.

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The first thing my brain registers is the intense, throbbing pain in the back of my head. I almost swear and move violently up before I feel a weight holding me down. I open my eyes slowly and wince slightly as they adjust to the natural light in the room. Once the fuzzy feeling is gone, I take in my surroundings. I’m in our bed and after a feel under the covers, I realise that I’m still in my bathing suit. Confused for a minute, I retrace my steps.

The sunshine, the deck, Laura in a bikini, diving in like idiots into the lake, taunting…

The jump

Pain

Black

I must have passed out, but how did they get me out? How long have I been unconscious? How did I not drown? Amongst all the questions and worries flying around in my head, Laura’s face pops up. I look down and almost smile when I see that the weight on my chest is her.

She’s back in my hoody, her hair is messy and…her sleeves are damp…huh?

When I tilt my head down, I notice that there are tear tracks on her cheeks. Shit. What the hell happened?

I decide against waking her up, she must have had a shitty night’s sleep if she was crying. I just gently stroke her hair and lean my own head back onto the comfortable pillow in an attempt to ease the pain above my neck.

I hear the door creak a while later and see a mess of ginger hair slowly make its way into the room. Laf sees that my eyes are open and I place a finger to my lips, glaring at them in a warning not to wake the sleeping girl on my chest. They nod and slowly step closer to me, hesitating slightly before placing a bizarre cuff on my arm and prodding me, much to my annoyance. After a few death stares and hisses, they just hand me a blood bag then pack their things away again, looking up at me with concern still evident on their face.

“You’ve been out almost twenty-four hours, broody. You smacked your head on the deck jumping in and we had to fish you out of the lake…sorry, bad pun. You coughed up a bit of water so I knew
you weren’t dead and all, but you didn’t wake up so you’ve been in here.”

I nod slowly and move my eyes to Laura. They pipe up again before backing out of the room.

“She hasn’t left the room since, barely said one whole sentence. She’ll be glad to see you’re okay.”

I can’t tear my eyes away from her and just move my hand from her hair to her cheek as they leave, the door clicking behind them. I pierce my blood bag with my teeth and let it flow down my dry throat.

What feels like hours pass before I feel a shuffle against me and a sigh. Continuing my earlier actions, I move my hand through her hair as she stirs. She stretches a little, her legs shaking and a yawn escaping her mouth before she freezes.

My hand stops its movements, knowing that she’s noticed something different.

Her head whips up and around to face me, eyes wide as she looks me up and down before landing back on my eyes. Her hand comes to rest on the side of my face and I give her a lopsided grin to reassure her that I’m alright.

“Hey, Cupcake.”

I don’t get a verbal response, only a pair of arms wrapped so tightly around my neck that I might suffocate. Her body is practically on top of mine and I wind my own arms around her waist as she buries her head in my collarbone. It’s only when I feel her shaking that I pull her back to arm’s length.

“Hey…hey, look at me.”

She wipes at her eyes suddenly in an attempt to look at me properly and my heart breaks at the redness surrounding them, the puffy bags underneath and her trembling frame. I scared her and now it’s my job to try and fix it.

I watch her carefully as she glances over my body and face, one hand resting in her hair and the other holding one of hers. I smile gently at her and her eyes well up again, but this time there’s a small smile on her face.

“You took your time.”

I laugh quietly and she leans forward to place a soft kiss on my lips, sighing happily when I deepen it a little.

“I was so scared. You were so still, not just sleeping still, but dead still. I must have watched you breathing for hours to make sure you were still alive. Laf said you wouldn’t revive for hours because of your head but I couldn’t help thinking you were gone every few minutes.”

Her voice is light and jokey but her eyes reveal the emotion in her heart.

“I know cutie, but I’m fine, I’m here and partially alive.”

I keep a gentle teasing tone to try and ease her concern, leaning in slowly to place small kisses all over her face.

Eventually, she giggles and kisses me back, hesitant but loving and my cold heart swells in my chest.
“We should go and let Perry and Laf know that you’re awake!”

