Brooklyn

by AmazySantiago

Summary

“So … let me get this straight. You dumped your coffee on her, stole my t-shirt, took her for golf and crappy pizza, and she still wants to date you?”

“Sal’s Pizza is not crappy, and you abandoned your t-shirt. Along with all of your other clothing, might I add. And yes. She still wants to date me.”

(A B99 AU where Jake and Amy meet in different circumstances.)

Notes

Ok, so this is only the second fic I’ve posted here. This will be multi-chapter, so stick with me! It’s a work in progress, but I wanted to write a love story about Jake & Amy that started out a little differently. So here I give you - Peraltiago AU, set in Brooklyn.
Chapter One - Coffee

On the day that she would meet the love of her life, Amy Santiago had been filled with conflicting emotions. It was a Friday, and she needed to make a decision.

Her life had reached a turning point - with her Art History major nearly completed, she had begun fielding the usual ‘what are you going to do now?’ questions from anyone and everyone.

Many generations ago, the Santiago family had begun a private investigation company, and over the years had garnered a high reputation as being the best within the sector. As the years passed on, more family members - brothers, cousins, aunts and sisters - had all joined the business and they all worked hard on maintaining that high standard. So there was a natural, unspoken assumption that when the time came, Amy too would join Santiago Investigations.

But secretly, she yearned for more. There was no doubt in her mind that the business would be good for her, and the cases her family had helped people solve over the years was nothing short of admirable. But her interest leaned more towards the NYPD, to the men and women that patrolled the streets - the first to run in when everyone else was running out. No one in her family had ever joined the force, favouring what they already knew, and there was a part of Amy that was quietly terrified of admitting her dream to join the academy. She was ambitious, a trait shared by all seven of her brothers, and her goal of one day wear a Police Captain’s uniform never seemed to fade.

Amy also knew that the topic of her love life would undoubtedly come up. With all of her brothers in established relationships, married or otherwise; she knew that her parent’s focus - namely her mother’s - would now rest solely on her. It wasn’t as though she didn’t date at all, of course she did … there just hadn’t been that spark. Dutifully accepting the blind dates that her mother Camilla kept setting her up on didn’t seem to be helping either. Last week’s date, for example, had been spectacularly awkward, and Amy knew that she had to draw the line with her mother before the options got even worse.

For now, she remained torn. Be the good, dutiful daughter and follow in her family’s footsteps? Or start her own trail, and potentially upset her parents?

It would be easier, sure, to join the family business and start dating a ‘nice young man’ that her mother approved of. But that wasn’t where her heart was calling - and starting either of those conversations, both of which pointed out her desire to do something completely different from her parent’s expectations, was something she had dreaded - and dodged - for far too long.

With the sole intention of distracting her mind from the task at hand, Amy had ventured out to East Williamsburg - to a small paper store tucked in between big name brands, holding it’s own purely on it’s popularity amongst Papyrophilia, her favourite of all the stationery blogs she frequented. There had been whispers amongst her fellow bloggers of new binders being released, and the rumours of the organisational tabs that came with them was enough to clear her schedule for the day and dive in deep.

It was several hours later before she left the store, triumphantly holding several shopping bags in her
hand when her phone rang with a tone she had set only for her mother. Inwardly groaning, she knew that avoiding the call wouldn’t help, and with a resigned sigh she settled herself down on a nearby bench to take the call.

Sadly, by the end of it, she had reached no further resolution - the words I want to join the force remained locked in her throat, threatening to come out with every pause in conversation. The insanity of it all was that logically, she knew her family would support her in whatever decision she made. But there was always that lingering doubt, the fear that they wouldn’t understand, they wouldn’t accept, and wouldn’t forgive. So for now, she ended up tangled in a one-sided conversation that lasted longer than she cared to acknowledge, ending with Amy agreeing to one more set up - a charming young man, a definite match!, her mother described him. It was the exact opposite of where Amy had hoped the conversation would go, but here she was - in a hipster neighbourhood in Brooklyn, dreading a date tonight, and in desperate need for coffee.

