Ready to Rumble

by moorelets

Summary

Yang Xiao Long, hottest new pro-wrestler, wild child and Blake Belladonna, newly graduated journalist's biggest hurdle on her way to a career in writing. After an interview gone surprisingly well, tensions grow when they’re both photographed by paparazzi in a compromising position. Media outlets everywhere decide to question their relationship, or lack thereof, and it’s not long before they play along. A Bumbleby fake dating AU.

Notes

so. hey. i'm back writing bumbleby again because this ship will never let me live. this fic will be kind of self indulgent in that i'm weak for fake dating. and yang and blake being awkward together. i hope you like it!
Chapter 1

tell ur roommate is her number 1 fan!

That’s what Sun’s last text said, although the seven winking emojis definitely weren’t necessary. Irritable as Blake was, staking it out in the gym parking lot to avoid the inevitable, she sent him a quick one word reply and reluctantly slipped her phone back into her bag.

She’d put it off for fifteen minutes now. Her big break. Her chance to make a name for herself. The golden opportunity to finally claw her way out of the dull life of an intern.

The only thing standing in her way was the newest pro-wrestling sensation turned notorious wild child, Yang Xiao Long, also known by the nickname ‘Yangarang’ by her die hard fans. In all honesty, despite her overnight fame and incredible rise in popularity, Blake hadn’t known much about her other than what she’d seen on the cover of countless fitness and sports magazines.

Blake just wasn’t that type of person. And that’s where Sun had come in, spouting trivia and supposedly fun facts about the Yangarang, after Blake asked him for a lesson in wrestle mania. He was more than happy to fill in any blanks in Blake’s knowledge, which meant a lot. She was more of a ‘stay at home and read all night’ girl than a ‘go out and watch two people fight while other people yell’ girl.

As it turned out, Yang was something of a nightmare, at least according to her frequent appearances in tabloids and gossip magazines. Much to Blake’s amusement, Sun always fiercely denied the supposed horror stories of Yang stumbling out of bars and clubs in the early hours of the morning and the occasional scandal surrounding her love life. Then there were the rumours of her using her uncle, Qrow Branwen, as a means into the wrestling scene. According to Sun, Branwen was the pro-wrestling champion two decades ago but became a drunken recluse after retirement.

Those touchy subjects made up the majority of Blake’s list of questions. She’d had close to zero say in choosing them and even less say in when and where she’d be meeting with Yang.

That had led her here, to the gym that Yang had trained at since she was twelve years old. She had Sun to thank for that useless piece of info.

Collecting her notebook and tucking a pen behind her ear, Blake climbed out of her car and made her way towards the gym. Fall was in full swing by now, littering the parking lot with red and orange leaves. What stood out most, though, was the bright yellow and black motorcycle parked precariously close to the entrance of the gym.

Blake frowned a little as she pushed open the door, mentally preparing herself to face a likely arrogant, shallow, immature, party gir-

Whatever. She could handle anything somebody like Yang Xiao Long could throw at her. She was totally used to it. Sun was her roommate after all.

Honestly, she didn’t know why she was so shaken up by it. It wasn’t like she was here to make friends with the girl. Ask questions, write the article, hopefully impress her boss. That was her job. Yang Xiao Long was nothing but a story to her.

“That’s all you’ve got?” came a voice, echoing off the walls. Blake peered around the corner, catching a glimpse of a wrestling ring. It wasn’t until she came closer that she saw the owner of the voice, laying on her back, arms behind her head as if she were having an afternoon nap. “Man, I’m
gonna fall asleep here.” At that, the red haired girl pinning her down leaned back and let her go, grinning when she saw Blake.

“Ooh, it's your next victim!” the girl pretty much yelled.

Blake wrinkled her nose. “Excuse me?”

The girl on the floor laughed and pushed the redhead backwards, sending her into giggles. Blake frowned. Some welcome this was.

Unfortunately for Blake and her plan to keep her cool during this whole… thing, she felt her stomach drop when the tall blonde turned to her, rubbing the back of her neck like she was embarrassed. And Blake actually found it… cute.

That was Yang Xiao Long. Blake had seen enough high definition photos of her and her abs to decide that those photos didn’t do her justice. Said photos had never done anything for Blake, but seeing her in the flesh, with her messy bangs stuck to the side of her face and the sports bra showing off pretty much everything… well, Blake could suddenly see why so many guys and girls were into her.

Yang vaulted over the ropes, landing in front of Blake. “Sorry about Nora,” she said, rolling her eyes as the redhead skipped off to the showers.

“Blake Belladonna,” Blake said, holding out her hand. It was formal and awkward but she had no idea what else to say.

To her surprise, Yang took her hand right away, shaking it boisterously. “I’m Yang!”

“I know who you are,” Blake said quickly, averting her eyes.

“Uh… yeah, right.” Yang did that thing again. That… smile.

“You’ve been everywhere lately. It’s hard to find a magazine without you on the cover,” Blake said, in an effort to break the ice.

“Tell me about it,” she said, laughing. "I guess you're pretty sick of me, huh?"

“Not yet.” Blake glanced down at the notebook in her arms. “But I'm sure you'll be sick of me after I ask you these questions.”

“I'm used to it by now,” Yang said, grabbing a towel from a nearby bench and slinging it over her shoulder. “Seriously, I’ve answered the ‘who are you dating now’ and ‘what’s your workout routine’ questions like… a million times. Not fun.” She grinned. "Steer clear of those and we're good."

“I think I can do better than that,” Blake lied. She knew she had a few of those superficial, stupid questions on her list but she wouldn't let Yang know that.

“Awesome!” she said, and Blake could tell the bright smile on her face was completely genuine. “Give me five to freshen up?”

Blake nodded. "Go ahead."

Yang disappeared into the showers, leaving Blake to wonder where exactly that bad reputation had come from. Sure, first impressions weren't always the most reliable but the happy-go-lucky, bubbly girl she'd spoken to moments ago seemed a far cry from the mental image Blake had thought up.
She sat down on the bench, absentmindedly doodling flowers in the margin of her notebook until
Yang came bounding out of the showers. Her shorts and sports bra had been swapped for a loose
fitting yellow hoodie and black jeans. A dorky looking beanie sat on her head, emblazoned with the
logo of some band Blake had never heard of. She hadn't expected that.

"Hey, sorry that took so long," she called, sprinting over to Blake and unknowingly flustering her.
"Long hair, don't care, right?" She gestured to her damp hair.

"It's no problem," Blake replied, snapping her notebook closed.

Yang raised an eyebrow at Blake's skittish behaviour before shrugging. "So how does this work?"

"Like a regular interview," Blake said. "You've done them before, right?"

"Yeah, the thing is... uh, well, I don't usually take this stuff seriously."

"What?" This girl was too much.

"My manager's in charge of this stuff. All I do is show up, make a few jokes, flirt with people,
pretend to punch things," she replied as if she was proud of it, shrugging one shoulder and sending
Blake a mischievous smile. "I have fun with it, you know? It's not serious." Blake stared at her,
trying to figure her out. "It’s my character. If you’ve seen any of my matches you’d kno-"

“I haven’t,” Blake admitted.

“Oh,” Yang said. "Well I just like wrestling. I never signed up for the other stuff like interviews and
photo shoots. I told my manager and he was like 'we'll turn you into a character' and bam, I made it.
It started as a way to separate wrestling and my personal life but man, the last few months have
been crazy. I've blown up big time. So I guess you could say it's working for me."

Blake stared at her. "So what's the problem? You're used to playing the character now, aren't you?"

"Yeah, and don't get me wrong, being the scary wrestling chick is fun and everything but you...
uh..." There was that embarrassed look on her face again. "I realised I've never actually been
interviewed as me."

If only Sun could see her now, sat in front of his wrestling hero, listening to her pour her heart out to
Blake of all people, a complete stranger. She gripped her notebook tightly. "What's changed?" she
asked. "Why do you suddenly want to do a serious interview?"

Yang smiled and shoved her hands in her hoodie pockets. “Let's just say I’ve never been interviewed by someone like you.”

“What does that mean?”

“Sooo how about it?” Yang asked, grinning and ignoring the question. She turned around and made
jumping into the wrestling ring look easy, vaulting straight over. Then, with a laugh, she held open
the ropes for Blake. “Wanna step into my office?”

Ten minutes later and Blake was sat cross-legged on the floor of the ring, opposite cross-legged
Yang Xiao Long, nodding along to everything she said and writing whatever she could down in her
notebook. The sheet of questions her boss had handed to her that morning lay forgotten next to her. It
wasn't like she needed it. Yang was doing most of the talking, totally unprompted, smiling and
laughing and teasing. Blake couldn't say she hated it. Not at all.
Somehow it felt dishonest, writing an article about Yang Xiao Long's childhood, her turbulent rise to fame, her family. Blake couldn't shake that thought as she finished her note taking, hand burning from overexertion. This was Yang's first time revealing so much about herself. Her real self.

"Ugh, you have no idea how good that felt!" Yang groaned, standing up and stretching. "I've wanted to get that stuff off my chest for a while."

"You won't get in trouble?" Blake asked. "With your manager I mean."

"Eh, I can handle him," she said nonchalantly. "What's he gonna do? Fire me?"

Blake smirked but tried to hide it by leaning down to pick her notebook up. "Mhm. I don't suppose he'd want to deal with your crazed army of fans."

"Crazed army? I'm offended!" Yang joked. Almost on cue, a high-pitched voice screamed Yang's name from across the gym. Blake raised an eyebrow and shook her head. "Okay, I see your point."

"Good luck with that," Blake said. Truthfully, she was surprised this was only the first fan of Yang's they'd come across in such a public place. "It was nice meeting you." And it was. "Goodbye." She held out her hand.

Yang eyed her for a moment that seemed to stretch on forever, like she was expecting more. Blake looked back, extending her hand further. It was agonising, until that excited fan waiting awkwardly by the doors called her name again and Yang had no choice but to shake Blake's hand and jump out of the ring. With a sigh, Blake climbed out and tucked her notebook under her arm. It was just like she'd planned. Yang Xiao Long was nothing but a story to her.

What she hadn't expected was to walk out into a parking lot full of fans, notably comprising of mostly teenage boys. Blake rolled her eyes and tried to squeeze through a group of girls crammed in close to the doors.

"-and I was like, I've been a yangirl since, like, three years ago' and she said-"

"Excuse me," Blake said through gritted teeth. One of the girls' bags was caught on her sweater. Ugh. Eventually she managed to tear herself free. "Yangirl?" she muttered to herself as she walked away. "Really?" Of course Yang would have fangirls as well as a legion of hormonal teenage boys on her side. That came as no surprise. Though it did give Blake a strange feeling of satisfaction that she now knew Yang better than even her most hardcore fans did.

Where there were rabid fans, there was paparazzi too, apparently. Blake noticed one guy snapping pics of the entrance to the gym every few seconds, as if he couldn't wait for Yang to suddenly appear. It was all too much for Blake. It was no wonder Yang had decided to start playing a character.

Blake was about to cross the parking lot when the screaming started. "Yaaaang! Yang! Yangaaaaang!" Sun had said something about fan chants, she remembered, turning to the source of the noise.

"What is it with wrestling fans?" she muttered. But she didn't look away. At least not until two huge bodyguards threw open the doors and a swell in the shrill screaming made Blake believe Yang had come out too. It was so hard to see anything.

She definitely hadn't been looking out for Yang in that sea of faces, but that didn't mean she was surprised when they locked eyes from across the parking lot. Yang waved at her as if she was an old friend or something, grinning ear to ear. Some jealous fans snapped their heads around, sending
Blake the death glare. Still, Blake waved back before turning away. She was being so stupid. Why was it taking her so long to leave? She'd never had a problem running away before.

Annoyed, she turned on her heel, right into the path of an incoming car. There was a screech of tyres and a loud horn and Blake was pulled backwards by something.

"That was way too close!"

"Wha-" Blake tried to say, voice muffled by a yellow hoodie and the smell of... was that citrus? It smelled good.

"Blake? You okay?"

Maybe if she knew what happened she'd be able to- oh. Oh no. She was in Yang's arms. "You-"

"Hey," she said simply, smiling.

Blake's heart skipped but that was soon out of her head. Cameras were flashing, Yang's hand was tangled in her hair and Blake's hand was in an... awkward position on Yang's chest. She pulled back, eyes wide. "Sorry."

"Hey!" Yang yelled, looking over at the paparazzi and flipping them off.

Blake couldn't help but laugh. "Let me guess, that was 'in character'?"

"Who knows?" Yang shrugged. "But it made me feel better."

Just then, after a heart pounding near death experience and an equally heart pounding split second spent held in Yang Xiao Long's arms, Blake remembered Sun. It was a Saturday morning, which meant he was either playing video games with Neptune or watching cartoons all alone. "I have a message I was meant to tell you," she quickly said. Yang raised an eyebrow, shoving her hands in her pockets. "My roommate is your biggest fan."

The smile on Yang's face was enough to make Blake's heart skip. But, honestly, it was nothing compared to what she did next. Leaning forward, she looked Blake right in the eyes. "I wish you were my biggest fan!"

Blake crossed her arms and stared back, trying to suppress a smirk. "Keep wishing."
hi! excuse the late update. blake and yang looked at each other for the first time in two volumes and i almost had a breakdown. anyway i hope you like this chapter!

Pro wrestling beauty Yang Xiao Long spotted kissing mystery girl outside childhood gymnasium!

That’s what the headline on the screen of Sun’s phone said as he shoved it in Blake’s sleepy face. Granted, it took her a few tries to read it, rubbing her eyes and demanding what the time was. Sun was never the type to randomly wake her up. She was usually the one dragging him out of bed.

“Oh my god,” she managed to say when Sun clumsily scrolled down the page a little.

“Tong, right?” He grinned. “This is great!”

“Sun, give me the phone. Now.”

It was a prank. Obviously. Or photoshopped. Or just… whatever. It was too early for this. Still, Blake somehow mustered the energy to snatch the phone from Sun. He was way too excited about this for five in the morning.

However tired and embarrassed she was, Blake had to admit it did look like they were kissing. The photo underneath the headline, unfortunately posted seven times throughout the whole article at different angles, was definitely familiar. She would recognise that obnoxiously bright yellow hoodie and the equally bright smile of Yang Xiao Long anywhere.

They'd been caught at a bad angle. That was all. But Blake's hand on Yang's chest and Yang's hand caught in her hair definitely wouldn't look innocent to anyone with an active imagination. Blake scrolled down, ignoring whatever it was Sun was rambling about, to a blurry picture of Yang flipping off the paparazzi, captioned '(Xiao Long) wasn't happy with the interruption' which bought a small smile to Blake’s face despite the craziness of everything.

"I knew you were acting weird when you came back yesterday!" Sun said, throwing himself on Blake's bed without an invitation. "Totally called it!" He was practically beaming. "So what happened?"

Blake glanced up at him for a split second. "Nothing happened."

"Psh, sure."

"I'm serious, Sun. It's not like that." Scrolling down to the bottom of the page hadn't been a good idea. There were two hundred and sixty five comments and if Blake had learnt anything from her time on the internet, that was never a good sign. This was no different, considering the age range of Yang’s obsessive fans who probably thought if they made enough fan accounts they’d one day be able to date her. "I can't believe this is happening," she said with a sigh.

"Hey, me neither," Sun said, that grin still on his face. "I mean, my roommate and my wrestling hero dating? Hello free tickets!"
"Dating?" Blake blurted out, suddenly feeling fully awake.

"Hold up. So you're not dating?"

"No, we're not," she said, irritable. "Sun, I met her yesterday." Honestly, lately Blake had sworn off dating, real relationships and made up by some bottom of the barrel 'news' site relationships included. It had been a while since she’d been with someone, at least in that kind of way. The drunken kiss with Velvet that both of them came to regret and Sun’s ‘jokes’ about what could have happened between them during their teenage years were about as close as Blake had come to any kind of action since the mistake known as Adam. And the less said about that mess, the better.

Finally, after nearly four years of living together, Sun seemed to be able to tell that Blake didn't want to talk, or think, about the stupid article anymore and left her to get dressed in peace.

When she emerged from her room he was still sulking on the couch, still half naked, which by now was so commonplace with him that Blake didn't even blink. "Good morning," she said, like nothing was out of the ordinary, and sat down at the table.

"What? Seriously? You're just gonna ignore this?"

Blake placed her laptop down in front of her, intending to get in a full day of writing. Without any interruptions. "Mhm-hm."

After two minutes of silence save for the whirring of Blake's old, dying laptop fan, Sun let out a groan. "This sucks."

"You'll get over it."

"Think about all the free matches I could've seen!" he whined, stretching out across the couch before mumbling, "Okay, no, never think about that. Ever."

Blake peeked at him over her laptop screen, suddenly feeling a little guilty for brushing him off so much. She knew he couldn't afford to go to wrestling matches, he'd complained about it to her enough times. But it wasn't Blake's fault that just because Yang Xiao Long had grabbed her and held her for all of five seconds, everyone with access to the internet concluded that they were in some kind of secret relationship. It was ridiculous and embarrassing and Blake wouldn't let it get in the way of doing her job.

It was a total mystery then, how she'd ended up with five tabs about Yang's love life open. It just kind of happened. The photo of her and Yang 'kissing' was the first thing you saw if you googled her name now, as if it was huge, breaking news. Blake narrowed her eyes and realised just how lucky she was to be referred to as 'mystery girl' and not by her real name.

Sighing, she thought back to that moment outside the gym, before they'd been swarmed with fans, when Yang had leaned forward like she was going to kiss her, just to say, “I have a match here next Tuesday, so... if you feel like coming out I can save you a couple tickets.” She'd grinned. “Oh, and bring your roommate! Gotta meet my biggest fan, right?” She'd said it with such confidence, with that smile that seemed to come to her so, so easily.

That was just one of the details Blake hadn't told Sun about. She'd planned to keep it a secret and pretend Yang had never said it. To go on with her life without ever seeing her again. And now that she'd found herself awkwardly tangled up in Yang's complicated life, Blake felt even more determined to stay away.

Needless to say, Sun's face when Blake finally caved in and told him absolutely everything,
including the way Yang had pretty much saved her life, was nothing compared to his face when they pulled up to the gym parking lot.

"She's been training here since she was twelve!" Sun said excitedly, earning an eye roll from Blake.

"I know."

"And that's her bike!" he yelled, pointing to the yellow and black motorcycle Blake had seen parked in the exact same place the other day. "Uh... Bumblebee! Yeah, Bumblebee!"

"She named her motorcycle?" Blake muttered as they made their way to the entrance, trying not to smile. "How do you know all of this?"

Sun turned to her, pretending to be offended. "I wasn't kidding when I said I was her number one fan!"

After being shoved into the doors a few times by eager fans on her way in, Blake was stopped by a guy close to twice her size demanding tickets. Like always, Sun felt the need to butt in with his whole overprotective best friend thing he'd had going on since high school, but Blake rolled her eyes and told the guy Yang Xiao Long herself had saved them two tickets. It went as well as could be expected until Blake told him her name. The guy then gave a nod and turned away from them, yelling and pointing at a group of teenagers trying to sneak in.

If Blake had ever thought that perhaps maybe she could get into this whole wrestling thing, the idea was thrown away as soon as Sun dragged her by the arm, right into the rowdy crowd.

From the very little Blake had ever seen of this so-called sport on TV, the set up in the gym was... well, modest. No flashing lights. No cameras rolling. Just a ring and a crowd. Sun had rambled about a lot of things during the ride there, and Blake had tried to listen, but the one thing she did remember was that apparently this match was something of a gift to Yang's fans. It was in Yang's hometown, the gym she'd been going to for years, it was all very sentimental.

Or it would have been, if Blake had ever seen Yang wrestle before. Surrounded by die hard fans, she felt a little out of place and awkward.

Then Yang came out looking every bit of that character she'd told Blake about. Flaunting everything she had, punching the air, earning screams every time she flexed. Blake had to roll her eyes. Nothing much about the whole display surprised Blake, from the yellow and black crop top that showed off enough to make Blake feel a little flushed to the orange scarf around her neck, which according to Sun was her signature thing. As expected, the crowd went wild, whistling and chanting her name, Sun included. He'd already tried to get Blake to join in a few times, which she was staunchly against.

Yang's opponent then appeared, with notably less screams and some significantly loud boos. Blake watched Yang taunt the much bigger guy, shoving him a bit before jumping in the ring. She had such... energy. Her hair swirled in an unruly mess behind her as she riled up the crowd, daring her opponent to get in the ring with her.

Blake wouldn't admit it to anyone, even if they asked, but it had been ten minutes and she couldn't hold it in anymore. Sun sent her a surprised, then smug look when she blurted out Yang's name just as the blonde slammed into her opponent from behind, jumping off the ropes as if it was the easiest thing ever. It was embarrassing, but by the time Yang flipped herself out of the ring and onto the ropes, planning a body slam or something, Blake was cheering along with the rest of the fans.
Yang won, because of course and Sun pulled Blake further into the crowd, yelling something in her ear about how he knew she'd get into it eventually. Blake rolled her eyes, being shoved this way and that by people behind her. Yang was still in the ring, doing some kind of victory pose while making fun of her defeated opponent, when her eyes drifted across the crowd and found Blake. For a second it looked like she wanted to wave and yell like she had done before, but she just smiled and turned to vault over the ropes and out of the ring.

Blake thought she'd gotten lucky and avoided another encounter with her supposed girlfriend until the crowd started to thin out. "You came!" a voice that was unmistakably Yang's yelled and of course everyone heard her because she was the one everyone in the room had their eyes on. Blake froze and hoped it wasn't long until the ground swallowed her up. Yang jogged over, giving a weak wave. How someone covered in a sheen of sweat with a dirty towel slung around their neck could still look attractive was beyond Blake, but somehow Yang Xiao Long could make it happen.

"Wha- if I knew we were gonna meet her I would've worn a tie!" Sun whispered close to Blake's ear.

Blake sent him a look. "No, you wouldn't."

"Hey," Yang said, sending Blake a smile. "I didn't think I'd see you again."

Neither did Blake. But she didn’t say that. “Well, according to the internet we’re dating now.” No, what the hell was she saying? “So I suppose we’ll be seeing more of each other from now on.”

For the first time, Yang looked a little lost for words. Blake should've known better though, because two seconds later, she shrugged. “Oh, yeah, that happens all the time! No big deal."

"Excuse me?"

"Pretty awkward, right?"

Blake frowned. "This has happened before?"

"Yep. Loads of times." Yang put her hands on her hips. "You know all those magazines with me on the cover? They think I'm screwing around with everyone I hang out with." While she definitely could’ve worded that better, Blake watched her with that slightly flushed face and couldn’t do anything other than smile. For someone with Yang’s… talents, she could be really adorable. "So anyway... how’d you like the match?"

"It was-"

"Freaking awesome!" Sun interrupted, which honestly Blake should have seen coming.

"Oh, this is your number one fan, by the way," Blake introduced, rolling her eyes. “The one I told you about."

"Number one fan, huh?" Yang asked, grinning.

"Oh man, I've followed you since forever! Like, not follow in a creepy way, just your-"

"Sun."

"Sorry! I'm freaking out here!" he said, looking from Blake back to Yang. "Blake was totally into it too! Even though she acts like she's too good fo-" Blake nudged him below the ribs, hard, and immediately shut him up.
Yang raised an eyebrow. "Really?"

"Is that so hard to believe?"

"Well," Yang started. "You're uh..."

"I'm what?"

"You just don't seem like the wrestling type I guess," Yang said quickly.

