**Made for Another Time**

**Summary**

A love story between Max and goodguy!Jefferson featuring a great dose of explicit sex scenes.

In this alternate universe, Mark isn't tormented by his dark obsessions, though his difficult past still lingers underneath. But a sweet and innocent girl like Max can ease his pain and make life worth living again. In return, he gives her his all and shows her the world like no one else can.

**Notes**

AU with no powers, no murders – everything is fine in this regard. I would say my depiction of Max is more or less in-character, though the story leads her into various places, somewhere the game did not, so I am not entirely sure if she would do these things the way I described them here. As for Mark, he is most definitely not the same person we saw in the game. For one, he is not the volatile, murderous psycho (whom lots of us adore), nor does he use drugs on people for his photography – willingly or not. I can promise you, the reader, that it will not
turn dark like this. Still, I hope some of you will like this version of him, since he is not entirely rid of his characteristics. I understand if it is not everyone’s cup of tea, though, by which I mean it is a love story with some drama here and there, as well as explicit sex scenes.

Small side note – English is not my native language, so please forgive any grammatical mistakes as well as my not-so-rich vocabulary most of the time. I am just having fun here. I also would like to apologize for any typos - I'm doing my best to avoid them, but some of them still slip once in a while. I do my best to correct them as soon as I notice them.

I hope you will enjoy your stay. Reviews are very much appreciated :)

The Golden Hour, Pt. 1

PART ONE - THE GOLDEN HOUR

Monday, September 2, 2013 – Max’s POV

Entering the Art classroom for the first time, Max finally saw her idol – Mark Jefferson, the very reason she had enrolled in the Blackwell Academy for – live, not just online or on the cover of some magazine. He was sitting at his desk, turning to her as she came in.

‘Good morning, sir,’ she said as she passed by, looking at him, trying to hide her excitement. He looked so handsome, with his nicely groomed haircut and beard, his face decorated with glasses that made him seem more like a serious professor. He was also wearing a suit and a tie, presenting himself very elegantly. He looks even better in person. Holy fuck.

‘Good morning,’ he replied, sending her a warm smile.

She noticed he was fixing her with gaze, so she ducked her head down, feeling a blush creeping up her face, and her heartbeat quicken. Damn it! Don’t let him know you’re crushing on him! It’s embarrassing. She sped up to the desk at the back of the class and hurriedly took a seat, unable to face him again.

Trying to calm down a bit, though thrilled to have finally seen Jefferson in the flesh, she began to unpack her stuff.

Checking the registry, he reached her name. ‘Maxine Caulfield?’

Max looked up and put up her hand. ‘Here,’ she said. ‘And, um, it’s just Max, sir.’

Mr. Jefferson regarded her for a second. ‘Max. Okay, I’ll remember that,’ he said, smiling at her again. She felt herself blush again, her heart twitching. Calm. The fuck. Down.

The professor went on with the lecture, with Max trying to look as naturally at him as she could, considering how attractive she found him, but it wasn’t easy. Moving around the classroom from time to time, it seemed he spent the majority of his lecture leaning against the desk in front of Max. He kept glancing in her direction, sometimes smiling under his nose as he turned his eyes away, sometimes seemingly smiling directly at her, all the while her heart was racing, unable to calm down.

You’re imagining things, Max. Like he would ever find you attractive.

The first lecture was rather general, but Jefferson seemed to be able to talk about it with just the right amount of finesse, capturing his students’ attention, interjecting with a joke here and there, and Max thought he was being quite dorky for a person of his age and position.

And she liked it.
Monday, September 2, 2013 – Mark’s POV

The term had just begun, and loads of students had transferred from other schools specifically for Mark’s course.

Though he never believed in such bullshit anyway, he had found himself making a resolution for the new school year – get better mentally. There had been strings of meaningless hookups, trying to fight off loneliness, sleeping with a brand new woman every few days, staying in hotels, then sneaking out, going back to his empty house. He hadn’t felt love in years, ever since he had moved back to Arcadia Bay, and it didn’t look like it was going to change, but deep down, it was all he wanted.

When he entered his classroom, most of the students had already been present and waiting, some of whom he knew already. He sat at his desk and took his stuff out, getting ready for the lecture.

Then an entirely new face came in. Ivory complexion, finely sprinkled with freckles. Rather short, light brown hair, kind of messy. She looked beautiful, and so, so innocent. She was wearing simple jeans and a hoodie.

Passing by, she quietly said, ‘Good morning, sir,’ and gazed at him with excitement in her eyes, but once she saw him linger, she ducked her head, flushed, and hurried to the desk at the back of the class. Mark could swear he felt his heart twitch.

‘Good morning,’ he replied, a little shocked, but with a warm smile.

Don’t. Do not fucking go there, he chastened himself.

But he couldn’t help it. It wasn’t love at first sight, but it felt like a lightning strike. He had never, ever fallen for a student in any way. This was an entirely new thing for him.

Checking the registry, he reached her name. ‘Maxine Caulfield?’

‘Here,’ a quiet, sweet voice reached Mark’s ears. It was the tiny beauty who shyly put up her hand. ‘And, um, it’s just Max, sir,’ she added.

Mark regarded her for a second. ‘Max. Okay. I’ll remember that,’ he said, smiling at her, making her blush again. Mark felt warmth spreading through his chest.

What the hell are you doing? She’s your student!

He quickly snapped out of it and continued on with the registry.

He felt drawn to her immediately, spending the majority of his lecture leaning against the desk which was facing the new girl, completely mesmerized by her simple beauty, her wide eyes gazing at him, though seemingly shyly. He would smile at her once in a while, then turn away as he saw her blush, he couldn’t help himself. He was also glad to see her chuckle lightly at his ridiculous jokes, attraction starting to build up.

Monday, September 2, 2013 – both points of view

After his first lecture of that school year had finished, Mark took a picture of his new class, Maxine among other faces which he did not care to study at all. He looked back at the screen of his camera,
carefully memorizing every detail of her gentle face. Her wide eyes were encircled by long, dense eyelashes, and framed by just a bit of eyeliner on her upper lids, sharpening them just enough to make them stand out. A light smile on her fair rosy lips rendered her expression soft. The high resolution allowed him to capture even her light freckles, which added to her overall charm. She was so gorgeous.

He imagined what it would feel like to be able to immortalize her pure, untouched beauty with his lens.

Max stayed in the classroom for a while, having several moments to look around the room, seeing as Mr. Jefferson seemed busy chatting with a short-haired blonde, who was ostentatiously sticking out her bum, bent against his desk, clearly trying to seduce the devilishly handsome professor. Max rolled her eyes, a bit amused, and began studying the displayed posters and some of Jefferson’s actual published work. She recognized them very well, of course – she was a fan of his after all, and marveled at his style.

She then moved to the corner, getting a look of some more pricey equipment, such as carbon fiber tripods. Whoa, the school is definitely well-equipped! The ballheads even have a pan-lock. she thought.

Moving to the right, she admired the fancy cameras behind the glass of the showcase, along with literature on the subject of photography. Max knew most of the titles, but hadn’t gotten around to reading them yet, though intending to do so soon.

Mark, who was rather disinterested in the blonde student’s advances, allowed himself to glance at the tiny beauty once in a while, smiling lightly to himself as he saw her curious expression. It seemed she knew quite a lot already, and even if she didn’t, she was the only one who actually bothered to look at what the classroom had to offer. Either way, it made him hopeful that perhaps he would finally be able to teach and mentor someone who was a genuine artist themselves, not just another amateur or a copycat. The new girl had an aura of true passion around her, he could see it from the start. Now it was only a matter of time until he would get a chance to see her photographs, and he was indeed looking forward to it, noticing her vintage Polaroid camera – again, something unique among his students.

When she was finally done, she turned back to him.

‘Goodbye, Mr. Jefferson,’ she said quietly, with a bit of hesitation, fearing he would not hear her, but he glanced at her and smiled widely.

‘Goodbye… Max. I hope you enjoyed the lecture.’

*He actually remembered my name? Oh. My. God.*

‘Yes, sir. It was very interesting,’ she replied, sending him a coy smile, and looked down for a moment.

The blonde narrowed her eyes at Max, looking angry that the doe-eyed, raggedy-looking hipster dared to interrupt her and Mr. Jefferson. Max had heard of her already – Victoria Chase, daughter of some very wealthy people. Clearly spoiled. A very mean person, too, already asserting dominance for some reason.

‘I’m glad to hear that,’ Mr. Jefferson said, smile not leaving his face. He was fixing her with gaze, and Max felt herself getting flushed. She then heard Victoria huff impatiently, so she looked down, feeling her anxiety rise. She hated confrontation, and the presence of Mr. Jefferson wasn’t making it
any easier.

Mark was a bit annoyed by the blonde at that point. Though skilled, she was spewing clichés about photography, complimenting him excessively, and he wasn’t impressed at all. It was all the more frustrating to notice that Maxine was too shy to approach his desk with Ms. Chase occupying it from the very start – she had managed to catch him during the orientation a few days back already, and he hadn’t been able to get rid of her since. Wanting to remain professional, though, he had to swallow up his irritation, and try to be a guide to her as well.

He noticed Maxine was had feeling uneasy, thus he wished to somehow improve her spirits.

‘I hope to see you tomorrow, Max,’ he said softly, prompting the tiny beauty to lock eyes with him.

‘See you tomorrow, Mr. Jefferson,’ she replied, blushing lightly and reciprocating his smile, then left his classroom.

‘Ms. Chase,’ he turned to Victoria. ‘I’m afraid I have to cut this short. Duty calls.’

‘Oh, of course, Mr. Jefferson,’ the blonde replied, sounding rather disappointed. ‘See you tomorrow,’ she said enticingly.

He didn’t respond verbally, simply nodded. She was actually waving her hips on her way out, but he didn’t bother to entertain her.

The only person on his mind was Maxine.

Tuesday, September 3, 2013 – both points of view

Mark had spent the rest of the previous day thinking about the new girl, wondering whether or not he had only imagined his initial attraction. After all, wasn’t it one of the demands of any photographer to recognize beauty where it was due? But once he saw her gentle face again later that day, he knew he wasn’t going to forget her quite easily, and that he would not be able to resist her charm.

Thinking about her now, in the morning, having his coffee, he remembered how focused and inquisitive she had appeared, a light spark in her eyes perhaps? He couldn’t not draw a connection to his younger self – she reminded him of his early days, when he too had been full of newfound enthusiasm and curiosity, ready to take over the world, so to speak. Rarely had he seen a true, pure, young artist such as Maxine… Max. Though shy, she had found the courage to assert herself like that, making him say her name the way she wanted it to be said, and Mark couldn’t help but be fascinated by her.

Maxine. The greatest. It was likely that he idealized her all too strongly already, but nothing like this had ever happened to him before, to such extent that is, and so he let himself carry that image of her in his mind.

During the lecture, he noticed her writing something down in her journal, focus painted on her face, lips slightly parted. He was curious what was in there, obviously, but he was more curious if she was paying attention to his class.
‘Max,’ he said suddenly, prompting her to look at him. She immediately stopped what she was going. She seemed a bit startled, blushing. Lovely, he thought.

Max felt her heart rate rise. Mr. Jefferson was fixing her with gaze, it seemed to take longer than it should, but then he finally asked her a question directly connected to his rant.

‘The, uh… shade spectrum, sir,’ she replied, trying to keep an even tone. She locked eyes with him for a moment.

‘So you are listening… that’s good to know,’ he only said, a small smirk under his nose, and he went back to conducting the lesson.

Max frowned. She wasn't sure what to make of this small altercation – Jefferson didn’t seem mad or annoyed, or anything of the sort. And she gave the right answer, so she had nothing to worry about. But his lingering felt a bit odd.

This is sad, Max. You wish he would notice you, huh? Like that’s ever going to happen. Just wait till he sees your pathetic selfies…

Mark looked back at her again, noticing she appeared to be dispirited, and he drew a conclusion that it was his fault for startling her, a hint of guilt in his heart.

She is too… sensitive. Too gentle, he thought. Maybe don’t hassle her too much.

Frankly, he had never wished to cut any of his students any slack, he would usually be quite firm in his rules, after all, Maxine wasn’t the first and she wouldn’t be the last student of his who seemed to have issues with anxiety or low self-esteem. But the tiny beauty seemed to be the only one who was able to bring out his softer, gentler side, even from the get-go. Protecting her was an instinct rather than a conscious decision.

He had to quickly snap himself out of his thoughts, there was still some time left until the end of the class.

‘Alright, guys,’ he said in a slightly raised voice. ‘I realize it has only been two days, but it would like to see your work already. For Thursday, take and bring in a photograph that best describes who you are as artists. And please, don’t show me something you think I would like to see. Show me what you want me to see.’

With that, the bell rang. ‘Class dismissed,’ he announced.

He stood up from the desk facing Maxine, having a quick glance at her, and then went over to his desk, finding Ms. Chase had already been waiting for him there – much to his disappointment. But he was a professional and so he braced himself for the short, albeit unpleasant, session.
Max woke up with a knot tied inside her stomach. What the hell am I going to show to Mr. Jefferson?

She had been trying to think of something for the rest of the previous day, but no inspiration had surfaced. She had even attempted to peruse through the pictures she had already taken prior to the assignment, but… did any of them really represent her as an artist? She couldn’t tell.

She liked taking selfies for fun – perhaps she could make it a more interesting photograph by including something else in the frame? But Jefferson had said, “Selfie… a dumb name for a wonderful tradition.” That surely had to mean he would not appreciate anything like that.

Still, Max had one more day to complete the task, and so she decided to relax for now.

The first Photography Lab was exciting. Mr. Jefferson allowed everyone to use the fancy equipment the school had in store, carefully observing his students at work. Victoria definitely seemed to know what she was doing, she herself already possessed a similar camera. Other students were also more on the digital spectrum of preferred equipment, and so it made Max feel rather intimidated.

‘I, uh… I’m not sure how to set it up, Mr. Jefferson,’ she looked at him shyly, slight embarrassment painted on her face. ‘I’m not used to working with digital cameras.’ She heard Victoria’s hushed, mocking laughter, and wished to disappear.

Mr. Jefferson approached her, and pointed his finger to the right button. ‘Here,’ he said softly, his fingertip brushing against her hand only so slightly.

‘Oh, I see it now. Thank you, sir,’ she said, sending him a coy smile. He nodded, reciprocating the smile, though with confidence, of course.

She then proceeded with taking the shot that he had demanded. She handed him the camera back and was awaiting his evaluation, he carefully studying her photograph.

‘Nice sharpness… the frame could be moved a couple of millimeters to the side, but maybe that’s just me nitpicking,’ he looked back to her, a small smirk on his face. ‘Considering you’re not too experienced with this type of camera, I would say it is a promising start. Very good, Max.’ He sent her a slight smile.

Oh, I knew it. She has a gift, Mark thought, delighted. He was already looking forward to seeing her homework due the next day.

Max exhaled with relief. She was so sure she would bomb this task.

‘Thank you, Mr. Jefferson.’ She went back to her desk and observed the remaining students at work.

Mr. Jefferson actually liked my photo!

Didn’t think I could take a decent picture
with that fancy camera, but I did. Now,

if I could only think of a photograph

that best represents *me*…

that would be great.

Max closed her journal, and laid back on the bed. *Think, Caulfield. Something. Anything! Think,* she urged herself.

The sun was about to start going down, golden rays piercing through the blinders, forming shadow patterns on the floor. Max was looking at it, and suddenly, she felt her inspiration come.

She stood up from the bed and got a hold of her camera.

*Perfect,* she thought, grinning to herself.

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*Thursday, September 5, 2013*

Anxious, she placed her homework in front of Mr. Jefferson, who was looking at her with a very soft expression, making her heart beat slightly faster.

‘Let’s see,’ Mark said, taking the picture and studying it closely.

There it was – a nice color palette, good angle, sharpness in place. In the photograph, sunshine was forming patterns on the floor, a hint of dust hovering, a fern with exceptionally green leaves, everything on the right side screaming *good vibes,* but once he looked to the left side, he noticed a girl sitting on a black sofa, her legs pulled up to her chest, face buried in her hands, appearing distraught. The rays did not reach that side of the frame, rendering it darker, sorrowful.

*Depression in a nutshell? Hm, perhaps…* he pondered. *Or… a good day awaiting?*

At first, Mark wasn’t entirely sure which meaning Max had meant to convey with the photograph. But then he realized – *double meaning.* *That’s her style.*

‘This is… fascinating, Max,’ he said, his face in a slight awe. ‘You have a gift.’

Max blushed, feeling a rush of heat to her cheeks and chest. *He likes it?*

‘I… Th-thank you, Mr. Jefferson,’ she replied, a bit tongue-tied.

‘May I keep this?’ he requested, holding the polaroid between his index finger and his thumb and shaking it slightly.

‘Oh, sure… if you’d like,’ she agreed, a coy smile on her face.

‘I would like that very much, Max. Thank you,’ he sent her a soft look, the corners of his mouth rising.

She only nodded in response, astonished to see him praise her, and went back to take her seat. She
had to discretely fan herself – his sight was too much to bear.

*Jefferson said, “You have a gift.”*

*And then he asked if he could keep my photo.*

*My photo!*

*I think I have to pinch myself real hard.*

( ◡‿◡)
The Golden Hour, Pt. 3

Chapter Notes

I don't personally feel strong either way about Nathan, he just serves a purpose I needed for this chapter, using a similar altercation between him and Max from Episode 1. I don't think he'll appear much more beyond "The Golden Hour" part of this fic or even this chapter.

Monday, September 16, 2013

Max was getting books from her locker, about to head to Algebra. Suddenly, a brown-haired, tall boy approached her, leaving her no time to react or walk away.

‘So Victoria tells me you’ve been looking at her the wrong way,’ the boy started angrily, invading her personal space. Max faced him and immediately knew who he was – Nathan Prescott. She’d heard of him, of course. Another rich kid. A little unstable. A faithful member of the Vortex Club, pretty much ran by him and Victoria. “He’s a cool, chill dude,” people would say. “He’s very funny when he’s high.” Well, he wasn’t too funny now.

‘Looking the wrong way? What does that even mean?’ Max asked quietly, trying to keep an even tone.

‘What-the-fuck-ever.’ He now leaned in very closely to her face, she could actually feel his breath on her cheek. Gross. ‘Point is, you mess with her again, I’m going to have to talk to you in a little bit more serious way. Got that?’

‘Huh? Messing with her?’ Max tried to explain, shaking her head. ‘I don’t even talk to her.’

‘Oh yeah? Keep it that way then.’

He suddenly grabbed her by the back of her neck and slammed her hard against her locked. She was clutching tightly onto her textbooks, but Nathan hit the pile from the bottom so hard that they tumbled down to the ground, hitting the floor with a loud thud. Max looked shocked, to say the least, her chest heaving frantically, and she was shaking. Prescott then hit the locker again, only with his palm now, causing Max to close her eyes and let out a hushed, panicked scream, and he walked away.

Calm down, Max. They’re gone. And they can’t actually hurt you... can they? she was trying to ease herself up.

And there he was – Mr. Jefferson approaching her slowly, his expression concerned. He had only witnessed the very end of it, and the rich kid was gone in a blink of an eye.

‘Max, are you okay? Are you hurt?’ he asked softly. He was watching her carefully, she was shaking, her bottom lip quivering, and it seemed her eyes were about to fill up with water.

Of course he knew she wasn’t okay. New girl, shy and quiet, not too many new friends around her... she was an easy target for bullies, especially at this school, where no one actually bothered to raise their kids, letting them run around and act entitled. It had been driving Mark insane for years.
Nothing much could have been done, though, the rich parents had basically been funding Blackwell, and Principal Wells had been submissive to their demands. Suspending one of those brats had never been met with approval.

‘Yes, Mr. Jefferson, I’m fine, it’s nothing,’ she murmured very quickly, desperately fighting off her tears. If there was one person who she didn’t want to see her cry, it was him.

‘Hey, you don’t have to hide, Max,’ he said firmly. ‘I’ve been dealing with Blackwell’s spoiled kids for years now, I know how they act. You’d think their parents give a damn, but they don’t, which is all the more infuriating,’ he explained.

She was listening to him, only staring at him with those wide eyes of hers.

‘Do you want me to report him for you?’ Jefferson asked.

Technically, Mark had an obligation to report any and every instance of such behavior, but as he had said to Maxine just a few moments before – no one truly gave a damn about it anyway.

Her eyes widened, expression frightened. ‘No, please, don’t! Mr. Jefferson, I can’t make enemies here, not with them, pl–’

‘Okay, alright,’ he raised his arms in defense. ‘I won’t. I promise. But that doesn’t mean I agree with it. If there’s anything wrong, you can come to me and I will do everything in my power to help you. Alright?’

Max looked up at him, eyes widened even further. She couldn’t quite believe he cared enough to comfort her.

‘Alright. Thank you, Mr. Jefferson,’ she said quietly, smiling only so slightly. ‘I’d better go now, though. Algebra is waiting,’ she added.

‘Right. Don’t let me stop you,’ he sent her a warm smile.

‘Thanks again, sir,’ she let out a small chuckle, encouraged by his empathetic demeanor.

‘Anytime,’ he waved it off, though he was serious about his offer. She began to leave, but he spoke again, ‘See you later, though?’

Mark stopped, turning in his direction again.

‘Oh, the lecture,’ she realized. ‘Yes, of course, I’m going to be there.’

‘That’s great. And, um… hang in there,’ he said softly.

Max nodded, sending him a coy smile, and then headed to her next class.

Mark wasn’t too happy with the outcome – he knew he shouldn’t have agreed to stay quiet on the matter, but at the same time, knowing how the school worked, it would have turned out worse for Maxine. So he let it be, like he had promised.
The lecture for today was finished, and everyone was eager to go home already, Max as well.

‘Max, can I speak with you for a moment?’ Mr. Jefferson called her out.

‘Yes, sir.’ She slowly approached his desk.

Once the classroom cleared out completely, he said, ‘Again, a really nice work with the shadows. You might actually have an eye for it.’

‘Thank you, Mr. Jefferson,’ Max smiled at him shyly.

‘You’re welcome. I called you in about something else, though,’ he continued.

‘About what, sir?’

‘Well, you still haven’t submitted a photograph for the contest, as most of the other students had. Why is that?’

‘I don’t think the world needs to see my five minutes of infamy.’

Mark raised his eyebrows. Is she really doubting her talent? ‘Infamy?’

‘Yes. Nothing special to see there.’

‘Max… the world first has to have a chance to see your work in order to judge it, you know?’

‘That’s true, but I already know the outcome. I’ve seen some of the other entries. I stand no chance against them, no matter what photograph I might take.’

He knew she wasn’t going to be convinced with a simple “you can do it!” pep talk. ‘Are you serious about becoming a photographer?’ he asked.

‘I am. I totally am,’ she shook her head frantically.

He wasn’t necessarily “calling her out,” but he needed to know if she really wanted that career for herself.

‘Then you have to put yourself out there. The world won’t wait for you to play catch-up. Especially the world of art. Not many people get a chance to do so, and not many end up succeeding.’

Maxine nodded.

‘I know it’s scary. Trust me, I remember what it’s like.’

‘But…’ she cut off, exhaling with defeat. ‘It seems so… unattainable.’

Mark nodded slowly, readjusting his glasses.

‘Why do you think so?’

‘Well, hardly anyone makes it, as you said, sir,’ she explained. ‘It was incredible enough that you made it when you did, what makes you think I can do it?’

Though listening to her carefully, he was also thinking about how much wished she would call him by his first name already.

‘Does my opinion count for anything?’ he asked.
‘Of course, sir.’

‘Well, then why not believe me when I say that you’re incredibly talented and you have a real shot out there?’ he was staring at her intensely, shaking her up a bit, her heart slightly picking up the pace. ‘Obviously, there is no guarantee. There never is. Just because an artist is exquisite, or absolutely perfect, does not mean they will succeed.’

Max nodded, widening her eyes, so as to make him see how she was right, but he continued.

‘My point is – you have to show off your work in order for anything to even start happening. Which, again, I know is really difficult and really scary, especially at first,’ Mr. Jefferson was explaining in a calm, even manner. It was a lecture of sorts, but he didn’t sound condescending. ‘I can promise you one thing, though – looking back, years from now, you won’t regret doing it, whether or not you succeed is irrelevant. Not attempting it will be much worse, and you will beat yourself up over it.’

Max knew it was all indeed very true. He’s right. Of course he is. Get it together, Max.

‘Alright… I can’t make any promises, but I can at least try.’

Mark smiled at her widely. I got through to her… at least a little.

‘That’s so great to hear, Max.’

‘When is the deadline, sir?’

‘End of September. You cannot be late, I won’t be able to get you in afterwards. Alright?’

‘You got it.’

‘Like I say – always take the shot. Might actually produce something worth keeping,’ he concluded. ‘Okay, you’re dismissed.’

Max only smiled over her shoulder on her way out.
Maxine was slowly climbing on top of him, entirely nude, gracing him with a coy smile. Her breasts, though small, were the perfect size in his mind, her ivory skin pristine. He was hard, and she was about to put her tiny hands to his dick, his anticipation rising.

He felt his heartbeat quicken and his body seizing when the manifestation finally started to run her palms up and down his length, lips parted, holding his gaze with those wide eyes. It looked so big in her hands, a little too big – it was a fantasy, after all… but she continued her movements, bringing a blissful tingling. He was breathing heavily, enjoying her gentle petting strokes, until he felt her mouth going down on him, and so he burst inside her almost immediately, waking up startled. He checked his pajama boxers, and sighed with disappointment. That’s just… great.

Indeed, he had just had a spontaneous orgasm while asleep, brought to him by the heroine of his dream – the tiny beauty, who just so happened to be his student, with whom he would have class later that day.

You’re so fucking gross.

He had been fighting his crush for a few days now, it had been intensifying with each class – hell, each look they had shared since their meeting. He had been trying everything he could think of, but she was impossible to shake off.

When he finally saw her during his lecture, it was difficult to look her in the eyes or even in her direction. He limited hanging around her desk to a minimum, though he still had to occasionally go there or look at her or ask her a question, so as not to raise any suspicion.

Max noticed Mr. Jefferson was on the edge. He was acting a bit strange… he seemed tense, he didn’t look at her as much. Oh, because you think he was actually looking at you like that? Jesus, Max. You’re embarrassing yourself. She decided to just listen to him and take notes, fighting off her teacher crush.

Mark, having a little weakness in the “I’d like to appear hip and cool” department, had been becoming friends with his new students on social media. Maxine was one of them, obviously. Though normally his students would invite him, and not the other way around, he had taken initiative and sent a friend request to her first.

Mark Jefferson has invited you, the notification read. Max was shocked. He is inviting me? How the hell…? She pinched herself, but it was indeed real. She proceeded with accepting the request, beaming inside.
A few days later, Mark noticed that her birthday had approached. *Turning eighteen. So she really was only seventeen before. And I’ve been fantasizing about her. Christ...why is this happening to me?*

But he couldn’t help it, he had been trying so hard to get over her. Thankfully, he had strong enough will to actually resist hitting on her, so at least his conscience was clean in that department. Still, he felt odd with himself. Was it or was it not creepy to have a crush on a teenage girl? Was he a bad person because of it? He wasn’t entirely sure, but he felt awful with himself.

Despite his nagging thoughts, he figured it would be nice to wish the tiny beauty a happy birthday, that was the least he could do to contribute to this exceptional occasion in her life.

*Happy birthday, Max! Always take the shot ;-)*

He looked back at the message and shook his head. Was it lame? He couldn’t tell. He hit send and closed his eyes for a moment.

*Jefferson wishes me a happy birthday? Oh. My. God. I’m going to pass out, she grinned widely at the screen of her laptop. She quickly composed a reply, though she had to hide her delight under a more formal thank you note.*

Mark heard a notification ring soon after and opened his eyes.

*Thank you, Mr. Jefferson! *smiley emoji*

He smiled lightly at the screen. *An emoji, huh? She is so adorable.*

Now he felt a little odd to act like a teenager himself, excited by that simple exchange. After a few hours had passed, he found himself fantasizing about her yet again, now no longer restrained by her age. He was free.

*Oh, that’s just great, isn’t it? Now you can be gross all you want, huh? Don’t you dare touch that girl, he chastened himself. Leave her alone.*

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*Monday, September 23, 2013*

That weekend had been hard on Mark. He had ended up fantasizing about her all the time, having no choice but to relieve himself in the shower all too many times, feeling like utter shit afterwards. He wasn’t kind to himself in his mind, and it had been worsening the situation even further.

He wished he could stop feeling that way about her, it was only a crush after all, and not some big love, and yet he couldn’t shake it.

With a heavy heart, he relieved himself once more this morning, yes, thinking about her, just to get it out of his system, in case his body would fail him and humiliate him in front of the entire senior class. Just to imagine how quickly that rumor would spread around Blackwell… He would get fired faster than he could say creep.

He had no idea Maxine had been experiencing something similar, something more than a simple crush on her idol-slash-teacher. Mark would sometimes wonder why she would space out during his
class – was he boring her? It didn’t seem like it. She appeared to be a rather keen student.

In reality, what Max would do was… fantasize about her teacher, just like he would fantasize about her. She imagined him taking her on her desk, right in front of her eyes, feeling aroused and agitated during class. She felt embarrassed by her behavior, though no one would ever find out, but just being attracted to such a handsome man, one she was sure would never look at her the same way, was an utterly humiliating feeling for her. She wished she could snap out of her wishful thinking, but Mr. Jefferson’s smile was too much for her. She couldn’t resist his charm, his confidence or his looks.

She wished she could at least gather up the courage to approach his desk more often, chat him up about photography, ask him anything, really, but Victoria was always there. Though it seemed rather amusing to Max, she still feared Mr. Jefferson found it flattering to get attention from an attractive, young student – one who had a ton of talent herself. Max didn’t think she stood a chance against Victoria in either of those departments, but especially when it came to the handsome professor.

Tuesday, September 24, 2013

Mark hadn’t woken up with a knot in his stomach in ages. Literally. He very rarely felt nervous anyway, but to this degree? It was getting out of control.

He had intended to go to work today, but when he had attempted to rehearse his brand new lecture, he hadn’t been able to form one coherent sentence. And if that coupled with just seeing Maxine? No. Just no.

Instead, he tried working out – doing pushups, crunches, lifting up… Not even endorphins were able to help him calm down. It felt as though the only thing that would help him would be to consummate his infatuation. And it wasn’t an option. So he had to give in to his other way of releasing the tension.

Mr. Jefferson apparently called in sick today… Max read the Principal’s notice. Man, that sucks. This one class is worth all the social dysfunction. Oh, well. At least my lunch break just got way longer.

She closed her laptop and headed to class. Somehow it felt all the more difficult to endure English without the prospect of seeing Mr. Jefferson today.
Several weeks had passed, and Max found herself in a dilemma. She had taken her picture for the Everyday Heroes contest a few days prior, but she was anxious to submit it to Mr. Jefferson, seeing as she was trying to do it on the last possible day.

Not that she would ever actually hope he’d notice her, but she was crushing on her teacher pretty hard, and every interaction with him was making her nervous. Not to mention, she just wanted him to like her work, he being a huge inspiration to her.

Taking a few deeper breaths, she entered the classroom.

He was sitting at his desk, leaning his arms on it, eyes closed, face half buried in his hands – he looked exhausted, and Max thought he might have been sleeping.

Seeing no other choice but to wake him up, she built up the courage and finally spoke, ‘Mr. Jefferson? Hello?’

He didn’t respond. Though her anxiety rose, she attempted to call out to him once more.

‘Excuse me, sir?’ she repeated.

He looked up at her, astonished. ‘Oh… sorry, Max. Been, uh… a tiring couple of weeks,’ he explained, rubbing his eyes under his glasses, readjusting them, and cleared his throat. ‘What’s the matter?’ he asked her.

‘I, uh, I’d like to finally submit my picture for the contest, sir,’ Max said quickly, avoiding his sight. She placed the artwork in front of him. ‘I’m sorry it took so long,’ she added shyly.

Mr. Jefferson regarded the picture for several moments.

‘A selfie, huh?’ he arched his eyebrow at her, shaking her up a bit.

‘Is it bad?’ she asked, a little scared and disappointed. ‘I know you hate those, Mr. Jefferson, but–’

‘No, I don’t hate them, only the word. I prefer the term ‘self-portrait.’ And I’m just wondering if I get it,’ he answered, smiling lightly at her. ‘I’m going to take a shot – no pun intended. So… the people in our lives are our everyday heroes.’

Max smiled shyly at him. ‘Yeah. That’s it. I feel as though it’s too… simple.’ He only guessed a part of it though, she thought, but decided not to correct him.

‘Well, the message might be simple, but I like your take on it. It’s a very good entry, Max. I’m glad you’ve decided to submit it.’

‘Thank you, Mr. Jefferson,’ she said, relieved, sending him a coy smile, and he nodded. She turned back and went to take a seat at her desk.

Oh, thank God. He is so great.

‘Alright, class!’ he raised his voice, getting up. ‘Settle down, the lecture’s about to start.’
All eyes were now on him.

‘So, seeing as everyone has submitted their photographs for the contest, the submissions are now closed, meaning no changing, no adding, no removing your entries. I’m going to choose one by the end of the week and let you know who will have won. It’s a great opportunity to jumpstart a career in photography, so I’m glad all of you are taking part. In the meantime, we still need to go over the Daguerreotype process.’

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Monday, September 30, 2013 – Mark’s POV

By now, four weeks had passed, and Mark had been completely unable to stop thinking about her, as much as he had been trying to control his thoughts. At first, he had just felt the same warmth in his chest whenever he would see her, he would feel his heart doing the twitch thing again.

Just... stop. Stop thinking about her.

But it wasn’t that easy. He couldn’t help but think her smile was the most beautiful thing he had ever seen. Never had he been infatuated with anyone so quickly. Admittedly, he had still been fantasizing about her, nothing was holding him back now.

It was even harder when she would come up to his desk to shyly ask him a question about an assignment or his work, her voice being so quiet and sweet. He had to really focus and not linger on any part of her body or not to gaze into her eyes for too long. It didn’t help that she was obviously crushing on him too, as many schoolgirls had.

His feeble attempts at sweating it off at the gym few times a week only made him more frustrated, not understanding how the hell that had happened to him. His thoughts eating away at him, trying to get him to stop, only made him more irritable, causing him to snap at some students for no reason. Another time, he had even tried calling in sick to just avoid having to go to work and seeing her all day. He needed to fight his temptation hard and fast, and everything was failing.

You probably just want to fuck her. You’re gross.

But it wasn’t just that. He would observe her interactions with other people around the school, the way she was helping them out, caring about their wellbeing. No wonder she had managed to make so many friends in such a short span of time. He was beginning to develop a crush on her. He couldn’t sleep, couldn’t eat, couldn’t even let off steam. It was driving him insane.

Meanwhile, Max had absolutely no idea her teacher requited her feelings.

He had been exhausted for quite some time now, even more so because the Everyday Heroes contest had been coming to a close. Students and other faculty members – everyone had wanted something from him, and even though it had been tiring at times, he was glad to have a bit of a distraction from his teenage crush.

Teenage. Yeah, teenage. Isn’t that twisted in and of itself.

‘Mr. Jefferson? Hello?’ a girly voice echoed faintly in his ears, not quite registering it as a real thing.

He was now sitting at his desk, leaning his arms on it, eyes closed, face half buried in his hands, his
face contorted in a tired expression, savoring the last bits of rest.

‘Excuse me, sir?’ the voice called out again, snapping Mark out of his lethargy. He looked up, and saw the sweet, innocent perpetrator herself.

‘Oh, sorry, Max. Been, uh… a tiring couple of weeks,’ he explained, rubbing his eyes under his glasses, readjusting them. ‘What’s the matter?’ he asked.

‘I-uh, I’d like to finally submit my picture for the contest, sir,’ she said quietly, avoiding his sight. She placed the artwork in front of him. ‘I’m sorry it took so long,’ she added shyly.

In the picture, there she was, out of focus, her back facing the camera, standing in front of a wall full of other polaroid pictures. Mark regarded the picture for several moments, theorizing about its meaning.

‘A *selfie*, huh?’ he arched his eyebrow at her, shaking her up a bit.

‘Is it bad?’ Max asked with a hint of disappointment in her voice. ‘I know you hate those, Mr. Jefferson, but–’

‘No, I don’t hate *them*, only the word. I prefer the term *self-portrait.* And I’m just wondering if I get it,’ he answered, smiling lightly at her. ‘I’m going to take a shot – no pun intended. So… the people in our lives are our everyday heroes.’

Max smiled shyly at him. ‘Yeah. That’s it. I feel as though it’s too… simple.’

‘Well, the message might be simple, but I like your take on it. It’s a very good entry, Max. I’m glad you’ve decided to submit it.’

‘Thank you, Mr. Jefferson.’ Mark nodded. She turned back and went to take a seat at her desk.

*Well, that went easier than I thought.* He was sure he would somehow give himself away or worse – make her uncomfortable in any way. That was the *last* thing he wanted to do.

‘Alright, class!’ he raised his voice, getting up. ‘Settle down, the lecture’s about to start.’

All eyes were now on him.

‘So, seeing as everyone has submitted their photographs for the contest, the submissions are now closed, meaning no changing, no adding, no removing your entries. I’m going to choose one by the end of the week and let you know who will have won. It’s a great opportunity to jumpstart a career in photography, so I’m glad all of you are taking part. In the meantime, we still need to go over the Daguerreotype process.’
The Golden Hour, Pt. 6

Friday, October 4, 2013

Max woke up feeling excited and very nervous – today was the day Mr. Jefferson would announce the winner of the contest. Though she had obvious doubts he’d pick her – she’d seen other entries, Victoria’s seemed better, and even Kate’s, but Max wouldn’t mind the latter winning at all. Kate had her own little talent and a ton of creativity, it would be amazing if her friend won.

But obviously, Max wished she would win. It would be a tremendous jumpstart for her career, one she had dreamed about pretty much her entire life, as well as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to hang out with her idol, one who apparently believed in her.

‘Guys, all of your entries were captivating and I saw you put in a great amount of thought into them, they were all truly fantastic. Alas, the winner is only one. I’ve made my choice, class,’ Jefferson started, looking around the room, feeling the anticipation.

Mark purposefully prolonged the pause, all eyes on him, everyone’s faces screaming impatience with a dose of fear.

Max could feel and hear her heart pound loudly in her ear, it was a miracle she even heard the announcement at all.

‘I’ve chosen the entry by… Max Caulfield,’ he announced. ‘Congratulations, Max,’ he sent her a wide grin. He saw her shocked expression, eyes wide, her hand covering her mouth.

‘Ugh, seriously?’ Victoria hissed under her breath, sending Taylor a baffled look. He decided to ignore it, the feeling of Maxine’s pure joy was the only thing important to him now.

Max couldn’t quite believe it. I won? I won! She reached out and pinched herself.

‘Yup, it’s real,’ Mr. Jefferson said, smiling at her.

‘Congratulations, Max,’ Kate Marsh said, sending a genuine, warm smile to Maxine.

‘Oh, God,’ Max exhaled under her breath. ‘Th-thank you, Mr. Jefferson,’ she said, looking at him in disbelief, feeling herself get flushed. ‘Thanks, Kate,’ she said a bit louder. She couldn’t restrain her grin, she was overjoyed.

‘You wholly deserve it, Max,’ Mr. Jefferson replied, reciprocating her joyous smile.

Mark saw that wide grin, her face flushed in gorgeous pink, but he had to quickly snap himself out of it. Don’t start again. It’s bad enough you’re going alone with her to San Francisco.

‘So, you’ll be going to San Francisco next week with me as your guardian, both of us representing the Blackwell Academy…’ he continued, briefly presenting the plan of their trip.

Oh, man. I’m going to spend the weekend with Mark Jefferson in San Francisco. Is this for real?!

Max was over the moon.

She needed to quickly calm down, though all she could feel was joy. She tried really hard to listen to Jefferson’s lecture, though he himself seemed to be a bit distracted too, which gave her an excuse to feel the same for once.
Mark had been beating himself up all week. He really did feel Max’s picture was the best. He couldn’t *not* choose it just because he felt he shouldn’t be alone with her – he couldn’t rid her of this wonderful opportunity.

*Keep your hands to yourself and everything will be fine.*

He was watching her excitement, smile not leaving her face throughout his entire lecture, causing him to be a bit distracted, but somehow… he didn’t mind. She looked so beautiful, her smile was making him smile, though he had to bite down on it, not showing his own joy.

After the lecture, Victoria came up to his desk, waiting for the classroom to clear out.

‘Mr. Jefferson, are you serious? Max Caulfield?’ she asked, baffled, her arms crossed.

‘Don’t you think you’re getting ahead of yourself here, Victoria?’ Mark frowned at her. ‘This is no way to talk to a teacher.’

‘But *Max Caulfield*? Are you seriously trying to tell me her lame selfie was better than my entry?’

‘Well, yes, I think I made that clear when I announced the winner.’

Victoria huffed.

‘Anything else?’ he asked, looking at his wrist watch, trying to get rid of her.

‘I guess not,’ she said, turning on her heel and leaving, clearly angry.

Mark rolled his eyes, quite amused by the altercation, still feeling firmly about his choice. It was a total coincidence that his crush had submitted the best picture. He couldn’t take that opportunity away from her.
The Golden Hour, Pt. 7

Chapter Summary

Their first date!ヽ(°﹏°)ﾉ Sort of.

Chapter Notes

No more split chapters from this one onwards.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Friday, October 11, 2013

Waiting outside the main campus, Max was feeling anxious. Not only about the upcoming weekend but about the very fact that she was going to have to take a plane ride there. Though she had been on a plane before, it had always been a stressful event for her. She didn’t want to show her fear to Mark Jefferson of all people, she wanted to play it cool and appear mature enough, but it looked like she wasn’t going to be too successful in her task.

She saw a cab pull up. The passenger door opened and Mr. Jefferson got out.

‘Hello, Max,’ he said to her with a warm smile.

‘Hi, Mr. Jefferson,’ she replied, looking down for a moment.

‘Let me,’ he said, taking her suitcase from her and putting it in the trunk.

‘Thank you,’ she said quietly.

He then opened the car door for her. ‘After you,’ he gestured with his hand.

Tucking her hair behind her ear, feeling all the more nervous, she got in the car, scooting to the left, with Jefferson taking the seat next to her.

‘You nervous?’ he asked, looking at her attentively, as the cab started driving towards the airport.

‘Very,’ she said, nodding.

‘It’ll be alright, Max,’ he said, putting his hand on hers for a moment. She felt her heart twitch. ‘Once we’re there, you’ll see you’ve been made to be there.’

‘You really think so?’ she asked.

‘Of course, Max. Like I always tell you – you have a gift.’ He was smiling at her warmly, and she gazed into his dark brown eyes for a moment.

‘Thank you, sir,’ she said, looking down again.
‘Come on, call me Mark.’

She looked back at him, raising her eyebrows in astonishment.

_Call me Mark? Is he serious?_

‘Are you serious? Won’t that be… weird? I’ve never called a teacher by their first name.’

‘I don’t think so, at least not to me. So what do you say?’

‘Okay… M-Mark,’ she drawled, smiling shyly.

‘And may I call you Max?’ he joked, making her laugh.

‘Yes, you can,’ she said, feeling tiny bit more relaxed. He seemed to linger on her again, as though he enjoyed seeing her laugh.

After they had finally settled in their seats on the plane, Max was shifting uncomfortably.

‘What’s wrong?’ Mark asked with a concerned look on his face. ‘Max, are you okay?’

‘I, uh… I’m nervous about flying,’ she said quietly, looking down, fanning herself now, feeling her anxiety rise.

He reached out with his hands, taking hers in his.

She looked at him, surprised. _What is he doing?_

‘It is going to be okay,’ he said slowly, squeezing her palms. ‘You hear me?’

Max quickly nodded her head, having her heart rate go up, reacting to his touch.

_His hands feel so nice on mine… Oh, stop it, Max. It doesn’t mean anything to him._

‘If there’s anything wrong, please, just tell me, okay?’ He was looking her in the eyes, smiling reassuringly.

‘Alright. Thanks, Mark,’ she replied, still feeling odd to be calling him by his first name. Admittedly, though it was nice of him, she wasn’t feeling any more relaxed, his sudden touch had the opposite effect to what he had intended.

He let go of her hands and reached for his bag. He took out two novels: Vera Brittain’s _Testament of Youth_ and Patrick Hamilton’s _The Slaves of Solitude._

‘Which one would you like to read? Might take your mind off it,’ he offered.

‘Hm… _Testament of Youth_, please,’ she said.

‘There you go,’ he handed her the book. ‘Enjoy.’

‘Thank you,’ she smiled at him. _That’s so nice of him._

The novel did end up taking Max’s mind off the flight, at least for the most part, as she would
sometimes glance in Mark’s direction, in disbelief that she was in such close proximity to him for several hours. He was reading the other book; it seemed he was focused on it entirely, but the truth was that he couldn’t focus at all, and put it away after a while.

‘Not an interesting read?’ she asked shyly, looking at him.

‘Hm, no, it’s not that,’ he answered slowly. ‘I don’t think I’m in the mood for that kind of a story.’

‘I see.’

‘How about yours? Is it taking your mind off the flight situation?’ Mark asked.

‘For the most part, yes. It’s also quite interesting,’ she replied with a coy smile.

‘Would you say it’s worth recommending?’

‘Hm… That depends on whether you’re interested in the Great War.’

‘It just so happens that I am,’ he replied with a smile, causing Max to do so as well. ‘More in terms of photography, of course, but yes, I am.’

‘Then I think it’s very possible that you’ll like it. It’s similar to photography in a way.’

‘How so?’

‘Well, in her novel, Vera Brittain immortalized some of the people she knew. Her brother, her fiancé… Both of them died in the war. I mean, a portrait is one thing, it can express a lot of emotions depending on the artist behind the lens,’ Max explained, capturing Mark’s attention, ‘but in here, it’s like… you give your close ones some sort of a… mythical depiction, they can become much greater than they actually were. Or so much worse.’

Mark was listening to her carefully, gazing at her face, his expression soft.

‘I mean… literature is just a different type of lens in this instance,’ she added at the end.

‘Well, Max, I don’t think I could have said it better myself,’ he said, sending her a wide smile. Max’s heart twitched, but she was pleased with herself for impressing her idol, responding in kind to his grin.

He felt all the more attracted to her in that moment, hearing her eloquent interpretation. She seemed to have had some sort of a spark in her eyes when she had explained her point to him, and right now she was gracing him with such a beautiful smile that he had no other choice but to get lost in her eyes for a moment. They seemed grey, falling a little bit into a light blue… he couldn’t decide exactly, but they were gorgeous nonetheless.

‘I will definitely give it a chance then,’ Mark said.

They began exchanging the names of their favorite novels, chatting enthusiastically, unwittingly turning their bodies towards each other. Max realized she adored his soothing, husky voice, and the way his eyes lit up whenever he laughed. In turn, Mark thought her sweet, girly laughter was one of the most adorable sounds he’d ever heard, admiring her innocent face. Her eyes would do the same sparkling thing again whenever she got passionate about a subject, and he couldn’t help but gaze into them.

Max felt so relaxed in his presence now that she completely forgot they were on the plane. However,
the landing made her feel nervous yet again. Mark offered his hand to her, and after a moment of hesitation, she laced her fingers with his, squeezing tightly until they were on the ground.

‘See? All good,’ he smiled at her, as she released his palm.

‘Thanks,’ she said, exhaling. ‘Here, your book,’ she handed him the novel. ‘I liked it a lot, Thank you.’

‘You’re welcome, Max. But… you haven’t finished it yet, have you?’ He took the book from her, though still gesturing with it in her direction.

‘Well, no, not yet…’

‘You can borrow it if you want, read it and then give it back later,’ he said, shifting the novel closer to her.

‘Are you sure?’

‘Of course. I’d love to hear some more of your thoughts about it.’

‘Okay then… Thank you.’ She took it from him and put it in her bag.

Getting out of the elevator at the hotel, walking towards their rooms, Mark handed Max her room card.

‘Thanks, I hope I won’t lose it.’

‘Do you have any plans for today?’ he asked.

‘Well, no, not really. You?’

‘There’s still some time before we have to get ready for the party. If you’d like, you could join me on a little sightseeing tour. We could take pictures round the city.’ He was looking at her persuasively.

Max met his gaze. ‘I’d like that, actually,’ she said, a wide smile on her lips and a beam of excitement in her eyes. She had always admired his work, and getting to take pictures beside him was a pretty damn exciting prospect.

‘Great. Meet you in…’ He glanced at his wrist watch. ‘Fifteen minutes?’ he asked, gently brushing his hand against her arm. She felt a pleasurable shiver.

‘Okay,’ she said and got into her room, which was next to Mark’s.

Shutting the door behind her, Max leaned against it. That was… a lot. She then remembered how good his hand felt on hers, and smiled to herself.

Max didn’t necessarily think Mark Jefferson was making moves on her – he had always been nice and kind to her, as well as to all of his students; he definitely seemed to enjoy having a passionate discussion about photography whenever, wherever, and now about other forms of art, apparently – but all the hand touching seemed way too unusual.

Being very attracted to him, though, she couldn’t shake the feeling that there was something developing between the two of them. Maybe I just want it to be the truth. Doesn’t mean it is.
She tidied herself up, brushed her teeth and readjusted her hair. Having packed only her wallet and her camera, she looked at the time. *5 more minutes*. Considering she didn’t have anything else to do, she got out of her room and saw that Mark had already been waiting for her in the hallway, leaning against the wall.

‘Ready?’ he asked, pulling himself up and smiling lightly at her.

‘Ready,’ she responded in kind.

The sun was shining with a mixture of yellow, orange and red tones, gorgeously illuminating Max’s face. Mark was standing there, his lips parted, admiring how beautiful she looked. They were standing by the cliff, getting a good look of the Golden Gate Bridge.

‘Would you mind posing for me, Max?’ he asked.

Max never thought of herself as any kind of model, seeing as she had no typical features of the sort, but posing for Mark Jefferson… that surely was an opportunity she wasn’t going to pass on.

‘Oh… sure, why not,’ she replied, blushing.

‘Alright, turn your head slightly to side, look here,’ he extended his arm to his right and waved, ‘yes, like this. And just smile lightly. Alright, now look into the lens, please.’ He took a few photographs and looked back at the screen to examine them. ‘Great,’ he said, looking up at her, sending her a smile. ‘Would you like to see them?’

‘Yes,’ she replied and approached him.

‘Here,’ he showed her the screen. In the pictures, she looked so much better than she had previously imagined. Her light brown hair was beautifully blending in with the surrounding sunlight, her usually grayish eyes appearing hazel now. ‘You look so gorgeous.’

She turned to face him, her lips parted in astonishment, feeling heat at his words. She smiled shyly and ducked her head down.

‘May I take a few more?’ he asked.

‘Yeah, go ahead.’

He yet again increased the distance between them. A light breeze was blowing through Max’s hair, and Mark took a few seemingly blurry candid photos as she walked away from him. Once the wind eased up, he went up to Max and brought his hand closely to her face. ‘May I?’ he asked.

‘Sure,’ she replied, holding her breath as he gently brushed a strand of her hair behind her ear, tickling her lobe and making her shiver. He couldn’t help himself and glanced at her lips, lingering for a moment or two, causing Max’s heart to pound loudly in her ears. Snapping out of his awe, he then moved back a step and snapped a couple of closeups.

‘I could take pictures of you all day but… how about you take a few shots now?’ he asked, extending the camera to her.

‘You sure? I could easily drop it.’

‘Of course,’ he moved closer to her and put the band attached to the camera around her neck. ‘There,
now you won’t drop it.’

Max chuckled, and looked up at him, smiling. He responded in kind and stepped back, giving her room to find her subject.

She took a look around and pondered.

‘I’d love to take a shot of the bridge, but… isn’t it too cliché at this point?’ Max looked back to Mark.

‘Well,’ he laughed lightly, ‘maybe a bit, yes. But since you’ve never been here, why not? Let’s not forget about the fun part of photography.’

‘You’re right,’ Max nodded, smiling at him. ‘Here goes.’ She moved to the side and bent her knees slightly, taking a few shots, moving around to take advantage of the sunlight as well. Mark was observing her, admiring her technique in silence. She soon faced him again, and passed him the camera.

‘Don’t you want to take a few more?’ he asked.

‘Uh, sure, I’d like that.’

‘Go ahead then,’ he encouraged her. ‘I’ll send all of them to you later.’

‘How about,’ Max started with a hesitation in her voice, ‘you pose for me now?’ she asked.

‘To be captured by a talented photographer? How can I say no?’ he said, smiling at her widely. ‘How do you want me?’

Max felt her heart twitch at his words, but decided to shake it off.

‘Uh… Stand against the sunlight and look past my left side.’ Mark positioned himself accordingly to her instructions.

She changed her angle a bit and took a few shots. ‘Could you look into the lens now? Yes, great.’ Looking back at the photographs, she smiled to herself.

‘Success?’ he asked, prompting her to look up at him.

‘Oh, yes.’ She sent him a bright, proud smile. ‘Come, take a look.’

Once he reached her, he leaned in closely to her and looked at the screen. She was able to take a shot where the sunlight bent and reflected off the lens of his glasses, but without making a flare all the way through the photograph.

‘Wow, this is excellent, Max.’

‘Thank you,’ she beamed at him. She took the band off and handed him the camera. ‘And thanks for letting me borrow your camera.’

‘You’re welcome,’ he sent her a light smile. He put it back in his bag and faced her again.

{ ♫ “Golden Hour” – Jonathan Morali}

The wind started blowing again from the same side the sunlight was coming from, causing them both to look in that direction.
‘The golden hour is exceptionally beautiful today, isn’t it?’ he remarked, admiring the view.

‘Oh, definitely. Especially for October. Don’t know how about you, but I absolutely adore the fall.’

‘As do I.’ He turned to her, gazing at her. Her face was being gorgeously illuminated by the rays of sunshine, her eyes sparkling, and he couldn’t help but think she looked absolutely beautiful. He felt his heart was beginning to pound because of what he was about to do.

Max sensed he was staring and faced him, sending him a quizzical look.

With a slight hesitation, he yet again brushed off the hair from her face and tucked it behind her ear, but rested his hand on the side of her face, looking deeply into her eyes. She froze at his touch, feeling her heartbeat quicken as he brought his face closer. Looking for approval in her eyes, he kissed her gently, tilting his head left. Responding to the kiss, Max brought her hands up to his chest, sliding them up to hold his face, and felt his tongue gently caress her lip, kissing him back deeper. She felt his other hand on her back, pulling her in closer. His lips felt so good on hers, he was kissing her delicately yet sort of passionately; for a moment Max forgot they were crossing a huge line right now, she just gave in. Their kiss was becoming more and more passionate, and Max found herself not wanting it to stop, breath catching up in her throat. Mark seemed just as eager, humming quietly into the kiss. It wasn’t until his hands slipped lower and stopped at her hips when she realized what they were doing.

She lightly broke away, resting her hands on his chest, looking him in the eyes and smiling shyly, feeling quite lightheaded.

_Holy fucking shit, Max. Did it really just happen?_ she asked herself in disbelief.

‘You okay, Max?’ he asked softly, letting go of her hips. ‘Should I not have done that?’

‘No, it’s not that. It was unexpected, but,’ she pressed her lips together for a moment, biting down on her lower lip, ‘the kiss was nice,’ she sent him a grin.

‘Are you sure?’ he was fixing her with gaze.

Her heart was pounding loudly as she leaned in again, bringing her hands to his face, and kissed him once more. ‘Yes, I’m sure,’ she said, as their lips parted.

Mark gently cupped her face with one hand and gave her cheek a tender caress, smiling at her.

‘Alright then. Think we should get back, though, only three hours left until the exhibition party,’ he said.

‘Yeah, we should,’ she agreed.

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Chapter End Notes

Thus ends "The Golden Hour" part of this fic.

Next up... you know what (°_°)
A very exciting evening... and night...

A much longer chapter ahead! 5.7k words to be exact.

PART TWO - THIS ACTION WILL HAVE CONSEQUENCES...

Friday, October 11, 2013 – same day

Max examined herself in the tall mirror by the door – she was wearing a light peach dress, whose top was sticking tightly to her chest, with a tasteful cleavage exposing her breasts just a bit, with its sleeves dipping a little over her shoulders. Instead of a traditional bra, she wore a silicone cup one, thanks to which her bare back looked classy and elegant. She also wore a pair of really nice, white, lacy panties, feeling all the more attractive in them.

The dress wasn’t too short or too long, only a bit over the knee, its bottom made of layers upon layers of tulle and was rather flowy. She wore matching high heel sandals, and pinned her hair back, a tiny little bun at the back of her head. She carefully applied some makeup, visible mostly on her eyes, the eyeliner rendering them mysterious. She sprayed herself with a bit of perfume and did a little spin, glancing in the mirror, enjoying her dolled-up look.

She grabbed a small evening bag and was ready to pull the handle to leave, when she heard a light knock on the door, her heart twitching slightly.

She took a few deep breaths before opening the door. Mark was standing there in a black suit, a formal white shirt underneath and a tie, which coincidentally matched Max’s peach dress, looking even more dashing than usual, gazing at her with awe.

‘Whoa… You look stunning, Max. Absolutely gorgeous,’ he said, shaking his head and smiling at her. Even so dressed-up, she still appeared so innocent and pure to him. He was fixing her with gaze; for a moment the frame of the door and its surroundings seemed to have completely disappeared, only her light silhouette and her beautiful, wide eyes present in his mind. Thankfully, the light makeup she had applied didn’t interfere with her natural features, her lovely freckles still piercing through the thin layer of the foundation.

She finally snapped him out of it, speaking softly. ‘Thank you,’ she said, blushing. ‘You look very handsome, too,’ she added, biting slightly on her lower lip, feeling her heartbeat quicken.

‘Thanks,’ he replied, smirking a bit, readjusting his tie in a playful way, cracking both of them up. ‘If
I may…’ He extended his hand to her and she accepted, leading her to the elevators.

‘Would you excuse me for a moment? I would like to say hello to some old friends,’ Mark said shortly after they had arrived at Zeitgeist. The gallery seemed a bit eccentric despite its simple design, with several quirky decorations and unconventional furniture.

‘Of course, go ahead,’ she smiled lightly at him, and went over to admire the other winning photographs. There were some truly stunning entries, making Max feel inadequate with her _lame_ – her own words – selfie. But then she heard some people talking about it, praising it for its simplicity and she felt a bit more confident.

‘Think I’ve figured out a second meaning to your photograph, Max,’ Mark said, suddenly appearing behind her after a while, prompting her to turn back to face him.

‘Oh, yeah? What’s your theory?’ she asked, smiling at him.

‘Well.’ He took a step closer to her, looking at the displayed photograph, she turning to face it as well, his hand brushing against the small of her back. ‘Not only everybody can be an “everyday hero”, but especially _you_ can – to all of them, even with the most mundane acts.’

‘Nicely deduced, _Mr. Jefferson_,’ she said, looking up at him, grinning widely. He picked up on her cue, smirking at her.

With the way he was fixing her with gaze, she found herself shiver lightly, gazing into his eyes as well, her hand flying to the back of her neck, feeling self-conscious, then it fell back, unintentionally running it by her cleavage as she looked away for a moment. Mark’s eyes involuntarily followed, having a quick glance, then chastened himself in his mind, clearing his throat, causing Max to look back in his direction.

Before she could say anything, they heard a call for the toast.

‘Ladies and gentlemen,’ the president of the event spoke, ‘I would like to congratulate all of you young artists for winning, and I am delighted to introduce you to the world of photography. I wish each and every one of you a successful career, this being just a small start. You should all be very proud of yourselves.’

A wave of applause filled the room for a few moments, and champagne was being distributed.

‘To you,’ Mark said, turning to Max, extending his glass to hers.

‘Thank you,’ she said, smiling at him, clinking her glass together with his.

‘Sir, miss, may I take your picture for the contest’s webpage?’ a photographer asked, approaching them.

Mark looked to Max and she nodded in accordance.

‘Sure, go ahead,’ he said. He embraced Max lightly by the waist, she leaning into him slightly, both of them smiling into the lens.

‘Jefferson!’ suddenly someone exclaimed behind the photographer. Mark looked in the direction of
the voice and Max saw a tall, blonde man, appearing to be around Mark’s age.

‘Dave?’ Mark asked in disbelief. ‘What the hell are you doing here?’ The two men smiled widely at each other, shaking hands.

‘Well, I scout for some talent here and there, figured this would be a great place to start, right?

‘Indeed, it is. Max,’ he turned to his protégée. ‘This is Dave, we used to work together when I lived in New York.’

‘Hey, I’m Dave, it’s very nice to meet you,’ the man said, smiling lightly at her, extending his hand to shake hers.

‘Hi. Max,’ she said shyly, accepting his greeting.

‘Is she your date or…?’ Dave asked.

‘No, I’m actually hers. Max is one of the winners, I’m merely accompanying her,’ Mark explained, turning to Max and sending her a wide smile.

She found herself rather speechless, not knowing what to say exactly, so she just bobbed slightly, shifting closer to Mark, who noticed her uneasiness and put his arm around her waist.

‘Which one’s your entry, Max?’ Dave asked.

‘Uh, the self– the self-portrait one. Right there,’ she gestured behind the man.

‘Oh, that one. It’s an interesting submission. Quite a talent you’ve got there.’

‘Thank you,’ she nodded.

‘I should snatch you from her, not gonna let you take credit for discovering this gem,’ Dave joked, turning to Mark.

‘Oh, you wish,’ Mark replied with a smirk.

‘Yeah, we’ll see about that,’ the other man said, laughing lightly. ‘Alright, it was good to catch up with you, man, but I need to take a wider look around. Be seeing you. And Max,’ he turned to her, ‘if we exchange numbers, I might give you a call, set you up with a deal, what do you say?’

‘Oh, uh… sure, that would be amazing,’ she replied, blinking in astonishment. She proceeded with giving him her contact information.

‘Once again, it was nice to meet you, Max.’

‘You too, Dave,’ Max replied.

Mark shook hands with his old friend, who soon parted his ways with them.

‘Was he a good friend? I mean… can I… trust him?’ Max asked hesitantly.

‘Oh, yes. I just haven’t had much contact with him, didn’t know what he was up to nowadays. If he ends up calling you, you should definitely take him up on that offer,’ he explained. ‘He could get you some good deals.’

‘Alright, I will. If he calls.’
A bit later, Mark was observing her from afar as she talked to other winners and the press, smiling to himself as he saw the joy on her face, reminiscing about the beginnings of his own career. He had almost forgotten what it felt like to be that joyful, seeing Max like this was bringing warmth to his chest, he was so happy to see her succeed.

She soon got back to him, beaming with happiness, feeling overjoyed. He greeted her with a wide smile.

‘This is so great!’ she said to him, grinning widely.

‘Oh, I remember what it’s like. You must be over the moon.’

‘I am, I definitely am. But there are so many amazing photographers in here, their entries are so amazing, and I’m just…’ she cut off, shaking her head.

‘You are still my favorite, Max,’ he said, fixing her with gaze. He meant to say, “Yours is still my favorite,” but he slipped. ‘How about we sit down to eat?’

‘Oh, yes, I’d like that, I’m actually starving.’

{♫ “Venus as a Boy” – Björk}

‘Dance with me,’ he said, getting up after the meal, and extending his hand to her.

‘Alright,’ she said, sending him a coy smile.

He took her hand and led her to the dancefloor, some other couples dancing there already. He embraced her by the waist, holding her palm in his other hand, and she hanged her free hand on his shoulder. The music seemed a bit eccentric, blending in with Zeitgeist’s overall allure.

They were swaying lightly, though the rhythm of the song was rather uneven. Mark glanced down at her, sending her a smile. As she met his gaze, getting lost in his dark brown eyes, a lyric hit Max’s ears: His wicked sense of humor suggests exciting sex, his fingers, they focus on her, touches..., bringing a warm thrill in her chest and lower abdomen, parting her lips. It seemed Mark caught onto it as well, his sight not leaving her, piercing through her, he seemed so caught up in her. He had to fight hard against himself not to kiss her again right then and there, they were in a very public space after all, they couldn’t risk getting photographed like that, so he just stared into her eyes, enjoying the moment for what it was.

Another lyric hit their ears: He’s exploring the taste of her arousal, so accurate, he sets off the beauty in her..., all the while Max felt her heat rise, swallowing hard as she held his gaze, glancing at his lips, Mark’s fingers on her back stroking her lightly, sending pleasurable tingling sensation up her body, and she felt herself getting wet.

{♫ “Come to Me” – Björk}

The song changed into a slower one, and with a slight hesitation, she released her hand from his, putting it to his chest, placing her head a bit higher, so that she rested her forehead in the crook of his neck, the other hand on his back. Mark tightened his grip around her a bit, feeling the warmth of her body and her chest against his torso. Max could feel his heartbeat pulsating against her skin, slightly elevated, heat radiating from his body. Eyes closed, they were dancing like that for a few more slow
songs, not wanting these moments to end. It was heaven and torture for Mark at the same time – he wanted her so badly, but he couldn’t afford to get hard right there and then.

Alas, as the evening turned into night, midnight approaching, the event was close to ending. The president yet again congratulated all the winners, and then everyone was getting ready to leave. Max and Mark headed outside to take a cab.

_Saturday, October 12, 2013 – past midnight_

The traffic was bad that night, and it took them close to an hour to get to their hotel, midnight having passed, but it also gave them some extra time together just to chat.

Max was telling him about the evening, to whom she had talked and what she had heard people say about her art. He was listening to her, sometimes interjecting with a small joke or a compliment.

Getting out of the cab, Mark offered his hand to Max. ‘If I may…’

She smiled at him, grabbing his hand and getting out of the car. Because of traffic, they had to stop a block away from the hotel. Max rubbed her hands on her arms. ‘It’s cold.’

‘Here,’ Mark said, taking off his jacket, ‘wear this.’

‘What about you? Aren’t you going to get cold?’ Max asked hesitantly, though she appreciated that he was being a gentleman.

‘I’m going to be fine, Max,’ he replied, putting the jacket on her, sliding his arms down her shoulders for a second. He had felt enough heat for the evening already. She shivered at his touch, feeling goosebumps rise. The jacket was slightly bigger than she anticipated, but it quickly subdued the cold.

‘Thank you,’ she smiled at him. He responded in kind and looked down at her hand before he laced his fingers with hers. She smiled at him in approval and tightened her grip a bit.

‘So… how does it feel to be a star?’ Mark asked as they slowly began walking to the hotel.

‘Oh, like you don’t know?’

‘Well,’ he laughed lightly, ‘alright, I do. But I would like to know how you’re feeling.’

‘It’s, uh… I still can’t believe it,’ Max shook her head. ‘Me winning was shocking enough, but this party… all the publicity… It’s incredible, but also… quite overwhelming.’

‘It’ll take some time getting used to, for sure,’ Mark said, leaning closer to her, making her heart beat faster. ‘But there’s no one else I know who deserves this more. You’re very talented, fame cannot escape you, I’m afraid. With enough time and hard work, I am sure you will become an amazing artist.’

Max met his gaze, looking a bit shy from all the praise and compliments he had been showering her throughout the evening.

‘Thank you… Mark.’ Even though a lot had happened between the two of them in the span of the last twenty-four hours, saying his name instead of _Mr. Jefferson_ still felt odd. ‘It means a lot that you believe in me.’

‘I do,’ he said, making her smile again.
Breathing in, Max looked up to the sky. It was exceptionally clear for an October night, with a few brighter stars piercing brightly through the darkness. Making use of the moment, Mark watched her mesmerized and calm expression, feeling warmth spreading through his chest.

‘Look up, Mark,’ she said softly, tugging his hand lightly, snapping him out of it. He turned his head to the sky, seeing the beautiful view.

‘Wow, it is quite something, isn’t it?’ he remarked.

‘Yeah,’ she said, exhaling. ‘I wish I could take a picture.’

With that, they reached the hotel entrance.

Looking back at Mark, she said, ‘It was a lovely evening. Thank you for accompanying me.’

‘Pleasure’s all mine, Max,’ he said, raising her hand in his, placing a small kiss on it, fixing her with gaze and smiling at her right after. Max felt so… enchanted with the way he was definitely trying to charm her.

Mark opened the door and gestured, ‘After you.’

Walking up to the elevators, Mark was trying to fight the want he felt was beginning to overwhelm him. He knew he shouldn’t even think of her like that, but his emotions were stronger than he could help.

Max saw the perplexed look on his face. She removed his jacket from her shoulders and handed it back to him. ‘Here. Thank you.’ She sent him a slight smile.

‘Oh, it’s nothing, glad it helped,’ he waved it off, taking the jacket from her hands.

When they entered the lift, Mark no longer fought his want. He moved closer to her, looking at her with desire. Her heartbeat quickened as he brought his hands to her face, letting the jacket fall to the floor, pulling her closer, beginning to kiss her slowly yet passionately. Max felt so… enchanted with the way he was definitely trying to charm her.

He broke away from the kiss, resting his forehead on hers for a moment, catching his breath.

‘Do you,’ he started, looking her in the eyes, ‘want to go to my room?’

Max felt a rush of heat as she heard his offer. She gazed into his eyes and considered the possibility for a moment. Instead of saying anything, she responded by kissing him, entwining her fingers in his hair.

The elevator door opened, and Mark quickly reached down for the jacket and took Max’s hand, leading her to his room.

Once the door shut behind them, he caught her face in his hands again, kissing her ardently, breath catching up in his throat. She brought her hands to his chest, sliding lower and holding onto his waist. He broke away for a moment, smiling widely at her, his eyes full of want. She reached down to slide the straps down her heels, nearly losing her balance.

‘Whoa! Careful,’ Mark chuckled, catching her before she fell. She clutched onto him, giggling nervously.
'Thanks,' she said with a smile. Holding onto his arms, she removed her shoes, and he did so as well, not caring about the awkwardness.

Max wasn’t quite sure she should be doing this; despite being casual during the trip and sharing a kiss, Mark was still her teacher – her teacher – and would remain as such until the end of the school year. Should she be crossing such a huge line? Should he? But she wanted him, so she ignored her doubts.

She felt Mark’s hands reaching her hair, pulling her closer into a kiss, heat rising between them again. She slid her hands lower and around, reaching his back muscles, digging her fingers into them, bringing him closer to her body. She then moved them to the front again, and started unbuttoning his shirt, her hands trembling slightly. Mark brought his lips to her neck, kissing her slowly at first, moving up and kissing her behind her earlobe. He broke away, took off his tie, and turned her around so he was behind her, fervidly kissing her neck, his hand at the zipper.

‘Should I stop?’ he whispered, breathing heavily, sliding his hands up her arms. His fingertips sent shivers up her body, and she felt warmth spreading between her legs.

‘No, don’t stop,’ she said.

As he unzipped her dress, he slid his hands under the fabric, and pulled the top down, kissing her shoulder, hearing Max’s pleasurable exhale. She reached behind and entwined her fingers in his hair. He was inching the dress off her, his fingertips following the fabric he was peeling off her. His touch electrified her body, she felt pleasurable tingling spreading down her skin.

When the dress fell to the floor, she stepped out of it, and turned around to face him again, only left in her panties, standing on her toes to kiss him. She reached his shoulders and slid his shirt off him. She looked at his naked torso, hesitantly running her fingers down from his abs up to his chest, then down again, reaching his belt, looking him shyly in the eyes.

He smiled lightly at her, thus she continued, her hands shaking a bit. He noticed her nervousness and reached out to kiss her tenderly, gently caressing her breasts, her nipples hardening at his touch. Encouraged, she continued, until she unzipped his pants and he took them off completely.

They were both now just in their underwear. Mark pulled her closer, his hands on her back, kissing her deeper. He then slid his hands lower, reaching her bottom, squeezing the cheeks, and picked her up. Exhaling with a hushed moan, she entwined her legs around him, holding onto his arms, and he carried her to the bed, placing her gently on the soft, white covers.

Though she wanted Mark to continue, Max was still nervous and unsure what to expect exactly. She reached up to his face, took his glasses off and put them away, getting to see him without them for the very first time. Mark sent her a light smile, knowing she must have been feeling anxious.

Lying beside her, he leaned down to kiss her, reaching with his hand to caress the side of her face. He was kissing her delicately, moving his hand down to touch her breast, eliciting a slight moan from her.

He pulled himself up, and looked for approval in her eyes. As he saw her smile, he moved away from her mouth, kissing her jaw, tracing kisses and licks down her neck, her collarbone, down her sternum and between her breasts, stopping to pleasure her nipples. She put her hands to the back his head, tilting her head back, feeling her heart thudding loudly in her ears.

Mark moved his hand to her thigh, striking it gently, his tongue still slowly circling around her nipple, taking his time with the foreplay, then attending to the other breast, squeezing it lightly. The
feeling of his tongue and lips there was making her feel spasms go down to her core.

He moved his hand back to her thigh, stroking it more urgently now, shifting closer to the inside, reaching her warmth. She gasped as she felt his fingers slide under the fabric and gently rubbing her wet clit; he was applying just the right amount of pressure, and Max felt herself pulsating against his touch.

He pulled away from her breasts, and looked up at her before moving around, so that he was now between her legs, and put his tongue where his fingers had been just a second ago, teasing her clit through her underwear, feeling her spasm as she let out a louder moan. He could feel her wetness had long since soaked through the fabric, so he began inching her panties down, looking her in the eyes with desire. He ran his fingertips along her inner thighs, gently spreading her legs further. She could feel his warm breath brushing against the exterior, sending more goosebumps up her body, but she was not prepared for the kind of pleasure that would follow, tightly gripping the covers in anticipation.

He began circling his tongue slowly, moving from her clit to her labia, his lips half-closing around her as though he was kissing her there, his facial hair scraping against her surface, adding to the sensation. She glanced down at him; his eyes were lightly shut, he looked so calm, like he was in the safest place on Earth, and the sight of his mouth pleasuring her filled her with more desire.

She felt his warm tongue touching her entrance, making her moan and instinctively push her legs together, but he was firmly holding them open, finally getting to taste her like he had been fantasizing for weeks, lightly rubbing her inner thighs. She entwined her fingers in his hair, tugging slightly, so he sped up his strokes, now feeling her deeper, moving higher up her folds and making the strokes regular and more insistent. Max could feel her pleasure mounting, panting unevenly in response; the way he was moving his tongue making her continuously gasp, her eyes fluttering, tingles spreading up her body. Not expecting her climax to come at that very moment, she let out a series of sudden moans as she reached her peak, her legs trembling and her heartbeat quickening. She felt the exhilarating sensation spreading through her body as Mark slowly continued his movements.

He was lightly kissing and licking her inner thigh, giving her time to collect herself, then shifted back to the middle for just a few moments, tasting her spill and skimming his fingertips up and down her sides, before he came up from between her legs, slowly tracing kisses from her abdomen until he reached her lips, kissing her long and passionately, wanting to be inside her already.

There was a strange taste on his tongue and lips. A bit surprised, she broke away and reached out to him, brushing her fingertips against his lower lip, sending him a quizzical look.

He looked down at her and quietly said, ‘That’s you.’ He brought his hips closer to hers and she could feel his hardness between her legs, only the fabric of his boxer briefs separating them, opening her mouth in thrill and astonishment. ‘And you taste so good,’ he said, moving his lips down her jaw, making her sigh loudly.

Eyes wide and face flushed, she resumed kissing him, and ran her fingers up and down his back until she reached his underwear, sliding it down as far as she could, he removing it completely. Max pulled her head up a bit, curious to see what he looked like. She never doubted he was anything other than well-endowed, but she surely didn’t expect him to be this large. She put her head back on the pillow, swallowing hard.

He noticed her nervousness and asked her again, his voice soft, ‘Are you sure you want me to continue?’

Max’s heart was racing, but she looked him directly in the eyes and spoke firmly, ‘Yes.’
He then guided himself into her, teasing her labia for a moment before entering very slowly. Feeling anxious, Max held her breath and clutched to his arms, digging her fingers in his skin, her eyes shut. She was anticipating pain, but there wasn’t any, just a slight pressure between her legs.

‘Are you okay? Does this hurt?’ he asked softly, filling her but not moving within her. She felt warm, wet and tight around him, she felt so good, he was definitely going to enjoy himself, but he wasn’t going to move forward without making sure she was alright.

Max opened her eyes and shook her head. ‘Doesn’t hurt, but’ she said, exhaling. ‘It’s just… I’ve never done this before,’ she near-whispered with a slight embarrassment in her eyes, smiling nervously and still holding onto his arms. Mark had realized that even before she confessed.

‘It’s okay,’ he said, smiling and leaning down to kiss her. She brought her hands to his face, kissing him back more eagerly. Her hands were trembling lightly, and he pulled up to face her.

‘Hey,’ he spoke again, his voice soothing, smiling at her, ‘if there’s anything wrong, or even if you change your mind, just tell me, and I’ll stop, okay?’

‘Okay,’ Max nodded, responding in kind to his smile, feeling more comfortable.

He kissed her again, giving her cheek a tender caress, and started gently moving inside her, getting her used to the feeling. He was filling her up, slowly sliding in and out, kissing her delicately, his hand at her left thigh, rubbing it lightly. Max put the same leg around him, slightly digging her heel into his loin, her hands at his back, holding onto him. She was beginning to feel warmth spreading from the sweet spot up her body.