A quick google check pointed her in the right direction of a nearby, highly rated cafe, and as she approached the door, the phone that had remained in her hand beeped loudly for her attention. Big mistake, she realises a few seconds too late, as she glances down at her phone, and runs smack into a stranger’s chest, hot coffee spilling instantly onto both their chest and hers.

Letting out a surprised gasp as the hot liquid hits her skin, she immediately springs back, dropping her phone and bags as she uses both hands to pull her top away from her skin, trying to minimise the sting. In the background, she can hear another voice cry out in a similar manner, but she’s temporarily too distracted to realise that she wasn’t the only victim in this scenario. Then, a male voice cut through the noise in her head - “Oh my god, I’m so sorry - are you okay?”

Hiding her frustration (deep down knowing that this was technically her fault), Amy lifted her head, stealing only a quick glance at the stranger in front of her before turning her attention back to her now ruined top. “Yeah, I’m fine. My clothes, however …”

“I’m so sorry ..” she hears again, and it’s with this second apology that Amy looks up again, this time holding her gaze at the person in front of her as the need to point out her involvement in this accident overrides everything else.

Kind brown eyes meet hers, and for a brief moment Amy completely forgets everything she was about to say. Realising she’s been staring as his eyebrows raise slightly, she clears her throat and stammers out “No, please, it was me - I wasn’t looking where I was going, and - oh my gosh, there’s coffee on you too! Are YOU okay?”

He smiles, a blinding smile, and she’s pretty sure he can hear her heart pounding as the tips of her ears turn red and she begins to blush. What is happening to her right now? Quickly, she pushes her hair behind her ears, a futile effort in smoothing her appearance.

“Yes, I’m pretty well versed in spilling things on myself,” he answers with a small chuckle. “Coffee stings, but it washes out pretty well - and to be honest, I think you copped the brunt of it.” He gestures towards her now coffee coloured shirt. “And I’m sorry to tell you, I don’t think your phone survived the war” he continues, pointing to the ground where Amy’s phone lay, an obvious crack now visible on the screen.

Damn it.

Squatting down quickly to scoop up her phone, Amy groaned loudly as she woke the screen up with her finger, the screensaver photo of her niece marred by a nasty gash that travelled along the front.

Double damn it.
“Look, I really am sorry I bumped into you. I feel terrible, I wasn’t paying attention and I should have seen you coming ….” The repeated kindness of this stranger only seemed to make her feel worse. Shoving her phone into her jacket pocket dejectedly, Amy shook her head and turned her attention back to him, this time holding her gaze steady as she tried to ignore the butterflies that started fluttering in her stomach.

“Honestly, it’s not your fault. I was distracted, I was looking at my phone instead of where I was walking.” She smiled as she saw the worry start to fade from his eyes. “I wasn’t thinking, and I definitely wasn’t looking. None of this is on you.”

He smiled again, softer this time, and bent slightly to pick up her bags for her. “Listen, I know this is going to sound strange …. but I live nearby, and I have still some old clothes that my roommate left behind when she moved out last month. I’m pretty sure you’re similar in size, and I’d be more than happy to run up and grab you something.”

Before she could protest, he continued. “I know, I know, stranger danger and all of that. You don’t have to come up to the apartment - just wait on the curb. I mean, you can come up if you want, I just … I don’t …. I’m not - Oh my god, why can’t I speak today?”

Laughing softly, Amy shook her head. She was glad not to be the only one struggling. “No, it’s fine, really. I wouldn’t want to impose.”

“Impose? No way. In fact, you would be doing me a favour. Gina isn’t coming back anytime soon to collect her stuff, and I really do feel bad about dumping my coffee on you, even if it was an accident.” He pauses, the sincerity in his eyes weakening her resolve. “Honestly, I’m just a few blocks away. We don’t even have to walk together, if you don’t feel comfortable. Stay here, if you’d like - I’ll be back in a flash.”

Laughing louder now, Amy shook her head and reached out for her bags, still in his hand. Her shirt really was starting to feel sticky. She didn’t know why, but she felt safe with him, and she spoke without thinking. “That would actually be really great. But only if you don’t mind.” That smile again. It was incredibly distracting. He pushes his hand holding the bags out to hers, and she pretends not to notice the jolt of electricity that rushes through her when their hands brush each others.