"You invited me," Blake said back, though she did feel like smiling. What was it with Yang that did that? It was infuriating.

"Well, yeah," Yang said as if it was obvious. "I wanted to see you again somehow." Then she realised what she'd said and looked away, awkwardly fiddling with the towel around her neck. "Uhhh, I mean-"

It was a bad time. Though, admittedly, there would probably never have been a good time for them to be interrupted by a reporter. He seemed to come out of nowhere, along with a guy with a camera and a large group of fans that looked at Blake like she didn't belong there. No. This was not good.

"Are the rumors true?" the reporter asked, coming much too close for comfort. "Who is this mystery girl?" Yang widened her eyes and glanced at Blake. "How long have you been dating?"

It was then that Blake realised there was only one, very awkward, very risky, way out of this.
It could've gone better. Yang had slammed her fist into her palm and assured Blake that she'd 'got
this', before proving that no, she hadn't got anything. Seeing the totally badass, fearless Yang Xiao
Long taken down by a scrawny guy with glasses asking questions might have been funny if the
situation wasn't so awkward, but right then and there, Blake just wanted to run away.

"Can you tell us about your first date?" he continued, totally relentless.

Yang made a face. “Nope. I'm good.”

“Your first kiss?”

“Seriously?” If she wasn’t angry before, Blake could see her exploding any second. “What part of no
don’t you guys understand?”

“Is there a reason why you’re getting so emotional?” the reporter pushed.

“Yeah, you won’t get out of my face!”

“So there are problems in your relationship?”

Yang frowned. “How many times do I have to say it before you get it? Blake's just a… friend.”

Blake wouldn't have said that, but she couldn't ignore that hesitation in Yang's voice, which up until
then had been confident enough to make Blake believe she was thinking of punching the guy. What
he was doing definitely counted as harassment, especially when he turned to Blake for the first time
and sent her the most obnoxious, triumphant smile.

"Ah, so her name is Blake!" he announced.

Blake froze. This was not happening. She'd graduated from mystery girl to her real name and surely
that meant the beginning of the end. "I-" she started, but by then he was in her face, asking more
questions and Blake could already see the crowd getting bigger. Just what they didn't need. She even
tried to look for Sun, probably because right now she could do with that overprotective side of his,
but he must have drifted into the crowd a while ago because she couldn't see him anywhere.

It could have been the look on Yang’s face after the guy asked Blake what it was like to date
somebody with Yang’s... questionable reputation, or simply the intense embarrassment Blake had felt
when he'd asked her to describe their relationship in three words, a stupid thing to ask even if
they were together, but Blake had decided enough was enough and reached for Yang's hand. Their
fingers brushed and all of a sudden it felt easier for Blake to do what she needed to do.

“I was just about to leave. Are you coming?” she asked, grimacing and curling a finger around
Yang’s pinkie. She could've added a babe or some other silly pet name but Blake just wasn't that far
into it yet.

She shouldn't have been so surprised that Yang caught on as quickly as she did, but then she had to go and intertwine their fingers and grip Blake's hand tightly, catching her completely off guard with an inappropriate wink.

It was ambiguous enough to look like perhaps, maybe, if you squinted, they were more than just good friends but not quite enough to convince the wide-eyed fans they passed on their way out. Despite that, the feeling of Yang’s hand in hers, fingers intertwined, probably too intimately for two almost-strangers, made Blake wish that perhaps she’d had the guts to do more.

It had all started as a way to shut the reporter up and get away from the judgemental stares from fans, but when they got outside and Yang still hadn’t let go of her hand,Blake averted her gaze, heart racing just a bit. 

Yang caught her reflection in the glass doors and widened her eyes. "Yikes. I didn't even get to shower."

"Would you have preferred staying in there?" Blake asked, one eyebrow raised.

Yang smiled and looked at her out of the corner of her eye. "Good point."

"I'm surprised he hasn't followed us out here."

"Yeah, well if he does he's so dead," Yang said and Blake rolled her eyes. She would've said something else, but Yang's eyes wandered to their hands before she had a chance. Blake didn't let go, she just kept her eyes on Yang until she cleared her throat and let out an awkward laugh that didn't help the situation at all. "So... we're really doing this, huh?" Yang finally asked.

“What’s ‘this’?” Blake replied, knowing exactly what this was. Yang looked confused, then embarrassed, before shrugging. How could Blake resist? “I suppose we are.”

Blake was on the receiving end of a few dirty looks from fans as she waited by the doors. But considering what she'd done, stealing Yang away like some kind of possessive girlfriend, she was getting off pretty easy. Though that wouldn't stop some of the more die hard fans from leaving death threats and hate comments for her online. She knew how this stuff worked.

After what seemed like hours, Sun appeared next to her, out of breath for whatever reason. "Where'd she go?!" he asked desperately, grabbing Blake's shoulders.

"Inside," Blake said, thinking back to how Yang had slipped in through the back doors you weren't ever supposed to use, apparently.

"What?!” He let go of Blake and threw his hands up. "I was gonna ask her to sign my shirt!"

Blake sighed. If there had been an easy way to tell your super fan roommate that you'd gotten Yang Xiao Long's number, hurriedly written on a ripped piece of paper in your pocket, without it sounding like you were bragging, Blake hadn't heard of it. And that was before she even considered telling him that they were now totally pretend fake girlfriends. She could guess his reaction already and it involved some yelling and a declaration of never washing his hand again if he'd held hands with his wrestling hero for as long as Blake had.

Her life went on as it always did until she woke up the next morning to a good morning text from Yang, as if they were really dating, along with an invitation to meet at the gym that afternoon. It was short notice and Blake hadn't even started writing her article but Sun asked her what she was smiling
at as she sat staring at her phone and she realised that maybe she did want to go.

There was no sign of Yang when Blake arrived. No black and yellow bike, no legion of crazed fans. Blake climbed out of her car shakily, feeling almost exactly as nervous as she had done the first time she'd pulled up into that parking lot.

Sighing, she waited, leaning against the wall, checking her phone now and then. Somehow it felt just like Yang to be fashionably late. Blake thought about texting her just as Yang swerved into the parking lot on her bike, no doubt over the speed limit. She threw off her helmet and waved a few times, much to Blake's embarrassment.

“Have you seen this?” she asked, jogging up to Blake with a dorky grin on her face. She flashed her phone at her and rubbed the back of her neck. “Can you believe they think the gym is our go-to date place?”

Blake could. Slipping her phone into her pocket, she smiled. “Well you’ve invited me here twice now, so you can’t blame them.”

“Yeah, but not for dates. That’s so lame.” Yang smirked. “If I was taking you on a real date I’d take you to, like… a pizza place or something.”

“How romantic.”

Yang played with her phone for a few seconds. "People are going crazy trying to figure out who you are!"

"I can imagine."

"This is gonna be so much fun!"

Blake stared at her. "So why did you invite me here?"

"Oh, uh..." Yang looked like she was trying to think up a reason right then and there. "It's our go-to date place?" she tried, and Blake raised an eyebrow. She wanted to say something else, and she would've done, Yang looked like she was expecting it, but then two teenage fans practically pounced on Yang from behind, demanding photos and fumbling over ten different ways of saying 'I love you'. All Yang could do was laugh nervously and glance at Blake a few times. "Whoa," she said between laughs, "uh... sorry but you guys know I'm taken!"

This time it was Yang carefully slipping her hand in Blake’s, giving the fans a rehearsed smile. Fake as it was, Blake smiled too, wishing holding Yang’s hand like this didn’t make her heart pound as much as it did. Ugh. If she kept this up she was in so much trouble. "Hi," she said, for some reason, and the fans looked at each other like they were trying not to laugh.

"So that's real?" one of them asked.

Yang grinned. "Yep."

"Oh." They nudged each other and Blake decided she really didn't like them. "She doesn't seem like your type."

What was that supposed to mean? Blake frowned but kept quiet while Yang took a few selfies and signed one of the girls’ gym bag, swirling a dumb smiley face underneath her signature.

When they'd left, Yang didn't look at Blake. "For the record, you're totally my type." Then she
winked and strolled into the gym, leaving behind a very confused Blake.

So, it turned out that Yang only wanted to see her to tell her some things she’d apparently forgotten to tell her about during their interview last week, but Blake had other ideas after what she’d said outside. Ideas that weren’t letting her concentrate on anything Yang was saying at all.

“So yeah, that wasn’t a fun Thanksgiving,” Yang said, sweating buckets after a round with the punching bag.

Blake tried to laugh but she had no idea what she’d just said. “Mhm-hmm.” She’d also tried to stop her eyes dropping to Yang's exposed midriff as often as they did but it was almost impossible when the girl looked like... that.

"Uh... Blake?"

"Hm?"

Yang pointed over at the doors, breathing heavily from her workout. "We have a problem."

Blake narrowed her eyes and turned to the doors, just in time to see a whole TV crew filing in.
Chapter 4

Chapter Notes

here's a longer chapter to make up for the last time. i suck. i'm sorry. i hope you like this chapter!

*have you seen yang? she's so gay.*

That’s what one comment on the Youtube video said and it was probably one of the only positive ones Blake had seen. Most of them were pointing out how uncomfortable Blake looked, and she couldn’t disagree. She was an introvert, self proclaimed and proud. But everyone knew introversion was public enemy number one when dealing with paparazzi and overenthusiastic interviewers with video cameras.

It was a Saturday and she really should’ve been doing anything other than curling up alone on the sofa with her phone, scrolling through the comments on the catastrophic interview she and Yang had done at the gym a few days ago.

Honestly, she was still learning how to have fun with it like Yang seemed to be doing. Then again, *Yang* was the one used to playing a character. And that's exactly what she'd done during the interview, cracking jokes and taking most of the attention away from Blake for the entire nine minutes thirty three seconds of the video, which Blake could’ve sworn felt longer during filming.

Blake had asked Sun, like she had done a lot of things, why it was such a big deal that Yang was *maybe* dating Blake. He’d shrugged and said something about Yang being the first openly gay pro-wrestler, which Blake was pretty sure wasn’t true. Even if it was, it shouldn’t have been big enough news for the two of them to be attacked by a camera crew at the gym. And yet Yang had rolled with the punches, probably *so* easy for her, and grinned in the face of awkward personal questions about their non-relationship.

Blake sighed while scrolling past a particularly mean comment, thinking back to how frozen she'd felt in front of that camera. She'd never claimed to be a good actress, or even one at *all*, but next to Yang she looked like she had no clue what she was doing. Finger hovering over play, she made sure she was about to play the right part of the video and then pressed it.

The interviewer had smirked and shoved the mic at Yang. “So how did you meet?”

“It’s kind of a long story,” Yang had said, and Blake remembered how she’d rolled her eyes at her faked enthusiasm. “We’ve been friends since we were kids-” Yang had said other things that Blake had raised an eyebrow at, but her reactions *obviously* hadn’t made it into the final video.

When the video cut to a shot of Blake she turned off her phone because *no*, she wasn't watching that again. Leaving her phone on the table, she decided to head out to her favorite coffee shop a few blocks away. It was out of the way but it was where she went whenever she needed an escape.

As expected, there was a line when she arrived. Someone was holding it up, Blake could see, and she was already irritable. Joining the end, she crossed her arms and hoped no one recognised her as Yang Xiao Long's new girlfriend. Though she supposed maybe it was too early for all of that being
recognised in public thing. Celebrity status couldn't be bought that easily, surely.

The person holding up the line was wearing a yellow hoodie, bright enough to blind everyone behind them, and Blake sucked in a breath at the sight of it.

It was Yang. The sunglasses and the hood covering her famous blonde hair couldn’t fool Blake, or anyone else, probably. She was ordering a strawberry milkshake with extra cream but it wasn’t like Blake was listening in on purpose.

“Thanks,” she mumbled, sounding tired for someone as usually energetic as Yang. Turning around and leaving, she might have looked directly at Blake, but it was so hard to tell behind those sunglasses.

Blake ordered a tea and sat down at a table near the window and tried to convince herself she wasn’t just sitting there to see where Yang had disappeared to.

Luckily she didn’t have to look far. Yang was stood just outside the coffee shop, surrounded by some fans who had also seen through her completely convincing disguise. By now she'd taken off the sunglasses and was posing with a lanky blond guy making a peace sign. Blake watched, trying not to smile or make herself noticeable in any way.

A few minutes passed and Blake was ready to leave. Or, she would’ve been if Yang hadn’t finally seen her when she left the coffee shop and yelled her name, interrupting fans and rushing over to pull Blake into a hug that she wasn’t prepared for. All eyes on them, they separated to a few awws and someone demanding that they pose for a photo. Okay, so maybe she’d been wrong about the not being recognised thing.

Wherever Yang went, a pushy guy with a camera followed. There was a flash and Yang looked at Blake. “Sorry guys, gotta go.” The small crowd groaned, paparazzi asking questions to try and stall them. “I’ve got a date!” Yang said proudly with an awkward wave, dragging Blake with her down the street.

“Where are we going?” Blake whisper-asked.

“I don’t know,” Yang replied through gritted teeth.

“Come on,” Blake said, turning to where she’d parked her car. Heart pounding, she unlocked it and climbed in as naturally as she could with a whole crowd of adoring fans and paparazzi watching her every move.

Yang got in the passenger side and let out a sigh after slamming the door. “Thanks.” She leaned her head back. “Those guys are the worst.”

"Mhm," Blake hummed, caught off guard by one of the guys snapping a pic just outside the window. "Do they ever give up?"

"No," Yang shrugged. "It's like they know where I'm gonna be before I'm even there."

"Shouldn't you have a bodyguard?"

"I can take care of myself," she replied, grinning. "Besides, who needs a bodyguard when you've got these?" She attempted to flex underneath her baggy hoodie, but Blake just raised an eyebrow.

"Right."
Now probably wasn't the time to sit and talk, especially with that one guy next to the car doing his best to get a badly angled shot of the both of them. Key in the ignition, Blake fully expected to get away without anything else happening, but as was par for the course with Yang Xiao Long, something did. The paparazzi outside the car must have had a death wish because he stepped out in front of them just as Blake tried to pull out. Brakes were slammed and freezing cold strawberry milkshake spilt all over Blake's chest from it's place on the dashboard.

"Whoa, Blake, are you okay?!" Yang cried, eyes wide, leaning over and brushing her fingers along Blake's arm. That wasn't helping.

"I'm fine," she replied. "That guy-"

"Here." Yang was already stripping off her yellow hoodie, showing some skin as the tank-top underneath rode up. Blake couldn't lie, she definitely felt herself warm up a little just from that. Yang handed it over with a smile on her face, before winding down her window and yelling at the paparazzi still hanging around outside. "Hey buddy! You owe me a milkshake!"

"Yang, it's fine," Blake said, leaning over to grab her arm after slipping on the hoodie. It was still warm and still smelled of citrus. "Let's just get out of here."

The sudden silence wasn't exactly awkward, but it wasn't comfortable either. Blake's heart was still racing from the shock, and maybe wearing Yang's hoodie was to blame as well, but only just a tiny bit.

She'd forgotten about the cat shaped air freshener hanging from the mirror in her car and it didn't take Yang long to notice it. “So you’re a cat person,” she said to break the silence. Blake glanced at her, determined not to take her eyes off the road for too long. “That figures.” What was she supposed to say to that? Instead, she glanced over at Yang again, eyes wandering to the now half empty cup of milkshake in her hands. "Oh, it was for my sister," Yang said without Blake even asking.

Blake nodded. "You told me about her. During our interview."

“Oh yeah.” Yang grinned. “She’s in college now but she’s still a total kid.”

“Ruby, right?”

“You remembered!”

“I wrote everything down, remember?” Blake replied, rolling her eyes with a smile.

“How’s it going anyway? The writing thing.”

“Good,” Blake hurried to say, knowing that she hadn’t written even one word of the article yet. “I think us being… together will help get people’s attention.”

“Well it’s worked so far,” Yang said, laughing.

Blake really needed to change the subject. "Your sister won't mind? About the milkshake."

"Not if I bribe her with junk food."

"Says the professional wrestler," Blake replied, and ugh, she just couldn't keep the smile off her face around Yang.

"Hey, I didn't say I'm gonna eat the junk food."
"But you will."

Yang shrugged. "Probably." Then she leaned back into the seat, arms behind her head. She spoke again a few seconds later. "Sooo... are you a yangirl yet?"

That word again. Blake rolled her eyes. "You definitely made that up yourself."

"Maybe." Yang laughed, loudly, and Blake loved it. "Did you see the match on Friday night?"

"What match?" Blake feigned ignorance, knowing exactly which match. Yang vs. another female wrestler, full of gratuitous boob and butt shots and an even wilder crowd than the one she and Sun had been a part of at the gym. Blake wouldn't admit it to Yang, but she'd caught Sun and Neptune watching it on TV the other day and had purposely found excuses to leave her room to see parts of it. "I was reading."

"Oh." Blake could feel Yang looking at her. "I thought you were getting into it and uh..." After trailing off, Yang took out her phone and didn't say anything else, leaving Blake flushed with shame. If she could only admit it.

"I was."

"Huh?"

"I was getting into it." Blake grimaced. Yang didn't say anything. "I just prefer reading."

"Keep telling yourself that," Yang teased and Blake could hear the smile in her voice.

Yang was full of questions during the rest of the ride, so much so that Blake felt that it was her turn to be interviewed. What books she read, what movies she liked, what her favorite color was... as if her outfit consisting of nothing but black didn't give it away already.

Twisting around in her seat, Yang held up her phone while they were at a red light. "Hey Blake, say cheese!" Blake supposed she should've been grateful Yang hadn't tried it while she was driving, but she still playfully narrowed her eyes as she turned her head and Yang quickly took a photo. "Too slow," she said, laughing as Blake tried to hide her face, failing spectacularly.

"Delete it."

"No way."

"Yang."

"Make me," Yang challenged, holding her phone out of reach. Blake was seriously considering it until the light changed and the car behind them blared its horn.

How Blake came to pull into the gym parking lot was a total mystery. She'd just... driven there. And it all felt natural. Yang sitting in her car, laughing way too hard at a dumb joke she'd made. Blake wearing Yang's clothes. If Blake didn't know any better, even she would think they were dating. It was only a matter of time until someone snapped a picture of Yang leaving Blake's car with her dishevelled hair and loose tank top sliding off her shoulders and came to the totally plausible conclusion of them hooking up on Blake's backseat. Perhaps the worst part about it was that Blake wouldn't mind.

"Blake?"
"Hm?"

"Thanks for the ride."

"Oh." Blake stared at her. "It's fine."

Yang smiled and leaned forward. "You smell like strawberries." Out of everything, why was that the thing that made Blake blush? She didn't even get a chance to say anything before Yang opened the door. "I should go. I was supposed to be here thirty minutes ago and trust me, Ruby hates waiting."

"I'm sure you can handle it," Blake replied, smiling.

Then Yang left with a wave, and Blake immediately hated the silence that she left behind. Biting her lip, she looked down at her hands in her lap and opened the door, calling Yang's name like it was the last time she was going to see her or something equally as dramatic.

She caught up with her, halfway across the parking lot, and grabbed her arm without thinking. "Your hoodie-"

"Keep it," Yang said with a smile. "I know you like black but yellow looks good on you!"

"Yang-" She was smiling and her fingers were reaching for Blake’s hand. Blake felt warm breath on her face and a soft kiss pressed to her cheek and she wondered if any of it was real. To Blake, all of it felt- “What was that for?” she asked, and her voice could have been shaky and nervous but at that moment she couldn’t think of anything but the lingering tingling on her cheek.

“Oh, you know,” Yang started, slowly backing away, still smiling. “Just practicing.” Then, just like she’d done before, she left and jogged over to her sister and her friends who were waiting outside the gym. Watching everything.

A few hours later Yang posted a picture of Blake, in Blake’s car, with Blake’s embarrassing cat air freshener on her Instagram, captioned with ‘getting some pussy’ and five hearts. When Blake saw it she hovered her finger over the like button, unable to stop herself from smiling.
Blake wasn’t feeling brave enough to trawl through the comments on that picture of her on Yang’s Instagram.

So, she scrolled down to the rest of Yang’s photos, from the countless fan-service gym selfies she probably thought were subtle to the more boring PR posts about upcoming events and matches. In her daze, Blake had scrolled too far and come across a mirror selfie of Yang posing with her hair in a high ponytail and a costume that looked like someone had tried to tear it off. Her finger stayed poised over the heart icon until Sun saved her that embarrassment by peeking over her shoulder, laughing about her checking Yang Xiao Long out and trying to steal her phone.

He did Blake a favor by accidentally scrolling back to the top of the page, bringing up one of Yang’s newest posts about a wrestling event coming up next weekend. Beacon Battleground. The name was so cheesy. Blake had to smile.

“I don’t like her,” Ilia said, sitting next to Blake with a huff. She’d been like that since she’d come over, sulking over Yang and everything that had happened. “She’s not good enough for you.”

Sun seemed personally offended. “Hey, take that back!”

“You’re both acting like I’m actually dating her,” Blake said, though she probably shouldn’t have gotten herself mixed up in this… argument. Sun and Ilia had an unconventional, complicated friendship and Blake had just assumed they’d eventually get over their differences and bond over their unrequited crushes on a girl they still hadn’t told Blake much about.

Ilia turned red, from anger or embarrassment, Blake couldn’t tell. “At least stop pretending you don’t want to date her for real!”

“Psh, who wouldn’t?” Sun managed to say before Ilia sent him a death glare.

“Blake?”

She blinked. “I don’t want to date her.” Fortunately it had been a while since Blake had mastered the art of resting Blake face. “Now will you both stop?”


Right. Though Blake couldn’t bring herself to say it, as if there was another reason for her playing along with Yang and this crazy, unpredictable relationship she’d found herself in. She was fine, she just couldn’t explain the sting of pain she felt at the idea that Yang was doing it all for publicity, good or bad. Either way Blake knew she was being stupid and much too emotional for letting herself—Yang’s name then lit up Blake’s phone with a text that read ‘BLAKE’, in all caps with nothing else. It would’ve been easy for Blake to roll her eyes and type a simple ‘what’ back, and no doubt receive a
stupid joke as a reply but she didn’t. Using her usual strategy of waiting a few minutes before replying, she put her phone down and avoided Sun's annoying knowing look. Barely two seconds later, she sighed and picked up the phone again, defeated. With Yang, it was so much harder. A few days ago Blake had changed Yang’s name in her phone from her full name to simply Yang and she’d be lying if she said she hadn’t been waiting for a text from her since.

Blake sent the reply almost immediately. A deadpan ‘what is it, Yang?’ And less than a minute later Yang replied, making Blake feel a little better about her lack of restraint.

'I really need your help right now' was her reply. Confused, Blake sent a text asking why. 'I'll explain when I get there' came the answer, still unhelpful and still confusing. Another text came a split second later, reading 'How far do you live from the gym?' Blake narrowed her eyes but replied with a vague answer and their apartment number. Yang sent a text back with a declaration that she'd be there soon and a cat face emoji.

Sun actually began tidying up after himself for once when Blake mentioned Yang coming over, grinning and rambling about finally being able to get her autograph. The same couldn't be said for Ilia, though, who shook her head and tried to leave, stalking towards the door.

Blake grabbed her arm. "Ilia-"

"Let me go, Blake," she sneered.

Then there was a knock at the door and Blake knew calling this whole situation awkward would be an understatement. Ilia was already backing away when Blake opened the door, bumping into Sun as soon as Yang came into view, out of breath, sweaty but smiling. Of course.