He moved away from her mouth, leaning to her right, kissing her neck now. Feeling the rhythm quicken, she gave into the pleasure, sighing and biting on her lip, digging fingers in his back. He felt so full inside her, rubbing against her wall, hitting just the right spots, eliciting quiet moans from her. He pulled up from her neck, slowing down a bit to kiss her. Looking down, he smiled at her, and she reciprocated.

Seeing her flushed face and how she was enjoying what he was doing to her, he yet again picked up the pace, feeling his pleasure come in waves. He straightened up to get a better look of her, admiring her nude body, holding onto her thighs, still moving gently within her. He slid one of his hands up her tummy, stopping at the parting of her ribcage, moving to the side and up, and squeezed her breast lightly, running his thumb against her nipple. She brought her hand to his, making him stay there, moaning as she felt her pleasure mounting. His pleasure was building up as well, feeling her warm, wet tightness around himself was bringing him nothing but pure bliss.

He filled her whole and stopped moving inside her altogether for a moment to lean down and kiss her passionately. He was kissing her deeply, his fingertips skimming up her sides, adding to her excitement, she holding onto him, her hands wandering from his back to his hair, pulling him closer. He slowly resumed moving within her, pulling up a bit to face her, sharing a smile. Max felt full of heat, wanting him more.

Leaning directly on top of her, feeling another wave of pleasure, he skimmed his hands down her inner arms and grabbed her wrists, gently pinned them to the bed, intertwining his fingers with hers, and went left to kiss her neck, moving faster within her now. Max felt her own pleasure rising as well, similarly to the previous time. She entwined her legs around him and threw her head back, closing her eyes, surrendering to her climax that soon followed, her moan more conscious than the previous one, and longer, her legs tightening the grip. Mark felt her contracting around him, so he began thrusting a bit more decisively, though he still needed to be gentle so as not to cause her any pain. The familiar tingling, pulsating sensation was ready to burst. Pulling up from her neck and
looking her directly in the eyes, he came with a loud groan, bringing his mouth to her neck again as he gradually slowed down his movements.

As he let go of her hands, she dug her fingers in his upper back muscles, dazed by her orgasm, bringing him closer to her. He pulled up to see her, she was smiling with delight. Requiting her smile, he leaned down to kiss her amorously. He then exited her and moved lower to trail kisses down to her stomach and up again, his hand caressing her breast.

Lying down on his back beside her, he pulled her into a snuggle, with her putting her head on his chest and her arm around him, both of them trying to catch their breaths.

Max didn’t seem too bothered by the fact that they were both covered with sweat, placing a light kiss on his chest. His body felt so warm and comfortable… She looked up at him, not quite believing what had just happened.

Kissing her forehead, he asked, ‘You alright?’

‘Yes,’ she said, smiling and holding him tighter. ‘That was… wow.’

Mark laughed warmly, drawing patterns on her back. ‘You want some water?’

‘Oh, yes, please,’ she said, feeling thirsty, pulling herself up a bit.

He reached to the bedside cabinet and passed her a tall glass filled with water. She chugged it down, she didn’t realize how thirsty she was.

‘Thanks. You want the rest of it?’ she asked, giving him back the glass.

‘Mhm, thank you.’ He drank what was left inside it and put the empty glass back on the cabinet.

They went back to cuddling, with Mark putting the covers on them. Max felt warm in his arms, and satisfied like never before, her fingers gently brushing against his chest. She felt Mark’s hand do the same thing against her shoulder… until it stopped. She looked up and saw that he was falling asleep. After a while, she sensed that something what she realized was his release was dripping out of her, and wasn’t quite sure what she should do. Feeling her own exhaustion overcome her, she decided to stay there, closed her eyes, and dozed off to the calm sound of his heartbeat in her ear.

Breathing in, Max opened her eyes, feeling her head was gently moving up and down with Mark’s chest. She glanced up and saw a peaceful expression on his face. She smiled to herself, thinking about the night they had just spent.

But then she felt a sudden rush of anxiety, realizing she had put herself in a conflicting situation – not only had she just had sex for the first time ever, not only with Mark Jefferson of all people, but with her teacher.

What the hell do I do now? I should probably leave before he wakes up.

Carefully, she took her head off his chest and pulled the covers off herself. Luckily, Mark was sound asleep.

Moving as delicately as she could, she got out of bed and tiptoed around it to get to her stuff.

She slipped into her dress, forgetting her panties that were still buried somewhere under the covers.
Having taken her bag and shoes, she quickly snuck out, shutting the door very quietly.

Leaning against her closed door, she exhaled with relief. *It’s okay, you’re okay.*

She decided the best course of action would be to take a shower to calm herself down a bit.

Warm water was splashing down on her face, slowly causing her to relax. Thinking about last night, she wasn’t sure how she was supposed to feel. Soaping up and massaging her body, she began unwittingly tracing back with her mind to all the places Mark had touched. Her body was responding to the memories, and Max smiled to herself. She never anticipated it would feel *that* good.

But emotionally, she felt… odd. The afternoon and the evening were exciting enough, talking to the press and to that old friend of Mark’s, with *that night* on top of it all? It was all overwhelming, weighing down on Max.

*You just had sex with your teacher. Your teacher! How the hell are you going to go back to school after this? And how are you even going to look him in the eyes after this?*

She needed to rethink the whole thing in a quiet, remote place.

Having gotten out of the shower and put her clothes on, she left her hotel room, taking only her wallet and her camera in a bag.

When Mark woke up a couple of hours later, he felt happy. Though he couldn’t quite believe he actually ended up making that move, he was glad to be able to finally touch her, the memories of the previous night filling him with joy. But then he realized Max wasn’t in the bed with him. He pulled himself up, looking around the room.

Her stuff was gone.
First time can be huge emotionally for a teenage girl, and Max is no exception. The implications are all the more severe since she has slept with her teacher.

Saturday, October 12, 2013 – same morning

He got out of bed and knocked the bathroom door. He pulled the handle and it turned out she wasn’t in there either. He decided to take a shower and make himself presentable first, before he would go to see her. Her disappearance didn’t make sense to him, though. He tried to remember how the night had played out. Nothing that he had done was wrong or met with her disapproval. Okay, relax. Maybe she just went to her room to clean up or something.

But when he finally knocked on her door, there was no answer. He waited a couple of minutes, knocking again and calling out her name, but all he heard was silence.

He went downstairs to see if she was having breakfast at the hotel restaurant, but she wasn’t there either.

He wasn’t quite sure what to do next. He didn’t have her phone number, so he couldn’t call or text her. He had no idea where she could have gone to, and the city was way too big to search it all. Though concerned about her, she was eighteen – technically, she was free to do whatever today. He thought he’d give her a little bit more time before searching for her further, though feeling uneasy, unable to focus on anything else.

Max was wandering through the city center, going in a zig-zag direction, looking for a quiet place to think. She settled on an old-school-looking, small café. Its interior was mostly wooden and quite spacious, with light music coming out of the speakers, lots of plants standing around and books lying on the tables.

Perfect, she thought, something to get my mind off it all. She ordered the largest latte on the menu and a bagel, and chose the seat that felt the most remote from the entrance, in case Mark somehow found this place.

Though the night she had spent with him was beyond what she had ever imagined her first time would be like, she couldn’t rationalize why he would want her in that way. Out of all his female students that he had ever taught, or even in this school year alone, surely there must have been more interesting or attractive ones. For one, Victoria was right there, ready to jump at the chance to be with him. So why Max? Was she even the only one he’d ever slept with? Probably not. More importantly,
what did it mean? It was all extremely confusing to Max.

The waiter put her order in front of her.

‘Thank you,’ she said, smiling.

Unable to focus at first, she soon got lost in the plot of the first novel that fell into her hands, *Disturbing the Peace*.

Hours had passed, and Max finally reached the ending. *Well, that wasn’t very optimistic.*

She looked at the time – 3:42pm. *Shit, I’d better go, it’s gonna get dark soon.*

She couldn’t remember how far exactly she had walked to find the café, so she pulled out her phone for navigation. *Three miles? That’s just… great.*

She started walking towards the hotel, looking at her phone at every turn, making sure she was following the route correctly. Suddenly, she bumped into someone.

‘S-sorry!’ she said quickly. Looking up to see who it was, she froze.

‘God, Max,’ Mark exhaled. ‘I’ve been worried sick. Where were you?’ His hands were on her arms, but she shook them off gently, stepping back, her heart racing. He didn’t fight her, just put his hands in the surrender gesture.

‘I-I was… I was out,’ she only managed to say. She was *not* ready to face him yet.

‘Why did you leave in the morning? Did I do something wrong?’ he asked softly.

‘No, I just… I didn’t know what to do.’

‘Okay, but why did you hide from me?’

‘I needed some time to… think, okay? To be alone,’ she said. Her voice was growing agitated, she wasn’t looking him in the eyes for more than a split second.

Mark was carefully observing her expression and movements, noticing she clearly wasn’t feeling okay with what had happened.

‘Why me?’ she asked suddenly.

‘What do you mean why you?’ he asked, confused.

‘Why did I win the contest, Mark? Was it *really* the best picture or did you just want to sleep with me?’

‘Of course it was the best picture! Why would you even ask that?’ he exclaimed, baffled. ‘Did that honestly seem like a casual fuck to you?’ He looked at her angrily, the accusation striking a nerve.

‘How would I even know the difference?’ she pushed back, angry tears welling up in her eyes.

Mark was momentarily stunned, not knowing what to say. She wouldn’t know the difference, because that was her *first time*. *He* was her first.

‘Max, I–’ he reached with his hand to touch her shoulder but stopped midway, seeing her stepping back. ‘God, I’m sorry. I’m so sorry.’
Max was trembling with cries, wiping her tears away with frustration.

‘I hurt you. I’m really, truly sorry about that, Max,’ he said, looking at her with concern mixed with guilt. She wasn’t looking at him, letting her tears fall to the ground instead. ‘But I just… I want you to know that it wasn’t casual to me, okay? Max?’

She looked up at him, her eyes conveying hurt and vulnerability.

‘To me, last night was special. You are special,’ he said softly. ‘I wish I could take it back if it brought you comfort, I really do, but if I’m being selfishly honest, I don’t regret it.’

Mark couldn’t bare the sight of her in pain, his face assuming a similar look.

‘You didn’t hurt me,’ she finally spoke, sniffling and trying to wipe off the tears. ‘But I just… I don’t know how I’m supposed to feel about this.’

Though she knew he meant well, and that he truly was sorry, she just couldn’t bring herself to even talk about it now.

‘Look, Mark, I–’ she took a deep breath. ‘I get what you’re saying, okay? But I really need to be alone right now.’ He nodded. ‘Would you mind… giving me a bit of a head start before going back to the hotel?’

‘Of course, go, I won’t follow you,’ he replied. All he really wanted to do was to have her back in his arms, comfort her that way, but he realized that was the last thing she needed right then.

‘Thanks,’ she said, turning around. She held herself tightly, quickly walking in the direction of the hotel.

Mark was observing her, beginning to hate himself for bringing the confusion and hurt onto her. Fucking idiot. I should have known better.

He desperately wanted to punch something, but being surrounded by other people on the street, he tried to subdue his rage. He leaned against the nearby brick wall, closing his eyes and burying his face in his hands.

As soon as she shut the door behind her, she took off her bag and fell onto her pristinely untouched bed, curled up and just broke down into sobs, unable to stop the emotions from pouring out. She couldn’t quite understand why she was feeling like that – last night wasn’t unpleasant in any way. Then why the hell was she feeling so helpless right now?

She kept thinking how quickly she had made that decision to kiss Mark back and go into his room with him. She had been nervous like never before, but she still had wanted that. Then she tried to remember how he had been with her – asking, making sure she had been fine with everything he had been doing… and she really had been alright with it, wanting him to continue any time he had asked. He had been slow, gentle, caring. Nothing short of amazing, actually. Maybe I wasn’t as ready as I thought I was...

A few moments later, watching TV, she heard Mark arrive at his room. He was pacing around the room, there were sounds of stuff hitting against the bed – presumably, he was packing, since they were to head back to Arcadia Bay in the morning. Wow, he’s feeling pretty awful about it all...

Max pulled herself up, hesitating for a moment, before she got up, got out of her room and knocked quietly on his door. She heard an immediate silence fall, followed by the loud thuds of his footsteps as he rushed to open the door.
Taking a deep breath as the light fell onto her face, she looked up at him.

‘Max,’ he said, slightly smiling. He was surprised but relieved to see her, but then he noticed her reddened eyes. ‘Are you okay?’ He knew it wasn’t the best of questions, but he couldn’t just leave it be, he had to know.

‘Hi, um, yeah…’ she started. ‘I heard you arrive. Look, don’t… don’t beat yourself up, okay?’ she tried to keep an even voice. ‘What’s done is done. Let’s just forget about it and go back to where we were before. Alright?’

Hearing her comforting him felt odd to Mark, but he felt glad that at least she still wanted to talk to him. The last request did kind of broke his spirit a little, though. He didn’t want to go back to where they used to be. Knowing very well he was being selfish, he wanted to be with her.

‘If this is what you want, that’s what we’ll do,’ he said with a hint of sadness.

‘Okay,’ she exhaled. ‘See you in the morning,’ she added quickly, leaving his doorstep and ducking back into her room.

‘See y–’ was all he managed to say, she left so fast. Astonished, he blinked a couple of times, slowly closed the door and resumed packing, beating himself up for having made that move on her.

Shutting the door behind her, she leaned against it, exhaling once more, closing her eyes and shaking her head.

She changed into her pajamas and cozied up in bed. Pressing play on the remote, she tried keeping her mind off it all by watching TV. Exhausted, she slowly dozed off, letting her body relax from all the tension of that day.

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**Sunday, October 13, 2013**

Mark barely slept for two hours, and waking up, he felt even worse than before.

Having tidied himself up and packed all his stuff, he got out of his room. Max had already been waiting in the hallway, with her suitcase beside her, jumping a little as he opened his door.

‘Hi. Sorry, didn’t mean to startle you,’ he said softly.

‘It’s okay,’ she replied, avoiding his eyes. ‘Let’s just go.’

Mark sighed quietly, closing his eyes for a moment, and followed her to the elevator with defeat.

They had spent the entire cab ride in complete silence, not even looking in each other’s direction.

The only time the silence was broken was at the airport, when he said, ‘I managed to switch seats with somebody else. You won’t have to sit next to me on the plane.’ He passed her the ticket.

‘Thanks,’ she said, relieved. As he turned away, she grabbed his arm and added, ‘Hey, Mark. Look, this doesn’t mean I hate you, okay? I don’t. But I do need space.’

He faced her, looking at her hand touching his arm for a moment, then looked her in the eyes and nodded.
He gestured with his arm to let her pass first as they headed for the send-off.

*He’s not even speaking to me. Does he hate me now? Great…*

Max didn’t see Mark back at the Arcadia Bay airport, though she looked around in search of him. She collected her luggage and went outside to take a cab. He was watching her from afar, making sure she was alright and got safely into her cab.

The most awkward moment was still ahead of them – Mark’s lecture the next day.

Having arrived at his house, Mark made himself a cup of strong coffee and headed upstairs to his small office. He copied the photographs they had taken on Friday onto the computer, unwittingly smiling to himself, though with a hint of sadness, as he gave them a look.

He then visited the Everyday Heroes webpage and there they were – he and Max, looking elegant and beaming with happiness, their bodies seemed to fit together quite perfectly.

*But you f*ucked up. *Should have stayed away.*

But thinking about the previous night, he couldn’t help but feel happy to have done it, deep down not regretting it at all. He kept remembering how he had felt when he had been tasting her, then how good it had felt to be inside her, how lovely she had sounded when he had made her come, how beautiful she had looked all flushed and aroused…

*You’re going to stay away, though. I mean it. Stay. Away.*

Chapter End Notes

What can I say... I love pain.
Temptation, Pt. 1

Chapter Summary

A good, loyal friend will always make you feel better when you need them.

PART FOUR - TEMPTATION

Monday, October 14, 2013

From the first moment Max had seen Mark’s photographs, she had been mesmerized by his style, the way he was able to perfectly capture the mood and what the picture was supposed to convey, his careful attention to details, the rawness of the black and white, and the way he played with shadows was inspiring to Max. She would dream about being one of the people in his portraits – not necessarily because she desired to be a model, which she rather didn’t, but because she wanted to be immortalized by him.

When she had been accepted at Blackwell, she had been beyond excited. To be able to study under Mark Jefferson? It had been a dream come true. Thinking about that statement now, though, she felt it was filled with bitter irony. That is not what I meant. How the hell did that even happen?

Max considered not coming to his class. She couldn’t even imagine how it would go on – if she avoided his eyes, others would notice something was up. If she looked at him too much, that could tip off people as well. She didn’t want to get him in trouble nor did she want anyone to suspect anything at all.

Exhaling loudly, she headed to the photography lab.

Mark hadn’t arrived yet, but most of the other students had. Max saw Dana posing for Logan, then she glanced towards Kate’s desk, waving happily at her as she met her eyes.

‘Hi, Max! How was the trip?’ Kate asked.

‘Hi, Kate! Oh, it was truly amazing,’ Max replied with a wide smile. She wasn’t lying, though. Despite the awkwardness between her and Mark, everything else had been a dream come true. ‘I should tell you more once we get the chance, alright?’

‘Sure thing, I’d love to hear about it all,’ Kate smiled widely. ‘Again, congratulations!’

‘Thank you.’

Mere seconds later, Mark entered the classroom. Max took her seat in a hurry, afraid to look him in the eyes.

‘Good afternoon, everyone,’ he said loudly. His voice didn’t feel like it changed. Max thought he was either putting up a good face or… or he was simply over it, seeing as he wasn’t looking in her direction at all. That stung.
‘Why are you upset? You wanted this! Now you have it.’

‘How was San Francisco, Mr. Jefferson?’ Victoria asked, fixing Max with gaze. Max huffed under her breath and rolled her eyes at her.

Mark sighed quietly. Victoria... so childish...

‘It was fine, Victoria, thank you for asking. Max was truly the star of the evening. I’m very proud of her,’ he said firmly.

Okay, wow… he’s a really good actor.

‘Thank you, Mr. Jefferson,’ she said quietly, ducking her face in her journal.

‘You’re welcome, Max,’ he said, looking at her. It helped that she wasn’t meeting his eyes, she made it easier to pretend she was just a student to him. ‘Alright, let’s move on with the lecture. You had all weekend to catch up on your reading, let’s see how much you can recall.’

{♪ “Journal” – Jonathan Morali}

Having arrived at her dorm, Max exhaled loudly, put her bag by the door and sat at her desk, opening the browser to check up on her social media.

Mark had ended up uploading the pictures of Max from San Francisco on his webpage – rare gems among his collection, seeing as the photographs weren’t in black and white, but in their original colors. There was a caption under all of them as well:

Gorgeous in front of the lens and talented behind it, Blackwell Academy’s very own Max Caulfield is one of this year’s winners of the annual Zeitgeist contest. She will go on to do wonders for the world of photography – and you heard it here first.

Max read the caption with astonishment. She appreciated his kind words despite what had happened between them, a small smile appearing on her face.

She then decided to check her e-mail, and among loads of spam, there was one message that caught her attention.

SUBJECT: Your SF photographs

FROM: markjefferson@gmail.com

She felt her heart twitch, but opened the message. Every picture she had taken in San Francisco was there, even the ones of him. He wrote a small note, too.

Hey,

Sorry to bother you, Max, I realize it’s a bit awkward for me to send these pictures to you, especially the ones of myself, but I believe it’s only fair since you took them yourself. They belong to you.

Also, I uploaded some photographs of you that I took. They’re on my webpage. Please, let me know if I should take them down.

— MJ
A hint of guilt hit her heart, seeing him be so civil and nice to her despite the fact that she had rejected him, so she decided to respond.

*Thank you, Mark. It’s really kind of you.*

*And no, I don’t mind. You can keep them up. Thanks for the flattering caption.*

Max.

Hesitantly, she hit *send* and closed her laptop. *Why do I feel bad about this?*

Resigned, she put music on the stereo and fell down to her bed.

>{ "“Something Good” – alt-J} 

Though in reality she wanted to forget about this whole thing, she found herself thinking about it anyway. She tried remembering everything that had happened in San Francisco, especially everything that Mark had done and said to her.

*To me, last night was special. You are special.*

But what did he mean? Was she special to him because of her talent? But just because he admired her talent, didn’t have to mean he was attracted to her. And “last night” wouldn’t make sense then. All signs pointed to him being attracted to her somehow. *He* was the one to initiate everything between them – the photoshoot, the tucking her hair behind her ear, the lingering, the kiss, the dance, the hand-holding, the sex…

*Why the fuck did I run away? Stupid! Should have stayed there.*

Angry at herself, she let out a loud groan into her pillow.

*Oh, something good tonight will make me forget about you… for now,* the lyric went.

A few hours later, Max met up with Chloe at the Two Whales diner for supper, anxious to tell her all about the trip.

Max arrived first, sat down comfortably in the same booth as usual, and waved to Joyce, who was on her shift that afternoon. Chloe was running late – *as always* – but it gave Max a little bit more time to prepare herself, still being unsure how to break it to her friend.

Finally, she heard the bell by the entrance and saw Chloe approaching the booth, so Max stood up from her seat for a moment to greet her.

‘Hey, my little rock star!’ she exclaimed, tightly hugging Max. ‘How was the trip? Tell me everything!’

‘Hey, Chloe,’ Max replied, reciprocating the hug. They both sat down. ‘Oh, it was amazing. Can you believe I actually talked to the press?’

‘That’s awesome! About time the world heard of Max Caulfield! I’m so happy for you, dude.’

‘Thanks,’ Max smiled.

Joyce approached their booth and asked, ‘What are you two eating this evening? We got fresh toast
if you want.’

‘Oh, that’d be great, Joyce,’ Max said. ‘Thank you.’

‘Yeah, for me too, mom, thanks.’

‘Comin’ right up!’ Joyce said, pouring them each a cup of tea.

‘Okay, so tell me everything, dude,’ Chloe requested again.

‘Well, the first day was already a pretty crazy one. When we arrived in San Francisco, Jefferson took
me on a sightseeing tour in some of the more iconic places, and then he even let me use his camera. It
was so great to be able to work beside him!’ Max recounted, excitement in her eyes.

‘Were you able to keep your cool? You said you were always so nervous and shy around him.’

‘Well, duh. Of course I was still super nervous. But somehow I think he was trying to make me relax
a bit. He… he asked me if he could take pictures of me by the sunset, and I agreed.’

‘Oh, really?’ Chloe arched her eyebrow at Max, amused by the revelation. ‘And how was it?’

‘Well, he took some shots against the sun, it was really sunny, you know, the golden hour. I couldn’t
believe this, but he said, *You look so gorgeous.*’ Max blushed at the memory.

‘Holy shit! Was he, like… hitting on you or something?’

‘Judging from now, definitely yes,’ Max nodded, her eyes wide.

‘Did… did something else happen?’ Chloe asked, her eyes narrowed, picking up on Max’s face
cues.

Max took a deep breath. ‘Yes.’

‘Well, spill,’ Chloe urged her.

‘Okay. But you have to promise me – *promise me* – that you will not tell anybody. I mean it. Not a
single soul, alright?’ Max said slowly, staring intensely into Chloe’s eyes.

‘I promise.’ Chloe put her hand to her chest. ‘You have my word. Whatever you say to me stays
between us. So what’s going on?’

‘Alright. I’ll start more or less from the beginning.’ She took another deep breath. ‘First of all, before
we even got to the airport in Arcadia Bay, he said I can call him by his first name, just like that!’

‘Nice,’ Chloe commented, drawing out the vowels, then took a sip of her tea.

‘So then there we are, taking pictures by the Golden Gate Bridge, at first it’s just him taking pictures
of me. One moment, he approaches me and tucks my hair behind my ear, his eyes kind of lingering
on me. I was telling myself it’s nothing, I mean, this is *Mark Jefferson*, and I’m just this shy,
awkward, little hipster, no way he’d be making moves on me, right?’

‘Right. I don’t mean it in a bad way, though.’

‘Yeah, I know, it’s okay. So then I took some pictures of the bridge, then of him, and after I handed
him the camera back, he… he leaned in and kissed me.’
Chloe gaped. ‘Wh… What?!’

‘Yeah. And I have no idea how I found the courage, but I was kissing him back, and before I knew it, we were nearly making out by the sunset.’

‘Wow, Max…’

‘I know… And then soon after we headed back to the hotel to get ready for the exhibition party. He picked me from my room, holding my hand… I mean, I never thought it would actually happen.’

‘You’re one lucky shy hipster then,’ Chloe grinned. ‘Hold on, my mom’s coming.’

‘There you go, girls. Enjoy!’ Joyce said, putting down the plates in front of them.

‘Thank you, Joyce,’ Max said, smiling warmly.

‘Thanks, mom.’ Chloe waited until Joyce was far away again. ‘Okay, so what happened next?’

‘Well, just standard stuff at the gallery. I got to speak with the other winners, there were some truly stunning entries, I mean… I can’t believe I won with that selfie, but alright.’ Max shrugged. ‘Then the president of the event spoke, there was champagne… And Mar– I mean Jefferson clinked his glass with mine, toasting my success. There was even this old friend of his, a talent scout, apparently, and he asked me for my contact info.’

‘Anyway, Jefferson and I were chatting some during the meal, and then he asked me to dance.’ A smile was beginning to appear on Max’s face, feeling a bit more relaxed now, reminiscing about the evening had definitely made her happy.

‘Man, that’s so romantic,’ Chloe said, leaning her chin against her hands.

‘Yeah,’ Max laughed lightly. ‘That’s one of the more intense parts. At first we were just swaying there, but then this song came on, it had like… really dirty stuff in there, but in a form of poetry. He was gazing into my eyes, literally, the entire time. I couldn’t help but… burn hot.’ She looked down for a moment, feeling same heat at the thought of it.

‘So, anyway,’ Max continued. ‘I don’t know how, but I was brave enough to but my hand and my head to his chest, and he embraced me tighter and we were dancing like that for a few slow songs…’

‘Aww!’ Chloe interjected.

‘And when the time came, we headed back to the hotel. We had nearly an hour to ourselves, just talking in the cab, ‘cause the traffic was really bad.’ Max took a deep breath. ‘And then, when we were in the elevators, he suddenly started kissing me again and… asked if I wanted to go to his room with him.’

‘Did you two…?’ Chloe asked, not finishing her sentence.

There was a short pause on Max’s part before she spoke. ‘…Yes.’

‘Holy shit… Really?’ Max nodded. ‘…How was it?’

Max shook her head, smiling. ‘It was… beyond amazing. The way he was with me, I… I never thought my first time would be like that,’ she said, her voice hushed.

‘Damn, girl.’ Chloe extended her hand for a high five, Max accepting it. ‘You really hit the jackpot!’
Max laughed lightly. ‘I guess… But then in the morning, I realized what I’d done, I mean… I had sex,’ she whispered the last word, ‘with my teacher, who just happens to be Mark Jefferson,’ she whispered his name as well, ‘I just freaked the fuck out. I went to my room, cleaned myself up, and just left the hotel, I had to clear my head.’

‘Aw, man… Then what?’

‘Well, after several hours, I was heading back to the hotel, and I bumped into him. I literally froze. He said he’d been worried sick, that he’d been looking for me. And instead of asking him upfront what it all meant… I accused him of making me win just so he could sleep with me. I can’t fucking believe I said that to him.’ Max looked down.

‘Oh… shit. What did he say?’

‘Oh, he was definitely angry, and I’d say hurt, too. It must have struck a nerve. He denied it all. He even said that night was special to him, that I was special to him, but I was still so freaked I just… I couldn’t talk to him about it, I actually fucking started to cry, can you believe this?’ Max shook her head at herself. ‘Then later I just asked him to just forget it even happened, to just, you know, go back to being student and teacher. I was just scared it was a one-time thing.’

‘But… why though? Did he do anything to make you think that?’

‘No. I mean… I never gave him a chance to do that. And he’s been so civil with me, I mean, he could have been vindictive, or really cold, but… he’s been way nicer than he should. Look,’ Max pulled her phone to show Chloe what Mark had written about her under his photographs of her.

Chloe carefully read the caption. ‘Oh wow. He is totally into you.’

‘Oh, come on. Why would he be?’ Max shook her head.

‘I don’t know exactly, but hey – you are awesome, alright? And if he sees that, then it’s even better than I thought.’

‘Thanks, Chlo,’ Max sent her friend a wide smile, but it quickly went away. ‘But I ruined it all. He’ll never want to talk to me again.’

Chloe pondered for a moment, exhaling loudly. ‘Okay… Look, if this is what you want, no judgement from me, alright? I support you. But please, be careful, okay? I don’t want you to get hurt.’

‘I know. Thanks. But as I said, I don’t think it’s going to happen now. It’s over.’

‘Nah. I’m telling you, he wouldn’t say such nice things about you under that picture. Hell, he probably wouldn’t even upload them at all.’

‘You think so? But he’s a photographer, what does it matter if he likes me or not?’
‘Yeah, I really think so. Now, if you still want him, I’m afraid you’re going to have to tell him that… somehow,’ Chloe explained. ‘Cause my guess is he won’t do anything since you asked him not to.’

‘Right… But how the hell do I do this?’

‘I don’t know, dude… I’m just saying.’

‘Yeah, you’re right,’ Max nodded, looking sad.

‘Dude, anytime you need to talk, I’m here, okay? You can count on me.’ Chloe extended her hands to Max, the latter squeezing Chloe’s palms in hers.

‘Thank you. So much,’ Max said, then took a deep breath. ‘So what’s up with you?’

They finished their meal, changing the subject to something entirely different. Max was asking Chloe how things were between her and Rachel, focusing on her friend’s happiness instead of her own misery, which turned out to work, at least for the moment.
Careful, Max. Your feelings are showing.

Tuesday, October 15, 2013

I need something cold and sugary or else I’m going to pass out in here. She chugged down the soda she had just bought and headed to the English class, which was taking place across from the vending machine.

Coming from around the corner, distracted by his own thoughts, Mark didn’t notice Max was in his way, nor did she notice him, causing them to slam into each other, the force of the blow resulting in Max falling to the ground, she still feeling quite weak because of the low blood sugar.

Stumped, she took a look around, barely able to make out of what had just happened.

‘I am so sorry, Max,’ she heard Mark’s voice and looked up. He was looking at her apologetically and extending his arm to pick her up. She accepted it, pulling herself up with his help, and readjusted her bag and clothes.

‘Are you alright? Are you hurt?’ he asked with concern in his voice. It seemed he felt really bad for bumping into her.

‘No, sir, everything’s fine,’ she shook her head and sent him a slight smile, they were being observed after all.

‘I was so distracted, I should have paid attention to where I was going,’ he spoke again. ‘I’m sorry for bumping into you like this.’

‘It’s alright, Mr. Jefferson. Happens to the best of us,’ she let out an awkward little laugh and continued her path to her next class.

Mark looked around the hallway, and several students immediately turned their eyes away. He sighed, rubbing his eyes under his glasses and beating himself up for slamming into her like that, and for making everything needlessly weirder. Idiot! I hope I didn’t hurt her, though.

The Photography class was over and Mark heard Max wince as she was getting up from her desk. She walked past his, heading for the exit.

‘Hey,’ he stopped her, gently yanking her arm, his voice soothing. Max immediately turned to face him, though looking at him shyly, a bit startled, feeling his hand touching hers. ‘Max, you’re walking funny, are you sure you’re okay?’

‘I’m fine, nothing’s wrong with my walking, I–’

‘Oh, come on, Max. You’re clearly hurt.’
‘I, uh… I mean, yeah. But to be fair, I didn’t lie to you right after it happened,’ she said. ‘It started hurting me when I got up from my desk after English.’

‘… I’m really sorry, Max,’ he apologized yet again.

‘Hey, it’s fine. Really. Nothing’s broken or anything. It’ll pass soon, and I’m gonna be fine. Don’t worry,’ she said softly, sending him a reassuring smile.

Mark was fixing her with gaze for a moment, her voice so soft and sweet in his ears, and Max couldn’t help but look at his lips, her own parted a bit, wondering what would happen if she kissed him now. She imagined herself making the move, slipping her hands up his chest, feeling his warmth and giving into the temptation, but feeling herself get flushed, she snapped out of her daydream and realized her hands had been on his arms all this time, lightly stroking them along with what she had been saying.

Fuck! She gaped and abruptly pulled away. Mark had an amused look on his face, and Max felt utter embarrassment.

‘Anyway, I, uh… I’d better go,’ she said, blushing further.

Yes, go. You’ve made your choice. Stick to it. It’s done, she chastened herself in her mind.

‘Yeah, sorry, don’t let me stop you,’ he said, laughing lightly. He watched her walk away from him and exit the classroom in a hurry.

Obviously, he had noticed her staring at his lips for a moment or two, he himself wanting to kiss her as well, but trying his best not to make any moves. But it was hard. All Mark could feel was yearning, he was using everything he had in him to hold on and respect her request. But seeing her in class or anywhere else, interacting with her around the school campus rendered that task that much harder.

Maybe she still wants me…

After lunch, Max saw Mark around the school, and felt compelled to observe him from afar. She had to quickly turn her head away once he caught her staring. Damn it!

Mark smirked under his nose, his heart twitching a bit at the hope of rekindling their little romance, then immediately dismissed the idea, knowing he shouldn’t be thinking of her this way anymore.

But he wanted to. So much.
Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Wednesday, October 16, 2013

Looking in the mirror by her dorm door, Max was examining her hurt hip, a bruise of average size had surfaced on her skin overnight, dark and pulsating.

‘Oh, wow, he really slammed hard into me,’ she said to herself. She pressed her finger into it and winced. ‘Ouch.’ She tried moving around to check if it obstructed her movements in any way, and it didn’t seem like it was going to be the problem. Mark certainly wouldn’t notice.

Being the loner that she usually was, Max was sitting on the edge of the fountain in front of the main entrance to the school, listening to music and enjoying some time alone, observing people around her as well as the beautiful weather.

Only a few more minutes remaining until the Photography Lab, she noticed Mark was heading towards the school, so she ducked her head, pretending not to see him, instinctively reaching for her camera – but he certainly did notice her. She was in the middle of snapping a picture, a hint of focus mixed with a pleased smile was gracing her face, although looking back at the freshly printed photograph, she seemed disappointed. With a slight hesitation, wanting to have a bare minimum of contact with her, he decided to chat her up.

Her heart picked up the pace once she saw that he was approaching her with a smile, and took out her earphones out.

‘Good afternoon, Max. Sitting alone?’ He seemed surprised.

‘Good afternoon, Mr. Jefferson,’ she said. Ironically, now it felt odd to refer to him this way and not by his first name. ‘Yes, I prefer this sometimes. You know, escaping the noise and admiring the view,’ she sent him a coy smile.

‘Ah, I totally get it. It’s so beautiful around here, it’s one of my favorite places to shoot in Arcadia Bay.’ He reciprocated her smile, his dark brown eyes appearing a bit brighter now, the sun rendering them golden brown, and Max found herself gazing into them.

‘He’s not making it any easier for me to get over him, huh.’

‘How’s your hip, by the way?’ he asked suddenly.

‘Better, thanks,’ she laughed lightly. ‘Think I’m gonna be fine.’ She wasn’t going to mention the bruise.

‘That’s good.’ He looked at his wrist watch. ‘I would love to continue, Max, but there’s only a few minutes left until our class, we’d better head there soon.’ He smiled at her, fixing her with gaze, still not leaving.

Or maybe he doesn’t want me to be over him…
‘You’re right, sir,’ she said, getting up. They started walking together towards the entrance.

‘After you,’ he said, gesturing to the door.

‘Thanks,’ she mumbled, blushing and hurriedly walking in front of him. She could smell his cologne, feeling butterflies in her stomach, and had to physically fight against herself not to look back at him.

Instead of walking all the way to the lab, though, she walked faster in front of him, leaving him behind, and quickly ducked into the girls’ bathroom, desperately needing to cool off. Having sprinkled cold water on her face, fanning herself, she felt her heart was beginning to calm down. She took a couple of deeper breaths and a few sips of water, then left the bathroom, heading straight to the Photography Lab class this time.

Mark carefully observed her expression, not quite sure what to make of it, but she appeared to be fine, and being forced to begin his class, he had to give it up for a while.

He wanted to ask if she was alright when the bell rang, but he saw her leave in a hurry.

*Maybe I should back off after all.*

They had no more classes together on that day, but that didn’t stop them from yearning or catching some lingering looks during breaks. Mark desperately wanted to initiate a conversation with her, feeling that there was something happening between them again, hoping that it all wasn’t over for good, yet he also wanted to respect her clearly stated wishes.

Max, though holding all the power, was unable to bring herself to make that move, fearing rejection, seeing as she had turned him down first. Why would he want to be with her now?

She saw Victoria hover around him, and even though it seemed ridiculous, Max felt jealous. For some reason, the way he looked at Victoria seemed romantic or… sexual all of a sudden, Max’s mind tricking her into thinking he had moved on already and was now into someone else. And why wouldn’t he be? He had so many more options to choose from.

Chapter End Notes

Tomorrow (July 24, 2018) is going to reveal some pretty exciting things! Tune in ;)
Temptation, Pt. 4

Thursday, October 17, 2013

As one of the ongoing tasks for the Photography Lab class, each student was to keep a portfolio of their work accumulated during the semester, and today everyone was supposed to show their progress to Mark.

Max found herself conflicted – she had been keeping the portfolio to the best of her abilities, but didn’t think it was worthy enough to show it to him. Now more than ever, after all the praise he had given her since they had met, she wanted to impress him.

Waiting the last in line for evaluation, she kept flipping through it, shaking her head. He’s going to think it’s total shit.

When it was finally her turn, she handed him the portfolio, looking away, holding herself by her sides.

‘Hey, don’t be nervous, Max,’ he said softly, prompting her to look at him.

‘It’s a total mess,’ she said, covering her face.

‘Even if that’s true, I’m not grading you yet.’

‘Still. I’m embarrassed you’re seeing this in such state,’ she explained, looking away again.

Mark was flipping through the portfolio, carefully studying the pages, sometimes nodding and sometimes shaking his head slightly.

‘It’s not half bad,’ he said finally, handing the portfolio back to her. ‘You do lack some smaller stuff, but it’s nothing you can’t make up for.’

‘Actually,’ Max started hesitantly, clutching the portfolio close to her chest, as though to shield herself. ‘I was wondering if you could… help me out?’

‘Sure, I’d be happy to,’ he sent her a warm smile.

She exhaled with relief, smiling widely. ‘That’s great. When are you available?’ she asked.

‘As soon as even this very afternoon.’

‘Oh. Well, then, uh… let’s start today.’

‘Alright,’ Mark smiled at her again, this time with slight lingering, making her heart twitch. He noticed her blush and looked down, smiling to himself. ‘Let’s get to work then. Grab a chair,’ he said, facing her again.

Max went over to the nearest desk and brought back a chair, joining Mark at his desk, trying her best to keep her cool. She placed the portfolio between them and opened it on the first page. There was a picture of a blue butterfly sitting on a rusty, grey bucket, with its wings half-expanded.

‘Now, this is one exceptional picture, Max,’ Mark said with admiration.

‘Thank you. Oh, I was so lucky to take a shot like that. It was at the girls’ bathroom. It just… flew in
and I knew I had to take a picture. Always take the shot, right?’ she said, turning to him with a shy smile.

‘Exactly,’ he responded in kind, his sight falling on her freckles, lingering for a moment.

Max was gazing at his face, both of them unwittingly leaning in closer until Mark realized what they were doing.

_Don’t. Just… don’t_, he reprimanded himself, suddenly turning away and clearing his throat.

Max blinked a couple of times, feeling a slight ache of rejection. _Not so nice when it happens to you, huh, Max?_

As afternoon turned to evening, they kept working on Max’s portfolio, not realizing the sun had gone down. A light pat on the hand or a slight brush against the skin, the tension between them was starting to become unbearable. She could feel the heat of his body radiating towards hers, making her want to tear his clothes off. In turn, throughout the entire meeting, Mark had been fighting off any thoughts or stares that might get him accidentally hard, feeling her heat as well.

He took off his glasses, rubbing his eyes from tiredness, trying to cool off, a few moments of silence between them. Max was leaning against the desk, propping her head with her arm, feeling a bit tired, observing him as he was lazily turning pages of her portfolio.

‘Oh, okay. This page,’ he said, a bit revived, shifting closer to her, prompting her to snap out of her fatigue, his arm touching hers. ‘It may need more work than the others, I think.’

He turned to face her, to see her reaction, and she met his gaze, looking at him with those wide eyes. Her lips parted, she couldn’t stop herself from getting totally lost in his eyes, her heartbeat quickening as she brought her face closer to his, anxious at the thought of possible rejection. Mark’s heart was beating faster as well, only inches separating them, and he noticed that her sight fell on his lips, then she looked into his eyes again, before closing her own and finally kissing him. He immediately turned his whole body to her, reciprocating the kiss with matched intensity. She felt his tongue caressing her lower lip, and their kiss deepened, his hand reaching out to touch her face, the other slipping up her thigh. Max brought her hands to his face, their kiss becoming passionate.

Slowly, he got up, prompting Max to do the same. He ran his hands down her arms pulling her closer to him. His lips felt so good on hers, he was kissing her as though he knew exactly how she wanted to be kissed right now, he was kissing her ardently, as if she was about to run away from him again. She held him by the back of his neck and stood on her toes to kiss him deeper, feeling his hands slip down her hips and higher up her hoodie, her skin warm against his fingertips, his heat rising. They were all over each other, passion overpowering them after such a hard week of restraint.

He abruptly swept the desk clean, his glasses and Max’s portfolio landing on the floor, but neither of them cared about that one bit right now. Just like the first time, his hands wandered off lower to her bottom, picking her up and placing her on the shorter side of the desk.

Having removed her hoodie, he took her face into his hands, and began kissing her, she reciprocating his kiss with passion and pulling him in closer, so that he was now close between her legs, her hands sliding underneath his jacket. His hands were at her thighs, sliding around her, shifting her closer to the edge. He felt her attempt to remove his jacket now, so he pulled away and hastily took it off himself.
Her hands found his chest, sliding lower and feeling his abs through the fabric, pulling out his shirt, which was tucked in his pants, and unbuttoning it from the bottom up. With the shirt undone, Max slid her hands down his torso, feeling his warm skin and his chest hair, kissing him deeper, only now having realized just how much she had missed him. Her hands wandering all over him, she sloppily toed off her shoes.

Excited by her eagerness, he yanked off her blouse, and began kissing her neck, hearing her heavy panting in his ear, pulling the bra straps down. She felt her heat rising and reached for his belt, unfastening his pants in a hurry, letting them slide down only a bit, exposing his hardness through his underwear. In turn, his hands moved down, reaching her jeans, unzipping them. He pulled her up a bit to remove them completely.

Bringing her hands to his face, kissing him, Max then slid them down his torso and reached down to touch him, pulling him out, beginning to move her hand up and down. Mark broke away from the kiss and gasped at her touch, closing his eyes for a second – he didn’t expect her to do that. Wanting to finally be inside her again, he brushed her panties to the side with one swift move and entered her impatiently, eliciting a surprised quiet moan from her. She grabbed him tightly by his upper arms, resting her forehead against his chest, and placed a small kiss on his sternum, feeling him move inside her.

She felt just as tight around him as before, deliciously wet and warm. His movements were eager but not harsh, he wanted the moment to last, the first wave of pleasure making him moan.

His hand found the side of her face, pulling her away from his chest to kiss her. She felt she was being held by the back of her neck and gently pushed down, until she felt her back touch the surface of the desk. Mark bent down for a moment, running his tongue and planting little kisses down her sternum, slid his hands around her and unclasped her bra, pulling it back slowly, looking her in the eyes. He then moved her a bit closer to the edge and picked up the pace, kissing her neck, then straightening up as he felt the fabric of her panties slipping back towards the inside; he got off her and removed them. Entering her again, he held onto her hips, pulling her onto him so he could fill her up completely. Max entwined her legs around him, feeling her heat rise. He felt so ample inside her, rubbing against all her being; it felt so good that she couldn’t contain the louder moan that followed. He quickly reached down and covered her mouth with his hand.

‘Shh,’ he said, laughing lightly, leaning down for a moment to kiss her. She sent him a wide grin, nodding her head, then throwing it back as she felt her pleasure mounting, tightening her grip around him.

He leaned against the desk, driving into her, and she held onto his arms, her head slightly pulled up, looking him in the eyes with want. He was gazing into her eyes in kind, marveling as he noticed she was entirely naked, the faint light of the desk lamp forming gorgeous shadow patterns on her skin. As the next wave of pleasure hit him, he began fucking her harder, and Max couldn’t hold on for much longer. He felt her fingernails digging deep into his arms, so he covered her mouth again, with her crying out even louder this time. As she was contracting around him, he leaned down, kissing her neck, quickening his moves. She pulled him in closer, moving her hips to meet his.

His last few thrusts were a bit harsher though slower, until she felt him spill inside her, groaning into her ear, gently pulling her lobe with his teeth, making her sigh.

He pulled up to face her. ‘You good?’ he asked.

‘I,’ she said, panting, her eyes wide and face flushed.

‘I fucked you speechless, huh?’ he laughed, smiling with joy, trying to catch his breath.
She laughed out loud, them quickly put her hands to her mouth, giggling in a hushed tone, breathing heavily.

He offered her his hand and she sat up, reaching out to him, pulling him closer and kissing him passionately, still filled with thrill, feeling him gently getting off her. He covered himself up and brought his hands to her face, kissing her back slowly.

After a while, they broke away, and Max rested her face by his neck, relishing in the pleasurable throbbing and the feeling of the warmth of his skin on her cheek, trying to even her breathing, her arms entwined around him. Mark held her close, caressing the back of her head, both of them enjoying the silence and the intimacy, breathing each other in.

He felt her embrace loosen around him and looked down at her. She was smiling at him, gazing into his eyes, and said, ‘I’ve missed you so much.’

Reciprocating her smile with a wide grin, beaming with happiness, he replied, ‘I’ve missed you too. God, I’ve missed you.’ He leaned down, kissing her again, his fingers entwining in her hair. He felt she was gently scratching his chest, a pleasurable tingling spreading through his body.

Ending the kiss, she pulled away again. ‘Hey, Mark, uh,’ she started, looking at him apologetically. ‘Yes?’

‘I’m sorry for running away like that,’ she said. ‘And for making that ridiculous accusation. I’m awful.’

‘No, you’re not. You were confused, and I can’t blame you for feeling that,’ he said, reaching for her cheek, cupping her face and gently stroking it with his thumb. She closed her eyes for a second and smiled. ‘It was such a huge step, and in the moment, I didn’t even wonder if you were truly ready or not. I feel as though… I might have pressured you somehow,’ he confessed, his face assuming a concerned look.

‘You didn’t pressure me. I wanted that. I wasn’t expecting it, sure, but,’ she stopped for a second, lowering her voice, and said, ‘the way you were with me? I never thought I’d experience anything like that.’

She laced her fingers with his and continued, ‘I just… When I woke up, I had no idea what it meant. Or how I felt about it. That night, it… it was beyond amazing.’ Mark smiled widely at her, hearting it. ‘I think I was just overthinking it way too much,’ she sent him an apologetic smile, and added, ‘Still, though… I’m so sorry I accused you of… making me win so you could sleep with me.’ She looked down. ‘I can’t believe I even thought of that.’

The truth was, when Max had woken up, she had been afraid to be vulnerable and open in front of him, exposed after a night that had changed their teacher-student relationship irreversibly. What if he had wanted to just have her for one night? What if she had gotten more attached to him? She had only wanted to avoid rejection and awkwardness.

Mark sighed, pondering for a moment before he spoke.

‘Hey, it’s okay, Max. I realize it could have looked like that. I really did like your picture best, and when I picked it, I promised myself that I wasn’t going to make any moves on you, but… being away, just the two of us… I just couldn’t help myself.’

‘And believe me,’ Max continued where he left off, ‘I really did want you. I… I think I was just afraid that it was a one-time thing, that if I somehow showed you any kind of affection, you’d think I
got attached or something.’

Max herself had been fantasizing about spending a night like that with him ever since they had met in person, her initial crush turning into something more. Anytime she had spaced out during his class, she had been wondering what it would feel like to have sex with him, thinking of how he would take her on his desk… or hers. She had a genuine hope that it would come to that in San Francisco. She hadn’t even told Chloe about it, feeling a little embarrassed, as if he would ever want her in that way.

‘Oh, sweetheart,’ Mark said, snuggling her closer, kissing her forehead. Max closed her eyes, breathing him in. ‘I would never do that to you,’ he continued, tenderly caressing the side of her face. ‘But I also understand why you felt that way. I put you in a weird spot.’ His voice was so soothing, she thought she could listen to him for days. ‘Now I just want you to be happy and comfortable, alright? And to spend time with you.’

‘Alright,’ she said, pulling up and kissing him.

He pulled her back into an embrace. She entwined her arms and legs around him, pushing herself closer into him, and he held her tightly. She put her head against his chest, listening to his heartbeat, and he was rocking them gently, breathing in with relief. ‘I wasn’t mad at you, even after you’d said it. I just missed you,’ he said softly, and she tightened her grip around him.

They were hugging like that for a few minutes, with Mark caressing the back of her head with one hand and drawing circles on her back with the other. It felt so good to be able to hold her, feel her warmth, knowing she was alright.

He felt her pulling away slightly, and he looked down at her.

‘What’s wrong?’ he asked.

‘I… just… What’s going to happen now?’

‘You mean, with us?’ he asked, Max nodding, her eyes uncertain. ‘Well… we can’t date like normal people, not openly, I mean. It’s against the rules.’

‘Yeah, I know.’

‘But if you want, we can date. As in, be exclusive. It’s what I would like, at least.’

Max was listening to his words, considering what they meant. *He wants to be with me?*

‘I want to be with you, Max,’ he said, taking her hands into his.

A gorgeous, wide smile appeared on her face and gazing into his eyes, she said, ‘I want to be with you too, Mark.’

She slipped her hands up his chest again and pulled herself up to kiss him, feeling his hands on her back. He skimmed them lower and picked her up again, moving them to her desk now, which was twice as wide.

He put her gently on the surface, leaning into her until she lay down, a passionate kiss growing between them. His fingertips were gently caressing her sides, stopping for a moment at her tummy, then moving up to caress her breasts, causing Max to sigh, she having missed his touch as though they had been separated for much longer. His lips moved lower, kissing her jaw and neck, biting her lightly, then up to her earlobe, sucking on it for a moment, before pulling up to face her. Looking at her with desire, he reached down between them and entered her again.
This time he was moving more patiently within her, slowly sliding in and out, his lips at her neck, and she held onto him, her legs loosely wrapped around him. She was quietly moaning into his ear as he was continuously filling her up, his breath quickening. She began moving with him, her hips meeting his, her pleasure mounting, his chest brushing against hers. He pulled up to kiss her passionately, then took her wrists and pinned them above her head, lacing his fingers with hers, leaving wet kisses on her neck. She was gasping and moaning, adding to his excitement, prompting him to speed up his movements.

Feeling his own pleasure rising, he once again pulled up from her neck, letting go of her hands, and leaned against the desk, while she held onto him tightly as he was unceasingly pushing into her, grunt and groaning, his breathing becoming harsher. She sensed she was getting close to finishing, her gasps growing rougher, her fingers digging deeper into his skin. She came with a long moan, struggling to make it quiet, and his release quickly followed with a hushed groan into her neck.

With him still inside her, they were making out, kissing each other with passion, not wanting to let go. Her hands were all over his back, pulling him closer, his hand slipping up her thighs, skimming up her sides, sending pleasurable tingling, until they reached her face.

Max broke away from the kiss, gazing into Mark’s eyes, sending him a wide smile, he responding in kind.

‘We should probably get going,’ Max started quietly. ‘It’s, like, 9:30pm, my curfew is in half an hour.’

‘Right. Okay.’ He gave her a little kiss, straightened up and got off her.

As they parted, Mark covered himself up and started buttoning his shirt back.

Max looked down and exhaled, realizing she wasn’t wearing anything – entirely naked in the middle of the classroom.

‘Would you mind passing me my, uh, underwear?’ she asked, pressing her legs together.

Mark smirked at her, went over to his desk and picked her panties and bra from the floor. ‘There you go,’ he passed them to her.

‘Thanks.’ She hurriedly put them on and hopped off the desk, readjusting her bra, and went up to his desk, reaching down for the rest of her clothes. Mark watched her as she bent down. Moving back up, she noticed him do that.

‘You’re staring,’ she said, covering herself, feeling a bit self-conscious.

‘Because I’m enjoying what I’m seeing,’ he said, coming up to her, grabbing her gently by her hips and pulling her in for a kiss. Letting her clothes fall to the ground, she pressed herself closer into him, her hands slipping up his chest and staying on his shoulders.

‘Mm, we should really get going,’ she said between kisses. ‘I’m not even dressed, and what if we have to scatter?’

Mark looked behind them and realized that though the door was shut, it wasn’t locked.

‘Oh, shit, you’re right,’ he chuckled nervously. ‘The door was unlocked all this time.’ He loosened his grip around her, seeing her startled expression.
‘Guess we were lucky then,’ she said. She kissed him once more and broke the embrace, quickly picking her clothes from the floor.

‘How about… you come to my place? We’d definitely be more secure there,’ he offered.

‘Oh… uh… Tonight?’ she asked, fighting with the zipper of her jeans.

‘Sorry, should I not have offered that?’ he asked, thinking she appeared to hesitate.

‘No, no, it’s fine, I just have a lot of homework to do for tomorrow,’ she explained, putting on her blouse.

‘Well, actually not tonight. I’m being sent away for a delegation for a couple of days, so we won’t see each other until Tuesday.’

‘Oh.’ Max raised her eyebrows, showing a slight disappointment. ‘Well, uh… that’s okay, we know how to wait, don’t we?’ she chuckled lightly.

‘That we do,’ he responded in kind. ‘Your timing was just perfect.’

‘Thank you,’ she grinned at him and put her hoodie on, ready to go.

‘But I was so close to losing it. If you hadn’t kissed me, I would have kissed you.’

‘Oh, really?’ she asked, grinning at him.

‘Really.’ He pulled her by the hand, snuggling her closely and kissing her. She pressed herself closer to him, kissing him back deeper, unable to get enough of him.

‘Mm, Mark, we really have to go…’ she murmured, but still wasn’t letting go of him.

‘Alright, alright,’ he broke the embrace. ‘Gimme your phone.’

She looked at him quizzically, but handed him her cell. He took it and put his number in.

‘Now, call me later, okay?’

She took the phone out of his hand and tapped on the screen. He felt buzz in his jacket, and smiled at her.

‘Now you can call me too,’ she said.

‘Good. I will.’ He gave her one small kiss.

‘Great. Okay, I’m gonna leave now.’ She reached down to pick up her portfolio from the floor and put it in her bag. She picked up his glasses as well and handed them to him. ‘Thanks for the help, by the way.’

‘Oh, thanks. And you’re welcome. The pleasure was all mine,’ he smirked at her, making her laugh.

She gave him one last kiss. ‘Okay, I really am leaving now.’

‘Bye,’ Mark said as she headed out, letting out a small laughter. He stood there for a while, happy, smiling to himself.
Closing her dorm door behind her, Max rested her back against it, smiling widely to herself, thinking of what had just happened, and, more importantly, that she had been the one to make that move.
Chapter Summary

A bit of (sex)ting before we move onto the main course.

Friday, October 18, 2013

A few moments after she had woken up, Max heard her phone buzz on her bedside cabinet.

Mark: Hey, girl

Max grinned to herself, feeling butterflies in her stomach. She actually pinched herself, just to be sure she hadn’t dreamed all of what had happened the night before.

Max: Hey, just woke up

Mark: Me too. How’d you sleep?

Max: Quite good, you?

Mark: A little less than I’d like to, but I have to catch that flight

Max: Right. Where are you going, by the way?

Mark: NY Institute of Photography. I’m supposed to see if we’re lacking in our photography department

Max: As if. We have a great program

Mark: Eh, you never know… I just kind of wish I hadn’t agreed to go there now

Max: You could have said no?

Mark: Sort of, maybe.

Mark: I could do so many fun things with you right now…

Max: Patience ; )

He probably doesn’t like emojis, she thought.

Mark smirked, having a sip of coffee in his kitchen. This was a new thing for him as well. Texting hadn’t really been a thing until recently, at least in his perception – people would usually call each other, or send a page, or an email on a more rare occasion. And here he was, texting his new girlfriend like all the teenagers would. But somehow he didn’t mind. He enjoyed the fact that she was making him feel a little bit younger.

Mark: You’re right

Mark: What are you doing?
Max: Just showered and got dressed
Max: Leaving soon. You?
Mark: Sipping coffee
Mark: Have you had a good breakfast?
Max: No, no time, unfortunately
Mark: When I get back, I’ll make you some
Having read that, she gaped, smiling, feeling a rush of heat.
Max: It’s a date then
Mark: Great
Mark: Okay, I’m heading for the send-off now, so I’m afraid I have to cut this short
Mark: Talk later?
Max: Yeah. I have class soon anyway
Mark: Alright. Bye for now
Max: Bye. Have a safe flight
Mark: Thank you

It was a little bit harder than usual for Max to focus during class, even though none of them were with Mark, just thinking about the previous night was making her smile, she couldn’t contain her grin.

‘Hey, Max,’ she heard Warren call her out. ‘What are you so happy about?’

‘Oh, uh, nothing much. I’m just in a really good mood,’ she replied.

‘Did you read that manga I sent you?’

‘No. I realize now that I completely forgot. Sorry, Warren. I’ll have some time off during the weekend, so I’ll definitely give it a go.’

‘Great. Can’t wait for you to read it,’ he said, putting his hand on her arm.

‘Yeah, me too,’ she responded, feeling a bit odd to be touched by him. She didn’t mind exactly, but it was just weird. She wasn’t clueless to his advances, she kind of realized he’d been crushing on her for a few weeks now, though she just couldn’t bring herself to turn him down, she considered him a really good friend.

She spaced out during Cultural Anthropology, doodling in her journal until she realized she’d been drawing Mark, though the image was not too clear. She quickly closed the notebook, blushing, and got back to listening to the lecture, a little smirk on her face.
She felt a buzz in her jean pocket.

Mark: Just landed

Max: Oh, that’s great. I’m still in class

Mark: And texting? That’s not very nice

He was teasing her now, but she knew how he would always reprimand anybody who would do that during his lectures.

Max: …

Mark: I’m just kidding

Max: Oh, alright. Got me scared there for a second

Mark: Sorry

Max: It’s okay. Guess I’ll text you back when I’m off

Mark: Okay

Later that day, Max met up with Chloe by the beach, since it was a nice, sunny day.

‘So… how’s the development between you and your Mister going?’ Chloe asked.

‘Well…’ Max grinned widely. ‘It’s… moved forward.’

‘In what way?’ Chloe arched her eyebrow.

‘Ah… a sex-in-the-classroom sort of way,’ Max whispered.

Chloe gaped, stopping mid-walk. ‘Really?’

‘Yup. I asked him to help me out with my portfolio yesterday and it sort of… happened.’

‘Wow, Max. You work fast.’

Max shrugged, unable to contain her smile, gigging a little.

‘Glad to see you so happy, though,’ Chloe said, hugging her friend from the side as they began walking again.

‘Thanks. How are you and Rachel doing?’

‘Good. We’ve been going on some dates, but she’s busy with school, and I work at that store, so we don’t get a lot of time.’

‘I see.’

Chloe didn’t seem too happy, though, and kept dodging further questions, so Max gave up after a while.

‘You’re gonna meet up with him tonight?’ Chloe asked suddenly.
'No, unfortunately. Wells sent him on a delegation to NYC. He’ll be back on Tuesday.'

‘Aw, sorry.’

‘It’s okay, we’ve been texting.’

They continued their walk, talking about a lot of things, Max taking pictures along the way.

In the evening, when she got back to her dorm room, she texted Mark.

Max: Hey

Mark: Hello to you too

Mark: How was your day?

Max: Good. School went quickly by and I met up with a friend afterwards

Max: How was yours?

Mark: Oh, boring as hell

Mark: I mean, I’ve been to the institute a lot of times, nothing new for me

Mark: But Wells didn’t care much

Max: I’m sorry

Mark: It’s okay, baby

Max smiled as she read the adorable pet name. So simple… yet effective.

Mark: I do wish I was with you right now

Max: Me too

Mark: I want to kiss you so badly

Max: Oh, I’ve missed that

Max: You’re a good kisser ; )

Mark: Ah, thank you. So are you

Max: You’re making me blush

Mark: That color suits you, you know?

Max: It does?

Mark: Very much so, yes

Mark: I mean, you’re already gorgeous enough

Max: Aw, stop…
Mark: Admiring your beauty? Never
Max: Guess I’m gonna have to get used to it, huh?
Mark: I’m afraid so
Mark: I wish I was with you now
Mark: I would kiss you
Mark: I would trace kisses along your jaw
Mark: Down your neck
Mark: My hand would slip up your side
Mark: Caressing your breast
Mark: Then I’d go lower, kissing your tummy…
She was burning hot reading his messages.
Max: And then…?
Mark: And then I would run my tongue down to your cl–

He stopped typing mid-sentence. *Christ… I can’t send her stuff like that! Not yet!* he chastened himself and deleted the draft.

Max: Oh, you’ll find out soon enough
Max exhaled. He definitely knew how to make her want him more.
Max: Wow…
Max: I am looking forward to all that
Mark: I bet you do
Mark: Prepare yourself for a lot more than this
His straightforwardness sent thrills down to her lower abdomen. She enjoyed the light dirty talk, though felt a little too shy to write anything like that to him.
Max: Anyway, what are you up to now?
Max: Just sitting at my desk, listening to some music
Max: How about you?
Mark: In my hotel room, kind of bored. The TV’s on, but nothing interesting’s in there
Mark: I have a lot of stuff to do tomorrow and on Sunday, though
Max: I’m sorry
Mark: It’s alright
Mark: At least I have our date to look forward to

Max: That you do : )

Mark: Got any plans yourself?

Max: Probably going to finish the reading you assigned

Max: And some other homework

Max: I might read or watch something, I’ll see

Mark: Pretty good. Way better than mine

Max: Think I must agree, yeah

Max: Anything you can do to relax though?

Mark: Don’t know yet

Mark: I’ll think of something

Max: I hope so

Max: Will you forgive me if I go to sleep now?

Max: I don’t wanna doze off on you

Mark: Of course

Mark: We’ll talk some more tomorrow

Max: Alright. Goodnight

Mark: Goodnight

During the weekend, Mark had a ton of meetings he had set up at the beginning of that week, anything to take his mind off Max, but that had all been before they had gotten back together.

Max read the manga Warren had been talking about, as well as bits of that book she had borrowed from Mark, and watched some movies.

When not busy, they would spend the rest of the weekend texting – talking and flirting some more.
Chapter Summary

A little bit more before the main course.

Monday, October 21, 2013

Max was rereading the same paragraph for the fourth time and finally closed the textbook, defeated.

She reached for her phone and saw the time – 11:06pm. There were some messages waiting for her as well. *Weird, I didn’t hear any of them come. Oh, right. It was silenced.*

Chloe: Wanna have breakfast with Rachel and me tomorrow?

Mom: Pop and I sent you some money. Check if the transfer went through. XO

Kate: Do you still have my copy of *The October Country*? If so, could you bring it back in the morning? I need to take some notes for class

And then there were three from Mark.

Mark: Hey, I’m back

Mark: Sorry I haven’t called, Wells dumped some last-minute project on me

Mark: Max?

*Oh, shit, he’s been waiting for two hours.* Max quickly started composing a reply.

Max: Sorry! I was doing homework

Max: And my phone was silenced

Mark: So you’re not mad?

Max: Of course not

Mark: That’s great. Tough homework?

Max: Not really. It was mostly just reading for your class

Mark: Did you like it?

Max: Couldn’t focus by the end, but it was interesting for the most part

Mark: What’s the project?

Max: Wells asked me to prepare the report AND devise a plan for a new contest…

Max: FOR TOMORROW?
Mark: Yeah. Great timing, huh?

Mark: As if I haven’t just gotten from a delegation he had sent me on

Max: Geez. I’m sorry

Mark: Thanks. Fortunately, I start at 11am, so maybe I’ll even get to sleep for an hour or so.

Max: Yeah, though I hope you’ll get to sleep more

Mark: Me too

Mark: So… we’ll see each other after class?

Mark: At my place, I mean

Max: Of course

Max: Missed you like crazy

Mark: Oh, me too

Max: But now please forgive me but I’m exhausted

Mark: It’s alright, at least one of us should get some sleep

Max: See you tomorrow

Max: See you

She smiled to herself and checked her closet. She didn’t have many girly clothes, most of them were left in Seattle – she didn’t think she’d need them. But there were some less hipster clothes, like two pairs of non-ripped jeans, for instance. She planned her outfit for the next day and then remembered to text Kate and Chloe back.

Max: Sure thing, I’ll come by around 8am, okay?

Kate: Awesome! Thanks Max.

She then looked again at the message from Chloe. *Hanging out with Rachel?* Max wasn’t quite sure she wanted to spend the morning with two highly absorbing personalities, one of whom was rather a complete stranger, not to mention, Rachel was attending Blackwell. Max didn’t want to be obstructed in her conversation with Chloe, lest she would slip up and say something about her relationship with Mark. No one could know her secret but Chloe.

Max: Tomorrow’s off the table, sorry. I’ve still a ton of hw to do, and yes, I really gotta do it. Another time?

Chloe: Aw come on

Max: I really can’t. You know I would if I could

Chloe: Alright…

Max: Don’t be sad, we’ll hang out this week. I promise!

Chloe: Okay, okay <3
In the morning, having brought the book back to Kate, Max went to the bathroom to take a shower. Feeling the warm water splash on her face, her muscles relaxing, she was thinking about how she was going to have to watch her behavior around Mark now, seeing as she wasn’t going to deliberately ignore him anymore. *Breathe. Relax. You’ll be fine.*

When she was drying herself off, she heard Victoria, Courtney and Taylor come in and immediately picking on some other girl.

‘Oh, look who it is, girls. Kate Marsh. Did you really think you could just join the Vortex Club and now we’d be friends?’ Victoria said.

Peeking through the shower curtain, Max saw Kate’s back. She was brushing her teeth, trying to ignore the other girls.

‘Well? Answer!’ Victoria nagged.

Max quickly put on her clothes and hastily moved the curtain. Four faces turned in her direction.

‘Great. The selfie queen has arrived,’ Victoria said, rolling her eyes. Her minions laughed in accordance.

‘Wow. You really need to work on your *witty*,’ Max mimicked inversed commas, ‘*remarks. They suck,*’ she said. Normally she wasn’t that brave, but she hated bullies, and seeing the sweet and kind Kate being bullied – by three people no less – made Max more confident.

Victoria raised her eyebrows, taken aback by Max’s decisive response.

‘Well? Answer,’ Max spoke again, crossing her arms. ‘Nothing? So go away.’

Victoria huffed and headed for the door. ‘Like I care,’ she said, leaving, with the other two following her out.

Once they left, Kate exhaled. ‘Max! Thank you so much.’

‘It’s nothing, Kate. I just don’t feel like letting bullies have their way.’

‘Still, I would never be able to stand up to them like that.’ Kate seemed impressed.

‘They piss me off on a daily, but even more so when they pick on my friends. Then it’s personal. Are you okay?’ Max asked.

‘Now I am. Thanks again. And if you still want to read the book, I’ll bring it by later, once I’m done with it.’

‘Oh, that’d be great. I’d love to finish it, Kate,’ Max smiled.

‘Of course. And thank you again, Max,’ Kate said, going up to her and hugging her. Max reciprocated the squeeze.

‘Anytime,’ she replied. ‘Can I ask what did they mean about the club?’

‘I was at the recent party. I don’t even know why I asked to join, honestly, I don’t really want to be
there, but I thought maybe they’d stop making fun of me. Not a smart move, though,’ Kate explained.

‘Yeah. Still, doesn’t excuse them acting like assholes.’

‘True. Well, I won’t be making the same mistake again,’ Kate said, heading to the shower cabin.

When she got back in her room, Max saw that someone messed with her photo wall. I guess that’s another one of Victoria’s witty responses. Max didn’t have much time to fix it, so she just let it be. Next time, I’m locking the door.

Heading to class, though, Max still felt so much more empowered. Victoria usually had her way with words, and on some level was able to silence her victims and laugh it off with her friends. So now that Max was able to best Victoria at her own game, it brought a triumphant smile onto Max’s face.

She pulled out her phone to text Mark.

Max: Good morning, sir
Max: Hope you slept some
Mark: Miss, it is inappropriate to text your teacher this way
Max laughed lightly at his humorous response.
Mark: But yeah, about four hours. Just woke up
Max: Better than nothing
Mark: Definitely
Mark: Going to class?
Max: Yup, English AP
Mark: What did you have to read?
Max: The October Country
Max: Didn’t know Bradbury was such a poet
Mark: Oh, I like those poems. Very dark, though
Max: Yeah, part of the appeal
Mark: True, true
Max: Gotta go now. See you in class
Mark: See you. Act natural
Max: You too
Max sat at her desk in the photography lab. A few minutes later, Victoria came in, side-eyeing Max. When she came up to Max’s desk, she took her journal and started flicking through it.

‘Dear diary, the world is so cruel, boohoo,’ Victoria started mocking Max.

‘Give it back,’ Max ordered.

‘Or what?’

‘Or what? Are you five?’ Max had a slight baffled look on her face. ‘You know what? Look all you want, enjoy,’ she added. As she finished talking, Mark entered the classroom.

‘It’s dumb anyway,’ Victoria said, throwing it upward in Max’s direction. The journal fell onto her desk with a loud thud, a couple of polaroid pictures falling out. Max started to quietly gather the stuff, readjusting the images and checking it there was further damage to the notebook.

‘You’re really childish, you know that?’ Max said.

Looking to the front, she noticed Mark was watching the altercation. She felt her anger rise underneath the surface, because he was there to witness this immature situation.

‘Victoria, next time you complain to me about who should or shouldn’t have won, look at what you’re doing. This is one of the many reasons why you weren’t suitable for representing the Blackwell Academy,’ he said, giving her a disapproving look. ‘Maybe it’s time to think about that.’

A couple of students had surprised but amused expressions on their faces, with Victoria looking down, speechless, feeling embarrassed.

Looking around the classroom, Mark said, ‘Now, seeing as everybody’s here, we can start.’

Max looked up at him, still in disbelief, relieved that he intervened. She looked at Kate and they exchanged looks.

Finally, someone brought her down a peg. Kate couldn’t contain her grin.

The rest of the lecture was refreshingly free of Victoria’s voice – for the first time ever.

During Mark’s lecture, both him and Max had to be really careful not to linger on each other too much. Perhaps no one would be too surprised to see her do that, but if Mark looked at her for too long, surely someone, most likely Victoria or Taylor, would notice. The task seemed all the more difficult because Mark would usually stand in front of or sit on the desk that was facing Max. He himself liked being so close to her; back when they hadn’t been together yet, that had been the only way he could look at her up close for an extended period of time. And having her crush in such small proximity to her had been great for Max, too.

When it finished, Max waited until everyone else left for lunch and went up to Mark’s desk.

‘I know you would intervene no matter who she was picking on, but that was so sweet of you,’ she said, leaning against the desk.

‘I honestly never suspected her of such childish behavior. I knew she was very capable of being mean, but this?’ Mark shook his head, closing his eyes for a second. ‘Are you okay?’

‘Yeah. Guess I must have really pissed her off this morning.’

‘How so?’
‘Well, when I was taking a shower, I–’ she stopped, seeing his smirk. ‘Stop,’ she said, laughing. ‘When I was there,’ she continued, ‘Victoria and her friends were picking on Kate for no reason, so I intervened and it actually worked.’

Mark was nodding his head. ‘You’re such a good person,’ he said, smiling at her.

‘Thank you. And sorry, I know hearing about this high school drama must be really dreadful,’ Max said.

‘It is. I’m glad it’s way behind me, to be honest. And hey, I don’t mind you talking about it, just sorry you still have to go through it,’ he said, taking her hand.

Max looked to the door and went up closer to kiss him.

‘I got you now, I think I’m going to be okay,’ she said, smiling. He looked at her in kind, placing a small kiss on her hand.

‘That you do,’ he said. Max noticed dark circles under Mark’s eyes as he looked down for a moment.

‘You sure you want to meet up later? You look exhausted,’ she said, giving his cheek a tender caress.

‘I’m tired, yes, but I still wanna see you,’ he replied. ‘One question, though.’

‘Hm?’

‘Any food allergies? Wouldn’t wanna poison you.’

‘Oh,’ she chuckled lightly. ‘No allergies. You?’

‘None either. Any food you don’t like?’ He tugged on her hand playfully.

‘Not a fan of brussels sprouts, but I’m not going to make a fuss,’ she smiled.

‘Well, I just want you to enjoy what I’m going to make for you.’

‘Oh, you cook?’

‘Yes.’ He laced his fingers with hers.

‘Hot,’ she winked at him, making him chuckle. ‘Alright, well... gotta go now. Kate and Warren are waiting for me with lunch.’ She gave him another kiss.

‘See you later,’ he said, letting go of her hand and watching her leave.
Chapter Summary

Here it is - their first real date! \( \wedge (\bigheartsuit__\bigheartsuit) \) \( J \)

Tuesday, October 22, 2013 – the evening of

Mark parked his car on the driveway and went up to Max’s side to open the door for her. He extended his arm to her and escorted her to the house. Because it was getting dark, Max couldn’t quite see how it looked, but it didn’t seem too big or too small.

Shutting the door behind them, Mark locked it and took his blazer off. Max put her bag by the door and took a look around.

The hallway was dimly lit and it was difficult to make out where it ended exactly. Vis-à-vis the front door, slightly to the right, there was a staircase leading to the next floor. To her left, Max saw two arched doors; one led to a completely dark room, and there was a faint light falling out of the other one.

‘Come on, let’s eat,’ Mark took her hand and led her to the living room. There was a big, wooden table with six chairs, two by each side and one by each head. Along the shorter side of the table, there were two plates facing each other, separated by two lit candles and a bowl with a mixed salad.

Max turned to him, a bit tongue-tied, and said, ‘Mark, it’s, uh… this is amazing.’

Mark smiled at her. ‘My lady.’ He pulled the chair up for her, making her giggle; he was being so charming.

She sat comfortably, and put her hands on her knees, feeling a bit awe-struck being so catered to.

‘May I offer you a drink? Wine, water?’ he asked.

‘Hm… water, please. It’s a school night.’ She exhaled, closing her eyes for a moment. ‘Uh, that sounded dumb.’

‘No, it didn’t. Water coming right up,’ he sent her a smile and headed behind her to the dark room, which turned out to be the kitchen, flicking the lights on as he entered it. Max looked around the living room; most of it was dressed in darkness, but she was able to see a sofa and a television a bit further into the room.

Mark came back with two wine glasses, but filled with water instead, placing one in front of Max and the other for himself. ‘There you go.’

‘Thank you.’

He ducked into the kitchen yet again and came back wearing mittens, carrying a slightly bigger dish with something hot inside it, placing it on a wooden chopping board between the two plates. He put the mittens away and proceeded with putting the food on her plate – a piece of roasted salmon with crispy potatoes.
‘Now,’ he started, ‘I can’t promise anything, but I hope you’ll like it.’

‘It smells delicious, thank you,’ she said, smiling at him.

‘Want some salad with this?’

‘Yes, please.’

Having put it on her plate as well, he took a seat opposite her and helped himself to the food.

‘So how was your day?’ he asked, putting a napkin on his lap.

‘It was alright,’ she shrugged slightly. ‘Nothing particularly interesting has happened since we last saw each other. How about yours?’

‘Well, apart from this,’ he gestured to Max and himself, ‘same as yours. And kind of fighting off the sleepiness.’

Max nodded, smiling.

‘How’s the food?’ he asked.

‘I knew you were teasing,’ she said, as she took a bite of the dish. ‘It’s really good.’

‘I was just trying to be modest. It’s not like I’m an excellent cook.’

‘Judging from this, I kind of want to disagree,’ she made Mark smile.

‘Well, I’m glad you like it.’

‘Oh, I just remembered. How did that project for Wells work out?’ she asked.

‘Alright, I guess. I gave it to him, but I don’t know how long it’ll take him to go over it. I kind of suspect I didn’t have to do it so fast.’

‘You mean you nearly pulled an all-nighter for nothing?’

‘Could be,’ he shrugged. ‘At least I don’t have to worry about it anymore.’

‘Right.’

‘So tell me this – how did you end up loving photography?’ he asked, changing the subject.

‘Well,’ Max started, having a sip of water. ‘It’s kind of hard to say. There was this old Polaroid at home, back when I first lived in Arcadia Bay, and I just liked playing with it. And I would always look for some new stuff to take pictures of, and it became a hobby.’

‘How old were you?’

‘Uh, about eight or nine, I think.’

‘Oh, so you started sooner than I did.’

‘Yeah? How old were you?’

‘Around 13 or 14, but I went hard for it. Except we only had an analog camera at home, so I had no idea how my photographs came out until I was able to develop them,’ he explained.
‘I see. Well, I mean I said it was a hobby, and I knew I wanted to be a photographer, but I wasn’t sure I could make a career out of it. Uh,’ she paused briefly, ‘it wasn’t until I saw your work, actually.’

‘Really?’ he arched his eyebrow at her, smirking.