She goes to move from my side and I pull her back in by her wrist, gripping her waist as she falls into me.

“They know already, they came to check on me while you were sleeping and I was up.”

“YOU DIDN’T WAKE ME?!”

I wince at the shout and her expression shifts from angry to apologetic. She rolls us back and links her fingers through mine, playing with my various rings.

“You looked peaceful and Laf said you hadn’t moved because you were so anxious, I thought you could use the sleep.”

I move my hand to stroke up and down her side under the fabric of her clothing, loving the feel of her muscles relaxing under my touch. She lifts her head to place a lingering kiss under my jaw.

“It’s okay, I’m just glad you’re back. Can we stay like this?”

I close my eyes in content but after a rumble from Laura’s stomach, I lift her up again.

“After we get some food in your belly, we can lay here for as long as you need, cupcake.”

She just laughs softly and raises from the bed, my pulse quickening at the gentle, familiar sound.

Helping me up, she wraps herself around my middle for a few seconds, seemingly breathing me in before gripping my fingers and pulling me down the narrow hallway.

I was always going to come back to her, how could I not?

------------------------------------

It’s been two days and yet Laura still seems nervous.

Today we all agreed that we would do our own thing, nothing mad before we go home tomorrow. So Perry and Laura are sat making daisy chains into various items of jewellery on the bank, Laf is stuck inside thanks to their (hilariously) bad sunburn and I’m reading - shocker – on the porch.

I only make it another thirty minutes before I hear the sound of footsteps on the stairs, a sound that’s become very familiar so far today. A finger appears over the spine in my book and I let it fall into my lap as the face of my concerned-looking girlfriend comes into view.

“How are yo-?”

“Laura,” her mouth shuts as I use her name, “sweetheart, I’m fine. I promise that nothing has changed in the past half hour and I doubt much will change in the next either. Please stop worrying, love.”

Her eyes are downcast as she moves the book onto the small table and plops herself into my lap, arms circling my neck and head resting on my shoulder. I hook an arm under her knees to keep her close and press a kiss to her forehead.

“I know, I know you’re fine it’s just…I just got you…I want to make sure you’re not going anywhere as long as I can help it.”
I sigh and rub a hand up and down her arm as she relaxes into me.

“Who would annoy you if I was gone, huh? Who would steal your food and complain about your movie choice? Who would leave their clothes everywhere for you to so kindly clean up? Who would give you multiple orgasms eve-“

She slaps her hand over my mouth quickly and leans back, looking at me with narrowed eyes and a small smile.

“Enough, Karnstein. I get it. I just like it when you’re near, definitely not completely dead, and near.”

She traces the outline of my face with gentle fingers and I smile watching her eyes follow their path. I take her hand gently in mine to bring her attention back to me and smile wider when her lips turn up.

“There is very little that can destroy me in this fairly normal world, Cupcake. There’s only one thing I have a lot of exposure to but I doubt it’ll cause me too much harm, or at least I hope not.”

She looks worried for a second before her eyes glimmer with determination. I almost laugh, knowing the thoughts that must be running through her beautiful little head.

“Well, we’ll just keep it far away from you then to be sure. We can do that, right?”

I lean in close to her and whisper above her lips.

“Afraid not, cutie. The only thing that close with the power to destroy me, is you.”

She doesn’t laugh, just leans her forehead against mine before kissing me softly. I know she’s trying to make her point that she would never hurt me, so I don’t deepen the kiss, just letting her set the pace instead.

She doesn’t re-join Perry for the rest of the afternoon.

The strain of the past few days seems to wash away under the hot stream of the shower. After talking Carm into letting Perry drive tomorrow, I feel I’ve done pretty much all I can to help her recover. She, obviously, had other suggestions for that but I don’t want to take any risks so I’ve told her she has to wait until we’re settled back in the dorm.