"So you were right about the bodyguard thing-"

"What are you doing?" Blake asked, stepping aside. "Please tell me no one saw you coming in here." There was absolutely no way Blake could handle another round with the paparazzi.

Yang just shrugged like it was no big deal and stepped into the apartment. "No one saw me coming in here."

"Yang."

"It's fine. I'm laying low." That explained the sunglasses. She was in her usual disguise, minus a certain yellow hoodie that was currently laying on Blake’s bed.

Blake looked her up and down. "Has that ever worked?"

"Nope, but there's a first time for everything," Yang replied, lowering the shades and smirking. Then, she did that thing Blake hated, lifting a hand to her hair and smiling, almost shyly. "Thanks though. I figured you wouldn't help me out after the stuff they wrote about us."

Blake frowned. "What stuff?"

Yang raised her eyebrows, and Blake swore she started avoiding her gaze. “They uh... think we hooked up in your car the other day.”

“What?” Blake blurted, despite having expected it the moment Yang had left her car. Her wearing Yang’s hoodie and Yang kissing her, way too tenderly than she should have for supposedly fake girlfriends, hadn't helped matters either. But then Yang laughed like it didn’t bother her, nothing bothered her, and Blake let herself join in.
Honestly, she didn’t know whether she should be happy or embarrassed over the idea of Yang Xiao Long herself keeping up with the latest news involving her own love life with her own girlfriend. Fake girlfriend. Not her real girlfriend, obviously. But it was getting easier and easier to forget and Blake knew that spelt trouble.

Sun clearing his throat loudly behind them broke through whatever trance Blake was in and Ilia let out a sigh beside him. "So. Hey," he said, grinning.

"Hey guys!" Yang replied, just as excited. Things didn't get any less awkward when Yang fell back on the couch next to Blake, laughing at something Sun said.

"So why are you here?" Ilia asked, earning a what the hell look from both Sun and Blake.

Yang sighed. "I didn't know she was gonna be here already-"

"Who?" Blake asked.

"Neon. She was at the gym."

"Yeah, that's her," Yang made a face. "She called me top heavy one time," she continued, huffing and unintentionally drawing attention to her above average sized chest that Blake hadn't been looking at at all. "I mean, what does that even mean?"

"Who... knows...?"

"And she always touches my hair too!" Yang frowned. "Without asking!"

"You wouldn't let her touch it even if she did ask," Blake said.

"Well, yeah, but still-" She sighed. "I have a match with her during Beacon Battleground and my manager wanted us to do an interview, but nope, no way! She's so-"

"We get it," Ilia cut in, red in the face.

"So," Yang continued, turning to Blake. "I was thinking you could come with me. To get her off my case, I guess. Whoever this Neon girl was, she must have been really something. Caught up in thought, Blake took too long to answer and Yang fidgeted uncomfortably. "Uh... it's in California. At the Beacon arena. It's a pretty big show and I-"

"Yeah, she's going!" Sun interrupted, squeezing himself between them on the couch. "Sooo... any free tickets up for grabs?"

According to Yang the gym wouldn't be safe to go back to for the rest of the afternoon. Unprompted, she gave a quick explanation on Neon Katt and how they were sworn wrestling enemies whose rivalry was rife with sexual tension and unspoken attraction. Or, that was how their managers always described it and Neon had accepted it as fact. It was all in character for Yang but Neon always thought otherwise, doing anything she could to tease over the top reactions out of Yang.

"Pretty sure there were rumors about us dating a few months ago," Yang said nonchalantly while playing video games with Sun. Blake rolled her eyes, watching them joke around with each other like they were good friends. Sun could pretend he wasn't still starstruck, but Blake could see the way
he'd keep sneaking looks at Yang when she wasn't looking, eyes wide in shock that wow, that was Yang Xiao Long. "That was not cool."

Blake stared at her. "You weren't bothered when we were... caught together?"

"That was different," Yang replied, leaving Blake to wonder what that even meant.

Their flight was Thursday morning. Yang’s manager had booked everything, including the hotel, and even though she knew all of those things, Blake still felt sick to her stomach. The bombshell that Yang’s manager was also in the dark about their relationship being fake was dropped in a text from Yang on Wednesday night. She found it hilarious that she'd managed to convince everyone in her life that she had a girlfriend. Blake, on the other hand, didn't find anything funny about having to share a room, and most importantly: a bed, with Yang Xiao Long for four days.

Thursday morning came and surprisingly Yang was the first one to get to the airport, claiming she'd been half an hour early. Right. Even though her hair looked like she’d jumped out of the shower five minutes ago. A few passersby whispered things and pointed and Blake pulled the scarf she had around her neck tighter. They could at least try to be subtle with their staring. One or two fans asked for photos and Yang happily dropped everything to take some dorky selfies, Blake standing by pretending to do something on her phone to avoid looking like a spare part.

It turned out that she didn't have to pretend too much. Since leaving the apartment maybe twenty minutes ago, Sun had sent her eleven texts, each one more excited and full of gibberish than the last. As promised, Yang had provided him with free tickets to the show, flight included. Blake rolled her eyes and sent a quick reply. She was starting to think Sun was getting more out of this relationship than herself and Yang. Well, physically, at least.

“So what is Beacon Battleground?” Blake asked as they finally boarded the plane. To be honest, she was already feeling some major motion sickness, either that or Yang’s company was making her dizzy. Not to mention the awkwardness she felt for even asking, especially since Sun hadn’t talked about anything else for the past few days.

“Just a normal live show,” Yang replied with a shrug. “I get to kick a lot of butt. So, the usual.”

Blake smirked. “It must get boring winning all the time.”

“Not really.” There was that twinkle in her eye all of a sudden. “Plus, I don’t win all the time. I lost my heart to you!”

“That was terrible,” Blake said, stumbling over the words and really hoping Yang didn't notice.

“You love it,” Yang teased. “Gotta get into character somehow, right?”

Yes, in character. This was fake. “I suppose so.”

“Speaking of, let's take a plane selfie!”

Before Blake could protest or shake her head or do anything to stop her, Yang was posing and leaning over, holding her phone up in front of them. Blake had absolutely no doubt that her face was red, in fact Yang could probably feel the heat from Blake's face she was so close. With a laugh, Yang leaned away, brushing her fingers down Blake's arm, totally oblivious to the way it made her feel. And the thought that she had to sleep with this girl for the next few days-

Yang posted the photo when they landed in California, pointing out Blake's flushed face and never letting it go.
Obviously Blake knew Yang was famous, they had been forced into this relationship because of Yang's fame, but she'd never imagined her famous enough to have a crowd that big waiting outside a hotel for her. Some of them started screaming Yang's name and shoving each other at the chance to touch her, talk to her, just breathe the same air as her.

Blake winced as she was pushed out of the way, stumbling out of the black car they'd been greeted with back at the airport. Yang was a little ahead of her, carrying luggage and trying and failing to not look angry. "Not right now, guys," she yelled over the noise, looking back at Blake with a face that screamed help me.

Things weren't any better in the lobby. They walked in to more yelling and there was definitely more than one guy taking pictures. Blake grimaced, eager to not look as jet lagged and embarrassed as she felt in those invasive photos they were taking. Again, Yang was ahead, checking in, while Blake was asked some personal questions and bombarded with rumors about her that she didn't even know existed. No, she'd never been a model. And she definitely hadn't stalked Yang and threatened her into dating her. If only they knew how wrong that was.

Someone had grabbed her arm and tried dragging her closer when Yang came over and took her hand, whispering something in her ear about getting out of there ASAP, probably unaware that Blake wasn't listening because Yang's tank top was dipping low around her cleavage area. Blake let herself be pulled away towards the elevator with Yang, who was doing her usual act of waving and pretending not to care about the utter craziness surrounding them. It did seem to work, so Blake tried it too, though she was much less convincing with her fake smile.

"You get used to it," Yang said after the elevator doors closed.

Blake was unconvinced. "When?"

A pause. "Okay, so it takes a while," she replied with a shrug.

Something about Yang's smile when she said it made Blake shake her head, smiling a bit herself. "I think I can wait."

Wasting no time, they found their room and Yang kicked the door open, struggling in with their bags. She huffed and grunted but refused to let Blake carry anything, throwing the bags down and falling face first onto the bed. Blake watched, rolling her eyes and contemplating whether now was a good time to give the bed up to Yang and suggest she sleep on the floor for the entire four days.

“‘I’m gonna sleep forever,’ Yang said, voice muffled by the sheets.

“Right,” Blake said, sitting on the edge of the bed beside her. “Didn’t you say you have to meet with your manager?”

She let out a groan and rolled onto her back. “Thanks for reminding me.”
At least with Yang out of the room, distracting her with just… being Yang, Blake could get on with some long overdue writing. Being Yang’s girlfriend had taken over her life, to the point where she’d put off writing in favor of hand holding and supposedly hooking up on her backseat.

The first step was unpacking, though, and Yang was absolutely no help. She stayed in the same position, letting out a sigh every now and then while Blake unzipped her bag, blissfully unaware of what sat on top of her neatly folded pile of clothes. Yang’s yellow hoodie. Blake widened her eyes as soon as she saw it, fumbling to pick it up and hide it behind her back or something but it was too late.

“You brought that with you?” Yang asked. Was she... She was blushing.

“It’s warm,” Blake said defensively. And it smells like you, she could've said, she thought, but knew better than to admit it.

Yang propped herself up on her elbows. “Uh… yeah, sure.” Then to Blake's relief, she laughed. "I told you yellow looks good on you."

Blake's heart fluttered. “Anyway,” she murmured, "how did they know which hotel we’re staying at?"

Yang shrugged. “I guess I have a stalker.”

She was not as freaked out about that as she should be. “Did you see them out there? I think you have more than one.”

"It's fine, it happens all the time-"

"It doesn't bother you?"

"Nope," she said, grinning. "I love my fans!"

Blake frowned, turning away to continue unpacking. "Okay."

Her reaction must have been mistaken for jealousy, or maybe Yang just loved messing with her. "Aww, Blake, it's okay, you're still my biggest fan." Blake rolled her eyes, pretending to hate it.

Yang would've been in trouble for slamming the door on her way out if she wasn't Yang Xiao Long. She'd told Blake she'd text her when she got there, which wasn't necessary at all but she'd insisted. Anyone would think they were actual girlfriends. Well, anyone did, and that was the problem.

With a sigh, Blake slipped her laptop out of her bag and settled down on the bed, taking a second to tie her hair up into a messy bun. The room was quiet now that Yang was gone, a little lonely maybe, but the perfect place to finally get some work done. About time. That week alone, she'd received at least three strongly worded emails from her boss and one or two from Velvet, who stuck to her usual routine of politely asking Blake to hurry up. If she wasn't careful she'd have no job to go back to.

Writing about Yang was nowhere near as hard as pretending to be her girlfriend. Blake's fingers flew across the keyboard, letting slip a few of her more personal feelings about Yang, like how every time she smiled Blake felt helpless or how confused she was whenever Yang touched her. She deleted those parts quickly, averting her eyes from her own confusing, embarrassing words and replacing them with the generic, completely normal, un-biased and one hundred percent professional journalist ones.

Her phone vibrated a few times, going ignored each time. She knew it was most likely Sun with questions about the flight or Beacon Battleground or whether she was sleeping in the same bed as
Yang every night. Ilia would probably have the same questions, along with opinions about how awful Yang was after reading a few of those trashy magazines everyone believed to be true.

Yang Xiao Long’s life of partying and sleeping with everyone she meets could be considered a modern day myth. Blake bit her lip as her fingers hovered over the keyboard, wondering if that was too much. Would she really want to come off as a defensive girlfriend like that? Defending Yang from the evil media.

Just then, her phone vibrated again and she narrowed her eyes. Sun could never take a hint, he’d always blow up her phone with endless texts if she didn’t reply within five minutes, like the overprotective big brother he thought he was. Blake sighed, for probably the tenth time that day, and picked up her phone, unlocking it in one move.

She was right about one thing. The total of five texts from Sun, the newest one being mostly question marks, went ignored for a moment when Blake saw what Yang had sent her. Other than the two texts telling her where she was, Yang had sent a selfie in just a sports bra, angled so her chest was extremely visible, smiling in that way only Yang could. Needless to say, Blake almost dropped her phone.

Why did you send me that? she quickly sent back.

Because was Yang's reply, sounding like a kid trying to win an argument. I needed to get your attention somehow. She'd waited a few seconds to send that second one, as if she was pausing for dramatic effect.

I'm working. Blake sent the reply before turning her attention back to her laptop screen.

Yang sent a photo of herself pouting, hair dishevelled and face sweaty. It did make Blake smile, but just for a second. I'm stopping by somewhere before I come back sooo do you want anything?

Ugh. Why did she have to be so- Blake replied that she'd like tea, even though she knew she could order room service just as easily. Refusing Yang was hard, she'd realised. And it was cute that she'd even asked, that she'd even thought of Blake.

In the end Blake had only written fifty nine words and one of them wasn't even finished thanks to Yang throwing the door open unannounced. She was wearing her sunglasses again and grinned as soon as she saw Blake. Closing her laptop lid, Blake sat up straight and took the cup Yang handed her.

"It's still crazy out there," she said, taking off the shades and jumping onto the bed.

"I can imagine."

"Yeah, and Battleground doesn't even start until Saturday."

"You have dedicated fans," Blake said, smirking. Yang just smiled, laying down next to Blake, much too close for them to feel comfortable. "How did it go with your manager?"

Yang groaned. "The guy treats me like a kid all the time. I told him I wasn't doing the interview with Neon and then he pretty much blew me off, saying stuff about meeting you-"

"What?"

"Yeah." Yang rolled her eyes. "He's totally convinced."
"Why would he want to meet me?"

"They want drama I guess." She shrugged. "It's more like he wants Neon to meet you."

No. Blake wasn't getting involved in some petty rivalry between professional wrestlers. Sure, she'd agreed to come, but being in the show itself? That was a no-go for her. "Is that what you want too?"

"No way. I asked you to come to get her off my case, not-" She was blushing. "You're my girlfriend." Blake knew if she ever heard Yang say that out loud she'd probably freeze, or try and run away out of embarrassment even when they both knew it wasn't true. Neither happened though. She simply took a sip of tea and listened to the pounding of her heart in her ears. "You know what I mean-" Yang fumbled with the words, making everything worse. "I thought if she saw that I had a girlfriend she'd back off, you know?"

"Right," Blake said. "I know what you mean."

Most of that evening was spent in the company of a book for Blake and channel-hopping through cooking shows and awful b-movies for Yang. There was more than one occasion of Blake feeling Yang's eyes on her while she was reading, until she decided she needed a shower and disappeared into the small room attached to the side of the bedroom. When she did, Blake finally felt like she could breathe again.

Until Yang emerged a while later, hair dripping wet, wearing a baggy t-shirt and hardly anything else. "Shower's free," she said, drying her hair with a towel.

Blake nodded and put her book down, eyes wandering to the shorts Yang was wearing. "Maybe I should sleep on the floor."

Yang stared at her. "You're kidding right?"

"It's just-"

"I get it." Yang looked away. "But it'll be warmer if we both... uh..."

That wasn't helping. Out of everything Blake was freaking out about, spooning with Yang for warmth hadn't been one of them, considering she hadn't thought Yang would suggest it in a million years. "I know." She nodded and turned away. "Okay."

If only she could've spent a while longer in the shower, but no, she had to step back into the bedroom where Yang was laying on the bed, scrolling through her phone. She glanced up at Blake and grinned. "Super cute pyjamas."

They were cute. Black with cat faces on them. Although Blake had no idea why she'd packed them when all they'd do was give Yang even more of a reason to tease her. "Thanks," she said, rolling her eyes and awkwardly climbing into the bed.

"Hey, listen to this," Yang said, laughing. "'At first I didn't like her but you can totally see that she makes Yang happy so I'm okay with her now'-" Okay, so she was reading comments from her fans. Blake cringed a little and waited for the insulting parts. "Oh, and she said you're pretty!"

Blake raised an eyebrow. So not all of Yang's fans hated her. That was a comfort. Though she had to wonder when, why and how that had happened. "They don't hate me anymore?"

"There's a whole bunch of comments like that." Then she smiled. "And I don't think they hated you."
Blake shook her head. "You didn't see the comments on the first article about us."

"Huh?"

"The photo taken outside the gym of us kissing," she said, somewhat nervous. For whatever reason *that* had never come up in conversation.

"Oh, uh... yeah," Yang replied, but Blake could tell that smile was forced. If anything, Yang just looked confused and spent the next few minutes sleepily teasing Blake over more overly familiar and complimentary comments about them from fans. There were one or two about Blake's red face in the selfie Yang had posted earlier that day that Yang wouldn't shut up about.

At one point she had to wrestle the phone out of Yang's hands, *not* a wise move, while she was in the middle of reading one particularly embarrassing comment involving a week old selfie of Yang sticking her tongue out. It was weird how Blake's name was mentioned casually all over Yang's posts now. She'd ended the wrestling match, or lack of, halfway straddling Yang, who was *also* halfway falling off the bed. Scrolling through the comments, she came across an even worse one.

*yang's nails are shorter since she started dating blake if you know what I mean...*

Blake *definitely* knew what they meant and immediately handed Yang back her phone. Yang saw it too judging by the way her face turned a deep red. Still, she was able to laugh at it and jokingly asked Blake if her nails were *really* that short. It was embarrassing and made Blake feel like hiding under the sheets until morning, but Yang being Yang was enough to make her laugh it off and any awkwardness was quickly forgotten.

"Night Blake," Yang mumbled some time later, lying on her side, looking right at her and making it nearly impossible for Blake's heart to stop racing.

"Goodnight Yang," she said back, choosing to lay on her back just to avoid looking at her. She was so close to the edge of the bed she knew she'd probably be waking up on the floor in a tangle of sheets. But it needed to be done. Yang was too close, too *warm* and smelled too good.

It was on the cusp of daylight that Blake shifted in her sleep, slowly blinking her eyes open and forgetting where she was for a second. All she knew was that it was *so warm* and there was soft, steady breathing beside her. Along with a very tangled mess of blonde hair and a peaceful, sleeping face that belonged to Yang Xiao Long, close enough to Blake’s face to make her sleepy mind snap back to reality. Her arm was draped across Yang’s chest and she was pressed close to her, like she’d been trying to cuddle her in her sleep. Or something *worse. No.* This wasn't happening. Blake panicked and snatched her arm away, grateful that *apparently* Yang was a deep sleeper.

Moving as far away as she could get, she quickly turned away from Yang and tucked her knees up into her chest. "Why?" she murmured, pulling the sheets up to cover half of her flushed face. Only three more nights. It would become a countdown until she could leave and sleep in her own bed again, *without* the risk of accidentally cuddling with fake girlfriends during the night. *Only three more nights.*
Chapter 7

WHERE ARE YOU????

Was what three of Sun's texts looked like, the last one accompanied by even more question marks. Blake's eyes could hardly focus on her phone and she was still in the post-rude awakening early morning blur, if you could count ten fifty three as early morning. It wasn't her fault that she'd barely slept after finding herself practically spooning Yang Xiao Long in the middle of the night.

Just because of that, she couldn't get out of the hotel quick enough. Yang was in the shower when she left, Blake could hear the water running and her side of the bed was still warm. Texting Sun a rushed reply and getting dressed at the same time hadn't been easy but she'd needed to be quick if she wanted to avoid coming face to face with her fake girlfriend. The bemused looks she received from staff in the hotel lobby were just as awkward though, and she couldn't shake the feeling that it looked like she was running away from a one night stand.

The hired car from yesterday was sat outside the hotel and luckily for Blake there wasn't a Yang Xiao Long fan in sight as she climbed in, phone blowing up with messages. A few more from Sun, obviously, just enough to distract her from thinking about Yang for the entire drive to the airport. Apparently he'd landed over an hour ago after an early morning flight because in his own words he was 'too freaking hyped'.

When Blake arrived she had to fight her way through a crowd until she spotted Sun lazily slumped across two seats, along with too much luggage for someone as irresponsible as him. Eyes narrow, she caught his eye and two seconds later he was waving and talking to someone next to him Blake couldn't see. She was pushed forward and she realised there was only one person with obnoxious blue hair in her circle of friends. To say Neptune looked sick wouldn't cut it. He looked pale and judging by how far away he was sat away from Sun, was anticipating throwing up any second.

"Blake!" Sun yelled, grabbing some unwanted attention. It wasn't like Blake was conceited enough to think that maybe someone might recognise her amidst the crowd, but she wasn't ruling it out. Sun ran up to her, dragging luggage behind him and making even more of a scene. "Whoa, Blake. You look..."

"What?"

Neptune nudged him. "Don't do it, man."

"Good!" Sun gave her an enthusiastic thumbs up.

She probably looked the worst dark-circles, messy-hair type of way, but that's what you had to work with when you had two minutes to change and exactly zero to put makeup on. He at least tried to make it up to her with a hug that she was in no way prepared for. "How was your flight?" she mumbled against his chest.
“Awesome! Uh, Neptune freaked out every time we were over water, but he’s good,” Sun said, shrugging. Beside him, Neptune looked more jet lagged than Blake felt. “You’re good, right?”

“Sure, man.”

Blake glanced behind them at the wrestling hating elephant in the room. “How did you get Ilia to come?”

At that, they both looked at each other and shrugged. “No clue,” Neptune offered.

“Yeah, she just kinda… showed up.”

“I wanted to see Blake,” she interrupted, walking straight past them for the exit, un-bothered. “That’s all.”

Sun nodded, though he looked totally lost, and Blake couldn't say she felt any different. The last text she'd gotten from Ilia was an ominous but well-meaning warning to end her relationship with Yang soon, before she started feeling… things for someone she couldn't have, not really. Blake remembered typing a reply and wondering when Ilia had become such an expert in romance. As far as Blake knew she'd only ever had eyes for one girl, that same girl Sun claimed he was totally over by now, and since then there had been an even longer dry patch in her love life than Blake's.

Blake was busy zoning out, the lack of sleep finally catching up with her, until they stepped outside and Sun's rambling was drowned out by her phone lighting up with Yang. She read the text quickly, a little nervous about being reminded of the incident last night in bed. But Yang had been asleep and Blake was stupid for even thinking she knew about it. “Yang wants to meet at the arena,” she said, careful to hide the message from everyone else. They did not need to see the way Yang ended her texts with a heart and a cat face emoji.

Unaware of that unofficial rule, Neptune peered over her shoulder. "Whoa, it’s like you're really dating her.”

“No it’s not,” Blake and Ilia said in perfect unison.

Neptune glanced at Sun, pointing at the phone. "Dude, there's like a million hearts and everythi-"

"I don't know what you're talking about," Blake argued, clutching her phone to her chest before Ilia could see.

Sun grinned and moved forward. "Seriously?"

"Are we leaving or not?" Ilia snapped, stopping Sun in his tracks and terrifying Neptune into slipping his phone back into his pocket before he had the chance to pester Blake for Yang's number.

Blake was fortunate enough to escape that conversation quickly. Sun and Neptune shut up immediately after, lazily throwing their bags into the back of the car Blake had now decided was Yang's own personal Uber. Blake helped, but as soon as she saw Neptune bring out his phone for the third time in five minutes, that same try-hard Casanova-wannabe smile on his face, she shook her head, rolled her eyes and climbed into the car next to Ilia.