‘Yeah,’ she smiled widely. ‘Something about the way you capture the mood, I can’t even explain why it’s so intriguing, but it just is. It’s like I can feel these emotions. Plus, the way you’re able to play with shadows is impressive.’

‘Well, thank you,’ he sent her a wide grin. ‘And may I say, your work had a similar effect on me.’

‘How so?’ Max asked, surprised.

‘I just knew you had a gift. Instantly.’ Mark was fixing her with gaze. ‘There’s always something happening in the background, and there are at least two sides to the meaning of your photographs. It’s inspiring.’

‘Thank you,’ she said, blushing. ‘It means a lot coming from you.’

‘You’re welcome, Max,’ he said, still smiling widely at her, and glanced at her empty plate. ‘Do you have some space left for dessert?’

‘Uh, sure. Don’t tell me you made it yourself too.’

‘No, no,’ he laughed lightly, getting up. ‘I’m a lousy baker, actually. This one is from a store. Let me go get it then.’ He collected the dinner dishes and went into the kitchen, and came back with two pieces of chocolate cake.

‘There you go,’ he said, leaning in for a kiss. She brought her hand to the side of his face, caressing it gently.

‘Thank you. Looks delicious,’ she remarked, having a bite. ‘And tastes,’ she sent him a smile.

‘I sometimes get it from that store, thought you might like it. I’m glad you do.’

‘So now you tell me this – how did you end up in a small town such as Arcadia Bay?’ For a change, it was Max who was fixing Mark with gaze.

‘Well, once my career kind of went silent, I took some time off to just relax. I was really tired of LA, its constant noise and the people you meet in the showbiz, it’s just… exhausting after a while, you know?’ he replied.

Max nodded. ‘I mean, I don’t know, but I can imagine. I’ve heard people say this for years.’

‘Yeah, and they’re not wrong. Sure, it’s a great place for opportunities like that, same as, say, New York. But I’d had enough at that point, and as I’d been getting less and less offers, I figured it was best to finish my career before someone else announced it. Then I, uh, took that teaching detour all over the States, as I suspect you might know.’

‘I do, yes.’

‘I just love how peaceful it is in Arcadia Bay, kind of secluded. Blackwell wanted me to stay as well, so I settled in here.’

‘I see. Do you ever wish to go back, though?’ she asked.
‘Hm. Yes and no. I would love to be able to take photographs for a living again, this part never stopped to amaze me. Just the additional stuff is still a no.’

‘I see,’ she smiled lightly at him, he reciprocating it.

‘And, uh… it just so happened that I ended a relationship as well, a very turbulent one, and I was just done,’ he said, looking away from Max. There were a few moments of silence.

She felt a slight ache in her heart, hearing about his former girlfriend.

‘Sorry,’ he said quietly. ‘You probably don’t want to hear about my past relationships.’

Max looked up at him, her expression a bit awkward, it was hard for Mark to determine what she might have been feeling.

‘It’s okay,’ she shook her head. ‘A turbulent one? Why? If I may ask.’

‘Of course you may. Well, we were fighting a lot, never on the same page about anything, and after some time, it just became really hard to try and fix something that wasn’t going to work out anyway.’

‘I understand,’ she nodded, looking him in the eyes, smiling. ‘So what happened next?’

‘Well,’ he cleared his throat, thinking he kind of spoiled the mood of the evening. ‘I went to visit my mother, and it just so happened that my brother had his first kid, so I figured I’d spend time with my family for once.’

‘Oh, you’re an uncle? That’s sweet. How many kids does your brother have?’

‘Two, a 6-year-old son and a 2-year-old daughter. Two most adorable kids ever, honestly,’ he smiled at Max. ‘You have any siblings?’

‘No, unfortunately. Which is why my best friend, Chloe, has been like a sister to me, since she’s an only child as well,’ she explained. ‘Felt pretty bad that we had to move to Seattle. We’d lost touch, kind of my fault,’ she looked down.

‘You guys made up now?’

‘Yes, and I’m so glad. It’d be so much harder for me now if it wasn’t for her. I didn’t know anyone else in here, and I was so afraid of living on my own while still in high school, but she and her parents have made it much easier for me. Wonderful, warm people. Mr. Madsen is actually Chloe’s step-father.’

‘Oh, really? And wait, her step-father?’

‘Yeah, her real dad had passed away right before I moved to Seattle. My parents insisted we leave as soon as possible, but I still don’t understand why it had to be on the day of the funeral,’ Max shook her head, looking away.

‘That’s awful, I’m sorry, Max,’ Mark extended his hand to her. She took it, squeezing it and smiling at him.

‘Thank you. Fortunately, she forgave me for all of that, but it breaks my heart that she had to suffer alone most of the time.’

‘Well, having you as a friend must be a pretty great thing,’ he complimented her. ‘Before we got together, I would observe you, how you interact with people… No wonder you made friends so
quickly here,’ he smiled at her.

‘Observing me, huh?’ she arched her eyebrow at him.

‘Yes. You could say I had a crush on you.’

‘No way. You? On me?’ Max parted her mouth in astonishment.

‘Yes. Is that hard to believe?’

‘Oh, come on. To me, you were this famous Mark Jefferson, and then someone I got to study from,’ she explained. ‘How could I have known that someone like you would have a crush on me?’

‘How could I not?’ he shook his head. ‘The day you walked into my classroom, it was like… like something hit me. I saw this beautiful face, covered with lovely freckles, smiling gorgeously at me,’ he said, looking her in the eyes, smiling widely at her, making blush and her heart beat faster.

‘I,’ she started, smiling in disbelief. ‘I thought you were just looking at me because I made it obvious that I was crushing on you,’ she covered her eyes with her hands.

‘Well, it’s… not uncommon for me, that’s true,’ he laughed lightly. ‘But it never happened in reverse – I mean, to me as a teacher. And I had no idea what to do.’

Max looked up at him again, smiling shyly; hearing all this made her feel a bit intimidated. Mark? Having a crush on me? How?

‘What do you mean you didn’t know what to do?’

‘I mean… I had no idea how to get over you. I tried, I really tried, for weeks, and nothing was working,’ he was saying all these things, smiling at her. ‘Because every time you smiled at me, or looked at me and blushed, I was back at it again.’

Prompted by his confession, though unsure at first, Max got up from her chair and approached him, leaning in for a kiss. He brought his hand to her face, kissing her back more passionately, getting up as well. Once up, he pulled her closer to his body, entwining his fingers in her hair, the other hand on her back, she sliding her hands up his chest, feeling his muscles through the fabric.

He broke away from the kiss and looked down at her. ‘Should we…?’ he asked.

‘We should,’ she said, biting down on her smile.

Mark moved closer to the table and blew out the candles, the faint smell of burning hitting Max’s nostrils.

‘Let’s go then,’ he said in a deep voice, taking her hand and leading her upstairs. She felt her heart racing at the thought of actually being in his bedroom.

When they reached it, she exhaled in awe. There were candles lit on the bedside cabinets and a single rose lying on the bed.

She looked to him. ‘Mark, this is so…’ she found herself lacking words, shaking her head.

Leading her closer to the bed, he leaned down to take the rose.

‘For you,’ he said, giving it to her and sending her a smile.
‘Thank you,’ she responded in kind, blushing, bringing the flower to her nose and smelling it. She closed the already tiny gap between them, hanging her arms around his neck and standing on her toes, kissing him slowly. She felt his hands on her sides, sliding lower to her hips, bringing her closer, then sliding up her blouse, sending shivers up her body.

Feeling her excitement grow, she began kissing him deeper, dropping the flower onto the floor and sliding her hands to his chest, unbuttoning his shirt. He yanked off her blouse, got a hold of her face and brought his lips to her neck, tracing wet kisses, causing Max to sigh. She resumed undressing him, finally getting to feel his warm skin against her fingertips. She slid the shirt off his arms, planting kisses on his chest.

She felt him gently push her towards the bed, leaning into her until she sat down, and then further, until she lay on the edge, kneeling in front of her and unzipping her jeans, kissing her tummy. It felt like a pleasurable tickling, and Max let out a slight moan, bringing her hands to his hair.

He then got up and slid the jeans down her legs, smiling down at her. Requiring his smile, she sat up and watched as he removed his pants, remaining only in his underwear now. She felt a warm thrill between her legs as she saw the outline of his erection, parting her lips and looking at him with want.

He leaned over her again, gently pushing her farther on the bed, positioning himself between her legs and leaning in to kiss her again, running his fingers up her arms, pushing them up until they were above her head, then pinning them to the bed’s surface. He pressed his hips close to hers, kissing her deeply, his excitement begging for release.

Suddenly, Mark felt her pull up. Breaking away, he saw that she was removing her bra, looking at him enticingly.

‘So beautiful,’ he whispered as she lay down again. He took off his underwear, revealing himself to her, hard, ready to go.

Leaning against the bed on top of her, he resumed kissing her, then moved to her jaw, down her neck, her collarbones, until his mouth reached her breasts. Gently squeezing one in his hand, he began pleasuring her nipple, his tongue circling around it, enjoying the feeling of her warm skin against his face. Max sighed in pleasure, pushing his head closer, pressing her legs together with him in between, getting to feel his erection against her thigh.

Looking up at her and sending her a smile, he began planting kisses further down, stopping at her tummy, skimming its sides with his fingertips and adding licks to the caresses. He felt her body spasm, and heard her giggles.

‘Tickles!’ she exclaimed, bringing her hands to his head.

‘Mm, you like that?’ he asked, laughing lightly, moving closer to her side and gently biting her in a playful manner, causing her to squeal.

‘Yes,’ she replied, trying to contain herself, arching her back concavely, then gasped suddenly as she felt his fingers caress her through her underwear.

‘I take it you like this too,’ he murmured, moving closer to her lips, giving her a little kiss before he yet again attempted to go down on her, trailing kisses down to her abdomen.

His face was between her thighs now, and he began inching her panties down, looking up at her with desire. Once her underwear was off, he spread her legs a bit further and lay down comfortably on his side. He teased her inner thigh for a moment, biting it playfully, before finally putting his
mouth to her wetness.

He was pleasuring her slowly, circling around her folds, gently grazing her clit. Feeling his warm tongue against herself, Max let out a moan, stretching her body and leaning into his mouth. With his strokes becoming more eager, she found herself putting her leg on his back, and reaching out to get a hold of his head, entwining her fingers in his hair, gasping as she felt her pleasure mounting. She brought one of her hands to touch her breast, relishing in the feeling of Mark’s lips and tongue pleasuring her the way that he was. Using his free hand, he was gently rubbing the inside of her thigh, moving closer to the middle and then back again. He heard her breathing become faster, so he continued his movements with no interruptions, her body spasming and trying to get away, reacting to the pleasure. She came with a long moan, digging her fingers in his hair and squeezing her breast tighter.

Trailing kisses up, he smiled at her before leaning down to kiss her, bringing his body close to hers. She embraced him, smiling into the kiss. He pulled up to look at her, and she used the opportunity to take off his glasses and put it on herself.

‘Oh, I thought you were hot already, but now? Damn,’ she said, shaking her head, then giggling.

‘You think you’re funny, huh?’ he said, leaning down to nuzzle her neck, turning her giggle into a slight moan.

‘I think I am,’ she said, her voice low. She then took the glasses off and put them away, bringing her hands to his face and beginning to kiss him passionately, and she felt him enter her slowly.

At first, he was gazing into her eyes, sending her a smile. They were sighing with pleasure, feeling each other’s movements – his within herself, himself inside her, looking in each other’s eyes, watching each other’s passion.

Sensing his pleasure overcome him, he leaned in closer, then kissed her and moved lower, sloppily kissing her neck and speeding up his movements. She embraced him and closed her eyes, surrendering to the feeling, pleasure spreading from her core up her body. She moved her hands up and down his back, pulling him closer, wanting to feel him deeper. Her passion rising, she bit down on his shoulder, moving with him and pressing her legs closer together. He began pulling and biting on her earlobe and she sensed she was getting close to ending. Her heavy breathing and gasps prompted him to pick up the pace, pushing harder into her, until he heard her climax with a drawn-out moan. His own quickly followed, barely able to hold it together beforehand.

Mark pulled up from her neck, kissing her temple as she tried to catch her breath. Struggling to do the same, he faced her, sending her the widest grin, she reciprocating and letting out a content laughter. He lay back beside her, pulling her into a snuggle and the covers onto them, with her planting kisses on his chest before she rested her head there, dazed by her orgasm.

Resting on Mark’s chest, facing him, Max was gazing at him, drawing circles on his skin. He was seemingly dozing off; he looked so calm that she couldn’t bring herself to wake him up, especially since he hadn’t had much sleep the night before. She felt content enough to just be able to lie down, feeling his warm body against her skin, both of them cozied up under the covers.

Max wanted to take a picture of him so badly, immortalize this simple yet perfect moment, but she wasn’t sure he would be alright with it. Eventually, she gave into her want, quietly snapping a picture with her cellphone.
Gently going back to the previous position, she began tracing back to their first night together, how exciting it was, albeit a bit stressful. She was imagining what would have happened had she stayed by his side that morning. Knowing what she knew now, she was almost sure it would have been a pretty blissful experience. She felt bad that she had freaked out over nothing, without giving him a chance to explain his side.

Mark’s eyes fluttered open and he saw Max smiling at him, pulling herself up and shifting closer to him.

‘How long was I asleep for?’ he asked, sounding a bit dazed.

‘Just a little over an hour.’

‘Why didn’t you wake me up?’

‘You were exhausted, and you looked so peaceful,’ she explained, smiling at him gorgeously. ‘Besides, I’m quite comfortable here.’

‘Oh yeah?’ he asked, smiling at her lightly.

‘Mhm,’ Max moved up to kiss him.

‘What were you doing when I was out?’

‘Just lying here, thinking.’

‘About what?’ he brushed the hair off her face.

‘About… our first night together,’ she sent him a bright smile. Mark responded in kind. ‘And that I wish I’d stayed there,’ she added, looking down, her voice breaking down a bit.

Mark’s face assumed a concerned look, he reached out and began gently stroking her face.

‘Well, you couldn’t help the way you felt in that moment. No need to dwell on that, baby,’ he said softly.

‘How are you so understanding?’ she asked, shaking her head. ‘I must have hurt you then.’

She had, yes. But he knew it hadn’t been on purpose.

‘I care about you, it feels natural to me,’ he said, brushing his fingertips on her shoulder and down her arm. ‘When I saw you were crying because of what happened, all I knew was that I hurt you,’ he added.

‘But you didn’t,’ she said, shaking her head and sitting up. ‘You didn’t, and I still went and ruined all that.’

‘You didn’t hurt me, and you didn’t ruin that either. I’m just happy you’re here with me now,’ he said, reaching up to touch her face again.

She leaned down and began kissing him softly, feeling butterflies rising in her stomach. He pulled her on top of himself, his hand moving from her hip, up her side, reaching her jaw. She was smiling into the kiss, with him kissing her back more eagerly, his other hand slipping lower to caress her breast.

Feeling her excitement grow, she began involuntarily grinding against his abdomen. Mark reached
down, his fingers stroking her wet clit, making her moan into the kiss and break away, hiding her face in his neck. She began moving her hips as his fingers touched her entrance, kissing him sloppily.

Their kiss was growing more passionate and feeling how wet she was for him, Mark felt himself get ready, so he took his dick into his hand and began teasing her labia, gently rubbing against it, eliciting an audible sigh from her. He then slid inside her, moving his hands to her bottom, steadily maneuvering her movements on top of himself. Max pulled up from his mouth, resting her hands on his chest, and began riding him, slowly at first, feeling a bit shy to assume this new position – up until this moment, she hadn’t been on top.

She leaned down, resting her hands against the covers, kissing him sloppily, and he was pulling her closer to his body, his hands wandering from her hips up her back.

With him maneuvering his hands to spur her to go faster, she gave in, straightening back up, picking up the pace and digging her fingers into his chest, moaning loudly as she felt him deeper inside her, hitting her sweet spot.

Seeing her arching above him and feeling himself within her warm wetness filled Mark with more desire and he abruptly turned her over, so he was now the dominant one. He gave her a little kiss before grabbing her wrists and pinning them to the bed. He began driving into her impatiently, though not too harshly, looking her in the eyes with want. He oh so loved how tight she felt, the fact that he had been the only one to have ever been inside her made him sort of proud, like he was the chosen one.

Giving into the sheer bliss that was spreading through her, Max began moving her hips to meet his. Her lips were parted, holding his gaze as she felt him hitting just the right spots, his groans sounding more aggressive than previously. She felt herself tip over the edge and slowed down her movements as she climaxed, crying out loudly. He sped up, thrusting more decisively, until he also came, feeling her as deep as he could.

Falling onto the bed beside her, he asked, ‘You okay?’

She was trying to catch her breath, unable to speak, only laughing with content.

He grinned at her, leaning in to give her a kiss.

‘How about I drop you off to your dorm in the morning, huh?’ he asked.

‘Mhm, I couldn’t get up now even if I wanted to,’ she replied, still out of breath.

He blew out the candles before lying back beside her, taking her in his arms and covering them both with the sheets. They dozed off, cuddled up, warm and satisfied.
Chapter Summary

The promised breakfast.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Wednesday, October 23, 2013

Around 6:30am, Max felt Mark leave pleasurable little kisses on her back, and his fingers lightly brushing against her tummy, blissfully waking her up. She let out a little sigh, stretching her body and turned to face him.

‘Good morning,’ he said, smiling widely at her. ‘How’d you sleep?’

‘Morning. Great, actually,’ she replied, reciprocating his smile and leaning in to kiss him. ‘How about you?’

‘With you by my side?’ He moved lower to her jaw, planting kisses down to her neck, his hand wandering off to her breast. ‘Amazing,’ he said in a deep voice, his kisses making Max shiver. His fingers were gently stroking her nipple until it hardened, before moving down to her tummy again, drawing light circles down to her mons, making her moan quietly and shift closer to him. As she did so, she felt his hardness against her abdomen, Mark looking up at her and sending her a smile. She met his eyes and slowly reached down between them and guided him inside her. He pulled her leg up and tucked it behind his hip, rendering their position more comfortable, sliding in deeper, and kissed her gently.

Feeling him lazily move within her, she let out a little sigh and said, ‘Mm, I could wake up to that every day.’

‘Oh, that can be arranged,’ Mark said. He began kissing her slowly, his tongue sliding inside her mouth, his hand rubbing her thigh, pulling her onto himself.

After a while, he gently turned her over, so that he was the big spoon, entering her from behind. He embraced her by the waist, kissing her neck, and she put her palm on his hand, lacing their fingers, held her leg up, resting her foot on the side of his thigh, her eyes closed. She was beginning to relax, just enjoying the feeling of him inside her. As his movements quickened, she put her hand on the back of his neck, pressing her back against his torso, while he held her leg up, pushing faster into her.

Hearing her pleasurable moaning, he yet again repositioned them, Max on all fours, her arms stretched out in front of her, and Mark pulling her by the hips onto himself, going slowly into her at first, scratching her bottom, adding to her excitement. He gradually sped up, she could hear his harsh breathing and grunts behind her, his body slamming into hers, making her breasts bounce off each other with each thrust. Max was surprised at this turn of events, but the sensation became more and more pleasurable with the pace he was driving into her, and so she rested her head on the pillow, surrendering to the bliss. Feeling her pleasure rise, she pulled herself up again, allowing Mark to hold
her by one shoulder, going faster, making her continuously gasp and sigh out loud, the sound of their bodies slamming into each other firing him up, prompting him to push harder into her until she came with louder moans, falling to the bed. Mark slowed down only a little bit, giving into his own pleasure, relishing in her tight warmth, and finally reaching his peak as well, spilling inside her with a loud growl. Having heard that sound a few times by now, Max realized how much she loved it.

Falling to the bed beside her, he looked at her; her eyes were closed, her face flushed and hair sticking to the sweat on her forehead, she was smiling, trying to catch her breath. He shifted closer to give her a little kiss on the back of her shoulder, prompting her to open her eyes. She sent him a wide grin of content, reaching out to him and giving his face a little caress. Reciprocating her smile, he lay back, feeling worn out and out of breath, but content nonetheless.

Their initial fatigue wearing out, they soon felt a boost of energy, ready to get out of bed.

‘What’s the time?’ Max asked.

‘Uh,’ Mark pulled himself up to see the clock on the bedside cabinet, ‘almost 7.’

‘Ah, alright, we got time then.’ She moved closer to him to kiss him. ‘Can I, uh, take a shower?’

‘Sure, come on,’ he gently pushed her towards the bathroom, getting out of bed behind her.

‘Oh, hold on, I have something of yours,’ he said, going up to the chest of drawers. ‘Now, I know it’s a little weird that I have it but…’

Max suddenly remembered that she had left something in his hotel room and gaped to herself.

‘Oh, shit. My under–’ she cut off as he turned back to her, holding her white panties in his hand. ‘Yup, my underwear.’ She smiled awkwardly at him, putting her hand to her neck.

‘Yeah. Found it under the covers and well, there was no non-awkward way to give it back to you, given our situation afterwards,’ he explained, passing her the piece. ‘Figured you would want it back, so.’

‘Thanks,’ she let out an awkward little laugh.

‘It’s washed, by the way. Separately from my stuff.’

‘Well, it wasn’t necessary to go that far, but… thank you,’ she said, smiling at him. ‘Turns out it ended up being useful in the right moment.’

‘Yeah, they did, didn’t they?’ he laughed a little. ‘Okay,’ he said, going to the bathroom, where Max followed. ‘Here’s a towel, you can use my shower gel, and here,’ he extended his hand to her. ‘A toothbrush. If you want, it can be yours whenever you decide to stay over again.’

‘Great. Thanks,’ she grinned at him, hearing his suggestion.

‘I’ll leave you to it then. Meet me downstairs for breakfast,’ he said, going out of the bathroom.

‘You got it,’ she smiled at him, and he closed the door behind him.

Mark quickly showered in the bathroom downstairs, got dressed, and waited for her to join him.

‘Is there something you can’t do?’ Max asked, having a bite of the pancakes Mark had just made for
her. She helped herself to the freshly cut fruit in a bowl in front of her.

‘Hope not,’ he replied, sending her a smirk. ‘You like ‘em?’

‘I do, yes, they’re delicious,’ she said with a smile.

Max took a look around the kitchen; it was not too big, not too small, very bright thanks to the big window to her left, from where she could see the driveway. There were dark granite counters sticking to each wall, except for the two arched doors: one leading to the hallway and facing the black fridge, and another leading to the living room. In the middle, there was a wide island resembling a table rather than a counter, with two wide bar chairs with comfortable backrest, one of which was being taken up by Max at that moment. There was a coffee machine and a toaster on the countertop behind her. It didn’t seem like Mark was using the kitchen a lot – well, his whole house appeared to be very organized and pristinely clean, so perhaps he just kept it that way. So unlike Max in her dorm.

Mark was frying his own pancakes now, not facing Max.

‘You want some coffee?’ he asked, looking over his shoulder.

‘I’d like that – if it’s not a problem,’ she said.

‘Of course it isn’t,’ he said, flipping the pancake and going up to the coffee machine.

‘It’s just weird having someone cook for me,’ she explained. ‘Both of my parents work, so my mornings were usually just me, eating whatever or nothing at all. And now that I live at a dorm, it’s even weirder.’

‘Well, it’s the same for me, the ‘alone’ part, that is. Feels nice to be able to do this for someone else, though,’ he said, smiling at her. ‘How do you take your coffee?’ he asked.

‘Two sugars, one cream, please.’ She sent him a warm smile. ‘And it feels nice to be on the receiving end, too,’ she added.

Placing a cup of coffee in front of her, he gave her a little kiss on the temple, and went over to the stove.

‘Thanks,’ she said.

For a moment, she was just eating, looking at his back and smiling to herself. He’s so caring, she thought.

‘Such good coffee,’ she remarked, taking a sip.

‘I’m glad you’re enjoying it,’ Mark said, taking a seat next to her and starting his own breakfast.

Max put her head on his shoulder for a second. ‘I feel so spoiled.’

‘Get used to it,’ he said, winking at her, and making her laugh a little.

Every tiny interaction like this made Max feel a twitch in her heart, but at the same time she hadn’t felt so comfortable and calm in a long time. It was so odd – before they had gotten together, she used to be so shy and nervous around Mark, and now his presence made her feel the exact opposite.

‘So,’ he pulled her out of her thoughts, ‘hard day ahead?’
‘Sort of. I do have Algebra, and I understand literally nothing, so good luck to me, but I also have Life Drawing, World History and Photography Lab,’ she replied, smiling during the last two words.

‘I take it you’re excited at that last prospect,’ he smiled at her in kind.

‘Mhm, very much so,’ she said, taking a sip of coffee.

‘Me too.’ He kissed her on the cheek.

‘How about your day?’ she asked.

‘Besides our class, I have another one, then I’ll hit the gym, another lecture in the evening, and then… I don’t know yet.’ He finished his breakfast and got up to make himself a cup of coffee too.

Max smirked to herself, thinking about the gym part.

‘Do you have time to hang out later today?’ he asked.

‘Unfortunately, no, English and Science tomorrow. Gotta prepare.’

‘Ah, alright,’ he only said.

‘You’re disappointed,’ Max remarked.

‘Yes, of course I am, I’d love to see you, but I don’t want you to drop your responsibilities for me. I’ll wait,’ he said, coming up to her and kissing her. She reached out with her hand to caress the side of his face, smiling as their lips parted.

‘Good,’ she said. Mark then took her empty plate from her and put it in the sink. ‘How long do we have before we have to leave?’ she asked.

‘Hm, let me see…’ he pondered, looking at his wrist watch. ‘I’d say about half an hour?’

‘Okay. So I was thinking… maybe you could just drop me off at the nearest bus stop?’

‘You sure?’

‘Yeah, it’s better this way. Less risky. I mean, it’s bad enough I didn’t spend the night at my dorm, Kate was looking for me.’

‘Could she get you in trouble?’ Mark asked, taking a sip of coffee.

‘No, no, I’ll just tell her I was at Chloe’s,’ she waved it off.

‘Alright then.’

He came up to her and Max brought her hand to his chest, admiring his body – he was dressed in his usual shirt and pants set, which highlighted all the best parts about his physique. She gazed into his eyes, sending him a light smile.

‘You look so good in a shirt,’ she complimented him.

‘I do?’ he smirked, arching his eyebrow at her.

‘Mhm, and so hot. Ironically, makes me want to tear this thing right off you,’ she said boldly, not quite believing she was this brave with words. Smiling at him, she began kissing him slowly, her
hand on his chest more insistent now.

‘You do what you must,’ he said, smiling into the kiss, bringing his hands to her face.

‘Don’t tempt me, you bad man,’ she retorted, giggling lightly. ‘We can’t be late.’

Laughing with her, he began kissing her more eagerly now, leaning into her. In turn, she loosely entwined her legs around him, holding him by the back of his neck and pressing herself closer to him. They were making out for a few moments until, inevitably, Mark had to break away, kissing her lightly on the cheek.

‘We have to get going,’ he said regrettably.

Max sighed. ‘I know. Let’s go then.’ She took the last sip of her coffee before grabbing her bag and heading outside with Mark.

Chapter End Notes

Last of the "Temptation" series. Still *a lot* more to go.
PART FIVE - CLOSE TO YOU

Tuesday, October 29, 2013

Max and Mark hadn’t been able to meet up that whole week because of their respective responsibilities at Blackwell and they had missed each other tremendously. The only thing they could do were some sneaky kisses here and there, but it was difficult to keep up appearances.

The Language of Photography lecture was coming towards the end and Max found herself fidgeting in her seat, feeling aroused. She was counting down the minutes until the lunch break, sending Mark smirks and some telling looks, forcing him to calm her down through texts.

Mark: Behave, you!

Mark: I need to focus

Max only sent him a cheeky little smile, amused by his reaction. But he didn’t stay indebted to her, sitting on the desk in front of her and fixing her with gaze once in a while.

When the bell finally rang, she waited until everyone cleared out of the classroom and watched as Mark went up to the door and locked it. She stood up from her desk and met him at its front, giggling as he ran up and caught her in his arms, doing one little spin as he picked her up.

‘Mm, alone at last,’ he said, putting her down and kissing her, smiling through it. ‘Missed you so much.’

‘Oh, me too.’ She was kissing him back eagerly, holding onto his face, bringing her body close to his. She felt Mark break away to remove his blazer, so she did the same thing to her hoodie, unzipping it hurriedly, and then ran her fingers up his chest, reaching his collar and pulling on it slightly, before she moved to the middle, unbuttoning his shirt.

He interrupted her by yanking off her blouse and propping her up to sit on the desk. ‘Up,’ he said quietly, smiling at her and kissing her playfully.

She toed off her shoes, and felt him leaning into her until she was lying on the surface, and hastily removed her pants, then unfastened his own, pulled them down slightly with his underwear, exposing his hardness to Max, looking at her with want. She parted her lips and she sat up, unbuttoning the rest of his shirt, running her hands up and down his torso and kissing his chest once she finished.

Feeling his excitement rise, he pulled her from the desk, making her stand up, and turned her around so that now he was behind her. She felt his fingers skim down her sides, making her shiver and
bringing a warm thrill between her legs, until he reached her panties, pulling them down until they fell to the floor. He swiftly unclasped her bra, running his tongue from her neck along her shoulder. Max then felt his foot against hers, gently spreading her legs further, and push her slightly towards the desk, until he finally entered her.

Holding her by the waist, Mark was slowly moving within her, relishing in the feeling of her warm wetness around him. She rested her hands against the desk, closing her eyes and enjoying his movements. He sped up a bit, pushing her down a little more, making her rest on her elbows, his breathing becoming faster, then skimmed his hands up her sides, sliding to cup her breasts and give them a light squeeze, before speeding up again, making Max gasp and sigh continuously.

‘Oh, fu– ah, yes,’ she said in a hushed tone, feeling him rub inside her, the friction bringing more pleasure, and then she let out a drawled-out, ‘Fuck.’

Mark reached out to her upper back with his left hand, running his fingertips around her neck, slipping up and getting a hold of her jaw, pulling her close to his torso. She turned back a bit, allowing them to kiss, before he moved to her jaw and neck again, his palm slipping from her sternum down to her tummy, pulling her onto himself.

She felt his lips go up to her earlobe, gently pulling it, and his soothing voice in her ear. ‘Would you mind if I go a little… rougher?’ he asked.

‘Go ahead,’ she replied, panting lightly.

He kissed her tenderly on the back of her neck, before pushing her to the desk again, quickening his moves, one hand on her hip, the other holding her by the shoulder. With him slamming harder into her, she closed her eyes and surrendered to the pleasure spreading down her body, gasping in a hushed tone in case someone was to hear them.

‘Oh, fuck, yes, just like that,’ she said under her breath, but loud enough for him to hear her, adding to his excitement, his pleasure rising.

Mark was thrusting more aggressively now, perpetually driving into her, eliciting louder moans from her, making it hard for her to contain the noise. She heard his grunts and groans behind her, his breath becoming harsher, and Max felt herself getting close.

As she felt her climax approaching, she bent lower, digging her fingers into the hard surface of the desk, struggling to come quietly, slowly moving her hips back to meet his, her legs trembling. Her release allowed Mark to finally let go, thrusting harshly though slowly, and he reached his peak as well.

He bent down to sweep the hair from the back of her neck, kissing her there tenderly, pulling her to stand up beside him, embracing her by the waist, then moved his lips more to the front, kissing her jaw, gently turning her chin to half-face him, and placed a kiss on her lips, sending her a wide smile. As he got off her, she turned to him, sliding her hands up his chest, leaning in for a passionate kiss.

‘You alright?’ he asked, smiling at her, his eyes wide, appearing to be sparkling. He held her lightly by her arms, rubbing them gently.

‘Mhm,’ she nodded, biting down on her smile. ‘More than alright.’

They began kissing, enjoying each other’s warmth, but Max soon had to break away, sensing his spill dripping out of her and down her legs.

‘Shit. I gotta clean up,’ she said under her breath, pressing her legs together and looking at him with
a slight embarrassment.

‘Yeah, sorry,’ he said, wrinkling his nose, giving her cheek a reassuring, tender caress.

‘It’s fine.’ She went around the desk to get to her bag, pulling out wipes. ‘I came in prepared.’

‘I’ll, uh, give you privacy.’

‘Thanks,’ she said, laughing awkwardly. She wasn’t afraid he would see her like this, but it was still something she would rather avoid.

‘Sure,’ he replied, turning his back on her and beginning to readjust his clothing.

She cleaned herself up and went up to her clothes scattered on the floor, getting dressed as well.

When she was done, she sat on the desk, waving her legs, smiling widely and tapping the space next to her at Mark as he turned to face her.

‘Sit with me.’

He came up to her, but instead of joining her on the desk, he caught her in his arms, tilting her back, and nuzzled her neck, making her giggle.

‘I hope these breaks will stop soon. How’s your weekend looking?’ he asked, still holding her in his arms.

‘Free so far,’ she replied, hanging her arms around his neck for a moment, before putting them to his chest. ‘I don’t think that’ll change.’

‘That’s good to hear. I believe we can work something out.’ He tucked a strand of her hair behind her ear, gently stroking the side of her face.

‘Oh yeah?’ She grinned at him.

‘Oh yeah. But it’s a surprise for now,’ he said cryptically, leaning in for a kiss.

‘Well, I’m excited anyway.’ She brought her hands to his face, kissing him back just as delicately.

‘That’s very good to hear,’ he said, sending her a smile and gently caressing the side of her face. ‘I can only go up.’
Friday, November 1, 2013

Quitting the classroom after Cultural Anthropology, Max felt her cellphone buzz in her pocket.

Mark: What would you say to spending the weekend at my place?

Mark: We could watch movies, I’ll cook for you…

Max: Say no more

Max: I’m in

Mark: Great. Pack a bag then, whatever you need

Mark: And wait for me at our spot at 6pm, so I’ll pick you up

Max: You got it

Having arrived at Mark’s place, he took her packed bag from her and put it by the staircase facing the entrance.

‘Please, feel at home,’ he said, lightly kissing her cheek.

‘Alright,’ she replied, smiling a bit shyly.

She was able to see the apartment more clearly this time with the lights on. To her left, there was the kitchen, and if one went a little bit further down the hall, the was the living room to the left as well, a bathroom at the end and a closet hidden under the staircase.

‘Are you keeping Harry Potter in there?’ she joked, pointing to the closet.

‘No, just my actual cousin,’ he replied with a laugh, causing her to snort.

He hanged his jacket and came up to her.

‘Come on, darling,’ he took her by the hand, ‘let’s finish making dinner, hm?’

‘Okay,’ she said, following him to the kitchen.

He propped her up so that she would sit on the countertop near to the stove. She leaned down to kiss him, sending him a gorgeous smile.

‘Would you like to drink something? Wine, water?’ he offered.

‘Wine, please.’

He poured her a glass of red, and handed it to her.

‘Thank you,’ she said, taking a sip. ‘Oh, it’s good.’

‘Welcome, babe.’
Sweetheart. Darling. Babe. He was already calling her adorable pet names, but she was a bit too shy to start addressing him in a similar manner. *What would I even call him?*

‘So how was your day?’ he asked, turning the stove on.

‘I got murdered during PE, but then Music Lab was kind of fun, so all in all, I’m not complaining.’ The faint smell of the dinner was beginning to hit her nose. ‘Smells delicious, what is that?’

‘Chicken and veggies. I hope you’ll like it,’ he said, gently stroking her knee, making her smile in accordance.

‘And how about your day?’ Max asked in return, taking another sip of wine.

‘I went for a jog in the morning, then I had one class to teach, and then I went on with the grocery shopping and making you dinner,’ he replied with a warm smile, stirring in the pan.

‘It’s so impressive how self-sufficient you are,’ she remarked in admiration. ‘I love my pop to bits, but I’m convinced he would even burn water,’ she joked, making Mark laugh. ‘How did you learn how to cook?’

‘Well, I’ve lived alone for a long time, and there’s only so many times you can go out and eat somewhere else, especially if, say, you want to keep in shape,’ he explained. Max hummed, nodding.

‘And, uh… When I was fifteen, and my brother twelve, our father passed away,’ Mark continued.

Max’s expression turned into concerned. ‘Mark… I’m so sorry,’ she said quietly.

‘It’s alright, it was a long time ago. But because of that, my mother had to go to work full-time, and many times she had no choice but to leave it up to me to cook, because she was working till really late at night.’

‘She must be really proud of you,’ Max said with admiration.

‘Maybe. I just know I’m proud of her. She’s incredible, sometimes I still wonder how she pulled it off, you know? She didn’t even have much time to grieve, and my parents were so in love. She never remarried, she loved my father very much.’

Max didn’t say anything, just reached out with her hand, gently caressing the side of his face. He pressed her hand closer and kissed her palm.

‘Do you have a good relationship with her?’ she asked, taking her hand away and taking another sip of wine.

‘Yes and no. She’s always supported me, and I value her insights, but she also wants me to have a family of my own, or she’s rather kind of pressuring me to have it.’

‘And you don’t want that?’

‘It’s not that, it’s just… never happened for me.’

‘How so?’

Mark seemed to ponder his response for a moment before he spoke. ‘I think it’s because when I was working as a photographer, career always came first. *Always.* And the thing is… when you’re trying to make it out there, whatever it is that you wanna do, you have to give it your all. You sacrifice *all*
of your free time to get to that goal, and that comes at a price.’ He turned to see her reaction; Max was nodding, listening to him. ‘Sadly, some people just don’t get it, they feel neglected in a relationship like that – which I can get, you know, because it does hurt, but… it is what it is. So, anyway, the few times when it wasn’t a priority for me, the other person would leave to pursue her own dreams. So it just never worked out long-term.’

‘I’m sorry,’ she said softly. Mark smiled lightly at her reaction. She was so precious, always showing compassion, even feeling sorry for his failed past relationships.

‘Well, it’s all in the past. I’ve moved on,’ he said firmly, looking her in the eyes. With a slight hesitation, he added, ‘For now, I’m curious to see where we will go – you and I.’

He was beginning to feel a little deeper for her, but considering that they hadn’t been dating that long at all, he was cautious not to scare her off. She was most likely too young to think about her future in such details, anyway.

‘Me too,’ she replied, sending him a wide smile, making him relieved.

‘I’m glad to hear that,’ he said, leaning in to kiss her.

The dinner was finally ready and they moved to the big table in the living room to eat it. Mark lit two candles and put some light music on the phonograph, rendering the atmosphere even more romantic.

‘This is lovely, Mark,’ she smiled gorgeously at him, then looked to the source of the music. ‘A phonograph, huh? You like vintage stuff?’

‘Yeah. Doesn’t apply to all things, but this,’ he gestured to the phonograph, ‘and, say, an analog camera, have some kind of magic about them,’ he explained with a smile.

‘They do, yeah. Same with Polaroid for me. So I’m gonna go ahead and guess that you must have a pretty impressive vinyl collection.’

‘I do, actually. I’ll show you later,’ he said, moving the chair for her. ‘My lady,’ he bowed, making her laugh. He then took his seat.

‘So you mentioned your dad,’ Mark started. ‘You two have a good relationship?’

‘Oh, definitely. We’re both fans of Seattle Seahawks, well, I am rather through him – he would take me to their games ever since we had moved there. Never thought I’d enjoy watching sports at all, but with him and live? It’s kind of awesome, really. And in turn, I would sometimes drag him to see some ridiculous teen movie, but he was so sweet and would always say yes,’ she was explaining enthusiastically, while Mark observed and listened to her, smiling and nodding. She had that spark in her eyes Mark had come to adore.

‘So you’re not from Seattle?’ he asked.

‘No, my parents are. I think they wanted to live in a more quiet place like this, so they moved after college, once they found jobs here. And this is where I was born, in Arcadia Bay.’

‘Oh, you were?’ he raised his eyebrows. ‘Thought you were entirely new here.’

‘Nope, just at Blackwell,’ she smiled. ‘How about you, where are you from?’ she asked, even though she knew some bits of his biography, it was all over internet, and, after all, she had taken an interest in him as a celebrity.
‘Well, I actually am from Arcadia Bay, too, just like you.’

‘Alright, I admit, I already knew that,’ she chuckled. ‘It’s on your Wiki page.’

‘Ah, right,’ he replied with a smile. ‘Forgot I even have one, to be honest.’

‘It’s not too detailed. I guess there’s only as much as you yourself have chosen to share.’

‘Probably right.’

‘But then you left as a teen, right?’ Max continued.

‘Right. My parents moved around a lot at first, my father had to follow where his job would move him. Both of my parents are from Baltimore, though. Somehow they had moved here just before I was born, and then again, to Chicago, this time at my request,’ Mark explained.

‘To attend, uh, the American Academy of Art, if I remember correctly,’ Max said.

‘Yes,’ he continued with a smile. ‘And it’s where I kind of slowly started my career. And, um, then I moved to Seattle for a couple of years, I even lived in New York for a brief moment, and then in LA – and you know the rest of the story.’

Max nodded, smiling. ‘It’s kind of a weird coincidence that both you and I have lived here and in Seattle.’

‘Maybe it’s fate,’ he said, his face assuming a cryptic look before laughing lightly, Max joining him.

When they calmed down, she hesitated for a moment. ‘Is it okay to ask about your father?’ she asked.

‘Of course. What would you like to know?’

‘Like… what was he like? Did you two have a good relationship?’

‘Definitely. My dad was… he was my hero all around. Huge baseball fan, so Baltimore Orioles all the way. I even attempted to play at one point, but once he, uh…’ Mark paused, looking down for a moment. ‘I just couldn’t.’

Max extended her hand to him across the table, smiling at him warmly. He squeezed her palm, requiting her smile.

‘I wasn’t good at it, anyway, so,’ he added, shrugging a bit, taking his hand away and continuing his meal. ‘But other than that, my brother and I would follow him everywhere – fishing, hunting, you name it, even though I wasn’t a big fan of that. Just anything that had to do with spending time with him, learning from him – that was enough. I just wanted to be like him.’

‘You mean, personality-wise?’

‘Yes. He was quite firm in his rules, but not too much, he knew when to let go and cut us some slack, you know? He was a very caring husband to my mother, now that I’m thinking about it.’

‘Well, as far as I can tell, you definitely got it from him,’ she smiled at him widely.

‘I’m glad to hear that,’ he responded in kind. ‘Obviously, I wish he was still here, but sometimes I’m relieved he wasn’t there to witness some of the idiotic stuff I’d done, because he’d be pretty disappointed in me.’
‘Like what?’ Max frowned.

‘Uh… drugs,’ he confessed, looking carefully at her.

‘Oh,’ she raised her eyebrows, putting down the cutlery.

‘It wasn’t big, I mean… I’m not a former addict or anything like that,’ he rushed with explanations. ‘But I let myself be persuaded to try cocaine a few times, when I was barely famous. Once I ended up in the ER with my mother crying over me, I knew I’d fucked up.’

He quieted down for a few moments. Max wasn’t sure how to respond.

‘Is this too much to hear?’ he asked quietly.

‘No, Mark, no,’ she extended her hand to him again, squeezing his palm reassuringly. ‘I’m glad you’re telling me this. I’m just not too good at saying the right thing in the moment,’ she looked at him apologetically.

‘It’s okay,’ he said, sending her a slight smile.

‘How old were you?’

‘Nineteen.’

‘Pretty young. Why do you think you did that?’

‘I didn’t think it would be that big of a deal. I thought I shouldn’t or couldn’t say no. I tried it once, then another time, and another… until one time, when someone gave me too big a dose. I was stupid as fuck to do that, honestly,’ he was explaining quietly. He then looked at her with concern in his eyes. ‘You can never let anybody do that to you, Max, once you make it out there.’

‘Not sure I’m going to make it that big,’ Max said, shaking her head.

‘I believe that you will. And when you do, you have to be extra careful. I’d hate for you to get hurt the way I did,’ he was squeezing her palm, looking her in the eyes with intensity.

‘Hey, I’m not going to do that, okay? I promise,’ she said, nodding her head to convince him.

‘Good. It’s not that I don’t trust you, because I do, okay? I just know what it’s like out there, and I want you to be safe.’

‘And I’m going to be,’ she smiled at him. She watched him get up suddenly, pulling her up as well, and locking her in a tight embrace. She snuggled up closer to him, closing her eyes.

‘I’m going to be okay, Mark, you don’t have to worry,’ she said, drawing patterns on his back.

‘I know, I’m just… I care about you, so I worry,’ he explained. Loosening the grip around her, he leaned down to kiss her tenderly. More than anything, he wanted to preserve her innocence as much as possible, and to never go through the horrid situations that he had.

‘And I care about you,’ Max said, once their lips parted.

‘Alright,’ he exhaled. ‘Sorry, I got kind of emotional,’ he let out an awkward laughter.

‘It’s okay. It’s sweet,’ she send him a smile.
'How about we finish our dinner?'

'Yeah, let’s.'

They sat down again.

'So, um,' Max started. ‘Was it easy to just stop doing it? The drugs, I mean.’

'Hm, well,' he pondered, 'I didn’t feel addicted, as in, there were no long-term symptoms of withdrawal, you know? I only had to bounce back after that one episode and fortunately, it scared me off for good. I’m really lucky, I guess.’

'It seems so, yes.' Having had the last bite of her meal, she said, 'That was really good.’

‘Thank you, I’m glad,’ he smiled at her, and took a sip of wine. ‘Hey, wanna watch a movie now?’

‘Sure. You have anything specific in mind?’

‘I got that on demand thing, so we can choose together.’

‘Sounds good,’ she smiled, getting up from the table. ‘Let’s, uh, clean up first?’

‘No need, I can do it.’

‘Hey, you told me to feel at home, so that’s what I’m doing.’

‘Right. But I have a dishwasher.’

‘Still. Come on,’ she gestured towards the kitchen.

‘Alright. As you wish,’ he gave up, getting up as well. ‘Lead the way.’

Closing the dishwasher door, Mark turned to Max and asked, ‘Want more wine?’

‘Yes, please,’ she theatrically extended her arm, holding out her glass. He poured her one and for himself as well, then grabbed her hand and led her to the living room.

‘So what are we watching?’ he asked her once they cozied up under the blanket, cuddling on the sofa.

‘Oh, I see one,’ she said, pointing slightly to the left, nudging him lightly on the arm. ‘How do you feel about rom coms?’

‘If you want, we’re watching.’

‘Awesome. Click on Crazy Stupid Love. To the left, see? Yeah. Usually, I don’t watch these, but everything I’ve heard points to this being a really good one.’

‘Okay then.’ He pressed play and snuggled her closer to his body.

They were watching it calmly for the most part, but during the pivotal hookup scene in the movie, Max slowly slipped her hand up Mark’s chest, seemingly casually, until she reached the top button of his shirt, undoing it and shifting up to kiss his neck.

‘Want me to pause?’ he asked.
‘Mhm,’ she hummed, undoing another button and running her tongue under his jaw.

He did as she asked and pulled her on top of himself. Smiling at her and holding her by the face, he brought his lips to hers, kissing her slowly at first. She continued unbuttoning his shirt, running her fingers up and down his chest, feeling his warm skin on hers.

‘So what do you think of the movie so far?’ she asked between kisses.

‘It got you fired up, so I’m not complaining,’ he replied, and slid his hands underneath her blouse, yanking it off, and leaned in to kiss her.

‘Oh, I could say the same thing about you, mister. Think I didn’t feel that hand of yours on my hip?’ She slid the shirt off him and went straight for his neck, giving him a little kiss, then teased him with her tongue.

‘Damn, I thought I was being stealthy, you know, sending you subliminal messages and all,’ he laughed lightly, then moaned quietly when he felt her lips on his neck, and ran his hands down her back.

‘Well, it wasn’t completely unhelpful,’ she said once she faced him, sending him a smile and getting up. She slid her pants down her legs and gestured to him with her head. ‘Get naked.’

‘As you wish,’ he put his hand in a pretend-surrender gesture, getting up as well, and unfastened his pants in a hurry. Once nude, he sat back on the couch, waiting for Max to join him. Max let herself catch a glance of his considerable erection, biting down on her lip.

Left only in her bra, she teased him again by removing it slowly and throwing it on him. Mark looked at her with a smirk, not quite believing she had it in her yet to be this upfront, and tossed it to the side.

‘Come here,’ he said, extending his arms to her. She sat astride him and began kissing him, arching on top of him, her hands on the back of his neck, slipping up and entwining her fingers in his hair. She felt his hand slip up her hip and her side to gently squeeze her breast, kissing her back more passionately, then moving his lips to her jaw and neck, eliciting a sigh from her. Her excitement rising, she pulled up a bit and reached back, guiding him inside her.

At first, she was riding him slowly, holding his gaze, one hand on his arm, the other on his chest, while he steadily held onto her lower back, smiling at her and pulling her closer to kiss her amorously. She pressed herself to him, feeling the warmth of his body against hers, tilting her head to the left, matching the intensity of his kiss, his hands slipping higher up her back.

Once their lips parted, he titled her back a bit, and was firmly holding her by her back and thigh, making her continuously slide back and forth on his dick in a cradling move, while she held onto his upper arms, gasping and breathing out steadily, her eyes closed, biting down on her lip in pleasure. Looking at her with desire, he was admiring her nude body moving on top of him and the passion on her face.

Her lips slightly parted, she half-opened her eyes, sending Mark a content smile, suddenly parting her lips further and letting out a pleasurable moan. She then shifted closer to him, kissing him passionately before she picked up the pace, riding him faster. Mark was loving this turn of events, seeing her be the dominant, tightly holding onto her bottom, pulling her on top of himself, gasping loudly.

Feeling their passion rise, their bodies started moving together now, with Max resting her face by his
neck, moaning and sighing in pleasure, holding onto his arm and shoulder, and Mark maneuvering her movements, grunting and breathing heavily. He felt her lips on his neck again before she faced him, giving him a kiss, and yet again sped up her movements, her face flushed with red, eyes wide, until she climaxed, slowing down, feeling exhausted. He titled her back again into the cradling position, maneuvering her body faster this time, her small breasts bouncing up and down, and he reached his peak soon after, bursting inside her.

Smiling at each other with delight, she moved closer to him and he locked her in an embrace, kissing her. He swept the hair from her face and placed a small kiss on her forehead, she resting her head by his neck, both of them trying to catch their breaths, sweat covering their skin.

‘Hey, babe, I’m kinda cold,’ she said.

‘Oh, sorry, hold on.’ He reached to the side and covered them with the blanket. ‘Better?’

‘Yes.’ She snuggled closer to him, feeling warm and satisfied, and Mark kept drawing patterns on her arm. ‘Could you press play? I mean, if you still wanna watch–’

‘Sure, baby.’ He kissed her temple.

They continued watching the movie until the end, still naked and under the blanket.

‘It was actually a really nice movie,’ he remarked once the credits began to roll. ‘…for a rom com.’

‘Yeah,’ Max agreed. ‘It was so bittersweet at the end.’

‘Mhm.’ He lightly kissed her cheek. ‘Think we could use a shower now.’

‘Definitely.’ She attempted to get up, and chuckled as their skin sort of peeled off one another. ‘We’re sticky.’

‘Yeah, come on,’ he laughed with her.

Having set the water to a nice, optimal, warm temperature, Mark guided Max inside the shower cabin, following her and closing the door behind them.

With the water splashing down on them, he reached up to the shelf above and passed her the shower gel. She squeezed out a small portion of it and began slowly massaging it onto his chest, soaping him up and smiling at him, albeit shyly. She felt his hands slip up her hips, bringing her closer, leaning down to kiss her. He too took some of the gel, spreading it on his palms, then gently fondling her breasts, bringing his lips to her neck, sending pleasurable tingling down her skin as his hands trailed off elsewhere. Hands all over each other, they were slowly washing one another for a while, adding gentle caresses.

Mark began kissing her slowly but deeply, his hand slipping down until his fingers found their way to her wet vulva, gently stroking it, which encouraged her to return the favor, she petting him, reciprocating the kiss, hearing him moan quietly.

Max closed her eyes, surrendering to the simple bliss.

Having gotten out of the shower and dried themselves off, they began to get ready for bed.
Max wore black leggings and an oversized sweatshirt, and put a pair of warm, fuzzy socks on her feet. Mark changed into a pair of grey sweatpants and a navy blue T-shirt, allowing Max to see a faint outline of his chest and abs.

‘You’re staring,’ he caught her, making her blush a little.

‘Because…’ She approached him. ‘I’m enjoying what I’m seeing,’ she reiterated his own words, grinning at him.

He met her halfway, grabbing her by the hips, pulling her closer.

‘You look cute,’ he said, bringing his mouth to her jaw, his beard lightly tickling her skin.

‘Mm, thank you,’ she murmured, giggling faintly. She slid her hands up his chest, getting a hold of the back of his neck.

She felt she was being led towards the bed, falling onto the soft covers, with Mark on top of her, kissing her playfully. She embraced him lightly, entwining fingers in his hair, smiling into the kiss.

‘Wanna watch another movie before we go to sleep?’ he asked, pulling up to face her after a while.

‘Alright,’ she responded with a smile.

Tucked under the warm covers, snuggled up together, they watched the movie until they dozed off.
Close to You, Pt. 3

Chapter Notes

Sorry for a slight delay! Here it is finally - near 6k.

Saturday, November 2, 2013

Mark woke up a couple of minutes before Max. She was tucked in close to his chest, breathing calmly, looking innocent. It seemed like she was smiling lightly, and he couldn’t help but to just look at her, feeling lucky to be able to hold her in his arms.

Her eyes fluttered open, and she looked up at him, smiling like an angel, he thought, running her hand up his chest to his face.

‘Mm, good morning,’ she murmured, her voice raspy.

‘Good morning.’ He leaned down to kiss her. ‘How’d you sleep?’

‘Oh, so great. It’s so comfy and warm with you,’ she said, snuggling up closer to him, scratching his chest through the fabric of his tee.

‘Right back at you,’ he smiled, leaning down again to kiss her.

She pulled herself up and began kissing him slowly, caressing his face. She felt Mark pulling her on top of him, and so she let herself be led there, kissing him more eagerly and feeling her excitement rise. He skimmed his fingertips from her hips up her sweatshirt, gently fondling her breasts. She sighed slightly into the kiss and started grinding her hips against him, feeling his hands maneuvering her. He took her sweatshirt off, pulled himself up a bit and began pleasuring her nipples, his tongue so warm and wet as he circled around them, causing her to sigh.

But today, Max decided she was going to try something entirely new to her.

She broke away after a few moments, crawling backwards a bit, and pulling up his T-shirt, kissing his abs and going up to his chest, then back down again. Still kissing him, she pulled down his sweatpants, revealing his erection. Looking up at him for a moment, she took him into her hand, moving up and down slowly. He brought his hand to her face, caressing it tenderly.

She had never seen him so up-close. Her palm was barely able to close around him, and he was indeed well-endowed, measuring slightly above eight inches. Her heart racing, she finally began her attempt.

At first, she shyly put her tongue to the tip, licking and sucking on it gently, tasting him and smiling playfully at him. He responded in kind, seeing the curious expression on her face, stroking her cheek with his thumb. He then gasped as he felt her taking him in, then a bit deeper, closing her mouth around him, and rubbing at the base. If she thought he felt big inside her, he definitely felt big in her mouth as well. Being quite inexperienced, she wasn’t sure what would bring him the most pleasure, so she just started moving her head up and down, similarly to how she did it with her hand earlier. She could hear his heavy breathing and his hand moving towards the back of her neck, gripping her tightly.
Mark glanced down at her; her eyes were lightly shut, her face was dressed in a lovely pink blush, her tiny mouth wrapped around him – it all looked even better than in his fantasies. He felt her beginning to suck on him a bit more intensely and couldn’t contain his loud groan, which encouraged Max to take him in deeper and go slightly faster, rubbing his base more rapidly. He closed his eyes, relishing in the very fact that he was finally filling her mouth, listening to her gasps.

She sensed she was getting wet now, excited by the fact that she was pleasuring her man and that he was clearly enjoying it. She heard his breathing become harsher and figured he was bound to finish soon. She braced herself for his release, feeling the grip on the back of her neck become tighter. He burst against her palate, causing her to impulsively move her head back, but she didn’t pull away. She felt utter satisfaction as she heard his moan, tasting his salty release.

He could feel her tongue and lips on his tip until there was nothing to suck off anymore.

Coming up for air, she smiled at him, going back to sitting astride him and leaning in for a passionate kiss.

‘You alright?’ he asked, smiling at her with delight.

‘Mhm,’ she nodded. ‘I liked doing it.’ She sent him a coy smile and asked, ‘Was that good?’

‘Yes, baby,’ he said, caressing her cheek. ‘What did I do to deserve such a pleasant surprise?’

‘Everything you’ve done so far,’ she replied and began kissing him. His hands found her breasts yet again, squeezing a bit tighter this time. He then slid his hands around to her back, digging fingers in her skin.

She felt him push her all the way down until she was lying on her back. Lying on his side, he was kissing her more eagerly now, his hand slipping down towards her hips, taking off her leggings. She pulled herself up slightly, helping him relieve her of them completely. As he was inching her panties down, he began sucking on her nipple again, and his fingers found their way between her thighs, gently stroking her warmth.

‘Mm, someone’s ready for me,’ he murmured in a low voice, feeling her wetness on his fingers. He looked up at her and Max bit down on her smile before their lips met, a passionate kiss growing between them. Max felt his fingers stroking her more insistently, so she let out a pleasurable moan, breaking away from the kiss.

‘Yes, that’s what I like to hear,’ he said right into her ear, beginning to kiss her jaw and neck, feeling her body spasm at his touch. As his fingers reached her sweet spot, rubbing side to side more and more intensely, she came with a drawn-out moan, holding onto his arm.

He pulled himself up and was now planting kisses down to her abdomen, building anticipation in Max. He positioned himself comfortably on his stomach and spread her legs further, first teasing her inner thigh, kissing, licking and biting lightly, glancing up at her to see her reactions. Max felt pleasurable ticking where his mouth was teasing her, adding to the buildup, and let out a slight moan. She then felt Mark’s tongue moving closer to the middle, until it was finally at her folds.

He was tasting her slowly, pleasuring her with what seemed like wet kisses, glancing up at her once in a while. Circling his tongue up, he was moving faster, then going lower, closer to the entrance, slowing down for a moment to taste her arousal, then repeating the cycle, gradually intensifying his strokes. Feeling the pleasure rise, Max stretched out her body, bringing her hands to the bedframe and curling up her toes, leaning into his mouth. After a while, he put his arms around her legs and reached out to her, lacing his fingers with hers. He was now stroking her clit with no interruptions,
causing her to tighten her grip on his hands and breathe faster. She released her hands from his and
dug them in his hair as he brought her to climax, her legs trembling, he holding her by her sides,
slowly drinking up her spill while she tried to come to her senses.

He rested his face on her inner thigh, drawing circles on the other, and glanced up at Max; her eyes
were closed, but he could see the satisfaction on her face, smiling to himself. After a moment, he
pulled up, trailing kisses from her abdomen up until he reached her lips, kissing her amorously. She
felt his hardness against her, and slipped her hands down his back then up his T-shirt, removing it
with his help. Mark felt her pulling up and her hand on his shoulder gently pushing him down, until
he landed on his back beside her, a bit surprised. She lay on her side now, kissing him, her hand
sneaking lower and getting a hold of him again, moving her hand up and down. He brought his
hands to her face, stroking her cheeks, kissing her deeper.

Max felt a bit more confident during her second attempt, breaking away from the kiss and slowly
planting kisses down his jaw, neck, down his chest and stomach, running her tongue along his
treasure trail, her tongue teasing the skin on his abdomen, feeling him spasm lightly in anticipation,
until she reached his hardness again. She pulled his sweatpants further down, Mark sitting up and
removing them completely, giving her a small kiss before lying down again.

Starting from the base, she ran her tongue up his length and took him in, making him gasp. He felt
her movements were more decisive and eager this time, she definitely seemed braver, taking him in
deeper and sucking on him more intensely, helping herself with her hands. He held her tightly by the
back of her neck and propped one of his legs up to get more comfortable. She stopped for a moment
to get between his legs, and resumed pleasuring him, her hand moving faster. She then brought her
mouth to his scrotum, teasing him lightly with her tongue, before she gently sucked on it for a while,
eliciting a moan from him. Again, she ran her lips up his length and took him in, going deeper every
few moves, hearing his heavy panting, until he grabbed her neck tighter, groaning, and she felt him
release inside her mouth once more.

Coming back to his senses, he felt her lips and tongue on his tip, and glanced down, seeing himself
exit her mouth and Max sending him a gorgeous, content smile.

‘You’re amazing, babygirl,’ he said, trying to catch his breath.

‘My pleasure,’ she bit down on her smile, crawling on top of him and leaning in for a kiss. ‘I thought
it would just be fair, you know? And now we’re even.’

‘I like your thinking.’ He was smiling into the kiss, running his hands up and down her back, pulling
her closer.

Max fell on the bed beside him, put her head on his chest, and entwined her leg with his, both of
them enjoying this perfect morning, embracing each other. Mark was running his fingertips up and
down the arm with which she was embracing him, she placing a small kiss on his collarbone. She
couldn’t contain her grin, she was really proud of herself for having pleasured him this way. *Twice.*

After a while, Mark spoke softly, ‘Quick shower and then breakfast?’

‘Sounds perfect,’ she replied with a smile.

A little later, after said shower and breakfast, Mark came back from upstairs and found Max at the
dining table, doing her homework. He headed to the kitchen and came back with two cups of coffee,
placing one of them in front of her.
'Oh, thank you so much,' she said with relief. ‘Just what I needed.’

‘Welcome, baby,’ he leaned down to give her a light smooch, both of them smiling into the kiss. ‘What are you doing?’

‘Algebra. Surprisingly easy, at least this time.’

‘I see.’

She looked at him apologetically and said, ‘I’m sorry I brought it here, but–’

‘Oh, don’t be sorry, Max,’ he chuckled lightly. ‘Do your thing. I’m just happy you’re around, whatever we’re doing,’ he said, caressing her cheek, making her smile.

‘Alright. How about you then?’ she asked.

‘Think I’m gonna finish that book, you know, the one I was reading on the plane?’

‘Oh, right. I haven’t finished mine either, now that I’m thinking about it. I still have it in my dorm.’

‘You can read something else for now if you want.’

‘Really?’

‘Of course. Hey, look behind you,’ he pointed behind her back. She turned around and noticed that the entire wall was a one, giant book case, filled almost entirely with books, accompanied by minimalist decorations, such as figurines and empty vases. ‘Anything you want to read, you can just pick up from there. Okay?’ he sent her a smile.

‘Okay,’ she smiled back and pulled him down for a kiss.

‘Now, I’m letting you finish your homework. Get back to me when you’re done?’

‘You got it.’

They went on to their respective activities, sometimes glancing in each other’s direction, smiling. Having her Polaroid beside her on the table, she took a candid of Mark while he was reading, a pensive, focused look on his face. He looked up and smiled at her, she hiding her grin and going back to her chore.

After several moments, Max’s phone rang.

‘Hey, Warren, what’s up?’ she answered, prompting Mark to pull up from his reading and listen to the conversation with curiosity.

‘I’m not there right now, so no. No, I’m away for the weekend. Well, I’ll watch that movie some other time then.’ Mark heard her laugh at something the other guy said, and frowned. ‘Nah, I don’t think so. Yeah, I’ll see you at school. Bye.’

He immediately went back to reading the novel – or rather pretended to, lest Max was to catch him eavesdropping. Just as he suspected, she glanced in his direction, but he seemed to be consumed by the book, so she continued doing her homework until she was finally done.

He heard the chair scraping against the floor and her light footsteps, and looked up, sending her a smile.
‘Done?’ he asked.

‘Yup,’ she replied, taking a seat next to him on the sofa.

‘Great.’ He closed the book and put it on the coffee table in front of them, then snuggled her close, she resting her head on his chest and looking up at him, smiling gorgeously, her wide eyes staring into his. She looked so adorable he couldn’t help but smile widely at her and lean down to kiss her.

‘So… who called you?’ he asked, immediately chastening himself in his thoughts for giving into his curiosity.

‘Ha! I knew you were listening,’ she chuckled at him. ‘My friend, Warren. Wanted me to watch another geeky movie with him, but obviously, I’m busy.’

‘I see,’ he replied, nodding his head lightly, not looking her in the eyes.

‘Mark… are you jealous?’

‘No,’ he said, seemingly half-heartedly, though still not meeting her eyes.

‘Oh, that is so sweet,’ she giggled lightly, snuggling up to him. ‘As if you had any reason to feel intimidated by anyone around here. Warren’s just a friend.’

‘Alright.’

Max was fixing him with gaze, eyes narrowed, not quite convinced he was alright with it after all. He still seemed a bit jealous, which, admittedly, she kind of liked – she never thought he would ever show that kind of emotion. She, although much more frequently than him, felt it as well, whenever some female students hovered around him, especially one certain classmate of hers, always bent over at his desk, buttering up to him.

‘Mark,’ she started, getting a hold of his face. ‘You do know you have nothing to worry about, right?’

‘I know,’ he nodded. ‘But… I’ve seen that kid around you. He clearly has a crush on you.’

‘Well…’ Max cut off, not knowing how to explain what she was thinking. ‘I… I can’t help it, right? Same with you and… Victoria. Or basically any other female student of yours.’

Mark pressed his lips together. ‘You’re right. Sorry, Max.’ He lightly caressed her hair, looking at her apologetically.

‘It’s okay.’

She pulled herself up and sat astride him, sliding her hand up his chest, leaning in to kiss him passionately. Mark held onto her, his hands wandering all over her back, pulling her closer, kissing her eagerly. They were making out for a few moments there, until they heard Max’s stomach growl and broke away, amused by the awkwardness.

‘Sorry,’ she chuckled.

‘Want some lunch?’

‘Yes, please.’ She got off him and stood up, Mark joining her, grabbing her hand and leading her to the kitchen.
Having a huge bite of the toast sandwich he made for her, her eyes fluttered shut, letting out a content moan.

‘This is so good,’ she said, her voice muffled by the food in her mouth, making Mark laugh lightly. He poured her a tall glass of orange juice and placed it in front of her, then proceeded with making himself lunch as well. ‘Thank you.’

Mark sat down on the chair next to her to eat his lunch, and kissed her lightly on the cheek, she resting her head on his shoulder for a few moments, chewing on the delicious sandwich, carefree.

‘Hey, may I take a peek at your vinyl collection now?’ she asked when they were done with the meal.

‘Oh, sure. I totally forgot yesterday.’ He got up from the chair and took her hand, leading her to the living room.

‘Oh, wow… that’s a lot of records,’ Max remarked in awe.

There must have been a couple hundred of records, most of them being stashed neatly on the shelves like books, some of them were displayed in full, most likely those which were Mark’s favorite.

‘Ooh, I see Nine Inch Nails, Radiohead, Depeche Mode, The Cure, Nirvana, duh, Soundgarden… Massive Attack… oh, hey, Portishead, I forgot about them… and… huh, Björk?’

‘Nineties, babe,’ he winked at her. ‘I think my most formative years in terms of music happened during that time.’

‘I see,’ she nodded her head, taking a look at some other records she didn’t know, appearing to be from earlier decades. She recognized a couple of the more well-known bands. ‘Oh, nice, classics. Led Zeppelin, Pink Floyd…’

‘My father’s. He rarely listened to music, but when he did, it was indeed stunning,’ Mark explained, looking fondly at the records. ‘I also have a whole lot of jazz, as you can see,’ he added as some other vinyl records caught his attention, ‘most of which I inherited from my late grandfather, he was a huge fan of jazz. He’s the one who inspired that love in me.’

Max smiled at him, listening to him enthusiastically share his passions with her. ‘It’s a pretty eclectic taste you have there,’ she said.

‘Thanks. Anything you love as well?’

‘Hm, let’s see… I do love Nirvana, obviously. I’m familiar with that Soundgarden’s ‘94 record, I adore The Downward Spiral and The Fragile… and some of Radiohead’s records, too – it’s like pop for hipsters, such as myself,’ she chuckled. ‘Oh, and—’ she cut off, one cover catching her attention. ‘Is that alt-J I see?’

‘Oh, yeah.’ He pulled the vinyl out. ‘Last year, some students of mine kind of dared me to try some of that hip, new music out there, and I wanted to appear cool, so I listened to it.’

‘Sweet,’ she laughed lightly. ‘Did you like it?’

‘For the most part. It’s definitely an interesting mix.’
‘I like this album a lot. I’ve been listening to it ever since it came out.’

‘Do you keep a collection like this?’ he asked.

‘Yes, but I keep my music on CDs, not on vinyl. Cheaper this way. And not a whole lot either, but if it’s something I love, I definitely have to have it in my collection,’ she replied with a smile.

‘I’m the same way now, but before the mp3 era, I just bought records blind. Some didn’t pan out, obviously, but at least I have a pretty neat collection.’ He grinned at her.

‘It’s definitely impressive.’

‘I do have some CDs to play in my car, though. A phonograph in there would be a bit much,’ he chuckled lightly, she accompanying him.

‘How about you, though?’ he shot back. ‘We share some favorites, but I’m sure you have some other preferred artists.’

‘I do, yes. For example, I like José González – he has this simple classical guitar style, I love playing his songs myself.’

‘Oh, you play guitar?’ Mark asked, raising his eyebrows.

‘Mhm, think I’m quite good at it, not to brag or anything,’ she said with a small blush.

‘A girl with a guitar… Teenage me would be all over you,’ he send her a wide smile, making her giggle. ‘What else?’

‘I adore Paramore, both musically and lyrically, they’re just perfect. A bit of Coldplay, when I feel cheerful,’ she pondered for a moment, ‘The Shins, also a light guitar style… I also like Muse, you know them?’

‘I know of them, I remember listening to their first few records, think I might even have one somewhere in here.’

‘I see. Well, I guess that’s it for the most part,’ she concluded with a smile.

‘Nice. I might try those out, perhaps your taste is close to mine,’ he said, reciprocating her smile, reaching out to caress her cheek.

Looking back at the collection, Mark suddenly noticed one particular record, an idea popping into his head.

‘Hey, turn around for a second.’

‘Why?’ Max frowned, but did what he asked.

‘Surprise,’ he said cryptically. He pulled out said vinyl and put the needle on track three, the first notes of Venus as a Boy coming out of the speakers.

‘Wait,’ Max turned back to him, a smile appearing on her face. ‘Is this…?’

‘Yes. It’s the song that played at Zeitgeist,’ he replied in kind.

He took her hand and pulled her into a dance, same way he had done at the exhibition party, his other hand on her back, hers on his shoulder.
'I have to admit, that song helped me out a lot that night,’ he said, grinning at her.

‘It did, huh?’

‘Absolutely. I mean… Obviously, I wanted you anyway–’ He brushed her hair to the side, looking at her with such a soft expression. ‘–but I wasn’t sure if we were on the same page.’

Max nodded slowly, smiling widely. ‘That staring contest was definitely… intense,’ she admitted. She remembered how thrilling it had been to feel spasms go down to her core, warmth spread between her legs, getting wet with the way he had been fixing her with gaze.

‘I wanted to kiss you right there and then, but I was afraid someone might photograph us,’ he said with a dose of regret.

‘Well, you can kiss me now,’ she said, sending him a gorgeous smile.

‘That’s right,’ he replied, bringing his face close to hers, kissing her slowly.

Their faces were mushing together more and more intensely after a while, and they stopped dancing, hands all over each other.

Her heart racing, Max slid her hand lower, feeling the defined abs first, then began rubbing her palm against his crotch, causing him to moan into the kiss, breaking away with a gasp. Kissing him more eagerly, she continued her attempt until she felt him get hard. Seeing as they were close to the table, Mark abruptly pulled away, moved the single chair away, and grabbed her, picking her up and placing her on the surface of the table, sending her a lustful look.

Mark seemed so ravenous with the way he was kissing her now, hastily yanking off her sweatshirt, pushing her lower so that she lay down on the table. Her leggings and panties removed, he then pulled down his own bottoms only so slightly, exposing his hardness to her. With a smirk, he spread her legs further and entered her, sighing as he felt her warm, wet wall around himself.

He seemed impatient, too, his movements quick from the start, but Max found she loved how she was able to fire him up, and how much he wanted her. She felt him continuously filling her, delicious friction quickly escalating the blissful warmth spreading from her core. Max closed her eyes, biting down on her lower lip, gasping as she felt him quickening his movements inside her, loosely wrapping her legs around him.

He glanced down at her, seeing the enjoyment on her face and her small breasts moving up and down added to his desire. He took her legs from around his waist, pressing them closer together and then towards her stomach, resting against them, fucking her harder until she cried out, grabbing onto the edge of the table, tightening her grip. He soon felt the tingling, pulsating sensation building up again, spilling inside her with a growl, feeling out of breath.

He gently spread her legs again and leaned down to kiss her, pressing himself close to her, taking her wrists and pinned them to the table for a moment, lacing his fingers with hers. His lips then went lower, teasing her jaw and neck. Pulling up, he grinned at her with satisfaction in his eyes, she responding in kind, quite lightheaded.

With his help, Max sat up on the edge of the table. Mark was looking at her, all smug, clearly very pleased with himself.

‘I guess it’s better that you restrained yourself at Zeitgeist, judging from this,’ Max remarked,
giggling, making him laugh as well.

Entering the kitchen towards the evening, Mark reached for the remote, and put the roller-blinders down, seeing as it was getting dark and this way it gave them more privacy.

Max climbed onto one of the bar chairs, crossing her legs, and propped her face on her hands, elbows resting on the countertop table. Mark turned back to face her and cracked up laughing, seeing her funny yet adorable expression.

‘What, you little goof?’ he asked.

‘I’m just trying to be cute,’ she said, grinning widely.

‘Well, it’s working.’ He went up to her and gave her neck a little nuzzle from behind, then asked, ‘Want something to drink? The dinner’s going to take a while.’

‘Hm, yeah, maybe? Do you have tea?’

‘Mhm.’ He let go of her and went around the island, reaching into a tall cabinet, and pulled out a packet of black tea and one of green tea. ‘Which one?’

‘Black, please. And no sugar.’

‘Alright.’ He poured cold water into the electric kettle and turned it on. ‘So I’m making pasta with steamed veggies, is that alright?’

‘It is,’ she replied with a smile. ‘Everything you make is delicious, so.’

‘Ah, you’re too kind, babygirl,’ he said, sending her a smile over his shoulder. He began his cooking while Max observed him for a while.

Thinking that the gap between them was too big, she hopped off the chair, approached Mark from behind and snuggled up to his back, entwining her arms around his waist, closing her eyes. She placed a small kiss on him, tightening her grip around him. He brought his free hand to her embrace and pressed her hands closer, turning his head back slightly, smiling to himself.

Noticing how relaxed she seemed in his presence, he felt warmth spreading in his chest; the moment was simple yet so lovely.

‘You’re so comfy,’ she murmured, exhaling and humming with content.

‘I am?’ He ran his fingers up her arm, sending goosebumps, and continued stirring in the pan.

‘Mhm.’ She stayed there for a while, relishing in the closeness and the warmth of his body.

He felt her move to his left side, running her hand from his stomach around his back, snuggling up to him again. He embraced her with his left arm and leaned down to kiss her tenderly, then placed a kiss on her forehead as she rested her head on his chest.

‘Can I help?’ she asked, looking up at him.

‘Sure, sweetheart,’ he smiled at her. ‘Here, stir the pasta,’ he gestured to the small pot.

‘Alright.’ She took the big wooden spoon from the edge of the pot and began stirring in regular
intervals. ‘What’s your favorite dish, by the way?’ she asked.

‘Well, I can tell you I enjoy French cuisine very much, though I don’t really have one favorite dish. And it’s been a long time since I’ve had anything from that menu, actually,’ he explained. ‘How about you?’

‘I’m more of a sweet tooth, so, for example, your pancakes are very high up there,’ she complimented him, making him smile. ‘Though I prefer crêpes. Still French, I guess,’ she chuckled lightly.

‘Oh, those are definitely delicious, too. I can make those if you’d like.’

‘Alright,’ she said with a light smile. She reached to take a sip of tea. ‘Think the pasta is nearly ready,’ she said after a while, looking to him.

‘Oh, that’s right.’ He moved away for a moment to take out a colander from the counter to his right and placed it in the sink to Max’s left. ‘Okay, hold on, careful...’ He took mittens and the pot, spilling the hot water into the colander, draining the pasta. ‘Alright. The veggies will follow soon.’

Once the dinner was ready, they moved to the table, taking their usual seats. This time they weren’t having an overly romantic dinner by the candlelight, just enjoying the simple, normal moment.

‘I have to take a few of those recipes from you for myself, they’re so good, and I rarely eat dinner when I’m on my own.’

Mark frowned, a bit confused. ‘So what do you eat?’

‘Well, I do eat lunch at school, then I sometimes grab something from a store, like a sandwich. Or some cereal. It’s a bit harder to cook at the dorms.’

‘I see,’ he nodded. ‘Well, guess you’re going to have to come here more often, or else I’m afraid you’re going to starve yourself,’ he joked.

‘I’ll come as often as you’ll have me,’ she replied with a wide smile.

‘Good,’ he said, taking a bite of the dinner, sending her a grin.

They conversed casually as they consummated the meal, feeling quite full after. Then they proceeded with watching another film, cuddling on the sofa.

‘Max, baby?’ she felt Mark nudging her lightly.

She opened her eyes, confused, taking a look around. ‘Did I… fall asleep?’

‘Yes,’ he chuckled, grinning widely. ‘Think I wore you out on that table,’ he said quietly into her ear, his voice deep, cracking her up.