I’ve also been trying to figure out a way to approach the subject of summer with her. I want nothing more than to stay by her side for the few months we have before the next academic year but I don’t know what her own plans entail. After speaking to my dad, he said he would welcome her in our house. I could also try and convince her to come with me when I travel. We’ll see...

It was all laid out easily before she came bombarding into my heart the way she did. I wouldn't have it any other way though.

I step out of the shower once I feel significantly prune-like and wrap a soft towel around my body, squeezing the water out of my hair before stepping back into our room.

I let out a yell and clutch at the towel when I turn to face a smug looking Carmilla.

“God, Carm! I thought you were back in the living room with the others, you almost gave me a
heart attack!”

She chuckles and pulls at the end of my towel, bringing me to her where she’s sitting on the edge of the bed.

“I missed you.”

I snake two hands into her hair, resting them at the base of her scalp, something I keep doing for reassurance since the incident.

“I was gone twenty minutes, max. You going soft on me?”

Her smile turns to a smirk and she pulls harder on the hem, allowing my towel to drop to the floor and leaving her hands to cup my now bare ass.

“Only for you, cutie.”

She tries to lean her mouth up and place it where some attention is needed but I pull back from her embrace.

“Nuh-uh. I said I wanted to wait until you’re 100% okay.”

“I am! I promise!”

I sigh and pick the towel back up from the floor, luckily not meeting any resistance from Carm.

“I know you feel alright, but please, just for my own sanity and still slightly guilty conscience.”

She pauses, a frown on her face and eyebrows scrunched together as she watches me place the towel over a chair and reach for my pyjamas.

“Oh, okay wait! If you insist on depriving me of your pleasure, at least stay naked.”

I take in the serious expression on her face, laughing heartily before shoving the t-shirt and shorts back into the dresser. I walk over to her and let her kiss my stomach lightly before caressing her cheek and leaning to kiss her in return.

“Fine, we can sleep naked. I warn you Carm, you try anything and I’ll get my biggest, thickest onesie out.”

She pulls me backwards onto the bed and starts to lift her own shirt over her head as I make myself comfortable.

“Naked but no inappropriate behaviour, got it.”

I roll onto my side and it isn’t long before I feel her throw an arm around my waist and press herself up against my back.

I fail to stop the groan that leaves my mouth at the feel of her skin against mine and I hear her laugh lightly as she lays kisses on my shoulder. I mumble grouchily while she tightens her hold.

“She should have told you to keep your damn clothes on.”

But she’s warm and she’s here and she’s mine. So I pull her in, laying my own arm over hers and bringing it up to rest over my heart.
She hums next to my ear and whispers my thoughts aloud.

“Mine.”
Epilogue

Chapter Summary

The gang gets ready to go back to their final year after a long summer.

Chapter Notes

Finally wrapping this one up with a fluffy epilogue! Thanks for all your lovely comments throughout this fic, writing during this hiatus has been great! Hope you enjoy the last one, let me know what you think. x

serendipityandhorchata@tumblr.com

sidenote - These characters belong to the writers and actors who brought them to life, I just borrowed them for a while :)

--- signals POV change

3 months later

The early evening sun is beaming down on Perry’s garden and the air is filled with the smell of barbeque smoke and excessively applied sun tan lotion.

We go back to classes in a week but September isn’t letting the summer die just yet. We’ve all gathered at Ginger number two’s house while her parents are visiting family and we’re desperately clinging on to the last of our stress-free, sunshine filled days before lectures and dorm room life takes over once again.

Light music is being carried along with the breeze that flows through the open garden, travelling from the speakers Laf has set up next to the barbeque. Speaking of which, they are currently attempting to reassure Perry that they have everything under control and there is a method to their cooking madness. The curly one seems to be unimpressed and continues to hover over them whenever she leaves her prepping in the kitchen; I find it hard to hold back my laugh when I see Laf snap their tongs in warning.