Surprisingly, for something that had everything to do with Yang Xiao Long, there was a noticeable lack of fans crowded outside the arena when they arrived. Blake soon saw why. For once, Yang had shown up somewhere with real security. Not just the same old reliance on that happy-go-lucky attitude that seemed to come so naturally to her. No. The guys stood outside were real security guards, whispering to each other every so often and pointing fingers at anyone suspicious.
Apparently that didn't include Blake. The four of them walked in un-bothered by the huge guy on the left that Sun kept shooting wary looks at. Blake herself felt paranoid, expecting to be stopped, until they got inside and Sun and Neptune looked at each other, just as surprised as she was, high-fiving and wandering off ahead.

Posters of Yang plastered the walls, as though anyone needed reminding that she alone was the star of the show. There were a few other wrestlers on the poster, tiny and hard to see behind Yang, front and centre, grinning and posing with her arms up like she was holding the *Beacon Battleground* logo.

The main arena was filled with a camera crew and it took Blake all of four seconds to consider running out of there before she was recognised. That plan went south as soon as Sun ran back over to her, pushing past a guy holding a camera and a folder full of paperwork. He grabbed her arm and pulled her through the small crowd of staff, dodging a camera flash or two.

Just like Sun had said, barely intelligible through his excitement, Yang was across the arena on the other side of the ring, doing what suspiciously looked like flirting with a tall, lanky guy with blonde hair. Cheered on by the red-haired girl Blake had first seen her with at the gym, she had him bent over in a headlock and even Blake could see he was blushing bright red. So that was Yang’s flirting strategy. Blake frowned, knowing she had no right to be judging or god forbid, getting jealous. There was just... something about it that made her want to look away. So she did.

"What's wrong?" Ilia asked her.

Shaking her head, Blake glanced at Sun and Neptune, wondering if she really was that transparent. "Nothing," she lied.

"Blake!" Yang pounced on her from behind, wrapping both arms around her waist and leaning her head on Blake's right shoulder, coming close to nuzzling her. "When did you guys get here?"

"Not long ago," Blake managed to say, frowning at Sun and Neptune's sudden silence. That was not like them at all. Expectations for Ilia were understandably lower, and she didn't disappoint with the *get me out of here* look on her face.

Yang’s breath was warm on Blake's skin and it would’ve made her weak at the knees if she didn’t have Yang literally holding her up. “Oh hey, mister number-one-fan,” Yang said, laughing and loosening her grip. “You ready for that rematch yet?” It was true that Yang seemed to take video games just as seriously as Sun did.

Sun’s face was the reddest Blake had seen it since the time he’d been dared to kiss Neptune during that drunken game of truth or dare in college everyone had agreed to never talk about ever. “I lost one time!” Neptune raised an eyebrow at him. “One time!"

Yang finally let go of Blake and stretched up to tie her hair back, which came with a generous eyeful of her everything. “I did warn you that I kick butt outside of the ring too!"

Blake smiled and averted her eyes. "What were you doing over there?"

"Just filming a promo for an event next month. Oh, and Nora wanted me in this photoshoot for an energy drink company and the guy over there's been waiting for an interview since, uh... two hours ago?" She pointed and laughed awkwardly. "Kinda need to get on that."

"It sounds like you're busy," Blake replied. "Why did you ask me here?"

Yang shrugged. "I missed you." There it was. Awkward confirmation that Yang didn't know that
Blake's friends knew they weren't really dating. As if that admission wasn't enough, she hugged Blake from behind again and pressed herself closer this time. "You disappeared on me earlier."

"You're sweaty," Blake muttered in an attempt to deflect the way Sun was staring at them. Without a doubt, he was totally going to hold this against her.

"I know," Yang whispered close to her ear, _why_, and Blake swallowed hard. "Be right back!" Her hair tickled Blake's cheek when she leaned in to press a kiss there, unwanted in front of everyone. She even laughed as she jogged away, letting Blake know that _yes_, she knew exactly what she'd just done.

“Dude, that just happened,” Neptune said as soon she left, looking from Sun to Blake and back again a few times.

“I told you, man!” Sun cried, throwing his hands up. “It’s crazy!”

“What's the big deal?” Ilia asked, like she was genuinely curious. "So she's kind of hot-

Sun laughed and pointed at her. "She admitted it!" Neptune groaned. "Pay up, buddy!"

Despite Blake's desperation to get as far away as possible, preferably back to the safety of the hotel, Sun and Neptune insisted on taking a tour of the arena. It was silly, there wasn't much to _see_ other than the ring, the large screens suspended high above the rows of seats and _Yang_, in her black and gold sports bra. So maybe _that_ sight could have been worth staying for, but not while Blake was still feeling flushed from the PDA earlier on.

Yang finished her interview some time later and sent Blake a smile before running off to the showers. All Blake could do was sigh and lean back in the uncomfortable plastic red seat she was sat in. Next to her, Ilia had her legs swinging over the seat in front of them.

"You're wearing her clothes."

Blake looked down at the yellow hoodie she hadn’t even realised she’d thrown on that morning. "How did you know?"

"You never wear yellow," Ilia said, because it was so obvious. She stared at Blake for a second. "Are you okay?"

"Mhm-hm." Blake looked at her out of the corner of her eye. "Why did you really come?"

"I wanted to-

"Ilia." _Silence_. "Why don't you like her?"

Yang came back just then, grinning when she was chased down by Sun and Neptune. With another sigh, Blake looked down at her lap, Ilia watching her, hesitating. "Blake-

"There you guys are!" Sun yelled up at them. "You coming with?"

Yang's manager had booked them rooms on the same floor of the hotel. Sun and Neptune had a room to themselves three doors down from Yang and Blake but Ilia, much to her annoyance, had to book her own. Blake had rolled her eyes and told her to use Yang's name as leverage but she refused, despite this being an extremely renowned, _expensive_ hotel that cost an arm and a leg if you weren't a pro wrestler with a consistent income.
Yang was held back by a two excited teenage girls when they pulled up to the hotel, but Blake just wanted to get inside, struggling in with Sun's suspiciously heavy bags. The elevator ride was a little tense, probably because Sun wouldn't stop talking and everyone except him was ready to collapse in bed. As soon as they reached the right floor, Sun and Neptune ran off to their room, leaving Blake and Ilia to find hers.

It just so happened it was at the end of the hall, and Blake could tell Ilia was pleasantly surprised by how nice everything was. There might have even been a hint of a smile on her face, and Blake had to smile too. "You'll stay, right?" she asked quietly.

"Hm?" Blake mused, putting the bags down by the door. "Okay."

It was only a matter of time until Sun and Neptune came knocking, so Blake took solace in the comfortable silence as Ilia unpacked next to her, phone laying idly in her hand. She couldn't help but wonder how long Yang would be, and eventually lost the fight to check if she had any unread messages. That had lead to her googling Yang's name again, careful to angle her phone out of Ilia's eye line. Scrolling past a few of the notorious older think pieces about Yang's love life, Blake found what she had definitely not been looking for.

Yang Xiao Long and alleged girlfriend pack on the PDA in LA ahead of live wrestling event!

There at the top of the article, was a photo of them from earlier that day when Yang had been all over her at the arena. For the first time since dating Yang, Blake was past the 'wow, this is ridiculous' stage, and actually found herself laughing. Whoever was writing these articles was making it harder for them to not put on more of a show, just to see which other sordid lesbian activities they could be accused of getting up to next.

Ilia was watching her. "It's so obvious," she started, interrupted by Sun and Neptune crashing into the hotel room and Blake was actually happy to see them if it meant avoiding whatever Ilia was about to accuse her of.

Giving the fake excuse of needing the bathroom, Blake dodged Sun's tackle-hug and left the room with her phone, that picture of her and Yang still on screen, zoomed in and grainy. With a sigh, she stepped into the elevator and pressed the buttons for the lobby with the intention of finding Yang, wherever the hell she'd disappeared to, but found her closer than she thought.

Yang was stood waiting in the lobby as the elevator doors slid open with a jolt. Blake widened her eyes, completely unprepared to see Yang stood there with her hair dishevelled, the white and gold varsity jacket she was wearing, or not wearing, halfway off her shoulder. "Blake!" she cried, pretty much diving into the elevator and pressing ten buttons at once.

"What's wrong?" No sooner had Blake asked, she heard a commotion out in the lobby. "Oh."

"Yeah," Yang said, letting out a deep breath as the doors closed, cutting off someone doing that stupid Yangarang chant. "They cornered me outside." She grimaced. "But I got this!" She held up a deformed looking dog toy that Blake recognised from an old anime. A fan gave her that?

"That's... nice."

"Right?" Yang leaned against the elevator wall.

Trying to ignore that it was taking longer to get back to their floor than it should, Blake glanced at Yang and let out a small laugh. "Have you seen this yet?"

Yang looked at Blake's phone with a raised eyebrow. "That was fast."
"I know, right?" Blake smiled. She'd read the article already. All big words in place of small ones and *over analysing* and people in the comments were speculating that one particular picture of Blake was of her turning to kiss Yang on the lips. It seemed like that was what people *wanted*, and Blake even suggested that to Yang without thinking.

“That’s a bad idea, right?” Yang asked, laughing. “Breaking news, right?”

Yang said something else but everything after kissing *for real* went straight over Blake’s head. “If we what?”

“You haven’t thought about it?”

Yes! No. Yang was smiling at her, like she was in on a joke Blake knew nothing about. Maybe. “You have?”

“Yeah, I mean, sometimes I guess. It’s what people do.”

People in relationships. And Blake and Yang *weren’t*. She didn't say anything like that, though, she just stayed quiet and looked away. The elevator continued stopping every few seconds but the doors didn't open once. None of that was helping Blake's nerves. Yang impatiently pressed some buttons again, leaning over Blake’s shoulder.

As if it *wanted* to make Blake feel even worse, the elevator then decided to screech and jerk them around and Yang was jolted forward, stumbling until she had Blake pressed against the elevator wall. It was a cruel twist of fate, then, that the doors opened at that *precise* moment. Back at the *lobby*. The place with the crazed fans and shifty looking guys with cameras.

One hand clumsily holding Blake's shoulder, Yang turned to check out the busy lobby, her face flushed. The toy in her other hand fell to the floor and it took Blake a second to breathe and see the girl in the midst of the small crowd, dressed in an obnoxious outfit that obviously meant she was wrestler too. Blake put two and two together as soon as the girl opened her mouth to say Yang’s name. That was Neon, though she wasn’t wearing the gimmicky roller blades Sun had told Blake about. Everything else was there though, including the hungry look in her eyes directed at Yang.

It made Yang move backwards, pretty much jumping away from Blake, but that was *not* something two people dating would do. Blake didn't know where that thought came from, maybe it was Yang’s comment from before, or just because a flustered, panicking Yang was *new* and irresistible but she stopped her, gripping her jacket and pulling her down into a desperate kiss. It could have been a mistake, maybe it would be tomorrow when she woke up with some leftover shame, but Yang kissed her back just as fiercely, just for show, it *had* to be. Maybe it did feel that way to Yang, but to Blake...

She wouldn't have minded if Yang had slipped a hand under her yellow hoodie and felt the lace of her black bra.
It hit Blake in the middle of the night, after a few hours spent tossing and turning, that maybe she didn’t regret doing what she’d done. Her knees were pulled up into her chest and her phone was lit up in her hand and she was feeling warm and flushed with the want to do it again. Yang was right there, sleeping next to her, lips parted just slightly, chest rising and falling in a relaxed rhythm. Earlier, when they’d pulled away and Yang had looked like she’d burst with excitement at the look on everyone's faces out in the lobby, Blake had pressed the buttons and closed the elevator doors, leaving it up to them to decide what else they were going to do in there. But then Yang just had to go and look dreamy and avoid looking Blake in the eyes. There had been a whole lot of mixed signals and the quiet ride back to their floor had had Blake's heart pounding. Her phone told her it was three twenty nine in the morning as she scrolled down old texts from Sun and a newer one from Ilia asking her why she was taking so long in the bathroom. It had gone without a reply simply because Blake couldn't think of a socially acceptable way of telling her that instead of going to the bathroom she'd been caught making out with Yang Xiao Long in an elevator. In front of at least fifteen people. Including Yang's wrestling nemesis. Honestly, it sounded worse every time she tried to rationalise it. The next morning she didn't wake up because she hadn't slept. Her phone was still in her hand and the book she’d tried to read slid off the edge of the bed as she turned over to check if Yang was awake yet, stomach flipping when she wasn't there. Sitting up, Blake rubbed her eyes and checked her phone. No unread messages. No missed calls. Okay, maybe she had dozed off at some point in the night. She was sliding her underwear off, about to step in the shower, when her phone pinged with a text from Yang. *Had to step out early because my manager sucks,* it said, and Blake smiled, stood in just a t-shirt in the middle of the hotel room. Yang sent another one two seconds later just to tell Blake that the show started at eight, which she knew already, and another after that to warn Blake to not go on Twitter with a laughing emoji. Intriguing and scary. Blake narrowed her eyes but didn't bother asking Yang why. She'd find out sooner or later, and surprisingly that didn't bother her much at all. Right now she needed a shower to wash away the horrible, throbbing headache she'd gotten out of bed with. It turned out that even if she'd wanted to, Blake couldn't have checked Twitter, because as soon as she got out of the shower, Sun started banging on the door. "Sun!" someone outside yelled, presumably Ilia, and the banging stopped just long enough for Blake to pull on a black and purple...
The familiar sight of Sun and Ilia arguing greeted her when she opened the door. "What is it?"

The arguing immediately stopped and Sun grinned. "You hungry?"

Ilia was the one to take the lead down the hall to the elevator, leaving Sun and Blake to trail behind. Neptune was traumatised, Sun's words not Blake's, from the flight yesterday and needed longer to get ready. Blake narrowed her eyes, barely awake herself, but Sun just grinned at her.

"What?" she asked.

"Nothing!"

"Sun."

"I was just thinking," he whispered, "next time you wanna... you know..."

Blake frowned. "No, I don't know."

"The bathroom excuse is kinda-"

Oh. Blake quickly saw where that was going and widened her eyes. "How did you-"

Too quickly to not be rehearsed, Sun took out his phone, messed with it for five seconds and then shoved it in Blake's face. The video he played was unmistakably of Blake and Yang making out in the elevator, shaky, clearly surrounded by shouting fans, but still good quality. You could even see the smile Blake hadn’t realised she’d had on her face two seconds before closing the elevator doors. When it ended, the video abruptly cut to a black screen and then replayed, and by that point Blake was feeling hot all over but also kind of… frozen. Photos had to be expected. But videos? And of their first real kiss of all things.

"-fan posted it on Twitter and it blew up-" Sun was saying, but Blake wasn't paying much attention. "Blake?" Turning, she walked away from him towards the elevator because her face was bright red and she just couldn't deal with it. "Hey!" Sun called and ran after her.

"I didn't do it because I wanted to," she insisted. Thoroughly unconvinced, Sun nodded slowly.

"That girl was there and Yang talked about kissing me-"

"Whoa, okay, what?" Sun babbled.

"Are you guys coming?" Ilia then interrupted, leaning out of the elevator.

Blake found out what Sun had meant by the video blowing up when she checked Twitter on her phone during the elevator ride. Three hundred and seventeen retweets and five hundred and sixty nine likes, which someone in the few dozen replies had pointed out as if it was the funniest thing ever. Despite her head telling her not to scroll further, Blake was way too curious about the other replies.

ok i wasn't convinced they were really dating until i saw this omg i love them now

Did anyone else notice Yang smiling like that at the end?

Find someone who looks at you the way Blake looks at Yang.

The elevator jolted just after she'd read that last one and she was able to play off her embarrassed
reaction as surprise. Heart pounding, she straightened up and noticed that the original poster had tagged Yang in the tweet, a stupid move, but she clicked Yang's name anyway. Blake smiled at the picture Yang had posted of herself in her sparkly gold costume earlier that morning, but as she scrolled down one tweet stood out, from late last night. I'm in sooo much trouble guys was all it said, but the blushing emoji had Blake hoping it meant what she thought it meant.

“What’s wrong with this thing?” Ilia huffed, slamming her hand on the buttons after the elevator stopped for a few seconds.

“It was like that yesterday,” Blake replied, looking up from her phone. “I think it’s broken.”

“How’d that happen?” Sun looked at her with a wink and earned a well-deserved glare.

They ended up sat at a table in the window of a nearby coffee place, Sun shovelling food into his mouth while Ilia sipped on her third coffee that morning. The dark circles under her eyes told Blake that she hadn't slept much either, not that Blake's order of tea was helping much. She was this close to passing out against the window.

"I'm not going," Ilia announced during one of Sun's speeches about how awesome Yang would be during the show later.

"What?!" he spluttered. "But it's people getting beat up! You love that stuff!" Blake had to hold in a laugh. Ilia's entire first meeting with Sun had been her accidentally throwing a basketball at his head and he hadn't let it go until the time she'd let him pinch her arm as payback.

Ilia stared at him. "Did you sleep with Neptune last night?"

Sun's grin disappeared. "What?!"

“Oh my god, you're Yang Xiao Long’s girlfriend!” a voice from across the coffee shop squealed, forcing the idea that she'd made it as a celebrity on Blake. If you could make random people scream and run over to you with their phones outstretched so early in the morning, you were officially famous. “It's Blake, right?”

Relieved that her full name was still the best kept secret of the month, Blake grimaced. “Yes, but-”

“Can I get a photo?”

Blake looked to Sun for help, but he just shrugged and chewed on a pancake. “Sorry, but Yang isn’t around right now.”

“Oh, no, I meant with you!” That had to be a joke, and Blake would’ve laughed awkwardly and forced Sun and Ilia to escape with her if the girl hadn’t smiled, holding out her phone. “Please?” Blake gave in and took the picture with her, stiffening a bit when the girl put her arm around her shoulders. Way too familiar.

When the girl left, looking happier with that awkward, unflattering photo than Blake had expected, Sun blinked. "Sooo..."

"Don't say anything," Blake cut in, red-faced, crossing her arms and staring out of the window.

Blake spent the rest of the morning and most of the afternoon in Sun and Neptune's hotel room, even though she knew she should at least try to get some rest before the show started or risk passing out during it. She was already feeling woozy and every time Sun moved next to her on the bed, using her laptop to search past Beacon Battleground's best bits compilations on Youtube to show
her, she felt like she was close to falling asleep and not waking up again until the next morning.

"Why isn't she in this?" Sun muttered to himself, making the video buffer by trying out different timestamps. Blake could see there was a whole video of Yang's best wrestling moments in the recommended videos list. Even more when Sun accidentally scrolled down the page, but that was when Neptune obliviously pointed out the time and Sun slammed the laptop lid down.

Blake was then forced back into her own room, the vague smell of Yang's shampoo in the air, which over the course of two days Blake had started to... like. Just like Yang, she supposed, and checked her phone while getting changed into something more appropriate for a live wrestling show filled to the brim with hundreds of people.

Just like she'd said, Ilia wasn't going. She didn't even open the door when Blake knocked for her, instead choosing to call out that she was going to bed early, feeling the need to specify that she wouldn't even watch the show on TV.

Sun and Neptune were waiting for her in the lobby, wearing matching black and yellow shirts with Yang's emblem emblazoned on them. When he saw her, Sun excitedly threw a third one at her.

"No," she said, catching it with both hands.

"Aw, c'mon, I got you a black one!"

"Fine," she said, slipping it on over the black tank-top she was already wearing. Only because it would've been weird for her to not be supporting her girlfriend.

Compared to yesterday, when the arena had been something of a ghost town save for the few cameramen and moderately famous people hanging around, Blake found herself surprised at the hoards of people waiting outside when they arrived. Sure, her experiences with Yang's fans had been enough to fill her in on the craziness of wrestling fans but to have people lining up around the block just to get in and see people fake fight each other? Blake hadn't expected that amount of dedication.

The tickets Yang's manager had saved for Sun were VIP passes, lucky, but not so lucky to walk straight past groups of impatient fans who had probably been waiting there for at least an hour. Blake received a few smiles and waves and she had no idea how to react to that kind of attention.

A lot of seats were already filled when they got inside, Sun running ahead to squeeze himself into the standing crowd closest to the ring. Blake and Neptune looked at each other before following him. They managed to fight their way into the crowd, but Blake just happened to be shorter than the average wrestling fan. Pretty much everyone around her was a tall, skinny teenage boy capable of blocking her view.

Some time later, between Blake being squished by a guy behind her and having to be pulled away by Sun, and getting stuck behind a group of three girls who wouldn't stop talking, the show kicked off with two female wrestlers vaulting into the ring. There was some kind of weird video game music playing and blaring commentary, and when the wrestling actually started, Blake couldn't understand the hype. Everyone around her went crazy over a jumping move that Blake couldn’t see very well because of the guy in front of her, but it must’ve been amazing, because Sun yelled exactly that in her ear.

Yang was better, she wanted to say, it was true and Sun would agree, but she wanted to try and get into it without thinking about Yang every time. She was only just starting to understand the rules of the show when the next opponent was announced and glided out wearing roller blades to huge cheering. Blake's little look of disapproval when Sun joined in made him quickly stop and send her a sheepish grin.
Neon was small and scrappy and Blake had to admit she was fun to watch, dodging and sliding away from her opponent. Sun nudged her when that match ended prematurely and the ring announcer spent two whole minutes introducing Yang, interrupted multiple times by the crowd.

Even for someone as unversed in anything and everything wrestling, Blake could feel the pure *badassery* flowing from Yang as she hyped up the audience on her way to the ring. So different from the soft Yang that Blake had slept with for the past two nights, and yet somehow exactly the same. Yang was… a lot.

The only thing that could wipe the smile off Blake's face was the way Neon was watching Yang, smirking and taunting and everyone was eating it up. Even the referee, whose smile even Blake could see, and Sun, ugh, he was grinning too, even if he didn't realise it. Blake shook her head, forced forward until she was right at the front of crowd, somewhere she didn't want to be, and Yang's eyes found her.

She smiled and almost raised her hand to wave before Blake could tell she remembered where she was and got back into her *awesome, badass* character. It made Blake laugh and she had to cover her mouth with her hand when Sun appeared next to her, yelling stuff she couldn't understand.

Then Yang climbed into the ring, Neon grabbing her right away, spinning her back into the ropes, getting up close and personal. There was some *ooh*-ing from the audience and a few whistles. So immature. Blake crossed her arms and looked away. Sun's eyes were on her but she didn't care, she was feeling *weird* and woozy and-

Yang must have done something big, because the crowd roared, and the next time Blake looked Neon had been thrown back on the floor of the ring, Yang on top of her, out of breath, like she'd been yesterday with Blake in the elevator.

She’d never figure out if it was because of her lack of sleep or because Yang was down there in the ring being touched by *her*, but Blake’s knees felt weak and a wave of nausea washed over her in the heat of the crowd. Sun called her, sounding like they were both underwater, and all of a sudden Blake felt very aware of just how much she hated crowds.

In her dazed state, Blake almost missed the hazy image of Yang vaulting over the ropes, landing on both feet on the floor and sprinting towards her, all while the ring announcer hurriedly raved about how *unexpected* this all was in the background.

All Blake could hear in the jumbled noise of the arena was Yang and Sun's voices calling her name, then she was grabbed and lifted over the barrier by strong arms that could only be Yang's.

"*is a Beacon Battleground first ladies and gentlemen! It seems that Yang Xiao Long is voluntarily leavi-*" the announcer shouted over the complaints from the crowd. "*All of that hard work gone to waste! Maybe she didn't want this as much as she cl-*"

"Yang?" Blake whispered, now completely aware that Yang was carrying her *bridal style* through the crowd and past cameras on their way out of the arena. She didn't say a thing, she just smiled and left with Blake in her arms.