‘Guess so,’ she said shyly, blushing. She still wasn’t used to hearing such bold statements, though, admittedly, she liked whenever he spoke to her that way.

She snuggled up closer to him, still feeling a bit sleepy. ‘How long was I out?’

‘Just a few minutes, baby. I can rewind if you want.’
‘Yes, please do. Sorry.’ She buried her face in the crook of his neck, nuzzling it lightly.

‘It’s okay,’ he chuckled, kissing the top of her head, and rewound.

Next thing she knew was waking up again, this time Mark had dozed off as well, the end credits rolling. She rested her head on his chest, it moving calmly up and down, not wanting to wake him up. She was drawing gentle circles on his left side, hearing him hum after a while, his eyes fluttering open.

‘Ha. Now we’re even,’ she giggled quietly.

‘Apparently,’ he replied with an amused look on his face, rubbing his eyes under the glasses, then his hand on her arm. ‘I don’t think this movie was interesting enough, I didn’t feel that tired before.’

‘Yeah, me neither.’ She pulled up from his neck and brought her hands to his face, leaning in for a kiss. She enjoyed the feeling of his beard against her skin – his facial hair wasn’t sharp or harsh, he clearly must have been making an effort to keep it nice to the touch.

Their kissing was growing more intense, and Max instinctively slid her leg around him and sat astride him, digging herself deeper into his embrace, while his hands wandered up and down her back, pressing her closer. Feeling his tongue slide in deeper prompted her to start grinding her hips against his, and Mark felt his excitement rise. He skimmed his hands up her sweatshirt, his fingertips gently brushing against her nipples, smiling into the kiss as he heard her pleasurable little moan. Max pulled away, going left to his neck, leaving wet kisses and gently sucking on his skin.

‘Ah, fuck,’ he cursed under his breath, breaking away as he got hard, ‘that’s it, we’re going upstairs.’

‘Okay,’ Max said with a wide smile, getting off him.

As he stood up, he suddenly picked her up bridal style, causing her to squeal in excitement, tightly holding onto him.

Having reached the bedroom, he gently threw her on the mattress, and climbed on top of her, kissing her playfully, his hand rubbing at her thigh. He felt her tiny hands slip up his tee, running her fingers up to his chest, kissing him with more passion. He took it off for her, going in to kiss her neck, she sighing loudly. They began losing pieces of their clothing until they were both nude.

His lips were wandering from her breasts, up her sternum, lightly biting her neck, then teasing her behind her earlobe, and Max found herself burning hot for him, until she felt him finally beginning to enter her, slowly, holding her gaze.

Slightly pulled up, he was moving within her while looking her in the eyes, sending her a content smile, she loosely holding onto his back. He felt so full inside her, his decisive thrusts creating just the perfect amount of friction, causing her eyes to flutter shut, surrendering to the pleasure, moaning loudly. With that, he exited her and abruptly turned her over on her tummy, pulled her hips up and entered her again from behind.

He was pushing steadily into her, maintaining an even pace for the most part, going in harder every few moves, much to her delight. She was gracing him with slightly high-pitched moans, looking back at him, observing the passion on his face.

Pulling her back against his torso, he slowed down his movements, holding her up by her waist with one hand, with Max’s hand pressed to it. He reached down with his other hand between her legs, stroking her clit, eliciting a pleasurable moan from her. He was sloppily kissing her shoulder, and she reached back to hold him by the back of his neck.
Feeling her pleasure mounting, she began maneuvering her hips back to meet his, feeling him deeper, hearing him groan. She yet again felt him push her forward onto the pillows, leaning with her and kissing her back and her neck for a few moments.

The rhythm quickened, Mark’s movements became more insistent, unceasingly pushing into her, harder and harder, groaning and grunting, relishing in the feeling of her tight wall around him.

‘Yes, yes, yes…’ she kept saying with each thrust, smiling with delight, her eyes shut, surrendering to the pleasure spreading through her body, until she completely fell apart, crying out and tightly squeezing the covers. He could finally begin his release, his palm on her back, digging fingers into her skin, his other hand holding her steadily by the hip, easing his thrusts into her, going as deep as he could, until he too graced her with a lovely cry of passion, a low growl as he came.

He fell on the bed beside her, sending her the widest grin, and she snuggled up to him, their bodies covered with sweat, he placing a kiss on her forehead. They were trying to catch their breaths, feeling warm and satisfied.

After a few moments they decided to take a shower, feeling a bit too sweaty, brushing their teeth together in front of a mirror, having a couple of laughs. Mark was so happy she had agreed to spending the weekend with him, he hadn’t felt so fulfilled in a long time.

‘What do you say to us sleeping naked?’ he asked, accentuating the last word with a deep timbre in her ear.

‘I’d love that,’ she said, biting down on her smile, a small blush creeping up her cheeks.

They cuddled up nude, warm under the covers. His body felt so comfortable, Max buried her face in his chest, breathing in his scent, falling asleep soon after.
Close to You, Pt. 4

Chapter Summary

Some nice fluffy moments to conclude the blissful weekend.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Sunday, November 3, 2013

Waking up, Mark was lying on his back, his arm lightly wrapped around Max, whose head was resting lower on his chest, her arm loose on his torso, her tummy pressed against his hip, her left leg between his legs. He could feel her folds touching his thigh and his morning erection grow.

Wanting Max to wake up as well, he began drawing gentle circles on her back and placed a light kiss on her forehead, she waking up soon after, letting out a pleasurable little sigh.

‘Oh, you’re up?’ he asked, pretending to be surprised.

‘Mhm,’ she said, her voice quiet and a bit hoarse. She cleared her throat and continued with an amused tone, ‘I have a slight suspicion someone might have helped me do that.’

‘That surely wasn’t me,’ he played, ‘I was just lying here.’

‘Yeah, right,’ she chuckled. His skin was burning hot against her cheek, and she reached out to feel his abs, a faint coat of dark hair on them, her fingertips sending tingles up and down his torso, causing him to squirm lightly in response.

‘You’re ticklish, too? That’s good to know,’ she smirked and heard him laugh, feeling his chest tremble.

Without changing her position, she slid her hand lower and got a hold of him, slowly moving her hand up and down his length, her tongue lazily pleasuring his nipple – something she hadn’t done before, but instinctively wanted to. His eyes fluttered shut, responding to the bliss. Max could hear him gasping and panting unevenly as she sped up her movements a bit, his hand on her arm tightening the grip, leaning in to kiss her forehead.

She pulled away after a few moments. ‘Hold on,’ she said, nervous, though excited, smiling at him.

He pulled up to see what she was going to do, and saw her reach to the beside cabinet, getting a hold of the lotion she had left there the previous day. He smirked at her in anticipation. She pumped a little bit on her palm and got between his legs, putting her petite hands back to his length, creating a smooth, slippery friction, and she gradually intensified the petting strokes on his dick. He rested his head comfortably on the pillows and closed his eyes, gasping as he felt her pleasuring him.

His breathing became harsher, and he pulled up to see her again. She held his gaze, sending him a slightly lewd look, to which he responded with a big grin. After a while, her arm was beginning to get a bit tired, but she felt her own excitement rise seeing his lustful expression, and so she continued, relishing in the sound of him moaning. Her strokes becoming more and more insistent, he felt the
tingling sensation building up stronger and stronger, and he felt himself starting to pulsate.

‘Oh fuck, oh fuck… I’m close,’ he gasped, involuntarily gripping her arm, throwing his head back in passion and looking at the ceiling, then suddenly felt her lips on his tip, her sucking on it and her continuous hand movements. He looked back at her and was soon able to comfortably burst inside her mouth, letting out a groan, smiling at her with joy. He saw her smile as her tiny mouth was sucking off the rest of his release, her hand still gently moving up and down, prolonging his orgasm.

Max found she enjoyed that taste. She rested her hands on his thighs before sliding them up and crawling on top of him, and leaned down for a kiss, he bringing her closer, his hands massaging her back. He embraced her tighter and tilted them both to the side, smiling into the kiss.

‘You are quite skilled,’ he remarked, brushing her bangs to the side.

‘I’m just a fast learner,’ she grinned at him.

‘Or maybe you have a good teacher,’ he arched his eyebrow at her, cracking both of them up, causing Max to cover her face with her hands, unable to contain her laughter. His gentle chuckle accompanied her, he placing a small kiss on her cheek, waiting for her to calm down. In the meantime, he discretely cleaned himself up with a tissue.

When she eased up, he passed her a glass of water, and once she drank it all, he positioned himself on top of her and began kissing her slowly, his hand skimming up and down her side, sending pleasurable tingles, then deepened the kiss, she loosely entwining her legs around him, one arm hanged around his neck, fingers dug in his hair, the other palm gently caressing the side of his face.

His hand slipped lower, rubbing her thigh now, kissing her intensely. His fingertips were lightly ticking her bottom, sending tingles, causing her to break away with giggles.

Mark sent her a smile and his lips moved lower, slowly tracing kisses and licks down her jaw, gently pulling her earlobe, leaving a kiss behind it. Max was lightly scratching his back in return until he moved even lower, and she felt his warm tongue go down her sternum. Then he lightly squeezed her breast in his palm, gently and slowly sucking on her nipple, the other hand drawing patterns along her side with his fingertips, tickling her only so slightly. She was beginning to relax, nothing but pure bliss being brought to her through his caresses.

Max was now barely moving, only lightly stroking the top of his head, sending a pleasurable tingling, while he sucked on her other nipple, his palm so gentle on her breast, skimming his fingertips up and down her other side, making her wetness grow. She then felt a sudden rush of warmth permeating from her nipples throughout her entire body. It wasn’t too intense, but a pleasurable sensation nonetheless, causing her eyes to flutter shut, and a light moan escaped her lungs.

He pulled up to face her, a slight smirk painted on his face, seeing the delight on hers. He moved up to give her a little smooch, then traced wet kisses down to her abdomen, gently spreading her legs as he reached one of his favorite places. Teasing her inner thigh for a moment, he was drawing circles on her tummy, adding to the anticipation. He then playfully left a couple dozen little kisses on her vulva and the surrounding skin, hearing her squeal and giggle, she pressing her legs together, he laughing with her as he was done. Continuing those little kisses, his warm tongue suddenly dived deeper, reaching her folds, turning her giggles into moans. Music to his ears.

He was teasing her slowly, relishing in the delicious wetness – she tasted so good to him. Max closed her eyes, relaxing her muscles and surrendering to his pleasurable strokes. She was fondling her own breasts in response, gasping and biting down on her smile. He was continuously grazing her clit,
flicking it side to side with his tongue, creating a near-vibrating sensation, causing her to moan and squeeze her breasts tighter. The bliss mounting higher and higher, she felt herself tip over the edge as he brought her to climax. His tongue entered her gently, slowly drinking her up, he was humming with content, rubbing her inner thighs.

Satisfied, she exhaled loudly, and glanced down at him, sending him a gorgeous, wide smile, and he climbed on top of her again, kissing her slowly but deeply, making her taste herself on his tongue, then his lips trailed off to the left.

With his lips on her neck, placing warm, wet kisses on her skin, Max pressed her legs together with him in between, and embraced him a bit tighter, lightly scratching his back. She heard his pleasurable, quiet moan let out into her neck.

‘You like that?’ she asked, her voice low in his ear.

‘Mhm,’ he replied between kisses. ‘Do it again.’

She slid her fingernails up and down his back, sending shivers to his spine, making him hum with content, thus she continued, drawing light circles on his back then scratching after a while, when he felt it tickle him.

After a while, Max proposed, ‘Hey, lie down on your stomach.’

He acquiesced with a smile, positioning himself accordingly, resting his head on the left side of his face, allowing her to see the sharp outline of his jaw, his arms stretched up above his head, bent at the elbows. She glanced down at the lower part of his back, getting a clear look of the defined muscles of his behind, and then she sighed with defeat.

*He actually has back dimples, what the fuck...* she marveled.

She then sat on him, just above his bottom and continued the caresses, smiling widely as she heard his moans. They were so much softer than his usual deep growls, but still so hot to listen to, so much so that Max felt she was getting wet against his loins. Mark could feel that, grinning with his eyes closed.

She ran her fingers down his arms, leaning closer, and pressed her chest to his back, rubbing her breasts against his skin, her nipples hardening against the light friction. He could feel that as well, recognizing the sensation, humming in a deep timbre.

A few moments had passed, she was doing wonders with her fingertips dancing on his back, sending more and more tingles down his spine, until she suddenly felt Mark shift under her; he was feeling an uncomfortable tension and had to pull up and turn on his back.

‘Something wrong?’ she asked as she heard his grunt, getting off him in a hurry.

‘Precisely the opposite. You made me hard again,’ he replied with a wide grin, causing her to do the same, though with a dose of blush. ‘Ah, and there it is... my favorite color,’ he said, reaching up to touch her rosy cheeks.

Max slid on top of him, sitting astride him, and leaned down to kiss him, smiling into it, feeling his hands lightly rub her back, pressing her a bit closer. Her tiny hands were lightly massaging his chest, and she felt her wetness grow even further, she was now aching for him. Sensing her passion, Mark reached down between them and guided himself to her, hearing her pleasurable sigh as he slid inside her.
She was riding him gently, resting her hands on his chest, holding his gaze, sharing a smile. He was gripping her bottom, helping her maneuver her movements on top of him. Soon, he was able to go in in his entirety, and Max couldn’t quite believe he fitted in there with no problem.

She moved one of her hands and held onto his arm, speeding up. He was looking at her with lust as she was bending and arching on top of him, her eyes wide and her face flushed, lips parted, letting out short moans. Her pleasure mounting, she straightened up, throwing her head back and looking at the ceiling as she felt him hit deeper inside, smiling through her moans.

He oh so enjoyed being so deep within her, feeling the tingling sensation along his entire length, sliding smoothly in and out – she was so wet for him.

Reaching up to her, he slowly pushed her to the side, so that she lay down comfortably on her back now, exiting her for just a moment to change the position.

He kneeled low, pulling her hips slightly higher onto himself, and began driving into her, gradually picking up the pace, again feeling her deeper, holding her by the thighs. Max stretched her arms above her head, closing her eyes, enjoying the escalating friction. She parted her lips and would let a moan every few thrusts. Mark was glancing at her bouncing breasts, smirking lightly to himself.

Her pleasure mounting, Max pulled up and grabbed onto his arms, prompting him to fuck her harder now, he leaning on top of her and moving more decisively within her, feeling his own pleasure rise. The buildup was growing higher and higher until she cried out, falling back onto the covers, allowing Mark to give into his pulsating sensation, releasing within her with a content groan.

He fell onto the bed beside her, snuggling her up from behind, placing a light kiss on her neck. They were lying there for a few moments, catching their breaths and relishing in their orgasms, their bodies glistening with sweat.

Having showered together yet again, Mark wore a new pair of sweatpants and a clean tee, while Max put on the same leggings and a sleeveless top, no bra underneath, her feet bare, her hair wet.

She felt so carefree and comfortable around him now, the weekend had been so much more than she had ever dreamed it would be.

They came downstairs and headed to the kitchen.

‘Alright, crêpes as promised,’ he announced, smiling at her.

‘Oh, awesome,’ she grinned back, climbing the high bar chair.

Mark first went up to the coffee machine, setting up the preparation of the hot beverages, then proceeded with making the pastry.

‘You have any fruit?’ Max asked.

‘Yeah, they’re in the fridge, hold on, I’m going to get them.’

‘I thought that maybe I could cut them for us while you make the actual crêpes,’ she offered.

‘Oh, sure, go on,’ he replied with a smile.

Max went up to the fridge and opened it, finding strawberries, half a mango and a banana, already
rinsed with water, ready to consume.

‘Guess that should do,’ she said and went onto cutting the fruit beside Mark.

Once a neat pile of thin pancakes and the two coffees were ready, they sat down and began eating.

‘Mm,’ she let out a content little moan, having the first bite of the delicious breakfast. ‘So good. Especially with the fruit.’

‘Guess our shared efforts paid off,’ he commented, grinning. ‘I’m really pleased with us.’

‘Me too,’ she smiled back at him.

After a few moments she asked, ‘Hey… what do you usually do, you know, when I’m not around?’

‘Hm, well,’ he started. ‘Depends. If I have to, I prepare the lectures, research new trivia, I sometimes even look back at my own artwork when it becomes helpful.’

Max nodded, listening to him with a smile, chewing on the pastry.

‘I may read a book once in a while, but by now, I think I’ve already gone through the most interesting listings. Not a lot of really good literature is being put out there, in my opinion.’

‘I see.’

‘I don’t really watch films on my own, I’m not too big of a fan, and it’s so much more fun to watch them with you,’ he continued with a smile, ‘so I save them up for our meetings.’ Max grinned at him in response.

‘I sometimes go out to take a few shots here and there, but not much. And then,’ he pondered for a moment, ‘I guess jogging, going to the gym, but these are mostly chores. Guess that’s about it,’ he concluded, turning to Max. ‘How about you?’

‘Hm, when I’m not taking pictures around Arcadia Bay, I guess you could say I consume a lot of pop culture – music, movies, novels, you name it.’

‘Well, I assume you still have a lot ahead. It makes me kind of jealous,’ he interjected.

‘Yeah, guess so,’ she chuckled lightly. ‘Homework also takes up time, more than I’d like. Sometimes I get to hang out with friends, well, mostly Chloe, and once in a while I just like to sit and take a deep breath and do nothing.’

‘Like that one time I caught you sitting by the fountain?’ he asked with a smile.

‘Exactly,’ she responded in kind. ‘Just… letting go.’

‘Yeah, I understand. When you do too much all the time, you forget to relax, and that’s not a good thing. I’m glad those days are behind me.’

‘You used to be that busy?’

‘Yes, I mean, I had no other choice if I wanted to succeed, you know?’ he replied, Max nodding.

‘Once I made it out there, it all slowed down, but only a little.’

Max considered his words for a few moments, thinking how this was what her future would look like if she wanted to make a successful career out of her talent – loads of hard work. Given she was
prone to anxiety, that surely wasn’t the part she was looking forward to.

‘Guess I’m going to have to go through the same, huh,’ she said with a rather bland expression.

‘I’m afraid so. And you have to stick to your motivation, which is no easy task.’

Mark glanced at Max, who seemed disheartened at that moment.

‘Hey,’ he started softly, prompting her to look back at him. ‘Don’t worry just yet. I realize it’s not a very optimistic prospect. But you’ll get there eventually, and it’ll all have been worth it,’ he said, reaching out to tenderly caress her cheek.

‘I hope so,’ she smiled faintly.

In that moment, he wanted to tell her he would be glad to be there by her side, but then he figured it was still too early in their relationship to make such promises. Instead, he tried to console her further.

‘Sometimes, you just get lucky and things mostly work out – by that I mean, your hard work pays off. Sometimes it doesn’t. But that also is not an indicative of, let’s say, a complete failure. It’s more of a sinusoid, if you will,’ he said, slightly amused by his own metaphor.

Max realized he was so well-spoken whenever he would explain stuff, even now, just to her. *Guess his job must have made an imprint on him.* She chuckled lightly with him.

‘Hm,’ she paused for a second. ‘Maybe you’re right. I still have some time before I need to start worrying about it.’

‘I’m telling you, no point in stressing yourself out in advance,’ he said.

Mark had noticed her anxiety even before they had become so close, and understood it was all going to be much harder on her. He wasn’t sure if there was much he could do to help, other than be there for her. But then again – he couldn’t be *entirely* certain he was going to be there.

He snapped out of his nagging thoughts and sent her a smile, seeing she had finished her breakfast. They took their coffee cups and went over to the living room.

Mark was sitting on the sofa, looking to his right at Max, who was lying comfortably on the pillows, her legs on his lap, smiling at him widely.

‘I feel so full,’ she said, rubbing her tummy, her eyes lightly shut. ‘It was so tasty.’

‘Oh, me too.’ He was lightly stroking her thigh.

They were resting there for a couple of moments in silence, taking sips of coffee once in a while.

The weather was so nice, and they wished they were able to go outside, at least for a walk, but naturally, they couldn’t.

‘I really wish we could, though,’ Mark said softly, observing the equally disappointed expression on Max’s gentle face.

‘Yeah, babe, I know,’ she smiled slightly. *Babe.* She realized it had actually been the second time she had addressed him in such manner, ever.

She shifted closer to him, snuggling up to his chest and tucking her leg on his lap, he embracing her and placing a soft kiss on her forehead.
‘I hate that tomorrow’s Monday already,’ she said, burying her face in him.

‘Me too. This weekend has been amazing,’ he replied, kissing her forehead again, making her smile and hold him tighter.

His fingertips were lightly brushing against her shoulder, trailing off down her arm and back up again, playing with the strap of her top. She could feel the comforting warmth of his body, his caresses lulling her into a nap. He didn’t join her, he was just observing her calm, gentle expression, counting the freckles on her face – they looked like a small constellation sprinkled across her nose and cheeks. Her head fitted so perfectly on his chest.

When she woke, yawning adorably and stretching her body on top of him, she noticed he wasn’t wearing his glasses. He pulled her into a kiss, she gently stroking his face, instinctively sitting astride him. She felt he was slowly inching the straps down, his lips trailing off lower, planting small kisses down her sternum and holding her slightly up, until he buried his face between her breasts, calmly breathing in her scent. Her eyes fluttered shut, smiling widely to herself, her fingers entwined in his hair, brushing against his head.

She felt his tongue smoothly transition from licking the skin on her sternum to sucking on her nipple again, eliciting a moan from her and prompting her to leave a kiss on his temple, pressing her face to his, and felt herself getting wet.

He moved them around, laying Max comfortably on the pillows, sending her a smile and lying on top of her. He slowly removed her leggings and her panties, and pulled his underwear only a little, revealing himself. She smiled widely at him, pulling him closer, and he entered her, causing both of them to sigh with relief.

He was moving achingly slow within her, enjoying her wet warmth, she enjoying his ample hardness. She would grace him with a sweet moan with each of his gentle thrusts, all of him against all of her. Their passion was rising, though the rhythm didn’t quicken, they were just relishing in the delicious friction between each other. She was holding his awed gaze, though through half-opened eyes, smiling with joy, pleasure spreading from the sweet spot.

His lips and tongue were doing wonders to her neck, intensifying her excitement, and she felt she was getting close now, embracing him tighter. He still didn’t speed up, but his movements inside her became harder and more decisive, and he was now rubbing against her most sensitive spot, bringing her to climax soon after, her calm, long moan ringing in his ears.

Pulling up, he sent her a smile, leaned down to kiss her softly, and began his release, allowing himself to look her in the eyes as he came with a deep growl. She reached out to touch his face, gently caressing it and gazing at him with joy. They were making out for a while, savoring the blissful moment.

Later they went onto eating the leftover crêpes for lunch and then watching a movie.

‘Hold on, I gotta… pee,’ she said shyly.

‘Go, go, I’ll set up the movie,’ he replied with an amused smile. She was still being so shy sometimes.

When she got back to him, they cuddled up and began watching *Pride & Prejudice* until it ended. Throughout the film, Max couldn’t shake the feeling that Mr. Darcy reminded her very much of
Mark – charming, well-spoken... and neither could he, remembering how frustrating it had felt in the beginning not to be able to indulge in his temptation.

After the movie, Mark got a little playful, ticking her lightly at first, just with his fingertips, soon intensifying, squeezing her sides and pressing tummy. She was squealing, laughing and kicking in response, but he held her legs firmly, tucked tightly under his arm, he continuing to tickle her with his other hand.

‘Mercy! Please!’ Max exclaimed, trying to contain herself.

‘Alright, alright,’ he laughed lightly, letting go of her legs and stopping the play.

He pulled her on his lap again, holding her and drawing gentle circles on her back, she doing the same thing to his chest.

It was beginnnig to get dark outside, the day ending way too soon. They then ate something small for dinner, and it was time to say goodbye for now. She packed all her stuff, making sure she didn’t forget anything, and they headed outside the house.

Mark pulled up by what looked like a café, now closed for business. He turned off the engine and looked to his right to face Max. She was smiling lightly, though with a hint of sadness.

He leaned in close, and began kissing her slowly, soon having to match her passion. She couldn’t get enough of him, kissing him deeply, her hand insistent on his chest, nearly unbuttoning his shirt, until she had to stop herself.

‘Sorry,’ she said softly.

‘It’s alright, babygirl,’ he said, his voice soothing. He tenderly caressed her cheek, looking at her with longing. ‘I’m so happy you decided to come. I haven’t felt so good in a long time,’ he confessed, making Max smile.

‘Me too. You’re a good host,’ she said, grinning wider.

‘Thank you,’ he laughed lightly.

‘I should get going…’

‘I know…’ He brought her hand to his lips, leaving a delicate kiss.

Neither one wanted to say goodbye now. Mark was waiting for her to take that step, he couldn’t just tell her to get out of the car.

‘Okay, I’m going to leave now,’ she finally said, much to his disappointment.

She leaned in close and kissed him goodbye.

‘Let me know when you’re safely at your dorm, alright?’ he asked softly.

‘You got it,’ she smiled and exited the car.

Mark stayed there, and would drive away only once she let him know she was safe.

It was a bit too dark than she would like, but thankfully, Mark had dropped her off closely enough to
the school campus, and she was in her room within a couple of minutes.

She proceeded with texting Mark like she had promised.

Max: Okay, I got in
Mark: Good
Mark: I miss you already
Max: Me too
Mark: Do it again next weekend?
Max: You don’t even have to ask
Max: Of course
Mark: So glad to hear that
Mark: Okay, I’m gonna drive home now
Mark: I’ll text you later
Max: Alright : )

Monday, November 4, 2013

Opening their eyes in the morning, though waking up separately in their respective rooms, Max and Mark were grinning widely to themselves, reminiscing about the blissful weekend they just had spent wrapped in each other’s arms. So many simple moments, easy-going conversations, the meals consumed together, the multitude of caresses shared in the bedroom and around his house… those were the memories they would both cherish forever, the way they had been bonding slowly but surely.

During his lecture, it was definitely more noticeable that Mark had changed – he was much more cheerful than usual, kind of… laid back, so to speak, enthusiastically explaining the subject, interjecting with more puns than he normally would. He no longer wore a tie, losing two buttons on the top of his shirt.

Damn, he looks hot, Max thought, smiling to herself. It was filling her with joy and satisfaction that it was her who was behind his blissful mood.

They locked eyes for a moment, and he looked at her with such a soft expression, smiling lightly, so as not to get caught, then moved on with his rant, bringing warmth to Max’s chest.

Unfortunately, his renewed allure attracted Victoria even further, thus she would continue hanging out at his desk after the lectures would finish. Mark saw the slightly disappointed look on Max’s face on her way out right now, and his heart sank a little.
Gah! So sorry for the typos. I am sooooo blind. Correcting them as soon as noticed.
PART SIX - \textit{RUSH}

\textit{Tuesday, November 12, 2013}

As arranged, they had spent another blissful weekend together at Mark’s place, feeling even closer afterwards. He was such a good host, Max felt more at home at his house than she did at her dorm, unrestrained by curfew, noise or people bothering her… sometimes.

Max wished she could be there with him all the time, as did he, though these short breaks were adding to their excitement, rendering the weekends that much more fun.

Barely able to hear his lecture now, she found herself looking outside the window, thinking about anything but. Everyone in the classroom seemed… distracted. Some students were scribbling in their notebooks, some were actually trying to listen but failing.

Mark had just asked an open question, but no one seemed to have realized.

‘Can somebody, please, answer my question?’ he raised his voice, snapping Max out of her daydream. She looked up at him, startled, feeling her heart pick up the pace. He wasn’t looking in her direction, but it seemed he was annoyed.

‘Stella?’ he called out. No answer. ‘Daniel.’

‘I have no idea, sir,’ he replied.

He then glanced at Victoria, who would normally be the first to answer any question, but was playing with her phone, much to his irritation.

‘No cellphones!’ he raised his voice only so slightly, but startling the blonde nonetheless, who hurriedly hid the cell in her purse.

‘Guys, please, focus,’ he said, moving towards the blackboard. ‘Max,’ he started yet again, causing her to actually jump in her chair this time. ‘When was this photograph taken?’ He pointed to the large image pinned to the board.

‘I… I don’t know. Sorry, sir,’ she said quietly, blinking repeatedly. She felt herself blushing and her heart skipping a beat, and she looked down, a bit embarrassed.

Mark sighed, closing his eyes for a second. Obviously, seeing Max in distress was his weakness, and witnessing it now softened his annoyance.

‘Okay, I won’t ask any more questions, but just please, at least listen, guys,’ he said, defeated.

‘Max?’ he called out, causing her to look up. ‘I need to speak with you,’ he said in a firm voice, his tone serious.
Alright, sir,’ she answered quietly, her anxiety rising. *Is she angry with me?*

Once everyone else left the classroom, he went up to the door and locked it. Coming back, he looked at her with concern.

‘Are you mad at me?’ she asked, getting up from her desk and approaching him hesitantly.

‘Of course not. I’m sorry for calling you out like that,’ he said, looking apologetically, now suddenly speaking so softly. Max exhaled loudly. ‘Are you okay?’ he asked.

‘Yeah.’ Nervous, she ran her fingers through her hair, trying to calm down.

‘You sure? Everyone was a bit distracted, I wanted to make it look… normal.’

Max nodded and looked down for a moment. Mark couldn’t make out what her expression meant.

‘I was so sure you knew the answer, I’m really sorry, baby,’ he said, gently pulling her chin up and sending her a soft smile.

‘I know, it’s okay – really,’ she responded in kind.

He pulled her into an embrace, gently stroking her hair, placing a kiss on the top of her head. She entwined her arms tightly around him, snuggling up to him. Her initial puzzlement and uneasiness began to fade away, and a sneaky, little idea popped into her head.

She pulled away slightly and looked up at him with a smile. ‘Is there a way, sir, to make up for my terrible behavior?’ she asked enticingly, her voice sweet and its pitch a bit higher.

Mark smirked at her, picking up on her cues. ‘Well, *miss,* there will have to be some sort of punishment.’

‘Oh, please, *sir,* I’ll do anything,’ she said with a grin.

He leaned down and began kissing her slowly at first, smiling into the kiss, running his hands down her back, reaching her hips, and back up to her jaw, to her hair. She was digging herself deeper into his embrace, her hands wandering all over his chest and lower, until she reached his belt.

‘How about this?’ she whispered, looking up at him with those wide eyes.

‘I’d say it’s suitable enough,’ he said, the timbre of his voice sensually deep in her ears, sending a jolt of excitement to her core, and he swallowed hard at the thought of her offer.

Max exhaled with a smile, and began kissing him more intensely than before, now unbuttoning his shirt until she felt his warm skin and his faint chest hair against her fingers. She moved her head lower, she was now kissing his chest, sliding her hands underneath his shirt and digging her fingers into his back, and she stopped to pleasure his nipples for a few moments.

Mark moaned, his excitement growing. He grabbed her bottom and picked her up, her legs astride him, and walked up to his desk, putting her down gently. He unzipped her hoodie, yanked off her shirt, and began kissing her shoulders, her collarbones, leaving tiny licks and bites on the skin, then removed his jacket. In turn, Max was scratching his chest lightly, and then went straight for the belt, unfastening his pants in a hurry.

‘Hey… patience, *miss,*’ Mark laughed lightly. ‘So eager.’

Max grinned at him, continuing her attempt, until she got a hold of his dick. She started moving her
hand up and down, clutching to his undone shirt and pulling him downward by his collar, kissing
him with fervor, his hands in her hair.

He broke away from the kiss to look her in the eyes with want. She began moving her hand faster,
the other hand leaning against his hip.

‘Ah, fuck,’ Mark panted, closing his eyes. Before he could even begin to anticipate it, he felt her
mouth going down on him, and exhaled sharply, his torso spasming. She started slow, running her
tongue up and down his length, then sucking on the tip, helping herself with her hand, glancing up at
him once in a while. The feeling of her mouth and tongue gliding on his dick caused his eyes to
flutter shut and a soft moan escaped his lungs.

Encouraged by his reactions, Max continued, intensifying her strokes. She was now maneuvering
her head so that he was rubbing against the inside of her cheek, her tongue entwined around him,
continuously brushing against his surface, her hand still rubbing at the base, all the while Mark's
fingers were entwined in her hair, digging deeper in his passion.

‘Oh… Max!’ he gasped quietly, her warm tongue bringing nothing but pure bliss. The cry of passion
was like music to her ears, hearing him say her name like that fired her up even further.

His heat was rising, and he felt himself getting close, thus he grabbed her tighter by the back of her
neck, and began thrusting slightly into her mouth, which surprised her, but she didn’t break away.
Feeling her own excitement rise, she began sucking with more intensity, still moving her hand. He
leaned against the desk, barely able to keep standing up. She felt him pulsate against her tongue, she
began circling it around him until she felt him release inside her mouth with a hushed groan. She
glanced up at him, watching the passion on his face. She continued until she swallowed it all, and he
relaxed.

‘So,’ she said, slowly sitting back up while tracing kisses up his torso, ‘was that good enough, Mr.
Jefferson?’ she asked, smiling widely as she faced him.

‘Excellent work, Miss Caulfield.’ He grinned at her and leaned in to kiss her passionately, his tongue
impatient.

‘Maybe you won’t be so cranky anymore, sir,’ she joked, and kissed him deeper.

‘Mm, maybe,’ he said against her lips.

Suddenly, there was a knock on the door. Max and Mark froze, looking at it with panic.

‘Mr. Jefferson?’ Principal Wells called out.

Mark turned to face Max. ‘Don’t make a single sound,’ he mouthed. She nodded quickly.
The principal knocked again. ‘Mr. Jefferson, are you there?’

‘Should you be in class now?’ Max whispered, her face showing horror.

Mark shook his head ‘no’. ‘But I was supposed to go see him when I’m done for the day.’ He
glanced at the clock. ‘And the lunchtime’s passed. He must have noticed. Damn.’

‘Okay, relax,’ Max started to calm Mark down, ‘he’s not too persistent, right? Let’s just pretend
we’re not in here, and he’ll leave.’

‘Alright,’ Mark said. In the meantime, the very least he could do was cover himself up.
Max instinctively held onto Mark, he ready to shield her.

Luckily, as suspected, the principal soon gave up and left. They both exhaled with relief, laughing quietly. They began putting their clothes back on in a hurry.

‘Max, fix your hair, I got… carried away,’ Mark grinned at her.

‘Thanks,’ she said, smiling back.

‘Okay, there’s forty-five minutes until the bell, you— wait, shouldn’t you be in class now?’ he asked, confused.

Max looked at the clock. ‘Oh shit… yeah,’ she realized, covering up her laugh with her hand. ‘Happens,’ she shrugged. ‘I had to make up for my terrible behavior, didn’t I?’

‘You are so bad,’ he said, kissing her through a smile. ‘Alright, as I was trying to say, we have quite a lot of time, but you can’t let him see you. Go to the girls’ room or something, and I’ll head to the principal’s office in a bit. ‘Sound okay?’ he proposed. Max nodded and gave him a little kiss.

He unlocked the door, opened it carefully and ducked out to see if there was anyone there. Not a soul.

Max quickly went out and headed to the ladies room. Mark closed the door behind her and exhaled. *Fuck, that was a close one!* Though, still… it felt pretty damn amazing to have had her surprise him like that. Another little fantasy ticked off the list.

Max reached the bathroom, and looked in the mirror. Her face was still flushed, with a radiant smile, eyes wide, and lips significantly redder than normal.

She was feeling pretty proud of herself for giving him that blowjob. He had always been making sure she had been *taken care of*, while never asking her to pleasure him in return. She figured she could do it way more often from now on.

Her heart still beating fast, she began making herself a bit more presentable. She wasn’t going to get Mark in trouble now, was she. She sprinkled her face with water and drank some as well.

The bell rang. She went outside and headed to her next class. She kept thinking about what had just happened during the rest of her classes, smiling to herself, though her own excitement never satisfied, as they had been interrupted.

When the last bell rang at 4pm, she felt her phone buzz. She reached to her pocket to see who it was from. *Mark*, of course.

Mark: That was pretty fucking intense

Mark: You are *good*

Max: Oh, thanks

Max: My pleasure

Mark: How about a rematch?
Mark: I can’t leave you hanging there, can I
Max: No, you definitely can’t
Max: If you’re into adrenaline rush, you could come by my dorm
Mark: Bad girl
Mark: You sure?
Max: Mhm. But are you?
Mark: We’ve been lucky thus far
Mark: Okay, I’ll come by
Mark: Around 10:30pm?
Max: Yes. See you soon then
Max: Room 219, last to the right
Max: Give me a call beforehand
Mark: Sure thing. See you

In the evening, Max commenced her preparations. First, she took a shower, feeling refreshed afterwards. She then changed into her pajamas, and decided to clean up her room a bit, hiding the scattered clothes in the closet, and moved all her notes and textbooks from the couch to the desk. She took the only two tall glasses she had, and poured water into them, placing them on the bedside cabinet, then lit the nightlight, turning the main lights off. Just in case, she put the blinders down, unless someone would catch even a glimpse of Mark in her room.

10:30pm approaching, she pulled the covers back and sat down on the bed, anxiously awaiting his call.

When she finally felt her cellphone buzz in her hands, her heart picked up the pace, and she answered.

‘Mark?’ she said quietly.

‘I’ll be by your door in a minute, so get ready,’ he near-whispered.

‘Okay,’ she said and heard him hang up.

A few moments later she heard a quiet knock on her door and immediately rushed to open the door. Mark greeted her with a wide grin, and she shut and locked the door behind him.

Smiling back at him, she stood on her toes and began kissing him playfully, feeling his hands on her hips.

‘I feel so naughty,’ she giggled.

‘It’s because you are naughty,’ he said in a low, deep voice, kissing her eagerly, pulling her closer,
his hands skimming up her back. Max felt her excitement rise at his words; she began pushing herself closer into him, brushing her chest against his. That in turn made Mark feel more thrilled, his hands sliding to her hips again, kissing her deeper. She held him by the back of his neck, trying to match his intensity.

They began losing pieces of their clothing, with Max leading Mark towards her bed, until she lay down and pulled him in. Their kiss becoming passionate, she felt his hand reach her breast, gently squeezing it, kissing her jaw, moving lower to her neck, causing her to moan quietly. His hips here pressed close to hers and she felt his hardness grow against her vulva, but as promised, her was going to pleasure her first.

Mark began planting tiny kisses down to her abdomen, building anticipation, then finally positioned himself between her legs. He teased her by licking and gently biting her inner thigh before his tongue reached her awaiting clit, grazing it gently, making Max sigh in pleasure. He put his arms around her legs and rested his one hand on her tummy, reaching out with the other and lacing his fingers with hers. He was relishing in her taste, circling his tongue around her folds, drinking up her juices. He felt her tighten the grip on his hand, exhaling. She closed her eyes, beginning to relax, breathing in deeply, his pleasurable licks bringing her nothing but pure bliss. He was gradually intensifying his strokes, causing her to break away from his hand and entwine her fingers in his hair, prompting him to go faster. With his hands free, he was gently rubbing his fingertips against her tummy, then reached up, gently fondling her breasts. She felt herself tip over the edge, coming with a hushed but drawn-out moan.

He came up from between her legs, sending her a smug smile before he entered her with no warning. She let out a surprised high-pitched moan, reaching for his arms, and pulling him down to meet her lips, kissing him passionately.

Moving slowly at first, he soon picked up the pace, wanting to feel her deeper. They embraced each other tighter, with Mark resting his head by her neck. He was pushing into her faster now, and their breathing became harsher. He felt her digging her fingers in his back, letting out a moan that seemed too loud, but they were too preoccupied to care. She sensed her pleasure mounting, biting on his shoulder slightly, spurring him to fuck her harder.

He pulled up from her neck, leaning his arms against the bed, looking at her with want, she holding his gaze, clutching to his upper arms, feeling his hardness deliciously filling her. She began moving her hips to meet his, feeling the heat rise further between them. Their movements seemed almost animalistic, becoming rougher, causing the bed to creak.

Mark suddenly grabbed her wrists and pinned them to the bed, aggressively driving into her until she reached her peak, and silenced her with a kiss. She felt him finish inside her soon after, his lips at her neck, with a hushed groan let out against it.

They were lying snuggled up together, soaked in sweat, dazed and trying to catch their breaths. After a few minutes, Mark felt Max nudging him.

‘Mark, baby,’ she patted him lightly. ‘You can’t fall asleep here.’

He opened his eyes, realizing he had almost dozed off. ‘Right. Sorry.’

‘It’s okay,’ she laughed quietly. ‘I wish you could, though.’

‘Me too,’ he said, trying to get up, but she stopped him.
'Don’t leave just yet,’ she whispered, pulling him back in. ‘Stay awhile.’

‘I’m not leaving yet.’ He kissed her gently. ‘I’m just going to have some water,’ he explained.

‘Oh, okay,’ she chuckled lightly.

Refreshed with water, he lay down again and snuggled her close to his chest, pulling the covers on top of them. Using their free hands, she reached out to lace her fingers with his, and put her leg on him.

‘Mm, this is so nice,’ she murmured.

‘It is, yes,’ he responded in kind, kissing her temple. ‘How did you like your rematch?’ he asked quietly, ticking her ear.

‘I thought my attempted screaming made it clear,’ she gave him a slight smile, blushing at her own words. ‘I had to restrain myself.’

‘Right,’ Mark chuckled lightly, drawing patterns on her arms.

‘By the way,’ she started, ‘I do remember a few things from your lecture.’

‘Oh yeah? Like what?’

‘Mhm, like… during the Great War, photography was either documenting or… trying to tell a story. You said that perhaps it was both at all times. I think it just depends on which photograph you might be talking about in the moment. They’re one or the other… or both.’

‘Nice to know someone was listening to me after all.’

‘Well, of course I was listening. You’re the reason I transferred to Blackwell,’ she explained. ‘To study photography under you.’

‘Under me?’ he arched his eyebrow at her, his expression amused. ‘Oh, wow… you’re a groupie,’ he joked.

‘Shut up, no, I’m not!’ she laughed, patting him playfully on the chest. ‘Wait, am I?’ she asked seriously, looking up.

‘No, you’re not,’ he calmed her down. ‘I was just kidding.’ He kissed her forehead. ‘You don’t act like one. You seem to care about me, Mark, not about Jefferson, the photographer-turned-professor.’

‘I do,’ she said, pulling up. ‘And I think I like that guy more.’ She leaned in to kiss him. ‘Don’t get me wrong, I love listening to your lectures, too.’

‘Yeah? I don’t sound too pretentious to you?’ he asked, kissing her back.

‘Just a tiny bit,’ she gestured with her fingers.

‘How dare you.’ He moved around so that he was on top of her, playfully grabbing her wrists.

‘But it’s hot. You’re all so… smug, walking around the desks with confidence, sitting on the one in front of me, piercing through me with those dark brown eyes, your voice deep, and I’m all, like, teach me, professor,’ she giggled. Laughing lightly with her, he brought his lips to her neck, turning her giggle into a moan.
‘You’re such a naughty girl,’ he murmured, moving up to kiss her. ‘You look so innocent, but you’re so goddamn dirty.’

Max felt her excitement rise at his words, feeling a warm thrill between her legs. His hand ducked under the covers and his fingers found their way to her wet clit. He was teasing it for a moment, then her entrance, until he slid them inside her. He was rubbing against her wall, kissing her neck. He managed to find her sweet spot pretty quickly, applying more and more pressure, drawing small circles around it, faster and faster, until Max couldn’t hold on any longer; she tightly grabbed his arm, her body spasming, trying to come quietly but failing, so he had to silence her with a kiss again.

Exhaling loudly, she sent him a dazed look.

‘Three to two, you owe me one,’ he said, giving her a quick kiss and getting out of bed, leaving Max a bit astonished and disappointed. Only a quick kiss…? She didn’t want to feel that way, but she felt a light stab in her heart.

She slowly sat up and covered herself up with the blanket, gazing at his naked body. She noticed he was hard again, and began staring, her lips parted.

‘Hey, you got something I can clean my hands with?’ he asked, snapping her out of her awe.

‘Yeah,’ she said, blinking repeatedly. ‘On the tallest shelf,’ she gestured to her closet, ‘there’s a, uh, an antibacterial gel.’

‘Thanks.’

Mark found it, pumped a few times, then spread it on his palms, waving his hands to let them dry off. He bent down to get his underwear from the floor and began to get dressed.

‘Leaving so soon?’ she teased him, getting out of bed as well. She walked up to him, entirely nude, and hanged her hands on his shoulders, rubbing her breasts against his still bare torso.

‘Baby,’ he said, exhaling, trying not to give in to the temptation, though bringing his hands to her bare hips. ‘If I stay, I’m going to have no choice but to fuck you senseless, and everyone is going to hear you.’

She parted her lips, pretending to be baffled. ‘But you keep making me wet when you say all these things,’ she said, pressing herself closer to him.

‘I know,’ he retorted, kissing her, running his hands up her back, sending shivers down her spine. ‘But I really have to go…’

She broke away from the kiss, and rested her forehead on his chest for a moment, before letting go of him. ‘Yeah, I know.’

As they parted, Mark went back to getting dressed, and they quieted down for a few moments. Max figured she should get dressed too, so that she would be able to get a look at the hallway before he could leave. She put on her pajamas and sat down on the bed, waiting for him to finish.

She got lost in her thoughts for a few seconds there, until she saw the light shifting. She looked up and saw Mark approach her with a concerned look.

‘What’s wrong, baby?’ he asked softly.

‘Nothing.’
‘I really wish I could stay,’ he said, kneeling in front of her and reaching up to cup her face, fully dressed and ready to leave. She brought her hands to his face as well, leaning in for a kiss.

*I’ve gotten attached*, she realized. In a very short period of time, she had gotten attached to him, to them being together, to being close to him, to spending the night… to everything, really – *just* like she had feared from the beginning. But she was too afraid to admit it to him now. *He can probably sleep alone just fine. You’re being pathetic, Max.*

‘Look,’ he started, as he broke away. ‘Come by on the weekend, and I’ll fuck you all you want,’ he said in a low, deep voice, sending her a wide grin, cracking her up and making her smile in kind. He leaned in again, giving her an amorous kiss, gently pulling her lower lip with his teeth as he moved back. ‘Or… make love,’ he added, with his lips wandering off to her neck.

‘Alright,’ she said, sighing, and smiled at him as he faced her again. The sureness of his statement made her feel aroused again, but she knew she shouldn’t be making any more moves on him, or else they’d end up staying there until morning.

‘Good,’ he said, standing up. He pulled her up with him and into a tight hug. They stayed like that for a few seconds, before Mark had to break away again.

‘Can you have a quick glance at the hallway for me, please?’

‘Yeah,’ she replied, giving him one last kiss, and ducked out of the room to see if there was anybody there. ‘All clear.’

‘Bye, baby,’ he said, quickly getting out. She shut the door behind him and leaned against it for a few moments, fighting off her emotions.

*Don’t start crying now, come on.* She tried to fight her tears back, but failed. Defeated, she turned off the night light and got into bed, shedding a couple of tears onto her pillow.

Few moments later, she heard her cellphone buzz and reached out to read the message.

Mark: Okay, no one saw me
Max: That’s good
Mark: I miss you already
Max: I miss you too
Mark: How about we see each other tomorrow afternoon?
Mark: At my place, of course
Max: I’d like that very much
Mark: Okay, great
Mark: See you tomorrow, sweetheart
Max: See you, babe

Smiling lightly to herself, she was beginning to feel a little better, especially since it seemed that Mark felt the same way about them being apart for even less than a day. Still, there was an ache in her heart – she’d much rather fall asleep next to him right now.
Chapter End Notes

Just imagine hearing Jefferson's actual dubbed voice saying that, gasping, "Oh... Max!" (°_5°)
Innocence of Sleep

Chapter Notes

A rather short chapter with some sloooooow fucking if you're into kinky shit like that :)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

PART SEVEN - INNOCENCE OF SLEEP

Wednesday, November 13, 2013

Max looked up and saw Mark drive up to their secret meeting spot. As he got out to open the door for her, he smiled widely at her and she responded in kind.

‘Hi,’ she went up to him, nearly giggling with excitement.

‘Hi, baby,’ he said, taking her hand and leading her inside.

Once in the car, he gave her a small bouquet of red tulips.

‘Mark, they’re gorgeous… thank you,’ she said, leaning in for a kiss. ‘You shouldn’t have.’

‘Oh, yes, I should have and it’s my pleasure,’ he smiled and started the engine, driving away soon after.

He hadn’t actually been giving her flowers, he realized, except for that little rose during their first dinner date. Max didn’t mind, his presence would make her forget about such minor things – though, of course, it was always nice to receive flowers. She buried her face in the bouquet, inhaling its faint scent, smiling widely.

Mark, being forced to watch the road, couldn’t look at Max now for more than a split second, but it gave her a chance to admire the sharp outline of his jaw and the way his beard dipped lower onto his neck just a bit, stopping at his Adam’s apple. His lips slightly parted and the way the glasses framed his eyes mixed with the focused look on his face rendered his look all the more handsome. He knew she was observing him and it made him smirk under his nose.

Sitting down for dinner, Mark asked, ‘Would like wine or water?’

‘Hm… Okay, wine, but just one glass,’ she answered, raising her index finger.

‘There you go.’ He smiled at her, pouring one. ‘I’ve missed you, you know?’

‘Missed you, too,’ she responded, hiding her smile behind the glass. ‘The day seemed to go on forever.’

‘Mine too. At least I got to see you during Photography Lab. I adore seeing you work,’ he complimented her.
‘Thank you,’ she blushed.

‘Again, that picture you produced on the spot? I am truly impressed, Max,’ he said with a grin and admiration in his eyes.

‘Oh, stop it, you’re spoiling me,’ she giggled.

‘Good. I like doing that,’ he winked.

‘Would you dance with me to one of my favorite songs?’ he asked after they were done with the meal. He felt so carefree; Max’s allure was making him want to do such things, when in the past, it had only served as an easy way of seducing a stranger.

‘I would,’ she smiled gorgeously, biting down on her lip.

He pulled out a record and put the needle on track one.

‘Now… it’s not a slow song, but… we’ll make do,’ he smirked and pulled her into a dance, she giggling.

{♪ “I Feel You” – Depeche Mode}

He wasn’t dancing too crazily with her in his arms to the song’s rhythm, but he was being playful, spinning her around repeatedly, then pulling her back in, mouthing the lyrics and sending her a wide grin. Max listened to the words, in awe that he was behaving this way. Mark suddenly tilted her lower, holding her tightly by the waist, and kissed her as he pulled her back up, making her giggle. She hanged her arms around his neck, kissing him back more eagerly. He then picked her up, and spun around with her as the song headed towards its end.

‘How did my baby like the dance?’ he asked with a soft smile.

‘She liked it very much,’ Max replied, unable to contain her grin.

My baby, she marveled in her mind. He was being so charming, and her heart couldn’t help but melt.

After getting a little too intoxicated with wine than they had planned, Mark led Max to his bedroom. They were clumsily losing pieces of their clothing, laughing and being altogether just so playful and comfortable around each other, until they were completely nude.

Mark sat by the bedframe and led Max to sit astride him, but with her back pressed to his torso, much to her surprise.

‘Let’s try this way, shall we?’ he said, his voice low and enticing in her ear.

Max felt thrill at his words, acquiescing to his demand with an excited smile.

Holding her by the waist, he began kissing her neck, sending tingles down her body, his other hand slipping down between her legs, gently stroking her warmth. She brought her hand to his, pressing it closer, feeling his fingers touch just the right spots. His movements became more insistent, causing her to moan and pull herself up, holding onto his embracing arm and getting away in response to the pleasure. He began stroking her clit more insistently; hearing how his fingers were sliding on her wet arousal, and her continuous gasps added to his excitement, making him hard. Sensing she was
getting close, he began stroking it side to side, faster and faster, until Max threw her head back, pressing her back to his torso and her legs together, her moan loudly as his touch brought her to climax, tightening her grip around his arms.

She turned to face him, gazing at him in awe, smiling with delight, and he began kissing her passionately, his fingertips brushing lightly against her sides, she feeling her own wetness being smudged on her skin.

Mark then picked her up and laid her gently on the pillows, letting her rest on her back, and leaned on top of her, kissing her. He started delicately, slowly sliding his tongue inside her mouth, gradually deepening the kiss, his hand gently caressing her breast. She loosely wrapped her legs around his waist, holding him by the face, matching the intensity of his kiss, feeling his tongue against her own, warmth spreading between her things. His hand skimmed lower, reaching her hip, his fingertips sending pleasurable tickling, making her moan into the kiss and break away with a gasp.

He sent her a smile and he began kissing her jaw, moving lower and sucking on the skin on her neck, sliding his hand lower, traveling from her thigh to her bottom, again causing her to moan, this time lightly and directly into his ear, which prompted him to pull up. Kneeling low in front of her, he straightened up his torso and slowly entered her, smiling at her all the while.

Holding onto her thighs, he was moving gently within her, sliding in almost entirely in then almost entirely out, creating a light friction, pressing himself a bit harder at the end of each thrust, intensifying the sensation for both of them. Sometimes it seemed to Max as though Mark knew her body better than she did herself. She oh so loved how he was fucking her slowly, he felt so deliciously full filling her, rubbing against all of her being. She closed her eyes in pleasure, moaning quietly.

Mark slid his palm from her mons, up her tummy, stopping at the parting of her ribcage, prompting her to open her eyes. He then slid it to the side and up, cupping her breast and ran his thumb against her hardened nipple – just like he had done the first time they had made love, Max realized. The rhythm quickened only a bit, he was now moving more decisively inside her, holding her delighted gaze, propping himself up on one arm, which he rested against the covers, moving his other palm up and down the parting of her ribcage, she up and down that same arm, her eyes half-closed.

He felt calm and relaxed, simply enjoying her tight, wet warmth, purposefully prolonging the thrusts as much as possible, only to feel how all of her was rubbing against all of him, the passion on her face adding to his desire. She kept tightening and loosening the grip around his waist, her heels digging into his loins only so slightly. She didn’t want him to intensify his movements nor did she want them to reach their peaks just yet – she just wanted to feel him like this, possibly forever, their moans tranquil, harmonious.

Max pulled him down after a few moments, he stopping his gentle thrusts, sharing a passionate kiss with her, his hand at her thigh. His lips trailed off to her jaw, her neck, behind her earlobe, to her collarbones, down her sternum, stopping at her nipple. She could feel his mouth closing around her breast, his warm tongue circling slowly, and she felt herself ache for him further.

Pressing himself closer to her body, Mark gave her a little kiss before resuming his slow movements, leaving wet kisses on her neck, she gracing him with sweet moans into his ear, locking him in a tight embrace, her eyes closed. Their pleasure was slowly mounting, stronger and stronger until they came together, moaning lightly, each observing the passion on the face of the other.

Dazed by their shared orgasm, they smiled widely at each other with joy. He leaned in for a kiss, deep and passionate, his fingertips lightly skimming up and down her sides, feeling her embrace his neck with one arm, fingers entwining in his hair and gently rubbing the skin on his head.
Approaching 10pm, they were lying comfortably under the covers, warm and snuggled up together, eyes closed, the room dimly lit by a faint light falling out of the nightlight on the bedside cabinet.

‘Hey, Max,’ Mark started quietly, his voice soothing, ‘will you stay over?’ He was tenderly caressing her hair, relishing in the intimacy.

‘I was hoping you would ask that,’ she replied quietly without opening her eyes, snuggling up closer to him and making him smile. ‘I love sleeping next to you.’ Going in blind, she slid her hand up, her fingers stroking the side of his face.

‘Me too,’ he said, gently kissing her forehead, tightening his embrace a bit.

He loved having her in his arms, feeling the warmth of her body, being able to inhale the light coconut scent of her hair… If it was up to him entirely, she would be here by his side every night, locked in his embrace, snuggled up to him. And she loved being this close to him, too, his body so comfortable to rest against, making her feel secure – dozing off to sleep had never been easier.

Max turned up to face him, looking adorable, he thought, with her sleepy eyes and a wide smile. He caressed her cheek, reciprocating her smile, feeling warmth spreading through his chest.

Mark realized he was falling in love with her – fully and undoubtedly. And there was no going back.

He was lightly brushing his fingertips on her skin, lulling her to sleep, observing the calmness on her innocent face, his heart melting. He too eventually dozed off, a smile on his lips.

_Thursday, November 14, 2013_

In the morning, during breakfast, and later, during his lecture, Mark couldn’t keep his eyes off Max, glancing at her all too many times, and had to fight back his smile, lest someone would notice.

He knew that now he was going to have to be cautious around her not to accidentally confess his feelings to her.

Chapter End Notes

Was this too fluffy? idk. I just want them to be happy :)
PART EIGHT - IN YOUR ROOM

Saturday, November 16, 2013

In the midst of yet another blissful weekend at Mark’s place, today they found themselves unable to get enough of each other, staying mostly in the bedroom, walking around the house in their underwear when taking a break to eat and drink something – most of which they would eventually consume in bed anyway. There was a television in there as well, so they were able to watch movies all they wanted, but they would still end up making love instead.

Evening approaching, they were now getting busy in bed again, nude by now.

Mark was behind Max, holding her by her sides, tickling her incessantly, she laughing and squealing, trying to get away.

‘Mercy!’ she exclaimed, unable to contain herself.

‘No mercy for eating the last slice of pizza,’ he said jokingly.

‘I’m sorry! I’m sorry!’ She could barely speak by now, kicking and screaming.

‘Alright, alright. Mercy granted.’

Mark was gradually stopped the tickling, finally letting go of her altogether.

She was trying to calm down, breathing fast, grinning to him, he responding in kind. He reached out to her, gently brushing her bangs to the side.

‘You evil man!’ she said, pouting.

‘Me?’ he scoffed, pretending to be baffled. ‘Evil?’

‘Yes, you.’

Mark climbed on top of her, planting kisses from her sternum until he reached her lips, kissing her playfully.

‘I should so punish you, though,’ he said, nuzzling her neck, and pulled away, straightening up and smiling widely.

‘Huh? Why?’ She too pulled up, resting on her elbows, and reached out with her foot, playfully
running her toes up his torso.

‘Well, since you devoured that last slice all on your own, I’m going to have to eat something else now, aren’t I?’ he joked and suddenly grabbed her by the ankles, pulling her closer, making her squeal and giggle.

He gently spread her legs and leaned down on top of her to give her a little smooch. He slowly planted kisses down to her abdomen, not omitting an inch, slowly running his tongue down her mons and abruptly pulled away just before reaching her clit, teasing her. Seeing her arch her pelvis in anticipation, he smirked and began tracing kisses from her knee along her inner thigh, licking and lightly biting once he reached closer to the middle, hearing her pleasurable sigh. Again, thinking she was going to finally feel his tongue on herself, she moaned at the prospect, but he teased her again, moving away and doing the same thing with the other thigh.

Approaching her awaiting heat, he began tracing wet kisses all the way down to the middle, his warm tongue finally started gently grazing her clit, eliciting a relieved moan from her, he closing his eyes for a moment and smiling as he heard that sound. His tongue was sliding smoothly up and down on her arousal, relishing in the taste, sending pleasurable tingling sensation as he moved side to side. Max dug her fingers in his hair, tugging lightly, sighing and biting down on her smile, and Mark reached out around her legs, fondling her tummy and breasts while his tongue and lips were pleasuring her. She was trying to get a hold of his hands in response to the pleasure, pressing them closer, moaning as he intensified his strokes, his warm breath and his beard scraping against her surface more rapidly.

He soon felt her muscles contracting, her hands tightening their grip on his wrists, and a lovely cry of passion reached his ears as he made her come. Still lightly stroking her, he glanced up and they locked eyes, she sending him an awed look. He came up from between her legs, ran his palm by his beard to clean himself up a bit, and leaned in for a kiss, she entwining her fingers in his hair and pressing her legs together with him in between.

He reached down and guided himself inside her, starting out slowly and gently, leaving delicate little kisses on her lips, she lightly scratching his back in return.

After a little while, without stopping, he leaned lower, gave her a sloppy, little smooch and then looked her in the eyes, an excited smile on his face. ‘Wanna go faster?’ he asked.

‘Yeah,’ she grinned back at him, and saw him straighten up his torso. He thrusted slower but harder a couple of times, gradually speeding up, holding onto her tights and looking at her with a smirk, seeing her face change as she kept gasping and sighing interchangeably, though with a dose of a delighted smile.

He grabbed her leg and put it a bit higher so that her heel was tucked behind his shoulder, allowing him to go in a bit deeper, and he began pushing into her harder, feeling the pleasurable friction against her wall, moaning in a deep timbre that Max adored so much. He sped up, now looking at her with lust, his breath quickening, sweat breaking out.

Her head was repeatedly hitting against the bedframe, a pillow softening the blows, while he was driving into her, leaning against it, pressing her other thigh to her torso. Max was holding his gaze, her eyes half-open, moaning as she felt him continuously hit against the sweet spot.

Abruptly, he moved her lower, leaned closer and began thrusting with more speed and force until she fell apart, crying out loudly. She sent him an awed smile, and closed her eyes, breathing heavily, feeling worn out.
‘Hey, don’t slack off on me just yet. I am so far from done,’ he chuckled lightly, his voice deep, cracking her up as well, and turned her onto her tummy. She graced him with a big smile over her shoulder, giggling.

He traced wet kisses down her back, sending pleasurable tingling, again building up the anticipation, then grabbed her gently by the waist, pulling her up so that she was on all fours, he behind her. He spread her legs further and entered her again, going slowly at first, sliding in a bit deeper than in the previous position, lightly scratching her bottom, the tickling adding to the sensation. Max felt her pleasure was mounting faster than usual, her first climax still not having faded away.

Mark slightly picked up the pace, relishing in the feeling of her tight, wet warmth around him, listening to her calm moans, enjoying the exciting view in front of him.

Her chest on the bed’s surface, hips pulled up, she turned back as far as she could to face him, her lips parted, holding his gaze as he was pushing into her, holding her steadily by the waist, his body slamming against hers, the sound of which echoing in the room mixed with their gasps and sighs.

She extended her arm to him, he taking her hand, his other hand on her lower back, driving faster into her, his breathing quickening, closing his eyes for a moment, letting out a groan. He then experimentally slid his index finger up her bottom, much to her surprise… and delight. She found she liked the sensation, letting out an astonished, amusing little moan, making him smirk.

With him hitting the sweet spot again with more speed and force, Max released her hand from his and pulled herself up on her arms, arching her back and crying out as she reached the second peak, squeezing the covers.

He removed his finger and slowed down a bit, moving gently within her now, giving her time to collect herself, and saving up his own energy to go further in a few moments.

Max definitely enjoyed a more intense intercourse such as this one, and was now wondering how rough he was actually able to go, and how much she was able to endure.

She looked back at him again, smiling with delight, biting down on her finger. ‘Mark?’

‘Mm?’ he asked, locking eyes with her, maintaining the slow rhythm, reaching out and running his hand up her back.

‘How… rough can you go?’ she asked a bit shyly.

His expression turned amused mixed with excitement, as he leaned down closer, spanking her bottom playfully, making her squeal and giggle.

‘Naughty girl, you!’ He straightened up, pulling her up with him, and nuzzled her neck from behind, making squeal again, she turning back and meeting his lips. They began kissing eagerly, Mark reaching around to cup her breasts, squeezing lightly.

‘Oh, I can be really rough when I want to,’ he said as their lips parted, his timbre low in her ear, making her shiver.

‘Then why don’t you show me?’ she asked, her eyes narrowed, fixing him with gaze, he smirking at her in response.

He pulled her earlobe with his teeth and asked, ‘Are you sure?’

‘Fuck me,’ she commanded, sending him a cheeky smile, leaning down again and arching her back.
He shook his head at her, she sending him a dirty look over her shoulder.

‘How can I say no then?’ he said, sounding pleased.

She heard his low, content hum, and felt his fingertips run along her back, stopping at her hips and tightly gripping her, causing just a bit of pain. He spanked her again, a bit harder, she wincing and arching her back, and leaned forward, moaning in thrill to let him know it was alright.

Pushing her lower, he entered her gently, going in only a bit further than his tip, then thrusted roughly into her, making her cry out in excitement. Fired up by seeing her enjoy this, he slammed into her again, she making the same sound, bracing herself for the next blow that soon followed, and the next, and the next, and the next, and the next, hearing his grunts. She looked back at him, seeing him push into her, her lips parted, sending him an awed look.

He gradually picked up the pace, maintaining the force, reaching for her arms, and pinning them behind her back, perpetually driving into her. It seemed her knew exactly how fast and hard to go to hit all the right spots; the friction bringing a warm thrill to her core, and even though it was difficult not to be able to use her arms to prop herself up, Max found herself wanting him to keep restraining her like that, her pleasure building up again. His breathing quickened, he was cursing under his breath, his want overtaking.

‘Oh fuck, oh fuck!’ she exclaimed, overwhelmed by the raw pleasure, bending lower as her second climax turned into the third, releasing her arms from his grip, slowly moving her hips back to meet his.

Mark leaned down to leave a tender kiss on the back of her neck, feeling exhausted, but he wasn’t done just yet. He then straightened back up and resumed his movements within her, slowly at first, soon thrusting more harshly into her, his breathing becoming faster and rougher, letting out loud groans, going as fast as he could, feeling his excitement escalate into its final stage. Max’s moans accompanied his, she clutched to the covers, leaning against the bed, biting down on the pillow, overwhelmed by the sheer pleasure. She pulled up as she felt his hand on her shoulder now, he was aggressively pushing into her until she couldn’t hold on any longer, the friction having become all too strong. She let out a drawn-out scream, her body spasming and ready to give up. He smashed her face into the soft pillow, fucking her harder. She soon felt him pull her hair slightly as he released inside her with slow but harsh thrusts, feeling her as deep as he could.

‘Max,’ he called out, drawling out the vowel, his growl loud and his orgasm intense. He could hear her grunts as he brought himself to climax, his movements inside her were definitely rough.

He gently got off her and got a look of her gorgeously reddened, enlarged folds. So beautiful, he thought, taking a mental picture. He brushed his fingertips against them, feeling a light throbbing. They were wet and smooth to the touch, resembling a rose.

Exhausted, Mark slowly leaned down over her, placing sloppy kisses on her upper back and neck.

Trying to calm his breathing, he whispered, lightly tickling her ear, ‘Are you okay, babygirl?’

Max needed a few more moments before she spoke. ‘Yeah,’ she said, panting, ‘I’m okay.’

Max was finally able to lie down, dropping her body onto the covers with exhaustion. He lay on his back beside her; she was facing him, her eyes shut, clutching the covers, overwhelmed by the series of orgasms he had just given her, her lips parted, breathing out in short puffs. She felt herself pulsating, pleasure permeating through her entire body. Mark reached out to caress her cheek and she smiled against his touch, though without opening her eyes. He lay back, breathing deeply in and out,
Max was lying on her stomach beside Mark, trying to come to her senses, eyes lightly shut, her breathing beginning to even down, his seed having dripped out of her onto the covers. Mark was brushing his fingertips up and down her arm, trailing off up her shoulder and down her back. He could smell the faint scent of her sweat, it having an arousing effect on him.

He was observing her for a while, admiring her nude body. She always looked so beautiful to him in her post-climax state, with rosy cheeks and a calm, satisfied expression on her face, sweat glistening on her skin… and right now he couldn’t fight off the temptation that was overcoming him.

Suddenly, he pulled up, and started, ‘Hey, Max, um…’

Her eyes fluttered open and she looked up at him, a little surprised to hear him hesitate.

‘Would you mind – and it’s completely fine if you say no – would you mind if I took pictures of you lying like this?’ he asked, gently drawing circles on her back.

She pulled herself up slightly and considered the offer for a few moments. She felt her heartbeat quicken as she spoke, ‘I… I’d like that, yes.’

‘You sure? You don’t find it too… odd?’

She turned on her side and reached out to scratch his chest. ‘I, uh… I’ve kind of already taken one of you once,’ she said, carefully examining his expression.

‘You have?’ Mark was genuinely surprised. ‘When?’

‘The first night I was here, when you dozed off, remember?’

‘Oh… then.’

‘Are you mad at me?’ she asked quietly.

‘What? No, of course not,’ he leaned in to kiss her, gently stroking her cheek. ‘Can I see it?’

‘Uh, sure. Would you mind passing me my cell?’

He reached out to the bedside cabinet and handed her the phone. ‘There you go.’

‘Thanks.’ She tapped and swiped a bunch of times and finally turned the screen to him. ‘There it is.’

Mark gave it a look – he was lying in bed, naked from the waist up, with a tiny fragment of the covers included in the frame; his right arm lying along his body, the other stretched out and going out of the frame. He looked so peaceful with his eyes lightly shut and his lips slightly parted.

‘I really like this picture of you. It’s, like, exclusively for me,’ she sent him a smile. Mark hummed in response.

‘You’re absolutely sure you want to do this?’ he asked again, having given her the cell back.

‘I mean, they’re only for us to see, right?’

‘Of course. No one else is going to see them.’
So… let’s just do it. Keep them away from a cloud and we should be fine, right?’

‘Right. Okay,’ he said, getting out of bed.

‘Just, uh…’ she stopped him for a second, ‘please, tell me you don’t have some old pictures lying around.’

Mark sat down on the edge of the bed, reaching out with his hand and squeezing her palm as she extended it to him.

‘I mean, I can’t stay it`s the first time I`ve done something like this but,’ he looked deeply into her eyes, ‘I promise, I don’t have any other pictures. The rule is, you break up, you burn and delete the pictures. The only nude or semi-nude photographs I have are from professional photoshoots, you know, part of my resumé.’

‘I get it,’ Max nodded her head, seemingly discouraged now.

‘You don’t want to do this,’ he said, narrowing his eyes.

She sat up, getting a hold of his hands. ‘I do. I really do. But… I want it to be mutual,’ she said, biting on her lip.

‘You mean you’re going to take photos of me too?’ he asked, arching his eyebrow at her, a smile appearing on his face.

‘Yes. It’s only fair, isn’t it? Seeing as I’m an aspiring photographer,’ she sent him a cheeky smile.

‘Can’t argue with that,’ he laughed lightly and kissed her again. ‘Let me bring a camera then.’

He went to the other room and came back with one of his less ‘fancy’ cameras, one that was easier to carry in one hand, just a normal lens attached to it.

‘This one should be enough for our insane ideas,’ he said, kneeling on the bed. ‘Can you lie down like you did when I offered?’

‘On my stomach?’

‘Yeah.’

She positioned herself on her tummy, arching her back concavely, closing her eyes, her arms bent and slightly gripping the covers. He spread her legs a bit further, bending them at her knees, and looked for the best angle. He chose to shoot her from the side, moving closer to her bottom, seeing her gorgeous folds again. He lightly brushed his fingertips against them again.

‘Can I…?’ Mark asked, unsure which word would be suitable in Max’s ears, laughing lightly at his own awkwardness.

Hearing his chuckle, she glanced back at him, and realized what he meant. Feeling heat at his request, she nodded, sending him a smile. She observed the awe and the focus on his face as he proceeded with immortalizing that part of her. Snap.

‘Perfect,’ he marveled, looking at the couple of shots he had taken. He leaned down, placing wet kisses on her bottom, sending pleasurable tingling up her body; she felt a jolt of excitement in her lower abdomen and her clit, letting out a quiet moan. He could taste the sweat on her skin, salt mixed with a dose of bitterness, enjoying it nonetheless.
'Okay, now…' He turned her on her back and messily covered her from her breasts to her mons. Max instinctively knew what to do next – she put one of her legs over the covers, somewhat lying on her side, but not entirely, her eyes half-open, looking directly into the lens. *Snap.*

Mark cupped her face and ran his thumb along her lower lip, then pulled the covers from her breasts and guided her hands to replace them, smiling at her as he did so, bringing a warm thrill between her legs. *Snap.*

With his next idea, he pondered for a minute there, before directing her further.

‘Sit by the bedframe,’ he commanded, then handed her a pillow as she acquiesced. Concealing the intimate parts of her body with it, she pulled one of her legs up, bending her knee, the other leg lying freely on the bed, Max crossing her arms against the pillow, playing shy. *Snap.*

‘You are a natural, Max,’ Mark said, sending her a look of admiration.

‘Thank you,’ she smiled at him.

He took a couple of shots from different angles, marveling as he looked at the screen.

Looking back at her, he asked, ‘Max… would you pose nude for me?’

Biting on her lip in hesitation, she tossed the pillow to the side, exposing herself.

‘Hmm,’ Mark contemplated for a moment. ‘Just one final… touch, though.’

He crouched closer to her and started tracing kisses from her jaw, down her neck, stopping at her breasts and started gently circling his tongue around her nipple, then the other, making them harden. She bit down on her smile, then lay down on her back, allowing Mark to capture her whole, her body stretched out.

He examined the shots and glanced down at her. ‘Stunning,’ he said. ‘Your turn.’ He handed her the camera. ‘How do you want me?’

Max bit on her lip and pondered. ‘Okay, I have an idea,’ she sent him a smile. ‘Sit, rest your back against the bed frame, just like I did. Bend your right knee slightly and straighten your left leg.’ She then covered his left leg and his crotch in a messy way. She reached out with her hand to readjust his hair. ‘May I?’ she asked with a smile.

‘Go ahead,’ he responded in the same manner.

She kneeled astride his left leg, digging her fingers in his hair, brushing them slightly to the side, then ruffling them a bit.

‘*God,* you’re so hot,’ she said with a hint of defeat, making him laugh lightly.

‘Thanks.’ Looking at her with want, Mark couldn’t stop himself and ran his fingers from her sternum down to her mons, sending pleasurable tingling to her core, causing her eyes to flutter.

‘I knew models were distracting,’ she whispered, then gave him a little kiss. ‘Okay, now, prop your elbow on the bent knee. Mhm, like this.’ She crawled back a bit. ‘And now… just smirk and look into the camera.’ She took a couple of shots from various angles. ‘Look to the window now. Yes, great.’

She approached him again and took some closeups.
Flipping through the pictures, she shook her head. ‘I know you do wonders behind camera, but
darn, you could just as well be a model.’

‘You too, my dear.’ He opened his arms wide. ‘Come here.’ She acquiesced and sat astride him
again, snuggling up to him. He pulled the covers up to their waists and took the camera from her
hand. Max pressed herself closely to his chest, resting her forehead on his temple, then put her hand
to his other cheek. He put his left arm around her, his hand on her hip, and took a few selfies of them
in this position.

‘Selfies, huh?’ she asked, laughing lightly. ‘Thought you hated those.’

‘I only hate that name. Self-portrait – that’s the word,’ he replied, his face assuming an amusingly
serious look.

‘Alright, professor,’ she rolled her eyes at him. He began tickling her in response and playfully biting
on her neck, making her squeal, her legs kicking frantically. ‘Stop! Stop! Let me see!’ she said,
laughing and patting him on the arm, trying to get away.

‘Okay, okay,’ he chuckled, pulling her back in and passing her the camera. They were looking at the
pictures with excitement and uncertainty, not sure how they had come out.

‘Huh,’ she raised her eyebrows, stopping to look closer. She tilted her head and pondered for a
moment.

‘What?’

‘We look good together,’ she said, looking to him, and smiled, passing him the camera.

‘We do. And you’re so beautiful,’ he said softly, kissing her on the cheek. ‘You look like you were
made to be in my arms like that.’

She pulled back and smiled at him, bringing her hands to his face, and began kissing him slowly. He
put the camera away and ran his hands down her sides, pressing her closer, kissing her back with
more passion.

Being so intimate with Mark and hearing him say all these things, coupled with the fact that he had
another side to him, a gentle and a caring one, made Max realize she was falling for him. Hard
and for real. That is why she was willing to go as far as they had gone, and that is why in a minute she
would propose something even more daring.

She felt heat rise between her legs, she was kissing him more eagerly now, pressing herself closer.
‘Want to,’ she started, between kisses, ‘make this more explicit?’ she asked, looking at him with
desire. Max… what are you doing?

‘What do you mean by that?’ he smiled at her.

‘I’m pretty sure you know what I mean,’ she looked at him tellingly. Max… what are you doing?!

‘I do,’ he murmured against her lips, kissing her lightly. ‘Alright then.’

Max broke away and turned on her back, moving closer to the pillows, spreading her legs. ‘Go down
on me,’ she said, biting on her finger and sending him a cheeky smile.

He felt a rush of thrill at her eagerness, and so he positioned himself between the thighs, brought his
mouth to her and began slowly circling his tongue around her folds. She sighed slightly, but then sat
up, trying to get a better angle. She captured him with his eyes closed, his tongue half-buried in her, one of his hands firmly holding her leg open. If anyone had ever been to find this picture, they would have no problem recognizing him.

‘This… I haven’t done before,’ he said, straightening up and going up to kiss her.

‘Mm, so I can give you your firsts too, huh?’ she said, her lips going lower and kissing his neck, then she passed him the camera.

‘Looks like it,’ he smiled at her. ‘Okay, rematch. But I’m going to have to get ready for this.’

‘Well, let me help you then,’ she said, her voice low, taking his dick into her hand, beginning to move it up and down his length, looking him in the eyes, her lips parted. It didn’t take her long to make him hard, smiling at him widely as she’d done so. ‘What now?’ she asked, lying on her stomach, pulled up on her elbows.

‘Stay how you are, but,’ he crouched lower beside her, his erection closer to her face. ‘Okay, now… put your mouth to it – horizontally, don’t take him in yet.’