“I really don’t mind.” He gestures with his left hand, leading her in the direction of his apartment, and slowly they fall into step together.

“I’m Jake, by the way” he said, breaking the silence after a few seconds of walking. She looked over at him with a smile, before replying - “Nice to meet you, Jake. I’m Amy.”
The 99

Chapter Summary

Jake runs into a beautiful woman at his local coffee shop. Relatively slow-burn AU.

Chapter Notes

Stick with me on this one, guys. Jake & Amy meet, in different circumstances. More series regulars introduced as the chapters move along. FluffCity once we get into the good stuff!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Brooklyn.

Chapter Two - The 99

Jake Peralta hadn’t expected his day to turn out like this.

Waking up hungover after a night out with buddies, a quick inspection of his kitchen confirmed that he had little to no food, and definitely no coffee. His intention for the day was purely to get enough supplies to survive the weekend, and return to his cave for a Die Hard marathon. The perfect weekend.

That was until, of course, he ran into what he would easily describe as the most beautiful woman he’d ever seen.

Unfortunately for Jake, and the woman in question, was that he literally ran smack into her.

Losing the grip on his coffee cup as their chests collided, he felt as though things moved in slow motion as he watched her helplessly, springing back and dropping her possessions as his long black coffee spilt all over her shirt.

He’d already fumbled out two apologies before he even managed to catch her eye - but when she lifted her head, it was all over. She had dark hair, olive skin, and eyes that sparkled. Which is a ridiculous way to describe someone, he knows. But they did. They sparkled. And for a moment, they rendered him speechless.

Before his brain could catch up with his mouth, Jake finds himself offering Gina’s old clothes, and - in an act that no doubt makes him sound like a psychopath - inviting this beautiful stranger up to his apartment. Be cool, Peralta! Thankfully, she bypasses the crazy and accepts his offer of a change of clothes, and he begins to lead the way, silently praying that she can’t hear his heart beating outside of his chest.

He hadn’t meant to invite him into his apartment, honestly. Partly, because he knew that he hadn’t
left it in a state of cleanliness when he had trudged out the door this morning - definitely not girl-ready. And partly because it was just straight up insane to dump your coffee on a stranger, and then invite her into your home with the pretence of recovering her clothes. He was a cop, he knew how those stories played out. And he wasn’t that kinda guy.

So when he looked up mid conversation and realised they were standing at the front of his building, Jake stopped abruptly and tilted his head upwards. Best not to invite her up. Turning his attention back to the woman in front of him - *Amy, the beautiful woman’s name is Amy* - he smiled quickly, pointing upwards as he blurted “This is me, I’m just going to duck up there real quick” before turning on his heel and grabbing the door as another tenant walked out.

Running up the stairs - which served only to prove just how unfit he really was - Jake moved quickly through his apartment, grabbing a few random shirts from the Gina Pile that had been gathering dust before making his way back down to Amy. *Amy.* God, the pull he felt from her, it was ridiculous. The conversation from the coffee shop to his place had flowed so easily, and he wasn’t ready for it to be over. Making his way back out to the street front, he opened the door and felt the smile begin to spread over his face again as he saw her standing there, in the same place he had left her only moments ago. The sun was catching on her hair, making it glisten, and it took a lot of restraint for him to keep his hand down by his side, and not immediately run his fingers through her strands. *What is happening to me?*

Instead, he held up the shirts triumphantly. “I brought out a few - thought I’d give you some options.”

She smiles softly, reaching out for the items as she replies, “Thank you so much, Jake.” he swears he’s never heard his name sound sexier. There’s no way that this can be over yet.

“Listen,” he starts, trying to slow down his words so he doesn’t trip over them as his heart thumps in his chest. “Why don’t we head back to the coffee shop? I can buy you a coffee - one that wouldn’t end up all over your shirt - and they’ve got a restroom there you could change in.” *Please say yes, please say yes.*

Raising her eyebrows slightly as she considers his offer, Amy smiles again and nods. And his heart has actually relocated to inside his throat. He swallows nervously and turns back towards the shop, ignoring the urge to reach out and hold her hand.