Blake probably dozed off at some point during the car ride back to the hotel. The only thing she could remember was Yang's hand in her hair and the look in her eyes. It felt like they were running away together, or maybe Blake's sleep deprived mind just wanted something to romanticise.

Admittedly, it was hard not to when Yang was looking at her like *that*.

The hotel lobby was surprisingly empty for almost ten on a Saturday night and Yang wasn't bothered.
by anyone as she carried Blake into the elevator and up to their room. After clumsily pushing the door open with her shoulder, Yang stepped in and gently placed Blake down on the bed, pulling the sheets up around her with a soft sigh.

Blake would be lying if she said she didn't feel guilty. "I'm sorry," she mumbled, snuggling the pillow.

"It's okay," she heard Yang say, the mattress dipping slightly as she sat down. "I can win some other time, right?"

Blake smiled and looked up at her. "You could go back."

"Nope," she replied quickly. "I'm staying."

"You'll get in trouble."

Yang shrugged. "I already am."

"More trouble," Blake whispered, smiling and unconsciously reaching for Yang's hand beside her on the bed. "This is all my fault."

"Trust me, I've done way worse." Yang bit her lip. "And you kind of saved me tonight."

"Hm?"

"Did you see how up in my face she got?"

Neon. Blake let her heavy eyes drift shut to disguise any reaction. "Oh." Silence, and after a while she was pulled towards a deep sleep that she hadn't had since sleeping in that hotel room with Yang by her side. But now, Yang was still beside her, fingers brushing hers, an easy smile on her face, and Blake felt safe. That's why she said what she said next, half-asleep, the jet-lag finally catching up with her. Thinking she was dreaming- "Yang," she murmured, breathless, more asleep than awake, "kiss me again."
There had been times in Blake's life when everything had worked out pretty well. This was unfortunately not one of those times. First, there had been that split second when she'd woken up, just as tangled up in the sheets as she was with Yang, blissfully unaware of everything that had happened. Second, Yang had been awake and would have definitely heard Blake sleepily moan her name as she'd stretched and yawned, accidentally sounding like she'd been having that kind of dream about her.

It had been awkward, but you wouldn't have noticed from just how easily Yang laughed a few seconds later, one arm tucked behind her head. Her hair was a mess but all it did was add to that charm of hers, annoyingly. "Hangovers suck," she said, smiling.

Blake rubbed her eyes and sat up. "I didn't drink last night." Obviously that was true, though the headache she had was making her doubt her memory.

"Oh... right," Yang replied, shuffling around in bed.

"Why?"

"It's just that last night you said some-"

Sun chose that exact moment to send her a series of texts, just to tell her that Neon's fans were attacking her online. Blake glanced at Yang, not yet ready to admit that she had no idea what Sun was talking about. As far as Blake could remember, Yang had won the match with Neon and kicked butt all the way through the show just like she said she would.

It would've been hard not to google it after the things Sun was saying, well, yelling in all caps, so Blake gave in and avoided looking at Yang again until she'd found out how badly she'd messed up last night. All it took was a quick google search of Yang's name for Blake to find countless articles about Yang walking out of the match.

*Pro-wrestling champ Yang Xiao Long abandons highly anticipated Beacon Battleground show to help passed out girlfriend!*

Abandons? *Harsh.* And passed out? Definitely wrong. Though parts of it did come back to Blake as she read through the comments on that one especially scathing article, before finding another one which described the show as a 'tremendous disaster' and went on to tear apart Yang's entire career in the span of one hundred words. Blake was about to find another, less biased website, when she felt Yang shift and lean over to kiss her cheek. “I'm gonna take a shower, you coming with?”

“Yang, what-” She wanted to push her away, or down onto the bed so Blake could- “Why did you do that?”

“Because I wanted to?”
“There’s no one around,” Blake started, heart racing, and Yang sent her a so? look. “You shouldn’t do that.” Because it's... confusing, was on the tip of her tongue.

Yang got up and turned away, lazily slipping off her t-shirt on her way to the bathroom. There were dimples on her lower back that Blake couldn't look away from. “That’s not what you said last night.”

What did that mean? Blake was about to ask before Yang slipped into the bathroom without another word. True, Yang was a tease, Blake knew that, but there had been something else in her voice then. Blake thought about it a lot until Yang came out again, the door clicking shut behind her.

“Hey, Blake?”

“Yes, Yang?” Blake mused, in the middle of replying to a message Ilia had sent her last night. Yang stayed quiet, forcing Blake to look up. She was in her underwear, and though the sight was far from the worst thing ever, Blake stiffened. “What are you doing?”

“Long story short,” she began, sheepish, “I may have left my clothes in the locker room back at the arena.”

Oh. Blake eyed Yang’s toned stomach for a little too long, wondering how someone could be so perfect. “You can borrow mine.”

Yang smiled. “Thanks!” Then she laughed. “I guess we really are like girlfriends.”

Blake laughed, really hoping it didn't sound as fake as it was, and put her phone away. The sweater she then handed Yang was what she’d planned to wear that day, which left her, unfortunately, with Yang’s yellow hoodie or a stripey grey t-shirt as her only options. The weather decided for her though, when the wind rattled the windows and she stepped into the bathroom with a yellow hoodie in her arms.

Sun and Neptune were suspiciously hanging out in the hall when Yang and Blake left the hotel room, Sun racing over as soon as he saw them. "You're okay!" He turned to Neptune, who looked a little worse for wear. "They're okay!"

"Sun-"

Ilia opened her door at the end of the hall, peered out, and then ran over to them too. "Blake!" She pulled her into a tight hug. "Are you okay? Sun told me what happened."

"I'm fine," Blake lied. Maybe if she knew what was going on she would be, but between Yang being slandered online and that thing about being real girlfriends sharing clothes, there wasn't much room for fine.

Ilia quickly turned her attention to Yang. "Thanks," she started to say, looking like she'd rather be doing anything else, "for what you did."

"It was nothing," Yang said, smiling and brushing Blake's fingers with her own.

Ilia attempted a smile, glancing between them a few times. "Blake, isn't that your swea-"

"No," Blake said quickly to shut her up. Too late, though, because Sun was nudging Neptune, holding in a laugh, while Yang pulled Blake closer in a move that said 'yeah it is, so what?'

After that embarrassment, Sun had insisted that they go back to the coffee place from yesterday
because their pancakes were his new favorite thing apparently, despite Blake hinting that she didn't want to go back and be recognised again, this time with Yang and the mess that would come from being seen together. But it was just like Sun not to listen to her, and they ended up sat at the same table, by the same window, with Blake feeling the same butterflies.

“Challenge accepted!” Yang announced with a grin. “First one to fifty wins!”

“But the world record’s only thirty three!” Sun argued, pointing at the stack of pancakes balanced on his plate.

“Okay, quitter.”

“How does he know that?” Blake asked under her breath.

Ilia shrugged and stole two blueberries from Blake’s plate. "I'm just here to watch him get his butt kicked."

Blake smiled and looked away, unsure whether the bigger elephant in the room was Ilia's newfound habit of staring at Yang or the biggest wrestling show of the year being completely ruined by Blake's sleep deprivation. Sun hadn't mentioned it once, to Blake's surprise, and Ilia and Neptune were acting like they were too hungry to care about anything else.

"I didn't agree to this," Sun said through a mouthful of pancake. Yang snorted a laugh but didn't say a word, proving that yes, she was very serious about this stupid pancake eating contest.

"This is ridiculous," Blake said, crossing her arms. Yang responded by playfully sticking out her tongue and shoving another pancake in her mouth. "What if someone sees?"

"Like that dude with the camera hiding behind the black car?" Neptune suggested.

"What?" Blake asked over the sound of Sun choking. A few whacks on the back from Ilia and Yang and he was okay, a little red in the face, but okay.

"Neptune's right," Ilia said quickly. "Look."

Twisting around, Blake took one glance out of the window at the guy loitering outside and suggested they leave ASAP. "He's not looking over here," Yang said before she could stand up, "see?" Barely two seconds later, the suspicious guy was joined by a larger group of paparazzi and the yelling from outside started, this time not the familiar Yangarang chant, but something much, much worse.

"We should leave," Blake insisted for what felt like the tenth time.

Sun widened his eyes. "Hey, wait, I still have pancakes!"

And Yang was already holding a menu up in front of her face. “Act natural, guys.”

“Natural?” Blake muttered, rolling her eyes, even though part of her wished she had something to hide behind too. "Did she follow us?" She sighed and ducked her head down, earning a knowing smile from Yang. "First the hotel and now here?"

Yang cringed. "Okay, so I have bad luck.-" A groan. "Those pancakes were a bad idea."

"Wait, she was at the hotel?" Sun interrupted. "I totally missed out on an autograph!"

"Sun," Blake muttered. "Now isn't the time."
That was proven a moment later, when a few customers started flocking around the windows, including Sun, who Blake had to literally drag back to their table, less kicking and screaming and more pouting and complaining. As she did, though, Blake could just make out the split second camera flashes outside before the door swung open and the entire place fell silent.

“Oh, hey, Neon,” Yang said, slowly lowering the menu and giving her best fake smile. “What’s up?”

“You-” She smirked. “You’re sooo lucky you’re hot!”

"Uh..." Yang and Blake shared a look, then Yang’s hand found hers underneath the table. “So... you know Blake, right? My girlfriend.”

"Oh, her," Neon sneered. "You're still doing that? Ugh, boring."

"What?"

"You know, it'd be kind of cute if you were at least a teensy weensy bit convincing!"

Yang frowned. "What's your problem?"

"Aw, don't get upset!" Neon smirked again. "I totally saw you guys in the elevator the other day and I was like 'wow, what's going down over there', if you know what I mean, but then Little Miss Top Heavy had to go and try and get away."

Yang was quickly losing her patience. "What's that supposed to mean?"

"It means you're a bad actress, girl!" She turned on her heel, but not before sending Blake a suggestive look. "And you're so not her type!" With one last smirk, she moved away towards the clearly starstruck barista.

Blake held in a sigh, thinking back to when Yang had pulled away from her before the whole unexpectedly kissing in the elevator situation happened. The kiss that had been convincing enough for trashy internet gossip sites, Yang's obsessive fans and Blake herself, though convincing of entirely different things. That was besides the point, apparently, because Neon seemed to be onto them and everything was a mess. Including Blake when she realised she and Yang were still holding hands underneath the table.

"Aw man, now she's leaving!" Sun cried, watching Neon glide away down the street with her plastic cup of coffee, paparazzi trailing after her.

"Good," Blake muttered.

Yang laughed nervously. "Yeah, she's... the worst." There was a moment of awkward, painful silence, while Yang looked like she was figuring something out. "I mean why did she say all of that stuff? We're totally dating! Right, Blake?" Ilia, Sun and Blake exchanged some amused glances and that was when Blake knew it would be cruel to let Yang carry on believing her friends didn't know their relationship wasn't real. "Oh," was all she said after Blake explained everything, but she didn't stop holding Blake's hand under the table, when she really should have.

It was midday by the time Sun and Neptune wandered off together on what Ilia insisted was a pizza date and Blake wasn't going to argue with that. Yang found an awkward way of asking if they were dating, earning some laughs from Ilia and a vague answer of nobody knows. They went back to the hotel soon after and Blake spent the better half of the afternoon reading, up until Sun sent a text in the group chat and dragged her back to her phone.
Ignoring it with an eye roll, she decided to check Twitter while she waited for Yang, who had disappeared earlier using her manager being mad as an excuse. Given the way she'd been acting since the run-in with Neon, Blake found that hard to believe.

She scrolled a little, liking Sun’s tweet from three hours ago; totally lost a pancake eating contest to THE yang xiao long and moved on, scrolling past some unfortunately angled photos Velvet had posted and a picture of a cute chameleon plush Ilia had tweeted with a caption about needing Blake to buy it for her as a birthday present. With a small sigh, she completely unconsciously searched Yang’s name and hovered her finger over follow. It was a risk, especially when she could continue to silently lurk on her profile without drawing attention to herself, but she did it anyway.

And immediately considered unfollowing as soon as Yang tweeted a picture of Blake from earlier, one she'd snapped during their conversation about Sun and Neptune of her laughing, half of Yang’s face in the bottom right corner, with the caption I LOVE HER SO MUCH, in some kind of attempt to disprove the things Neon had said about them. Blake didn’t hate it, she just put her phone to the side and buried her flushed face in her book.

Neither of them mentioned the photo or Blake's sudden follow when Yang came back, talking about how she'd met up with Sun and Neptune and bonded over pizza. It was almost seven before Blake realised. Yang came out of the bathroom a while later, the sleeves of Blake’s sweater rolled up to show off her arms.

“You’re really going tonight?”

“Yep,” Yang replied, falling onto the bed beside Blake. “I figured I should at least show my face, you know?”

“Is that a good idea after yesterday?” Blake could imagine the angry mob of fans with pitchforks outside the arena already.

“Probably not,” she said with a shrug. “You’re coming too though, right?”

“I don’t know.”

“I promise I’ll run away with you again if you freak out!”

“Not funny,” Blake said, but she was laughing and letting Yang’s smile give her butterflies again.

Yang propped herself up on her elbows. “Soo... you’re coming. Got it.”

“Fine,” Blake replied, rolling her eyes.

Of course, the arena was buzzing just like it had been the night before. The publicity from Yang’s walk out had brought out every single reporter in LA desperate for an exclusive. So desperate that a few overzealous cameramen tried grabbing Yang's arm on their way in. Blake also had trouble with numerous cameras in her face and questions being thrown at her, but Yang hadn't let go of Blake’s hand since they'd stepped out of the car and by how tightly she was squeezing it she obviously didn't mean to let go any time soon.

They were separated from Sun and Neptune by two burly security guards and were forced to make their way in without them. Everything was how it had been yesterday, but somehow the crowd seemed bigger and rowdier and more into it. Yang lifted her sunglasses and whistled at the sight, but Blake was a little less enthusiastic. They probably shouldn't have even been there in the middle of a scandal.
The crowd swallowed them up, Yang surprisingly going unnoticed until they found themselves near the front, still holding hands. This was bad. Yang seemed like she wanted to be seen, though, so Blake shuffled closer to her, noticing a few fans behind them whispering to each other. Another one grabbed Yang's sweater and shouted a few words of surprise, all while a larger group of teens to their right looked like they were getting ready for a chant. Not a good idea when the first match was about to begin.

Neon came out to notably less cheering than yesterday, because Yang was right there, and everyone was watching her, wide-eyed, muttering things to each other. The ring announcer was doing his best to hype Neon up as she climbed into the ring, but even he gave up eventually and turned his attention to the chanting crowd. Yangarang! Yangarang! Yangarang!

Someone behind them shoved Blake forward, making her stumble into the barrier. Yang pulled her back, shooting a death glare totally befitting her wrestling persona at the guy who did it. Blake tried to smile through the craziness, but she knew she looked just as nervous as she felt when Yang looked at her like that. "Are you okay?" Blake gave a weak nod. "I meant what I said about running away," she whispered, squeezing Blake’s hand even when she didn’t have to, even when she didn’t know that her smile alone made Blake feel safe.

"I’ll be okay," Blake whispered back, feeling hot and bothered for reasons other than the crowd.

"Yang Xiao Long is with us in the audience tonight ladies and gentlemen!" the ring announcer yelled, pointing in the wrong direction. Immediately after, Yang and Blake appeared on the screens above the ring and every single person, if they hadn’t already, turned to look at them. Neon included, trademark smirk disappearing pretty quickly.

Yang smiled to herself, turning to look at Blake. "Are you thinking what I'm thinking?"

"That depends," Blake replied, glancing at Neon, letting her know that this was just for her and absolutely no other reason whatsoever. Hesitating, Yang averted her eyes and took a deep breath, as if she was preparing herself, and then Blake moved in and kissed her, pulling her down to her level. Yang's hands were on her before Blake could close her eyes, and that combined with the way the crowd roared around them-

"That wasn't what I was thinking," Yang teased when they pulled away, and Blake glared at her for a second, looking away to hide her flushed face.

Nothing happened during the rest of the show that could in any way compare to the heart pounding excitement of that kiss and everything that came with it. Blake's stolen glances at Yang throughout the night only made her recall the way she'd tasted on Blake's tongue. Which was selfish and stupid and she just couldn't want that again...

"She totally stole your move!" Sun yelled out in the middle of the hall once they were back at the hotel. One look at him would have told you he was drunk, except that he hadn't been drinking at all.

"The chick with the ponytail?" Yang replied, sending Blake a confused shrug. "What can I say? I'm a trend-setter."

"Dude, it's late," Neptune said, forcing Sun into their room with a shove. Blake heard a faint 'night guys' before the door slammed shut.

"Did you see her face?" Yang laughed as she stumbled into their own room, hands all over Blake as if she wanted to get lucky. "Seriously, I haven’t seen her like that since one of her fans stole her rainbow sweatband!" Blake raised an eyebrow, turning around to stare at her. "It's a long story."
Blake rolled her eyes. “I suppose we were pretty convincing.”

“Are you kidding? We make a great team!” Yang hesitated, rubbing the back of her neck. “Sometimes I forget we're not—”

“What?” Blake tried to take her hand and beg for her to finish that sentence like her life depended on it. “We're not what?”

"It's late,” was all she said. "We should probably get some sleep.”

"I suppose so.”

"Yeah,” Yang mumbled, looking like she was about to head for the bathroom. "Or we could—" she then started to say, until Blake moved forward, taking her face with both hands and kissing her. Without an audience this time, just them, in the warmth of their hotel room. It only took Blake pulling her back onto the bed for Yang to slide her hand under that yellow hoodie, trailing warm fingers along Blake’s exposed stomach. And wow, it felt just the same as before, when they’d been caught in the elevator, and Blake suddenly wanted Yang closer. So much that her hand on Yang’s back somehow landed on her ass instead, and Yang moaned into their kiss, fingers fumbling with Blake’s bra.

It felt real, real like every other time they’d kissed or touched or looked at each other.

But Yang’s phone vibrated in her back pocket and Blake’s eyes opened wide, leaving her wondering just how they'd ended up almost half naked on the bed, Yang's yellow hoodie pulled up around her shoulders. She definitely shouldn’t have, but Blake thought Yang looked amazing in the dim light of the hotel room, her jeans unbuttoned and Blake's sweater hanging off her, and it took all of her willpower not to grab her and tell her to ignore whoever was interrupting them.

"It's my manager,” she quickly said, clumsily sliding off the bed and hightailing it out of the room, leaving Blake out of breath, her whole body hot with the shame of wanting more from something that wasn't even real.
To say Blake had felt needy after that kiss would be the understatement of the century. After Yang had left, slamming the door like she was running away from a mistake, Blake had touched herself, just to see if she could pretend the way she was feeling had nothing to do with Yang.

It hadn’t worked and she’d stepped into the shower, one hand against the wall while she did things to herself she’d wanted Yang to do.

Honestly, she hadn't expected Yang to come back that night, but she had, when Blake was still awake, unconsciously waiting for her. They hadn't said a thing, Yang had just quietly shut the door and disappeared into the shower and Blake had slowly closed her eyes, gripping the sheets tightly, not getting to sleep until Yang climbed in beside her, like she'd needed her there.

But then Yang wasn't there when she woke up. It wasn't like Blake was surprised, just... disappointed and maybe a little heartbroken, if she was into being dramatic. She'd gotten dressed wondering if they'd messed up their already confusing relationship with the kissing and undressing each other thing but the unmistakable sound of Sun knocking on the door, too loudly for the early morning, threw her out of that dangerous way of thinking.

"Finally," Sun complained when she threw open the door. "Where's Yang?"

"I don't know," Blake muttered, stepping out into the hall.

"Did you guys get in an argument or something?"

"No," she said quickly. Sun raised an eyebrow, looking at Ilia and Neptune for backup, then back to Blake, who now had a very serious frown on her face. "What would we argue about? We're not even dating."

"Okay, okay, sorry!"

Like she always did, Ilia figured her out straight away and shoved Sun into the elevator before he could say anything else to make things worse, pushing Neptune in soon after despite his numerous complaints about messing up his hair. Per Sun's predictable request, they went back to the coffee shop for breakfast, no Yang Xiao Long fans in sight for once, and they sat down at the same table, Sun enthusiastically ordering more pancakes than he could eat. Blake was at least ninety nine percent sure he'd forgotten about their flight home that afternoon but she didn't say anything, sharing an amused look with Ilia.

She couldn't bring herself to eat much, and she couldn't pretend not to notice the concerned looks on her friends' faces either. By the time Sun tried to force-feed her a pancake smothered in chocolate sauce, Blake's appetite had gone completely and while she was perfectly content with her cup of tea, nobody else seemed to want to leave her alone.
Ilia leaned back in her chair a while later. "Something happened."

"Yup," Sun agreed, and Neptune nodded beside him, a whole waffle balancing on his fork.

"We kissed last night," Blake then said, quietly, and without hesitation.

"Yeah, so?" Sun said, mouth half full. "It was on TV, remember?"

"No, Sun." Blake looked away. "On the bed."

Sun widened his eyes. "Okay…"

"Alone."

"Woo! High five!"

"Sun," Ilia warned, shooting him a death glare before turning back to Blake. "And?"

"She ran away," Blake said, totally blunt.

"Isn't that your thing?" Sun asked.

Purposely ignoring him, Blake looked over at Ilia. "She wasn't there when I woke up and I didn't get a good morning text from her like I usually do."

"We're still acting like they're not dating, right?" Neptune whispered to Sun, definitely unaware that Blake could hear everything.

"Just go with it," Sun was saying when Blake's phone vibrated in her pocket with a long-awaited text from Yang. Hey, was all it said, short and sweet and disappointing, but it was better than total silence. "That was her!" Sun interrupted, pointing right at her, and before Blake could narrow her eyes and ask how he knew, she caught Ilia shaking her head beside her and quickly realised she was smiling, for perhaps the first time that morning. Was she so predictable—Another text came a few seconds later, though, and that smile disappeared quickly.

"What did she say?" Ilia asked.

I have some things to figure out so I can't come back with you guys, was what it said, and Blake was desperate enough to guess those things had something to do with what happened last night in the hotel room, because there was no way she was the only one still thinking about the way they'd kissed each other. "She's not coming with us," she said, spending the next five minutes typing and then deleting every hypothetical message she could possibly send back to Yang, pretending everything was okay and that she didn't already miss her. Kind of. Maybe.

She settled on a desperate sounding, Okay, but I'll see you when you get back? I hope I didn't get you in trouble. Yang was already in trouble because of her, she wouldn't pretend she didn't know, and the things she had to figure out were probably 'manager things' and Blake was making all of her feelings up because she was lonely.

Yang didn't reply and Blake wore the yellow hoodie on the flight back because she was tired of pretending the way it reminded her of Yang didn't comfort her, and right now she needed something to do that, even if she couldn't have the real thing. What happened when you ruined a relationship that didn’t exist in the first place?

She was such a mess, sat in silence next to Ilia on the plane, idly reading one of the many books
she'd packed and planned to read on this faux vacation with a girlfriend who wasn't real. Though when her phone buzzed in her pocket, she dropped the book into her lap, something she never did, and checked it right away. You know where to find me, came the reply from Yang she hadn't expected, and Blake's heart racing in her chest told her all she needed to know about these feelings being one hundred percent real.

Jet lag stopped Blake from working on the article she really should have finished by now, and the day after arriving home she was needed back at work, no more excuses, just one deadline she needed to meet. That had resulted in her drinking copious amounts of gross black coffee, the kind Ilia loved and Blake hated, to stay awake and finish the article the night before it was due.