Max slid her tongue across his length a couple of times, holding him in her palm at the bottom. She stopped midway, her mouth and eyes half-open, looking into the lens. He snapped a picture, then commanded, ‘Now, with your eyes closed.’ She put her mouth closer to him, her lips pressed against him, enabling Mark to take a shot he actually wanted. ‘Incredible.’

She smiled at him, in disbelief as she thought of what they were actually doing.

‘And just so you know – I haven’t done this either. Compared to this, you’d say those old pictures were prudish.’ She sent him another smile, a cheeky one this time.

‘Lie down,’ she said, gently pushing him down. ‘No, hold onto the camera,’ she said as he offered it to her.

Once he was on his back, she took him in, moving her mouth up and down, rubbing at the base.

‘Okay, stay like this,’ he said suddenly, then proceeded to take a shot.

Her face looked similarly to how it was the first time she’d gone down on him – innocent, her freckles visible on her face, her tiny mouth closed around him, appearing to be smiling, eyes lightly shut. He sat up and caressed her cheek with his other hand, capturing that moment as well.

Mark felt a little perverse; thinking about how her innocent look made him not only inspired purely because of her beauty, but because of how sexually attracted he felt to it.

Max continued her movements, sucking with more intensely, then ran her mouth from his tip, along the side, down to the base, and sent him a bright smile before sucking on his scrotum for a while.

‘Oh, fuck,’ he said, overwhelmed by the pleasure, his eyes fluttering shut. He felt her tongue going from the base up, and he pulled up to look at her, putting the camera down on the bed, and pulled her face up, kissing her deeply. ‘You’re still sure you’re okay with this?’ he asked.

‘Yes. I am sure. I trust you,’ she said slowly, kissing him back. ‘My turn again.’

She lay on her back again, pulled up only slightly, and spoke again, ‘Get between my legs again.’

He obliged, lying down on his stomach. ‘Aw, you’re so wet,’ he remarked, looking delighted,
grabbing her thighs and putting his tongue to her wetness. She used this moment, him looking ravenous, and snapped a picture. With him drinking her up, she took a few more, struggling to focus as she felt his tongue inside her.

‘Tease my inner thigh, like you usually do,’ she said between gasps. He moved to where she told him to – his dark brown eyes half-opened, looking enticingly, his tongue against her skin. ‘Now, look into the camera,’ she said, taking another picture.

Mark then moved his lips back to her folds, his tongue pleasuring her, causing her to moan and call out his name.

‘Yes, dear?’ he asked, his voice low, smiling against her. He put his arm around her leg and rested his hand on her tummy. He then laced his fingers with hers, using the other hand, and looked up at her. ‘Remember this?’

‘Mhm, let me immortalize it,’ she said, snapping a picture once he got back to work. It was difficult to focus and keep the camera straight having only one hand at her disposal and with him maneuvering his tongue like that, making it more and more pleasurable. She gave up, put the camera away and entwined her fingers in his hair, moving her hips to meet his lips.

Her moaning became louder until she couldn’t hold on any longer and came, crying out and throwing her head back.

‘Sorry for interrupting you,’ he said, ‘I was thirsty.’

‘I forgive you,’ she chuckled lightly at his joke.

Coming up, he ran his tongue from her clit up her mons and positioned himself between her legs, planting kisses all the way up to her mouth, kissing her deeply. She held onto him, scratching his back, feeling his hardness touch between her thighs.

Wanting to relieve his tension, he moved around, sat up and pulled Max on top of himself. Sitting astride him and sending him a gorgeous smile, she got a hold of his length, slowly moving her hand up and down, rubbing it against her labia at the same time, making him gasp.

‘Do you want to continue?’ he asked, trying to focus.

‘Yes,’ she nodded.

Mark reached for the camera. Max parted her lips slightly, looking down, and stopped her movements for a few seconds, giving him a chance to capture the moment. He then pulled her closer for a kiss, his hand on her back, digging his fingers into her. Their passion building up, she reached back and guided him inside her, sighing as she felt him within her. She pressed herself close to him, riding him gently, trying to savor the sensation.

Having left the camera on the pillow, he embraced her tightly and brought his mouth to her neck, placing pleasurable tickling kisses, feeling himself deep inside her. She was licking and pulling on his earlobe, feeling her chest brushing against his. He oh so loved the way she was quietly moaning in his ear, the sound adding to his desires. They moved together, not rushing to finish, just enjoying the moment. His hands were all over her back, either brushing gently against it, or digging his fingers in her skin. She pulled away from his neck and rested her forehead against his, looking him in the eyes and smiling, he reciprocating and reaching up to feel her breast with his hand. She began kissing him slowly, kind of sloppily because of their continuous movements, but soon had to break away, feeling her pleasure overcome her. She started riding him faster, holding onto his shoulders,
gasp[58x748]ing and letting out short moans.

She yet again went to kiss his neck, hiding her face from him because of what she was about to say. ‘Fuck,’ she started, slowing down a bit and feeling him deeper, biting on his lobe again, ‘you’re so fucking big.’

He got a hold of her face, looking her in the eyes with want. ‘You dirty, little girl,’ he uttered, playfully biting her neck. He gently pushed her off himself and onto her back, so that her head was in the foot of the bed. ‘Let me show you big,’ he added.

‘Oh, is that right?’ she chuckled at him as he leaned on top of her, giving her a little kiss. He straightened up and reached back for his camera. Leaning on top of her again, he pressed his hand to the parting of her ribcage, air escaping her lungs, and looked at her with dominance.

‘Yeah, that’s right,’ he said and entered her suddenly, causing her to gasp. He started slowly, as though to tease her further, putting his hand to her breast and squeezing it tightly, and lined up the shot, her eyes wide and lips parted.

‘So lascivious,’ he said, smirking at her.

‘Who, me?’ she sent him a seemingly coy smile, which then turned into a smirk as well.

‘Yes, you.’ Putting the camera away, he leaned down and kissed her.

He gradually picked up the pace, soon pushing harder into her, holding onto her hips, she gripping the covers. With him continuously slamming into her, she soon felt herself tip over the edge, coming with a loud moan, closing her eyes and falling apart.

Mark slowed down his movements and was wondering now whether to ask her one last thing that had just popped into his head.

‘Max, baby,’ he started, nudging her leg.

‘Mmmm?’ she asked, without opening her eyes, breathing heavily and trying to come to her senses.

‘I’ve one last idea for a photograph,’ he said, looking at her with thrill and a slight hesitation. ‘But if you think it’s too insane, you can say no, alright? I want you to know that.’

She opened her eyes and looked at him quizzically. She watched him exit her and take his dick into his hand, moving up and down, getting himself to finish, and she quickly realized what he meant.

‘Do you want to finish… here?’ She ran her fingers from between her breasts down her stomach, looking at him enticingly, her heart racing.

‘Yeah,’ he said, holding her gaze, breathing unevenly.

Fuck. I am insane. Insane! she thought. Maybe it was the fact that she felt more relaxed doing this now that she had come, when her body was in this exhilarating state, her brain full of endorphins, but… she found herself agreeing to his proposition, though way more kinky this time.

‘Alright,’ she said, smiling at him, biting on her lip.

We’re insane. This is fucking insane! Mark screamed at himself in his mind, though he didn’t stop, moving his hand faster, feeling himself get close to ending. Finally, he ejaculated on her with a hushed moan, the first outburst landing on her stomach, then he aimed for her clit, releasing all the
way up to the parting of her ribcage. She ran her tongue against her lower lip before biting on it, sending him an aroused look, all the while her heart was pounding with a mixture of excitement and a slight uncertainty. Seeing her pleased reaction, he smiled at her, then reached back for the camera. Once at her side again, he gently took her hand into his and guided it between her legs, then propped one of her legs slightly up, bending her knee. Her face was all ready to go, flushed with pink, eyes wide and hair messy and she picked up on his cues, posing for him.

He found the best angle and took several shots of her, while she changed her pose a few times, such as closing her eyes, parting her lips or enticingly tasting his release on her finger.

Done with capturing her, he shook his head, sending her an awed look. ‘You are… something else.’ She kept surprising him with just how far she was willing to go with him.

He put the camera away and began gently stroking her knee. ‘So… you’re okay?’ he asked.

‘I am,’ she sent him a wide grin. ‘We’re insane, but I’m okay.’

‘We sure are,’ he said, shaking his head slowly and smiling widely.

‘Would you mind getting me a towel for, uh, this?’ she gestured to her stomach.

‘Sure, hold on,’ he said, getting out of bed. He went to the bathroom and brought her a large towel. ‘There you go.’

‘Thanks.’ She cleaned herself up and got out of bed. ‘Think I need a shower.’ Extending her arm to him, she asked, ‘Wanna join me?’

‘Mhm, yes,’ he said, following her to the bathroom. He let go of her hand and tickled her sides. She lost her balance laughing, but he was prepared to catch her, kissing her on the neck.

‘Please, have mercy,’ she chuckled lightly, trying to contain herself.

‘Alright, alright.’

Coming back to bed, she tried walking more carefully, so as not to let Mark know she was feeling sore, but of course he noticed, grinning at her as he pulled himself up.

‘What are you so happy about?’ she asked, frowning at him.

‘Oh, nothing,’ he smirked at her, sending her a dirty look, struggling not to smile widely.

‘Wow… you are actually proud of yourself.’ She shook her head. ‘This is all your fault,’ she said, pretending to be angry, carefully getting into bed. ‘I’m way too fragile for that wild stuff.’

‘Hey, I reckon someone requested it.’ He arched her eyebrow at her, causing her to finally crack up. ‘You loved it and you know it,’ he added, his voice low and deep, catching her in his arms from behind as she lay down next to him, nuzzling her neck, then gently biting her and leaving kisses.

‘You evil, evil man.’ She reached back to press his face closer to her neck, feeling the pleasurable caresses.

‘How bad is it, though?’ he asked softly.

‘Just sore muscles. No abrasions.’
‘Good. Wouldn’t want to actually hurt you.’ He snuggled her closer.

‘I know.’ She sighed, closing her eyes. ‘And yeah… I did like it,’ she said, biting down on her smile.

‘Ha! I knew it,’ he said with a deep timbre in her ear.

Max rolled over so that she was now facing him, and leaned in for a kiss, then put her head on his chest, digging herself into him, he holding her. She closed her eyes, breathing him in.

After a few moments, though, Mark heard her stomach rumble.

‘You want to eat something?’ he asked.

‘Isn’t it too late?’

He glanced at the bedside clock. ‘It’s around 9pm,’ he said. ‘And besides, it doesn’t matter what time it is. I probably wore you out a bit, no wonder you’re starving,’ he added, laughing lightly.

‘Only a bit, huh?’ she laughed with him. ‘Okay, let’s go.’

‘So, Mark, uh,’ Max started, swallowing a large bite of her sandwich. ‘We should probably discuss the pictures…’

‘We should, yes,’ Mark agreed. ‘Anything you wanted to propose?’

‘Well… first of all, where do we keep them?’

‘Hm,’ he pondered for a moment. ‘On a separate memory card? Or… we print them out?’

Max put her sandwich down on the plate, and sighed. ‘I’m kind of afraid to look at them at the moment, to be honest.’

‘Oh.’ Mark stopped eating as well and turned to her. ‘Why?’

‘I… I’m not sure how I look in them.’

‘I understand,’ he nodded. ‘We don’t have to do this now if you don’t want to.’

‘No, it’s not that I don’t want to. I am curious. It’s just…’ she cut off, unable to find words.

‘Okay, look.’ Mark reached out to her, grabbing her hands and squeezing her palms reassuringly. ‘If you end up not liking some or even all of them, we can delete them.’

Max was slowly nodding.

‘Please, tell me if you think it was a mistake,’ he asked with concern, bringing her hands close to his lips.

‘No. I don’t regret taking them.’ She released her hands from his, bringing them to his face. ‘I mean it, okay?’ Mark nodded, smiling slightly. ‘We had a lot of fun doing that, right?’

‘Right.’

Max smiled widely for a moment. ‘I just… don’t know what to expect. I’m not sure how I came out.’
‘Oh Max,’ he started, cupping her face and lightly stroking it. ‘I can assure you – you were so stunning in there. Impressive. You completely blew me away.’

She looked down for a second, then met his eyes, smiling. ‘Alright,’ she agreed.

‘And hey, whenever you decide you don’t want these pictures to exist, we destroy them, no feelings hurt, okay?’

‘Okay. And same goes for you.’

‘Agreed.’ He took her hand and placed a gentle kiss on it.

Chapter End Notes

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In Your Room, Pt. 2

Sunday, November 17, 2013

Mark woke up with his arm around Max, lying behind her, her back snuggled up to his torso. He smiled to himself and glanced at the bedside clock – 7am. It seemed she was fully out, most likely exhausted after the previous evening, the realization making him smirk.

Not wanting to interrupt her blissful rest, he carefully untangled himself from their already loose embrace, and placed a tender kiss on her cheek. In the abyss of her slumber, her mind registered the caress, making her let out a little content moan-slash-hum, and she rolled over to the other side, still sleeping. She looked so adorable. Mark chuckled lightly and got out of bed. He grabbed a towel and a pair of sport shorts and went downstairs, leaving the door to the bedroom cracked open just a bit.

Not long after that, Max woke up, yawning and rubbing her eyes. She noticed Mark wasn’t in the bed with her, but she heard some weird noises coming from downstairs. Having stretched her body, feeling a pleasurable tingling in all her muscles, she quietly headed towards the source. The strange noises intensified, it was as though someone was panting and exhaling with effort, in regular intervals, though at an odd pace.

When she reached the living room it all became clear – there he was, on the floor, doing pushups, his body glistening with sweat, his back and arm muscles tensing and untensing. Max leaned against the frame of the arched door, and began observing her man as he was working out, smiling to herself.

Mark had heard her light footsteps, thus he wasn’t startled now that he faced her. He got up and dried off the sweat on his forehead, then his neck and chest with the towel he had brought.

‘Good morning,’ he greeted her with a wide grin, sounding out of breath. ‘How’s my best model ever?’

‘Good morning,’ she replied in kind. ‘She’s great. Though, she’s definitely not a model.’

‘But she’s definitely the best,’ he retorted, making her chuckle.

‘Fine, I concede,’ she said, putting her hands in a pretend-surrender gesture. ‘How’s the hottest photographer-turned-professor ever?’ she shot back, cracking up at her own ridiculous comment.

Mark approached her slowly, purposefully sticking his chest a bit forward, sending her a confident, enticing look. He leaned against the arched door over Max, and leaned in for a smooch, not wanting to touch her now that he wasn’t feeling all that fresh.

‘Oh, he couldn’t be better,’ he said, giving her another kiss. ‘Would you like some breakfast?’

‘Well, um, yeah… but I can wait for you.’

‘No need if you’re hungry now. I have that granola you like, and yoghurt, how about that?’

‘Okay,’ she nodded, ‘that sounds good.’

‘Come on then,’ he said, and followed her to the kitchen.

Once her bowl was filled with the delicious cereal, yoghurt and some fruit as well, he asked, ‘Want some coffee too?’
'Coffee can wait until you’re back here with me,’ Max said, smiling at him lovingly.

Mark grinned widely. ‘Alright then. I’ll shower quickly,’ he said.

‘I’ll be waiting.’

When she was nearly done eating, he finally joined her, fresh out of the shower, his hair still a bit wet and non-styled yet, his glasses on. *Bastard still looks hot, though,* Max thought.

At first, he made two coffees, handing one to his girlfriend, and placing his cup on the counter. He then proceeded with making himself a bit more substantial meal, considering he had just worked out and was in need of good calories – fried eggs with a small strip of bacon he would allow himself once in a while, and some broccoli, all accompanied by a glass of pomegranate juice.

‘Maybe I should start working out, too,’ Max said.

‘You want to get ripped?’ Mark chuckled lightly, cracking her up as well.

‘Not necessarily, just, uh… maybe yoga? Or some sort of lighter cardio workout. I don’t know yet.’

‘I thought I was giving you just the right amount of cardio,’ he arched his eyebrow at her, again making her laugh.

‘Guess so. Just yoga then,’ she said.

‘I like that idea. You’ll get more flexible,’ he smirked.

‘You dirty man,’ she nudged him.

‘Look who’s talking,’ he shot back, causing her to close her eyes and blush with a light smile. She remembered that, after all, it was her who had initiated the more explicit part of their little photoshoot last night. ‘Guess we match each other in that department, huh?’

‘Apparently,’ she said.

Mark smiled, lightly shutting his eyes for a moment before he spoke, ‘Don’t know how about you, but I like that about us.’

‘Me too,’ Max grinned back at him.

Later, Max was doing homework in the living room, Algebra having nearly fried her brain by now and she needed a break. Mark was attending to some business of his own somewhere else in the house.

‘Max, baby?’ he called out from upstairs.

‘Yeah?’ she shouted back.

‘Could you come upstairs?’ he asked.

‘Sure thing,’ she replied and chugged down the last of her coffee.

Having come upstairs and headed to the bedroom, Max asked, ‘Mark? Where are you?’
‘Here,’ his voice came from some other room Max hadn’t been to yet. She went there, albeit a bit shyly.

The other room turned out to be his office, not too big or too small, with simple black, grey and white color palette, appearing rather modern, sort of minimalist décor, but not quite. There was a soft, dense carpet in the middle, and to the right – shelves with literature on the subject of photography and another showcase with all of his rather pricy equipment, his Hasselblad H5D among it. To the left – a professional lighting kit and a couple of tripods. By the window, whose roller-blinders were down right now – a large desk with three screens, a desktop computer lying under, and two comfortable chairs standing by the desk, one of which was taken up by Mark at the moment.

‘Whoa,’ she only managed to say, looking around. ‘Your office looks… nice,’ she found herself short of words. Simply put, the room was a freelance photographer’s dream. Max definitely wanted to own such a place with all that pricy professional equipment one day.

‘Thanks. Come, sit with me,’ he invited her, pointing to the other chair.

‘Are you… going over the pictures?’ she asked, slowly approaching the desk, her heart picking up the pace.

‘Yes. Turned them all to black and white,’ he smiled at her.

‘Classic Mark Jefferson,’ she grinned at him more widely, cracking him up a bit.

‘Guess so. Would you like to see them now?’ he asked softly, attentively observing her expression.

Max appeared a bit nervous and hesitant. She stopped a couple of steps before the desk and took a deep breath. ‘Alright. Yes.’

Mark patted the chair next to him again, and she finally joined him at the desk.

‘Ready?’ he asked. She nodded, hugging herself tightly, as though to shield herself from what was about to appear in front of her eyes.

The first few photographs Mark showed her were of them – the “self-portrait” ones. She and him really did look good together, fitting together rather perfectly, which was now more evident due to higher resolution. Max loosened up and turned to him. They locked eyes, smiling at each other.

Next, there were pictures of just Max. She exhaled in awe – he had made her look like an actual, attractive model. She appeared confident, like she knew exactly what she was doing.

‘This doesn’t look like myself,’ she said, shaking her head.

‘But it is. I told you, you are a natural.’

‘You did, but… I never expected myself to look like this. Me? Confident? Since when?’

‘The magic of my lens, apparently,’ he grinned at her, making her smile as well.

‘Guess so.’

And then there she was – entirely nude. That wasn’t a new look to her, she had seen herself bare in the mirror hundreds upon hundreds of times, but never quite like this. She resembled some of them movie stars – sexy, but in a tasteful way. ‘Pure beauty,’ the caption read. Max shook her head slightly, still in disbelief.
‘This is absolutely stunning, baby,’ Mark said softly, prompting her to look at him. ‘I could stare at it forever.’

‘Oh, stop, you’re making me blush,’ she bit down on her smile, turning away.

‘Can’t. It’s just the truth.’

‘Alright,’ she smiled more widely. ‘Proceed,’ she gestured to the screen.

Mark’s dark eyes were piercing through her now, looking enticingly at her from the computer screen. His tongue was gently caressing her inner thigh, inviting the viewer to join. Max couldn’t take her eyes off him, and snapped out of it once she felt a jolt of excitement in her lower abdomen, pressing her legs together.

‘Wow,’ she said, swallowing hard. She looked to see Mark’s reaction, but couldn’t make out what his expression meant. ‘You okay?’ she asked.

‘Yeah, yeah, I mean… I’ve already seen these multiple times. But it is a bit odd seeing myself like this. I am rarely the subject of any photographs, let alone anything like this,’ he explained. ‘Does this look good?’

‘Does this look good?’ Is he seriously doubting how hot he looks in those photos? Max thought, a little baffled.

‘Well, uh… yes. You look… persuasive, yet in a sort of subtle way,’ she said shyly.

Mark hummed with content in response.

There was also one of him with his tongue half-buried in her, eyes lightly shut. It seemed so… tender, soft. And another one – with his palm resting on her tummy, a faint smile on his lips; he looked like he was in his most favorite, safest place. Max adored seeing him like this – live and in photographs.

‘That’s a nice sharpness there, considering it was probably hard to focus, huh?’ he remarked with an amused look on his face, lightly stroking his beard with his index finger and his thumb. He looked so smug.

Max blushed and smiled, only nodding. Mark then went onto the next photograph.

And then there it was – she saw herself with him inside her mouth and inhaled sharply, involuntarily moving back in her seat, looking down, her heart skipping a beat. It was difficult for her to actually see herself in such position. She felt her cheeks burning red, and she closed her eyes, trying to calm down. She could barely believe she had let herself go that far, it was a very pornographic picture after all.

Mark, a bit startled by her reaction, minimalized the photo viewer and turned to her, bringing his hands to her face.

‘Baby, you okay?’ Mark asked softly. ‘I can delete it right now.’

He moved the cursor towards the delete option, but was stopped by Max putting her palm on his hand.

‘Hold on,’ she said quietly. She breathed in and out a couple more times and looked him in the eyes. ‘It’s just… a lot, seeing myself like this, you know? But I haven’t decided if I want it gone yet.'
Okay?'

‘Of course.’ He reached out to her again and caressed her cheek reassuringly, making her smile a little.

‘I know it was basically my idea to go this far. The more I think about it, the more scared I am of what you must think of me,’ she spoke again, looking down.

‘Oh, sweetheart…’ He moved closer, kissing her forehead and lightly stroking the side of her face. Holding her chin up and looking her in the eyes, he spoke again, ‘It’s okay. You really think I didn’t want to ask you that myself? But I just… I didn’t want you to feel pressured to say yes to me.’

Max nodded, though with her lower lip quivering. He immediately embraced her tightly, pressing her face close to his chest, trying to bring her comfort.

‘Yeah, and I still went ahead and did this,’ she said, her voice breaking. ‘And now I suddenly change my mind. Typical Max,’ she rolled her eyes at herself, letting her tears roll down onto his thighs. She was trembling with cries in his arms, feeling extremely vulnerable right now.

Stop fucking crying! You’re not a child anymore, Max. You wanted this!

But she couldn’t help herself. Once a few tears rolled down her cheeks, there was no stopping the others from following suit.

He heard her sniffle and felt her clutch to his tee.

‘Shh, shh, it’s okay, baby,’ he said quietly, his near-whisper soothing in her ears. ‘I shouldn’t have proposed that photoshoot to begin with.’

*You should have known better. And yet you just keep making mistakes like that.*

‘But I wanted that! And now I backtrack. Again,’ she nearly whimpered.

Mark began rocking her in his arms, speaking soothingly, ‘Hey, stop. I understand your reservations, even though you felt you wanted that in the moment. I don’t blame you for that. It is no small thing.’ He kissed her forehead. ‘Okay?’

‘Okay,’ she said, still crying, though trying to calm down.

After a few moments she eased up a bit and untangled herself from his embrace.

‘I’m going to be fine,’ she said, smiling through her teary eyes. ‘Really. I don’t want you to delete them, okay? I mean it.’ She did. ‘I just had a moment of weakness, because I never expected to see a picture of myself like this.’

Mark nodded, tenderly wiping her tears away, cupping her face and sending her a soft, concerned look.

‘I understand,’ he said. ‘I never expected to see myself do that either. Or to see you do that. But it’s okay. We did that together. And it’s just for us to see.’ He looked her in the eyes, looking for an ounce of relief, which she soon granted to him, smiling lightly. ‘But say the word and they’re gone.’

‘Alright,’ she said.

‘How about I show you something a little different, huh?’ Mark proposed.
‘Okay,’ Max narrowed her eyes.

A few clicks of the mouse and there it was – she looked up and saw herself shot from behind, or rather just a part of her. But instead of seeing her vulva, like she expected, there was a rose seamlessly photoshopped in its place, everything still black and white, the sight of which cracking her up.

‘You made it into an actual flower?’ she asked, her tone amused, turning to face him. ‘That’s sweet.’

‘Yeah,’ he grinned widely, happy to have improved her mood even if only slightly. ‘I mean, there’s also one that’s not photoshopped, but I figured it was a nice touch nonetheless.’

‘It is,’ she laughed lightly. He definitely made her feel better with this small joke. She put her head on his shoulder and wiped her face clean. ‘Okay, you can show me the rest.’

‘You sure, baby?’

‘Yes,’ she lifted her head up and sent him a genuine smile. She meant it.

‘Okay then.’ He placed a small kiss on her forehead and proceeded like she asked.

The next photograph was without the rose. Max had never actually seen her intimate parts in such detail, it wasn’t that easy with just a mirror. Not everything was visible, but whichever was – was quite clear. It definitely helped to see them in black and white, the filter rendering them a bit more… poetic, so to speak. Mark had turned into a work of art, not just a smutty picture.

He brought his lips close to her ear and whispered with a smile, ‘They’re beautiful.’

She smiled, blushing, and turned to face him, though looking at him shyly. ‘Thanks,’ she said, a slight grin appearing on her face, though she hid it, burying her face in his shoulder again.

Was it weird to have taken such photographs of each other? Or was it weirder to look back at them? Max couldn’t decide, but considering she wasn’t in it alone and seeing that Mark clearly enjoyed the fruits of their photoshoot, she figured she had nothing to worry about.

‘Can you show me more of myself with your, uh…’ she cut off, closing her eyes for a second. It all would have sounded too odd if said out loud. ‘You know what I mean.’

He touched her arm reassuringly. ‘Yes, if you’d like.’

‘Yes, please.’

Mark showed her the same photograph as before, allowing her to get a clearer look. It didn’t seem too bad now, and neither did the next few, until she finally saw the one where his hand was gently cupping her face. Suddenly, it seemed tender, loving, like caresses being given to someone who the subject – Max – loved, and not simply a pornographic image. She actually smiled at the sight.

‘They don’t seem so bad now,’ she said, turning to face him, sending a wide smile. Then she remembered something. ‘There are more, though…’

‘Yeah. You sure you want to see them?’ Mark was carefully studying her reaction.

Max pondered for a moment. ‘How did you feel about them when you first saw them?’

‘Again, a little… taken aback, I guess. At least at first,’ he explained. She nodded slowly.
‘But are they good?’

‘Yes, once I turned them black and white, they appeared much better. Though still quite… lewd. But as far as I’m concerned – I like them.’

‘I see.’

There was a longer pause, Max still wondering whether or not she wanted to see the other ones. Finally, she braced herself, taking a deep breath and clutching to his forearm. ‘Show me.’

Click. ‘There you go.’

‘Oh, this one isn’t too lewd,’ she said, exhaling with a bit of relief. The photograph she was watching now was the one of her sitting astride Mark, glancing down, rubbing herself against his dick. Rather benign in comparison.

‘I actually love this one a lot. Even with the filter, I can see your rosy cheeks,’ he commented.

Indeed, a light blush was depicted on her soft expression, bringing out her cheekbones, her lips parted only so slightly, allowing the dimples to surface, everything crowned with her delicate freckles. Her small yet somewhat full breasts were highlighted by a faint line below. To Mark, it was a sight for sore eyes.

He was looking at it now, smiling lightly to himself, then glanced at Max and noticed she was responding to the picture in kind.

‘I take it you like it too?’ He was running his fingertips up and down her forearm, widening her smile. ‘Yeah?’

‘Yeah,’ she grinned at him.

‘Next? It’s from near the end.’

‘Next.’

Max was lying on her back, Mark’s big palm was wrapped around her breast, muscles flexed, veins visible on his arm. She wasn’t looking directly into the lens, it seemed she was sending that lascivious look to the photographer himself.

She wondered now whether or not he thought her breasts were too small, a bit of insecurity surfacing, after all, his palm really did seem big in comparison. But she didn’t ask him about that, she was too frightened to even utter these words quietly to herself.

“Do you think my breasts are too small?” Ugh, it sounds so weird! No way I’m asking that. No way, she thought to herself, kind of flinching.

Of course he didn’t think that. To him, she was perfect. Every inch of her. He wasn’t all too certain she ever truly believed his compliments, though.

‘You don’t like it?’ he asked, noticing her slightly disgusted reaction.

‘Hm?’ she snapped out of her thoughts, looking confused for a few moments. ‘No. No, I just… thought of something else,’ she explained. ‘I like this, though the previous one was better.’

‘I see. And I think I agree. Next up, it’s, uh… the last ones.’ He seemed uncertain whether he even wanted her to see that. Deep down, he wasn’t sure he should have asked her to pose like that at all.
The photographs were *really* dirty.

Max wasn’t sure she wanted to look at them either.

‘Should I be afraid?’ she asked.

‘I… am not sure, quite honestly,’ Mark said, looking down. ‘It’s not that they came out bad – they didn’t. But I think it was a bit much to ask you that.’

‘You mean *that* in general or the picture?’

‘Both, actually.’

She nodded slowly, but he didn’t see it.

‘Hm, well… I didn’t mind you doing that.’

He looked up at her. ‘You didn’t?’

‘No,’ she smiled. ‘Was it… unexpected? Yes. But in a very… kinky way, though, it was still… hot.’

She felt her cheeks burn.

‘You sure?’ He reached out to give them a gentle caress.

‘Yes. But I admit, the pictures were a bit much.’

‘So do you want them gone?’

‘I think so. Yes. Is that okay?’

‘Of course. I only want them if you want them.’

‘Okay,’ she smiled widely. ‘We can keep the rest, though.’

‘Yeah?’ he grinned back, his eyes lighting up. ‘You sure? All the remaining ones?’

‘Yes.’

‘Glad to hear that. I’d like that too.’ He leaned in and kissed her delicately, both smiling at each other once their lips parted.

Though Mark attempted to hide it, when Max glanced down, she noticed he was hard, presumably from watching all those images of her and himself – and no wonder, they were rather… stimulating. Still, he was worried she might take it the wrong way.

But she didn’t. Feeling her own excitement surface, she kissed him again, more passionately this time, her hand sneaking down and rubbing his erection through his sweatpants, and she felt him moan lightly into the kiss. She stood up from her seat and sat on his lap, allowing him to slip his hands under her top and caress her breasts. She held him by the back of his neck, deepening their kiss.

He took off his glasses and put them on the desk, then swiftly removed her top, she doing the same to his tee. She was leaving wet kisses on his neck and lightly scratching his chest, he doing the same to her back. His hands slipped lower to her hips and she then felt he was trying to take off her leggings, so she stood up, allowing him to do what he wanted, feeling his lips on her tummy.
Max was now standing nude in front of him, lightly holding onto his arms, looking down at him. Mark quickly corrected the height difference between them, standing up as well and leaning into her, causing her to move back until she reached the edge of the desk. Sending her an enticing look, he kissed her again, skimming his hands up her sides, she reaching out to tug down his sweatpants. He stepped out of them and took her hand to lead her to the bedroom, but suddenly, Max stopped him, pulling him downward to join her on the carpet.

‘*Naughty,*’ Mark smirked, his voice deep, arching his eyebrow at her and making her giggle. He positioned himself between her legs, she entwining them around him.

‘Oh, the carpet is so soft,’ she remarked once she touched the surface, rubbing her back against it.

‘Yeah?’ he smiled at her. ‘Haven’t actually checked this way until now.’

‘It is. Dare I say it’s even softer than the covers on your bed,’ she joked.

‘Well, we can move here more often.’

‘I don’t see why not.’

With a grin, he leaned down to kiss her, feeling her smile into the kiss, her tiny hands slipping up his back, pressing him closer. His hand at her thigh, his lips trailed off to her jaw, her neck, down her sternum, then his warm tongue was slowly circling around her nipple, his hand caressing the other breast. After a few moments, he moved lower, kissing her tummy, until he straightened up his torso and sent her a wide smile, taking his dick and rubbing it slowly against her clit, she gasping in response, reaching out to hold onto his arms. He was teasing her for a while, sliding smoothly on her wet arousal, the stokes becoming more and more pleasurable for both of them, until he heard her moan, which finally prompted him to enter her.

He began by moving slowly within her, considering how rough he had been the previous evening.

Giving her a little kiss, he asked softly, ‘Still sore, baby?’

‘Not so much anymore.’ She kissed him back again. ‘You can go a little crazy,’ she grinned at him.

‘Noted.’

But he didn’t go faster or harder right away. Instead, he indulged in one of his favorite things to do – looking her in the eyes while he moved inside her, observing the pleasure on her face. Max sent him a gorgeous smile, bringing her hands to his face and lightly stroking his cheeks, then she suddenly parted her lips and moaned, making him want to kiss her passionately, leaning lower, their chests brushing against one another.

‘Lovely,’ he whispered, reciprocating her smile and went left, leaving tiny kisses on her neck, speeding up his movements, listening her moans in his ear, his palm gently caressing her breast.

Feeling himself rub against her tight, slick wall, his passion rose, and he reached up, skimming his fingertips down her arm, lacing his fingers with hers, and pinned her hand above her head. He began thrusting faster, his breathing quickening, hers as well, encouraging him to go harder. He felt her dig her fingers into his upper back, her legs tightening the grip, and a louder moan escaped her lungs.

She pulled up and gently pushed him to lie down now.

‘Hey, it is softer,’ he said, rubbing his back on the surface, just like she had done so before, and running his hand up her thigh as she climbed on top of him.
‘Told you,’ she smirked at him, leaning in for a kiss, bending and arching, then reached back and guided him inside her. She was moving vigorously on top of him, he staring at her in awe, admiring her nude body, his hands steadily gripping her bottom and maneuvering her movements with her. She held onto his arms, feeling his hardness continuously filling her and rubbing against her wall. Their moans and grunts were mixing together, the friction escalating further and further, until she suddenly slowed down, crying out with a wide smile, her wall contracting around him, and she rested her hands on his chest, feeling overwhelmed by her climax.

Mark shifted under her, and she got off him, wanting to lie down again, but he turned her over, so that she was on all fours, and entered her from behind this time. Max thought he was going to give into his pleasure and finish now, but he didn’t. Instead, he found her sweet spot again and began driving into it, harder and harder, gifting her another orgasm. She looked over her shoulder and sent him a content grin, and only then did he allow himself to release within her, taking his sweet time with the slow thrusts – it felt so good to be inside her. She closed her eyes and smiled to herself, hearing his deep growl.

‘Okay, I gotta get up,’ she said, lifting herself up from the floor after they both collected themselves.

‘Stay,’ he attempted to pull her back, but she untangled herself from his embrace.

‘I don’t want to stain the carpet,’ she sent him a telling look, though with a light smile.

‘Right.’ He got up as well. ‘Shower then?’

‘Mhm,’ she grinned at him and rushed to the bathroom, he following her.

‘We’re so lazy,’ Max said, snuggling up to him on the bed. They were still nude, still drying off after the shower. ‘And it’s barely noon.’

‘It’s Sunday, though,’ Mark observed, running his fingertips up and down her arm. ‘We’re allowed.’

‘Still. I should be finishing my homework. You kind of saved me from Algebra when you called me to come upstairs. It was actively trying to fry my brain.’

‘Welcome then.’

‘Thanks,’ she chuckled.

‘You want to get back to it now?’ he nudged her lightly.

‘No. I’d rather stay here with you,’ she replied, burying her face in the crook of his neck.

He laughed gently. ‘How about this – you stay overnight, I drive you up to school in the morning,’ he proposed. ‘That way you won’t have to rush so much.’

‘I’d like that,’ she pulled up and sent him a smile, leaning in for a smooch. ‘It will make for a nice start of the week.’

‘Precisely,’ he kissed her back.
Chapter Notes

A lot, a lot, a looooooooooot of sex in this chapter, accompanied by some other events, a cheesy line here and there, but I hope you'll like it anyway. This is also a bit anti-Rachel...but only for the purposes of this story, based solely on the affair she and Mark had in the game. I have nothing against the character and I don't think I'll use her again.

PART NINE - DARKROOM

Monday, December 2, 2013

After a few more weeks, they had figured out the system and sneaking around the dorms had become quite easy, the only downside being that they had to be really quiet. But it was so damn exciting that they just couldn’t let go of it. Mark would usually come by the dorms on a school night, and they would spend the weekends at his place.

Seeing as Mark had always made a special effort to host her while she was at his house, Max figured it was time to try and do something similar. She couldn’t do much in terms of food or drink, but she figured she could at least make the mood a bit more romantic. Since there was a lot of space in the middle of her room, she spread a couple of blankets to create a soft mattress, and put all of her pillows and the covers on it. She lit a couple of candles, which she had been able to get from a store earlier, and put music on the stereo.

She had found her best set of underwear, one that actually matched, and had saved it for the occasion. Having showered now, she enrobed it, hiding it under her pajamas, and waited for Mark to come by.

Her phone buzzed and she knew he was close by. ‘Yes, baby?’ she answered.

‘Get ready,’ he whispered, half-singing.

‘Waiting.’

She stood up and went up to the door. Not twenty seconds later, she heard a quiet knock and opened it immediately, greeting Mark with a huge grin.

‘Hey, babygirl.’ He took a big step into the room and kissed her even before she uttered a word back or was able to shut the door behind him, grabbing onto her hips, clearly quite impatient.

‘Shh,’ she whispered against his lips, trying not to giggle and keep quiet. ‘You wanna get found out?’ She finally closed the entrance.

‘Maybe?’ he retorted jokingly. He pulled her back in and his lips found hers again, his hands slipping up her pajama tee and yanking it off. Seeing she wasn’t nude underneath it, he inched her shorts down as well, exhaling with delight.
‘Mm, nice lingerie,’ he remarked, skimming his fingertips up her ribs till he reached the bra straps. ‘Would be so bad if someone tore it off.’

Max grinned at him in response, and began undressing him as well with his help, soon leaving him only in his boxers. With that, took off his glasses and put them on the bedside cabinet. Coming back to her, he pulled the bra straps down, then slid his hands around and reached the clasp, kissing her neck as he took it off her and tossed to the side.

‘It definitely looks better on the floor,’ he said, kissing her slowly and pushing her gently towards the door, making her giggle at all his playful remarks.

Once he pinned her to the door, she slipped her hands lower, down his back until she reached the edge of his underwear, tugging it down and rendering him nude.

Breaking away from her mouth, he was planting kisses, nips and licks down her jaw, moving to her neck, down her sternum, stopping to gently cup her breasts. Max felt shivers going down her body, with Mark bending down now to pleasure her nipples for a moment. She held him by the back of his head, pressing him closer. He then kneeled in front of her, kissing her tummy first, inching her panties down, looking her in the eyes with desire.

Still leaving wet kisses, he could hear her uneven breathing, his dark brown eyes always locked with hers, appearing to be sparkling, the way he was fixing her with gaze was filling Max with want, heat spreading throughout her body. He ran his fingertips down her sides, sending goosebumps, bringing a warm thrill to her core. His lips and tongue were slowly moving down her mons, causing her to her sigh in anticipation and her eyes to flutter shut.

Leaning against the door, she felt his tongue slowly circling around her. He was looking up at her, seeing how much she enjoyed his tongue, and smiling through his strokes. She glanced down at him and their eyes met; his lips looked like they were kissing hers, his hands on her hips, slightly digging his fingers in her skin. She brought her hands to his hair, entwining her fingers in them and gently stroking his head, sighing in pleasure and biting down on her smile.

His tongue grazing her clit more intensely caused Max to gasp and her knees to bend slightly. He took her hands from his head, laced his fingers with hers and propped her arms up, helping her stand up, though speeding up his strokes, moving side to side faster and faster. She let out a moan, throwing her head back, hitting it against the door. He was relentlessly pleasuring her, his quickened, warm breath adding to the sensation, causing her body to spasm that even with his help, leaning her arms on his, Max found it difficult to control her limbs. Her thighs gently hugging his face, Mark soon felt them starting to tremble and her muscles contracting as he brought her to climax, she gracing him with a moan. He slid his tongue closer to her entrance, drinking up her spill, his fingertips lightly brushing against her tummy.

Exhaling deeply and coming back to her senses, Max looked down at him, dazed and smiling with delight. He stood up from between her legs, requiting her smile and leaning in to kiss her, sliding his hands from her hips, up her sides, then around her back, pulling her close to his chest. She put her hands to the back of his neck, pressing herself closer, kissing him back passionately. She slowly slipped her palms down his torso and got a hold of his hard dick, moving her hands up and down, kissing him deeper, tasting herself on his tongue and lips. She sped up the petting strokes, causing him to break away from the kiss and lean his forehead against hers, gasping loudly, she sending him a proud smile.

Wanting to be finally inside her, he took both of her hands, lacing his fingers with hers. She felt she was being gently pushed towards the door again and pinned to its surface. Mark looked at her with want, and slid his hands down her sides until he reached her bottom, squeezing the cheeks and
picking her up. She held onto his shoulders, parting her lips in astonishment.

‘Hold on tight,’ he said, smiling at her enticingly, sliding his hands lower down her thighs and guiding her to entwine them around him. Then he entered her slowly, holding her firmly by her thigh and her lower back. She sighed as she felt him move inside her, gradually picking up the pace.

At first, she was holding his gaze, giving him a seductive look; he was pushing into her, causing her body to repeatedly hit against the door.

‘So we’re not afraid to make noise anymore?’ she asked, propping herself higher.

‘This is way too exciting for me to care,’ he said, smirking at her, and gave her a quick, sloppy kiss, then moved lower to her neck, making her moan in excitement. He felt so good and full inside her, filling her up continuously.

‘Oh, fuck,’ she cursed under her breath, her pleasure rising. Biting down on her smile, she took a small risk and commanded, ‘Harder, daddy,’ straight into his ear, her voice low, though sweet. She’d never said anything of the sort before, it felt so surreal coming out of someone so seemingly innocent, but Mark could swear that one word uttered in such manner could have brought him to climax all on its own.

He never expected her to utter such dirty words, but it would always arouse him further when she ordered him around like that, wanting him more. He sent her a lewd smirk, piercing through her with his dark eyes, and driving into her with no stops, feeling her deeper, groaning into her neck as he felt his own pleasure mount. She didn’t stay indebted to him, embracing him tighter with her legs, her moaning adding to his excitement. She was trying to tease him behind his earlobe, but it was difficult to do with the rhythm he had set up. He once again propped her higher and began pushing harder into her, the friction becoming all too pleasurable to resist.

Sensing the peak coming, she dug her fingernails in his shoulders, her breath quickening before she came letting out a long, loud moan, struggling to control her limbs.

She felt Mark exit her and carry her to the pile of blankets on the floor, laying her down gently and positioning himself on top of her. She sent him a gorgeous smile; her face was flushed with pink, eyes wide.

‘Mm, you sound so lovely when you come,’ he murmured into her ear, leaning in to give her a kiss. The compliment caused her to blush further, and a jolt of excitement went straight to her core.

‘Well, it’s all thanks to you.’ She bit down on her lip.

‘I know,’ he said against her lips. ‘I should probably be calling you Climax by now.’

Max cracked up laughing at his ridiculous pun, trembling with giggles under him, while he grinned, sort of proud of himself for making that comment, returning the favor from earlier.

He pulled up to have a quick glance at the room, finally noticing the candles by the bed and the music coming out of the speakers of her stereo.

‘This is quite romantic. Am I being seduced?’ he asked, arching his eyebrow at her, an amused look on his face.

‘Maybe...? Is it working?’ She gently ran her fingernails up and down his back, looking at him enticingly. Her excitement subdued for a little while, interrupted by the his sudden joke.
'It is,' he said in a low voice, resuming the kisses, pulling the covers onto them.

‘Gotta do it more often then.’

‘No protests from me,’ he said, nuzzling her neck, eliciting a slight moan from her, mixed with giggles.

Mark reached down between them and guided himself into her again, quietly sighing as he felt her warmth around him. He was moving achingly slow within her, looking her in the eyes. Max loved the way he was holding her gaze, like she was the most beautiful thing in the world, and it felt like he fitted inside her perfectly.

Sensing the pace of the rhythm elevate, she began moving with him, running her hands up his chest and hanging them around his neck for a while. His hand at her thigh, he leaned down for a moment to kiss her, then lower to kiss her jaw and neck, pulling back up to face her, sending her a wide smile, she responding in kind. Max’s hands skimmed up to get a hold of his face, gently stroking his cheeks with her fingers, pulling him down for a passionate kiss, feeling him reach deeper inside her, and wrapped her legs around his waist.

They were making out sloppily, his movements slow within her, feeling himself rub against all of her – she was so wonderfully tight. As he broke away from the kiss to bury his face in the crook of her neck and leave tiny kisses on her skin, he heard her whisper in his ear.

‘Mark,’ she breathed in her passion. Never had he heard such a beautiful rendition of his name. This time he couldn’t help himself, her lovely cry-out triggering his peak, his soft moan causing her to close her eyes and smile widely, her arms tightening the grip around him.

Catching his breath, a quiet, apologetic whisper escaped him, ‘Sorry, baby.’

‘Don’t be. Now I made you come,’ she said with a smile, albeit a shy one, a little blush creeping up her neck.

‘You sure did.’ He grinned at her and leaned in for a kiss. He then slid out of her, lay back and pulled her into a snuggle, kissing her forehead as she put her head on his chest, his skin burning hot against hers. ‘But I wanted to give you another one,’ he murmured.

‘I appreciate that,’ she laughed lightly in his arms. ‘The night is still young, though.’

‘That’s true,’ he agreed, leaving a kiss on her forehead again.

‘Hey,’ Max started after a few quiet moments, pulling up and resting her chest against his. ‘So you were talking about chiaroscuro today, which, uh…just so happens to be your preferred style.’ She was drawing patterns along his collarbones.

‘Mhm. Why do you ask, though?’ He brushed her bangs to the side, cupping her face.

‘It just reminded me how…when you uploaded the photographs of me from San Francisco, you left them in color. Why? I mean, you talked about how chiaroscuro is the perfect way to capture one’s essence, and yet…you didn’t want to do that with me.’

‘Hm, well… Maybe it’ll sound cliché, but I just believed you deserved a more special treatment than all my previous models. You have to admit those pictures stand out in my gallery, right?’ he arched his eyebrow at her. Max nodded with a coy smile. ‘And, admittedly myself, I can understand why
you like shooting outside, the natural light does have its charm.’

‘I see…so I’m special?’

‘Of course you are special. Have I not made that clear enough by now?’

‘Mm…maybe?’ She made a face and cracked herself up. ‘It’s always nice to hear, though.’

‘Oh…so you tricked me…’ He pulled her on top of himself. ‘Well-played, my darling.’

‘Thank you,’ she said, leaning down for a kiss.

‘You are very welcome,’ he replied, slipping his hands up her thighs and back.

Their lips joined in a kiss, moving together slowly at first, tongues meeting and caressing one another. Leaning her hand on the pile of blankets, Max reached down between them, wrapped her tiny palm around his dick, moving her hand up and down with slow petting strokes. Mark’s hand was gently caressing her breast, playing with her nipple, moaning quietly and gasping between the kisses, which were stopped by his gorgeous lover only when she felt him grow in her palm.

‘Now… I believe I owe you a gift,’ he said in a soothing voice, grinning widely at her. Just as she leaned in to kiss him again, he put his index finger to her lips. ‘But before I do that, I have a question for you.’ He took his hand away.

‘Yes?’ Max sent him a quizzical look.

Mark then looked behind her, her eyes following. ‘Is it possible to remove that mirror?’

‘I…I don’t know, actually. Why?’

‘Let me check first, alright?’

She got off him and watched him take the mirror off the wall and put it against the door, allowing her to see her own reflection. ‘Oh, you dirty man…’ she shook her head at him with a grin. He allowed her to catch sight of his considerable erection as he faced her again, sending her a smirk.

‘On all fours, please,’ Mark commanded politely, joining her back on the blankets and kneeling behind her. As Max submitted to his little demand and positioned herself accordingly, he entered her gently and leaned over for a kiss. ‘Enjoy the view,’ he added, using his persuasive, soothing tone again, his beard tickling her earlobe before she felt his teeth gently pulling it, all of which causing her eyes to flutter shut and breathe out in thrill. He straightened up his torso, his hands steadily gripping her waist, and they both now faced each other in the mirror.

She felt him begin to move within her slowly, creating a light friction as he was continuously filling up her well, so slick and wet for him. Mark soon sped up, going a bit harder too, and it seemed Max was enjoying herself very much, her eyes fluttering, lips parted, smiling through her quiet, little moans. He could see her breasts bouncing with each slam into her, the sound of which echoing through the room, adding to their excitement. She opened her eyes and saw the passion on the face of his reflection; he was looking at her back, his palm sliding up to get a hold of her shoulder. She could hear his breath quickening and his thrusts became more rapid and insistent, until he began hitting against the sweet spot.

‘Oh…yes!’ breathed out, arching her back, and Mark glanced at her reflection, observing the pleasure building up on her face, making him smirk with pride.
He was slamming into her harder now, faster and faster, her arms bending and making her stretch them out in front of her and rest on her chest, his hand firmly holding onto her hip, maneuvering in a circling move, as though he was trying to pull her onto him. As promised, he soon gifted her an orgasm, not slowing down throughout it, leaving her senseless, she letting out a drawn-out, loud moan.

‘Hush,’ he smirked. ‘You have neighbors, Max. And it’s way past curfew. You’re very inconsiderate,’ he said humorously, sounding breathless.

‘You keep teasing me like this–’ She looked over her shoulder, trying to catch her breath. ‘–I’m going to start pointing fingers at a certain someone who is making me do this,’ she joked, panting.

‘Oh, you wouldn’t dare…’

He didn’t have to watch her in the mirror now, she rested the side of her face on the blankets and he could see her satisfied expression, observing it until he came too, releasing with a deep growl, widening her smile.

Absolutely exhausted, they both had to lie there, out of breath and covered with sweat, but still fulfilled, wrapped in each other’s arms.

‘I should probably get going soon,’ Mark whispered regretfully after a while.

‘I know,’ she concurred, but still tightened her grip around his ribcage.

When they were both fully dressed again, Max took a peek at the corridor – it was empty and seemed dead quiet.

‘Bye, baby,’ he kissed her, a wide smile on his face. ‘I lo–’ ve you, he nearly blurted out. He sent her a slightly started look and Max’s heart picked up the pace, but it seemed she misheard him. ‘I’ll, uh…call you later?’

‘Y-yeah.’ She blinked a couple of times. ‘Bye,’ she sent him an awkward, unsure smile, he responded in kind, heading out and waving goodbye at her. With that, she closed the door behind him.

Mark quickly got back into his car, breathing in and out to calm himself down. *Fuck! You really need to be more careful, you idiot! Did she suspect anything? Or did I scare her away? His cover-up seemed good enough for him, at least he hoped that it had worked.*

Max kept thinking about this confusing, little moment for a long time after he had left, wondering if perhaps she had imagined the whole thing. *Was she even ready to hear him to say “I love you” to her?*

Neither of them ended up getting much sleep.

*Tuesday, December 3, 2013*
In the morning, Max went to take a shower. As it was early, there was no one in the bathroom besides herself and… Rachel, who strode confidently out of the shower cabin, wearing just a towel, smiling at Max in the reflection of the mirror.

‘Hey, Max,’ she said.

‘Hey, Rachel,’ Max replied. Rachel was giving her a quizzical look. ‘Something wrong?’ Max asked.

‘No. Just… I saw someone leave your dorm past midnight,’ Rachel said halfheartedly.

Max froze at her words. *Fuck!*

‘Who was it?’ Rachel asked, examining her own face in the mirror.

‘Uh…just someone I’m seeing.’ Max tried to remain calm and casual, not looking at Rachel, brushing her hair instead.

‘Seeing, is that what it’s called?’ Rachel said with a smirk.

Max didn’t respond, hoping she would butt out.

‘Do I know him?’ the blonde asked again. ‘Max?’

‘Why are you asking me about it?’ Max snapped, but Rachel seemed unconcerned.

‘I think I know him. He looked very familiar.’

Max’s heart picked up the pace as she heard that. ‘Then you figure it out, I don’t have time for playing games,’ she said, heading for the shower cabin.

‘He’s good in bed, isn’t he? At least…I enjoyed myself,’ Rachel said.

Max was momentarily stunned, but she turned her back on the blonde and entered the cabin without saying anything.

Shutting her dorm door behind her, Max was trying to contain sheer panic that was slowly overcome her. *Fuck. I thought we were being careful.*

Then she thought about what Rachel had just said. *‘He’s good in bed.’ Did he sleep with her too?*

Max was getting angry thinking about it. *I’m special, huh? So he slept with her as well and didn’t bother to tell me.*

For a few moments, she was battling with her anger and her thoughts, wondering if she should call and confront him right now.

…*No. Bad idea. What if it isn’t true? I’d only fuck up his concentration. I know he needs to focus.*

Breathing in and out, trying to calm down, she got dressed, took her bag and was ready to head to school, but she received a message…from Mark, of course. *Perfect timing, babe.*

Mark: Good morning baby, you okay?
Max: Hey babe. Yes, but gotta head to class now

Max: See you later?

Mark: Of course. See you

She seemed weird, didn’t she? Something’s definitely going on, Mark deduced, putting his coffee away. He was overreacting, of course, but his fear was definitely eating away at him. He didn’t want to ruin things between them, they’d been doing so well.

Max felt quite agitated during his lecture, though trying to focus on what he was saying, but she just needed to confront him about what Rachel had said.

When it was finally the time, she went up to his desk, waiting for the classroom to clear out. ‘Can I talk to you, sir?’ she gave him a telling look.

Mark glanced in her direction and sent her a puzzled look. Max shifted in her position, gesturing with her head towards the door.

Once the other students left the room, he went up to the door and locked it. He turned back and approached her.

‘What’s the matter, Max?’ he asked with a hint of concern in his voice. ‘You seemed on the edge during the lecture, is everything okay?’

Max took a deep breath. ‘Someone saw us,’ she said. ‘I mean, someone saw you leave my room last night.’

Mark’s eyes widened in astonishment, he felt his heart quicken. ‘Shit,’ he said, reaching out to loosen his nonexistent tie, it was as though he was being choked and needed to catch his breath. ‘Wh-who was it?’ he asked.

‘Rachel.’

He frowned. ‘Rachel… Wait, Rachel…Amber? That model?’

Max nodded, though narrowing her eyes. Is he seriously pretending not to know her?

‘Well, do you think she’ll say anything to anyone?’ Mark asked.

‘I don’t think so, unless she’s petty or something. Look, she and Chloe are dating, I hope she won’t tell on you for the sake of her relationship,’ Max explained, putting her hand to her forehead, feeling nervous.

Mark exhaled loudly, though still suffering from that sudden rush of adrenaline.

‘She said one more thing to me,’ Max spoke again. ‘Something I hope is not true.’

‘What did she say?’

‘She implied that you and her…had sex,’ Max said, looking down. ‘Did you?’

‘No,’ he replied calmly. Max looked up, her eyes narrowed. ‘I’m telling the truth, Max.’
He was.

‘So why would she say that?’

‘Well…’ Mark hesitated.

‘What happened between you two?’ Max felt her anger rise again.

‘Nothing big. She came onto me once, I turned her down, that’s it.’

‘You turned her down?’ She raised her eyebrows. ‘Have you seen her?’

‘Yeah, and so?’ Mark asked, baffled.

‘Don’t tell me you don’t think she’s attractive.’ She rolled her eyes at him.

‘I’m not saying she isn’t,’ he said.

Max felt a sting, her face twitching a bit. ‘So why did you turn her down?’ she asked.

‘Because I’m not interested in her.’

‘That doesn’t sound real,’ Max said, shaking her head.

‘What do you mean?’ Mark asked, getting annoyed at her. ‘Before today, you never asked or even cared, and now suddenly I’m bound to be attracted to her?’

‘I just… No one ever turns her down. She can have anybody.’

Mark laughed, amused, unintentionally getting on her nerve. Max started walking towards the door, feeling her anger overcome her.

‘Baby, come on,’ he stopped her, gently pulling her arm. ‘There are a lot of attractive women in the world, doesn’t mean I’m into all of them.’

‘But it just doesn’t make sense!’ she shot back, sounding frustrated.

‘What doesn’t make sense?’ he echoed, getting more irritated.

‘That you’re saying you’re not interested in someone like her, but somehow you went for someone like me!’ Max yelled out, her eyes wide, expressing disbelief. She was feeling so vulnerable right now, the accusations just came out of her mouth before she knew what she was saying.

Mark scoffed, sounding a bit baffled. He thought she was being so unfair to him right now, considering how he felt about her. ‘Explain to me, please–’ He tried to keep a calm voice, though clearly sounding angry. ‘–what’s so great about her, huh? What am I missing?’

‘She’s…’ Max cut off, shaking her head. She didn’t have an answer for that. And even if she did, his tone made her feel too intimidated to retort quickly enough. It was a stranger sensation than just being shy and nervous around him. It was pure jealousy and insecurity having control over her now. ‘I—I’m sorry, I have to go,’ she said quickly and headed for the door.

He had to stop her from leaving. ‘I told you, you are special to me, why don’t you believe me?’ he asked, his voice urgent and slightly raised. Max stopped, looking shyly over her shoulder, but not facing him completely, a conflicted look on her face.
‘You think it wouldn’t be easy to have my way with her if I wanted to? For a quick, meaningless fuck?’ he uttered. Max was stunned. Obviously he had used such words before, but never towards her and never this angrily.

‘Don’t you think I could just have Victoria like that?’ he continued, snapping his fingers. Mark didn’t want to be so harsh with her, but his anger got the best of him. No one likes being put under such scrutiny with no reason behind it.

_Please, please, stop_, Max begged him in her mind, so close to crying. But she still shot back without thinking. ‘Just as easily as you had _me_, right?’

Mark felt a stab in his heart, momentarily stunned. His face was expressing a lot of emotions right now – from betrayal to disappointment, from hurt to…heartbreak?

_There you go again, Max. Accusing him with no grounds. What the hell is wrong with you? Shut the fuck up already! You’re only making it worse!_

Max would often wonder how was it that couples fought so dirty, even when both people felt strongly about their significant other. Hearing herself making an accusation after an accusation, now she understood how and why they would ever let it go so far. Insecurity. Jealousy. Pride even.

‘Why would you say that to me?’ he asked, his voice downbeat. He genuinely thought she might have been falling in love with him too, yet it seemed as though she was entirely detached from feelings, enjoying only his body. That _hurt._

She closed her eyes for a moment, trying to shield herself. She knew she was the one to have initiated this argument, but it was not turning out in her favor _at all._

‘Have I done _anything_ to make you believe that?’ he continued in the same manner.

‘No,’ she said quietly, shaking her head and looking down. As she closed her eyes again, tiny tears rolled down her cheeks, now grimaced in pain that she had brought onto herself.

And there it was – his weakness again. Though _she_ was hurting _him_ now, the sight of her crying was too much for him, they subdued his quiet rage.

He exhaled to calm himself down. ‘What would be the point of risking my reputation and my job here, a job that I happen to enjoy, just so I could sleep with a student who doesn’t matter to me whatsoever?’ he asked her calmly.

Max seemed like she wanted to say something, but her face was painted with confusion all over, her mind blank all of a sudden, she was just listening to him silently.

‘I thought we were at a good place, I thought we _trusted_ each other,’ he tried speaking softly again.

‘We _do_. But I just… I just don’t understand why you’re risking so much for me. What is so special about me?’ she asked, resigned, choking back her tears. _You want to lose him completely? Really? That’s what you want?_

Mark exhaled heavily. How was she still not _getting it_? ‘Why?’ He sent her a baffled look. He brought his hand to his face, covering his mouth and taking a deep breath. ‘Because I _care_ about you, Max! Because I’m _in love_ with you!’ he nearly yelled out, finally venting his frustration. ‘And you— you…’ And you _don’t feel the same way_, he finished in his thoughts, shaking his head and looking away.
Max couldn’t believe what she had just heard, her lips parted. The aggression in his voice didn’t match the contents of his confession. It was even more shocking since she did not expect him to say that now…or ever. Her heart was racing and she was staring at him in complete awe.

He looked up and saw her astonished expression, realizing that he had actually just said that, his heart picking up the pace. ‘Max, I didn’t mean t–’ he rushed with explanations, shaking his head frantically, ready to take it back should that confession scare her, but he was cut off.

She ran up to him, hanging her arms around his neck, kissing him. He locked her in an embrace, smiling into the kiss, pressing her closer. He felt her fingers entwine in his hair, her kissing intensifying, becoming ardent, his hands slipping lower and gently stroking her hips, pulling her onto him. He felt her kiss turning more passionate; her chest was brushing against his own. His excitement was growing, heart beating faster. He slid his hands up her hoodie, feeling her warm skin.

She broke away to catch a breath and smiled at him joyously, letting out a tiny laughter. He reached out with his hand, quickly collecting her tears with his index finger, and then took her by the hand. He led her to the back of the class, opening the door to the darkroom. Shutting the door behind them, he turned on the red light.

‘It’s kind of romantic,’ Max remarked with a smile, sniffling.

‘That’s the idea, glad you think so,’ Mark replied, resuming their kiss. He began gently guiding her towards the counters, picking her up and letting her sit as they reached it.

He was yanking the hoodie off her, kissing her deeply, with her entwining her legs around him, pushing him closer to her. She felt his hand slide from her hips, down her leg until he reached her shoe, taking it off, then the other one. He stepped out of his own shoes, removing his jacket, still kissing her. He then unzipped her jeans and took them off.

Her hands were holding his face, sliding lower to unbutton his shirt. He interrupted her by taking her blouse off her, reaching her bra straps and pulling them and kissing her shoulders, moving lower down her cleavage. He took the bra off and began pleasuring her nipples. She let out a slight moan, leaning against the wall. She felt him move lower again, kissing her stomach and reaching her underwear. He slid her panties down and looked her in the eyes before putting his mouth between her legs.

As she felt his tongue scraping against her surface and pressing against her clit, she sighed, putting her fingers in his hair. His strokes seemed hungry, she could hear his breath quicken and felt his tongue move lower, entering her, and she couldn’t contain the loud moan that exited her.

She pulled his head up to kiss him, helping herself with her legs, pushing him closer. She yet again attempted to unbutton his shirt, he unfastening his pants, getting undressed in a hurry.

‘Lie down,’ she ordered, hopping off the counter. She took her hoodie and spread it on the carpet.

‘On the hoodie?’

‘Yes. Lie down, I want to feel you inside me.’

Smiling with thrill, he acquiesced and lay down. She kneeled and sat astride him, leaning down to kiss him, tasting herself on his tongue. She teased him by grinding herself against his hardness, eliciting a quiet moan from him.

She then guided him to her warmth, sighing as she felt him slide inside.
At first she was moving slowly, letting him fill her up completely, then almost entirely out. Feeling him inside her, sliding in and out, was filling her with heat and excitement.

He loved the way she was moving her body on top of him, bending and arching, her lips parted and eyes wide, holding his gaze. She was leaning against his chest, and his fingers were digging into her hips, pulling her onto him.

Max felt a little braver doing it this way, in a half-darkened room, dressed only in the red light. Feeling her pleasure mounting, she began riding him faster, unable to contain her moans, digging her fingers in his skin. The moment was all the more exciting considering that they were indulging themselves at school, both completely naked and louder than they would usually be able to be.

In his passion, he reached up to cup her breasts, squeezing a bit tighter than usual, prompting Max to ride him more decisively, holding onto his wrists. Her breath was quickening, she was fucking him harder, thrilled to be truly dominant for once. Mark was marveling at her, her slight aggressiveness and moans adding to his excitement, her continuous movements becoming more and more pleasurable for him.

She was gazing down at him with pure lust, her body aggressively moving on top of him, her cries of passion harsh. *Mine*, her expression screamed. The red light illuminated her face in such a way that she appeared dark, evil – so unlike her true self. But somehow he found himself in love with that version of her as well. He was observing her in awe, his head pulled up, his lips parted, breathing out uneven groans, feeling her wall continuously rub against his hardness, sending sheer, raw pleasure. Though in reality her movements were fast-paced, he attempted to slow down time in his mind, prolonging every sensual thrust, taking mental pictures.

Their hungry gasps and sighs were filling the space, safely contained within the darkroom. They were still holding each other’s gaze, observing the passion on each other’s faces.

Sensing the end, she took his hands off her chest, bent down, resting her arms on his shoulders, and cried out, feeling overwhelmed by her peak. She needed good thirty seconds or more to come to her senses, riding him only so gently now, her eyes closed, her orgasm bringing a satisfied smile to her face, causing him to smile as well – he adored that sight of her. She leaned low, kissing Mark with passion, his hands on her back, pulling her closer. Straightening up, she gradually picked up the pace, faster and faster, until the friction became too unbearable for him, and he also came, his tension bursting inside her, making him groan loudly, and he reached up to touch her breasts again. She could feel him throbbing within her along with his release, and felt so proud of herself for bringing him to climax all on her own.

Out of breath, Mark kept gazing at her in awe, blown away by her dominance. She gently got off him, and snuggled up to him, worn out, but fulfilled. For a while there, she was resting her head on his chest, he embracing her, their legs entwined, both of them covered with sweat, feeling the heat of each other’s bodies, trying to catch their breaths while lying there on the rather dirty carpet in the darkroom. His heartbeat in her ear was slowing down until it was back to its normal pace, and she felt him drawing patterns on her back.

Max pulled up to face him, sending him a gorgeous smile before she finally spoke, ‘I’m in love with you, too,’ she said softly.

Mark felt warmth spreading through his chest, feeling himself being filled with joy. He hadn’t scared her off with his confession, and she was now saying the same thing back to him. He smiled widely at her, and pulled her chin towards his face, kissing her delicately and lovingly, she caressing his cheek.

When their lips parted, Max put her head back on his chest, though facing him, and she couldn’t stop...
smiling. He was lightly stroking her hair, gazing deeply into her eyes.

Shyly at first, she looked at him apologetically, wrinkling her nose. ‘I’m sorry about that ridiculous argument… I was jealous,’ she said, looking down. He would have been able to see a blush on her cheeks had it not been for the red lighting.

‘Oh, sweetheart…’ His heart melted a little. ‘Look at me.’

Max put her head up, though feeling vulnerable, gazing into his eyes, her own wide. He brought his hand to her face, gently caressing her cheek.

‘It’s okay. I’m sorry, too. I shouldn’t have said so many harsh words.’

‘It’s okay,’ she echoed, accepting his apology, just like he had accepted hers.

‘Like I’ve told you – you’re special to me,’ he added. ‘Right? And I meant it.’

She wasn’t sure what he meant by that exactly, though. ‘So you mean you’ve never…with any other student? Ever?’

‘Never. Not until you. I even had a rule against it.’ He was still stroking her face. ‘I never needed to look for sex at my workplace, and I definitely never felt anything romantic towards any of my students. But then you showed up. And I was a goner,’ he confessed with a slightly amused expression.

She smiled widely. She climbed on top of him again, leaning in for a kiss, his hand slipping up her thigh, stopping to squeeze her cheek, the other at her back, gripping her tightly. They were slowly making out, feeling overjoyed, until, sadly, they had to leave.

School for the day was over now, and Max was heading to her dorms, texting Chloe.

Max: Did you tell Rachel?

Chloe: No. Not a word.

Chloe: Why you ask?

Max: She said something to me

Max: I mean, first she said she saw *someone* leave my dorm past midnight

Max: Then she implied she knew who it was and…

Chloe: And?

Max: And that they had sex too

Max: But he said it’s not true.

Chloe wasn’t responding for a good half an hour.

Max: Chloe?
Max: I believe you
Max: And I’m sorry you had to hear it from me but
Max: I’m going to talk to her now
Chloe: Max, please don’t
Max: I have to. She knows my secret
Max: And it’s a pretty fucking huge one
Max: I’m sorry
Chloe: Alright…

Max reached the dorms and headed to Rachel’s room – 224. She took a deep breath and knocked on the door. A few moments later Rachel opened it, surprised to see Max at her doorstep.

‘Hey, Max. What brings you in here?’ she asked.

‘Can I come in?’

‘Sure,’ Rachel said, letting her in and shutting the door behind her. ‘So what’s up?’

‘Are you going to tell on him?’ Max cut straight to the chase, crossing her arms and glaring angrily at the blonde.

Rachel blinked, taken aback by Max’s aggressiveness.

‘No, of course not,’ she swore. ‘You have my word.’

‘Forgive me if your word doesn’t mean much. Why did you say that about him?’

‘Said what?’

‘Don’t play dumb, okay? You said he…’ Max closed her eyes for a second. ‘…was good in bed. Meaning you slept with him, which is not true.’

‘Oh, that,’ Rachel half-smirked, arching her eyebrow. ‘He said it wasn’t true? And you believed him?’

‘Yeah, just about anyone seems to be more truthful than you, Rachel.’

‘Whoa, relax. Okay, fine, I lied. Sorry.’

Max exhaled, baffled. ‘Okay? Sorry? Why the fuck would you lie about this?’

‘Well, the rumors were already there, so why not own them?’

*What?! What rumors?*

‘Oh, I wonder who would spread them,’ Max rolled her eyes.
‘Whatever, Max. I do what I want. You don’t have to like it.’

‘It’s pretty rich coming from you. You’re the one messing around with my business, and with my best friend!’ Max raised her voice.

‘Chill. I’m not mess**ing around** with Chloe. I actually love her.’

‘You’d better fucking mean it sincerely. I’m not going to let you hurt her, you understand?’

‘Yeah, I understand,’ Rachel replied, seemingly unconcerned.

‘And stay the fuck away from my life, please,’ Max said at the end, opening and slamming the door shut behind her, not waiting for the answer.

Once she found herself back in her own dorm, she exhaled and tried to calm herself down. She needed to talk to Mark right away.

‘Hello?’ Mark picked up, his voice a bit hard to hear due to some noises.

‘Hi, it’s me,’ she said. ‘Where are you?’

‘Blackwell parking lot, getting in the car.’

‘Aw, I’d wave at you but…you know.’

‘Yeah, baby, I know,’ he said warmly. ‘So you’re okay?’

At the very moment he said “baby”, Victoria passed him by and her heart sank a little. Mark heard her slight jeer and rolled his eyes with an amused smile on his face.

‘If you’re asking about our meeting,’ Max said in a low voice, ‘then I’m more than okay.’

‘Glad to hear that. Same goes for me.’

‘But…I did something.’

‘What did you do?’

‘I…confronted Rachel.’ Max heard silence on the other side. It lasted seconds, but felt like hours.

‘Mark?’

‘I’m here, I just… What did you two talk about?’

‘I asked her if she’s going to tell on you. She said she won’t.’

Mark exhaled. ‘Can we trust her?’

‘I’m not one hundred percent sure, but I really hope so. I don’t want you to get in trouble.’ Max paused for a second. ‘Mark…’

‘Yeah?’

‘She said, and I quote, ‘the rumors were already there.’”

‘What? There are?’ Mark’s voice seemed uneven, the revelation definitely surprised him.
‘I’ve never heard any of them, but then again, no one gossips with me, so…I don’t know. But it seems to me that she made them up herself, or maybe she just told me that as an excuse,’ Max groaned in annoyance. ‘I don’t understand what her deal is, honestly.’

‘Shit,’ he breathed. ‘Still, I’m more worried about you,’ he said. Max heard the car door get shut.

‘About me? Why?’

‘Well, if this gets out, what do you think people will say about you?’ his voice was full of concern. ‘I can guarantee they won’t be kind.’

‘Fuck. You’re right.’

‘And hell, who knows, maybe you’d be expelled too.’ He heard her exhale with defeat.

‘…I didn’t even consider it,’ she said quietly.

‘I’m sorry, baby. I put you in this position, didn’t I?’ He sounded concerned and guilty at the same time.

‘I don’t see it that way. I could have said no.’

‘You sure?’

‘Yes. You’d asked several times if I wanted it. Besides, it’s done. We’re trapped with each other,’ she joked.

‘No coming back, huh?’ he laughed with her.

‘None. Especially after today…’

‘Mm, are you talking about our special moment?’

‘Yes,’ she said quietly. ‘Speaking of, what are we going to do about our meetings in my dorm?’

‘I’m not sure. They seem a little riskier now.’

‘Right.’

‘So we’re just gonna spend time at my place, what do you say?’

‘You know you don’t have to convince me.’

‘I do know that, but I just want you to know my house is always open to you.’

‘I know,’ she said, her tone indicating she was smiling.

‘I’m glad. Look, I’m going to drive home now, okay? I’ll call you later.’

‘Okay.’

‘Bye, sweetheart.’

‘Bye, babe.’

With a smile on her face, Max hung up.
She decided to text Chloe now, she felt she owed it to her to let her know how the confrontation with Rachel had gone down.

Max: Chloe?

Max: She admitted it was a lie

Max: I don’t know if she will tell you about it

Max: I’m sorry it’s all happened

Max: I was just protecting Mark

Max: I’m really sorry if I hurt you

Chloe: It’s alright, Max

Chloe: I understand. It’s just…

Chloe: For a moment there, I thought she and I would be over, you know?

Chloe: Because I thought she lied to me

Max: I know, I’m sorry. I hope you two can work this out

Max: I want you to be happy

Max: But if she hurts you, I won’t allow it

Max: (■ • ⁰)■

Chloe: That’s sweet, thanks dude <3

Max: Always <3

Everything lifted off her chest for now, Max decided the best course of action would be to take a long, hot shower, feeling fresh and relaxed afterwards. Just as she got back into her dorm room, wrapped in a towel, 7pm approaching, she heard her phone buzz, rumbling against the desk. Mark.

‘Hello?’ she picked up.

‘Hey, babygirl,’ Mark started enthusiastically and got straight to the point. ‘How about you come over?’

‘Hey,’ she said, chuckling lightly. ‘I’d like that, yes.’

‘Good. Pick you up in fifteen?’

‘Twenty.’

‘Fine. See you soon then.’

‘See you, babe.’
Max was resting her head on Mark’s shoulder, looking him in the eyes and drawing patterns on his bare chest, he doing the same, his fingertips gliding from her temple, down the side of her face, along her collarbone and down her arm. Their legs were loosely entwined with each other, the covers keeping them warm. He was smiling at her, his expression soft.

‘Mark,’ she started, pulling her head up a bit, ‘can I ask you something?’

‘Mhm. What is it, baby?’ He reached out to tuck a strand of her hair and cupped her face, gently stroking her cheek, the tender caress making her smile.

‘Cause, like…before we got together, even during our first class, you would spend a majority of the lecture leaning against the desk that was facing mine, right?’ She saw him nod. ‘And, uh…I had an impression that you were doing that on purpose… Were you?’ She was looking shyly at him, blushing just a bit.

‘Well, yes,’ he replied, smiling widely. ‘I just wanted to see you up close as much as I could. I couldn’t exactly approach you anywhere else, and you weren’t at my desk a lot, you know, to ask me questions or something like that.’

‘Because Victoria was always there. She still is, by the way. Back off my man,’ she joked, cracking Mark up. She gave him a light kiss, he caressing the side of her face.

‘I so wanted to chat you up about photography, though,’ she continued, ‘but felt too shy to do that as much. Besides, I was convinced you knew I was crushing on you.’ Max hid her smile, burying her face in his chest. ‘I didn’t want to make it any more obvious.’

‘Yeah, I get it. And you know, I had to be careful not to come off…pushy, I guess? I mean, having a crush on someone is one thing, but…I was– I am your teacher, so I just…I didn’t want you to feel like you couldn’t say no to me. You understand?’

Max listened to him carefully, beginning to understand his reasoning, and nodded with a light smile. ‘Yes.’

He pulled up and turned them around, positioning himself on top of her. ‘Oh, but you have no idea how much I would fantasize about you, Max,’ he said, his voice low and deep, the confession causing Max to burn hot and blush.

‘Oh yeah? Like what?’

‘Like…taking you on my desk. But we’ve done that already,’ he said, smiling widely at her, with a hint of a smirk. ‘Then taking you on your desk, but we’ve done that too.’ He brought his lips to hers, kissing her, smiling into the kiss.

‘Well. I can. Tell you,’ she was responding between kisses, ‘That. That fantasy? Wasn’t just yours.’

‘Oh, really?’ he asked, pulling up a bit, arching his eyebrow at her. ‘Now your casual spacing out is starting to make more sense.’

Max chuckled lightly. ‘What did you think that was about?’

‘I was kind of afraid I was just…boring you.’

‘Oh, baby… That was so not it. I was actually listening to you most of the time.’ She ran her hands
up his arms to reach his face. ‘But you’re just…way too hot for me to focus all the time.’

Mark laughed warmly, leaning down again for a kiss. ‘Alright, that’s a valid point. I can forgive that.’ He pressed his body closer to hers, his lips trailing off to her jaw, her neck, behind her earlobe. ‘But your presence wasn’t helping my attention span either, you know?’

‘Oh, I’m sorry,’ she giggled lightly.

‘Are you now?’ he arched his eyebrow at her with a smirk.

‘No, not really,’ she shook her head.

‘Yeah, me neither,’ he shot back, silencing her further with a kiss. It quickly became passionate, their faces mushing together, hands all over each other, until she felt him enter her, sighing with a sound that resembled relief.