Again the conversation flowed so quickly, so easily - and as he watches her from the corner of his eye as she continues her story from where she left off before he ran in to his apartment, he can’t help but think how out of his league she is. Which is insane, he doesn’t know her - he met her less than an hour ago.

“So, what brought you to the nine-nine today, anyway?” he asks as they approach the coffee shop again.

Furrowing her brow, Amy looks up at him - “The nine-nine?” she questions.

“Yeah, I mean I know their official name is longer, but most staff call it that anyway” Jake replied with a shrug, pointing out the name of the business, printed out in subtle lettering on the front window of the store.

**99 COFFEES (AND DECAF AIN’T ONE)**

As she takes in the name, Amy bursts out laughing, the smile lighting up her face as she throws her head back in joy. *Oh boy, he was a goner.*
Opening the door for her, Jake ushered Amy inside & quickly placed their order, snagging a table over by the window. Drumming his fingers nervously on the table as he waited for her to get changed, he took in the moment of silence to try and calm his nerves. *It’s just a pretty girl, Peralta. You’ve met pretty girls before.*

*Nope,* he thought, as Amy re-enters the cafe, looking better in Gina’s top than his former roommate ever did. *She’s not just some pretty girl.*

“So, I have a question …” Amy started as she sat down across from Jake, hand reaching out to nurse the coffee mug that had arrived while she was changing. “Who, or what, is Floorgasm?”

This time it was Jake’s turn to laugh. How does one begin to describe Gina?

“Oh god, I probably should have paid more attention to the shirts I picked up,” he laughed as she pointed at the embroidered logo that took up the top half of her shirt. “Floorgasm was my old roommate Gina’s dance troupe - and yes, it was as amazing AND terrible as you think.”

She joins him in his laughter, visibly relaxing into her seat as it dies down and they fall quiet, watching each other across the table with the curiosity that always exist in a first time meeting. Breaking the silence with a quick clearing of her throat, “So, this Gina - she sounds interesting, how did she become your roommate?”

Tearing his eyes away from her as he pauses, Jake slowly takes Amy through the story of his old childhood friend. He had a tendency to talk a lot - he knows this - but with Amy, he didn’t feel as though he was wasting her time. She held his gaze, laughed in the appropriate moments, and bounced off his questions with her own. Part of him never wanted them to ever leave this coffee shop.

“She’s definitely the type of girl to see an opportunity and run with it, you know?” leaning forward as he continued. “So when Floorgasm fell apart, and this new troupe, Dancy Reagan, approached her with a multi-city tour, she just took it. And that was it - she moved out while I was at work, and last I heard she was tearing up the dance floor in Hoboken somewhere.”

Amy leaned forward as well, a wistful smile growing on her face as Jake finished his story. “It’s admirable, really” she said softly, casting her eyes downwards for a moment before looking back up at Jake. “To know what you want to do, and grab whatever chance comes your way and run with it.”

He waits for her to continue, and when she remains silent, speaks. “Obviously I don’t know any better, I’ve only just met you … but it kind of sounds like you’re a little bit envious.”

“Jake, do you know what it feels like to have the chance at something amazing *right in front of you,* and not knowing if you should take it or not?”

He holds her gaze, probably longer than he should, silently begging for his heart to slow down before he spoke. If he just leant forward a few inches, he would be kissing her. Nervously, he clears his throat. “Yes, I think I do.”

Amy raises her eyebrows slightly as she takes in the moment. Both of them sitting across from each other, bodies inching forward in such slow movement it had been barely noticeable. Her eyes travel down to his lips, and Jake licks them nervously. *Is this really about to happen?*

His phone rings from inside his jacket pocket, startling them both and causing them to spring away from each other. Fishing to grab it before it went to voicemail, Jake groans loudly as he see’s the
caller ID. Perfect timing, as always. “Boyle, hey - I can’t tal-” he cuts himself off mid-sentence as he listens to his partner on the other line. There was a sudden lead in the case they’d been working on for weeks, and he knew that if they didn’t act now, they might lose their chance forever. Damn it.