The summer society girls made a brief appearance earlier to say hey before going to one of their vitally important pre-term house meetings, I managed to resist the urge to spill out all of the sarcastic comments in my head thanks to sufficient training from Laura. Of course, the puppy dog arrived a while ago with some of his sweaty Zeta ‘bros’ and they immediately set up a makeshift soccer pitch opposite the pool. Watching several overgrown toddlers chase a ball is unsurprisingly mind-numbing and so I’ve chosen to occupy my mind with something far more interesting.

Laura is floating gracefully on the surface of the pool, moving her hands back and forth through
the water and looking as relaxed as ever. After choosing to sit and dangle our feet in when we arrived, she naturally couldn’t resist the water and quickly stripped to the bikini I didn’t know she was wearing before diving in. Safe to say, I’ve been happily enjoying the view for a good hour now.

After spending almost the whole summer following her everywhere, watching her is something I’ve become addicted to.

I managed to survive the time we spent at her dad’s house. After realising that I worried about Laura’s well-being possibly even more than he did, I was welcomed with open arms. Seeing Laura in her natural habitat meant that I learnt and got to love so many new things about her, even when I didn’t think that was possible. Especially finding out that she sulked for almost the entire duration of her stay with her dad - away from me - the month prior. He received a death glare from her after telling me but was easily soothed when I left the chess table to curl up next to her on the couch.

She got her revenge anyway when her Dad pulled me aside to give me a ‘talk’ before we left him. I tried to act nonchalant but when your girlfriend’s father tells you that he’s “glad she has you”, one’s face apparently automatically turns red without one’s permission…

We’d spent most of the summer days living out of my small apartment just off campus. Drawers became hers and my bathroom was quickly filled up with the smell of her fruity products, I only pretended to gag a few times before I gave up and accepted that I loved it.

I’d gone with her to Spain and we spent 3 weeks wandering cobbled streets, taking afternoon siestas covered only by a thin sheet on our bed in the heat, getting drunk on cheap sangria and eating homemade tapas on our rickety Airbnb balcony.

It was during this trip that I decided everywhere was better with Laura. It was also when I booked us tickets to Germany for December, knowing that watching her explore the Christmas markets would be the best gift I could ask for.

As my thoughts settle on the realisation that I will never get tired of being with her, I switch my gaze to where she still lays in the pool. I watch as she slowly moves herself to tread water again and looks for me.

When she sees me, she grins and sinks under the water surface to swim towards me. Her hair fans out in the water and I can’t help the smile that appears on my face as I watch her mermaid-like figure silently and smoothly glide to me.

I feel hands on my feet as she uses them for leverage, pulling herself back up towards to surface and wiping the water away from her eyes as she bobs gently in front of me. She pushes my legs apart to settle between my knees and lean on my thighs, looking up at me and ignoring my suggestive smirk at her action.

My breath hitches a little as I take in her form. The evening sun glistening off her damp skin, hair slicked back and soaking over her shoulders, eyes soft and a bright smile looking into my own. How she manages to make my stomach squirm like that, I’ll never understand.

She reaches her hands forward and rests them on my hips.

“You gonna join me, Karnstein?”

She has a mischievous look on her face and grins as she pinches my sides gently. I wriggle a little and chuckle.
“Nice try, Cupcake, but no thanks. I think after my previous encounter with water submersion, I’ll give it a miss.”

I smile lightly at her but the memory of the event seems to click something in her mind and I watch her eyes dull slightly.

“Sorry, I didn’t even think. Don’t get in, I never want to relive that.”

Her head leans forward to rest on my thigh and I run my hand through her wet hair, working some of the tangles out gently.

“Sweetheart, I wouldn’t. Don’t let that stupid thing upset you, it’s over with now. I’m fine.”

She doesn’t look up but sighs heavily before lifting her head a little to press a lingering kiss to my leg. I smile down at her and bring one of her hands to my own mouth, peppering small kisses until she smiles up at me.

Soft gazes are exchanged until a shrill voice calls across the yard.

“FOOD IS READY, CHILDREN.”