She could feel his chest brush against hers, his abs against her tummy and his deep, near-lethargic thrusts inside her as he continuously repeated the movement. She oh so loved being fucked so slowly, she could feel the entirety of him rub against her whole being. Soon, she felt him roll over and pull her back close to his torso, he lying on his side, she mostly on her back. His knee bent, she spread her legs tucked her one against his, allowing him to enter her, and his arm went around said leg, teasing her wet clit with his fingers. His lips were leaving wet kisses on her breast and its surrounding area, she entwining her fingers in his hair. He wasn’t moving much within her, resting almost entirely inside her tight well anyway, his thrusts gentle though reaching deep. Her eyes fluttered shut, feeling his caresses in so many different places at the same time. The way she was moaning quietly and sweetly was making him smile through the kisses, going into her a little deeper every few moves. Mark was gradually intensifying strokes, soon hitting her sweet spot, faster and harder, until she fell apart in his arms, her moan drawn out, her orgasm blended. Max looked up at him, sending him a dazed smile, and he kissed her, just before reaching his peak that soon followed.

Having put their underwear back on, somewhat wrapped in the sheets, Max was lying comfortably on her back, head rested on soft pillows, Mark between her legs, resting his face on her tummy, she lightly stroking his head, her one foot absentmindedly brushing against his back. He reached out with one hand to lace his fingers with hers. They were both turned towards the bedroom television, watching a comedic movie. His head would tremble with her stomach anytime she laughed, and she could feel his beard tickle her skin anytime he would do the same.

They felt happy, carefree.

And they would behave ridiculously, hideously in love during breakfast the following morning, sharing kisses that tasted of pancakes and strawberries.
Chapter Notes

Really sorry to have kept you waiting for a bit longer than usual!
It makes me really happy, though, that the hit count is growing. I hope you're enjoying all this fluff :)
Thank you so much for the kudos and comments, it means a lot <3

PART TEN - BLISS

Thursday, December 5, 2013

Max’s phone was rumbling loudly against the wooden surface of her bedside cabinet. She needed a few moments before her mind registered what was happening exactly. She rubbed her eyes and finally got a hold of her cell, which was difficult as her limbs hadn’t started operating properly yet. *Mark is calling.*

‘Mark?’ she answered, her voice quiet and raspy.

‘Hey, baby,’ he said softly on the other side. ‘Sorry for waking you up, but…I have a proposition.’

‘Mmmm? What?’ she asked, yawning. She sounded so adorable when sleepy.

Mark chuckled. ‘Well, I would like to take you out on a small date…of sorts. What do you say?’

‘Huh? What are we gonna do at…what is the time, anyway?’

‘6:50am.’

‘Yeah, so what could we possibly be doing so early in the morning?’ Max asked.

‘How about you trust me and you’ll see for yourself soon enough?’ he proposed. He definitely had that magnetic quality about him, anything he said sounded persuasive. So what else could she do but say yes?

‘Oh, alright,’ she chuckled lightly. ‘Where do we meet?’

‘By the main gate.’

‘You really do wanna get found out, don't you?’ Max said, amused.

‘No one will be able to see us there so early,’ he eased her. ‘How much time do you need to get dressed?’

‘Uh…give me 20 minutes?’

‘Fine, it’ll work. Wear warm clothes. And bring your camera if you want.’
It seemed he was planning some sort of outdoor activity.

‘Alright,’ she said. He could hear the smile in her voice. ‘See you soon.’

‘See you.’

Closing the door on the passenger’s side, Max leaned in for a kiss. They shared a delicate smooch on the lips.

‘Hi. So where are we going?’ she asked.

‘Hello to you too. Still a surprise.’ Mark winked at her. ‘But I have a strong feeling that you’re going to like it.’

She grinned back.

‘Here’s a hot latte for you.’ He gestured to the two paper coffee cups between them.

‘Oh, thank you, that’s so thoughtful.’ She leaned the side of her face against the backrest, sending him a dreamy, soft look.

‘Welcome, baby.’ He came closer and kissed her gently. He then turned on the engine and drove out of the parking lot as she fastened her seatbelt.

Max tasted the beverage he had brought. ‘Hey…it tastes like…your coffee,’ she remarked. ‘I mean, the coffee from your glorious coffee machine.’

‘Because it is,’ he gave away, turning his face towards her, though his eyes not leaving the road. ‘Figured you deserve the best coffee there is.’

She frowned, though with a dose of amusement. ‘That’s a confident statement. But how did you get plastic cups? I don’t recall you running an actual café.’

‘Maybe you just don’t know it yet,’ he joked. ‘Not to claim some sort of vast knowledge about dates, but – a good one is a planned one, at least a little bit. So let’s just say I came in prepared. Even more so, because we can’t go out much.’

‘Right. Thank you anyway, it’s delicious.’ She sent him that specific gorgeous smile he adored so much.

Max was watching the view from the window, sipping coffee. It was still dark outside, not a soul to be seen, it was as though the town knew they needed privacy. The roadside trees seemed so pensive and august at this time of night. Mark was driving at an average speed, allowing her to admire the view.

It turned out he took her somewhere she hadn’t been before, though they were still within Arcadia Bay territory. It was a semi-high cliff at the end of a small forest, a bit of mist hanging in the air, rendering the vista mysterious. She could see the faint outline of the beach on the other side of the bay, and the Lighthouse, its light orbiting in regular intervals. The air was crispy, though not too harsh on the throat, it was actually fresh and soothing against her nostrils and the inside of her lungs, energizing her sleepy mind. Max kept breathing through her mouth, forming outbursts of steam with each exhale. Mark was watching her childlike fascination, smiling at her.
‘Must be nearly freezing,’ she observed, rubbing her palms together. ‘So…what are we doing here?’

‘You’ll see in about…’ He looked at his wrist watch. ‘…five minutes. Then look to your right.’

‘Okay.’

‘Now, let me.’ He took the coffee cup from her, placing it on the ground along with his own, and extended his hands to hers, hugging her cold, tiny palms between his, the friction bringing warmth to her skin. ‘Better?’ he asked, smiling at her with care.

‘Better,’ she smiled back. He then brought her hands to his lips, placing a tender kiss. He was always so solicitous about her wellbeing, even in such mundane moments.

Max then reached back for their beverages, handed Mark his coffee, and he put his arm around her waist. She snuggled up to him, putting her head to his chest, the closeness of his body and the hot coffee both warming her up. He put his lips to her forehead, leaving a dozen tiny kisses until he heard her giggle lightly and felt her dig herself deeper into his embrace.

As promised, after a few minutes, faint rays of sunshine emerged low on the skyline, one by one it seemed, some of them piercing through the trees, some of them falling into their eyes, gradually intensifying with each minute.

‘Wow…it’s so beautiful!’ she breathed, mesmerized.

‘Isn’t it?’ he concurred. Max just kept staring at the panoramic view, looking a bit awe-struck, jaw dropped. Mark gently pushed her chin up, laughing lightly at her adorable expression. He couldn’t let her pass on such an opportunity, though. ‘Always take the shot, my darling,’ he reminded her. ‘I’ll hold onto your coffee while you work your magic.’ He took the cup from her.

‘Right.’ She untangled herself from his warm embrace and pulled out her Polaroid from the bag. Moving a bit closer to the edge of the cliff, she then lined up the shot. The sun shone directly into her lens, creating a light flare across the shot. Not ideal, but the overall composition turned out in her favor either way, thus she didn’t mind.

She passed the picture to Mark for him to examine. ‘What do you think?’

His eyes studied the photograph carefully for a good minute or two, then he finally met her eyes. ‘I love it. The dark blue looks incredible combined with that light orange sunrise,’ he stated.

‘What about the flare?’

‘If it was a problem, I’d tell you. It’s a good picture, Max,’ he reassured.

Max grinned at him, satisfied with the praise. ‘Alright. Thank you.’

He bobbed his head slightly. ‘You’re welcome,’ he replied politely.

She looked back to the sunrise. ‘Hey,’ she turned to Mark. ‘Would you mind becoming my model for a bit?’

‘Always.’ He grinned. ‘How would you like me?’

‘I have an idea,’ she said. She grabbed him by the hand and made him stand a bit closer to the edge of the cliff. ‘Okay, stand edgewise against the sunlight… No, your left profile, babe. Yes. Now, on my mark…’ She grinned at her own little pun. ‘…exhale to create some steam, okay?’
‘Your wish is my command,’ he said theatrically.

Mark posed there, positioned accordingly to his girlfriend’s instructions. Besides the obvious items of clothing, such as shirt, pants and boots, he was dressed in a black coat that reached just above his knees, and a grey scarf was hugging his neck. He had also been asked to keep his hands inside the pockets. His silhouette was darker than the sunlight illuminating him from behind, steam coming out of his mouth as required. He looked kind of…ominous and mysterious – just the way Max had intended. The photograph came out rather perfectly. And Mark certainly made for a great model both in and outdoors.

‘Ooh!’ Max blurted out, sounding giddy as she looked back at the freshly printed picture. ‘It’s awesome. Hold on, let me take one or two more, okay?’

‘I am yours for the taking,’ he said jokingly.

Max took a few more shots from different angels, and a couple more closeups. She seemed content with the results to finish there. Small clouds covered the sunlight for the moment anyway.

‘I think I’m done for now,’ she concluded, putting the Polaroid back in her bag.

‘You sure?’ Mark asked.

‘Well, the clouds interfered. And besides, I have to save up film,’ she explained. ‘My parents are already asking me to switch to digital, but I love Polaroid way too much. Plus, it’s not like they can afford an actual, nice DSLR camera.’

‘Right. I could always lend you one of mine, if you want,’ he offered.

That was definitely a tempting proposition, but…wouldn’t it be taking advantage where she really shouldn’t?

Max hesitated. ‘It’s so sweet of you to offer, but…it doesn’t feel right.’

Mark nodded. ‘Well, either way – a talented photographer, such as yourself, can take amazing photos with any camera they’re given.’ He walked up to her and caressed her cheek. ‘The offer still stands in case you change your mind.’

This actually made her smile. ‘Thank you. I’ll think about it.’

She brought her hands to his face and leaned in closely. He met her halfway, kissing her delicately at first, his lips warming hers up. His palms hugged her gentle face, intensifying the kiss bit by bit, their tongues soon joined in, their lips moving together ardently, the now much brighter rays of sunshine illuminating their faces. It was a little bit less cliché to make out by the sunrise instead of the sunset. What a simple, perfect morning.

Mark was thoughtful enough to bring some breakfast too, seeing as they both still had their respective Blackwell-related responsibilities to attend to soon. Nothing sophisticated, just simple toast sandwiches, but Max had come to enjoy them very much, they were certainly better than whatever she could find at the cafeteria. His company was obviously an asset as well. Sitting inside his car, they were consuming the delicious breakfast.

‘So,’ he started, having swallowed a large bite of his sandwich. ‘Would you like to come by after school?’
'I’d love to, yeah,’ she accepted. ‘I’m going to have to bring my homework, though. Hope that’s okay.’

‘It is not a problem in the slightest. I’ll be working too, so we’ll both be busy at the same time, but at least I’ll have you close by.’ He reached out and quickly caressed her cheek.

Max hummed. ‘It’ll definitely be a good motivation to finish as quickly as possible.’

‘Exactly,’ he agreed. ‘I’ll pick you up right after class then?’

‘Mhm,’ she nodded, not wanting to speak with her mouth full. She sent him a puffy smile.

He lightly pinched her nose. ‘You’re so adorable,’ he said softly, cracking her up.

Mark heard Max approach his home office, her light, though audible footsteps giving her away, but he still pretended to be surprised when she knocked on the door frame.

‘Mark?’ she called out sweetly.

‘Yes, sweetheart?’ He turned in his chair to face her. Hands clasped together, she came closer, going around the desk and sitting on his lap. The chair squeaked under the added weight. Mark put his arms around her waist, pulling her closer.

‘Are you busy?’ Max asked.

‘A little. Not necessarily. You’re done with homework?’ Mark retorted, brushing her bangs to the side.

‘Mhm,’ she nodded. ‘It was so boring, though. Maybe because I don’t quite get science.’ She snuggled up closer to him, resting her head by the crook of his neck, and he embraced her tighter.

‘So, what are you doing?’

‘Researching for tomorrow’s lecture,’ he replied. His voice reverberated through his neck and into Max’s ear. ‘Nothing than cannot be put off for later.’ He placed a gentle kiss on her forehead.

‘I just wanted to snuggle…a bit,’ Max murmured, burying herself into his warm body.

Mark hummed. ‘Well, you can always come to me for that. Even when I’m busy.’

She sighed. ‘That’s good to hear.’ She was lightly scratching his chest through the fabric of his shirt. She then looked at and pointed to the computer screen. ‘What will the class be about?’

Mark quickly got a hold of the mouse and minimalized the window.

Max pulled up and faced him. ‘Hey! Show me,’ she coaxed, chuckling lightly.

‘Nuh-huh. No peaking. No special treatment,’ he half-joked.

She pouted. ‘I thought I was special,’ she teased.
‘Well, you are. You do receive some forms of special treatment, don’t you?’ he shot back with an amused expression.

Max rolled her eyes. ‘I suppose.’

He frowned. ‘You suppose? Our time together not special enough for you?’ He arched his eyebrow at her.

‘It is, it is…’ Max eased. She then pondered for a moment. ‘I guess I should thank you for that lovely date this morning.’ She sent him a smile. ‘Thank you.’ She put her tiny palms to his face and placed a loving, gentle kiss on his lips.

He put his hand on one of hers and kissed her back. ‘You are very welcome, baby.’

What he thought would be a couple of kisses, turned out to be a longer make-out session. Max was kissing him slowly, though with passion. She readjusted her position, sitting astride him, her hands wandering around his chest, his on her back, sliding up and digging his fingers in her skin.

Her excitement rising, she began unbuttoning his shirt, instinctively bringing her body closer to his. As she unveiled his torso, she ran her hands up and down his bare, hot skin, further deepening the kiss. Mark slid his hands up her tee, going up to cup her breasts, prompting her to break away and allow him to take it off. She then got off him and stood up, sliding her pants down her legs and stepped out of them. He got up as well and attempted to remove his shirt, but Max stopped him.

‘No. Keep it on,’ she ordered with a smile.

Mark smirked. ‘Alright.’

They joined in a kiss once more, it becoming more passionate and ardent. Her fingers slipped lower, reaching his belt, and she hurriedly unbuckled it, letting his pants fall down to the floor. Her one hand resting on his chest, she sneaked her other hand lower until she reached his crotch. She was gently stroking his dick through the fabric of his underwear, her petting slow and coy at first, gradually intensifying it and deepening the kiss. He soon grew against her touch, but she didn’t stop right away, prolonging her slightly teasing caresses. Mark was moaning quietly into the kiss, his hands not quite sure where to wander. Max pulled him downward by the collar of his undone shirt and began kissing him intensely only to abruptly pull away, leaving him wanting more.

‘Sit down, professor,’ she commanded with a grin, gently pushing him back towards the revolving chair. With a thrilled smile, Mark sat down. Max then took off her bra, requiting his smile. Their eyes locked as he watched her kneel in front of him and shift closer, pushing him to lean against the backrest.

She started by kissing his abs, moving lower to the abdomen, before she looked at him for a moment and pulled down his boxers, seeing him all ready to go. She removed his underwear and pants completely, moving the clothes to the side, and spread his legs to get comfortably between them. Looking him in the eyes with her wide ones, her lips traced a path down his treasure trail. Mark sent her an awed look in anticipation and she took him in hand.

Slowly at first, she was glancing up at him and running her tongue and lips up and down his side, her hand wrapped around him, following the same movements. He tenderly caressed the side of her face or her hair once in a while, sending her a content smile. She stopped at his tip for a moment, circling her tongue around it, then closing her mouth around him and sucking on it gently, hearing his quiet moan, her hand slowly rubbing at the base. As he met her eyes, she took him in deeper, moving back slowly, then yet again, this time a little deeper, again moving back, and was repeating the cycle,
causing Mark to gasp and reach out to her to touch her face.

After a while, her eyes became lightly shut, she was smiling slightly with him inside her mouth, maneuvering her tilted head horizontally, he bulging out of her cheek, her fingers loosely wrapped around his base. He was gripping her face steadily but gently with both of his hands, his fingers lightly stroking her cheeks; he was breathing heavily and looking at her with passion as she was pleasuring him. Her tongue was so warm, bringing in delicious pleasure. He felt her lips reach the tip, licking it before she put her hand to him, moving up and down and her lips trailed off to his scrotum, pleasuring him with her tongue, gently sucking on it, causing Mark’s eyes to flutter shut and throw his head back.

‘Oh, my fucking God,’ he only managed to mutter, gasping, overwhelmed by the pleasure, feeling her sucking become more intense.

By now she had gotten to know that it was his favorite part, so she stayed there longer, continuously bringing in the familiar tingling bliss. He was panting heavily as she was relentlessly sucking on him, sloppily moving her hand up and down his length.

Max looked up at him, her excitement rising as she observed the passion on his face, proud of herself for pleasing him this way. She ran her lips from his base up, then took him in again, going down on him deeper. Mark’s breathing became harsher and he yet again grabbed onto her face. He felt he couldn’t hold on much longer, feeling himself pulsate inside her mouth, and so he climax ed with a loud groan, Max’s half-opened eyes gazing at him. His release dripped down the corner of her mouth and down his length. She slowly sucked off whatever she could, and was now waiting for him to come to his senses, still kneeling in front of him.

‘Fucking hell,’ he said, trying to catch his breath. Max was grinning at him widely, wiping her bottom lip with her thumb.

‘Was that good?’ she asked as she got up, her voice sweet, pretending to be shy.

‘Oh, my little tease, you…’ he shook his head, still out of breath, pulling himself up a bit. ‘You know it was good.’ He sat up straight, and pulled her in closer by the hips, kissing her tummy, his hands skimming up her back, she bringing hers to his head as she bit down on her smile.

‘Figured an artist should sometimes show a bit of modesty, don’t you think?’ she teased some more.

He pulled up to face her, chuckling lightly. ‘So you’re an artist in this department, too?’

‘Well, aren’t I? That was a masterpiece,’ she said, sticking her tongue a little, laughing at her own joke.

‘Can’t argue with that,’ Mark admitted, laughing with her. He stood up and abruptly picked her up bridal style.

‘Whoa!’ she exclaimed, surprised. She held onto him tightly, the skin on his bare torso burning pleasurably against hers.

Stepping over the scattered clothes, Mark carried her to the bedroom, or at least that was what she presumed, because he stopped in the middle of the office.

‘Now, you do know that I have a reputation to uphold, right?’ he asked teasingly. Holding her steadily, he carefully kneeled on the carpet, lowering her to the floor. ‘So…it’s your turn now.’

‘Yes, I know – you are a generous man,’ she concurred, giggling as he laid her down on the carpet.
Mark positioned himself on top of her.

‘Indeed, I am.’ He returned her smile, bringing his lips to hers. Leaning against the floor with one arm, his other hand was gently caressing her breast. Max wrapped her legs around his waist, and her hands arrived on the back of his neck and arm.

Mark soon moved lower, tracing a slow path down her jaw, neck, her sternum, stopping just for a moment to suck on her nipples. Though he wished to finally taste her, he still wanted to plant kisses all over her body, treating her skin as his own personal canvas. Leaving wet, pleasurable kisses down her stomach, he eventually reached his favorite spot. He inched off her panties and threw them backward. They landed on the edge of one of the computer monitors. He then lay comfortably on his stomach and encircled his arms around her thighs.

Sending her one of those smug smirks of his, he buried his face between her legs and she loosely wrapped them around his neck. His hands were sliding up and down her thighs as the tip of his tongue was gently grazing her clit just to tease her at first. It was definitely working – Max found herself aching for him all the more with his restrained, interrupted strokes. She was breathing unevenly, breath catching up in her throat as he stopped just before she felt the pleasure rise. He was taking his sweet time, focusing mostly on tasting her arousal just for himself.

*Generous, huh? I see right through you, mister,* she thought while smirking lightly.

‘Mm, my sweetness,’ Mark murmured barely audibly, widening her smile.

Max glanced forward at Mark. He usually took his glasses off for their intimate endeavors, but not this time. Seeing him now lock eyes with her from behind his specs, his magnetizing, desirous stare coupled with the sight of his lips pleasuring the most intimate part of her, both surely added to her craving.

But something had changed about the way she viewed him. He was no longer just Mark Jefferson who was her inspirational, supportive teacher and whose art she greatly admired. Since realizing she was in love with him and he in love with her, he was simply Mark – someone who was still devilishly handsome, no doubt, but also someone who cared to get to know her – her mind, her heart, and yes, her body too. And she wanted to return the favor just as much.

Her train of thoughts was, however, interrupted now as Mark assumed she had spaced out. He intensified his strokes, moving his tongue side to side more rapidly, actually allowing her pleasure to build up, and managed to elicit a moan from her.

His caresses became wet kisses, he was helping himself with his tongue, moving it slowly together with his lips. For a while there, just as Max had done before him, he got lost in what he was doing – his eyes were lightly shut, his strokes slow but perpetual, his hands absentmindedly fondling her breasts and tummy, her little moans keeping him company. In her passion, she slightly tightened the grip around his neck and brought her hands to his arms, digging her fingers in his skin. She could feel his facial hair scrape against her surface and her inner thighs, which were still gently hugging his face.

In her craving, Max was getting wetter, much to his delight, causing him to nearly get lost in the flavor again. She entwined her fingers in his hair to spur him to pick up the pace. He couldn’t keep her waiting, then. The renewed vigor of his caresses certainly made a difference. His gorgeous lover leaned her hips in closer to his mouth, gasping with each inhale, exhaling with a moan.

His tongue began moving up and down, side to side, creating the blissful, vibrating sensation. He adored the feeling of her hardened clit and enlarged folds against his tongue, and the way she was...
constantly spilling further, as though to reward him for his efforts. Her pleasure was rising higher and higher, she was unable to contain her moans. Mark felt her fingers etch themselves in his hair, her toes curled up against the fabric of his shirt covering his upper back muscles, and her thighs trembled around his face as he brought her to her peak.

‘Yes…yes!’ Max breathed in her passion, a delighted smile painted on her flushed face. Her heartbeat quickened and her limbs gave up, surrendering to the climax. Mark smiled and could now fully indulge in his favorite endeavor. He was slowly circling his tongue around her wet folds, humming and lightly growling through the strokes, relishing in her flavor and scent. Max closed her eyes, further relaxing, feeling so blissful that she nearly dozed off to the soothing sound of his voice.

He soon moved to kissing, licking and delicately biting her inner thigh, his chin soaked in her juices, prompting Max to wake up.

‘Mmm,’ she murmured, sort of absentmindedly. Her content, little moan made him smile.

‘That was definitely worth taking a break from my research,’ Mark stated, cleaning up his face a bit. She laughed lightly to concur.

Legs entwined, they cuddled, lying on the soft carpet, caressing each other’s skin.
Bliss, Pt. 2

Thursday, December 5, 2013 – same afternoon

Max felt Mark’s lips on her neck, his beard lightly tickling her skin, causing her to moan quietly and lean back onto him. He was behind her, embracing her by the waist, his one hand at her breast, his fingers gently playing with her nipple, the other hand dipping lower between her legs, his thighs hugging her hips.

The bathtub wasn’t awfully big, but it fitted the two of them with no problem, leaving quite a bit of extra space so they didn’t feel squished in there, allowing them to stretch out their legs should they want to. The hot water was keeping them nicely warm, the foam on the surface covering their bodies, leaving a little bit of mystery. Two wine glasses, along with a bottle of red, stood on a stool nearby. The bathroom was only dimly lit by the candles surrounding the tub, which, coupled with the enjoyable, citrus scent of the bubble bath, rendered the mood romantic.

‘Mm, we should have done this ages ago,’ Mark murmured into her ear, making her smile. His lips and tongue were teasing Max behind her earlobe, his slightly scruffy beard tickling and scratching her skin.

‘Mm-maybe.’ She exhaled, responding to the caresses. ‘But now it feels more special,’ she added, bringing her hand to the back of his neck.

‘It does, yes,’ he murmured again between kisses, ‘like everything that has you in it.’

Max bit down on her smile. ‘I–’ her own moan interrupted her, escaping her lungs.

Mark’s fingers were stroking her clit delicately though more insistently, the dull sound of sloshing about with his rapid hand movements coming from beneath the surface, his other hand gripping her thigh open as she started squirming in response to the pleasure. She brought her palms to his, pressing them closer, gasping and panting, pushing her back against his torso. Her head landed on his shoulder, allowing him to leave a trembling, sloppy kiss on her jaw, moving his fingers faster and faster, bringing in that blissful, tingling heat, and was forced to move his other hand to her waist to steady her, locking her under his arm, she holding onto him, surrendering to his caresses. She abruptly turned her face towards his, moaning against his jaw as he made her come.

Her body limp against his, she let out a content laughter, feeling his lips leave a kiss on her cheek. ‘I…I forgot what I was going to say,’ she breathed, laughing some more. Mark joined her, flexing and unflexing his tired hand.

She reached out for her wine glass. Taking a sip, she looked back at Mark and had to hide her grin behind glass as they locked eyes. His stare was sometimes so intense – or so it seemed to her – that it made her feel shy in his presence. In turn, he adored seeing that coy look on her. He smiled back at her and left half a dozen little kisses on her cheek.

‘Oh, I am getting way too drunk for my own good. I’ll probably fall asleep on you once we get out of here,’ Max chuckled, putting the glass back on the stool.

‘Being on the receiving end of your little masterpiece, how could I ever hold anything against you?’ Mark joked, his murmur vibrating in her ear again. Max could swear it was one of the hottest things he did, his voice so soothing and sort of purring, almost always sending shivers or tingles down her neck.
'You definitely cannot,' she breathed, her eyes shut and her smile wide.

They cuddled for a few moments in silence, caressing each other skin, enjoying the warmth of each other’s bodies.

Feeling playful, Max took two handfuls of foam and carefully placed it all along her jaw and above her mouth. Turning to face him, she said, ‘Now I look like you,’ an amused expression on her lips, cracking herself up.

Her girly, sincere laughter filled his eardrums and Mark couldn’t help but laugh with her at her silly demeanor. He absolutely loved how adorable she was. ‘You little goof,’ he said softly, stroking her cheek.

She grinned at him wiped her mouth as too much of the bitter foam dripped down to her lips. He created a big cup with his palms and drew clear water, cleaning off the rest of it to kiss her.

Max repositioned herself, turning around and sitting astride his one thigh, and brought her hands to his face, kissing him back with more eagerness, his hands holding her steadily by the waist. Mark could taste wine on her tongue, as well as feel her palm slipping lower down his chest, until she dived it deeper, eventually reaching between his legs.

‘Mm,’ she murmured, breaking away from the kiss. ‘Someone is ready for me.’

Mark offered her a huge grin. ‘It appears s-so, y-yes,’ he gasped, as she wrapped her hand around him and started gliding it up and down his length.

She gave him a little smooch before planting wet kisses on his neck, teasing him with her tongue, working her arm vigorously, making her partner moan with delight. His palm, dipped underwater, squeezed her cheek in passion, feeling her strokes become more and more insistent, he was simply sighing and grunting as his pleasure kept mounting higher. She could feel he was getting close now, as his grip on her behind tightened, and he soon grated her with a content growl, much to her satisfaction.

She moved up, bringing her palm to his cheek, sharing slow, deep kisses with him.

Drying off her hair, Max called out, ‘Mark, babe? I have nothing to wear to sleep, I didn’t bring anything.’

Mark exited the bathroom and headed to the chest of drawers, perusing through its contents until he found something. ‘Okay, I can offer this,’ he stated, passing a pair of grey pajama shorts and a navy blue tee to Max. ‘The shorts are probably too big for you, but they have that, uh…string thingy, you can tie it quite tightly around your waist so they won’t fall down.’

Max raised the clothes in her hands, examining the attire. ‘Hm. Okay, I’ll try it on.’

Indeed, Mark was right in assuming the clothes were far too big on her, but the string did help and the tee hanged nicely off her shoulders, though looking rather oversized.

‘There we go,’ he said, checking her out. ‘You look so cute.’

She grinned. ‘Ah, thank you.’ She left a little smooch on his lips. ‘Okay, come on, let’s go to bed, I’m super tired.’
‘Yes, me too, it was an eventful day,’ he chuckled. ‘No wonder we’re exhausted.’

They snuggled up together, warm and cozy, falling asleep soon after.

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Friday, December 6, 2013

A pair of soft lips was leaving delicate, little kisses on Mark’s bare upper back, and an arm hooked itself around his shoulder, bringing the owner’s body closer to his. His chest heaved as he drew a deep breath, slowly waking up, making Max smile as he let out a pleasurable, humming moan.

‘Good morning,’ Max purred into his ear, gently pulling on his lobe. She then went back to kissing his gentle skin, it burning pleasantly against her lips.

‘Good morning,’ Mark murmured in reply. He felt her bare breasts pressing against his back. Turning his head to face her a little, he asked, ‘Hey, where’s your tee?’

She slipped her hand down his torso, stopping to feel his abs. ‘I didn’t think I needed it anymore.’

Mark chuckled, sounding a bit sleepy. ‘Nicely deduced,’ he praised. ‘Come here.’ He rolled over and pulled her on top of himself. ‘My, my, entirely nude, huh?’

Max grinned at him. ‘Thought you might like it.’

‘I do indeed.’ His hands skimmed up her sides, arriving at her breasts, squeezing and fondling them lightly, she bringing her hands to his, feeling the pleasurable warmth radiating from his palms, and began grinding her hips against the edge of his underwear. Mark then pulled her down for a kiss, his palms wandering up and down her back. They then trailed off to her behind, pushing her hips towards his face. ‘Have a seat,’ he said playfully, sending her an enticing gaze.

Max giggled and eagerly acquiesced to his offer. She kneeled over his head, slowly lowering her pelvis to his face, her pulsating clit soon meeting his warm tongue. Holding onto the bedframe, she was calmly rocking her hips, sighing and biting down on her smile. Mark’s one hand at her cheek, steadying her, the other trailing off up her torso, eventually wrapping his palm around her breast, she bringing her hand to his again, and they moved together, both teasing one another.

Oh, but Mark knew exactly how to make her want more. Maneuvering his tongue interchangeably up, down and side to side, he soon elicited a delighted moan from his girlfriend, making her wetter, and she began riding his face a bit faster, though still gently.

‘Ah, Mark…’ Max sighed, her fingers curling around the bedframe and his hand, her cry undoubtedly making him smile. It clearly encouraged him to intensify the caresses, his strokes becoming more and more pleasurable, the warm, tingling sensation escalating higher, until she cried out again, slowing down her movements.

Wanting to feel him inside her, she broke away from his mouth, and crawled backwards, her lips meeting his for a wet, passionate kiss. Mindful to return the favor before going further, she was now planting kisses down his neck, all over his chest, relishing in his scent and the feeling of his blazing skin, backing away and kissing his abs, hearing his pleasurable, humming moans, his anticipation rising.
Finally getting between his legs and meeting his eyes, she sent him a gorgeous smile and pulled down his boxers, sliding them down his legs and relieving him of them completely. She teased him some more, licking the skin by the base and digging her fingers into his abs. Mark bit down on his bottom lip as he felt her lips wrapping themselves around his tip, sucking on it as her tiny palms moved up and down his length in regular strokes. It felt utterly satisfying to hear him quietly moan.

‘Mm,’ he murmured, then suddenly gasped in pleasure. Responding to his quiet cries of passion, Max began sucking on him more intensely, taking him in deeper. ‘Fuck,’ he whispered, his hand landing on her nape, his fingers tightening the grip. He closed his eyes, listening to the lovely sounds her mouth was making around his dick, coupled with her ragged breathing. He then locked eyes with her, smiling at her as her lips glided up and down on his side, leaving a playful, little kiss near his tip.

He pulled up, cupping her face with both of his hands, and brought it closer, kissing her eagerly. ‘You wanna…?’ he asked, once their lips parted.

Max didn’t respond verbally. She relieved herself from his loose embrace, crawled towards the foot of the bed and lay down on her stomach. Looking over her shoulder, she sent him a wide grin. She giggled in excitement, bending her knees and waving her feet.

Mark smirked. ‘I’ll take it as a yes.’ Tilting back, he reached for a large pillow and passed it to Max. ‘For you, my darling.’

‘Thank you very much,’ she replied in a polite, theatrical way. She took the pillow, stuffed it under her upper torso, and rested her head and arms comfortably on it.

Mark crawled right after her, kneeling low behind her, his torso straightened up. Moving her one leg up and, bending it at her knee, he came closer, she smiling at him over her shoulder all the way through. He teased her some more, brushing his fingertips against her soft labia, delighted to feel how wet she was for him.

‘Lovely,’ he murmured, widening Max’s grin.

She then felt him slowly slide inside, sighing quietly as he made himself at home. He loved the familiarity of the feeling of her warmth around himself, perfectly slick and tight.

‘Ah, yes,’ he breathed, beginning to move within her, holding onto her bottom, spreading the cheeks as he leaned against them. Closing his eyes, he murmured, ‘Oh, Max…you feel so good,’ escalating her excitement. He was gently rubbing against her wall at a semi-rapid pace, creating a light friction, causing her to gasp and let out quiet moans once in a while. She could hear him panting and grunting in response, he was clearly enjoying himself, his palms tightening their grip on her behind.

Mark was continuously rocking his hips, pressing himself against hers, going in slower every few moves to feel her deeper, grunting in pleasure. He propped himself against the bed and leaned in closer to leave wet kisses on the back of her neck. As turned her head to face him, he kissed her.

‘Good?’ he asked, reaching out and caressing her cheek.

‘Mhm,’ she replied with a wide smile.

Reciprocating it, he kissed her again and straightened his torso back up, his hands finding her hips and steadily holding onto them, and began moving more decisively, pushing harder, reveling in the sensation. Feeling her heat mount, Max reached back for his hand, he taking it and putting it to one of her cheeks, then covered it with his palm. Sweat breaking out on his skin, he began driving in faster and faster, evidently having reached her sweet spot. Hitting against it with more force, he heard
her delighted, drawn-out moans, her body moving beneath him in response to the delicious, warm pleasure.

Slowing down for a moment, leaning over of her and smirking to himself, Mark uttered in a deep timbre, ‘Oh, you like that, huh?’

Her grin widened, her lips parted, she moaned and closed her eyes. ‘Yes,’ Max murmured, drawling out every letter of her cry of passion, tightly gripping the pillow, feeling him continuously filling her up, her voice shaky due to Mark’s rapid movements within her. Her pleasure was building up higher and higher, warmer and warmer, causing her to remove her hand and prop herself on her arms and knees, the sensation all too overwhelming.

Arching and bending her back, his hands holding her by the waist, she felt his thrusts becoming faster and more aggressive, the friction more and more intense, much to her delight. He was panting behind her, evidently getting exhausted, but relentlessly slamming into her until he eventually brought her to climax, her peak breathless, fingers wrapped on the edge of the mattress. She dropped her tired body onto the bed with a loud thud, causing the bed to wobble.

Mark was now able to slow down. He slid his palms up her soft back and, having swept her hair to the side, leaned over her to give her a sloppy smooch on her nape. Max simply lay on the side of her face, eyes closed, satisfaction curving her lips upwards, trying to catch her breath. He was still moving inside her, albeit less intensely for now, as though to prolong the moment for himself, lightly kissing the back of her neck.

Max felt him withdraw from her and turn her on her back, thus she opened her eyes and sent him a dreamy, near-euphoric smile, reaching out with her hands to hug his face, which was approaching hers. Kissing for a few moments and sharing a grin right after, she then sensed him slide back inside. Mark leaned on top of her, again propping himself up on the mattress, her encircling her legs around his waist, her palms pressing against his chest. They were smiling at each other, lust mixed with affection, sharing the blissful friction between one another. He didn’t need to be as insistent this time, her pleasure was building up again, thanks to her first peak still lingering.

‘Are you a good girl?’ he asked, his voice tired, but still thrillingly deep.

‘I am,’ she replied, her lips parted and curved up in a smile, eyes closed.

Pushing a bit harder and hearing her moan, he asked again, ‘You want another?’

Without opening her eyes, she uttered, ‘Yes.’

‘Ask nicely.’

‘Please, Mr. Jefferson,’ she murmured, gasping as her pleasure mounted higher, barely able to speak.

He smirked. ‘Good girl.’

Keeping his end of the bargain, he began rocking his hips with more vigor, increasing the speed and force, pushing more roughly than before, observing the bliss painted on her face. She dug her fingers into his chest, feeling him continuously and relentlessly hit against the sweet spot, he was driving into it with no stops, soon bringing her into her second climax. It was more intense, causing her to cry out and tighten the grip around his waist, moving her hips with his. Mark lowered his body, his chest brushing against hers, his lips at her neck, and with the last few thrusts, he burst inside her with a loud growl.

Exhausted, they lay there, dripping with sweat, cuddling and trying to catch their breaths, elated.
smiles on their faces.

‘Pancakes?’ Mark offered after a few moments, then placed a kiss on her forehead.

‘I’m kinda feeling like…eggs and bacon this morning, if that’s alright with you.’

‘Of course it is.’ He squeezed her a bit tighter in his arms. ‘Anything you want, you get.’

She trembled with giggles. ‘Oh, you are going to spoil me beyond repair.’

‘Impossible. We’ve established that you’re a good girl,’ he said, cracking her up. ‘Okay, go shower quickly and I’ll make you that breakfast, hm?’ Max wanted to protest, feeling he really was spoiling her, but he cut her off before she could say anything. ‘Go, go, go!’ he hurried her, lightlyspanking her bottom in a playful way with each word.

She got off him, giggling. ‘Yes, sir.’

Mark simply shook his head at her with a smirk, enrobed his underwear back, and headed downstairs to keep his little promise.

Max soon joined him in the kitchen.

‘You’re fast,’ he remarked, raising his eyebrows. ‘There you go,’ he said, gesturing to the plate placed on her side of the island. ‘If you want more, just say, okay?’

Max took her seat. Two fried eggs and three strips of bacon, along with a big piece of toast graced her plate. He had also cut some veggies and made her coffee just the way she liked it. ‘Oh, it’s perfectly fine. Thank you.’

‘Welcome. Now, I’m gonna go shower, I’ll be back soon, you just enjoy your meal, baby,’ he announced, placing a kiss on her temple and headed upstairs.

Max slowly consumed the delicious breakfast, peeking out the window with a dreamy smile. The weather was nice enough for December, a few faint rays of sunshine were piercing through the glass. She felt simply blissful, spending time with Mark, or just at his house, always felt so wonderful.

He soon joined her, wearing her favorite white shirt, rolled-up sleeves, completed with dark jeans. He made himself a cup of coffee as well, and a similar breakfast, though just a bit more.

‘You sure you don’t want more?’ he asked.

‘You have no idea how full I am right now.’ She smiled, massaging her tummy. ‘It was so tasty. Thank you.’

Mark chuckled. ‘Well, alright. I’m glad you liked it.’

‘I did. Dare I say, it was even more delicious than Joyce’s.’

‘Who’s Joyce?’

‘Oh, right. Chloe’s mom. She works at the Two Whales,’ Max explained. ‘Can’t count the number of times she’s made breakfast for Chloe and me. But, as I said, I’ve found my new favorite chef,’ she added, grinning. She moved closer and kissed him.
'That makes me very happy,’ he replied with a smile. ‘So, busy day?’

‘A bit, but I think it’s still going to be rather easy on me, especially since English has been called off today. Ms. Hoida is still not feeling well.’

‘Right. I do hope she comes back soon, she’s a damn fine teacher.’

‘She is. I love how passionate she is about literature, makes it so much easier to absorb it all.’ Max took a sip of coffee. ‘How about your day?’

‘Just two lectures, gym in between.’

‘I see. I actually have PE first, too, gonna burn all this breakfast.’

‘You’ve already had some cardio today,’ he joked.

‘I did, yes, but I doubt that counts at Blackwell,’ she chuckled.

‘Sadly, I’m afraid you’re right.’ Having finished, Mark collected their empty plates and put them in the sink. ‘Oh,’ he groaned, ‘I’m full now too.’ He then joined Max back by the island, both sipping their coffee. ‘You know, this was actually my father’s favorite breakfast,’ he confessed.

Max smiled. ‘Yeah?’

‘Mhm. My mother would make it often for him, especially when he was working hard at night, coming back home early in the morning, completely exhausted. Once he was finished, he always said, ‘You’re the best,’ to my mom, kissed her on the forehead and headed to sleep,’ he recounted with a wistful smile. Clearly, the memory of his father was always somewhere at the back of Mark’s mind.

‘That’s so sweet.’ Max shifted closer, smiled and said, ‘You’re the best.’

Mark moved up and kissed her forehead, caressing her cheek. ‘You are.’
Saturday, December 7, 2013

{♪ “Apocalypse” – Cigarettes After Sex}

Sharing caresses – a light kiss on her cheekbone, a brush of her tongue against his Adam’s apple, his fingertips gently stroking the skin on her arm, the feeling of his soft facial hair against her fingers, kisses left on uncommon areas, bopping one’s nose, making a face at one another and smiling right after…it was just so blissful, accompanied by delicate rays of sunshine, however dim, given it was a December morning. To make everything even more magical, it had actually snowed recently outside. And they were so stupidly, carelessly in love.

Mark sitting up against the bedframe, Max somewhat astride his hips, they were now exchanging scars.

‘And this, right here…’ He showed her a very faint, white, long line along his inner forearm. ‘I was climbing a tree, I couldn’t have been more than eight or so. Obviously, I fell, but before I did, I got my arm stuck against a broken-off, very sharp and rugged branch, and then it ripped my skin open as I was falling. It was actually slowing down the descent.’

She winced and flinched simply hearing about it. ‘How much did it hurt?’ she asked, lightly blushing her fingertips against that spot.

‘A lot. What I remember the most vividly is the amount of blood. I think I might have passed out initially…or almost. I’m not sure. I needed nine or ten stitches.’

‘Stitches? My poor baby.’ She pouted, looking at him with compassion. She raised his forearm in her hands and placed gentle kisses all along the scar, making him smile. Ensconcing herself in his embrace again, she added, ‘But I do know how it feels.’

Mark kissed her temple, ‘Yeah? What’s your big scar?’

Max tilted back and slid her hand under her bangs, revealing her entire forehead – and there it was, a line similar to his, but on the very edge of her hairline.

‘Oh wow,’ Mark breathed, getting a hold of her head and examining the scar carefully, brushing his thumb against it. ‘How did that happen, baby?’

‘Not sure how old exactly I was, but definitely a toddler. Ran full speed ahead and slammed my head against the edge of the table. Passed out immediately without crying, according to my parents. They actually thought I killed myself,’ she recounted, Mark’s face assuming concern throughout. ‘Yeah…and they worried for a long time after, you know, in case I got a concussion or something worse, so they would get me checked up a lot. I do remember feeling dizzy and my head hurting, though.’

‘That sounds awful, can’t imagine what your parents must have felt,’ Mark said quietly, straining a smile and looking away for a moment. He then asked, unfazed, ‘Is this the reason you have bangs?’

Max blinked, a bit confounded by his behavior, but decided to let it be. Maybe I imagined it.

‘Mainly, yeah,’ she replied.

‘I see. Suits you, though.’ He sent her a smile, a genuine one this time. ‘Would be hard to imagine you without it.’
She kissed him gently. ‘Thank you.’

He nodded. ‘You’re welcome.’

Max rested her face in the crook of his neck, he embracing her with one arm, his lips first leaving a kiss on her forehead. He then leaned his head against the bedframe, closing his eyes.

Running her fingers up and down his inner arm, Max kept glancing at his scar, getting lost in her thoughts, until she noticed there was a similar white line along his wrist, albeit a clearer one. Without much consideration, giving into her curiosity, she brushed her fingertips against it, causing Mark to abruptly pull away.

His eyes snapped open. ‘Hey, so I’m thinking…it’s a nice weather outside, and I’ve checked and there’s actually an ice rink open in Salem. Not far away from here and I don’t think anyone will see us there. I haven’t skated in years. Would you like to go there later?’ he blurted out in the most rapid flood of words yet. His irises were frantically moving side to side, looking into her eyes, and a wide smile was suddenly gracing his slightly startled expression.

Max blinked once more, flustered. This time she was sure something felt off, but yet again, it seemed pressing him about it wouldn’t be fruitful, thus she let it go. ‘Hm. Yeah, why not? I’d love to go out, and ice skating seems like a perfect occasion to do so,’ she replied, burying herself in his warm chest.

‘Great. We could get dinner before or after, too, huh?’ he offered.

‘I’d love that, Mark,’ she responded and pulled up to face him. She knew she couldn’t ask him about the other scar she’d just seen, but what he could see now in her eyes was compassion. He cast his eyes downward, starting to shake his head in protest, his heart ramming fast in his chest, but then he felt her gentle palms hugging his face. ‘I’m sorry. I’m so sorry. We don’t have to talk about it,’ she said quietly, shaking her head as well. ‘Not unless you want to.’

Mark thanked her for her understanding with ardent kissing. She found it hard to match his intensity, but did she try. She was consolingly caressing his face, changing her position to sit astride him. He was embracing her tightly, breathing raggedly through his nose, though slowing down his kiss. As he ended it, he looked like a changed man – a wide, genuine smile beamed from his face, reaching his eyes, pupils dilated. Max kissed him again, and he then lifted her up a bit, holding her steadily by the waist, only to lay her down towards the foot of the bed and crawl on top of her.

Max felt him leave wet kisses on her neck, humming with contentment. ‘Hey,’ she chuckled. ‘What about ice skating? Don’t we have to leave soon?’

‘But I wanna play…’ Mark murmured into her neck, amusement coloring his tone. He then pulled up and brushed his nose against hers. ‘Pretty please?’

She cracked up, snorting and playfully pushing his face away. ‘Alright. Have fun.’

He grinned. ‘You won’t regret it. Promise.’

‘Prove yourself,’ she said, smiling widely as his grin turned into a smug smirk.

Starting with slow kisses on the lips, he soon moved to her jaw, teasing her with his tongue, his hand wandering off lower, lightly stroking her thigh. It then slipped up her sleeveless top, tracing a pattern up to her breast, caressing it delicately, while his lips attended to her neck again, planting kisses and brushing his teeth against her skin. Max brought her hand to his nape, tickling his skin just a little, closing her eyes and enjoying his touch.
She soon felt him pull her top up and his lips gliding up her sternum. Cupping her breast from below, he slowly, nearly lazily circled his tongue around her nipple, proceeding with gently sucking on it, and repeated the cycle, his facial hair pleasantly scraping against her skin, eliciting a content, little moan from her. He then attended to the other breast, taking his sweet time with the foreplay. Before moving further, he came back to give her a smile and a kiss, and traced a path down to her abdomen, delighting in every inch of her soft skin.

Arriving at her hips, Mark tugged at the edge of her shorts. ‘Let’s get these shorts out of the way, shall we?’ he teased with a smirk, taking them off. Max giggled in response, letting him disrobe her.

Then he was between her thighs, doing absolute wonders with his tongue, somehow always coming up with one caress that felt new and exciting. He was gently grazing her clit, teasing her a little, then letting her pleasure build up, then tease some more, glancing up at her with a bit of a smirk.

He looked so calm and lost in his endeavor, slowly moving his lips and tongue, like he was in his element, but for an entirely different reason, though she couldn’t quite guess what it was. She remembered that he had looked the same during their first night together, during all the following ones, as well as that one encounter a few days back. He always hummed with delight in between caresses, enjoying himself nearly as much as whenever he was on the receiving end or when they were both participating.

‘God, I love how wet you are for me,’ he murmured all of a sudden, not meeting her eyes but making her smile nonetheless, and went back to his little activity.

Max brought her hand to his hair, then slipped it lower, caressing the side of his face, which encouraged him to intensify the strokes and caused her to throw her head back, close her eyes and let out a sweet moan, adding to his desires. Going a little faster, he felt her tremble beneath his caresses and bring both of her hands to his head, etching her fingers in his hair and tugging at them in pleasure. Unable to hold on for much longer, her thighs began shaking around his face, and she moaned softly as she reached her peak.

Mark came up from between her legs and kissed her deeply, his chin leaving some of her juices on hers. ‘So, did I prove myself?’ he asked with a grin.

‘As always,’ Max replied, reciprocating his smile. She kissed him again and wanted to return the favor, but he just broke away and got out of bed. She frowned and pulled up, surprised once more. His behavior this morning had been off all around. ‘Wait– Don’t you want me to, uh…you know?’ she asked, getting out of bed as well. ‘Am I not…good at it, is that why?’

‘What? Baby, of course you’re good at it.’ He closed the gap between them and leaned in for a kiss. ‘I love when you do that. We just don’t have that much time right now.’

‘Oh, okay,’ Max said, glancing down. She then met his eyes with a dose of hesitation. ‘But…I feel as though I’m on the receiving end of this far too often – in comparison to you, I mean.’

‘Hm. Well…maybe?’ He shrugged. ‘But just so you know–’ His eyes roamed all over her face, his fingertips lightly tickling her cheek and her earlobe as he tucked her hair behind her ear and met her eyes again. ‘–I love pleasuring you. Especially this way.’

Max narrowed her eyes, a light smile on her lips. ‘You do?’

‘Mhm,’ he confirmed, nodding and smiling, his hand slipped from her cheek, along her jaw, and arrived at her chin.
‘How so?’

‘How so?’ he echoed, a bit astonished that she would even ask, taking his hand away. ‘You think I’m doing that out of some sort of obligation?’ He arched his eyebrow at her, sounding a bit amused.

‘No, it’s not that, just…didn’t know you liked it that much.’

‘Well, I do. I mean…it calms me, for starters. It’s also very exciting to feel and hear how much you enjoy my tongue.’ He smirked as her cheeks burned with red. ‘And you taste so good.’

Max smiled widely, albeit still shyly. She cast her eyes down and said quietly, ‘So do you.’

Mark chuckled. ‘Why, thank you very much. Glad to hear that.’ He kissed her again. ‘So, don’t worry, I don’t feel left out. And you’ll make it up to me later anyway.’ He winked at her.

Max laughed. ‘Gladly.’

One more kiss later, Mark announced, ‘Okay, that settled… So, although I’ve had breakfast already–’

She frowned, surprised. ‘You have? When did you– Oh!’ She giggled. ‘You were joking.’

‘Partially, yes,’ he chuckled, arching his eyebrow and cracking himself up. ‘So, a real breakfast is in order, would you agree?’

‘I would.’ She laughed with him. ‘Maybe something quick and small, though? That way, we’ll have some more space left for that dinner?’

‘Good idea, sweetheart.’

Having arrived in Salem, Mark pulled over by a facility called “Salem On Ice.” They got out of the car and started walking towards the entrance.

‘Whoa, that is a big rink,’ Max remarked, her eyes roaming over the building.

‘It is, yeah,’ Mark concurred. ‘And it’s good that it’s indoors with all this snow going on.’

‘Speaking of, won’t we get snowed in?’

‘I don’t think so. But if we do, we’ll just rent a motel room or something. Don’t worry, darling,’ he eased.

‘Okay.’ She readjusted the hat she was wearing.

‘Now, come,’ he said, taking her hand.

Max was twirling around him, carving patterns in the ice and giggling. ‘I really wouldn’t believe you or anyone if they told me you could skate.’

‘I’m just full of surprises, aren’t I?’ he retorted, taking her hand and spinning her around under his arm.
‘You are.’ She came back to him, leaning in for a kiss, her hands landing on his chest. ‘If I hadn’t seen it first-hand…’ She shook her head. ‘I knew there was pretty much nothing you couldn’t do.’

‘And no one would believe you if you told them.’ He smirked. ‘The other part is… almost true. Lousy baker, remember?’

‘Oh, yes, that’s true. Maybe I could help in that department.’

‘You can bake?’ Mark asked, surprised.

‘Some stuff, yes. Cookies, a simple pie or a cake.’

He theatrically narrowed his eyes. ‘Hm, I shall use your powers to my own benefit then.’

She giggled. ‘For evil?’

‘That’s yet to be seen.’

Doing laps around the rink, even racing at times, they truly felt free for these few hours. Going out wasn’t much of an option, obviously, and no way they could ever do anything together in Arcadia Bay, but this town appeared secure, not many – if any – Blackwell students visited it, they seemed to prefer Newberg or Portland.

‘Ha, ha! First!’ Max exclaimed, smiling triumphantly as she arrived at their preassigned finish line.

‘Oh, I let you win,’ Mark stated, catching up to her a second later and jokingly rolling his eyes. He hugged her face with his palms and started kissing her for a little while until she broke away with a dreamy smile.

‘Then that is still your loss,’ she retorted.

‘Fine. No mercy next time.’

Max giggled and kissed him in the same manner as he had a moment ago. ‘You’re on.’ Her eyes shifted over his shoulder for but a second. Her smile died immediately as she saw someone in the distance – a blond, short-haired girl appeared in the growing crowd by the entrance to the building, a sight Max would recognize anywhere.

Oh, fuck. Oh, no, no no! Victoria’s here? Oh, we’re in so much trouble!

Mark saw the startled look on her face and followed where her eyes were gazing intensely, but he didn’t see anything unsettling.

Wanting to turn around and hide behind him, Max suddenly tumbled backwards, slipping on the slick ice and hitting her bum on the cold, hard ground. ‘Ouch!’ she cried out, bringing Mark’s attention back to her.

‘Oh, baby, how did this happen?’ he asked, concern all over his face, and crouched down to help her get up.

‘I…I saw Victoria,’ Max breathed, having difficulty speaking with that ripping pain in her left buttock. She winced as he pulled her up. ‘Come on, quick, we need to hide.’

Standing back up with her, he smiled at her reassuringly. ‘Sweetheart, there’s no one there. I checked,’ he soothed. ‘We don’t have to worry.’ He caressed her cheek, the other hand holding hers steadily.
‘Are you sure? What if you’re wrong? You’re gonna get in trouble,’ she spoke quickly, clutching to his coat.

‘Don’t worry, sweetness.’ He left a soft kiss on her forehead. ‘Everything’s fine. But perhaps we should head home, your bum must be hurting you pretty badly, huh?’

Attempting to skate back towards the exit, Max winced again, Mark following her. ‘Ouch. Yeah, it does,’ she replied, grimacing.

‘Okay, let’s go then.’

Once off the rink, Mark took off his skates and crouched down to remove hers, so that she didn’t need to sit down to do so herself, seeing as each movement of those muscles brought her pain.

‘Thanks, babe,’ she said with a smile. She stood on her toes to kiss him. ‘Can we go eat first? I’m pretty hungry, and I could use some comfort food right about now.’

‘Of course. Come on.’ He grabbed her hand and they soon left the building, got inside the car and headed to a nearby diner.

‘Oh my, the bruise is…substantial,’ Mark stated, examining the purple-brown contusion on her left cheek. They were back at his house, safely secluded in the bedroom. His fingertips brushed against it for but a second, but Max still winced in pain, albeit more involuntarily than because it actually hurt. He quickly took his hand away. ‘Sorry, baby.’ He then pretend-pouted. ‘That is a shame, though – no spanking for a while,’ he half-joked with that smug smirk of his.

‘Oh, the horror!’ Max scoffed, rolling her eyes, a slightly amused smile on her lips.

Mark played again, this time pretending to be baffled. ‘Talking back to your professor? That’s not very polite, Ms. Caulfield.’ He shook his head disapprovingly.

Max grinned. ‘What are you going to do, spank me, professor?’ She brought her body closer, grinding her hips against his, teasing him.

Mark smirked. ‘No. I see right through you, you bad girl – that would be a reward for you.’ Hearing her giggle, he slipped his hands up her thighs and experimentally dug his fingers into the bruise. The sensation, though slightly painful, was weirdly pleasurable and far too enjoyable for her to resist. Max winced with a smile, her chest heaving, her eyes lustful. Seeing that, he dug them again, harder this time, eliciting a slightly pained moan. ‘Good.’

Holding her by the waist, he rolled over with her, landing on top of her, and buried his face in the crook of her neck, leaving those wet kisses she adored so much. His one hand skimmed lower and arrived at her underwear.

‘Get this thing out of the way!’ he said playfully, pretending to be annoyed. Max grinned at him as he removed her panties, and watched him do the same to his boxers.

‘Already?’ she asked, arching her eyebrow as she saw him nude.

‘I’m always ready for you,’ he shot back, smirking and leaning over her to kiss her.

He then reached back between them and entered her slowly. Readjusting his position on top of her,
he lifted her a bit, she propping herself up, her feet firmly placed on the bed, her knees bent, her upper back and stretched-out arms resting on the bed as well. He started slowly moving within her, smiling at her, gradually speeding up, that familiar, warm friction escalating thrust by thrust. Their quickened breaths and the sounds of their bodies hitting against one another filled the room, their moans joining soon after. The new position felt exciting, allowing him to reach her sweet spot a bit faster than he usually would. Though his arm was getting tired, he saw how much she enjoyed his movements, thus he proceeded, feeling himself continuously brush against her slick wall, observing the sheer bliss on her gentle face.

Her cries of passion becoming louder and louder, her eyes fluttering shut, and her warmth contracting around him as he brought her to climax, he lowered her back to rest on the bed and kissed her passionately before rocking his hips anew, soon releasing inside her with a content moan.

Though satisfied and warm in his arms, Max couldn’t stop thinking about his odd behavior earlier that day, pondering about what she’d seen and whether or not Mark would ever willingly tell her about it.
Bliss, Pt. 4

Tuesday, December 17, 2013

The bell finally rang. Most of Max’s classmates hurriedly evacuated themselves from the Art class as though it was on fire. She sat on the edge of her desk for the time being, waving her feet and observing the conversation between Mark and Victoria – the usual, forced pleasantries, of course, so Max didn’t think much of it, it would be over soon enough anyway.

After a while, though, Victoria sensed Max’s gaze and shifted her eyes towards her. ‘What are you looking at, selfie hipster?’ she snarled.

‘Victoria–’ Mark attempted to interject, but Max was quicker, rolling her eyes at the blonde. ‘I need to speak with Mr. Jefferson about my assignment, too, Victoria,’ she stated calmly. ‘You’re not the only student here, you know.’

‘But I’m the only one worth it,’ Victoria shot back. Max simply snorted, not letting the blonde get the best of her. It wouldn’t be worth it.

Mark sighed deeply and continued the talk with his wayward student, and Max kept observing them in silence, patiently waiting for it to be over. But as her boyfriend and her “nemesis” were talking, suddenly, Mark laughed at something Victoria said, causing Max to frown and feel a tiny stab in her heart.

Max knew Mark. That laughter definitely wasn’t strained. He wasn’t being polite just for the sake of keeping up appearances or to remain professional. He actually found Victoria’s comment – or whatever the hell it was – endearing. Endearing enough to bark out a laugh. There was a burning sensation building up in Max’s chest and emerging on her cheeks now too. She crossed her arms, watching his and Victoria’s ongoing exchange with her lips pressed into a straight line, her eyes expressing anger.

Thankfully, after a few minutes, Victoria left the classroom, enticingly waving her hips on her way out, to which Mark didn’t pay attention as a new issue emerged. Max put her bag on her desk and headed towards Mark with her arms crossed and her eyebrows furrowed.

He frowned in surprise. ‘What’s wrong?’ he asked with a sigh.

‘You laughed at her joke? Really?’

‘What, am I not allowed to laugh at anyone’s fun remarks but yours?’ he asked, his slightly angry tone mixed with amusement. He shook his head and rubbed his eyes under his glasses.

‘I’m not disallowing anything,’ she shot back, baffled. ‘I just don’t like it.’
‘And what was wrong with that?’

‘Nothing. Just didn’t think you liked her.’ Max rolled her eyes, turned around and headed towards the exit, completely forgetting about her bag she’d left on her desk.

Mark caught onto her, yanked her arm and blocked her escape. ‘No, no, hold on, we’re not doing this. You’re not going to imply something like that and then just leave like nothing happened.’ He was fixing her with gaze, his eyebrows furrowed. He then, still holding her arm, reached back to lock the door and faced her again. ‘Talk to me.’

‘About what?’ She freed her arm from his grip. ‘I think I made myself pretty clear.’ She turned away again and headed back to her desk.

He glowered at her once she faced him again. ‘Yeah, I thought I’d made myself clear, too, and yet… here we are. I don’t like her, you know that. You also know I can’t avoid her, she’s my student. A very eager one at that.’

‘I know that,’ Max shot back, befuddled, her eyes wide. She went around her desk from the left side to try and leave again, but she stopped once she heard another one of his retorts.

‘So how do you suppose I go about it, huh? Act like a dick? I’m a teacher, Max. I can’t exactly choose sides.’

‘I know!’ she almost yelled, then fell onto Victoria’s desk and decided to stay there for the time being, looking down at the floor.

Mark frowned and came closer. ‘Then what is your problem?’

Max hopped off the desk and raised her hands, frustration pouring out. ‘Because I hate her! Okay?! Have you heard how she speaks to me? O-or anybody else for that matter?’ she explained, gesticulating in an agitated manner, slowly approaching him all the while. ‘She walks these halls like they’re hers, insults people left and right, harasses them for no fucking reason. And then you proceed with talking to her and just letting it go, even as a teacher, not just my…boyfriend.’ That last word sounded odd. And it was the first time she’d addressed Mark as such.

He exhaled, trying to calm himself down. ‘I actually tried to defend you today, but you handled it yourself.’

Words died in her mouth. She took a deep breath. ‘Still. I hate that she’s all over you. And yeah, I hate that you laughed at whatever it was that she said, like it or not.’ She crossed her arms, feeling her anger still coursing through her veins.

‘Oh, and your Warren, or whatever the hell his name is, is all over you, and you still haven’t told him to butt out, yet here I have to swallow it up and act like it doesn’t bother me?’ Mark shot back heatedly. ‘Rather unfair, don’t you think?’

Max rolled her eyes. ‘Oh god, how many times do I have to tell you – he’s my friend!’ she retorted in a raised voice.

‘I know that. But he wants more,’ Mark said, pointing to the door, as though Warren stood right there. ‘And you know that. He touches you, hugs you, makes you laugh. You think that doesn’t make me furious? You think I like it? But I chose to trust you, so I believe you when you say he’s just a friend.’

She raised her eyebrows, sheer bafflement beaming from her face. ‘And I don’t trust you?’
‘Sometimes, it doesn’t seem like you do, yeah,’ Mark simply stated, his features contorted with annoyance and a slight rage building up under his skin.

Max narrowed her eyes. ‘Well, I guess there’s no changing your mind, then.’

He huffed. ‘Changing my mind?’ He pointed to himself. ‘Oh, that’s rich, Max.’ He shook his head and an angry smirk appeared on his face.

‘What?’ she snarled.

Mark started to close the gap between them, approaching her step by step, causing her to backtrack towards Victoria’s desk. ‘It’s you who insists that I “like” Victoria, when I keep telling you that I don’t,’ he uttered.

With the last word, Max was pressed to the edge of the desk, Mark towering over her. She felt the tension rise even further between them, her heart picking up the pace and shivers running down her body. She raised her hands and put them to his chest, but he took them away, tightly gripping her wrists. He glared at her and suddenly kissed her. It was a quick yet hard kiss, catching her off guard for a moment. He then moved back a bit to study her reaction. Her irises moving frantically side to side and her anger turning into excitement, she kissed him back just as hard, he letting go of her wrists and allowing her to grab onto his collar, she tugging on it in frustration. His hands wandered lower to her thighs, picking her up and making her fully sit on the desk.

Ragged breaths and ardent moans filling the classroom, Mark was hastily undressing her, soon leaving her entirely nude without allowing her to do the same to him, his warm palms finding her breasts and squeezing them a bit harder than usual, causing her to grunt. She found she liked how rough he was being right now, her excitement escalating further. Continuing their heated kiss, Max’s hands finally met his hips, and pulled out his shirt, beginning to unbutton it in a hurry.

She hastily spread his undone shirt, leaving possessive, biting kisses on his chest, his hands pressing her head closer, breathing out in excitement and tugging lightly on her hair, her head being tilted backwards for a moment, lust flashing behind his dark brown eyes. He kissed her hard again, still holding her head back, feeling his want become stronger. She broke away, her blue eyes desirous, her lips found his chest again, glided up to join him back for a kiss, Mark soon deepening it. He began to hurriedly unbuckle his belt, feeling he couldn’t hold on much longer. Having quickly unzipped his jeans, he let them slide down to his ankles along with the underwear, he then entered her and started moving inside her, slowly though harshly at first, letting out frustrated grunts.

Her arms hooked around his neck, he broke away from her lips and was now leaving wet, biting kisses on her neck to return the favor from earlier, making her close her eyes and moan in thrill. Max slipped her hands up, entwining her fingers in his hair, and encircled her legs around his hips, panting and smiling through it all, but he soon broke away, straightened up and put his palm to the parting of her ribcage, pressing it and looking at her with dominance, lust laced with anger, the other hand wandering off to her thigh and squeezing it tightly, causing just a bit of pain. Holding his slightly angry gaze to the same degree, she parted her lips, taking in shallow breaths, feeling his harsh thrust become more insistent, and reached out to his arms, clutching to them and digging her nails into his skin.

They were moving together aggressively, grunts and throaty moans filling the room, until there was a sudden knock on the door. They froze for a moment, Mark’s head immediately shot towards it, quickly pulling up and clutching to Mark’s chest, then her eyes shot back to him, both their eyes meeting in a second of terror.

‘Mr. Jefferson?’ Victoria called out. ‘Are you still there?’
Mark swallowed hard. Thinking quickly on his feet and figuring there was no way they could get dressed back up quickly enough and not raise any suspicion, he gave Max a telling look and put his hand to cover her mouth, resuming his movements within her with a renewed vigor, slamming harder into her and gazing into her eyes with an excited smile. Max lay back again and tightened her grip around his waist, surrendering to the thrill and pleasure. She slipped her hands up his chest, digging her fingers into his muscles, causing him to grunt as quietly as he could, having difficulty muffling his own cries of passion, his heat rising and pleasure building up stronger.

As it began to overwhelm him, he leaned over her, and, still having his hand on her mouth, buried his face in the crook of her neck, leaving one trembling, sloppy kiss, and stayed there, his warm breath on her skin bringing in shivers, his other hand back at her bottom, steadying his hard, harsh thrusts into her. Max embraced him with one arm, the other hand sliding up and etching its fingers in his hair, tugging in pleasure, digging her heels into his loins. They must have been making some noise, though, with their bodies hitting against the desk, it scraping against the floor once in a while, their quickened breaths and tiny moans audible throughout the room, but they just didn’t care, it was all too exciting in the moment, especially coupled with the threat of being found out.

‘Mr. Jefferson? Hello?’ Victoria called out again, sounding a little impatient and knocking once more. ‘I know you’re in there.’

Almost at the same time, Max sensed Mark begin to drive straight into her sweet spot, causing her to let out a moan far too loud even with his hand muffling it, but he didn’t stop, completely surrendering himself to the thrill and the bliss of it all as well, feeling her become wetter and squirm beneath him, encouraging him to push harder and more aggressively into her, undoubtedly making it louder than they should have. In her passion, Max began moving her hips to meet his, digging her heels into his loins to the point of pain, but it only furthered his want, reveling in her tight, wet heat, their sweating chests brushing against one another with each thrust. Soon, her eyes fluttered shut, her wall began contracting around him, and a silenced cry-out emerged from underneath his palm. Following her nearly to the second, he slowed down his movements, his pulsating, tingling sensation bursting forward, a soft moan let out against her neck. They were too far in the moment to hear Victoria go away, her footsteps soon dying somewhere in the hallway with echoes.

Their hearts still racing from all the stress and thrill, they shared a content smile and a passionate kiss, laughing and trying to catch their breaths.

Mark withdrew from her and hid his face in the crook of her neck again, exhausted. After a while, he left a tiny kiss and pulled up a bit to face her once more. ‘Does this prove my point enough for ya?’ he asked, breathless and chuckling.

Max grinned back, breathing out a laughter. ‘I think it does, yes.’ A few more deep breaths, she put her hands to his face and added, ‘I may or may not have overreacted. I’m sorry.’

‘Well, uh…it led to this, so I guess I’m not as mad anymore,’ Mark said, sharing his head sideways. ‘I’m sorry too – about that Warren stuff I said. Apparently, we’re both a bit jealous and possessive.’

‘It seems so, yeah,’ she chuckled. She pulled him down for a kiss or two.

‘Our conflict resolution technique is superb, though,’ he joked, crackling her up.
Alright, so first of all, I suck. I'd like to apologize for taking such a long break. I'm really, really sorry. Life and a bit of writer's block happened, but nothing severe enough to make me stop writing altogether. I'm still here, still continuing the story :) It's just sometimes hard to finish certain chapters. Lovely to see more hits, comments and kudos. Thank you all for reading and sticking with me <3

Another thing: questions have been raised whether or not Max and Mark have been using any sort of protection during their many intimate encounters. To which I answer — of course they have :D I guess wanted to be a bit less explicit on *that* front, but I really should have made it clear from the start. So, in this chapter, I attempt to quickly set the record straight. Maybe it's a lame attempt, but welp, too late to resolve this differently now, lol.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Thursday, December 19, 2013

Max woke up early, but felt actually well-rested for once. Sleeping alone in her dorm room, without Mark by her side, was usually more difficult. She stretched out her tense muscles, pleasurable pins-and-needles and shivers as she did so. She got out of bed, took out a pill out of the package and swallowed, gulping an entire tall glass of water. This was her reality now, since a couple of weeks before her trip to San Francisco, secretly hoping the pills would have become useful, always keeping in mind what her mother had been telling her ever since Max had started high school: ‘Max, don’t do anything you’re not comfortable with, okay? And just…be safe, alright? Don’t be afraid to ask for whatever you need.’

Max had also heard it a couple of times before she had left for Blackwell, and understandably so – from then on, she had been going to be completely on her own, day to day, without anyone truly trusted close by. No one to ask those important questions without fear or constraint. She appreciated that her parents, and especially her mother, always took good care of her sex education. They never treated this matter as something to be ashamed of. Thus, before moving further with Mark, Max had started to take precautions. Obviously, Mark had been prepared as well, he’d never make her or anyone else feel unsafe in such an intimate situation, but he and Max had come into an agreement and both made sure to remember about it. They were free to enjoy each other without worry.

She turned on her stereo, Syd Matters busting out of the speakers while she made the bed and got dressed, humming along to the light and cheerful melody and dancing a little bit.

The bell rang. Mark finished his rant and went over to his desk. Sitting down, he unbuttoned his blazer to get more comfortable. As usual, most of Max’s classmates were desperate to get out of the classroom as soon as possible, even Victoria, who must have had something exceptionally better to do this afternoon. Max, on the other hand, was in no hurry, and took her time packing up her items. She looked to the front in search of Mark’s eyes, but they were consumed by something on his
laptop. Despite their making up on Tuesday, there was sort of an...uneasy mood between them, she couldn’t quite explain why, even to herself, but she could just sense it – Mark was a bit more... distant. She clearly made him assume a rather guarded approach after their fight. And even though it felt awful, she really couldn’t blame him, that argument was ridiculous and upon further consideration, she could hardly believe she had actually initiated it.

Finally, she was the last to leave. She got up from her desk and chose the more remote route to the exit. She glanced in Mark’s direction, but his eyes didn’t meet her like she hoped. Resigned, she sighed and figured she should be on her way then. Just as she was about to step through the threshold and onto the hallway, she heard him.

‘Max,’ Mark called out softly. She stopped mid-way and tentatively turned around. ‘Can we talk?’ he asked.

‘Sure,’ she replied quietly. She reached back and closed the door, locking it once, and then slowly made her way towards him.

‘Sorry, I was too caught up in checking in with my lecture plan, I thought you were still at your desk,’ he explained with a concerned look on his face.

Max mustered a slight smile. ‘It’s fine.’ She waved it off. ‘Are we okay?’ she asked after a short pause.

Mark raised his eyebrows. ‘Huh? Of course we are, why wouldn’t we be?’ he shot back, genuinely surprised.

She glanced at him for a second, then cast her lids down, clasping her hands together. ‘Because of the stupid shit I said. I wish I could take it back.’ She looked back at him. ‘I’m sorry.’

Mark stood up from his revolving chair and leaned against the shorter side of his desk, crossing his arms only so slightly. ‘I thought we resolved it. On that desk.’

‘Well, uh...yeah, we did, but you’ve been...distant. Like what I said made you cautious or something. I shouldn’t have.’

She took a couple of more steps towards him until the gap between them was closed. Almost automatically, Mark then cupped her face and looked her in the eyes. ‘But I said some stupid shit, too, didn’t I?’

‘Yeah, but I made a scene out of nothing, basically. You were right, it sounded like I don’t trust you, and it’s not true,’ Max said, looking at him apologetically. She put her hands to his chest and tightly squeezed the fabric of his shirt. ‘No more petty jealousy, okay? I promise.’

Mark snuggled her close and left a gentle kiss on her forehead. ‘Alright, sweetheart. None from me either,’ he assured. ‘It’s okay. We’re okay.’

She embraced him tighter. ‘Okay,’ she mumbled into his chest, making him chuckle. He put his warm palm to the side of her face and lightly stroke her cheek, feeling her smile against his touch. They stood there for a few moments, eyes closed, slowly breathing in and out, absolutely calm in each other’s arms, enjoying the simple intimacy of a hug.

After a while, Max pulled away a bit and looked up at Mark. ‘So, you wanna come over tonight?’ she asked, biting down on her excited smile.

‘Ah, so we’re still in our reckless phase, huh?’ he shot back with a big grin.
She shrugged a little, her smile widened. ‘Yeah, why not?’

‘I guess you have a point, we should savor it before it becomes impossible, hm?’ He brushed her bangs to the side and leaned in to give her a smooch.

Max nodded. ‘We should,’ she affirmed. ‘So?’

‘Well, if that’s the case, then I shall come by,’ Mark replied playfully and kissed her again, she giggling lightly against his lips.

‘Good. 10:30pm?’

‘Mhm. I could get us sushi from that place next to the library, what do you think?’ he offered. ‘I think it’s open till midnight.’

‘Oh yeah, great idea. I’d like that.’ Max smiled and stood on her toes to kiss him once more. ‘See you later then. Gimme a call beforehand.’

‘As always.’ He nodded theatrically. ‘See you later, baby.’

Warm under the covers, nude and half-lying on top of Mark, her one hand wandering up and down his side, Max was kissing him slowly, his hand cupping her face, the other lightly caressing the skin on her upper back. Their bodies were still sweaty and tired from the blissful encounter they’d just had, but despite the satisfaction it had brought, they were nowhere near done with each other for the night. For now, though, simple aftercare sufficed. Giving into the fatigue, Max snuggled back up to him, resting her head on his chest.

‘You know, I really like your photo wall. Polaroid photographs do have their charm,’ he remarked after a few moments of silence.

She smiled. ‘Hm, thank you. So many great memories on this wall, you know? I kinda wish some of our pictures could be hanging in here too, but…’ She cut off, squeezing him a bit tighter.

‘Yeah, me too, sweetheart,’ he murmured and kissed her forehead consolingly.

Max hummed, her lips contorted into a small pout. Maybe someday, if she were to own an apartment, she would be able to do so. But would Mark be there with her? She wasn’t sure, as much as she’d like that kind of future.

‘Hey–’ Mark’s soothing voice pulled her out of her thoughts. ‘–would you like to have that sushi now?’ he asked, drawing gentle circles on her shoulder. ‘I’m pretty hungry.’

She smiled. ‘Yeah. I’m actually starving too.’ She pulled up, gave him a little kiss and changed her position into a seated one. Mark did so as well, covering himself with the covers up to his waist, and Max tucked the covers under her arms. Mark then reached to the bedside cabinet for the two plastic trays filled with sushi and handed one to Max, as well as one set of chopsticks.

‘There you go, baby,’ he said. ‘Enjoy.’

She grinned at him. ‘Thank you.’ She separated the chopsticks, the sound of wood breaking apart as he did so as well. Consuming her first piece, she hummed with contentment. ‘Oh, it’s so good. I forgot how much I missed having sushi. You’re a genius for thinking of this.’

Mark chuckled with his mouth full. ‘I do know you a little bit, don’t I?’ he asked, having swallowed.
'You do,' she affirmed. 'Hey, why did you bring your bag with you?' she asked, pointing to the object.

'You’ve only noticed it now?'

'Hey, I was otherwise occupied,' she replied, arching her eyebrow and flashing a smirk similar to his.

He chuckled again. 'Good point,' he concurred. 'Well, I brought my laptop to show you something.'

'Show me what?'

'Something,' he said evasively again with a bit of a smirk. Max rolled her eyes and took another bite of her sushi. 'Okay, fine. It’s the photographs you’ve taken so far during the labs.'

'Really? Weren’t we all supposed to review them tomorrow during your office hours?'

'That’s correct. But I figured I could show you yours in a much nicer atmosphere than to the rest of your classmates.'

Max breathed out a laughter. 'Again – genius,' she said.

Mark leaned in for a quick smooch. 'See, I knew you’d appreciate it.'

She smiled and made a face that said, 'well, duh,' in response, making him laugh. 'So, how am I doing so far?' she asked.

'As splendid as always.'

'Really?' She theatrically arched her eyebrow.

'Mhm,' he affirmed. 'You’ve made a great – and fast – progress. Especially for someone who doesn’t use digital and refuses to switch to it, too.'

'Well, I’ve told you, I can’t quite afford it,' she reminded him.

'I know that. And I have offered my help. I know you think it wouldn’t be fair, but your colleagues have very pricy equipment and I’d say that’s not exactly fair either.'