Hanging up the phone, he looks over at Amy apologetically, holding up the phone as he explained. “That was work, I need to go in. I’m really sorry, Amy - I wish I didn’t.” He stood quickly, secretly happy when she looked disappointed at the sudden change of plans.

Standing at the table for a moment, he debated in his head before finally blurring out, “Listen, I’d really love to see you again. I can’t explain it, but I think there’s something here.” Grabbing a napkin and pen from the counter, he quickly walks back over to their table, scribbling down his name and number before handing it over to Amy.

She stands up to meet him, taking the offered napkin & blushing as she takes in what he’d just said. They’re closer now, and Jake can feel the electricity crackling between them. 

“Kissher kisser kisser kisser kisser.”

“It was really great to meet you, Jake Peralta” she whispered, consulting the napkin for his last name as she smiled. He leans forward, and his phone beeps. He pulls back. Duty calls.

“I really hope you call me, Amy ...?”

“Santiago. Amy Santiago.” Amy Santiago. It was perfect. She was perfect.

His phone beeps again. Damn it. He really did have to go.

“We’ll talk soon, Amy Santiago.” He smiles, wanting to reach out one last time and touch her, just in case there wasn’t a next time. But while surprise and passionate embraces can be sexy, consent is even sexier. So instead he looks at her with a smile one last time, and turns to walk out the door.

“That we will, Jake Peralta,” she calls out after him, and it’s all he can do not to turn around and smile. Good thing that he didn’t - there was no way to hide the ridiculously boyish grin that was currently wrapped across his face.

She wanted to see him again. The beautiful woman called Amy wanted to see him again.

Today was definitely looking up.

Chapter End Notes

I hope this is starting to get intriguing - it will be slow to start but I promise you, fluff (and perhaps a little smut) awaits!

Please leave kudos and comments if you like where this is going.
Eyes Closed, Head First (Might Lose)

Chapter Summary

Amy gets by with a little help from a friend.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Brooklyn.

Chapter 3 - Eyes closed, head first (might lose).

“What do you mean, you haven’t called him?!”

Amy sighed, dipping her head as she tried to come up with a decent reason in her head. She had been in desperate need of girl talk with her best friend, Kylie, so when she had texted her early this morning to see if she was keen for brunch, she jumped at the chance and headed straight to their favourite restaurant.

She hadn’t intended to tell Kylie about Jake. She wasn’t even sure if there was anything to tell. But then her friend had asked her what was new, and before she knew it, she was rambling about his bright smile, his warm eyes, and the tingle that she felt every time they accidentally touched.

It was fair, she reasoned, for her best friend to sound so incredulous when she admitted that she hadn’t called him yet. The ball was literally in her court - he didn’t have her number, only her name. But there was something that held her back, and she wasn’t sure if she was ready to acknowledge it. Instead, she shrugged noncommittally, trying to look like it didn’t matter.

“Oh don’t try that move, Santiago. You forget I know you. Your face is burning, and your gripping your mug for dear life. You like him.”

Stupid emotions, making themselves obvious. “Okay, okay - so I like him.”

“Then what are you waiting for?”

“Nothing. Everything. I don’t know. You be talking cray…” she rambled, looking everywhere but her friend’s eyes, already know what her face will say if she glanced at it.

“Oh, fine!” Kylie raises her hands up in surrender. “You obviously don’t want to talk about it. I think you’re crazy, but I can’t make your decisions for you. LORD knows I’ve tried.”

Now it’s Amy’s turn to look incredulous. “What is that supposed to mean?”

“So tell me what’s going on with your family. What’s up with S.I.? You’re mother’s got to have set you up with some weirdo by now, right?” she breezes past her earlier statement, ignoring the brunette’s question as she flags the waiter down for another chai latte.
Narrowing her eyes, Amy stares down her friend as she talks. She wants to know when it is Kylie thinks she’s made her decisions for her. But she also kind of wants to tell her about the men her mother has set her up with. She’s totally right, there have been some weirdos. But there had been one exception.

“Gary wasn’t great, but there was another guy that I went out with at her insistence, and he wasn’t so bad.” Raising her eyebrows, she admitted - “It was the same day I met Jake, actually. Well, the night of anyway.”