Saving it after a whole hour of tearing it apart and putting it back together again, a must for any writer, Blake decided to check her emails before bed. She was sure there would be the inevitable few from Velvet and at least one from Coco. Maybe one from her boss if she was really in trouble for spontaneously taking time off work.

We're happy for you! was the first of five emails from Velvet, but Blake did not want to know, scrolling down the list until re: Yang Xiao Long caught her eye. The email was from her boss, from three days ago, during which time she'd been sleeping with Yang-

It's come to my attention that you have a deeper, more personal connection to Miss Xiao Long than any of us anticipated- was the first part that really woke Blake up and then the -we understand you both value your privacy but this is a great opportunity for not only your own career but the future of the magazine.

It didn't take a genius to figure it out but the -write an article about your relationship with Xiao Long, and the even more heart attack inducing -Miss Scarlatina has agreed to photograph you both for the cover story of the next issue, made it loud and clear that even her boss bought everything.

He'd even added a little note at the end of the email that said you make a good couple and awkwardly hinted that he wanted an autograph.

So now she was expected to write an article about her supposed real feelings when those were exactly the things she'd been trying to avoid since she'd kissed Yang, watched her run away and then touched herself in the shower thinking about.

"Where did you two meet?" Velvet asked over the phone the next morning.

The gym on the day I interviewed her, wasn't the right thing to say, so Blake went with Yang's go-to answer of, "we've known each other since we were kids," instead. She ended up mentioning the gym by accident, though, and gave Velvet an excuse to talk about how perfect it would be for the shoot. Blake then had to spend the next half hour listening to every single concept she had in mind. In the ring, in front of lockers, Yang doing push-ups with Blake sitting on her back. That last one definitely not happening.

The last straw was Velvet asking Blake if she thought props were a good idea. Quickly cutting her off with a meeting time of two in the afternoon at the gym and a rushed goodbye, Blake sent Yang a text saying I need to see you. Honestly, she didn't mean to sound so eager, but maybe she was.

It was no surprise that Yang's security, or lack thereof, hadn't changed much. Blake had pulled up to the gym parking lot with a little smile, spying Yang's bike parked against the wall like it always was. Pushing open the doors, it felt just like the first time she'd stepped into the gym, when she hadn't known what to expect and had somehow gotten everything she'd wanted.

Yang was sat waiting on one of the benches when Blake found her, the rest of the gym surprisingly
empty. She would've called her name, but Yang turned to her and smiled, getting up straight away. "Hey," she said, smiling and looking like she was going to kiss Blake again, and it all felt like they were back in the hotel room about to pick up where they'd left off. It wasn't fair for her to feel this way at all.

"Hey," Blake replied, averting her eyes.

"Sorry about-" She looked away, adjusting the beanie she was wearing. "I've been busy with... stuff."

"You're in trouble with your manager, aren't you?"

"Yep," she said, grimacing. "After you guys left I spent the whole day getting lectured." Blake stared at her. "I mean, thanks to us Beacon Battleground had it's highest ratings in four years so he can't be too mad about it."

"Seriously?"

"Yeah," she said, laughing. "Everyone loves us."

"Yang, there are people fighting over who you should be with-" And there were. Blake had seen the comments online.

Yang laughed. "Yeah, well I chose you."

Why did she have to go and say that and make Blake feel like she was being serious? That maybe they had a chance to become more than whatever they were right now- No. Blake let out a small sigh to cover whatever it was she was feeling. "I have to write an article about us," she admitted, "our relationship."

Whatever it was. She looked away. "I know it's sudden and I'm not happy about it either-"

"It's okay," Yang said, shrugging. "It's easy now, right?"

"So easy. "Right," Blake whispered, Yang slowly taking her hand, feeling real, until she saw Velvet and Coco walking towards them and realised the hand holding was more rehearsed choreography than anything else. Still, Blake managed to smile and pretend that she wasn't surprised to see them. They were early and Blake hadn't even had a chance to explain anything about the impromptu photoshoot yet. Despite that, she awkwardly introduced them to Yang.

"So what's bunny girl doing here?" Coco asked, using the nickname she'd given Velvet the one time she'd worn a rabbit pin on her sweater.

"We're doing a photoshoot for the next issue." Velvet aimed her camera at Coco and pretended to take a photo. "What are you doing here?"

"I'm doing a piece on relationships in the public eye," Coco said, nonchalant. "He knows I'd rather be doing fashion but this is as good as it gets right now." Blake narrowed her eyes. "I still can't believe Blake's dating a celebrity."  

"Neither can I," Blake whispered, Yang's hand on the small of her back and she'd be lying if she said she wasn't aware of it.

"Hold that position," Velvet said, holding up the camera already.

"What are we doing?" Yang whispered in Blake's ear.
Blake in ripped jeans and black and white flannel and Yang looking like she'd dragged herself out of bed ten minutes ago probably weren't cover story photoshoot material. "This needs some work," Coco muttered, pulling Blake away from Yang and unbuttoning one of her top buttons to show some cleavage.

"I don't know about this," Blake whispered.

"Relax. You look good," Coco insisted, turning to Yang. "Your hair-"

"On it," Yang said, pulling off the beanie and running her hand through her hair. "Done."

Coco lifted her sunglasses and smirked. "Don't you have anything else to wear?"

"Uh..." Yang glanced at Blake and then down at the baggy t-shirt she'd obviously thrown on without thinking, or knowing anything about the extremely important photoshoot she was going to do today. With a nod and a little smile, she disappeared into the changing room.

"I thought we'd have more time," Blake said, standing awkwardly while Coco and Velvet looked at her from different angles.

"Velvet," Coco interrupted. "Hair in front of the ear or behind?" Her fingers tucked some hair behind Blake's left ear.

Velvet thought for a moment. "Behind."

The magazine the three of them worked for was a local one, totally unremarkable in almost every way, so Blake shouldn't have expected much, though the lack of lighting equipment and an expensive camera became a problem when Velvet proudly showed her a shot she'd taken earlier of the ring. It was blurry and shadowy on one side, like her finger had been covering the lens.

Blake was trying to come up with a nice way of suggesting she didn't do that again when Yang emerged from the changing room, wearing the black and gold sports bra and gym shorts that had Blake turning away with a flushed face.

"How do I look?" she asked, striking a few poses, and Velvet just replied by taking photos while Blake watched, arms crossed.

Any leftover awkwardness from the night in the hotel had to be pushed aside in front of the camera. That was why Blake felt like running away from everything when Velvet suggested they figure out their own positions because that way it's more intimate and personal, apparently.

To be honest, the first thing Yang came up with wasn't too bad, mainly because they weren't touching and Blake didn't have to think back to Yang's fingers fiddling with her bra. Blake was leaning against the side of the ring, with Yang sitting on the ropes above her, the hint of a smile on her face.

The next few poses were equally tame, one with them sat on the floor of the ring together, one with Yang's arms around Blake's waist, one of Blake awkwardly leaning on Yang's shoulder. All of them okay but not worth cover photo status.

The locker room was the worst, and all because Coco was hinting that they needed an interesting shot to pull in readers. So, basically, a shot to attract the horny teenage fanboy crowd. It started off easy enough, but Yang was told to get closer and closer until she had Blake against the lockers, both of them looking at the camera, and Blake hoping Velvet's camera wasn't good enough to catch the flush in her face and the shortness of her breath.
Whenever Yang touched her now, Blake could only think back to her hands all over her those few days ago, desperately pulling off that yellow hoodie, lips clumsily on hers. So as soon as Velvet apologetically asked Yang to get even closer and a hand accidentally brushed her breast, Blake’s mind to Yang doing her against the lockers, whispering dirty things over her shoulder while she touched her, and the vision was so detailed she wondered what the hell was wrong with her.

Velvet took a few shots of that pose, Blake faking being okay with it, and Yang eventually moved backwards a bit, trailing her hands down her body like she wanted to turn Blake on in front of her coworkers. Blake had one hand on Yang’s bicep and the other awkwardly hovering over her waist as she straightened up, and she was pretty sure it couldn’t look any more awkward.

“Now kiss!” yelled a loud voice that definitely wasn’t Velvet, and Blake, face now completely red, turned to see the girl she’d heard Yang call Nora, stood with her head peering around the corner of the row of lockers. How long had she been there?

“What-” Yang said quickly, followed by a cackle from Nora, and a raise of an eyebrow from Coco.

“Actually,” Coco started, and Blake could guess what was coming. “That’s a good idea.”

Blake let go of Yang. “We’re not kissing on camera-”

“Why not?” Yang cut in, hands on hips. “We’ve done it before.” Not since they’d tried undressing each other and gotten close to going further in a hotel room… but Blake couldn’t say that, and she knew Yang was right. They’d already kissed three times, now wasn’t the time to be shy about it. "Blake," Yang said suddenly, pushing forward and kissing her, and Blake didn’t even care that Velvet's camera was flashing, not when Yang's hand was in her hair, thumb stroking Blake's cheek as she kissed her slowly and simply, completely differently from the heated kiss in the hotel room. Blake opened her eyes and caught Yang looking at Velvet and Coco out of the corner of her eye, reminding her that this had all been for show and wasn't the tiniest bit motivated by god forbid, real feelings.

It was too bad Blake didn't feel the same way, kissing Yang harder and touching her and that was all it took for Yang to have her pressed against the locker again, breathing hard, wanting it. Yang’s fingers were fumbling with Blake's buttons when the camera flash stopped and Coco cleared her throat.

Blake sighed into the kiss before she pulled away, out of breath, wondering what would happen next time if they didn't have Yang's angry manager or her red-faced coworkers around to stop them.
Chapter 11

Chapter Notes

god, i'm such a useless lesbian. i hope you guys enjoy this chapter lmao!

**Remember to get an autograph for your father's birthday sweetie**

That was what the last text from Blake's mom said, after the one making Blake promise to take Yang home and introduce them. That would never happen, but Blake sent a promise and a heart and knew she'd feel bad about it for a long time afterwards.

That was nothing compared to the entire other conversation about the thing about Blake and Yang being childhood friends and falling in love slowly over the course of their school lives, or something else the internet had made up. *I'd never heard of Yang Xiao Long until your father told me she was a wrestler,* she'd sent in another text, *and pretty cute,* was the part that made Blake wince and send a quick 'I'm busy, Mom' reply.

“Why does this keep happening?” she muttered, slipping her phone into her pocket and going back to the open word document on her laptop. If she was going to get any work done on the article today she'd needed to bring the work with her.

“Because you like her?” Sun offered around a mouthful of food.

“This isn’t about Yang,” she lied.

“But you knew who I was talking about!”

“Sun,” Blake warned, “I’m not doing this.”

“You know you’re wearing her hoodie again, right?”

“It’s cold out.” Sun held in a laugh. “What?”

“Nothing! Nothing.” He held his hands up in surrender. “I’ve just never seen you like this before. It’s kinda-”

"We only kissed for the photoshoot."

Sun actually laughed at that and nearly choked. *Good.* "What about that time at the hotel-"

"That was a mistake." Sun looked anything but convinced. "So was the photoshoot."

"What?" he asked, eyes wide. "You totally have the photos on your phone! I saw you last night-"

Blake narrowed her eyes. "Velvet sent them to me." He raised an eyebrow. "She needs help with the editing."

There wasn't much time for Blake to pretend Sun's smile meant anything other than acceptance, because they'd been sitting in the window of the coffee shop, Sun taking every opportunity to complain about the lack of banana pancakes, for a while now and Blake was *antsy.*
The deadline for the next issue of the magazine had been bought forward by her boss, no doubt to capitalise off of the Beacon Battleground drama and Blake's utter embarrassment and she hadn't even finished writing yet. Then there was Neon, tweeting suggestive things at Yang and mentioning Blake once or twice or five times.

Watching Sun stuff his face and rant about why Yang should get to have a comeback after Blake messed up her Battleground appearance, his actual words, wasn't how she'd expected to spend her valuable Saturday morning. Yang's hoodie, a blanket and her favorite book were sounding much more appealing-

Then Yang was suddenly on the other side of the window, waving like a total dork, wearing a coat and a scarf and maybe she was kind of cute. Sun waved back and glanced at Blake. "I figured she wouldn't come," he admitted, "so I told her you were coming too." He winced a little, anticipating Blake being mad, which she would have been if he hadn't said that and confirmed that Yang had a way of making Blake feel like they really were girlfriends.

"When did you get Yang's number?" Blake asked instead, looking over as she came through the door.

"Forever ago," he said, grinning.

"Hey guys," Yang said, leaning down to kiss Blake's cheek, lips cold from the weather outside yet somehow able to make Blake feel warm inside.

"No," Sun started, miming a camera taking a photo, "today, huh?"

Yang sat down next to Blake. "Uh... there was one guy but I think I lost him."

"No fans either?" Blake asked.

Yang tugged off her scarf and smirked. "Other than you guys? Nope." Blake just rolled her eyes and took an innocent sip of tea, deleting the last sentence in the word document she had open, because Yang couldn't see her describe them as perfect for each other. Just for the sake of the article, obviously. "How's it going?"

"Fine," Blake quickly said, trying to tilt the screen away without looking suspicious. Yang leaned forward though, proving that it had been.

"Every time she smiles I feel like-" Yang read, squinting at the screen, and Blake closed the laptop so fast. "Who's that about?" she said with a wink.

Sun mouthed what was that at her and Blake shook her head at him, close to standing up and leaving, stuck trying to think of something to say to stop Yang staring at her with that amused smirk. Luckily Sun's phone rang an awkward moment later and he grinned, shrugged, and mumbled an 'I should get that' before leaving the coffee shop completely, door swinging behind him. All weird behavior, even for someone like Sun, whose friendship with Blake had been full of him doing the most.

Yang didn't notice though, she'd gotten up and was too busy charming the barista and signing the coffee cup of the guy behind her in the queue. "He set us up," Blake said when she came back to the table.

"Huh?" Yang said, slurping the milkshake she'd just ordered.

"On a date," she said, on a Saturday morning, in the middle of a busy coffee shop, right in public
Sun knew nothing about dates.

"I thought he just took a call."

"No, I know him, he's been talking about us all morning."

"Oh," Yang said, taking another slurp of milkshake, just as it started raining outside and the paparazzo Yang had supposedly lost earlier had a hard time hiding himself behind a tree across the street outside, or so it seemed to Blake, who felt like she was being pranked every single time she was caught with Yang. Twisting around, Yang looked in the same direction and turned back again, groaning. "How do these guys always find me?"

Blake forced a smile. "I didn't think they came out in the rain."

"Are you kidding?" Yang laughed. "One time Ruby and I were caught up in a thunder storm on Bumblebee and the next day there were photos of us on the internet calling me a real life badass-"

"I’m sure you hated that," Blake said with a playful eyeroll, and Yang grinned, eyes wandering to Blake’s lips for the quickest split second ever, but she saw it and it made her heart skip. She must have been leaning forward, and apparently so was Yang, and Blake had to grab the collar of Yang's coat to stop them from doing that again. "What are you doing?"

She shrugged, leaning backwards a little. "Giving him what he wants." Blake stared at her, feeling things. "What everyone wants."

That hadn't been what Blake had expected her to say. Knowing Yang she should have shrugged it off and laughed about it, or teased Blake about the red tinge to her cheeks, or something. Just not that. "But what do you want?" Blake asked a moment later, fingers brushing Yang's neck as she slipped her hand away, scared of the answer and hoping Yang wouldn't ask the same of her.

For a second Yang looked like she might get up and walk out, eyes low and cheeks flushed, though that was probably just from the cold. Maybe. Who knew. Blake couldn’t stop staring at her lips long enough to even care. Their... moment was then ruined before it could happen by someone clumsily slamming a plate of pancakes down on the table between them.

"The try-hard guy with blond hair told me to give you these," the barista with a name tag Blake couldn't read said, looking from Blake to Yang and you could almost see the exact moment he recognised Yang. "Whoa."

Yang had a few seconds to sign the guy's phone case before he was ordered back to work, and she looked back at Blake, grinning. "Wanna try out that date thing?"

"Fine," Blake replied, pretending she wasn't into it.

If Blake was going to take into consideration the gossip magazines that forced every person Yang made eye contact with into potential love interest status, Yang had been on hundreds of dates. She wouldn't, though, that wasn't Yang, this was the real Yang, sat in front of her, telling a ridiculous story about her family dog somehow being mailed to her sister's college campus, laughing and casually sharing pancakes with Blake.

"How did that work?" Blake was asking, laughing at Yang's dreamy look as she took out her phone and held it up towards her. "Yang," Blake started, "what are you doing?"

"Nothing," Yang replied, and she couldn't sound any more suspicious if she tried.
"Let me see," Blake insisted.

"Nope."

Yang claimed she needed another milkshake after that, jogging off to the other side of the now small crowd of people packed inside because of the rain. Slipping her phone out of her pocket, Blake unlocked it, ignoring the notifications she had from Sun and her mom and hurried to check Yang's Instagram. Of course, there was the picture of her laughing, totally caught off guard, greeting her at the top of the screen, and her stomach flipped at the prospect of reading whatever caption Yang had given it.

*Her smile* with a cat face emoji and two hearts and the lines between real and fake were so blurred because of Yang's dreamy look when she'd taken it. Was it comforting or scary that it already had almost two thousand likes-

“Best date ever,” Yang said some time later, Blake trailing behind her as they left the coffee shop wrapped up in at least three layers each.

Blake pulled her scarf over her mouth to hide her smile. “That was *not* a date.”

“Maybe not,” Yang said, chuckling and glancing behind them, “but he totally believes it was.”

Blake didn’t even acknowledge the click of a camera behind them, “but he totally believes it was.”

"Good," she said quietly, probably muffled by her scarf, but Yang smiled at her and squeezed her hand. "Where are you going now?"

"The gym," Yang said, predictably. "You could come with."

"And watch you work out?" Yang grinned. "Is that part of our date?" Blake asked, amused.

“If you want it to be,” Yang teased, moving in front of Blake as they walked in the rain, taking her other hand and Blake's chest hurt- “I want to spend more time with you.” Now she was walking backwards, holding both of Blake's hands with that dorky smile on her face.

"I have work to do," Blake said, remembering the laptop in her shoulder bag and the unfinished article and the fact that she'd drop it all to watch Yang wail on a punching bag for a few hours if she could.

"It's okay," Yang insisted, "if you come with me I can help you out." No, Blake wouldn't read into the smirk or the eyebrow raise, all that would do was remind her that she wanted Yang to help her out with something that had absolutely nothing to do with the magazine.

As hard as it was for her to forget Yang's shameless flirting for the benefit of the paparazzo who'd followed them all the way to Blake's car, she ended up going with Yang to the gym. They'd been greeted by Nora, who Blake could *never* figure out, and Yang had been forced to drop and give her thirty on the spot as soon as they'd walked through the doors.

Honestly, Blake had never realised how *good* she was at faking it until she was sat on the benches next to the ring, absentmindedly typing words she'd have to delete later, eyes not once leaving Yang as she bent her head back, out of breath, sweaty and perhaps the most attractive she'd *ever* looked, flipping Nora over her shoulder like she weighed *nothing*.

Yang stood back with a grin, crossing her arms and watching Nora groan and mumble to herself about *kids these days* and *pancakes* as she made her way to the showers. Confused, Blake looked up
at Yang, who shrugged and laughed. "She's just mad because I always kick her butt." Blake smiled, watching Yang vault out of the ring and grab the water bottle from the closest bench. "Soooo can I read it yet?"

"What?" Blake blurted out, completely unaware of how long she'd been staring at Yang drinking, because apparently even that could have her heart racing for some reason. Yang grinned, knowing exactly what she was doing. "I'm not finished."

Yang sat down next to her. "Lame."

"Maybe," Blake said, rolling her eyes, "but I have to finish it by Monday morning if I want to keep my job." She could feel Yang staring at her. "My boss is a fan of yours, so-"

"Seriously?"

"Mhm-hm." Blake glanced at her. "He must have seen Beacon Battleground." He thought we were a cute couple, she could have said, she wanted to, because Yang was smiling at her like she believed it too.

"That's crazy," Yang said, looking up at the ceiling.

Blake raised an eyebrow. "Out of everything, you think that's crazy?"

"I don't know," Yang replied, laughing nervously, "everything's crazy." She turned to Blake. "Three years ago I was working two jobs to get Ruby through college and now I'm-" Silence. "I'm doing this."

Blake smiled. "Three years ago I was in a relationship I couldn't get out of, working a job I hated just to get myself through college."

Yang watched her and shuffled closer. "I just realised," she said, smiling, "that I don’t know much about you, I mean, other than," she counted on her fingers, "cat person, hates wrestling, loves tea, really pret-"

"Yang." Blake rolled her eyes, heart pounding. "I don’t hate wrestling."

"Then," she started, "let me teach you some moves?" Blake was being lifted into the ring before she could even think to interpret Yang's offer in a very different way, slipping through the ropes while Yang vaulted straight over the other side. "I'll go easy on you," she whispered, moving closer, guiding Blake's hands to her waist. "Promise." She fell back onto the ropes, bouncing a little, and Blake felt completely helpless every time she looked at her. There was just something about Yang's competitive si- "Okay, flip me over," she said, laughing, probably not expecting Blake to flip her with that kind of strength.

"My dad was a martial arts teacher for ten years," Blake explained, averting her eyes from the image of Yang lying on her back on the floor of the ring, breathing heavily with her hair tousled. She had one eye open, that same grin on her face, and soon her hands were on Blake, pulling her down and flipping her over in one move. Then when Blake was close to kissing her, hands buried in Yang's messy hair, tugging her closer, Yang made the mistake of looking like she wanted it too.

"Blake, wait-" Yang started, mumbling against Blake’s lips, they were so close, “we’re not supposed to-” their lips touched for a second, "when we're alone-" Blake sighed and closed her eyes. Those were the unofficial rules Blake had somehow forced upon them-

Nora yelled Yang's name across the gym, and Blake swore there was an echo, which just made
everything so much worse. But with Nora there, now wolf-whistling at them, everything they were doing, everywhere Yang was touching and everywhere Blake's lips wanted to touch were suddenly acceptable, and Yang was the one to close the distance and kiss Blake like she really needed it, fingers in Blake's hair, a kiss along her jawline every time they broke apart.

It was a kiss that Blake thought about in the shower that evening, before Sun broke her out of her thoughts by banging on the door with complaints about her spending an hour in there. A total exaggeration.

Back when Yang had pulled away, reminded of a party her and Nora were supposed to be going to that night, Blake had almost wanted to accept the invitation to go, betraying the introverted part of herself just to spend a while longer with her fake girlfriend, at a party full of people who definitely wouldn't know they were faking it.

She hadn't, though, and her evening had since been spent reading and ignoring Sun, with the occasional text sent to Ilia. Totally boring and uneventful until she was getting into bed and her phone rang. Yang's name lighting up the screen.

"Yang?" she answered sleepily.

"Is this Blake?" a guy's voice asked, muffled music in the background.

"Yes, who is this?"

"Lie Ren," he replied, and Blake could hear something in the background. "Nora, please, get down from there-"

"Hello?"

"You must be Yang's girlfriend, because of the hearts," he said. Okay, what? "I'm sorry for the inconvenience."

"What is it?"

"Yang is passed out on the kitchen floor."

Driving in the rain at one in the morning to pick up her drunk fake girlfriend wasn't ever on Blake's list of things she wanted to do, but Nora was asleep on the couch after an intense drunken encounter with a lawnmower, Ren was underneath Nora, and Jaune, whoever he was, had been throwing up in the bathroom for forty minutes with no sign of coming out soon, or so Ren had told her.