'And it was very sweet of you to offer, okay? I really do appreciate it.' She reassuringly touched his arm. 'I guess I’d be more willing to accept one of your cameras if you were just my boyfriend. But you’re also my teacher. I don’t know why that feels like taking advantage where I shouldn’t, but it just...does,' she explained.

'Alright, I get it.' There was a longer pause and just the sound of chewing. 'What if it was a gift?' he asked after a while.

Max put the last piece of sushi into her mouth and chewed slowly, pondering her response. 'I...guess? I’ll think about it some more, okay?' she replied with a slight smile.

'Okay,' he replied in kind.

'Good.' With that, she found her pajama tee, slid it on, gave him a kiss and got out of bed.

'Wait, why are you getting dressed back up?' Mark asked, astonished. He didn’t think the night was over just yet. 'Did I upset you?'
‘Of course not. I’m just gonna go to the bathroom real quick, okay? I really need to pee,’ she replied, pulling on the shorts as well. ‘I’ll lock the door in case someone decides to visit…though it’s unlikely.’ It was unlikely anyone would get inside her room at this hour. But then she remembered that someone determined had already broken in once, and this time around Max had a lot more to risk.

‘Oh, okay,’ Mark chuckled. ‘I think I’m going to be safe. I hope your closet is big enough, though. You know, just in case.’

Max snorted. ‘I should hope so too. Okay, I’ll be back soon.’ She waved to him, slid out of the room, then closed and locked the door behind.

Mark had a couple of moments to do one thing he’d been planning for some time now. He rose to his feet, approached the closet and perused through its contents. Unlike him, his girlfriend was a bit of a messy person, but the peach dress he was looking for was hanging neatly among her many tees and hoodies, unwrinkled and covered with protective plastic. At the bottom of the closet, there were the matching high heel shoes. Mark grabbed all of that, folded the dress as carefully as possible, and stuffed it together with the shoes inside his bag. He could iron the fabric again should there be a need for it. He then quickly sat down on the sofa, covered himself up with a small pillow and waited for Max.

She came back not too long after. At first she startled, because he wasn’t in the bed, but as soon as she noticed him sitting on the sofa, she smiled at him with a bit of pride that it was so easy for them to sneak around. Then again, no one suspected Mr. Jefferson of such endeavors inside the girls’ dorms, so no one even bothered to check. As long as everyone took their key and was checked in by 10pm, no alarms were raised. Sleepovers outside the dorms were allowed to those who were of age, of course, albeit with a prior notice. In any case, Mark had found a secret passage, perhaps left by those girls who frequently snuck out themselves, and used that, unobserved. Obviously, it was rather irresponsible of him as a member of the faculty to know of this matter and not to do anything about it, he did realize it was a bit hypocritical for of him, too, but…oh, well. He’d report it if there had been anyone else involved but him and Max.

She closed and locked the door from the inside. ‘Did you miss me?’ she asked playfully, approaching him, and sat on his lap, getting rid of the pillow first.

He snuggled her close and gave her a tiny smooch, smiling against her lips. ‘Very much so,’ he replied. ‘You are always missing from me, baby,’ he chuckled. He kissed her again, a bit longer, then again, a bit more passionately, and again, until it turned into another exciting make-out session, Max reciprocating his eager kisses with a matched intensity, changing her position to sit astride him, just as she loved so.

‘You still have some time left?’ she asked between kisses and quiet gasps. ‘Or do you have to go home soon?’

‘When you’re this eager? Of course I’m gonna stay,’ he responded, laughing lightly. ‘I don’t think you have any idea how difficult it is for me to leave your dorm every time. I’d love nothing more than to stay and sleep next to you.’

Max smiled widely. ‘I love sleeping next to you too.’ She hugged his face with her tiny palms and kissed him gently. ‘Among other things,’ she added, giggling.

Mark pulled her in for another kiss. They really couldn’t get enough of one another. ‘I bet you do, you little bad girl,’ he said as his lips moved lower to tease the skin on her neck. She grinned, hearing his words, and he slipped his hands down her back until he reached her bottom, wrapped his hand
around the cheeks and squeezed.

Max broke away from the kiss and removed her pajama tee, all the while Mark’s eyes lustfully roamed over her body. He steadied and tilted her a bit back, planting kisses down her sternum, she holding onto his back, giggling as his lips tickled her skin. His then lips glided up to her neck again, and he suddenly pulled up from the sofa, holding her firmly as though she was as light as a feather, and laid her down on the floor. As he crawled on top of her, she smiled widely at him, pulling his face closer for a kiss.

Max giggled again. ‘Ooh, raw, on the dirty floor?’

Mark grinned back at her. ‘Mhm,’ he replied between kisses. ‘I must have you right here, right now,’ he added, laughing with her as he cracked her up.

‘Well, if you must…’

‘Oh, I definitely must,’ he shot back, removing her shorts.

They joined back in a kiss, it turning ardent and passionate, their hands exploring one another’s skin with more and more fervor, soon becoming one. For a few moments, all they could hear were their quickened breaths and their skin clashing together, all they could see were each other’s elated smiles and widened eyes, and all they could feel was the delicious pleasure being created between them. Max held onto his nape and arm, pulling him down for a kiss. Mark kept kissing her sloppily as he moved within her until they were both forced to break away, feeling their pleasure mount. Breathing heavily, he slowed down only a bit and brought his body closer to hers, his lips caressing the skin on her neck, while she embraced him with all her limbs, moaning into his ear.

Mark kissed her again and straightened up his torso. He placed his palm on the parting of her ribcage and, holding onto her thigh with the other hand, he was watching her as she surrendered to the pleasure his decisive thrust were bringing in. Max stretched her arms above her head, closed her eyes and was smiling widely with her lips parted, delight painted all over her face, once in a while letting out a sweet moan in response. He smirked to himself, observing as her breasts were bouncing up and down, hearing her gasps and tiny winces and reveling in her tight wetness, and so he gave into his want, reaching out and squeezing her breasts lightly, prompting her to open her eyes and look at him.

Smiling at him, she pulled him in for a kiss again and embraced his waist with her legs. ‘My turn?’ she asked.

Mark grinned at her and helped her roll them over closer to the middle of the room, so that he was now lying on the floor. Laughing lightly, Max leaned down to kiss him, and began to ride him, not trying to be slow or gentle at first, clearly more eager than usual. The longer they knew each other, the more confident she felt taking initiative like that. Mark once again reached out to feel her breasts, then his hands slipped lower and stopped on her behind, squeezing a bit more tightly. Max put her one hand over one of his, and the other to his chest, leaning against him as she moved on top of him. She quite enjoyed being on top, having a bit more control of her own, although she couldn’t deny the thrill of letting him be in control most of the time, of surrendering herself to him. But once in a while, just like now, she liked to be the dominant one. And Mark didn’t even think to complain – seeing her like this definitely worked for him as well.

She sped up even further, riding him with more fervor, now leaning against his chest with both of her hands, looking him in the eyes, both their lips parted and their pleasure escalating, so much so that Mark couldn’t stop himself from actually letting out a moan in a soothing tone, closing his eyes and smiling widely in response to the bliss. It was a sight Max adored very much, and even more so if she was the one to give it to him. Getting exhausted, she slowed down, leaned her arms against the
floor and began to kiss him, his hands on her back pressing her closer.

‘Oh, come here, you,’ he uttered, sounding out of breath and smiling at her with excitement. He rolled them over again, and then just Max, making her lie on her stomach. He kneeled behind her and pulled her hips up, soon entering her anew. She sighed as though with relief and offered him a content smile over her shoulder.

Leaning against the floor with his one arm, he encircled his other arm around her chest and wrapped his warm hand around her breast, squeezing it lightly and kissing her neck and nape as he slowly moved within her, feeling her back brush against his abdomen.

‘Oh yes… Oh yes! Just like that,’ Max near whispered, simply giving into the pleasure, moaning as quietly as possible, but it was becoming more and more difficult as Mark straightened up and kept going in harder and faster, creating that blissful, warm friction, his ragged and aggressive breathing adding to her excitement, he was almost *growling* under his breath, his hands tightening their grip on her hips. Max stretched her arms forward, digging her fingers into the carpet, barely able to hold herself together, breathing heavily and whimpering as quietly as she could, her eyelids fluttering, as she felt him hit against her sweet spot with more conviction.

Giving into his passion, Mark spanked her bottom and sped up his thrusts, moving his hands to her waist to get a steadier hold of her. Driving into her with more force, he murmured, ‘Oh fuck, yes! Oh, Max, you’re so fucking tight.’

Max arched her back and moaned in response, smiling widely to herself with her eyes closed, and then glanced over her shoulder for a moment to meet his lustful gaze. He grinned back at her and slowed down for a moment to kiss her, feeling fairly exhausted at that point, but then straightened back up and picked up the pace. The delicious warm friction began to rise higher between them again, soon turning into pure pleasure. Her limbs trembled and turned into cotton, and she melted all around him as he finally brought her into a blissful peak. She moaned so softly and sweetly, making him smile. Mark was now free to surrender to his climax, feeling himself pulsate along the few last strokes, and burst inside her with a wide, satisfied smile, the sensation both exhilarating and relieving.

Glistening with sweat and trying to catch their breaths, they lay on the floor by each other’s side, relishing in their orgasms. Once they regained a bit of their energy back, Mark pulled up and moved closer to Max, brushing her bangs to the side, away from her wet forehead. She smiled at him and pulled him down for a kiss.

He grinned back at her when their lips parted. ‘So, uh, you wanna see your photographs now?’ he asked, lightly caressing her cheek.

‘Mhm,’ she replied, grinning at him in kind. ‘Could you grab me a tissue from the nightstand first?’

‘Sure thing, sweetness,’ he said and stood up. He fetched the item she wanted and handed it to her. ‘There you go.’

‘Thank you,’ she responded, tending to the much needed cleanup. Meanwhile, Mark went over to the closet, nearby which he had left his bag, and took out his laptop. Holding it in one hand, he approached Max again and offered his free hand to help her stand up. ‘Thanks,’ she said again, a big smile gracing her flushed face. She looked so gorgeous with her red cheeks, euphoric eyes and messy hair, all thanks to him.

They then sat down on the bed and veiled themselves with the covers again, leaning against the bedframe, kind of snuggling.
‘Alright,’ Mark started, ‘here we go.’ He opened the folder labeled Caulfield Maxine, the name of which made Max frown, but before she could even begin to protest, he eased, ‘Yes, Max, I know you hate your beautiful full name, but this is just in case someone ever had a glance at my stuff, okay?’ He held her chin up and kissed her temple. ‘I’d name it My Sweetness if I could, but, alas…’ He kissed her again. ‘At least, this is how I named the folder I have on my PC at home.’

‘It’s not beautiful,’ she interjected, disregarding all the other praise. But she didn’t ignore it completely as she would remember it and write it down in her journal later on.

‘Are you kidding me?’ he shot back. ‘It is. Before we became a couple, I’d called you that in my mind all the time. Sometimes still do.’

‘It’s not beautiful,’ she said again, rolling her eyes.

Mark sighed. Sometimes, she was being so needlessly stubborn. ‘How about when I say it…like this?’ he offered. He put his lips close to her ear, their movements tickling her earlobe, and spoke in that soft, yet deep and purring timbre, ‘Maxine…’ And, well, try as she might to fight back her smile, she couldn’t. Shivers ran down her neck and she grinned widely at his words, meeting his amused gaze. ‘Sounds beautiful now, doesn’t it?’ he asked, smirking at her.

‘Mark Jefferson always gets his way, huh?’ she joked. ‘I guess…it does sound much better when you say it. Like that.’

‘Ha. I knew it,’ he retorted, still smirking, all the more smug now. He leaned in and kissed her softly on the lips before moving on. ‘Okay, opening the folder now.’

Two taps on the touchpad later, Max saw the first photograph she’d produced with a more advanced DSLR camera. She remembered how completely clueless she had felt when she hadn’t been able to set up the equipment on her own, needing Mr. Jefferson’s assistance and feeling embarrassed in front of her classmates.

‘God, I felt so stupid when I couldn’t set up that camera. Some people laughed,’ she recounted.

‘No one important, I believe. And hey, I was more than thrilled to help you out. I love what you’re able to do with your Polaroid, but a professional, such as one you’re going to become, should know their way around any equipment.’

‘Yeah, but compared to my classmates, I am still so far behind.’

‘Hm, well… Like I’ve told you – you’ve made a great progress over such a short period of time. I’m so proud of you, baby,’ he praised, offering her a smile.

‘Oh, you’re too good to me.’ She chuckled. ‘But I appreciate it. You’re a great teacher. Before enrolling in Blackwell, I often wondered what the classes would look like. Obviously, I was aware you knew a lot, but I just wasn’t sure how you’d teach us.’

‘Thank you, baby. That’s actually my favorite part about teaching – not the lectures, although I love giving them too – but the practical part of it all, when I can see the progress my students make. Makes my effort worthwhile, especially with students like you, my little madam,’ he said playfully.

Max put her head on his shoulder and mushed her cheek into his skin. ‘Oh, stop it, you’re making me blush.’

Mark reached out with his hand and lightly stroke her other cheek before moving onto showing her more pictures. ‘See?’ He kept showing her the photographs week by week. ‘Do you see the
improvements? All of them are great, but overtime, you’ve become better and better.’

She didn’t want to sound too full of herself, but being honest with herself, she did see the progress she’d made. From that first, a bit blurry image, to the sharper ones; from the a bit poorly-lit to those which made use of natural light in a much more skilled way. Even the framing had improved, eventually finding a way to keep her subjects where they were truly supposed to be. Not by some arbitrary measure, but she could see that the further she had ventured during the labs, the better the outcome in her own estimation.

‘I know you can,’ he answered for her, coaxing her to agree.

‘Fine. I actually do see it,’ she finally replied. ‘I’m…proud of some of these photos,’ she added quietly. It sounded so odd to acknowledge one’s achievement. She’d never done that before.

‘There she goes,’ Mark praised. ‘Don’t ever be afraid to say that, alright? You’ve no reason to be insecure about anything you do, and especially not about your stunning photographs, Max.’

‘I’ll try my best,’ she promised, nodding. ‘Thank you. You make me believe in myself.’

‘Always, sweetness,’ he said, softly kissing her temple again. He closed his laptop and carefully set it onto the floor. Turning back to Max, he crawled on top of her again. ‘I’m gonna be honest, I think I’m too tired to go again, but…wanna just make out instead?’ he asked with a huge grin, breaking the tension.

She giggled, hugging his face with her hands and wrapping her legs around his waist. ‘Sure.’

Smiling against each other’s lips at first, they began to kiss slowly, tongues lightly caressing one another, knowing that their time together was soon going to be over for the night, thus savoring the blissful moment before it was over.

Chapter End Notes

A/N from 12/17/2018: I'm very sorry for another long delay, but I promise: new, Christmas-themed chapters are coming soon! I haven't abandoned this work, I've just been busy with uni stuff.
Hello, Dear Readers! It appears I am back. I'm very sorry for taking the longest break *to date*. Ugh. Uni stuff kept me busy throughout November and December, and it was difficult to sit down and focus on writing. Coincidentally, due to so many breaks in posting, both Jefferfield in this story and us in real life have reached the date of December 21. If lucky, we'll be following their lives on the same dates, just 5 years in the future :)

Anyway, thank you so much for reading *looks at the number of hits and chokes* and let's get on with the chapter already :)

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**PART ELEVEN - A MERRY LITTLE CHRISTMAS**

*Saturday, December 21, 2013*

Max reached out to the tallest branch she could possibly manage and hanged the tree ornament she was holding in her hand, carefully trussing the band up around the branch so as not to impale her skin on the sharp fir needles.

‘There you go,’ Mark said, passing her another bauble. Most of them were white, grey and black, along with copper ones somewhere in the mix. There were silver chain decorations and white Christmas lights gracing the fir as well, rendering the tall and thick tree quite a spectacle of its own. It reminded Max of one of those trees one could see in the middle of a town’s square.

‘Thank you,’ she replied, standing on her toes and giving him a smooch on the lips before taking the ornament from his hand and hanging it on the tree. With that, they were done with the decorating. Max took a couple of steps back, pulling Mark by the arm and making him do the same. They gave the tree a scrutinizing look, which would have any potential observer crack up with laughter; they appeared so comically serious and pretentious in their critique of a Christmas tree. ‘It looks amazing, don’t you think?’ she asked.

‘Oh, definitely,’ Mark concurred. ‘The color palette of the baubles arranges perfectly with the chains and the lights.’ Theatrically stroking his chin with his index finger and thumb, he joked, ‘It deserves a place in its own art gallery.’

‘Oh, shush.’ Max snorted and rolled her eyes. ‘One more word and we’ll officially become pretentious beyond repair.’

Mark chuckled and draped his arms around her waist, embracing her from behind. ‘Oh, sweetheart… that ship has sailed long ago. At least I’m not the only pretentious one in this relationship.’ He hugged her tighter and placed a small kiss on her neck. In turn, Max put her hands to his arms and squeezed, digging her back into his torso and letting out a little laughter. ‘Although, I admit, I’m still far worse than you.’

‘That you are,’ she affirmed, and turned back to face him, giving him a little kiss. She then turned
around in his arms to face him and snuggled up to his chest, sighing with relief. He was wearing that pristinely white shirt she adored seeing on him. ‘I’m so glad you decided to get this tree, by the way.’

‘Me too.’ He tucked a strand of her hair behind her ear and gave her another little smooch, offering her such a soft gaze. ‘Before you, I never actually had any reason to get a tree for this house. I visit my family for the holidays anyway, so.’

Max pulled back again, only to face him. ‘So you got it just because of me?’ she asked, offering him a gorgeous smile.

‘Mhm.’ Mark gently brushed her bangs to the side now. ‘For us.’

‘That’s so sweet,’ she murmured and hid her face back in his chest.

He chuckled at his girlfriend’s adorable demeanor. He wouldn’t possibly be able to express how happy she made him. Certainly no one else had ever made him this glad to be alive. ‘It’s good you think so. Now… would you like a hot chocolate?’ he offered, dipping his fingers into her hair, his fingertips lightly brushing against her head and tickling her skin, making her hum with content.

‘Oh, yes! It’s like you’re reading my mind,’ she replied enthusiastically and squeezed him tighter, enjoying the warmth of his body as well as that pleasant scent of his cologne.

‘Okay, you just make yourself comfortable on the sofa while I make the drinks.’

Having poured hot chocolate into two big cups and filled Max’s with more sugar and a myriad of tiny, little marshmallows on top, Mark went over to the living room, where she had been watching television and waiting for him.

‘There you go, sweetness,’ he said softly, handing her the beverage and a table spoon and sitting down next to her on the sofa.

‘Oh, you got me those marshmallows…’ Max smiled at him with that little pout which conveyed, You’re so sweet. ‘Thank you,’ she replied sweetly and leaned in for a little smooch.

Mark smiled against her lips and kissed her back, a little bit longer. ‘Well, I know how much you like them, so.’

‘And you not so much, huh?’

‘Eh.’ He shrugged and took a sip of his drink. ‘I’m quite indifferent towards them, let’s say.’

Max examined his expression and scoffed a bit as she uncovered the truth. ‘Oh, my god. You’ve never tried it.’

Mark chuckled and nodded. ‘You got me, guilty as charged. It’s just not something I grew up doing, you know?’

‘Hard to imagine, but alright, fair enough,’ Max said. She then brought her cup closer to him and offered, ‘Here. Try it. Trust me, you won’t regret it.’

‘Trust you…’ He theatrically narrowed his eyes. ‘Hm. Alright,’ he conceded. He took the cup and the spoon from her hands and dipped his upper lip into the sweet beverage, took a sip and then a spoonful of marshmallows. They felt spongy and soft under his teeth and tasted even sweeter than
the drink itself. Max certainly loved sugar way more than he did.

‘And?’ she asked expectantly with that little, excited smile lighting up her face.

‘It’s far too sweet for my liking, baby,’ he replied. ‘But…it is tasty. I can definitely understand the charm.’

‘It’s sweet just the right amount,’ she retorted, taking back the cup and the spoon from him and pretending to be disappointed. But she was happy that she’d got him to try something new, seeing as normally it was him who introduced novelties to her and not the other way around. Little moments, such as this one, made her feel like she had something she could offer him as well.

‘Well, you’re all the sweetness I really need,’ Mark murmured and went in for a kiss.

Max giggled. ‘And he’s back. Nice save.’ She brought her free hand to his face and kissed him once more.

They cuddled on the sofa, feeling cozy in each other’s arms, enjoying the hot chocolate and watching a movie.

Finished with just one tiny, Blackwell-related task he had to do before the Christmas break, Mark headed back downstairs to join Max for another movie séance. All the lights were shut off on the entire floor, though, with an exception of the newly decorated tree.

‘Max?’ he called out in search of her.

‘Present!’ she exclaimed while giggling excitedly, her voice emerging from somewhere in the living room.

Mark narrowed his eyes and an amused smile crept up his face. Following the echo of her voice into the living room, he noticed her on the floor, by the tree; she was lying down on a pile of blankets and was covered with one as well. Some of her clothes were scattered nearby, but she was still dressed in her underwear, leaving it up to him to unwrap her like a Christmas gift.

‘And what are you doing?’ he asked, chuckling, but clearly appearing pleased to see her take initiative like this.

She grinned at him. ‘I’m just waiting for you. Would you care to join me?’

‘I certainly would.’

‘Then how about you lose these clothes right now?’

‘Your wish is my command,’ he replied theatrically.

He took off his glasses and placed them safely on the nearest hard surface he could find, which happened to be a shelf belonging to the bookcase. He looked back at Max and started to slowly unbutton his shirt, as though to tease her, then lost his pants and underwear too. Max simply observed, her eyes not leaving his silhouette for a second, admiring the art that was his body. When he was done, she pulled up the blanket and invited him in.

Finally beside her, he draped the blanket onto both of them, and teased her neck with his lips, eliciting such an adorable giggle from his girlfriend that he couldn’t help but crack up laughing himself as well.
‘Mm,’ Max said with delight between kisses, ‘you taste like chocolate.’

Mark chuckled into the kiss. ‘So do you,’ he murmured. ‘And like those sweet, little marshmallows.’

‘Admit it, you’re a fan now,’ she coaxed.

‘Only on you.’

‘Fine, I’ll take it.’

‘Good.’

Mark smirked and swiftly removed her bra. Planting kisses from her stomach up, he stopped at her breasts, his tongue circling around her nipple, with the other hand caressing the other breast. Max arched her torso in response, sighing in pleasure.

‘You like when I touch you?’ he asked, his voice low, his breath brushing against her skin.

‘I do,’ she murmured, smiling to herself.

‘Mm, and what do you like?’ He moved up and was kissing her jaw now, moving onto her neck.

Max sighed in pleasure again. ‘I like your lips…and your tongue.’

‘I bet you do.’ He kissed her, his tongue gently caressing her lower lip. ‘How do you like my tongue?’

‘I like…when you go down on me, kissing me everywhere else first.’ Max surprised herself how easy it was for her to say these things to him, even considering how intimate they had been. Something about Mark made her feel comfortable – maybe it was the fact that he was so caring, that she could trust him, that she could feel how much in love he was with her.

Mark’s excitement was growing; hearing her say those things was filling him with more and more desire. He pressed himself closer between her legs, grabbing her wrists and pinning them to the floor, his lips yet again at her neck.

‘I love feeling you inside me,’ she continued, near-whispering, as she felt his erection between her legs. ‘And how full you feel when you fuck me slowly.’ He pulled up and looked her in the eyes with want, then leaned down and kissed her passionately. She grinned at him as their lips parted. ‘Or when you call me dirty.’

‘Because you are dirty.’ He went left and gently pulled on her earlobe, his teeth gently tickling her skin. ‘And yet you still look so innocent, you could have fooled me.’

She smiled widely and felt herself aching for him, but she wanted to continue the dirty talk. ‘And…I love that…growling sound you make when you come inside me,’ she said, sounding out of breath, her eyes closed as she felt his wet kisses behind her earlobe.

Mark’s excitement was begging for release.

‘And what do you like?’ she asked, reaching down between them with her hand and brushing her fingertips against his lower abdomen, nearly touching his base. She moved forward and teased him by lightly wrapping her palm around his erection and rubbing it against him.

‘That,’ he panted. ‘And when you take me in your mouth.’ He moved his hand lower now, finding the edge of her panties and inching them off.
‘And I love doing that,’ Max interjected shyly. She loved whenever he filled her mouth, when he took her gentle face into his hands and gazed into her eyes with passion. She wasn’t quite able to take him in in his entirety, but it always seemed he enjoyed the way she pleasured him, and that made her proud of herself in a way she never thought she would be until she had actually tried it for the first time. Letting him release inside her mouth felt oddly though utterly satisfying, too. It felt so…intimate.

‘Well, you’re very good at it,’ Mark murmured into her ear, making her shiver and close her eyes, listening with delight to that purring, deep timbre.

He’d lie to himself if he said the sight of her tiny mouth wrapped around him, the way he seemed far too large to fit in there, and her quiet, ardent moans which accompanied it all weren’t exciting to him. It felt a bit perverse to draw so much satisfaction from seeing an innocent-looking girl like her perform such wonders with her lips and tongue…but he couldn’t help it, it drove him insane. In the short period of time they’d been together, she’d learned what he enjoyed the most and always left him impressed and fulfilled.

They locked eyes again, and Max sent Mark a big grin, biting on her lower lip. She quickened the movements of her hand up and down his length, seeing a clear eagerness for more in his lustful gaze. As though reading each other’s minds, they swiftly changed the position. Mark lay comfortably on his back while Max continued the pleasurable strokes, soon her mouth helping her hand, while the other hand wandered forward, digging her fingers into his abs. She sucked on him slowly and delicately, delighting in the sound of his soft, deep moans. It felt so satisfying to be in control of his pleasure, to hear him beg for more. Mark focused on the few moments of that blissful feeling of her warm tongue around him, closing his eyes and smiling widely. Not wanting this whole thing to be over too soon, though, he pulled up, cupped her face in his palms and began to kiss her, matching the pace of her caresses.

Again, Mark regained the control and rolled them around, positioning himself on top of Max. ‘Ah, Maxine…’ he murmured against her soft neck, widening her smile. ‘Yes, I’m calling you Maxine right now.’ He chuckled with her. ‘That was just perfect.’

Max giggled again and embraced him tighter. ‘You’re welcome.’ She then pulled him down for another kiss, eager to finally be with him, but he wasn’t finished with the dirty talk quite yet.

Mark smirked at her in response. ‘I love the sounds you make when you surrender to the pleasure…or when I make you come.’ He brought his fingers to her wet clit, stroking it slowly. She let out a surprised, high-pitched moan, which actually reminded him of their first night together. ‘Or this sound,’ he continued, a smug smile on his lips, his fingers quickening their movements, making her feel that wonderful, tingling friction. The sensation of her wetness against his fingertips always added so much to his excitement. He slid them into his own mouth now, tasting her arousal. ‘Or the way you taste,’ he whispered against her lips, looking deeply into her eyes. ‘In fact…’

He dived his head lower, finding himself between her thighs. She felt his lips gently kiss her labia, and his tongue lazily followed suit, circling around her and relishing in the scent and the sensation of her wet folds against his lips. He lay comfortably on his stomach and fully engaged in the endeavor, slowly pleasuring his beautiful girlfriend and listening to her sweet moans and gasps, his hands wrapped on her hips. She brought her hands to his and tightened the grip as she felt the pleasure mount. He oh so enjoyed how she squirmed beneath him, unable to control her body. He was constantly grazing his lips and tongue against her clit, causing her eyes to flutter until she couldn’t hold on anymore. She put her feet on his back, her soft thighs hugging his face, and curled her toes against his skin as he gifted her that wonderful climax.
‘I love when you come on my face too,’ he breathed out with delight, flashing a smug smirk, his eyes euphoric. Max’s cheeks were already dressed in that lovely pink blush of hers, but combined with the smile she gifted him now…she looked so, so beautiful.

‘But most of all,’ he resumed, beginning to kiss her, ‘I love being inside you. And yes, I do love the fact that I’ve been the only one inside you. You’re mine and only mine,’ he added with a smug smile on his lips again. And, Lord, did it feel exhilarating to hear him say she was only his. Max reciprocated his smile, although hers conveyed more joy than satisfaction. ‘And I love the way you’re always so wet, just for me,’ he was enumerating between kisses, ‘and so warm, and so tight. Aren’t you, Max?’

‘Oh, god… Yes, I am,’ she breathed, closing her eyes as she felt warmth spreading from her core. Knowing she couldn’t hold on any longer and with her voice barely above whisper, she urged him, ‘Get in there already.’

What else could he do but to comply? He entered her slowly, looking her in the eyes. She sighed, holding his gaze, parting her lips and digging her fingers into his back.

He was slowly moving within her, eliciting calm moans and sighs from her. Propping himself up with one arm and with the other at her thigh, he was kissing her neck, and she could feel his breath brushing against her shoulder. She loosely entwined her legs around him, moving her hips to meet his, the two of them soon finding a mutual rhythm. She reached up to touch his face, leading him to meet hers and kissing him delicately. Though he wasn’t picking up the pace, his movement became more insistent, and she couldn’t help but spasm and moan into the kiss.

Breaking away, he smiled widely at her. He gradually stopped moving, though rested inside her. ‘I love you,’ he confessed. He was looking at her with a calm, soft expression, sending her a loving smile. ‘I love you, Max.’

They had already said they were in love with each other, but this was something new – this felt like a promise. The way they had connected over such a short period of time left Max with no doubts. On some subconscious level, she already knew that this was how he felt about her.

She smiled in kind, bringing her hands to his face, gazing into his eyes and feeling tiny tears of joy well up in hers. ‘And I love you, Mark,’ she responded, her voice trembling due to emotions, but she spoke with conviction. ‘I love you,’ she echoed, her confession ending in a light, joyful laughter.

In that moment, both of them felt so happy and so lucky. The universe had clearly intended for them to be made for another time – putting them twenty years apart from one another and placing them in a forbidden situation, where hardly anyone would understand that it was something more than a simple attraction, that it was a real, tangible love. And yet despite all this, they had found each other and forged a deep connection.

Prompted by her confession, Mark smiled widely and kissed her passionately, resuming his movements and trying to feel her deeper, his hands unable to stay in one place. He glanced down at that beautiful face, which belonged to not only someone who he loved, but someone who loved him back just as much. She was his happiness, his everything. She was finally, truly his. And he was finally, truly hers. They were finally each other’s. No restrictions. No having to hold back those confessions any longer. Mark reciprocated the smile she was offering to him right now and kissed her again, a little bit longer, trying to lose himself in that feeling, in that blissful moment.

Max put her arms around his back, digging her fingers into his skin and feeling him fill her up again and again. He kept bringing in more and more of that wonderful, delicious friction, she couldn’t help but to immerse herself completely in the sensation, forgetting about the dear world for those few
moments. She focused entirely on the very fact that a person who she loved and who loved her back was right now in her arms, being so close and intimate with her. She felt lucky beyond comprehension.

Responding to her yearning embrace, Mark brought his lips to her neck again and his body closer to hers, their chests brushing against one another with each of his thrusts, feeling the heat of each other’s skin. They joined in eager but gentle kisses and slowed their movements just a bit, trying to prolong this endeavor as much as possible, seeing as it was truly one of a kind. With one hand still at his back, she dug her fingers into his hair now and buried her face in the crook of his neck, moaning right into his ear and furthering his excitement. He hadn’t been exaggerating when he’d said he loved being inside her the most; the way he was feeling right now was beyond intoxicating. He couldn’t stop his cries of passion even if he tried.

Eyes closed and limbs tangled all with one another, Mark and Max were sensing each other’s movements, completely lost in the shared pleasure and emotion. They soon reached their peaks, one following the other almost to the second, and rejoined in slow but passionate kisses, unable to get enough of one another.

**Sunday, December 22, 2013**

They made use of the longest night of the year.

Waking up in the morning, Mark pulled Max close to his chest and began to plant gentle kisses on her nape and back. Her mind slowly registered the pleasurable caresses, and she roused too, instinctively pressing her back closer to his torso and relishing in the sensation of their blazing skin touching.

‘Good morning, sweetness,’ he murmured behind her and kissed her neck, his hand running up and down her arm.

‘Morning,’ she replied in a raspy voice, making him chuckle. She rolled around to face him and met his elated smile. That was a smile of a man who had everything he could ever hope for, a man who felt complete. He pulled her in for a kiss, his hand arriving at the side of her face. She embraced him with her arm and leg, kissing him back just as eagerly.

‘So I’ve been thinking,’ Max started once they finally pulled away, ‘I could make a pie for you. You know, to take it with you, for your family.’

‘Oh?’ Mark appeared surprised and amused. ‘And why would you do that?’

‘Why?’ She frowned and put her index finger up. ‘Well, firstly because it’d be just nice.’ She added her middle finger. ‘And secondly, I know you’re going to buy something ready, and I think a homemade pie speaks louder than words.’

She sounded so self-assured and a bit scolding, which coupled with her gentle and innocent look just made Mark chuckle. ‘Fine,’ he remitted. ‘I guess you have a point.’

‘Great. I promise you, they’ll love it.’

‘Oh, I have no doubts, considering you’re going to make it.’

Max blushed and giggled, burying herself in Mark’s warm body and feeling his strong arms close around her.
Approaching late afternoon and hearing the increasing clutter of Max’s pie preparations, Mark, having finished wrapping gifts for his family, came in from the living room into the kitchen. ‘How’s it moving forward?’ he asked, stopping at the threshold of the kitchen and leaning his shoulder against the rosewood doorframe, hands shoved in his jean pockets.

Max turned to him and revealed her tousled hair and her right cheek, which was all smudged with flour. She looked so adorable. The apron he’d given her definitely came in handy – it contained a bit of just about everything a pie could possibly be made of – and protected her sleeveless top and skirt from getting dirty. Some ingredients had landed on the floor, too, but Max was able to swiftly move around that and thus her fuzzy socks stayed clean.

‘A bit messy, but according to plan nevertheless. Making batter now,’ she replied and brushed her hair from her face with her forearm. ‘Sorry about the mess, by the way.’

He simply shrugged and waved it off. ‘It’s not a problem in the slightest. I can clean this up later. You just work your magic, sweetheart,’ he said.

Max grinned at him. ‘Okay, thanks!’

Mark kept observing her for a couple of moments there. Despite making quite a mess, she appeared to be a confident and competent baker. After a while, though, he walked over to the window, took the remote from the windowpane and set the roller-blinders down. He then turned to face her, flashing that smug smile of his.

She narrowed her eyes in question. ‘And what are you doing?’

‘You know what I’ve realized?’ he started, slowly approaching her and bringing his hands to her waist and lips to her neck once he found himself at her side.

‘Yeah?’ she replied with a smile, leaning her back into his chest. She moaned quietly as she felt his lips gently tickling her skin and his hands sliding higher and dancing under the apron on her tummy. She continued with her baking preparations, seemingly ignoring his advances.

‘I haven’t taken you on this island yet,’ he said with a deep timbre into her ear and gently brushed his teeth against her neck.

She pressed her legs together, feeling the heat rise as she heard his confident and dirty offer. ‘Oh, you haven’t, huh?’

‘Yes. Which is unreasonable of me.’ He untied her apron and slid his warm hands up her top, his fingertips sending shivers up her body. ‘Thus, I’d like to change that.’

Max moaned again and felt his palms wrap themselves around her breasts for a moment, prompting her to break away and turn around to face him. She got rid of the apron entirely with a bit of his help. And then, with a lustful gaze and an enticing smile, Mark gently took her hand into his, put his mouth to her wrist and licked the small amount of batter off her skin. ‘And it’s extra sweet, of course,’ he commented, chuckling and going in for a kiss.

She draped her arms around his neck somewhat and giggled. ‘Well, duh. It’s the Caulfield style.’ She couldn’t embrace him quite in the right way because of the batter on her hands, so she just kept them up, clumsily embracing him with her forearms instead. ‘I realize it’s not to your liking, but I’m afraid you’re gonna have to get used to it.’

‘Mhm, I’ll try,’ he murmured, shushing them both with a kiss for the following few moments. He
was kissing her with more and more fervor, pressing himself against her and pinning her firmly to the island counter, and his hands roamed wherever they could over her body. Max was still a little reluctant to touch Mark in return, seeing as she didn’t want to stain his clothes with the batter, but he didn’t seem to care about anything but getting to be with her.

It was difficult to match his impatience and the intensity of his kisses, too, but Max found herself thrilled at how insistent and in control he was right now, completely taking charge of what was going to happen, how he was about to just take her right there, simply because he wanted to. The restraint she was displaying somehow added to her own excitement; she ached for him just as much, it seemed, but was still waiting for him to move further.

And indeed, he wasn’t going to keep her waiting much longer, and gave into his desire. He moved the most essential dishes out of the way, so as not to make all her efforts in vain, and propped her up to sit on the cool, black granite counter. Ignoring her dirty hands, Max finally brought them to his face, and wrapped her legs around his waist, keeping him close. His lips arrived at her neck now, leaving wet kisses. She could hear his hungry gasps and feel his hands pull down the straps of her top, she thus wished to return the favor, getting to unbutton his shirt piece by piece soon after. She spread his shirt open, and her hands roamed over his bare chest, leaving the remaining batter on his skin and sending him an excited, gorgeous smile.

Without further ado, Mark undid his belt and unzipped his pants in a hurry, then pulled up her skirt and brushed her panties to the side, soon entering her awaiting, wet heat, sliding in with a delighted moan. Max breathed out with relief too, closing her eyes and smiling widely as he was moving within her. He was definitely not trying to be gentle or slow, his thrusts felt eager and impatient, but bringing in just as much of pleasure to her as well. She hooked her one arm around his neck and rested the other against the countertop, while Mark’s one hand was squeezing her breast in passion, and the other was holding her firmly by the small of her back.

Their gazes met now. There was a clear surrender in her beautiful, blue eyes, and control blended with lust in his dark brown ones. The fact that he had his glasses still on rendered his stare all the more magnetizing now. He quickened his movements, causing Max to moan and break away from his eyes, closing hers again, digging her fingers into the skin on his head and tugging on his hair. He felt so full inside her, hitting hard against her sweet spot, again and again, and moaning deeply into the crook of her neck. And how could he not – she was that flawless combination of wet and warm, tightly wrapped around all of him, her high-pitched moans adding to his want.

Mark once again picked up the pace, immersing himself in the sensation, pushing harder into her and delighting in the sounds he made at each entrance. He was almost at the edge of his peak, working his way to get her there before he could finally let go. Soon, she found herself leaning backwards, as though losing her balance, giving into the waves of bliss, tangible all over her skin, and embraced him tighter, her wall contracting around him as he made her come. An ecstatic, sweet moan filled his ears, and an euphoric gaze met his eyes. He kissed her passionately and resumed his movements until he spilled forward, relishing in those few precious seconds of his orgasm within her heat.

Exhausted and fulfilled, they rested in each other’s arms, soaked with sweat and trying to catch their breaths. Later, after a quick shower and jokingly telling Mark to stay away, Max was able to finish her little baking masterpiece.

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*Monday, December 23, 2013*

‘You got everything you need, baby?’ Mark asked for the last time, both of them dressed to leave, with all of their luggage by the main door of his house.
‘I think so, yeah.’ Max perused through the contents of her bag once more, checking the presence of each important item. ‘Got my ticket, my boarding pass…my wallet…my cellphone, my camera…Yeah, got everything,’ she affirmed and smiled.

‘Alright. Let’s go then.’

They drove to the nearest airport, which happened to be in Newberg, about sixty miles away from Arcadia Bay. Max’s flight to Seattle was an hour earlier than Mark’s to Chicago, thus giving them a little bit more time to be grossly adorable at the airport as they were saying their goodbyes.
Chapter Summary

Something a little bit different in this short chapter - we meet Mark’s family.

Monday, December 23, 2013 – the afternoon of

Mark’s cab pulled up by his old family house. It hadn’t changed much over the years. It was still the same big, white, brick, two-story house with mahogany shutters by each window and marble staircase leading up to a small terrace, which had a plethora of flowers standing and hanging around each conceivable surface, just like always. Yes, it hadn’t changed much, with an exception of a new coat of paint covering the elevation of the building, the old one having long since flaked off the surface. The same one his father had managed to embellish the house with in this way, passing away far too soon after. His mother, in her late husband’s absence, took great care of the house, appreciative of the fact that he had built it with his own two hands.

Mark paid the driver, got out of the cab, grabbed his suitcase and the pie Max had prepared, and headed towards the entrance. He came to visit his mother, Tessa, and his brother, Patrick, each Christmas, ever since his brother’s kids had come along. Mark felt it just made more sense to celebrate the holiday with children around, they always brought out its magical side.

And that’s exactly who ended up greeting Mark at the threshold. The front door squeaked and a tiny head and a curious pair of eyes emerged from behind it.

‘Uncle Mark!’ his little nephew Noah exclaimed excitedly.

‘Hey, hey, little man,’ Mark replied, chuckling. He lifted his hand up and brought it closer to his nephew’s face. ‘Up top!’

Noah giggled and reciprocated the gesture, high-fiving his uncle with so much more force than the year before. Indeed, one year made an enormous difference for a growing boy.

‘Good man, getting stronger.’ Mark ruffled Noah’s dark brown pixie-cut hair. According to everyone but Mark himself, the boy appeared to be a faithful copy of his younger self – more so even than the boy’s own father. ‘So…will you let me in now? It’s a bit cold outside, you know.’

‘Okay, uncle Mark.’ Noah pulled the door wide open now, allowing Mark to get in.

‘Thanks, man,’ Mark said and came in, tugging his heavy suitcase behind. It contained very little of his personal items. Instead, most space and weight belonged to the presents for the kids.

And then his mother emerged from the living room and smiled widely at him. ‘Oh, Mark! So good to see you,’ Tessa said, embracing her son.

‘Hi, mom,’ he replied softly, hugging her tighter. ‘You’re doing alright?’

‘Oh, yes, everything’s fine. I get to be busy during Christmas time, you know how much I love it.’

Mark chuckled. ‘Right.’
It was indeed Tessa’s favorite holiday and, during Mark’s childhood, it had always been her who had made sure that time had been as magical for all her children as possible. She’d been in charge of the presents and the cooking – and she happened to be an exquisite cook – always mindful to create that special atmosphere and to make each Christmas memorable on its own. She would even come up with a new theme for the celebration every year. She wished her family never associated the holiday with anything but happiness. Perhaps because her own early memories weren’t that great.

‘And you, hon?’ Tessa asked. ‘Everything’s alright with you?’

‘Yes, mom.’ Mark grinned, thinking about how much better his life had gotten since the last time they’d seen each other. ‘I’ve never been better, actually.’

‘Well, that makes me very happy to hear, dear. Come, everyone’s in the living room.’ Dragging him by the arm, Tessa led him there into the fully decorated room. Reds, whites and greens dominated the color palette, broken apart only by the brown oak furniture. It appeared Tessa had outdone herself this year.

‘Mom, whoa. That’s…something else.’

‘Ah, it’s nothing. I had so much fun decorating. Plus, Noah helped out quite a bit.’

‘He did, huh?’

‘Yes, I did,’ Noah replied from behind Mark’s back.

‘You did a great job then, man,’ Mark praised, ruffling his nephew’s hair once more.

‘Thanks, uncle Mark.’

Stepping further into the living room, Mark finally saw his brother, Patrick, and his sister-in-law, Laura, sitting on the sofa with the little Jennifer ensconced between them, all three flashing a smile upon seeing him.

‘Hello, brother, good to see you,’ Patrick said, getting up and shaking Mark’s extended hand. The two brothers patted each other on the back the way men usually would, a tiny bit too hard too.

‘Hey, man. And hey, Laura,’ Mark responded and leaned in to give a small peck on his sister-in-law’s cheek. He then did the same to Jennifer’s forehead. ‘Hello, little one. She’s grown so much, guys,’ he remarked. His niece offered him an endearing, toothless grin, and let out a little baby-like laughter.

‘She’s a handful, this one, way more wayward than Noah was at her age,’ Laura stated.

‘Oh, I bet she’s still daddy’s little princess,’ Mark said.

‘Duh, why do you think she’s a handful? Patrick keeps spoiling her.’ Laura gave her husband a pretend-disapproving gaze.

‘I can’t help it, she’s too adorable,’ was all Patrick had to say in his defense, taking Jennifer from Laura’s arms.

Mark laughed warmly. It was comforting to see his family was doing great, after so many painful events that had occurred in the past. The numerous tragedies hadn’t broken the family apart, they’d made it all the more stronger for it. At least, Mark didn’t have to worry about living so far away from home – everyone was doing great. But if it hadn’t been for Max, that happiness would have only
been on the surface. On the inside, he’d have been screaming throughout, feeling lonely and empty, like he had been for years before he’d met her.

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**Tuesday, December 24, 2013**

The rest of the previous evening had been all about catching up with what had been going on with Patrick’s new job as Head of Cardiothoracic Surgery at the Northwestern Memorial Hospital, Noah’s early school accomplishments – the kid was already so bright for his age – and Laura’s newfound ‘do it yourself’ hobby, seeing as both her and the kids loved that kind of stuff. Tessa seemed to enjoy being a grandmother tremendously, as though she was made for it. Mark was always in touch with his mother much more frequently than with the rest of his family, thus he hadn’t spent much time catching up with her. But he hadn’t yet told her about Max, a little afraid of her reaction.

Having stuffed their faces almost through the roof, there was still a little bit of space for dessert. Jennifer had been put to sleep hours ago, but Noah was still in the living room, playing with his new Lego set, gifted to him by his favorite uncle.

‘Uncle Mark, you’re the best uncle ever!’ Noah yelled out joyously once more. There was a constant clutter of those building blocks coming from somewhere around the Christmas tree, by which Noah was sitting.

‘You’re welcome, little man,’ Mark chuckled in response. ‘Just clean up after, alright? I don’t want your parents to be mad at me for giving you those Legos.’

‘Okay!’

‘Good man.’

Tessa cut the pie into small rectangles and distributed a piece to everybody at the table. Mark glanced at each face in anticipation, curious himself what the pie tasted like. Max had put a lot of work into it, he’d hate if it all went to waste.

Upon taking her first bite, his mother gawked and let out a content hum. ‘This pie is delicious. Really delicious. Where did you get it? Did you change bakeries?’

‘Not exactly. I got it from Arcadia Bay, yes, but it wasn’t bought,’ Mark replied cryptically with a little smirk.

‘You made it?’ Tessa asked with a smile, albeit quite astonished. ‘No offence, hon, but you’re a terrible baker.’

‘Yeah, I still have nightmares after you made that birthday cake for me, brother,’ Patrick interjected, laughing lightly, Laura joining him.

‘Hey, it was twenty years ago, I think it’s time to forgive and forget.’

‘No one wishes more to forget it than I do, believe me,’ Patrick joked again. ‘I was sure my insides would come out together with that cake.’

Laura’s amusement turned into a slight grimace. ‘God, do you two have to be so gross while we eat?’
‘Sorry, babe,’ Patrick said, giving her a little kiss on the cheek. ‘Anyway, yeah, you’re a terrible baker, Mark.’

‘I realize it. This is why I wouldn’t even dream of making it.’ With a tentative smile, he added, ‘My girlfriend made it, actually.’

‘Your girlfriend? You’re dating someone? Oh, that’s great, Mark!’ His mother smiled widely at him. ‘I’m so happy to hear that.’

‘Yeah, man, congrats,’ Patrick said, grinning at his brother and patting him on the back. Laura nodded with a smile, unable to speak with her mouth full with the delicious pie.

‘Thanks, guys,’ Mark replied with a smile. It felt good to tell them. But the biggest reveal was yet to come.

‘So how long have you been dating this girlfriend of yours?’ Tessa asked. ‘You didn’t say anything last time we spoke.’

‘Yeah, sorry about that, mom. I just didn’t want to…jinx it, let’s say,’ Mark said, wrinkling his nose. ‘And not too long. A little over two months now.’

‘That’s great. I’m very happy for you, hon. So how did you two meet?’

‘I met her at work, actually. This year.’

‘Oh, she’s a teacher, too?’

‘No. But a fellow photographer as well. A very good one at that.’

Tessa narrowed her eyes in confusion. If the girlfriend wasn’t a teacher, but was a fellow photographer, it meant that she was either some other kind of faculty member or… ‘…A student?’ she asked.

Mark hesitated and put down the little fork he was holding. ‘Uh…yeah.’ He observed quietly as his mother followed suit and gulped down the last of her pie. ‘Mom?’

Tessa was simply stunned. Her son had certainly been unlucky in love, but never had he dated anyone so young – not to her knowledge at least. And she’d seen what a disaster his last relationship had been, thus this revelation rendered her all the more concerned for her child. How many times was he going to get hurt? ‘Mark… I…I don’t know what to say.’ She held her hand near her mouth, taking in the information she’d just been given. ‘A student? That’s…illegal. Do you want to lose your job and go to jail?’

Mark swallowed hard. Everything his mother was saying was true, as much as he’d want to disagree. ‘She’s eighteen, if that’s what you’re worried about,’ he replied calmly. ‘And yes, you’re right, I’m risking a lot here. For her. For both of us. But…I meant what I said – I’ve never been happier. She’s the best thing that’s ever happened to me.’

Tessa took a couple more of deep breaths. ‘I mean…alright, she’s eighteen. That’s good, but…that’s still way too young, don’t you think? A-and sorry to bring this up, but…are you sure you know what you’re doing?’

Patrick gently tugged at Laura’s arm. They both felt it was time for them to leave the room. They grabbed a sleepy Noah on their way out and headed upstairs, giving Mark and Tessa the much needed privacy.
Mark frowned. He tried everything he had in him not to go off and get defensive way too soon. So far no “accusations” had been made, therefore he needed to stay calm, although his heartrate kept only spiking with each minute. ‘What do you mean?’ he asked.

‘I mean…what you went through right before you moved to Arcadia Bay,’ Tessa spoke quietly and softly. What she was about to recall were painful memories, buried under countless one night stands and chased away only by Max’s presence. ‘That was…difficult on you. It’s a lot of baggage. Do you think she has the capacity to understand it? To accept it?’

‘She’s not an idiot, you know,’ Mark interjected, quite annoyed.

‘I’m not saying she is. I didn’t mean to make it sound like it, I’m sorry,’ Tessa recoiled calmly. ‘All I’m saying is, are you sure you want to put all of this on her shoulders? She’s not an idiot, but is she mature enough to grasp it?’

Mark didn’t answer. He didn’t have an answer to that, if he was to be frank with himself. He had no doubts Max would show him nothing short of compassion, that much was certain. She’d put her tiny arms around him, stroke his hair, kiss him gently. She’d make the pain go away. But would she be able to accept the things that had happened to him? Or would they scare her away?

‘I’m not saying this to get you to break things off with her, Mark,’ Tessa soothed. ‘I’m not. I admit, it’s not the perfect scenario, it’s certainly not what I imagined for you after Charlotte, but–’

‘Charlotte was a different situation. Completely different,’ Mark dryly cut her off, although he didn’t raise his voice. He didn’t want to think about that at all, and he hated himself each time those memories surfaced, making him feel ashamed, angry and bitter.

Tessa extended her hands and grabbed Mark’s. He squeezed her palms in his and offered her a sorrowful, a bit strained smile. ‘I know. I’m sorry. But if you’re sure about…what is this new girlfriend’s name by the way?’

‘Maxine. Max.’

‘A beautiful name.’ She smiled warmly at her son.

‘It is, yes,’ Mark concurred.

‘Alright, so if you’re sure about Max, stay with her. I am still worried about you, yes. That’s what a parent does. I do hope you’re happy. And that you’ll continue to be happy. That’s all I ever wanted for you, you know that, right?’

‘I know, mom,’ he admitted quietly.

‘Just…be careful. I don’t want you to go through that again. Think twice about this new relationship. And don’t break that new girl’s heart either, alright? She’s young and it’d be that much more harder to pull herself back together.’

‘Alright. I won’t. I love her.’ He nodded a couple of times in silence. ‘And thank you, mom.’

‘Always, hon.’

Having helped his mother with the cleanup – which included Noah’s scattered Legos as well – Mark went to his old bedroom. It was quite spacious, although it felt so much smaller after all these years. There was an old boombox lying on a medium-sized dresser, a bunch of old CDs beside it, a big
Depeche Mode poster on the corresponding wall, and a bunch of other smaller posters on the wall by the bed. Opposite the bed, there was a desk with a cork board with analog black-and-white pictures pinned to it. It felt like a bit of a nostalgia trip, seeing all those items. Mark kind of wished Max could see it now, but a couple of photographs would have to suffice for now.

He changed into his pajamas and ensconced himself in his old bed. Not comfortable at all. So empty without Max, too. He couldn’t fall asleep, unable to stop thinking about what his mother had told him. And why would she even bring that up? He had no intentions of breaking things off with Max, ever. He grabbed his cellphone and gazed at the background – a selfie of himself and his love, those joyful, ocean blue eyes beaming at him. It brought an immediate smile onto his face. She was his everything and he’d have to be an utter idiot to leave her.
Max was finishing her breakfast when Mark texted her, inevitably bringing a big, bright smile onto her face. She’d been missing him tremendously, even though they’d only been separated for two days so far. She knew he hadn’t seen his family in literally a year and needed to spend some time with his close ones, thus she hadn’t bothered him much the day before. He had texted her goodnight, though, using just about every pet name he had for her. In return, she’d sent him a selfie, wearing a Christmas-themed sweater in the picture, which he'd definitely found endearing.

Max: Merry Christmas, baby :*

Mark: Merry Christmas, Sweetness

Max: I miss you so much

Mark: I miss you more

Mark: How’s your morning going?

Max: Oh, good. Got some clothes and sweets from my parents and now we’ve almost finished breakfast. How’s yours been?

Mark: A bit lonelier without you. But spending time with my mother, brother and his kids feels nice too. I’m “the best uncle ever” according to my nephew Noah

Max: Awww, that’s so sweet. Are you his only uncle?

Mark: No. And that’s the beautiful thing about it

Mark: I really am his favorite uncle. Ha!

Max: :D

Mark: Did you find your gift, Sweetness?

Max: No? Where would it be?

Mark: Search your bag a little more carefully then

Max headed to her room to get to the bag, frantically searching for what Mark had hidden in there. She was almost sure he’d tricked her, it was *that* hard to find. Finally, in the most inner pocket, she found a small box. When she opened it, she saw beautiful, golden earrings in the shape of a butterfly.

Max: Oh Mark…you shouldn’t have
Max: They’re BEAUTIFUL, thank you :*  
Mark: I’m so glad you like them  
Max: Now you go and look inside your bag. Haha!  
Max: My gift is in the same taste  
Mark: Nicely arranged. Hold on then  

Mark got up from the sofa and went up his old room, where he had left his suitcase. Under the pile of his clothes he hadn’t unpacked yet, he found a small-medium bag, and inside it – a small box with cufflinks. They were also golden, with minimalist embroidery on the edges and M.J. initials engraved on the surface.

Mark: Sweetheart, they’re perfect  
Mark: Couldn’t have picked better ones myself  
Max: Really? Oh, that’s so great  
Mark: Yeah, really. I’m going to wear them all the time now  
Max: Good (ienia)  
Max: So, any plans for today?  
Mark: Nothing specific… We might watch some family movie, then probably eat the rest of the pie you made  
Mark: How about you, babygirl?  
Max: Well, I *wish* I could spend Christmas with you  
Max: Not that I mind seeing my parents but… you know  
Mark: I know, darling, it’s alright  
Max: So yeah. We’ll hang out and take a walk like we usually do  
Max: Although no snow this year  
Max: Oh! And I made a pie here too, so we’ll eat it too  
Max: I wonder if my parents missed me or my baking more…  
Mark: Haha. I’m sure it was you though  
Mark: Speaking of  
Mark: My family asked who made the pie  
Mark: So I told them about you  
Max: Oh… How did they react?  
Mark: Well, they were definitely surprised to hear how young you are
Max: So you told them I’m your student?
Mark: Yeah…
Mark: Something tells me they might think I’m crazy
Mark: But I told them that I love you
Mark: And that it’s not some casual thing
Mark: Because it isn’t
Max: I know, baby <3
Max: Should I be afraid to meet them then? Especially your mom?
Mark: No, of course not. I’m sure she’d love you. They all would
Mark: And I think I explained it to my mother well enough
Mark: She’s just worried that it won’t last
Mark: I mean, she’s worried for you, not for me
Max felt her heart sink. Did his mother have a good reason to think so? But thankfully, this little scare was short-lived as she read the next message.
Mark: But you know it will last, right?
Max: Yes, baby. I know
She smiled to herself, feeling relieved.
Mark: Good. I’m glad
Mark: So how about you guys?
Max: We might go out for a walk after dinner but for now we’ll just hang out at home
Mark: They’ll probably want me to talk a lot about Blackwell and how I’ve been doing
Mark: It’s so sad, you’re gonna have to leave out the best parts
Max: Haha yeah, poor them
Max: I do wish I could just tell them about us
Mark: I know, me too.
Mark: But they won’t see it in a good light
Mark: And I can’t even blame them
Max: :( 
Mark: Don’t be sad, baby
Max: We’ll tell them eventually, right?
Mark: Well, yeah… But rather around June or July
Max: Yeah yeah, once I finish school.
Max: But I fear they still might go and do something about it
Max: I don’t want you to get hurt in the process
Mark: Don’t worry, Sweetness. I’ll be okay
Mark: We’ll just have to do in a very delicate way
Mark: And, uh… I could quit teaching at Blackwell
Mark: So the problem would be gone, sort of
Max: Yeah, but we can’t tell them how long we’ve been dating
Max: Maybe we should tell them even later
Max: And hey, please don’t quit just for me
Max: You love your job
Mark: I love you more
Max smiled widely.
Max: I love you too (‿◠‿◠)
Mark: See, you’re too adorable. Blackwell be damned
Max: ^^
Mark: Let’s not worry just yet
Max: You’re right
Max: So what are you doing right now?
Mark: Finishing my pancakes, listening to the news
Mark: The kids are running around
Max: Guess it’s much noisier there
Mark: Oh, definitely
Mark: I’ve missed them, though
Max: Well, I’m glad you can finally hang out with your family
Mark: Me too, baby
Max: Look, I gotta get going now
Max: But I have an idea

Max: We can Skype later. Or sext

Mark: Don’t you mean text?

Max: Oh, I do mean sext

Max: Look it up, we’ve kind of done it a little already

Mark: Oh

Mark: I get it now

Mark: That sounds…interesting

Max: It does, doesn’t it?

Max: But if we do choose to Skype, keep your hands on the keyboard

Max: The walls in my house are too thin

Mark: Naughty girl, you only think of one thing

Max: Oh, like you haven’t thought of it

Mark: Touché

Max: Check in later, babe.

Mark: Later, sweetheart

Max then decided to talk to Chloe, though she wasn’t sure if her best friend was busy with her mother, her “stepdouche” or Rachel.

Max: Merry Christmas, Chlo! <3

Chloe: Merry Christmas Maxie

Chloe: How’s it going?

Max: Good, good, but I miss you. And Mark

Chloe: Aww, I miss you too

Chloe: Got anything nice from your parents?

Max: Clothes and sweets. Good enough

Max: And you?

Chloe: Some money. They’re not exactly sure what to get me

Chloe: I have a pretty wild taste
Max: Oh yeah you do

Max: Anything from Rachel?

Chloe: I don’t know.

Chloe: I haven’t seen her yet.

Max: You guys okay?

Chloe: Not really. We had a fight last night.

Max: What happened, Chlo?

Chloe: We were just talking on the phone, joking and stuff and she suddenly took offence, accused me of calling her a slut – WHICH I DIDN’T – and hasn’t been responding to my texts.

Max: I’m so sorry, Chloe…

Chloe: Thank dude. I really don’t know what was it that I said that made her so mad. I’ve been replaying that convo in my head and I still have zero clue

Max: Well, if you explained it to her, it’s now up to her to believe you. And she should

Max: You’re crazy about her, and you would never deliberately hurt her

Chloe: Exactly. I hope she’ll understand

Max: She will. She’d be an idiot if she just let you got bc of that

Chloe: Thanks Max. You always know what to say

Chloe: How are you and your Mister doing?

Max: We’re great, but I so wish I could spend Christmas with him

Max: He’s with his family too, at least not he’s not sitting alone at home

Max: I think I’d stay in AB if he didn’t have anyone to go to

Chloe: Yeah, that’s good

Max: Yeah. Once again, I’m sorry about Rachel

Bitch is always making problems, Max thought to herself. She was feeling angry at her best friend’s girlfriend. But then she felt bad for having these mean thoughts, too.

Chloe: Thanks… Let’s just hope she’ll come around

Max: She will! Or she’ll have to deal with me. NO ONE hurts my Chloe.

Chloe: <3

As the evening was approaching, Max felt another buzz in her pocket. She was sitting on the bed in her old bedroom, cozy under a couple of blankets and watching some Christmas-themed videos on YouTube. The walk with her parents hadn’t been the most pleasant one. They hadn’t argued, but
kept asking about her plans about college, and given her low GPA since coming to Blackwell, Max felt too scared to break it to them. What college would even want her?

Mark: This has been the longest Christmas ever
Max: Aww baby, I’m sorry. I wish I could be there
Mark: S’alright. The pie though? Masterpiece
Max: You liked it?
Mark: Everyone liked it. It’s great
Max: Really?
Mark: Yeah, it was delicious, babe. Thank you so much for being so thoughtful
Mark: And you know how much I love dark chocolate and raspberries
Max: Oh yes, I do. Welcome (◕‿◕✿)
Mark: Cute
Max: What are you up to now?
Mark: I’m in bed, there’s some movie on, but I have no idea what it’s about
Mark: How was your day?
Max: We did take that walk, but I was being bombarded with questions about college
Mark: Don’t know where you wanna go yet?
Max: Yeah. And my GPA sucks
Mark: You still have time to get it up
Max: True, but I still don’t know where to apply
Max: Not a lot of photography-focused programs
Mark: Chicago is wide open with their photography programs
Mark: And I think UCLA might have some Art programs too
Mark: And if not that, you can pick something related. You don’t *have to* study photography at college
Max: Maybe… I mean, what you’re saying is right, but I just…I don’t wanna think about it right now
Mark: Okay, baby. Let me know when you do
Max: I will. Thank you <3
Mark: No problem. So what are you doing right now?
Max: Taking my mind off it all, watching videos on YouTube

Mark: Anything fun?

Max: Yeah, I’m enjoying it. I don’t think it’s your taste though

Mark: Most likely not

Mark: I trust you know me

Max: I think I do, well enough

Max: I wish you were here

Mark: Me too. Like I said, it’s been the longest day ever

Mark: I’d be having so much more fun by just being around you

Max: Me too, baby

Mark: I would kiss you, run my lips down your jaw and neck

Max: I would snuggle up to your chest, run my fingers down your back

Mark: I would sneak my hands up your PJs, yank it off

Max: And then?

Mark: Feel your breasts, bury my face in them

Mark: I love doing that

Mark: And sucking on them

Max: (°_°)

Max: I would unbutton your shirt, feel your hot skin

Max: Kiss your chest, going lower and lower

Mark: And then?

Max: I would reach your belt, unfasten your pants in a hurry

Mark: By then I’d already be hard

Max: I would take you into my hand

Max: Move it up and down

Max: Then faster

Max: Until I’d replace my hand with my mouth

Max: Going down on you, feeling you inside my mouth

Max: Feeling you against my tongue, my cheek, my palate
Max: You’d feel so good
Max: And you’d pull my hair because of how good you’d feel inside my mouth
Mark: Oh wow. Now it’s way too vivid in my mind
Max: I’d suck on your with more intensity
Max: And you wouldn’t be able to hold on any longer
Max: Finishing inside my mouth
Max: And I’d swallow, smiling at you
Mark: Fuck. You made me touch myself
Max: Good.
Max: Now what would you do to me?
Mark: Pulling you on top of me, my hands skimming down your sides
Mark: Until I reach your panties, inching them down
Mark: Seeing you nude on top of me
Mark: I wouldn’t be able to keep my hands off you
Max: I would be so wet for you
Mark: I would reach out with my hand
Mark: Gently stroking your entrance with my fingers
Mark: Feeling just how wet and warm you are for me
Mark: I would lay you down now, position myself between your legs
Mark: Then I’d tease you by kissing and licking your soft inner thighs
Max: I love when you do that
Mark: Noted
Mark: I would then move closer, my tongue finally touching your delicious cookie
Mark: I would taste your sweetness on my tongue
Mark: You have no idea how good you taste to me
Mark: Moving my tongue in circles
Max: I’d put my hands in your hair, urging you to go faster
Mark: I would stroke your wet folds more eagerly
Mark: Enjoying how they grow against my touch
Mark: And I’d listen to your moans with delight
Mark: Knowing that I’m the very reason of your pleasure
Mark: I’d move my lips and tongue faster now
Mark: Causing you to throw your head back
Mark: You’d spill further into my mouth
Mark: And I would drink it all up
Mark: Because I love the way you taste
Max: Oh fuck…
Mark: You want me to fuck you now?
Max: Yes…please

Max had been touching herself for a while now too, albeit through her underwear, but reading his words made her excitement grow and she couldn’t restrain herself completely. Nor did she want to be stopped.

Mark: Moving up, I’d slowly enter you
Mark: I would see that lovely pink blush on your face
Mark: I’d lean down to kiss you
Mark: And make you taste yourself on my tongue
Mark: I’d take your wrists and pin them to the bed, moving within you
Mark: It feels so good to be inside you
Mark: I’d look you in the eyes and you’d see the desire in mine
Mark: I would be making you moan with each of my movements
Mark: I’d pick up the pace, riding you faster
Mark: Feeling how warm and tight you are
Max: I’d begin to move with you
Mark: I would begin to feel myself pulsate inside you, unable to stop
Max: I would beg for more
Mark: With the last few thrusts I’d drive into you more slowly
Mark: Feeling you deeper
Mark: Until I make you come
Mark: You’d sure call out my name
Mark: Then I’d give into my own pleasure

Max: Mark…wow

Max: How are you so good at it and at describing it?

Mark: I have the best muse, so it’s not difficult

Max: Stop, you’re making me blush

Max: I love that color on you

Mark: Too bad we can’t do all that right now

Mark: I’m all ready to go

Max: Me too, I’m kinda blaming you

Mark: Can’t help it

Max: Well, you’re just gonna have to do all that when I come back on Friday

Mark: Like you even have to ask

Thursday, December 26, 2013

Max: I am very angry at you, mister

Mark: And a good morning to you too

Mark: What’s this about?

Max: Well, you warmed me up

Max: And I couldn’t do anything about that

Max: Very frustrating

Mark: Oh…well

Mark: You could have taken care of it yourself

Max: Easy for you to say

Max: It’s way simpler for you

Mark: True

Max: Plus, as I said

Max: The walls in my house are REALLY thin

Max: It’s hard to…focus

Mark: I’m sorry, baby

Max: Plus, I…haven’t exactly been able to…finish
He hesitated for a moment before composing the next message.

Mark: If you want, I could…

Max: You could…what?

Mark: …teach you?

Max: Oh

Max: To…pleasure myself?

Mark: Yeah

Max almost choked, reading that message, feeling her heart pick up the pace. *How would he even do that?*

Max: I don’t know what to say

Mark: I’m sorry. Was that too much?

Max: No, I just…

Max: Never expected you to offer

Max: Or to even think about it

Mark: Well, it’s just that – an offer

Mark: You can decline, no feelings hurt

Mark: But I absolutely wouldn’t mind doing it for you

Max: Won’t that be…weird?

Mark: Weirder than all the stuff we’ve done?

Mark: Like our little photography session, for instance

Max: Right.

Mark: And I don’t think you have any idea how hot it would be for me to watch you do that

Mark: There may or may not have been vivid fantasies of it swirling around in my mind already

She began considering his offer, feeling her heat rise as she imagined what it would be like.

Mark: Max?

Max: Sorry. I’m still here, I’m just thinking

Max: And I did like your dirty fantasies text so ; )

Mark: Look, I’m just as happy to pleasure you myself

Mark: But if you want me to, I’ll show you how
Mark: It's only fair if we’re both able to do so
Max: You’re right
Max: Well…we can try it
Mark: Remember, absolutely no pressure
Max: I know
Mark: If it doesn’t work, then it just doesn’t
Mark: But I’m pretty sure it will ;)
Max grinned at her phone screen. She loved how confident he was in his abilities. And he wasn’t being overly confident here, it wasn’t as though he hadn’t proven himself to her time and time again already.
Max: You know, I do like this idea
Mark: You do?
Max: Yeah, I mean…nothing bad can happen, right?
Mark: And a lot of good *can*
Mark: Picture me smirking right now
Max: Oh, I know it’s your default expression, sir
Mark: Mhm, “sir”…?
Mark: You naughty girl
Max: Well, alright
Max: Teach me ;)
Mark: Putting it in my schedule now, miss
Mark: It’ll be a lesson you will *never* forget
Max: Oh gosh stop or I’ll have to touch myself right now
Mark: Go ahead
Mark: I wouldn’t dare to stop you
Mark: If only I could watch too…
Max: Maybe I’ll let you
Mark: Don’t tease
Max: I’m not ;)
Mark: Oh, you are driving me *crazy*
Max: Good. That’s the point
Max: Think how right now, my other hand slowly slides down
Max: Tickling my own skin, creating goosebumps
Max: Imagining that it’s you who’s doing that to me
Max: Until I reach between my thighs…
Max: Pleasuring myself and thinking of you
Max: I’m smiling widely, and I have to cover my mouth or else someone’s going to hear me
Max: I’m blushing a lot because this feels like I’m being so *naughty*
Max: What would Mr. Jefferson think of me if he knew what I was doing right now?
Max: But it just feels so good, so I’m not stopping
Max: I can feel myself aching for him more and more
Max: And I gasp to myself: Oh Mark…please come home soon
Max: Even though…I’m not *allowed* to call him “Mark”
Max: This is *Mr.* Jefferson
Max: He’s my *teacher*
Mark: Oh lord. I’m hard again.
Max: But I’m just a naughty girl who has a crush on her photography professor
Mark: Girl, what are you doing to me?
Max: Did you like it?
Mark: Like you don’t know already
Max: Ha. Picture *me* smirking right now
Max: And what are you going to do to me for being so naughty?
Mark: I am so going to fuck you senseless when I see you
Max: You better
Mark: Don’t ever doubt it
Hello for the first time in 2019! Happy New Year! I hope you all had a great time celebrating the end of 2018, be it at a party or chilling at home.

Wowsers. Writing and publishing this fanfiction for the better part of 2018 was a wild, but an amazing ride for me. I'd never done that before, and never for such a small (but dedicated!) fandom. I didn't think this ff would get much traction, not to mention so many hits, kudos and comments. Wheef! I'm thankful for each and every single one of those, and I hope you, Dear Readers, have enjoyed yourselves here. THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU! ♥

There's one more chapter from the Christmas part of this ff, probably out in a few days. Finishing 2013 on a happy note, things will get far more serious for Jefferfield in 2014. It's all I can or should say for now.

Friday, December 27, 2013

Staring absentmindedly at the airport rush happening in front of him, Mark finally blinked repeatedly as a familiar tiny palm waved at him from afar, a gorgeous smile beaming from his favorite face in the world. He immediately requited the grin, his heart picking up the pace and joy surfacing as he locked eyes with Max. He could hear her adorable, excited giggles echoing throughout the space they were in and growing louder with each of her steps. She was sort of running up to him now, evidently thrilled to see him again at last, just as he was. He opened his arms wide, allowing her to almost jump into his embrace a few moments later, causing him to step backwards a bit under the force of the blow, and locked her tightly under his strong arms and close to his chest.

That same familiar, pleasant, coconut scent of her shampoo filled his nostrils, and he rested his face in her hair for a little while. As if it were even possible, she dug herself deeper into him, breathing in his scent as well and relishing in the familiarity of the warmth of his body.

‘Oh, I’ve missed you, babygi–’ Mark started, but was cut off by Max’s eager kisses. He smiled in astonishment, causing them to bump mouths for a couple of seconds, but their kiss soon grew a little more intense and less and less decent, considering they were in a public space. She clutched to his face and gradually slowed down, breaking away soon after.

‘I’ve missed you, too,’ she said, flashing that gorgeous smile again, gazing into his eyes with wonder. Their lips met for another wistful, tiny smooch.

‘Alright. I don’t know how about you, but I’m starving. How about we eat something first, huh?’ he offered, cupping her face with one palm and sending her a matching soft, wondrous gaze.

‘It’s like you’re reading my mind again.’ She bobbed her head, a wide grin on her gentle face. ‘Yes, please.’

‘Alright, let’s go.’
They grabbed their suitcases and headed to a nearby airport pizza place.

Having barely arrived at Mark’s place, they were all over each other, almost forgetting about their luggage left on the porch or to even close the front door. Mark slammed it shut and continued the heated kiss, Max gripping his face for stability and smiling against his mouth. His hands found her hips and pulled her closer to his own, sliding higher and pushing her towards the wall separating the kitchen from the hallway. Their gasps and grunts were echoing throughout the room. They felt so starved from one another’s touch it nearly felt like feeding an addiction.

Finally, Mark pinned her to the wall and his lips started to sail across her jaw, leaving those amazing, wet kisses of his, his breath kept sending shivers and goosebumps right down into her core. He soon moved lower, caressing the soft skin on her neck, all the while his hands sneaked up her tee and explored their way up to her breasts, eventually wrapping themselves over her bra and squeezing lightly. Max moaned in thrill, her hands landing on his shoulders and skimming up until they reached his hair. With one more squeeze, she tugged on his hair and felt his teeth teasing her neck. He kissed her once more before looking her in the eyes and attempting to undo her pants.

‘Wait, hold on,’ she countered, although with a dose of disappointment in her own voice.

‘Why, what happened?’ Mark asked, reluctantly taking his hands away.

‘Nothing, nothing, just… I feel so gross after being on the plane for so long. I’d like to take a shower first.’

‘Oh. Well, alright, of course, go on. I should probably take one, too.’

She gave him a tiny smooch. ‘Thanks. We’ll finish this right after, okay? Promise.’

‘Alright, baby,’ he replied and took a couple of deeper breaths to collect himself. His excitement had risen just before she’d stopped him, and so now he needed to readjust his jeans, feeling that uncomfortable tension.

Max noticed it and offered him an apologetic look, a bit of guilt surfacing. ‘Sorry,’ she mouthed, putting her hands to his chest and flashing a slight pout.

‘Hey, it’s okay.’ Mark kissed her once more. ‘Later it is.’

Max all but started heading upstairs on her own, but then stopped in the middle of the staircase and looked back down at Mark. ‘How about…you join me?’

He immediately turned to face her. His excited smile told her everything she needed to know.

Done with brushing her teeth, Max undressed herself, leaving all of her clothes in a messy heap on the floor by the sink, and went into the shower cabin. She never really focused on any details inside it, but she had to admit – it was quite spacious and definitely luxurious. Obviously, the showers at the Blackwell dorms couldn’t compare, but neither could her home bathroom back in Seattle – in here, there was an electric shower with temperature controllers and a big shower head. It always felt like getting an actual massage with just streams of warm or hot water. She could stay here for hours and hours.

She stood under the shower head and let the hot water soak her entire body. She then soaped herself up with Mark’s shower gel, slowly massaging her skin and cleansing the areas that needed it the most, the warm water relieving tension from her sore muscles. Meanwhile, Mark brushed his teeth at
the sink, looking in the mirror and seeing the reflection of his beautiful girlfriend who was now nude, and kept involuntarily smirking to himself with the toothbrush in his mouth. He couldn’t help but let his anticipation rise. And the pressure between his legs became all too unbearable to ignore.

Finally finished, Mark removed his specs and turned around to approach the shower cabin, then gently knocked on the slightly steamed glass, prompting Max to face him.

‘All good?’ he asked, his bare, dark brown eyes piercing through hers so persuasively.

‘Oh, yeah, it’s amazing,’ she replied, and paused for a second, tentatively resting her hand against the glass door and biting down on her bottom lip before she spoke again, ‘Would you like to join me now?’

‘I would like that very much,’ Mark responded with that soft yet deep timbre of his. His eyes roamed over her gorgeous, soaped, tiny frame with desire, marveling at how foam dripped off of her. ‘God, you’re beautiful,’ he said.

Max flushed, and regarded him for a second. He was wearing only those dark jeans and a white shirt, the two items complimenting his muscular body.

‘As much as I love this look on you,’ Max started, enticingly, pressing her breasts against the glass, ‘I mean, I really love it, but you should definitely lose these clothes right now.’ Mark began to quickly unfasten his belt, but he heard Max protest just as fast. ‘Hey, slow down,’ she stopped him. ‘Your shirt first. Let me savor it,’ she said.

Following her order, he began slowly unbuttoning his shirt, one clasp at a time, looking at her all the while with that same desirous gaze. As he reached the end and exposed his naked torso, she instinctively rushed forward to touch it, but all she could touch was the obstacle in the form of the glass wall of the shower cabin which separated them. He looked down at his body, then back at Max, and started to unbuckle his belt, again slowly and teasingly, and eventually revealed himself, holding her gaze throughout.

Max smiled and opened the cabin. ‘Come in,’ she invited him. Without missing a beat, Mark got in and shut the door behind.