Perry has set the large table up in front of the back porch and Laf is serving the various meats ready for us all to devour.

Laura moves to the side of my legs and pushes herself out of the water using her arms. My mouth goes dry watching her arm muscles work and the water droplets move slowly down her tanned skin.

I’m only snapped out of my thoughts when a towel-clad Laura appears in front of me, kissing my nose and stroking my cheek with one hand. She's grinning and raises her eyebrows in question before taking my hand and dragging me over to the others.

We all eat hungrily, discussing our group dislike for the fact we have to go back to university and work. I partake in the conversation here and there, choosing mostly to keep one hand on Laura’s thigh, stroking small patterns with my thumb and handling my food with the other hand.

“Are you guys staying at Carmilla’s apartment this year or are you going back to the dorms?” Laf pipes up from the end of the table and Laura answers before I can swallow my food.

“We’re going back to the dorms, for now, it’s easier to be closer to everything. We’ll need the library and professors a lot more this year so it makes sense to go back, right Carm?”

She turns to me, a small but bright smile on her face and I kiss her forehead lightly before looking at Laf and answering.

“Yeah, we don’t really want more stress than necessary. We can always use the apartment for the holidays or weekend breaks if we need them. We have a double bed though thanks to some contacts of mine, I couldn’t take another year of this bed hog almost knocking me out every night.”

The group erupts in quiet laughter while Laura turns to me with an unimpressed look, I just squeeze her thigh gently and chuckle.

We finish up our food and Laura drags me to the porch swing, curling into my side and sighing happily as she watches the boys try to drag Laf onto the soccer pitch.
I turn my nose into her hair and close my eyes, I’m almost drifting off when I feel her stir beside me. When I open my eyes, she’s staring at me carefully, head tilted to the side.

“What’s wrong? Do I have ketchup on my face or something?”

She smiles at me then and brings her hands up to cup my face. She doesn’t say anything, just bringing my lips down to slide over hers. After a few seconds and a suck on my lower lip, she pulls away.

“I really fucking love you, you know that right?”

My smile widens tenfold and I tuck a loose strand of hair behind her ear.

“I do know that... what brought that on? Is my ability to eat burgers and still look sexy appealing to you?” I wink and smirk at her while she giggles softly into my shoulder.

“Well of course, but mainly the fact that I could never have pictured my summer being any better than it has been and...well...you’re the main reason for that.”

My smirk changes to a soft smile as I bring her hands up to kiss her knuckles and return the sentiment.

“Likewise, cutie. I’d follow you anywhere.”

Her smile makes my chest flutter and she places a few gentle kisses on my shoulder before lifting her gaze again and whispering.

“Let’s go home.”

As soon as the door is open, I head towards the bathroom. As much as I love the summer sun, the smell of chlorine and the tacky feeling to my sun tan lotion-covered body is starting to get on my nerves.

“I need to get under that shower, the smell of chlorine will stick to our sheets for weeks otherwise.”

Pushing the door open and pulling my hair tie out of the ponytail on top of my head, I proceed to ditch my shorts and t-shirt, leaning over the tub to turn on the shower ready.

I turn on a Spotify playlist and then look down to rifle through the drawers, looking for a new razor amongst the plethora of random items Carm seem to have stored in here.

I finally find one but before I can make a move, I feel gentle arms wrap themselves around my bare middle. Looking up into the mirror, I see Carmilla with her chin resting on my shoulder and a look of adoration in her eyes as she drinks in the sight of us. I lift my left arm to graze her cheek with my hand and she hums in content. Her fingers splay out across my stomach and she brushes her thumb underneath the line of my bikini top.

“You are incredible.”

I feel a blush rise from my chest to my cheeks and I link her fingers with mine. She smiles at my embarrassment and leans her head forward to kiss her way from my shoulder to my ear. When she reaches it she whispers.
“Every time I look at you, you always find a way to leave me breathless. I keep seeing new parts of you so that every time I think my love for you is at full capacity, I just fall all over again.”