Yang trying out her wrestling technique on a tree while Blake was trying to get her into the car was something she couldn't handle, especially with the way the other drunk people were looking at them and cheering Yang on, but eventually Yang climbed inside and spent the entire drive back to Blake's apartment twirling the cat air freshener and sending Blake dreamy looks.

They stumbled in together, Blake a bundle of nerves because she just couldn't risk waking Sun up and giving him another reason to tease her over whatever tiny, insignificant crush she might have had on Yang Xiao Long.

Unfortunately, they didn't get very far before Yang dragged Blake to the floor with her after tripping over the leg of the couch. Blake was on the floor, Yang bent over her, uncomfortably stuck between the couch and the coffee table. Yang chuckled quietly, because of course she had to be a giggly drunk when Blake needed them to be quiet.
Yang was hanging off of her, somehow clinging too, and mumbling things drunk girls mumbled. “Blake,” was the only thing Blake could make out, and the thought of the drunk messy Yang on top of her thinking about her in the state she was in- “Blake.”

“Yes, Yang,” Blake said, trailing a hand down her back and regretting not being able to make it onto the couch.

Yang straightened up, eyes heavy, smirking, and it all made Blake’s stomach drop. “I think I love y-” Then she ruined whatever she was saying by falling on top of Blake again, head on her shoulder, hot, shallow breaths against her neck and none of it was fair.
Chapter 12

Chapter Notes

hey. so. i'm sorry for the super late update. i've had some issues. but i hope you guys enjoy the chapter!

Somewhere between Yang’s drunken confession and Blake’s desperate attempt to run away to avoid the things she knew she’d do if she stayed trapped underneath her, they’d made it to Blake's bed. Everything that happened or didn’t happen after that was a blur and the black tank top hanging off of Blake’s shoulders and the lack of pants she couldn’t remember taking it off made it very clear that something had happened.

Yang was right there beside her, spooning her, one hand underneath Blake's tank top and there was no way that was innocent. Blake shifted from the shock, pretty sure she could feel Yang's bare skin against her back.

"Five more minutes," Yang mumbled against Blake's neck, holding her tight, oblivious to where her hands were. Suddenly they were cuddling, and Blake knew Yang was still a little drunk when she pressed a kiss to the back of Blake's neck. It all felt like normal, like it was meant to be this way, and Blake hated how much it hurt.

Sun was knocking on her door ten minutes later and she attempted to get up, heart racing, but Yang sleepily tried to drag her back to her, the sheets slipping down to reveal her wearing little of anything.

Blake would have to deal with that later, not now, when Sun had started knocking again and everything was a mess. Yang couldn't have been as hungover as Blake thought she was because it looked like she’d turned red, pulling the sheets all the way over her head. Heart pounding, Blake pulled on her discarded jeans from last night and hurried to the door, impressed with Sun's new habit of actually knocking.

"What is it, Sun?"

Sun widened his eyes. "Uh... are you okay?" Blake nodded. "Right." Silence. "Okay, so kinda long story, Neptune's got two ti-" His eyes wandered past Blake, straight to the suspicious lump on the bed. "Hey Yang!"

Before he could say even one more word, Blake shut the door on him and awkwardly turned back to Yang, now with her head out from under the sheets, hair a mess and face flushed. They didn't say anything to each other as they clumsily dressed themselves, Yang groaning over a headache, or everything-ache, and Blake had to reluctantly help her pull on the sweatshirt she'd been wearing last night, ignoring the way her fingertips brushed Yang's skin as she tugged it down.

She left the room to get water and pain killers and returned to Yang sitting on the bed. "I don't usually drink that much," she insisted, downing the tablets in one go.

"Right."

"But Nora said she could chug more than me-"
"That explains a lot," Blake mumbled with a little smirk. Yang smiled, and thought then would be a great time to ask if she’d done anything stupid last night. Of course, Blake could think of one thing, but she hated how her chest felt tight when she thought about it, so she settled on the wrestling a tree thing.

"Okay," Yang said, looking relieved.

"That's okay?" She shrugged. "Could be worse."

Worse like confessing your love, real or not, to your fake girlfriend, probably stripping off in the process, and then sleeping in the same bed, doing things you couldn't remember, and wishing you could. Those three words Yang had tried to say last night wouldn't leave Blake alone during breakfast, the rushed, borderline inedible one Sun had made in ten minutes, after he'd thrown on a shirt and shorts and pushed Blake into a chair.

"Soooo, last night was fun, huh?" he said awkwardly, sending Blake a look that said I told you so. Blake narrowed her eyes, wanting to force whatever he knew that she didn't out of him right then and there. Through the sheer intensity of Blake's glare, he caught on, clumsily scrolling through his phone, grinning, and holding it up towards them.

Yang Xiao Long drags new girlfriend into late night partying habit!

The headline was tame by Yang's standards, and even Blake found it funny, especially the rhetorical question at the bottom of the page, put there for the sole purpose of starting fights in the comment section, that hinted they were going to break up, accompanied by the dark, grainy image of Blake helping Yang into her car. True, her expression was a little disgruntled, but only because she was tired and stressed and worried-

"Yikes," Yang said, and took a bite of toast, glancing at Blake and smiling for the first time that morning.

"It's not funny," Blake tried to say, but she couldn't hold in the laugh.

Yang was laughing too, and reaching for Sun's phone. "Did they get one of me wrestling a tree?"

"Uh..." Sun looked down at his phone and back up again. "Wait, what?"

"No, but there's one of you falling over," Blake said, taking a quick look at Yang, "and two of you-" there was hesitance, Blake eyeing the photos of Yang kissing her against the side of her car, in her dizzy, drunk way, how had she forgotten that, "-leaning on me," she decided to say, and she could feel Sun judging her. Drunk people kissed people, no big deal.

"That's gonna be fun to explain to my manager," Yang said, rolling her eyes.

"It could be worse," Blake said, smiling at the way Yang looked at her, hungover with her hair in a lazy ponytail, and some part of Blake wanted to say screw it and snatch Sun's phone away to show Yang the photo of her kissing Blake, when she was blind drunk and this act they were putting on didn't need to be kept up, to show her that even if she didn't realise it while sober, there was a chance she-

"Gotcha!" Sun was saying to himself, checking out the photo he'd just taken with his phone, had he ever heard of private space?
"Sun," Blake warned, "delete it." He grinned, shrugged, and clearly started typing something as quickly as he could. But Blake had no patience after last night, and glanced at Yang before both of them took out their own phones at the exact same time. The first thing Blake saw on Instagram was the picture of them with the caption _third wheeling sucks_ and three winking emojis, _so_ dumb, but did Yang _always_ look at Blake like that?

Yang liked it a few seconds later, setting her six hundred thousand followers on Sun, but after what he'd done Blake couldn't find much room to care.

Apparently Yang got a text from her sister halfway through breakfast and had to leave, completely forgetting that she had no motorcycle waiting for her outside. There was no other choice than for Blake to take her back to her apartment in her car. Although she couldn't help but think that was a bad idea after what they'd been caught doing last night. Yang smiled and agreed, though, and they left the apartment, Blake slamming the door behind her to try and send a message to Sun that she wasn't okay with _anything_ he'd done.

"Thanks for letting me crash here," Yang said as they made their way down the stairs, turning to Blake with a grin. "I was a total mess last night, huh?"

"You could say that," Blake said, wanting to say _you told me you loved me_, but Yang was already on her way to the door and it was as good a time as any to ask. "Did you mean it?" Honestly, it had been eating at her the entire morning and it hurt whenever Yang turned to her with that look in her eyes, the one that said yes, she _did_.

"Huh?" was what she said now, though, turning to Blake as she was halfway out of the door.

The pictures online and the headlines so-called journalists decided to use against them were apparently paying off, because a small group of teenagers were stood waiting outside Blake's apartment building. All of a sudden her worst fears were realised and she frowned, stepping forward to warn Yang before they attacked from behind and dragged her outside, because of _course_ Yang's crazy fans were capable of that.

"There she is!" one of them said, nudging the girl next to her, all of them squealing as Yang shrugged at Blake and made her way over to them with a smile that was one hundred percent fake.

Much like Blake's as she sucked up any stupid, irrational heartache from Yang's short term memory loss from the night before and followed her outside. "Oh my god, no, sorry-" a girl with blonde hair was rambling as Blake approached. "This is so crazy. Our friend, she's sick, she can't get out of bed right now, ugh, we didn't even tell her we were coming-" Blake felt like grabbing Yang's hand and pulling her back so they could get away _ASAP_. "So we thought you could, like, record a video, I guess?"

Wasting no time, Yang made a peace sign and leaned towards the blonde girl's phone, waving at the camera. "Hi... friend!" She looked at the girl. "Wait, what's her name again?" She was _so_ awkward and hungover and the fans had no idea. "Hey Blake, get over here!" she called after she'd winked and made a stupid joke towards the camera.

"Ohhh, she's more of a Neon fan," the girl interrupted, cutting off the recording before Blake could get in frame.

So _that_ happened, making Blake feel even more awkward for having her hand in Yang's while she talked to her fans with an easy smile on her face, swinging their arms sometimes just to draw attention to them.
Dealing with strangers declaring their love to you was so much weirder when you weren't a famous pro-wrestler with a million scandals following you around, but that wouldn't stop the two other girls and the guy hiding behind them from rambling about how much they loved Blake, and Yang, obviously, and everything about their relationship that wasn't real.

After signing the guy's shirt, so messily it left Blake wondering if she'd even sobered up yet, Yang did everything she could to get away before paparazzi could appear out of nowhere and chase them to Blake's car, which weirdly had been the norm for them for a while now. They'd been caught kissing against a car at one in the morning, when the weather was bad and Yang had been at a house party Blake was pretty sure nobody except the people there knew about. So, no, nothing could surprise her much anymore.

"How did you guys meet? I mean, I know, like, I guess, because there was that interview-" one of the girls said, "-know you're childhood friends-"

Yang tried not to laugh, sending Blake a look that probably meant she was sorry for making up stories even Blake's parents had found out about. By now it seemed to be common knowledge that they'd grown up together, had known each other forever. "Uh..."

"-what you did during the Beacon show was sooo romantic! Like, the sweetest-"

Now Blake really needed to get away. "It wasn-'" Suddenly she was in Yang's arms again, being carried bridal style, with the worst case of stage fright. Put me down, was what she wanted to say, but all she could think about was Yang carrying her back to bed like that, putting her down and bending her over-

Yang was really into embarrassing her. "Sorry guys, we've got places to be!" Apparently not, though, because she found two minutes in her supposedly busy schedule to pose for photos, grinning and at one point kissing Blake on the cheek. There wasn't much pretending though, not when Blake's heart was pounding and Yang's hand was gradually moving further down her back.

It was even more embarrassing when Yang decided to walk away like that, smiling at her fans as they took even more photos, just as bad as paparazzi, maybe worse, and Blake knew she had no idea where Blake's car was parked. "It's the other way," Blake whispered. Yang winced, hurrying back past the group of teenagers, laughing nervously when one of the girls asked her what she was doing and shoved her phone at her again.

"My head feels like it's gonna explode," Yang groaned after she'd awkwardly let Blake down next to the car, kissing her cheek again because those fans were still looking, and climbed into the passenger side. Blake glanced at her, letting out a little sigh and putting on a smile, starting the car and pulling out. It was really awkward. Mostly because Yang wouldn't stop looking at her every few seconds. "Did I mean what?"

"Nothing," Blake said, taking a deep breath as she did. Yang had the worst timing.

But she laughed, leaning her head back into the seat, and all Blake could do was look at her through the mirror. "I said something stupid, right?" She sighed and Blake could feel her eyes on her. "That... happens."

"You were drunk," Blake said quietly, "it doesn't matter."

"I guess," she mumbled with a shrug, nothing like Blake had imagined it would go, but maybe she'd been expecting her to suddenly remember and climb across the car and kiss her at the red light. And maybe that was too much like wishful thinking.
Blake had dropped Yang off at her apartment and driven away as quickly as she could, leaving a promise to text her later to check on her and her hangover of doom. She didn't though, and Yang didn't text her either. Maybe it was selfish and stupid and hurt, but she had an article to finish and photos Velvet wanted her to check out and Coco was texting her questions about the interview from the other day and none of it was making any sense at almost nine on a Sunday night.

Sun was cuddled up with Neptune on the couch, though they'd never label it that, nor would they ever stop inching away from each other every time Blake wandered into the kitchen for something. She smiled at them moving away from each other for the fifth time that night, making her way back to her room, just in time for her phone to vibrate from it's place on her bed amongst paperwork and her open laptop.

I need you, said a text from Yang, and it was ridiculous how little three words like that could make Blake drop everything.

Are you drunk again? was the only reply Blake could send, knowing Yang saying stupid things when she was drunk 'happened'.

Nope. Blake narrowed her eyes. Just missing you, was what the next text said, with a cat face emoji and no, Yang had way too much time on her hands.

What is it? she sent back, blunt as could be. Yang would never have to know about the way she fell back onto her bed with a little sigh and a smile.

Yang didn't explain much, other than her manager being mad about the photos of her online, and on top of the trouble she was already in for going off script during Beacon Battleground, she was skating on thin ice. Come over? she sent five seconds after making a dumb joke about it all being worth it, that totally didn't make Blake roll onto her side and want to hide her flushed face.

I'm busy at the moment, Blake sent back.

My parents aren't home, came the next message, along with a winking emoji. She was so-

Stop. Blake laughed, though, and Yang sent another message ten seconds later, claiming her manager wanted her to drum up some positive PR in hopes of overshadowing the drunk, falling over, wrestling a tree, stuff. So, like she was desperate, Blake left, forgetting about the deadline she was under pressure to meet just so she could see Yang.

The door swung open when she got there, and frankly Blake was surprised she hadn't been attacked by guys with cameras as soon as she'd stepped out of her car. "Hey," Yang said, smiling as she took Blake's hands and pulled her into the apartment like they were meeting secretively or something. Yang's hand was still holding Blake's when they fell back onto the couch and Yang took a deep breath. "Sorry, it's just-" She looked at Blake for a second. "You're gonna hate this."

"What is it?" Blake asked, narrowing her eyes.

"He wants us to do a Q&A," she said, both eyes closed, Blake just now noticing that she wasn't wearing a bra under that orange tank-top.

"And that will help?" Blake crossed her arms. "How?"


With Yang's crazed fans, and the inevitable influx of Neon's bitter, Blake-hating ones, it was almost
guaranteed to be a total disaster. Blake wasn't even ready when Yang started the stream on Instagram, but the familiarity between them was so, so easy she almost didn't care. Yang's free hand was on Blake's thigh, skin on skin, legs tangled a little, and she'd leaned her head on Blake's shoulder immediately after starting the stream.

*yangarangxl started a live video. Watch it before it ends!*

It took a couple of minutes for the numbers to start rising, and before Blake could move out of their planned position of her sitting in Yang's lap while she held her phone up, the viewer number was nearing six thousand.

"Hey guys!" Yang said. "Blake, say hi!"

"Hey," Blake said, stiffly, feeling stupid and unwanted. She'd seen a hate comment fly by already and it was only going to get worse.

"Ask us stuff, guys," Yang said, laughing at Blake's less than impressed face on the screen. "Even Blake's excited!"

The comments were moving too fast for them to read, but Blake caught the occasional aww and the ever present gal pal jokes, which lost any shred of irony when Blake remembered they actually were just friends. Yang asked for questions again when the viewer count reached ten thousand and the few expected homophobic comments flew by. A lot of people called them out, including Yang, and the one guy who wouldn’t stop calling Yang baby for at least the first five minutes of the stream was driven away pretty quickly.

The questions could be anything, and they were, and suddenly Blake understood everything Yang had said about Blake hating it. There were more than a few suggestive comments, which honestly she should have known were coming after the time fans on Twitter were analysing the length of Yang's fingernails. That was still a thing, by the way, but Blake just took a sharp intake of breath and prepared herself for whatever Yang's fans wanted from the-

"Favorite animal?" Yang read aloud, though Blake was certain nobody even asked that. "Wellll, Blake loves cats."

Blake rolled her eyes. "Right." She averted her eyes from the screen. "And I suppose that means you're a dog person?"

“Opposites attract, right?” she said, laughing and leaning over Blake's shoulder like she’d started expecting kisses.

But Blake just couldn't kiss her again. No way. “Mhm.” Someone commented *i thought yang liked pussy*, thinking they were a comedic genius, but it made Yang laugh and Blake point out another question before it flew by. "How long have we known each other?"

Yang's fingers drummed on Blake's thigh as she tried to remember the fake story she'd told interviewers before. "Uh... we've known each other forever,” was what she settled on.

*So smooth. Blake shook her head. "We went to school together."*


"Yang may have saved my life," Blake said, shifting in Yang's arms, and their hands found each other somehow, off camera. "On the first day of school." The fans were eating it up and the viewer number was close to twelve thousand. "I stepped out in front of a car and she pulled me back, she
was so strong, even back then—" Yang's face on the screen was now red and confused and everything Blake wanted her to be. "I really liked her, and I remember thinking th—" No, that was her getting too close to real life to be anything but suspicious and she leaned back into Yang, too embarrassed to say anything else.

Unfortunately, everything she'd already said had ignited curiosity in every single one of those thirteen thousand viewers and they were swamped with comments like SO CUTE and questions like when did you realise you loved her??

"When she smiled at me for the first time," Blake said, unsure if she was embarrassing herself to keep up the act or whether there was any truth in these things she was saying. It was getting impossible to tell, and judging by Yang's face and the way she moved the phone down to hide it for a moment, even she was having a hard time.

"I, uh..." she mumbled, holding up the phone at a different angle, one that revealed they were holding hands, that shouldn't have been a big deal, but it was according to the flood of comments about it.

hammer_time: JUST SAY IT ALREADY

Apparently that was Nora, and Yang's way out of whatever it was she'd been trying to say. Another fan asked what their favorite thing about the other was, resulting in Blake's answer of Yang's smile and Yang's answer of Blake's ass, though she'd said it with a laugh and corrected herself to 'everything'.

Soon they'd relaxed into the back and forth and found themselves lounging on Yang's couch, answering more questions and holding hands and Blake ignored the soft look on Yang's face every time they looked at each other. "Have I taught Blake any moves?" Yang read out, grinning. "A few. If you know what I mean."

Blake rolled her eyes. "Whatever." The comments flew by even faster after that. Fifteen thousand viewers. How had that happened?

Someone in the comments asked about hidden talents. "I'm an awesome cook! Years of setting my dad's kitchen on fire totally paid off," Yang boasted.

"I can read a six hundred page book in five hours," Blake said.

Yang seemed impressed, laughing and looking back at the comments. One fan commented on Blake's flushed cheeks, another on how she was pressed into Yang's side, and it seemed like everyone loved it. "Favorite book?" Yang read out, shrugging, but all it did was lead Blake into a rant about this series, and that trilogy, oh, and that romantic classic. "Do comic books count?"

"No," Blake said, sending Yang a look before carrying on with her rant about one particular series a bunch of people in the comments loved.

"I love it when you talk booky to me," Yang mumbled, and Blake knew she'd been watching her the whole time, angling the phone more towards Blake, way too interested in a book she'd never read. Blake buried her face into Yang's shoulder, embarrassed for both of them. The comments went crazy, calling Yang out for her bad joke, complimenting Blake's... everything, telling them they should kiss-

And it wasn't like it hadn't crossed Blake's mind every time Yang had looked at her and smiled or leaned close and looked like she'd wanted to kiss her but always changed her mind. It was
complicated, with thousands of people watching them, but the rule she'd forced onto them about only kissing when they were in public couldn't be an excuse in this awkward, desperate situation. Yang, like always, laughed it off and glanced at Blake like she was waiting for permission.

Then Yang’s free hand was at the back of her neck, a little cold at the fingertips but Blake couldn’t care about that when she was being kissed again, simple and chaste and put on for the live video. Until it wasn’t that at all, Yang pulling away for a second only to kiss her again, like she’d been waiting all night. It was late now, and the room was dark enough for Blake to forget they were streaming themselves with their hands all over each other, warm kisses on her throat, hand in Yang’s hair, pulling the tiniest amount, just enough to make Yang moan against her skin.

Yang’s phone slipped out of her hand as she fumbled with the belt Blake was wearing, still kissing her. Blake closed her eyes, stopping Yang before all of it could hurt anymore. “We shouldn’t,” she said, and without thinking her eyes wandered to the phone laying screen side up between them. Still streaming.

"Blake, I-"

"I can't do this anymore," she was saying before she could even think, and she ran away, Yang's hand brushing her own as she took off towards the door.
Chapter 13

Chapter Notes

i'm officially the worst for not updating sooner. writer's block really had me bad. sorry! i hope this chapter makes up for it!

I'm sorry.

That was what Yang’s last text said. Blake had stared at it for a while, after she’d stumbled back into her apartment and straight into Sun’s millions of questions. It had been too late to pretend she hadn’t been crying in her car for ten minutes before she’d had the nerve to even go in and despite their fake surprise, it was so obvious Sun and Neptune had been watching the stream. They hadn’t admitted it, though, they'd just let her go to bed and wallow in whatever it was she was feeling.

Calling in sick the next day didn't make her feel any better, but she did it anyway, earning a side-eye from Sun and a much-needed hug a little while later. He squeezed her and rubbed her back while she cried a little and whispered things she wouldn't have admitted if she wasn't feeling like a total heartbroken mess. It was all dramatic and embarrassing, especially because no matter how much it felt like a breakup, it wasn't, and that just made it worse.

Yang, though, was taking their unofficial breakup well. At least that was how it seemed from the five times she'd tweeted Neon that morning, part of some kind of fake feud to hype up the re-match event they were putting on that coming weekend. Part of Blake knew it wasn’t real and that Yang might not have even sent those tweets herself, but she'd also posted a picture of herself posing with her fists up, grinning like she always did, and there was a twinge of jealousy there, enough to make Blake feel stupid and needy.

So for the rest of the week Blake pretended she didn't care, something she'd perfected, or told herself she had, during this whole faking not liking Yang Xiao Long thing. Work was slow and her boss chewed her out, because everyone had to have questions. Velvet and Coco were the worst, bringing up the photoshoot and the interview and Blake called in sick again on Thursday.

Rumors about the breakup fuelled dozens of unreliable articles from even more unreliable sources. Yang was photographed a few times that week, not that Blake went out of her way to check, but every time she wasn’t seen with Blake the breakup rumors turned into scandals involving Blake breaking up with her because of her partying habit or Blake cheating on her with people she didn’t even know.

Fans think THIS is the reason for Yang Xiao Long's mysterious Instagram live incident!

According to that particular article desperate for clicks, it was all a publicity stunt to sell tickets, though Blake had no idea what that would have to do with her. It was bad enough having that humiliating, heartbreaking moment on the internet forever, for anyone to see, without the constant theorising from strangers online.

It was too much, and that Thursday, when she was supposed to be on another sick day, she sat in her car waiting outside the place Sun worked instead, hovering her thumb over unfollow on Yang’s Twitter. There was no doubt it would spark another few theories on what exactly had
happened during that now infamous stream, she'd already seen the comments all over the internet about them, but she really couldn't handle seeing more happy, normal pictures of Yang, as if nothing had ever happened between them.

So she couldn't understand why she scrolled down a little to the newest photo Yang had posted, three hours ago, and read the replies which had absolutely nothing to do with the harmless selfie of her with her black and yellow bike helmet on that was so Yang Blake had to smile, just a tiny bit.