He gently took her face into his hands, and began kissing her softly at first, but soon had to match her impatient intensity, their tongues brushing against one another with more and more fervor. Her hands traveled all over his chest, savoring the way he felt against her skin, and reached back for the shower gel to spread it along his torso, down his arms and around his waist to his back, resuming their heated kiss. Her palms dancing on his skin kept furthering his want, sending that pleasurable and tingling sensation in all directions, until they slid lower and she gently dragged her nails down his abdomen, undoubtedly teasing him, judging from the grunt with which he responded. And then he felt her tiny hands wrap themselves around his awaiting hardness, eliciting a moan. What a satisfying sound to fill her eardrums with.

The kiss intensified on Mark’s part now, his pleasure mounting in a blissful wave. He brought his hands to her breasts, feeling the familiar shape against his palms, and stroked her hardened nipples with his thumbs. ‘Mine,’ he whispered against her lips, brushing them against her jaw and down to her neck again.

Still moving her hands up and down his length, she smiled widely with her eyes closed and murmured, ‘And this is mine.’

His hand wandered off to touch her too in response, feeling her warm wetness on his fingers. ‘Mine,
too,’ he added as he heard her moan slightly. He kneeled to finally feel her with his tongue as well, the familiar taste triggering his excitement. She felt his lips close around her, his warm tongue not omitting any area with those eager strokes, and she soon found it hard to stand still, the pleasure overcoming her, making her knees weak and causing her to have to lean against the glass wall. After a few moments, he felt her pull him up. He smirked and stood up, with Max immediately resuming the pleasurable, petting strokes and their kiss.

‘Fuck,’ Mark panted between kisses, Max’s hand movements becoming faster and irresistible. In his growing passion, he moved his hands up her hips and under her bottom, picked her up, and pinned her to the cool tiled wall, while the hot water was splashing down on them. She entwined her legs around his waist and held onto him tightly by his shoulders, sighing lightly as she felt him slide inside her.

He began to go into her slowly, though hard and as deep as he could, with her gasping with each thrust, and kept her eyes shut. His movements were deliberate, precise, decisive and unrestrained. He was looking at her face so deliciously surrendering to the pleasure, her back being pinioned to the wall, one hand in his hair and tugging on it slightly. ‘Faster,’ she urged him.

Mark flashed an excited grin and guided her hand to the shower rail. ‘Hold onto this then,’ he ordered, enticingly cocking his eyebrow. Biting down on her smile, she acquiesced and embraced him by his shoulder with her other arm. Mark propped her up higher for stability and picked up the pace as instructed. He was now slamming into her with more speed and force, perpetually and relentlessly. She found herself at his mercy – he was nowhere near stopping, his voice rough at each enter, his hand hitting the wall with frustration. His ample hardness was tangible against every inch of her tight wall, the shared friction becoming all too overwhelming for the both of them.

Her arms almost ready to give up, she pulled herself up once more, digging her nails into his shoulders, and urged him again, ‘Harder,’ which only made his movements all the more aggressive, having him groan now. It felt so wonderful to be inside her and so thrilling to hear her demand to be fucked the way she wanted. He kept hiding within her, again and again, his lips caressing the crook of her neck and eliciting those sweet moans from her.

Breathing more and more heavily at the edge of her peak, Max suddenly felt her vision get blurry, her limbs turn cotton-like, and there was a growing whirring in her ears as she came, contracting around him, a delicious warmth spreading down to her core and across all nerves. Almost losing her consciousness, she rested her forehead against his collarbone, her arms and legs letting go of Mark, slumping down all helter-skelter.

Startled, he stopped his thrusts immediately and held her limp body up. ‘Oh, hey, hey, Max! Are you okay? Can you hear me?’ Having heard no answer, he checked if she was still breathing. ‘Oh, thank god,’ he murmured as he felt her steady albeit a bit weak breath against his protruded cheek, and opened the shower cabin to let more air in. He waited several minutes for her to collect herself, holding her firmly in his arms and gently stroking her cheeks. He dismissed his unsatisfied excitement and focused entirely on his partner.

Beginning to regain consciousness, Max heard his muffled question, ‘Are you alright? Max?’ She let out an astounded little laugh, opening her eyes and looked up at him. ‘Yeah,’ she replied, beaming at him blissfully, though still quite lightheaded. Feeling pretty proud of himself, Mark began to kiss her slowly now, smiling into the kiss, and she felt pleasurable tingling sensation mixed with pins and needles in her limbs as they returned to their usual state. ‘You really did fuck me senseless,’ she added, chuckling and sounding breathless.

‘I did, didn’t I,’ he affirmed, a smug smirk painted on his face. ‘I’ve missed you too much,’ he said.
‘I’ve missed you, too,’ she echoed, exhausted, holding onto his chest, resting her head against his collarbone and trying to catch her breath. He held onto her as well, hot water splashing down on them and keeping them warm. A while passed while Max recovered. She looked up at him again and remembered one crucial thing. ‘Did you have an, uh… Did you get to come too?’ she asked quietly with a little bit of that gorgeous blush of hers.

Mark offered her a soft gaze and brushed off the wet hair from her face. ‘Well, uh… no,’ he admitted. ‘But it’s okay, making sure you were alright was more important to me.’

‘I am. Let me take care of you now.’

She slid her hands up his chest and reached his face, holding onto it gently, and they joined in slow, deep kisses, meanwhile her one hand wandered off, skimming down his arm, then down his abdomen, until her tiny palm arrived back at his length and wrapped itself around it. She glided it slowly and gingerly at first, getting her partner ready. He pushed her back towards the wall and leaned against it, towering over her with a lustful gaze as her strokes intensified, making him grow in her hand, allowing her to go faster and tighten her grip around him with both hands.

His breathing quickening, Mark somewhat buried his face the crook of her neck and focused on the pleasure, but soon had to break away as it became too powerful. Max observed his passion-stricken features as they kept displaying nothing but delight in response to her petting caresses. She heard him cuss under his breath as another wave of pleasure hit him hard, thus she picked up the pace, eliciting grunts and moans, and didn’t stop until she felt his warm release cover her tummy. She surrendered to his kisses now, still moving her hand to prolong his bliss.

They gave into their fatigue and snuggled up nude together in his bed, with Max burying her face into Mark’s chest.

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Saturday, December 28, 2013

Waking up in the morning, Mark had to wait several minutes until he was fully awake, as though he completely forgot what led him to this situation. He didn’t want to move as not to wake her up just yet, but he had slept in the same position the whole night and was forced to finally change it, awakening his fiery lover from the previous night.

‘Mm, good morning,’ Max’s sweet voice greeted him, she gently scratching his chest.

‘Hi, baby,’ he replied, kissing her on her temple. ‘We completely passed out.’

‘Yeah, we did,’ she chuckled lightly. ‘How did you sleep?’

‘Oh, it was great.’ He yawned, his voice sounded so adorably sleepy that Max couldn’t help but melt inside. ‘Haven’t felt so well-rested in a while,’ he added, rubbing his eyes. ‘How about you?’

‘Same.’ She looked up at him, smiling, both of them thinking of what had happened the previous night. They had been aching for one another during those few days of separation, their passion having overcome them. Max could feel his morning erection against her abdomen. Still wet, she sneaked her hand down and guided him inside her. He exhaled loudly, slowly beginning to move within her and gripping her thigh for stability.

‘Mm. If we keep doing this,’ he remarked between gentle thrusts, his words ending in a soft moan, ‘we’re never getting up.’
‘That’s the idea,’ she replied, moving her hips with him, sighing lightly. She moved her head slightly lower, and began to pleasure his nipple, circling her warm tongue around it, prompting him to move faster, holding tightly onto her, pulling her leg up to feel her deeper and lazily moving within her for several moments, allowing them both to slowly wake up.

After a while, they changed the position, he entering her from behind, holding her leg up and burying his face in the crook of her neck, leaving wet, sloppy kisses, his beard lightly scraping against her skin. His thrusts were slow, she could feel the entirety of him sliding in and out, so ample, so full within her. Her moans were calm and let out with each exhale, sweet and slightly high-pitched, making him smile and escalating his pleasure and excitement. His breathing was a bit more uneven than hers, he was humming lightly in a deep timbre straight into her ear, her well spilling further. She felt perfectly wet and slick, so warm and tight, he honestly could just stay there for hours and hours, feeling her like this. And it was indeed what they ended up doing, not caring about what time it was, just enjoying each other’s company.

She could feel herself tumble over the edge, the heat within her growing higher and higher until she felt one, calm rush permeating from the sweet spot as he brought her to her peak. She graced him with a lovely cry of passion, pouring out even more and triggering the last stage of his excitement, as the familiar pulsating sensation was surfacing. He didn’t speed up his movements, wanting to come in the exact, tranquil manner as she just had. He soon felt ready to burst, and in one sudden moment, everything turned warmer and wetter, their liquids meshing together, and Max sensed a slight twitching, throbbing feeling of his hardness, he swelled just a bit as his release filled her.

‘Well, I definitely know what I’m thankful for this whole year,’ she giggled, coming up for air.

‘Me, too,’ he concurred, laughing with her, and gave her an amorous kiss.

‘Okay, I’m gonna take a shower,’ Max said, getting up. ‘These bedsheets are going to need a serious cleanup.’

‘I know,’ Mark said, smirking at her. ‘Go, I’ll clean up the mess.’

Consuming meals and watching movies together throughout the morning and afternoon, they eventually dozed off on the sofa, covered with a warm, fuzzy blanket. Max was somewhat sitting astride him and resting in Mark’s arms and he held her in a loose embrace, both of them listening to the soft music emerging from her phone, one earphone for each. They awakened after a couple of hours of napping, staying in the same position.

Gently caressing her hair for a few moments, Mark soon took out the earphones from his and Max’s ear, shifting her focus to him. She squirmed in his arms and met his eyes in question. ‘So I, uh… I bought us—well, you—something,’ Mark started. ‘Some accessories, so to speak,’ he clarified and gazed tellingly into her eyes, but wasn’t quite sure she understood what he meant. ‘Come on, I’ll show you.’ He gently grasped her hand and guided her upstairs to the bedroom.

On the bed, there were lying a couple of different items, hard to discern from afar, but once they approached the bed, Max was able to recognize what it was, even if she hadn’t seen it live before. Mark had bought sex toys. Certainly not each of them was going to be used during their “teaching session”, but perhaps he just wanted to present all the possibilities to her. In any case, Max felt a hot blush creep up her cheeks and she squeezed Mark’s palm tighter in her hand.

‘Again,’ Mark’s soft voice filled her eardrums and his hands cupped her flushed face. ‘If you don’t want to do it, it’s alright, I won’t insist. I want you to be comfortable with everything we do. But if you do want it, I can keep my promise and…teach you.’
Max gazed into his eyes, listening intently to his assurances. She felt nothing but safe with him. And yes, the prospect of discovering herself, even in front of him, rang exciting, she couldn’t deny it. ‘I’m a little nervous, yeah, but…I do want it,’ she said. ‘I’m sure.’

‘Alright. Let me show you what I bought then.’

They sat down at the edge of the bed, now both feeling thrilled. Mark grabbed a pink, sort of wavy device and pushed the button on its top. It was barely audible, but once he eased it into Max’s palm, she recognized its purpose.

‘A vibrator,’ she said, her voice quiet and breaking a little from the slight stress that still lingered. She examined the purring device in her palm. It seemed it had just the right weight and size, as though Mark knew exactly what she needed. Honestly, she wouldn’t be surprised if that was the case.

‘Mhm,’ Mark affirmed with a warm smile. ‘It should definitely help with your tiny issue. And as you’ve probably noticed, it’s very discreet, so you can take it with you to your dorms and no one is going to hear what you’re doing.’

She gulped at the thought. ‘Right.’

‘See, it has intensity regulator right…here.’ He pointed to the button right above the “start/stop” button. ‘If you’d like, you can try it out on your own at first, I don’t have to be here.’

Max nodded and took a deeper breath. ‘I think I’d like that, actually.’

‘Good. Well, I should leave you to it then.’ Mark got up from the bed and cleared it out from the rest of the sex toys, putting them away into the nightstand drawer on “his” side of the bed. ‘I’m going to wait for you inside my office. Take your time, however long you need.’

_His office, which neighbors the bedroom_, Max remembered. It was possible he could hear her from there. But did she really have to be embarrassed of that? He’d heard and _seen_ her in many more explicit situations thus far; surely listening to her cries of passion shouldn’t intimidate her. And Mark had said it himself, it would be beyond exciting for him to experience that.

‘Okay,’ she said, getting up from the bed and approaching Mark, still grasping the vibrating device in her hand. She stood on her toes and kissed him gently, flashing a gorgeous smile right after. ‘Thank you.’

‘You’re welcome, babygirl,’ he replied softly, brushing the back of his index finger across her blushing cheek. With a smug smirk on his lips and that deep, purring timbre in his voice, he added, ‘_Enjoy._’ And then he left the bedroom, shutting the door behind.

Max turned around and involuntarily squeezed the device tighter inside her palm. She switched it off for a moment, walked over towards the bed and set it down on the sheets. She then proceeded with undressing herself, her hands shaking a bit. Once nude, she reached for the vibrator, pulled the covers up, ensconced herself in the comfortable mattress and spread her legs wide.

A little tentatively at first, she was simply brushing her fingertips against her surface, enticing her senses beat by beat, thinking of the things that she considered sexy. Mark. She undressing Mark. Mark talking to her in that soothing voice of his. Mark pleasuring her. Mark’s dark brown eyes piercing through her. Mark being inside her. Mark’s deep moans. The sound of Mark’s orgasm. She now used the other hand to gently caress her skin throughout, sending goosebumps and shivers, fondling her breast as well. Soon, her own arousal covered her fingers, allowing her to slide them back and forth on her wet clit, it swelling soon after along with the rest of her folds. The familiar,
tingling sensation was building up stronger with each stroke, until it was time to use the brand new device. She switched it on, applied it to her clit and began to explore.

Oh, Mark had been nothing but right when he’d said it would help. The vibrations sent by the device felt far more intense than her own touch, the warmth was growing higher at a much more rapid pace, yet only prolonging the blissful sensation. Max started to move the device in circles, causing the delicious pleasure to rise up and linger; it stayed at an even level for a couple of minutes, and then rose up further, this time eliciting a moan.

Mark heard that wonderful sound from behind the neighboring wall, seated by his computer desk, his desirous eyes sunk into the image before him – a photograph of Max, her tiny lips wrapped around him, which was a part of their very intimate session. His pants were pulled down and resting on the floor now, his shirt undone, as he was pleasuring himself, just like his girlfriend was doing so to herself inside his bedroom. He made use of her coconut lotion, it provided a smooth, slippery friction, and its scent added to his already heightened senses.

‘Mm, oh, Max…’ he kept muttering to himself, listening intently her delighted moans, gliding his hand up and down, thinking of her and panting heavily with a big smile on his face.

Max was at the brink of her peak, finally getting to discover what it felt like to be able to achieve that on her own. Obviously, she enjoyed Mark’s lips and tongue far better, he was always able to make her see stars with his caresses, but this…this was so exciting and a little bit new, she couldn’t deny the fact she felt proud of herself. She slightly picked up the pace, moving the device more vigorously, letting out a moan after a moan, feeling that heat escalate higher and higher, until it burst forward and she felt her thighs tremble and shake as she brought herself to climax.

She turned off the vibrator and rested on the bed, relishing in the bliss and smiling widely with her eyes closed. A few moments later, she heard Mark’s soft moan emerging from his office, and her grin only grew wider. She stayed in place for another while and draped covers over her bare body, caressing her skin and waiting for Mark. He joined her not long after, flashing an euphoric smile and gracing her eyes with his naked torso. He also brought the coconut lotion with him, presumably for the upcoming session.

‘Hey, you,’ she greeted him. ‘I take it you enjoyed yourself as well, huh?’

‘I may have,’ he retorted evasively and cocked an eyebrow, sitting at the edge of the bed and leaning his arm against the mattress. ‘But it goes without saying that you definitely did.’

‘I did, yeah,’ she admitted, mushing her face into the soft pillow to hide the blush on her cheeks. ‘You were right.’

‘The teacher usually is. And he appreciates diligent students.’

Max giggled. ‘I’m diligent?’

‘You certainly are,’ Mark affirmed. ‘Did your homework, prepared for the lesson…now it’s time for the labs.’

‘Oh?’ She raised her eyebrows in question.

‘Oh, yes. I’m going to teach you how to perform something more…intense,’ he replied with a smirk and readjusted his glasses. ‘And I’ll just observe the results.’

‘You are welcome to do the same, though, Mr. Jefferson,’ she teased, playing off of him. ‘Should you choose to, of course. I just love seeing you at work.’
‘I shall, Miss Caulfield, I shall.’

Biting down on her smile, she shook off the covers and kneeled on the bed in front of him. ‘May I help you, sir, relieve yourself from these clothes?’

‘For extra credit?’

‘So to speak.’

‘Well, proceed then.’

Max brought her hands to her professor’s bearded cheeks and began to plant kisses on his soft lips, feeling them move against her own, and his hands skim up her back, his fingertips designing goosebumps on her warm skin. She slid her palms lower, down the shoulders and under the fabric, pulling his shirt down, which prompted him to etch his fingers in her hair and pull back, gazing her in the eyes with lust. He gently pushed her back to lie down on the bed and traced a path of wet kisses down to her delicious, still wet folds. He needed to get at least a small taste of her. It was that one tiny thing that had been missing from him in his office.

Mark got up now and towered over his gorgeous student, his eyes roaming over the perfection that was her body, her ivory skin almost melting together with the white sheets of his bed. Her arms were stretched over her head and her legs loosely pressed together, as though to tease him by hiding herself from him. She undoubtedly noticed the excitement bulging out of his pants and bit her bottom lip as she got caught red-handed. Mark then proceeded with removing the rest of his clothing, eventually standing before her in all of his glory. He then kneeled on the floor and pulled her by the ankles closer towards the edge.

‘Now, our lesson begins,’ he announced with a smug smirk, eliciting a blush and a smile from Max. He brushed his fingertips against her wet clit and then smoothly slid his middle and ring fingers inside her, making her moan in astonishment mixed with pleasure. ‘See, I’m moving my fingers against your upper wall, in that little ‘come hither’ kind of way.’ Hearing her delighted moan, he added, ‘And that’s how I know it’s working.’

‘Mhm,’ Max replied, although it came out more as a whine or a whimper of sorts.

Mark kept maneuvering his fingers in the same manner, purposefully slowing down as soon as he realized her pleasure mounted, and repeated the teasing caresses with a smirk. It drove her insane, but in a way, she loved what he was doing to her, and how smug he appeared throughout. Leaving her at the edge again, he withdrew his fingers from her slick warmth and slid them into his mouth for a moment, once more reveling in the flavor.

‘Alright. Now–’ He gently took her hand into his and placed it between her thighs. ‘–try and do the same. I’ll help you.’

Max nodded and pulled up a little bit. ‘Okay,’ she agreed and carefully drove her middle finger inside. Mark’s warm, large palm covered her hand and closed around it, navigating her movements slowly, but with a firm conviction.

‘Don’t be shy about this, move your fingers with me.’ Looking back to her with a soft expression on his face, he asked, ‘Good?’

‘Mhm, yeah,’ she murmured, getting used to this new, odd sensation. Her entrance felt more spongy rather than smooth, and it wasn’t something she’d anticipated, but the deeper she slid her finger, the less strange the impression rang. Soon, she felt Mark’s fingers tenderly push her ring finger to join
her middle one, thus she acquiesced, placing her trust in him. Guided steadily by his hand, her fingers were exploring her own depth in search of the sweet spot.

‘You’ll know when you find it,’ he muttered into her ear, the sheer feeling of his lips and breath against her earlobe sent a jolt of excitement down to her core, making her breathe out a moan. It also encouraged her to move her fingers more vigorously, bringing more pleasure to herself. Mark then let go of her hand and reached for the lotion. He squeezed out a fair amount onto his palm and wrapped it around his pending erection, gliding it up and down at a pace that matched her own. He kept sending her an assured smile, and his features were lightly graced with pleasure.

Giving into his want, Mark then pulled up and kneeled low, getting a better view of his girlfriend as she was pleasuring herself before him, finally making his fantasy come to life. He helped her move around, so that now she was fully resting on the bed, with her head sunk into the soft pillows and Mark in front of her, getting off to the sheer sight of her experiencing pleasure. Their eyes roamed over one another’s bodies, maneuvering their hands to elicit more bliss.

And that was the moment Max found her sweet spot. ‘Oh, god,’ she murmured under her breath and continued the rapid strokes.

Mark’s pupils dilated and his smile widened. ‘Yes, exactly like that. Move your fingers in circles or side to side, I’ve found you love both techniques,’ he advised with a mischievous flash behind his gaze, as though he was proud of himself for holding such valuable knowledge. ‘And don’t stop.’

She followed his instructions without words, though her response wasn’t quiet in the slightest, as she graced him with a delighted, loud moan, her eyes fluttering shut, which only rendered Mark more inclined to move his hand faster. Max focused on the perpetually rising pleasure, relentlessly working her fingers around the sweet spot, hearing Mark’s increased breathing and the sound of his palm sliding on the slick surface of his entire length. Arriving almost at the end, she locked eyes with him, her lips parted and letting out unrestrained cries of passion.

Mark sank his stare into this wondrous sight in front of him. The way Max kept driving her fingers into her own warmth, bending and arching them with such a raw passion painted on her delicate face, how he could see the pleasure she felt, how absolutely gorgeous she appeared throughout, all intensified the experience for him. His imagination wasn’t as gifted as he’d thought, seeing this happen compared to photographs he’d created inside his mind couldn’t compare one bit. Max was simply…too perfect to imitate.

Perhaps that was what brought Max to her peak – the gaze that Mark offered her in that moment. As though she was the most desirable, most beautiful item in the whole universe to him. And of course she was. She felt warmth explode out of her, making her flutter her eyes shut. Mark was now able to witness the fulfillment on his girlfriend’s flushed face, accompanied by her lovely, relieved moan. She needed a few good moments to recollect herself, and he just kept staring at her, wonder in his eyes and his arousal mounting higher.

Her ecstatic blue eyes returned to his again, the usually dark brown irises appeared almost entirely black now. She could hear his throaty groans, and knew his climax was just around the corner. Beaming at him with a satisfied smile, she drew patterns from between her breasts and down to her mons to indicate that his race was to finish right there and nowhere else. Her incentive was all the invitation he needed. Devouring her beautiful frame with his lustful gaze, he soon burst forward with that familiar deep moan of his, and his hot seed landed on the predesignated spot, much to both of their contentment.

Mark crawled on top of her, his lips and tongue hungry for hers, even though his want had been satisfied two times over. Max embraced him with all her limbs, her fingers smudging her arousal on
his upper back, and she could feel him pressing himself against her abdomen. He kept kissing her with fervor, immersing himself in the moment.

When he eventually broke away, Max brought her palms to his face and stared into those dark brown eyes of his. ‘Thank you…for teaching me,’ she said quietly, her shyness apparent due to the pink blush on her cheeks.

Mark chuckled and sent her a soft gaze. ‘Thank you for letting me observe,’ he countered. ‘You always look so beautiful when you’re aroused and when you come, I can never get enough of that sight.’

She flashed a grin. ‘Thanks.’

‘You’re very welcome, sweetness.’ He gave her another wistful, delicate kiss. ‘Come on now, a serious cleanup is due. Again.’ He broke away from their embrace, got out of bed and took Max in his arms, carrying her bridal style, her gentle giggles accompanying his walk up to the bathroom.
Chapter Notes

Ugh, I'm so sorry for such a delay! I didn't mean to keep you all waiting 😊 In any case, here's the new chapter — a little, pre-Valentine's Day treat, if you will. I hope you'll enjoy

A big thank you to each and every single one of you who left kudos under this work. I'm truly amazed by how fast it had grown over the course of January alone. It was incredible to keep track of, and it kept me pushing through my writer's block. Thanks again!

Tuesday, December 31, 2013

Max had spent the previous two days with Mark at his house, savoring the short Christmas break however they could, be it making love or dinner; watching movies or listening to music together, or discussing their favorite novels as well as photography and actually taking some new pictures. Mark couldn’t help but get back to his preferred portraiture style little by little, and there was no better muse in the world than Max. Fortunately enough, there was one spare, rather spacious room vis-à-vis his office, empty up until that point, and now he’d finally found a fitting purpose for it. Everything Max did rang adorable in his perception, thus he needed to capture it all. And Max herself didn’t mind one bit being in front of the lens anymore.

Time was rushing far too quickly by; they truly didn’t want to think about their Blackwell-related responsibilities they were inevitably going to have to go back to once the new year would arrive. Each other’s company was the only thing they truly needed, living out their honeymoon phase to the fullest. If it hadn’t been for their teacher-student relationship they had to keep secret for the moment, Mark would feel inclined to actually suggest living together; he adored having her so close by that much. Although, giving it a further thought, perhaps he’d rush things which required buildup and their own pace. He wouldn’t dare to ruin anything between them.

Having taken care of his love by now, with the last few hard thrusts, Mark finally experienced fulfillment as well, ending his race in a deep moan. He reached out to Max, who was lying on her tummy before him with her eyes closed and her fingers wrapped tightly around the bedsheets, brushed off the hair from her sweat-covered neck, and placed a kiss on it, making her smile. He rested within her for another little while, moving slowly to prolong his peak. Eventually, he withdrew from her and lay down next to her, snuggling her back into his torso.

‘I’m so going to miss these mornings when I’m back at the dorms,’ Max confessed with a downbeat tone in her voice, breaking a few moments of silence, which was only interrupted by their panting and heavy breathing.

‘Me too, baby,’ Mark concurred, embracing her tighter and placing a light, affectionate kiss on her neck. Morning sex did belong to one of his favorites, but just waking up beside Max and being able to hold her in his arms was enough to make him happy. ‘I’ll just miss having you here all the time.’

Max hummed delicately, turned around to face him and buried herself deeper into his embrace. It always felt so intimate to cuddle right after, when their skin was still hot and covered with sweat, and
their more natural scents flowed in the air. She now slid her palm up his chest and began to brush her fingertips against his skin, looking up at him and sending him a content smile. In turn, Mark brushed her bangs to the side and cupped her face with one hand, staring into those euphoric eyes with a soft gaze.

‘So, I was thinking… Maybe we’ll get dressed up for the evening? We can cook dinner together, watch a nice movie on the sofa…’ he offered, lightly caressing the skin on her cheek. ‘What do you say?’

‘Sounds lovely.’ Max pulled herself up and kissed him gently. ‘Wait, I don’t have anything to wear, though. Unless you count skinny jeans and a tee as dressed up.’

‘Well, you look great in everything. And out of everything,’ he half-jested. Max giggled in his arms, prompting him to chuckle as well. ‘But you’re wrong in assuming you’ve nothing to wear.’

‘Huh?’

‘Hold on.’

Mark untangled himself from her arms and got up. Max rolled over on her stomach and, with that curious expression of hers, observed what he was doing. Mark then walked past the TV and up to the large closet on both of their left. Max had never actually seen the inside of it, but now that he opened’d it, she was able to see a long row of nothing but white shirts – there must’ve at least been twenty of those – as well as a couple of blue and pale lilac ones too, and at the very right end of the rail, a couple of single jackets and suits. What he reached for, though, was a wide but flat, white box, which was lying at the bottom of the closet next to several sets of black leather shoes.

Once the box found itself in his hands, Mark joined her back by the bed and extended the gift to her. Max then opened the box and gasped quietly.

‘Mark…’ she started, parting her lips in admiration for the gorgeous, red dress that was resting beneath the lid. She gingerly took out and eyed the clothing, shaking her head at Mark. ‘This dress is…beautiful, thank you.’ She reached out with her free hand to stroke Mark’s cheek and leave a delicate kiss on his curved upwards lips. ‘You really shouldn’t have, but thank you. I love it.’

‘Yeah?’

Max nodded. ‘Yeah.’

‘I’m very glad then,’ Mark replied with a proud smile, gently took the dress out of Max’s hand, and threw it onto the bed, allowing his hands to pull her closer. She put her palms to his chest and slid them up, arriving at his collarbones and lightly brushing her fingertips against his skin.

‘Although, fair warning—’ She looked up at him. ‘—if we’re cooking, it’s like you’re asking me to stain that dress.’

He chuckled. ‘We can wash it right away if that’s the case. And wear aprons for the cooking part.’

‘Right. Okay.’

‘Hm, and maybe—’ He skimmed his hands down her back and stopped at her hips, giving her that magnetizing stare-down sprinkled with a smug smirk. ‘—it’s just a clever ploy to get you out of this dress later on, no matter its state?’

‘Oh, so that’s your true motive, huh?’ Max bit down on her growing smile and nodded. ‘Alright
then. Let’s do this.’

‘Good girl,’ Mark murmured with a dreamy smile, cupped her face and brushed his lips against hers, placing a delicate, purposefully restrained kiss. But Max was eager for more, thus she hooked her arms around his neck and kissed him back with passion. He slid his hands down her back until he reached her bottom, lifting her up and making her encircle her legs around his waist. She held onto him tightly, which allowed him to safely fall back onto the bed on top of her, making her smile against his lips. This little moment didn’t become anything more than slowly-shared, deep kisses, yet would still make for a fond memory; shivers and spasms tangible all over their skin, moans and gasps echoing around the bedroom, limbs entwined.

‘Alright, perhaps I was wrong,’ Mark stated, frantically stirring in the pot and thus preventing their dinner from getting burnt. ‘I cook, you observe.’

‘Sorry, I really suck at this,’ Max mumbled, pouting and appearing all-around contrite. Mark obviously wasn’t angry at her. It rather amused him that she was so incompetent at cooking, while showcasing rather superb baking skills.

‘Hey, it’s okay, sweetness, I’m just saying,’ Mark soothed. Once the chaos was subdued enough, he reached out and placed a kiss on her forehead. ‘Don’t worry. One day you’ll learn.’

Max smiled at the endearing gesture, but still crossed her arms on her chest. ‘What if I never do?’

‘Well, then it’ll be up to me to cook for us or else we’ll both starve,’ he joked. Max rolled her eyes, appearing a tiny bit embarrassed. ‘Oh, come here, you.’ He pulled her under his arm, embracing her with it, while continuously stirring in the pot with the other hand. She wrapped her arms around him and snuggled to one side of his chest. ‘I honestly don’t mind the cooking.’

‘So…it doesn’t bother you that I can’t cook?’ she asked as she looked up at him.

‘Not at all. Why would it bother me?’

Mark first raised his eyebrows in surprise, and then breathed out a little chuckle. ‘I don’t expect you to become a housewife, Max, if that’s what you’re worried about.’

He certainly didn’t think there was anything wrong with being a housewife – his mother used to be one after all, and he had a huge amount of respect for her in this and many other regards – but it wasn’t a quality he was looking for in his girlfriend. Or a future wife, if he was ever to get married. What he yearned for was someone career-driven like him. Never had he thought he’d form a relationship with a fellow photographer, and yet here she was. Max embodied the “dream girlfriend” concept he didn’t even know he wanted. Together, they could explore the world of photography, and he’d be more than thrilled to show her what it had in store. Matters typically associated with marriage, and having children, were of a secondary importance to him.

Max smiled and squeezed him tighter. ‘Good,’ she said. ‘I don’t think I’d want that either. I don’t even know if I have it in me. Look at me.’

‘Right. Well, I guess you’ll find out when you’re older. You don’t have to know all that just yet. For the time being, I’ll gladly keep us both well-dined.’
She mushed her face into his shirt and, sounding content, she mumbled, ‘Okay.’

Mark really did seem like the perfect boyfriend. Besides the obvious, such as his impeccable looks, his wit, his successful career, and how he carried himself, there were these…soft and gentle characteristics. He was caring, he was understanding. A damn good lover, too, Max thought to herself and bit down on her smile. All that was amazing on its own already. But now, he’d opened before her a future that wouldn’t require her to become anything other than what she wanted to be. It meant that he would be her partner in whatever adventure was waiting for them. And that…rendered her tremendously happy.

He placed a kiss on the top of her head now, embracing her tighter; absolutely adoring the way she melted into his body.

Max pulled away only so slightly and offered Mark that gorgeous smile of hers; those wide eyes staring into his with admiration. ‘I love you,’ she said; for the first time before him.

Mark smiled widely, his eyes lighting up, and then all but drew her in for a short yet passionate kiss. ‘And I love you,’ he responded with a matching gaze.

They went on with the cooking, all the while cuddling and being goofy around each other.

When it was time to move the dinner onto their respective plates, Max grabbed the pot by the handles, a little too carelessly, as it turned out in that moment that the handles had the option of being twisted around, for some goddamn reason. The pot swung sharply back and forth, horror flashed behind her eyes, and she would have spilt its contents all over herself if it hadn’t been for Mark, who caught the pot at the very last minute, thankfully already wearing mittens.

He couldn’t stop laughing now; it’d all looked far too comical. Max hid her face in her palms in utter embarrassment, but she soon burst into giggles as well, laughing with him at her own clumsiness together with Mark.

‘Come here, my beautiful disaster,’ he said, chuckling, and pulled her into a hug.

‘I really am a disaster in the kitchen,’ she concurred, hiding the last of her laughter in his chest. ‘Good reflexes, by the way,’ she added once she faced him again.

A smug smile grew on Mark’s lips. ‘Thanks, sweetness. I have to compensate for your adorable, clumsy bum somehow,’ he joked, and kissed her delicately, reciprocating her amused grin. ‘Now, come, let’s eat already.’

The candle-lit dinner passed by far too quickly, but this was just the consequence of having such good times in each other’s company. Hours felt like seconds and there was no time in the world that ever felt quite enough to satisfy them. Conversations about anything and everything, be it something that fascinated either one of them, or mindless babbling, or discussing something utterly trivial – whatever it was, they could talk to each other forever and never get bored. It was as though having that special somebody one could spend a lifetime with.

No fancy New Year’s celebration would be complete without dancing, especially considering how little possibilities there were for Max and Mark to actually go out and have careless fun in public. Mark therefore created this lovely, intimate evening to show his love what having even a tiny shred of that might one day feel like.

He twirled her under his arm and pulled her back in. They lightly swayed to the delicate jazz melody emerging from the record player. She fell back into his arms, breathing in the pleasant scent of his
cologne. It seemed a little bit different than what he usually wore, but she enjoyed it nonetheless.

Just the way it’d happened the very first time they’d danced together, at Zeitgeist, she snuggled to his chest, sinking into him, and he embraced her with his strong arms, closing his eyes and pressing her close to his heart.

‘You know,’ he started, causing her to face him again. A dreamy smile and eyes gazing into his eyes with a matched wonder. ‘I didn’t think this year would be any different from all the previous ones. I thought I’d finish it alone again, with no real hope for the upcoming year.’ Max furrowed her brows, and a glimpse of concern flashed behind her blue eyes, but he just continued, ‘And then one day, this little, freckled beauty entered my classroom. She had that wonderful aura of optimism and innocence around her, like everything I used to be, everything I wished I still was, and I couldn’t help but wonder if…maybe I’d finally be happy by her side. And hoped to be someone who could make her happy as well. I knew I shouldn’t, but I had to try and make her mine. And somehow, she loved me back.’

Max didn’t even notice the moment they’d stopped dancing. All that was visible on her gentle face right now was pure awe, seasoned with a gorgeous smile and little tears of joy in her eyes. Mark cupped her cheeks, brought his lips to hers, and started to kiss her slowly yet passionately.

Responding to the kiss with a matched commitment, Max placed her hands on his chest, feeling his skin through his shirt, and slid them up, inch by inch, until she arrived at his nape, and pulled herself even closer to him.

Still gently holding her face, Mark stared intensely into her eyes, and confessed, ‘You have no idea how lucky I feel, Max. How you make me feel. I love you so much.’

‘I…’ Max breathed, lost for words. What could she possibly say to that? Mark was far too skilled at saying the right thing, whereas she always struggled to find proper words. Whatever she’d come up with right now would undoubtedly sound childish and so insignificant in comparison. Besides, she couldn’t quite comprehend how and why she’d found herself here, by this man’s side, and how in the world was she making him so happy.

Say something, dummy!

‘I–I–I don’t know what to say, Mark,’ she stammered. ‘I mean… You use so many incredible words, and I’m just me, I–I don’t know how to tell you how amazing you make me feel.’ But she was going to try anyway, finding encouragement in that unwavering smile on his face, sprinkled with a bit of amusement too. ‘No one’s made me this happy, ever. And I don’t think anyone ever will again. I never thought I was any special— I still don’t. I mean, look at me, I’m so…normal, I–’

‘You are a brilliant, beautiful, young woman,’ Mark countered, cutting her off. ‘The most fascinating woman I’ve met in my life. How could I not say all these things? I don’t even think any words could do you justice.’

Max smiled, dropped her sight, and breathed out a laughter. ‘See?’ she continued, looking up at him again. ‘Whatever you say about me sounds…so wonderful.’ She took a deep breath and exhaled through her nose. ‘I feel…cared for when I’m with you. Entertained by whatever we do together. I learn so much from you. About everything. Literally. And you make me feel…loved.’

‘Because I do love you.’

‘I love you too.’

Joining in slow kisses, they closed their eyes and let the passion lead them. Swiftly moving her
around, Mark kept gently pushing her towards the sofa, step by step, until there was that lovely astonishment coloring her features when she realized they weren’t by the table anymore.

Returning the favor, she pushed him to sit down now, sat astride him, and resumed their fervid kiss. She continuously dug her fingers into his skin through his shirt, again and again, until she finally began to button it down. The familiar blazing skin met her fingertips, allowing her to explore all over his bare torso.

Intensifying the kiss, as though to compete with her, he slowly skimmed his palms up her thighs, sending warmth and shivers all around her soft skin, then slid them up her dress, gliding up and up, brushing against her breasts for but a moment as well, until he arrived at the top and rendered her semi-nude. Max lifted her pelvis up and brought herself closer to his abdomen, getting a hold of his head and etching her fingers in his hair. He hummed into the kiss with contentment, wrapping his hands around her bottom and pressing her tummy closer to his stomach.

Soon, though, she pulled away and grinned at him with excitement before getting up. Without breaking their stare, she slowly kneeled in front of him. He reciprocated her smile with an apparent anticipation, and leaned in to kiss her once more. She was eagerly kissing him back, all the while her hands found his belt, and she hurriedly unbuckled it, pulling his suit pants down only so slightly. With one hand in his hair and the other rubbing over his underwear, they were still kissing lustfully, tongues entwining and tasting one another.

Max eventually broke away, flashed a bit of a smirk, and pulled down his underwear. She readjusted her position to get more comfortable and wrapped her tiny palm around his cock, leaving wet kisses on his lower abdomen and by the base to tease him. She didn’t even realize how much power she held over him in those moments.

Looking up at him, she finally let him fill her mouth.

‘Ah, baby…’ he whispered, ending his utterance in a delighted moan, smiling widely right at her and caressing the side of her gentle face; her cheeks dressed in the gorgeous red which suited her so much.

Her radiant eyes met his, joy and pride behind those beautiful, blue irises, and she simply continued to bring in the delicious pleasure with that pretty, little mouth of hers, helping herself with that warm tongue, her palms grazing his surface; up and down, up and down... It all was driving him insane, and he absolutely adored it.

She listened intently to his deep moans with her eyes closed, relishing in that wonderful sound and thinking of the many times his lips and tongue had returned the favor with as much dedication.

His heat was rising, and he was focusing on it; thinking it was all but a part of the foreplay, yet the more intensely she sucked on him, the easier it was to just surrender to it and lose himself in it. Eventually, he reached out and hugged her delicate cheeks with his hands, gazing into her eyes with passion and his lips parted; gasping and breathing out with a moan.

Max deepened her thrusts now, speeding up and setting his senses on fire. She was running her mouth up and down his length as much as she was able to; up and down, up and down went those soft lips and hot tongue, humming and moaning with his cock inside her mouth. Mark couldn’t possibly restrain his gasps and moans right now; he was panting heavily and squeezing her head in passion as the pulsating sensation began to surface.

She knew his fulfillment was due soon, feeling her own heat burn between her thighs. With the last few intense pulls of her mouth, she brought him to his peak; a wave of pure warmth and tingling
tangible all over his length.

‘Ah, Max…’ he moaned softly and fell onto the backrest, overcome by her.

She carefully drank up his release with delight, still sucking on him to prolong his bliss.

Resting her face on his inner thigh and watching the euphoria on his face as he slowly came to his senses, she couldn’t help but grin and be proud of herself. If being weak with words was rewarded to her this way, she wasn’t going to complain. For the time being, it seemed she’d left him speechless anyway. She closed her eyes and kept brushing her fingertips against his other thigh. Soon, she felt his fingers do the same thing to her hair, thus she looked up at him, and saw admiration and satisfaction in his eyes.

‘Come here, you,’ Mark said, pulling her up by the arms. Max grinned and all but climbed up him again, sitting astride his hips and rejoining in a passionate kiss. ‘Hmm, how are you so perfect?’ he murmured against her lips.

Max didn’t reply, just smiled and continued to kiss him, beginning to grind his hips against his and enticing his excitement anew. In return, he was skimming his fingertips from her thigh, around her pretty, little bum, up her back and down again, tickling and teasing her delicate skin. Her nipples hardened with each repeated brush of their chests, and he oh so enjoyed the way they felt against his skin.

Not being able to withstand this torture any longer, Mark swept her panties to the side and slid inside her, this time he making her moan.

‘Oh, you are already so wet for me, Max,’ he murmured into her ear. She responded with another lovely, kinky-sounding moan, and it was all he needed.

She was slowly moving on top of him, her lips hungry for his, increasing the speed beat by beat. In no time, she was riding him with fervor, panting and letting out those amazing, high-pitched moans. Mark kept gazing into her lustful eyes with desire whenever he could, helping her maneuver her hips and humming under his breath.

Then suddenly, fireworks started to explode outside.

Slowing down, Max glanced over her shoulder and then faced Mark again. ‘It’s midnight already?’ she asked. Indeed, time flew by in seconds once more. But finishing the old year and starting the new one in this way was such a wonderful coincidence.

‘Apparently so,’ he said, having a quick glimpse as well. ‘Happy new year, sweetness.’ He offered her a dreamy smile and cupped the side of her face.

‘Happy new year, baby,’ she replied, half-giggling, and gave into his languid, deep kisses.

Mark filled her again and again, caressing the skin on her neck and pulling her on top of himself; delighting in the sensation of moving within her tightness. Max surrendered to the pace and force he set up, getting lost in the shivers and the warmth as it kept mounting higher and higher.

Her loud, elated moans echoed throughout the house as his precise thrusts brought her to climax.

Wednesday, January 1, 2014
Max abruptly got up and immediately regretted being awake, feeling her head pound as though her brain was to explode out of her skull. She squeezed her eyes shut, attempting to fight off the ache for but a second.

A tiny bit eased, she looked around and her eyes landed on Mark, who lay beside her on his stomach in quite a messy and slightly comical way – covered somewhat with sheets, with only his behind sticking out a little, mouth opened and snoring silently. Even though he was wearing his underwear, Max still covered him up, and then finally looked down at her own body, realizing she too was only dressed in her panties. The two of them must have slept like that the entire night. She couldn’t remember how they’d got there, though.

She glanced at the bedside clock – 11:42am.

Carefully, so as not to rouse Mark, she got out of the bed and headed for the bathroom. Once in, she opened the faucet and drank cold water straight out of it, feeling massively hungover. Having a quick glimpse of her reflection the mirror, she gaped – her eye makeup was all over her face. She resembled a character from a horror movie rather than an actual human.

‘Oh, wow…’ she murmured.

‘Max?’ Mark’s muffled voice called out to her from the bedroom. ‘Baby?’

‘I’m in the bathroom!’ she shouted back. ‘Aw, fuck…my head…’

‘Oh. Good,’ he grunted. ‘Can I come in?’

‘Yeah.’

He rushed in and did the exact same thing she'd done just a few second ago – he frantically lapped up the refreshing, cold water, groaning in pleasure as he finished. ‘We partied super hard last night,’ he said and cleared his slightly sore throat. ‘Way too hard.’

‘Yeah. My head is pounding,’ she added.

‘Mine too. I honestly regret being alive right now. And hello there, zombie face,’ he said as he noticed her smeared makeup, sounding and looking amused.

She giggled lightly, then caught her head in pain. ‘Ouch. Shouldn’t laugh.’

‘Okay,’ he started, rubbing his face. ‘We need, uh…lots of cold water, lots of coffee and definitely–’

He tried to gather his thoughts with a focused frown. ‘–definitely some painkillers.’

‘Oh, yes. And some greasy, greasy food.’

‘Yeeees! You’re a genius,’ he exclaimed. ‘Fuck, ouch. Way too intense.’

Max giggled lightly at his demeanor, only frowning a bit as her headache rang again. ‘Now, be honest with me,’ she started her question. ‘Do you wanna throw up?’

‘Not…yet,’ he replied, gawking ahead, sending her an amusing look and holding himself by the stomach. ‘Give it time, though.’

‘Do you remember what happened after midnight?’ she asked. ‘I have a very vague memory of what followed our little happy ending.’

Mark flashed a smirk, albeit a tired one. ‘Wine, wine…and wine. Oh, and champagne. We were
feeling pretty content otherwise.’

Max smiled. ‘Right.’

‘Okay. I’ll order the food so it’ll be on its way while we make ourselves presentable,’ he proposed.

‘Sure thing. Can I shower first? I’ll make us coffee,’ she counter-offered.

‘Mhm. Deal.’

Almost ready for breakfast, Max bustled about in the kitchen, preparing coffee as agreed, filling tall glasses with copious amounts of water, and looking for painkillers in the kitchen units. Mark was still upstairs, getting dressed.

The bell rang and Max headed to open the front door.

She was just about to carelessly pull the knob and open the door, but some unknown sixth sense told her to look through the peephole, and, well…

Warren?! What in the hell is he doing here?!

Behind the door, there was her friend, holding the ordered food in his hands and waiting for the host of the house to open up. It appeared that he had taken up this gig as his part-time job. Max had no idea about it.

Warren rang again. ‘Baby? Can you get this?’ Mark called out from upstairs.

Max run up a couple of stairs and whisper-shouted, ‘I can’t! It’s Warren!’

‘Huh?’ Mark’s head emerged from behind the wooden railing, and his astonished expression followed suit. ‘How in the hell?’

‘Well, apparently he’s a delivery boy, duh! Come down here and get that!’

‘Yeah, okay, I’m coming.’

Mark quickly dashed down the stairs, buttoning his shirt up, and then headed to get the delivery. Max all but scampered away to the kitchen, and was obviously going to eavesdrop on the conversation.

‘Oh, hi, Mr. Jefferson,’ Warren said, sounding surprised, to say the least. There was a rustling of foil and paper, presumably originating from their order.

‘Hello, um…William?’ Mark replied. ‘No, hold on… Err…Warren, right? Sorry.’

Max sighed and rolled her eyes. Oh, like he doesn’t know his name.

‘Yeah. It’s alright.’

‘So, no partying for you this year?’

‘Um, no. I couldn’t get home for the break anyway, so I figured I’d at least make some extra cash instead.’
Mark paused. ‘Right. That’s smart. How much do I owe ya?’

‘It’ll be $20.50.’

‘Here. Keep the change.’

‘Wow…’ Warren breathed. ‘Thank you so much, Mr. Jefferson.’

‘Don’t mention it. Happy new year, Warren.’

‘Happy new year to you too, sir.’

With that, Mark closed the door and joined Max back in the kitchen.

‘William? Seriously?’ Max asked, crossing her arms, although appearing amused rather than actually angry. ‘That was kinda mean.’

‘Aw, come on. I had to.’ Mark waved it off somewhat, placing the food on the island. ‘Maybe this will console you – I just felt like a total jackass for making fun of him after he made it sound like money’s tight at home. I know that feeling all too well.’

Max nodded. ‘So, how much did you give him?’

‘I don’t kiss and tell, Max,’ he replied evasively, readjusting his glasses on the bridge of his nose and shooting a tiny glare in her direction. Bragging about gifting the boy that hundred-dollar bill wouldn’t sit well with him. ‘Let’s just say I was generous. I bet he’ll tell you all about it when you two see each other at school anyway.’

‘Right. Sorry for being so goddamn nosy,’ she mumbled, sounding repentant.

‘It’s fine, sweetness.’

‘But you–’ Max approached him and wrapped her arms around his waist, looking up at him with those big, wide eyes; so adorable. ‘–you are very sweet. Thank you for doing that.’

Mark embraced her and smiled down at her. ‘It’s not that big a deal.’

‘Still. I didn’t even know he was struggling with money. I should probably pay more attention to my friends before it’s too late or something.’

‘I’m sure it won’t be.’ He placed an affectionate kiss on her forehead. ‘Okay, let me wash my hands, and then we’ll finally eat, huh?’

‘Alright.’

Consuming the delicious junk food and hydrating throughout the lazy afternoon, they were now cuddling on the sofa and watching a movie. Mark brought the volume down as much as possible, considering their headaches weren’t gone quite yet. They both felt rather drained of energy, paying little to no attention to the plot of the film.

‘I can’t believe how close we were,’ Max said, shaking her head in disbelief. One careless mistake could have led to some dire consequences. ‘We would’ve totally been caught. And you would’ve been rightfully mad at me for getting you fired.’
She didn’t think Warren was a vindictive person. It’d certainly be possible to ask him not to say anything, but... what if finding out about her and Mark broke Warren’s heart? The boy had a crush on her after all... And what if he lost all respect for her? There was nothing admirable about having an affair with one’s professor, and Max would be lying to herself if she said she was proud of that. Yes, she loved Mark and he loved her, but these circumstances were far from ideal.

Mark sighed and chuckled. ‘No, I wouldn’t’ve. Relax, baby,’ he soothed, embracing her a tiny bit tighter. ‘No need to be so paranoid. Nothing actually happened, so don’t worry.’

‘Yeah, but... I just hope this isn’t some... bad omen,’ Max drawled. That certainly seemed like one, seeing as this was the very first day of the new year. Not a perfect start.

‘I’m sure it isn’t,’ Mark countered, attempting to ease her fears. He delicately kissed her on the temple. ‘We’re going to be fine.’
PART TWELVE — SAFE HAVEN

Friday, January 3, 2014

The new year had barely begun, and yet Max found herself feeling pretty good about it already. She and Mark were falling in love more and more—as usual—and everything was so perfect. Despite that one “bad break” in the form of Warren Graham, which had almost ruined everything—or perhaps because they’d been able to avert it—they were feeling rather invincible. For the time being, nothing and no one seemed to be in the way of their happiness. Right now, they were entirely secure, secluded from the outside world inside Mark’s bedroom—their little safe haven.

Max slowly roused, wrapped in grey sheets and Mark’s warm, loose embrace. It must’ve been really early in the morning, as the sun hadn’t started to light up the world. Mark was still sound asleep, his chest moving calmly up and down and lulling Max back to sleep. She closed her eyes and gently mushed her face into his hot skin. As sleep slowly overcame her mind anew, she was thinking of what the new year could bring into her life. Sharing more blissful moments with Mark? Embarking on new photography adventures? Or both?

A few hours passed, and the first couple of faint rays of sunshine fell right onto Max’s face, this time it waking her up more decisively. She squirmed in Mark’s arms, snuggling up even deeper into him, which prompted him to wake up as well.

‘Mm, hi,’ he quietly muttered into her ear. He drew in a deeper breath, and left a tiny kiss on her forehead. ‘How’d you sleep?’

‘Why, hello, lover,’ she replied humorously, making him chuckle. ‘I feel like I’ve slept for years. Your arms are really comfortable.’

‘Hmm, right back at you,’ Mark half-laughed, his voice still quite raspy. ‘And you dozed off on me pretty quickly last night.’

‘Well, you basically fucked me into a coma,’ Max retorted, again amusing Mark to the point of laughing, his chest shaking beneath her head.

‘I did. Ha,’ he replied when he finally eased, delicately running his fingertips up and down her arm.
‘Not that I’m complaining, but you’re going to be the end of me if you keep going like that.’

Mark cocked his eyebrow and teased, ‘I intend on doing so.’

Max rose and pulled herself up, eventually sitting astride him. ‘Oh, you do, you bad man?’

‘Mhm. I’m afraid there’s not much you can do but surrender. I always get what I want,’ he jested back, and gently tickled her sides. She squealed, lightly patting his hands away.

‘Stop! Stop!’ she pleaded, giggling and whimpering. ‘I give up! I give up!’

Mark took his hands away and pulled her down for a kiss, smiling widely against her lips. ‘See? Told you,’ he said, flashing a smug smirk.

‘Cause you’re evil,’ she shot back, and kissed him again.

‘Mm, alright. Maybe a little.’

Max straightened up again, allowing Mark to stare at the beautiful porcelain of her body. Each part of that silk surface was perfect in his eyes, and he could never get enough of that image. She noticed that wonder behind his gaze and blushed, dropping her sight.

Mark frowned. ‘Am I making you uncomfortable?’

Max briefly locked eyes with him, shook her head, and answered, ‘No, of course not. Not at all. But…I guess it’s just…intimidating when you look at me like that.’

He frowned again. ‘Huh? Why?’

‘Because I’m just…normal.’

Mark sent her an amused, slightly baffled look. ‘Your body is nothing but perfection. No matter what you might think,’ he said, smiling at her. He slowly skimmed his hand up her torso to cup her breast, his thumb delicately stroking her nipple. ‘This? Art.’

His hand then trailed off to her tummy, gently caressing it. ‘Art.’

He slid it further down and teased her by tickling her mons, making her flutter her eyes shut with a delighted sigh as he sent hundreds of shivers down her soft skin. ‘Art,’ he whispered.

Max opened her eyes and stared into his with awe.

‘And I can’t not admire art, can I?’ Mark concluded, triumphantly arching his eyebrow at her with a pretend-scolding look.

She rolled her eyes and attempted to stop herself from grinning, but failed. ‘I guess you can’t. But you’re still way hotter.’

‘I disagree,’ he retorted, pulling her down for another tender kiss. ‘Art.’

‘Alright,’ she said, snorting a little.

‘Good girl,’ he murmured. ‘So, what do you say we…take a road trip to Portland today, huh? Savor the last of our free time?’

Max offered him an astonished expression, but there was happiness hiding beneath it. ‘Really? I’d
‘Mhm. I would love to take you out on a real date,’ he said, running his fingers down and up her sternum, between her breasts, down to her abdomen, and up to her jaw; all the while gazing at her with that same wonder in his eyes. ‘We could go and visit a gallery, maybe see a movie? I might even say yes to you playing that alt-J album you love so much.’

‘That’s very sweet of you, but… I don’t have that CD with me.’

Mark smirked. ‘But I do.’

‘Well, then I’d love all that, too,’ she replied, smiling at him and relishing in those pleasurable shivers he was gifting to her. She leaned in to gently kiss him. ‘We should clean ourselves up then.’

‘Alright, you go first. I’ll do something with the mess.’ Mark gestured to the scattered clothes on the floor and their messy bed.

‘Okay,’ she concurred, and got off him.

He watched her walk away from him to the bathroom, admiring the art.

Max stood in front of the tall bathroom mirror, examining her body. She wanted to see what amazed Mark so much. She didn’t think she was unattractive, but to her, she looked pretty average. Kind of skinny limbs, small but somewhat full breasts, and clear, ivory skin. She turned around to see her back and bum. Everything was just…normal. Standard. Nothing to lose one’s head over.

And yet, Mark did. Maybe it was about the simplicity of her looks? But how come someone as stunningly looking as Mark could think that someone like her was perfect? “Art”? None of that made sense to her.

‘Ugh, okay… nevermind,’ she muttered to herself, shrugging off her worries. She hopped into the shower cabin, letting the water slowly warm her up, and used Mark’s shower gel instead of her own, which she had in here as a spare. Somehow, soaking herself in his scent made her feel more attractive.

When she came back to the bedroom, everything was cleaned up, though the sheets definitely appeared used. Max smiled at the sight.

A light sound of a whirring water was coming from downstairs, which signalized that Mark was taking a shower in that bathroom, perhaps having gotten too impatient to wait for her to free up this one.

With her thoughts somewhere far distant, Max patted her skin with a towel to let it dry completely. Having absentmindedly dropped the towel to the floor, she walked over to the armchair by the window, where she found her clothes. Most of them were addle and needed to be washed already, but she managed to find thin leggings, a skirt and a sleeveless top to wear.

‘Hey,’ Mark’s voice suddenly rang behind her, startling her a bit. ‘Nice outfit,’ he said, grinning at her.

Max quickly remembered she was still entirely nude, and blushed. Though it did help that Mark was barely dressed himself, wearing only a large, white towel knotted around his waist. ‘Well, thank you,’ she chuckled. ‘I’m in a bit of a dilemma.’

‘How so?’ He looked at her quizzically, and picked up her towel from the floor.
‘Most of my clothes are useless, that red dress you gave me is too,’ she explained. ‘I don’t exactly have anything to wear for the gallery, and I can only wear these—’ She gestured to the clothing she picked up. ‘— for the trip itself.’

‘Right, you do need something more fancy.’ Mark’s face then assumed that smug smirk of his, and it meant he was up to something. ‘Now, I think you’re going to be pretty happy with me, because…’

He went up to the closet, and pulled out her peach dress, neatly resting on a hanger. The same one she’d worn to the Everyday Heroes party. ‘I kind of stole it when you sneaked out to the bathroom. You really shouldn’t leave me alone. But, I figured you looked so stunning in it, why not wear it again, huh?’ he proposed, and hanged the dress on the knob of the closet.

Max’s face turned from surprised to awed. ‘You’re a lifesaver!’ she exclaimed, running up to him and jumping into his arms, legs astride his waist. He held her firmly, heading for the bed.

‘How are you going to thank me?’ he asked enticingly, falling to the bed on top of her.

‘Oh, I don’t know…’ She moaned slightly, responding to his lips teasing the skin on her neck. Feeling playful, she pulled his towel down, revealing him as a result. ‘Now, that’s art,’ she joked, and giggled adorably.

‘Oh, you are such a bad girl,’ he retorted with a chuckle, pinning her wrists to the bed, and ran his teeth down her neck, teasing her further and eliciting a squeal. ‘I’m so going to punish you.’

‘Hm, I’m counting on it.’

‘I bet you do,’ he murmured into her ear.

It was difficult to separate these two. The cute banter turned into yet another make-out session, colored with tickling and even more playful caresses.

‘Mhmmm, but if we keep doing this, we’re never getting to Portland,’ Max remarked, lightly scratching Mark’s back.

‘You’re right,’ he concurred, breaking away. He gave her one final smooch. ‘Let’s get dressed. However saddening that may be,’ he joked, to which she laughed lightly.

Mark got out of bed and strode over to the closet again. ‘By the way, I have the matching shoes too.’

‘Oh, that’s good. My sneakers would definitely feel out of place with that dress. Or a little bit hipster...ish? Anyway, thank you.’

‘You’re welcome.’ Mark then pulled out one of his white shirts and offered it to Max. ‘Here, you can wear this for now.’

Max smiled, biting down on her lip, quite excited at the prospect of wearing her man’s shirt after such a passionate night. That was definitely a dream come true. She joined him by the closet and enrobed the shirt with his help. She then went up to the mirror and examined the new look. And just as always, Mark regarded her with wonder.

‘Stunning,’ he praised.

She grinned back at him and bit down on her index finger, unable and not trying to contain her joy. ‘Yeah, I love it.’
‘It’s so unfair that you get to be fully dressed,’ Max said with a pretend-reproach in her voice, pouting. She took her usual seat by the kitchen island and waited for her breakfast.

‘It is what it is, my darling,’ Mark replied, turning around and handing her a plate with a heap of pancakes. ‘It’s not my fault you look your best wearing close to nothing.’ He shrugged.

Max glowered at him, albeit with a smirk on her lips. ‘Nicely arranged, Mr. Jefferson.’ She then proceeded with having a bite of the meal. ‘Damn, these are so good!’

‘Ah, thank you,’ Mark said, waving it off. ‘It’s like I’m not even trying.’

Max cracked up giggling at his silly demeanor.

He soon sat next to her, starting his breakfast as well. ‘Damn, I really am that good,’ he concurred, chewing on his first bite.

Max briefly rested her head on his shoulder, feeling blissfully calm in his presence. ‘How far away is Portland, by the way?’ she asked after a few quiet moments as she faced him again.

‘Eh, just under ninety miles, I think.’ Mark shrugged and slid another piece into his mouth.

Max narrowed her eyes, studying him. ‘You’re in a funny mood today. So…carefree,’ she remarked.

‘New year, new me?’ Mark jested. ‘Seriously, though, I’m just really, really happy, Ms. Caulfield,’ he responded, offering her a dreamy smile; one that she could never resist.

Max leaned in and kissed him softly, his lips tasting of the dark, slightly bitter chocolate with which he had covered his pancakes. ‘Somehow these Mr.’s and Misses sound very dirty in our mouths,’ she said.

‘Aren’t we, though?’ Mark cocked his eyebrow at her, making her chuckle.

Max hummed affirmatively and nodded. ‘That we are.’

‘Alright, I gotta get dressed,’ Max announced after breakfast. She began to head upstairs, then suddenly stopped in the middle. ‘Shit! I don’t have any underwear.’

‘You’re not going to need it,’ Mark stated frivolously.

Max snorted. ‘Oh yeah, I bet.’ She dashed back down the stairs. ‘No, seriously, I need it. We’re gonna have to swing by the dorms.’

‘Okay, okay,’ he remitted, coming up to her and taking her hand. ‘Come on.’

He escorted her from the staircase and into the living room. Lying on the dining table, there was a medium-sized, black box, wrapped with a white band and ornamented with a matching ribbon on top. ‘Open it,’ he coaxed.

Attempting to hide her excited smile, Max pulled by the edge of the ribbon, causing the band to slide off the box. She then removed the lid and peered inside. There were two sets of very delicate, lacy lingerie—one pearl white, another crimson; a bralette and a matching pair of panties in each set. It all appeared to be and definitely was luxurious.
Max looked to Mark, who was flashing that smug smirk of his right now. ‘Mark… I can buy my own underwear. You didn’t have to do that.’

Mark simply rolled his eyes. He enjoyed gifting her various items, and once in a while, the least she could do was simply to say Thank you with no further objections. ‘I don’t doubt it, but see, these are not actually for you, not per se,’ he murmured into her ear, embracing her from behind and teasing her neck with tiny kisses.

Max put her hands to his arms, humming with contentment. ‘Okay then,’ she conceded. ‘Thank you, sweet man.’ She turned back a bit and gave him a little smooch, then relieved herself from his embrace, grabbed the white set, and went upstairs to get dressed.

She enrobed the clothing she’d previously picked up, took out the dress and shoes she was supposed to bring along on the trip, and started to head for the door, but she noticed the closet was still open, thus she stopped to shut its door.

When she approached it, though, she also noticed there was a wooden box at the bottom, sort of resembling a small chest or case—somewhere one might put valuable items. It couldn’t have been bigger than a typical box of shoes, and had an aura of an old mystery. Against her own better judgement, Max’s curiosity got the best of her, and she crouched down before the chest. Carefully, she open it, surprised that it wasn’t locked. She wasn’t entirely sure what she’d find there, not even the nature of it, but she certainly wasn’t prepared for what was actually hiding inside.

Just photographs, a dozen or so, most likely taken with an analog camera, judging by the look of it.

The first photograph Max picked up pictured a beautiful, young woman, standing under one of those gorgeously pink sakura trees and squinting her eyes because of the blinding sunlight. She had long, straight, dark brown hair and from what Max could tell, dark brown eyes as well. In the next photograph, there was the same woman, but in a domestic setting, sitting in an armchair and holding a little baby in her arms.

Aww, is that his little nephew? Or niece?

Picture after picture, the baby grew from an infant up to about a two-year-old toddler. An adorable, little girl. Some of those photographs featured Mark as well, sometimes carrying the child in his arms, sometimes there was a smiling, middle-aged woman—presumably Mark’s mother—and sometimes…it was together with that same dark-haired woman from the first picture. She and Mark were embracing. Like a couple might. And Max couldn’t help but notice there weren’t any pictures with or of the nephew or the brother or the sister-in-law, as much as she was able to tell. No one but the two women and the baby, which she found odd.

Then it struck Max. It was becoming all too clear now. The woman in the photograph definitely wasn’t his sister-in-law. And the child… the child must’ve been Mark’s.

Meanwhile, Mark himself, completely unaware of Max’s little research, cleaned up in the kitchen, and packed the last necessary items for their road trip—including the red set of that lacy lingerie. He felt so happy at the prospect of spending the day a bit more differently than just secluded in their little safe haven. To show Max a bit of the world, slowly but surely, was one of the things he enjoyed the most.

Max perused through the pictures with a racing heart and a numbing disbelief. Mark… had a child. A child who now was probably even older than two. A child he’d never told her about. A child he’d said he’d never even had.
‘And you don’t want that?’ Max recalled her conversation with Mark the first time she’d stayed at his place for the weekend.

‘It’s not that, it’s just…never happened for me,’ he’d said, loud and clear. No hesitation. No eye twitch. No nothing. Just a spectacular liar.

So, was everything they’d shared so far just a lie then? Why would he hide from her such a vital fact about his life? Did that mean he had a family somewhere out there that he’d conveniently forgotten to mention? Was Max just a plaything for him to enjoy? And besides, how the hell did no one in the world know that the famous Mark Jefferson had an offspring?

Max didn’t notice her own tears until a couple of them fell onto the picture she was holding in her hands right now, snapping her out of her shock.

‘Shit,’ she cursed in a whisper, quickly wiping the tears off the surface. She hid the photographs back where they belonged, shutting the small chest and the closet behind. She took a couple of steps back, as though she wanted to distance herself from the discovery.

What the fuck do I do now? Max panicked. As much as she’d liked to, as much as she probably should, she couldn’t confront Mark about her findings. Not with that teary face of hers. Not to mention, she could only imagine how angry he’d be at her if she knew she’d just gone through his personal items, ones that he clearly had chosen not to share with her. If there was one thing about Mark that she did know for certain was that he valued his privacy.

‘Max, baby? Are you ready yet?’ he suddenly called out from downstairs, startling Max.

‘Fuck,’ she quietly cursed again. She drew a deep breath before she spoke. ‘Um, nope, I, uh… I gotta go to the bathroom!’ she shouted back, trying her best to mask the hurt in her voice.

‘Oh, it’s okay. I’ll wait.’

‘Thanks. I should be out in a few.’

‘Take your time, sweetness.’

Max closed her eyes as she heard that. That word… that lovely word hurt now. It sounded so…insincere.

She locked herself inside the bathroom, and rested on the shut toilet seat, unable to stop her tears from rolling down.

He fucking lied to me.

And what if it wasn’t the first time he’d done so? How many secrets was Mark Jefferson really holding back? There was that unexplained scar on his wrist and a mysterious, “accidental” overdose. What had really happened to him then? What else had he done? How many women had been there before Max? Who was this one? Who was the child? Perhaps the family he had come to visit over Christmas was a lie as well. In no time, Mark was going to go back to that woman and his child for good, leaving Max once he got bored with her; she was so sure of it right now.

Does he even really love me? Did he ever?

The agonizing realization struck at Max with a terrible knot inside her throat, and a burning ache in her chest. It was turning more and more difficult to muffle her cries, which soon turned into uncontrollable sobs. Everything hurt and nothing was fine.
Several minutes passed, and it was all becoming *unbearable*.

Perhaps it was a defense mechanism, or a terrifying thought that she was going to lose Mark, but her mind was now trying its best to come up with an explanation. *Anything* would be better than this.

*Maybe it’s just…a huge misunderstanding. God, I hope so. This isn’t true… It can’t be true.*

As much as she was in despair right now, Max didn’t want to—she *could not* let herself lose Mark. She’d never been this happy. She’d never felt loved like *this*. Would she ever find a love like this again?

Sniffling and choking on her tears, she begged fate to make it all go away. Her own stupid nosiness had only caused trouble again. She should’ve never gone through Mark’s stuff. She wanted to forget she’d found the photographs. If only she had the power to rewind time…

*Okay, pull yourself together, Max. You can’t show yourself to him looking like this. Stop it, right now,* she ordered herself.

Breathing in and out, she began to calm down.

In and out.

In and out…

Next, she stood up and walked over to the sink. Helping herself with cool water, she washed her face until the redness from her eyes seemed to have gone away, at least for the most part.

‘Okay,’ she spoke quietly to her own reflection in the mirror. ‘Everything’s fine. You’re fine. You’re just gonna go back downstairs, you and Mark are gonna go on that trip, you’re gonna have fun like you planned, and everything will be forgotten before you know it.’

To keep up the appearances, she flushed the toilet and washed her hands. With that, she exited the bathroom, grabbed her cellphone from the nightstand, the dress and the shoes along, and joined Mark downstairs; he was already waiting for her by the stairs. She hanged her clothing on the wooden railing and set the shoes down on the last step of the staircase.

‘Hey, you okay?’ Mark asked with concern. Max looked pale and seemed a bit…off. ‘You were up there for quite a while. Is your stomach bothering you?’

‘No, everything’s fine, I just had to, uh…you know.’

Mark nodded knowingly. He approached her, gently cupped her face and stroked her cheek with care. ‘Are you sure that’s all it is, baby?’ he asked again, just be certain. ‘Your eyes look sort of glassy, and even your cheeks are warm. I hope you’re not getting sick.’

‘Mhm, I’m fine. I’m sure,’ she mumbled and hid her face in his chest, the same recognizable warmth and heartbeat, embracing him firmly with her arms. He requited it, snuggling her closer and caressing the side of her face, just what she’d come to adore. Without her even properly noticing, he began to rock her in his arms. She breathed in his scent, and it was as though everything what was wrong just…vanished.

‘I love you,’ she said quietly, clutching to the fabric of the shirt on his back.

‘Hm, I love you too,’ Mark soothed, that same familiar, calming sound of his voice. He left a soft kiss on her the temple, and Max squeezed him tighter in return.
Mark was hers. He was the love of her life. She was never going to be fine in anybody else’s arms. Whatever the truth was, there was no way she was going to give him up like that. No way.

The car ride was a bit calmer than what Mark had imagined it to be, but he and Max were conversing just as normally as always, and that alt-J album which had been promised was keeping them company, thus he didn’t even think anything troubled her mind. He certainly didn’t suspect she’d found out about that of all things.

Max was now fiddling with her phone, once in a while unlocking it and staring at the background picture—a selfie of herself in Mark’s arms. The way he looked at her in that photograph—with love, admiration and wonder in his eyes, as though she was the dearest thing in the world to him—couldn’t possibly be fabricated.

...Right?

‘So, your tummy’s fine, baby?’ he asked one final time.

‘Hm?’ Max sobered up to reality, looking up at him from the screen. ‘Oh, yes. No issues,’ she responded with a smile, and patted her belly as though to definitely drive the point home. ‘I don’t think I drank enough water yesterday, probably why.’

‘I see. That’s good.’ Mark’s eyes left the road for a split second to catch a glimpse of Max. ‘But are you sure you’re okay? You’ve gone silent and you keep glancing at your phone. What’s so interesting in there?’

‘I’m just looking at this picture of us.’ She lifted the phone in her hand to show it to him, though he couldn’t give it a proper look. ‘We look so happy together,’ she added wistfully.

Mark frowned. ‘We are happy together.’

‘Yes, uh… that’s what I meant.’

Mark nodded, albeit Max’s behavior definitely seemed off. ‘I see. Well, uh…we should be in Portland in about an hour. Would you like to stop for a bathroom break maybe?’

‘Uh…’ There was a longer pause before she responded, and only the hum of the engine present in the air. ‘No need,’ Max finally replied. ‘Not for that,’ she added frivolously, giggling at the end.

Mark smirked. ‘Oh, really?’

‘Mhm.’ Max slowly slid her hand up her skirt, staring at him with an enticing grin and removing the leggings beat by beat.

‘And it can’t wait until we get to the hotel?’

‘Nuh-huh.’

Mark continued to drive for a little while, eventually pulling over a little more than a mile later, and a little bit further than just the side of the road—into a nearby forest. They were now secluded in a tiny circle comprised of dense bushes and trees, allowing for the intimate moment to begin.

♫ “Fitzpleasure” – alt-J

‘Come here, you little tease.’ He pulled Max onto his lap, making her giggle in excitement.
He was kissing her eagerly, his hands slowly slipping up her skirt, tracing a tickling path from her thighs to her bottom. He gripped it steadily, she intensifying the kiss, her tiny hands trailing off lower, pulling out his shirt and unbuckling his belt.

Mark couldn’t complain at this turn of events, matching Max’s passion to the best of his abilities, although she seemed far more determined than usual; her kisses were haste, hard, deep. There was a newfound kind of ardent urgency in her, as though she had to have him right here, right now; as though she was possessive of him.

‘You know,’ Max started between kisses, ‘it was a really good idea to get a car with tinted windows.’

‘I know what I’m about,’ Mark concurred with a smug grin. Struggling to remove her top, he groaned, ‘Get this little blouse out of the way.’

‘Just pull it down,’ Max breathed, hurriedly unbuttoning his shirt in return.

Mark did as she ordered, soon wrapping his palms around her breasts—still clothed and covered by the white, see-through bralette he’d gifted her this morning—and squeezing in passion. She moaned and kissed him harder, overwhelmed by her own want.

He traced his fingertips over her nipples, delicately circling around them, and as they eventually hardened against his touch and protruded beneath the fabric, he gazed at his creation and whispered, ‘Perfect.’

‘Why, thank you,’ Max replied, smiling widely at him. ‘You picked a good set.’

‘This is just a very nice bow on a very beautiful gift,’ he replied, trying not to laugh at his own pretentious statement. Max did giggle, though, and resumed their kiss.

Going in blind, Mark pulled the bralette down as well, and soon his lips followed a downward trail from her jaw, down her neck, until they reached those soft breasts of hers. His warm tongue circled around her nipples, causing her to moan quietly and gently exhale in pleasure. Mark knew the exact pace and intensity with which to please her, and she gave into the sensation for a few minutes, murmuring out quiet moans. Finally, he faced her again and smiled, lifting her in his arms and sweeping her panties to the side, brushing his index finger over her wet labia as he did so. She parted her lips and gasped, holding his lustful gaze as he gradually slid his hard, thick cock inside her moist, warm, tight cunt.

Both sighing with relief at first, she soon was riding him with such ferocity in her eyes and in her movements, completely taking Mark aback, yet the pleasure soaring through him was far too captivating for him to think of anything but his beautiful girlfriend on top of him. For better or worse, though, he didn’t know the worries which clouded her mind and made her so intent on keeping him as close as she could and all to herself. She then went to his left, and was now planting biting kisses on his neck, intertwining them with wet and tender ones, causing him to etch his fingers into her upper back in response to the rising pleasure.

Max began to ride him harder now, turning a bit aggressive in her approach, crashing her pelvis against his hips; finally eliciting a deep, delighted moan from her partner. She grinned at him, flashing pride and smugness in the expression she offered to him, something that was usually his specialty, and in return, she received a wide, half-astonished, half-happy smile. Slowing down a tiny bit, she leaned in to kiss him, feeling his hands slide lower and lock around her waist. Mark was kissing her back just as eagerly and gently moaning into her mouth.
The sound of their ragged breaths intensified; for the few following moments it was the only thing clearly audible in the midst of the alt-J record. They were gazing intensely into each other’s eyes, their mouths parted due to the shared pleasure. But then, unable to contain the delight, Max began to moan and dragged her nails up his torso, once again evoking the same reaction in Mark, who was simply getting lost in the moist goodness inside her. She was jumping on top of him, even though the muscles in her thighs must’ve been on the verge of giving up; and Mark was trying to match her, thrusting upwards, but she was so determined, relentless.

The pleasure rose higher, and even exhaustion couldn’t keep Max from stopping now. She riding him out until the end, Mark watched with awe as her face turned to euphoria, juices pouring out and giving way to his own climax as well. He pulled her in for a kiss, still moving his hips up until the delightful tingling, pulsating sensation burst forward and meshed with her arousal. Everything was so blissfully wet, and their elated moans sounded so lovely.

Max gradually slowed down until she stopped altogether, eventually getting off him, but resting on his lap. Giving him a tired, sloppy kiss first, she then nestled her forehead up against the crook of his neck, her arms made of out cotton. She really did feel exhausted, dizzy even, but wasn’t going to admit it to Mark. She was just so proud of herself for surprising and satisfying her man.

When they both finally regained their strengths, they faced each other again, kissing with joy, exchanging satisfied, happy gazes and smiles. ‘Mm, what has gotten into you?’ Mark queried, gliding his lips along her neck to the collarbone and back, planting wet kisses.

‘Nothing.’ Max sighed in response to the tickling pleasure. Feeling rather brave and proud of herself, despite the lingering dizziness, she simply said, ‘I wanted to fuck my man, so I did.’ She then flashed a wide grin, tilting her head to the right.

Mark raised his eyebrows and chuckled, quite surprised by that direct statement.

‘Besides, I also wanted to do it in your car. Can’t believe we hadn’t yet,’ she continued and kissed him. ‘You’re not complaining, are you?’

He brushed her bangs to the side and tenderly cupped her face. ‘I believe it would make me particularly stupid if I did.’

‘It would, wouldn’t it?’ She pointed her index finger at him, delicately drilling it into his bare sternum, and half-jokingly added, ‘I expect the same treatment later.’

Mark grinned at her, chuckling, and kissed her gently. ‘Oh, you are getting yours, babygirl, don’t worry,’

Max giggled and kissed him back once more. ‘Good.’

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