My heart feels as though it may exhaust itself with how fast it’s beating and I melt in Carmilla’s arms. Turning around but not leaving her grip, I rest my hands either side of her face and kiss her gently, running the tip of my tongue along her lower lip before placing a final kiss there.

“Join me, will you?”

Her soft eyes change from adoration to desire and she speaks so softly that I barely hear her.

“You never need to ask, Cupcake.”

After pulling away all the string of my bikini and letting it fall to the floor, she strips herself of her sweaty clothing and follows me as I step under the stream of water.

Coming up behind me, she lathers my shampoo in her hands and works her fingers through my scalp, supporting my weight easily as I lean back against her front. She leaves lingering kisses on my wet skin each time she rinses through the products and only laughs lightly when I use the same shampoo on her.

Attempting to get the bodies clean is another mission and before I know it, a soft hand has left its place washing my stomach and snaked its way between my thighs. I sigh heavily and lean my head back to drop against her shoulder as she works her way through my folds.

It’s only minutes before I’m writhing against the wall of the shower, her lips on my neck, one hand holding me up by the waist and the other where I need her the most. The feel of her hot breath against my skin and the way she touches me leaves me in a shaking mess in front of her, kissing me languidly as she brings me down from my high.

As she moves to get more shower gel, I sink to my knees, gently turning her around and chuckling softly as I watch her confused eyes look for me before glancing down and realising where I am.

Her hand in my hair and my mouth on her clit, utter bliss. I give her no time to catch up, keeping a fierce and steady pace to bring her over the edge.

Two orgasms and one bang on the ceiling from our downstairs neighbour later and we’re curled up, naked and still damp on our fresh sheets. I wonder whether the neighbour will ever realise that he can bang on his ceiling as much as he likes, Carmilla will never hold back on her noise.

With my head on her chest and her arm wrapped tightly around my shoulder, we’re almost asleep before she taps me gently on the forehead.

When I look up at her, she’s smiling softly but there is worry in her eyes.

“What’s wrong?”

She blinks hard before reaching over to the small cabinet by the bed and pulling out a chain. It’s only when she places the chain on her chest in front of me that I see what she’s presenting me with.

“Carm…”

“It’s a key.” She interrupts, nerves evident in her voice

“You don’t have to take it if you don’t want it but I figured that we won’t be with each other every
second when we’re back at school and I just want you to be able to come here whenever you want. Either with me or on your own even, if you like.”

She is watching me intently, nibbling on her bottom lip and her chest rising quicker underneath my chin.

“Are you serious? You want me to have a key to your place, Carm that’s…I’m honoured.”

I laugh a little but lean up to kiss her gently, taking the chain in my hand and slipping it over my head to rest against my chest. I pat it fondly and when I glance back to her, she looks so happy and childlike that I almost burst with love for her.

“I want you to feel that wherever my home is, your home is there too. I love you more than anything I’ve ever experienced, Laura. Nowhere is home without you.”

Her voice is quiet and my emotions are all over the place. I feel a lone tear escape but brush it away quickly before raising my head and kissing her soundly. My heart pumps so loudly in my ears that I can barely think straight but my heart knows what it needs all by itself.

“This means everything and I hope you know that. I love you too, Carm.”

Her smile is watery as she tucks my head back underneath her chin. Our breaths fall into step with each other and it’s not long before the day hits us both and we’re out like a light.

My last thought before sleep is of her. It’s always of her. And it will always be of her.

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Laura is awake and seemingly out of the flat when I wake up. A note has been left on the pillow to say that she’s out getting breakfast things.

I smile at her eagerness before wandering slowly to the bathroom. The heat hits me quickly and I realise that she must have had a shower not long ago before she left. I grab my toothbrush and as I move to check my appearance, I notice there is a note amongst the fog of the steamed-up mirror.

_I love you with all my heart. PS – You’re adorable when you sleep_

Will you regret giving her that key?

Hell no, you can definitely get used to this.

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