_who says "i can't do this anymore" when they're yang xiao long's gf?

_They're over. Neon was right.

_Is anyone else really upset? They looked so happy together during the IG live._

_I guess perfect couples don't exist_

Blake _could_ have sat there all day scrolling through strangers upset about fake breakups and how Yang looked like she was about to run after her before ending the stream, tears in her eyes, that's what a few dozen fans were claiming happened. But no, she put her phone down on the dashboard, waiting for a text from Yang, or anything, all it had to be was a stupid cat face emoji or a joke about how much of a disaster everything was, Blake didn't _care_, all she needed was a sign it wasn't over.

Her phone vibrated a few seconds later and she grabbed it, heart racing, feeling hot and bothered and _hopeful_, but it was just Sun, asking what kind of day old donuts he should bring out with him. Blake said she didn't care and pushed her phone away again.

Sun appeared a while later, waving even though they were barely ten feet apart and jogging over. "Did you see?" he asked, slamming the passenger side door and burying his hand in the bag of stale donuts he'd bought with him.

Blake glanced at him. "What?"

"She's gonna be on TV tonight," he started, pausing to take a bite, Blake staring at him the entire time, "on one of those late night talk show things, I guess."

"And?"

He shrugged, and said, "-figured you missed her," voice muffled.

And she did, which was why she'd break her usual habit of going to bed early with a book and a chip on her shoulder just to see Yang for the first time in little under a week, totally ridiculous when she realised how little time it had been, but she'd felt that absence so _hard_.

Neptune was invited over that night, like it was the biggest thing to _ever_ happen, and even Ilia reluctantly accepted Sun's invitation. It was impossible to tell whether the things he was doing were supportive best friend things or thinly veiled attempts to get Blake to open up. Either way, he was _sweet_, and Blake told him that, stopping him on his way to the door when Ilia knocked.

Blake was pulled into a hug and had to really look at her to even begin to believe Ilia would willingly watch anything to do with Yang, or wrestling, or reminders of the fake relationship she _obviously_ didn't approve of, but Sun's face said it all as he watched them, shrugging at Blake and falling back onto the couch next to Neptune.

_They spent most of the night avoiding the subject of Yang, despite the host of the show mentioning her before every single commercial break to thunderous applause and cheering from the audience._
An overly dramatic promo for the weekend's match made Blake feel so sick that she felt like she needed to run away again, until Sun reminded her that Yang was the next guest and that was it, she got up and mumbled, "I'm going to bed."

She didn't get very far by the time Yang came out to screams from the studio audience and playful admiration from the host, dressed in a black suit that fit her perfectly, why did that have to happen right then-

Much to Blake's surprise and embarrassment, she sat back down without thinking or saying a word. Ilia stared at her for a second, and Sun nudged Neptune a few times, who just pushed him away, trying to listen.

"Looking very snazzy," the host teased, inviting Yang to sit on the couch. "Pretty different from your usual get-up, huh?" Yang laughed and shrugged, making a joke about the suit being her new wrestling costume, but all Blake could focus on was how normal everything was. It wasn't like Blake was sat there feeling heartbroken over something that wasn't real and never would be. Why did Yang get to be over it already, how was that fair?

"Yeah, things have been crazy," Yang was saying when prompted, fiddling with her tie.

"Whoa, whoa, hang on a second," the host interrupted, "sorry but we have talk about something else here. I think you know what I'm saying." He grinned. "Beacon Battleground. What happened there? That was something else. I think everyone here agrees." The audience erupted into cheers, a few people whistling, and Blake swore she heard a guy yell Yangarang above the rest of the noise.

"I mean, you guys saw what happened," Yang said, forcing a smile, people cheering in the background. "I-" She glanced at the host. "Blake wasn't feeling so good."

The host nodded along with everything she said. "Let's talk about her for a second," he said, leaning back in his chair. "You two have been front page news for a few weeks now, right? That's gotta be weird."

"Totally," Yang said. "You get used to it. You kind of have to." She grinned, genuinely. "Blake's pretty much a celebrity now too! I mean, people love her, and I get it, I d-" The crowd cut her off, Blake watching, not believing any of it, but still smiling, how could she not?

"She got you in a lot of trouble though, isn't that true? I read that somewhere," he said, Blake frowning because she knew exactly what he was doing. "You jeopardised your career for this girl. I mean no disrespect, but wow, you must really love her." He took a look at the audience, eyebrows raised, earning a few halfhearted laughs. After the live stream situation, everything Yang said and did was considered suspicious, at least on the internet where fans had entire threads on Twitter dedicated to figuring out what Blake meant.

But then Yang bit her lip and looked down. "Yeah," she said, looking up again, smile not quite meeting her eyes. "I really do."

Sun's eyes were on Blake as soon as Yang said it, and she felt Ilia shift next to her to place a hand on her shoulder. No. Yang wasn't allowed to do that, not when Blake was sat at home watching her say it when she really wanted her to kiss her again, like all those other times, and make her feel it. Of course Blake knew it was her fault, but Yang wasn't drunk this time. There was no reason to lie during an interview when they'd broken up in the least conventional way perhaps ever.

"Is she backstage tonight?" the host pushed again. "Or is she watching at home?"
Yang looked confused, glancing over her shoulder like she expected Blake to come walking out behind her. "I-" She nervously laughed along with the audience, the host asking again, trying to get Yang to admit things. He quickly gave up, Yang was stubborn, and announced that Yang would be teaching him a few wrestling moves after the commercial break, at which she tugged down her tie and rolled up her sleeves, winking at the camera.

"Man, why couldn't you guys keep it up a little longer?" Neptune said, breaking the tense silence and completely ignoring Sun, who was giving him the shut up, dude look he always did. "What?" Ilia rolled her eyes. "You know the comeback match is in two days, dude-"

"Yeah, so, ignore him," Sun said, leading them into another awkward silence. Neptune raised an eyebrow, looking at Sun, then at Ilia, and finally at Blake. And then Sun's shoulders fell and he caved. "Okay, I know we told you we didn't watch it, and we didn't, I swear!" Blake pulled her knees to her chest. "But that was totally real! It was like you guys wer-"

"Sun's right," Ilia interrupted, crossing her arms.

"Whoa. Okay. Weird."

Ilia sent him a look and turned towards Blake. “You need to tell her.”

I know, she wanted to say, maybe even climb to the roof of the building and yell, because of course it had to be now that she realised, and not every time she'd kissed Yang and made excuses and silly rules and acted like she didn't care. Every time she’d wanted Yang’s hands all over her or her fingers right there-

"So," Sun pushed, "what are you gonna do?" Blake didn't fall for it, she stayed quiet, staring at the television, annoyingly aware of Sun and Neptune high-fiving and whispering 'I told you so' loud enough for her to hear.

"We've gotta get tickets fast, man," Neptune hinted with a laugh.

"I'm her girlfriend," Blake said, heart pounding, face flushed because the room was so hot, "we don't need tickets."

Later that night, after Sun and Neptune left for a late night run to the store, Blake curled up on the couch and scrolled through the few pictures of herself and Yang she had on her phone. She should've gotten more, she knew that, but she'd been too deep into pretending she wasn't in the middle of the worst crush she'd ever had on anyone.

Ilia had stayed behind, half watching a random movie she'd put on and half watching Blake, in a familiar, longing way Blake had always caught her doing. When the movie got boring, barely fifteen minutes in, Ilia decided she was leaving and got halfway to the door before Blake could stop her. There was an excuse about needing to be up early for work that didn't convince Blake at all. Mainly because Ilia did everything but look her in the eye when she said it.

That was how Blake ended up driving her home, radio down low, Ilia with her arms crossed in the passenger seat. Silence had always been comfortable between them, but as Blake pulled up outside Ilia's apartment, she felt like there was something more.

Ilia leaned over and hugged Blake for maybe too long, squeezing her and hesitating. "Good luck," she said, fingers on the door handle. "Don't leave it too late like I did."

Okay, so there was something. Blake looked at her carefully. "What are you talking about?"
Ilia sighed and lifted her hand off of the handle. "I know I should've told you sooner." Blake just stared at her, finally understanding, maybe, she didn't know. "Do you get it now?"

"Ilia." The way she was looking at her was- It made sense, of course it did. "I didn't know," she whispered, but it didn't feel like enough.

"It's okay," Ilia said, grimacing, sounding more defeated than Blake ever wanted her to feel.

Blake loosely took her hand, awkward, embarrassing for both of them, but Ilia squeezed it and smiled, eyes down, and that's how they stayed for a moment until Blake was sure she understood. "I want you to like her."

And Ilia gave her a look then, somewhere between irritated and embarrassed. "Will you guys just get together already?"

Blake laughed, eyes wandering to the dumb cat air freshener still hanging in the car. "You can come with us." Silence. "If you want to."

Ilia just let out a deep breath, looking equally relieved as she was embarrassed. "I know you hate her," she started, grimacing, "but the rainbow girl is kind of-" She stopped herself.

"Mhm-hm."

"What?"

"Nothing," Blake said, smiling, leaning back into her seat, enjoying just how red Ilia was turning. "You should go for it."

Saturday finally came after a tense Friday at work and a late Friday night spent scrolling through comments on Yang's talk show interview and typing, deleting and re-typing messages to Yang Blake knew she'd never have the willpower to send. Well, not until she got the chance to somehow drag Yang away from everything and kiss her when no one was watching, to tell her how it felt to lose her for barely even a week, just to let her know how stupid she was for her. She wouldn't even complain if Yang posted a photo of her red face or teased her about running away, no, she kind of hoped she would.

Before she knew it, she'd wasted her Saturday on daydreams of stupid, romanticised scenarios of how to tell Yang how she felt when really all she needed to do was-

"Heads up!" Sun yelled, throwing her car keys at her from the top of the flight of stairs. It was getting way too close to seven for them to be running late. "Be right back." He disappeared into the apartment, then reappeared two seconds later, raising his eyebrows at Blake's obviously blank expression. "You're not freaking out, right?"

"No." Blake squeezed the keys in her hand and walked away, out of the apartment, totally freaking out.

The match was happening at the famous arena out of town and during the slow, traffic-filled ride Sun was the most excited over a wrestling match Blake had ever seen him, rambling about that one move he'd seen Yang do that one time and gushing over Yang's new costume she'd posted a photo of earlier that day. Neptune kept agreeing from the backseat, Ilia not even trying to hide her disinterest anymore. Blake joined in with a nod though, face a little red. That new costume, with the black and yellow bra and the weird mask that made her look like a superhero from an old movie. Yang really could rock anything.
Judging by how packed the parking lot was when they got there, as well as the huge line that extended into the parking lot, they'd arrived late. And Sun wasn't helping, yelling for Blake to park there, no, there. Neptune was complaining about carsickness and Blake had to pull into a space she was pretty sure was half a mile away from the arena.

Sun got out of the car before she'd even parked properly, freaking out about being late and not getting seats, running ahead as if it would make any kind of difference. Like always, Neptune followed, shrugging at Blake and Ilia, who shared a look before hurrying after them.

It didn't take long for Blake to get recognised, probably for the wrong reasons, and she was ushered forward in the queue by fans, something she wasn't okay with. Sun and Neptune, on the other hand, definitely were, and took every opportunity to cut in line.

The line started moving forward, and after one particularly awkward moment with two fans asking her what she was doing there, Blake came to the front of the queue, moved back a little by the huge security guy holding his hand out in front of her. Sun quickly appeared next to her, crossing his arms and trying to look tough, something that Blake appreciated was probably really hard for him.

Having an audience when you were trying to talk your way into a match you didn't have tickets for wasn't a good time, especially when you were assumed to be a bitter, fame hungry ex-girlfriend. Blake knew that was what some fans thought she was by just how many disgruntled looks she'd received while waiting in line, but the security guy just held out his hand.

"I'm Yang's girlfriend," Blake said, heart pounding, and Sun held in a laugh beside her. It shouldn't have sounded so weird.

The security guy looked her up and down. "Name?" And Blake told him, crossing her arms, half expecting him to throw them out. Instead, he nodded and gave them seat numbers, moving them along as quickly as he could.

Inside, things were even worse, the entrance to the arena too crowded for anyone to even move, and Sun leaned over to whisper promises of getting Blake out of there if she freaked out again. With a roll of her eyes, she nodded and moved forward, ignoring the comments from fans and the one guy pointing at her, whispering something to the girl next to him.

"-ait, I thought they broke up-" somebody mumbled behind her. Someone else yelled her name over the sound of everyone else and it was all enough to make her reconsider whatever stupid idea she thought she had. A hand grabbed her shoulder and she was so close to swinging around and getting out of there, until she realised it was Sun, pointing forward.

Thanks to Neptune's height, they found a gap in the crowd and got out, struggling to find their seats. They did, though, and there was no way they were close enough to the ring for Blake to make sure Yang knew she was there. She felt Sun's eyes on her as she sat down, hands buried in the pockets of that yellow hoodie she hadn't gone two days without wearing since Yang had given it to her.

They were on the left side of the ring, stuck behind a group of guys who wouldn't stop talking with their outside voices, listening to the announcer stumble over an explanation of Yang and Neon's history, adding just the right amount of drama to hype the crowd up until the whole arena was cheering over him.

A few moments later, Neon came out on roller skates, obviously, that was her thing, as was wearing everything rainbow. Blake reluctantly clapped, aware of the camera set up suspiciously close to where she was. Knowing everything that had already happened, she'd be caught on camera refusing to cheer for Neon and unknowingly set off another war between fans. So, she cheered,
putting on a fake smile, even daring a look straight into the camera, glancing at Ilia's similar reaction beside her.

"What?" Ilia mouthed over the cheering, turning away to hide her small smile.

Showing off a bit too much, Neon did some safe tricks and narrowly avoided crashing into the ropes as she came to a clumsy stop next to the ring. Still, the announcer went off praising her, mentioning Yang's name just to make the crowd explode into screams again.

Blake felt way too hot in her hoodie as he announced Yang's entrance, the group behind her chanting Yangarang progressively louder until most of the left side were yelling her name. Sun included, along with Neptune, who had one arm draped around Sun's shoulders.

It might have made her feel ridiculous, but Blake couldn't be the only one not chanting. That camera was right on her, suspiciously focusing on her and her alone, so she shook her head and started cheering too, not yet ready to admit that maybe she did like wrestling. Just... only when it came to Yang.

Ten seconds later, Yang came out, riding her motorbike, wearing sunglasses and a leather jacket, a rehearsed, totally in character smirk on her face. She moved forward, crowd going crazy, feet brushing the floor, then climbed off, a competitive nod in Neon's direction, throwing off her jacket and lowering her sunglasses. The guys in front of Blake suddenly stood up, chanting louder and blocking her view. Of course.

Yang's sunglasses were thrown to the side as she moved around the outside of the ring, all while Blake tried to move into view, desperate and definitely embarrassing herself. Sun watched her, eyebrows raised, but she ignored him, shouting Yang's name through all of those confused feelings. Yang gave someone in the front row a high-five and then flipped herself into the ring before Neon could even think about taking her roller skates off.

It started off tame enough, all taunts and teasing from Neon and playful anger from Yang. But then Neon was up in Yang's face, saying things nobody else could hear over the noise of the arena, coming close to kissing her, only to fake-out and push her backwards. It was an act, fake, everyone knew that, and Sun had made sure to remind Blake of that as soon as he noticed how uncomfortable she was with Neon touching Yang like that.

After that everything about the match felt different. For once Yang was slow, ignoring every cheer and chant of her name from the crowd, letting herself be spun around by Neon. She was thrown into the ropes five times before she fought back and finally wrestled Neon to the floor in a pretty suggestive way. Blake wanted to roll her eyes at the way everyone around her whistled and yelled things, but she couldn't keep her eyes off of Yang and the weird conflicted look on her face.

Nothing like the confident Yang from the talk show with the claims of loving Blake and the smiles and laughs and the brushing everything off. Maybe it was the crowd, the hype, or maybe Blake was just so overwhelmed with seeing Yang there again, but she thought she saw something there, in Yang’s half smile and the pained look on her face, something that told her Yang felt as heartbroken and lost as she did.

"Yang!" Blake shouted out again later in the match, needing her to know she came back, but she was drowned out like before in the stupid Yangarang chant that followed Yang pinning Neon.

"It looks like Yang Xiao Long has her mojo back, ladies and gentlemen!" the announcer was saying when Yang turned away from everything to vault out of the ring, leaving Neon to complain to her manager over the ropes. Blake was so confused, was Yang walking out again, or had she already
Finally, after what felt like the entire match, the camera that had been previously focusing on Blake moved, the cameraman racing straight for Yang as soon as she'd climbed out of the ring. Every other reporter in the arena followed suit, leaving Neon to complain over the ropes to her manager while Yang was swarmed. Probably not a good time for Blake to call her name again, but she did, struggling to see past the guys in front who were now celebrating. Loudly.

Though Blake started to think it was a good thing Yang hadn't seen her, with the way she was dismissive of everyone except Nora, who’d somehow fought through the crowd and started dragging Yang away in the middle of an unofficial interview. There were at least five microphones in Yang’s face as she left, nudging guys out of the way, pulling on the grey hoodie Nora had handed her. Sun must have noticed Blake's hesitance, her nervous step forward, and ended up pointing Yang out at the far side of the arena, like he was hinting that Blake should go over or something.

So that was what Blake did, not even caring about the cameras that followed her every move as she pushed through, past the barrier and around the ring. More cameras flashed as she made her way towards the door she'd just seen Yang rush through, pushing it open, feeling shaky and nervous for some reason, even though she was so, so sure of herself.

Sat on the bench at the end of the hall was Yang, hard to see past the crowd of reporters and other arena staff, but it was Yang, Blake was sure, and she had her head in her hands, Nora sat beside her with her hand on her shoulder. Blake hesitated, because Yang was crying, but she was pushed forward through the thinning crowd by a passing group of staff. Despite everything, she managed to say Yang’s name through the conflicting feelings of guilt and want, and she looked up straight away, teary-eyed, flushed cheeks, but that smile Blake had loved the moment she’d seen it for the first time, that was on her face as soon as she saw Blake stood there in the middle of the small crowd.

Yang stood up, hesitant, looking like she was about to run over and kiss her, and Blake would've let her, but that was when she walked forward and pulled Yang into a hug instead, and wow, it felt good to touch her again. There was no resistance from Yang at all, just a wipe of a tear and an awkward smile in Nora's direction and then she hugged Blake tighter, one hand in her hair, fingers at the back of her neck, softly saying her name. "You came," she said after, and Blake could hear the smile in her voice.

"I was on the list," Blake said, pulling away, not wanting to, but she needed to see that smile. "Oh," Yang said, as if she didn't know, laughing like she hadn't been crying a moment ago. "Yeah, just in case."

She was so- Blake had to kiss her, even if it was a quick, fleeting one to let her know that yes, she wanted her. Just not... there, with Nora watching them and cameras flashing from down the hall. Blake took Yang's hands, pulling her away into what Blake could only hope was a private room, until they were stood alone in the empty locker room, Blake's heart fluttering at every little look Yang sent her.

"Blake," she said quietly, hands still in Blake's, fingers brushing, and then she moved closer. "I thought you sai-"

Blake didn't wait any longer to realise that maybe they didn't have to say anything. Just because of that, she moved forward and pulled Yang down into the kiss she'd needed, clumsy fingers along her jawline down to her collarbone, completely unconsciously because it felt so real and right and then
Yang's hand was in her hair-

But Yang pulled away, opening her eyes slowly like she was waking from a dream. "Wait, this means," she started, "you like me," she tried to say again, between Blake's desperate kisses, "like I like you, right?"

Blake pulled away and stared at her. "Yes, Yang," she said with a little laugh, moving forward to kiss her again, fingers trying to pull the grey hoodie she'd thrown on after the match over her head and off.

Yang caught on and awkwardly pulled it over her head, arms up, voice muffled. "Since when?"

"Does it matter?" Blake asked, embarrassed and kissing her again as she let the hoodie fall to the floor before taking off her own, Yang's hands already trying to take off the t-shirt she had on underneath, hot breath on her face, lips on her neck and fingers on her bra strap.

"Yeah," Yang murmured against her, and ugh, it tickled. Blake laughed, pushing Yang back and averting her eyes.

"I-" Blake started, feeling stupid because she was stood there in her bra, with Yang staring at her with lipstick smudged around her mouth, expecting something. "I want this to be real."

Yang stared at her. "It is," she mumbled, "it always was, I mean-" But that was all Blake needed to tug her closer and kiss her harder until they stumbled back into the bench, laughing against each other's lips. Blake tried to pull off Yang's black and yellow sports bra while Yang unhooked hers, but it was on too tight and things were too hot and heavy to really concentrate. "Shower?" Yang whispered, not even waiting for an answer.

Blake had Yang pulling off her jeans and underwear as she sat on the bench, and she really hoped other people weren't going to be using the locker room with the very obvious trail of clothes now leading to the showers.

Five minutes later, after Yang had clumsily slipped Blake's bra off, tips of her fingers brushing her nipples, kissing her everywhere up against the locker closest to the showers and making sure Blake came close to begging her for it, they stumbled into the shower together, Yang's hands on Blake's ass, Blake's lips on Yang's neck, tangled in each other.

The glass was steaming up when Yang's hand wandered to Blake's clit, the other against the glass, slowly rubbing her, kissing her through every single moan, laughing every time Blake tried to say something. To tell her right there. Harder. Fuck.

Yang kissed her again and sank to her knees in front of her, parting her legs, smiling up at her after every kiss along her inner thigh. Closer, until Yang pressed her tongue there and Blake's hands were in her wet hair, holding her there, breath heavy, knees weak. Blake straightened herself against the wall of the shower, watching Yang look right at her as she flicked her tongue against Blake's clit, fingers on her thighs, and Blake's heart pounded hard in her ears, muscles tightening, this had been everything she'd wanted.

Blake couldn't even moan Yang's name, she was unravelling, Yang's fingers sliding inside her, painfully slow at first, mouth against her, and Blake could feel Yang lift her right leg onto her shoulder for better access. That was when she grew louder, pulling Yang's head closer, feeling like she was climbing the wall behind her. Ugh. "Yang," she whimpered, face hot, everywhere hot, feeling like she might cry, and she caught herself moaning Yang's name over and over again as she lurched forward, eyes tightly shut, Yang's name becoming a loud moan as she came hard against
Yang kept her fingers on Blake's clit as she stood, working her down, smiling like she was so proud of herself, leaning forward to kiss Blake through her heavy breathing and mumbling what sounded like, "love you." Blake smiled, eyes still closed, pulling Yang's hands up to her breasts and lowering her own, wanting more, leaving marks on Yang's chest, lifting her leg between Yang's and teasing her.

However long they'd taken in there hadn't been enough, not even after Yang had taken her slowly from behind, kisses on her shoulders and down her back, teasing her for being so loud when they were done. They'd leaned against each other under the spray, Blake washing Yang's hair while she told her how much she'd wanted her, Yang grinning over her shoulder and Blake couldn't help but smile back.

When they came out, hair dripping wet, holding hands and smiling and whispering, Blake laughed and leaned her head on Yang's shoulder, oblivious to Sun, Neptune and Ilia sat in the now virtually abandoned arena, eating pizza with Nora in the middle of the ring. Sun was the first to see them, jumping up and waving and peering over the ropes. "Hey!" He grinned, looked them up and down and took a sly little glance at the others. "So... this is real now, huh?"

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!