“Ohhhh, now I get it! We’ve got ourselves a lover’s triangle!” her friend responded, clapping with glee. She lived for the drama, as long as it didn’t directly involve her.

Laughing, Amy shook her head. “No, nothing like that. I accepted the date with Teddy before I even met Jake. It was actually his text that distracted me, and caused me to run into Jake in the first place.”

“Well, if that isn’t fate playing it’s hand, then I don’t know what is!”

Rolling her eyes, she continued. “He’s actually pretty nice. Very polite, reserved - seems a little too invested in pilsners, but that may have been the first date nerves talking.” She looked over at Kylie, who was currently wrinkling her nose up at the description of Teddy.

“Pilsners? EXCITING. What ever will you talk about next?”

“Ha, ha Kylie. Lay off, he’s a pretty nice guy.” Amy wished she believed what she was saying, she really did. Teddy was her mother’s choice, and it would be relatively easy to keep seeing him, and make her happy.

“So, are you gonna see him again?”

There’s goes her indecision again. She might do. Maybe even wanted to. The conversation never really got boring, he was handsome, and she felt comfortable with him. “Maybe. Yes. I don’t know?” Busying herself with the napkin to the right of her, she thought again about a similar one at home, with a certain number scribbled onto it - one that she can’t bring herself to throw away.

Kylie sat silent for a long while, and when she dared to look up, she saw her friend studying her in great detail - her blonde hair pooling onto her left shoulder as she tilted her head and stared at Amy with a pensive look on her face.

“Okay, so let’s just do a quick debrief on the case at hand” she started, and Amy smiled at her terminology. Years of knowing the Santiago’s had left Kylie with enough investigator lingo to sound almost legitimate. Slowly, Kylie raises her left hand. “On the one hand, you have Teddy. Polite, reserved, and nice. Has the same name as every person’s childhood toy. Perhaps obsessed with pilsners. This remains to be confirmed.”

Amy tries - and fails - to repress her smile, and nods. Raising her right hand to mirror her left, Kylie continues. “On the other hand, you have Jake. Whom, and I’m quoting you here, has a captivating smile, warm brown eyes; and made you smile more than I’ve ever known you to, at least when talking about a guy. Someone you literally ran into, destroying his coffee, and then spends the rest of his afternoon trying to make it up to you. Literally gave you the shirt off his back.”

Amy tries to avert her gaze away from her friend. She knows where this is going. “It wasn’t his shirt, Kyles. It was his ex-roommates.” she responds feebly.
“Oh, well, that changes EVERYTHING!” Kylie responds with a laugh. “Come one, Ames. You know where I’m going with this.”

Amy nods in response. She does. And she’s probably right. “In my defence, I’ve probably texted him about seventy times. I mean, I’ve never pressed send, but that’s got to count for something, right?”

Twisting her mouth, Kylie considers this for a moment before nodding. “I will give you this concession, but only because I think you need it. But you know what else I think you need?”

“To call Jake?”

“Yes … but also this. You need to take stock of what you want, Amy. I know that you still haven’t told your parents that you want to join the academy. If you had, you would’ve told me by now. Stop worrying about keeping everyone else happy, and just start worrying about what you want. What do you want, Amy?”

Sitting across from her, Amy is stunned into silence. What does she want? Such a simple question. So many loaded answers. She looks over at her friend, who now seems to be blushing after blurting out so much.

“Look, I’m sorry for all the truth bombs. Maybe the tequila from last night is still in my system. But I only want the best for you, you know that. And I’m just not sure you’re following your heart right now.”

Slowly, Amy nods. She does raise a good point. “I know. I’m just scared I’m going to make the wrong decision.”

“So what if you do? Life is full of wrong decisions. It’s the right ones that make it amazing.”

“That was very poetic for 10 in the morning.”

Kylie laughs, burying her head in her hands briefly. “God, who AM I today? Maybe I am still drunk?”

Laughing along with her, Amy reaches out to pull her friend’s hands away from her face. “You’re my best friend, Kylie. That’s who. And you have good intentions. So thank you.”

“Okay, so I just have one more thing to add, and then I promise I’ll shut up about it.” She waits. “You’ve told me about two guys today, and to be fair, both of them sound good, at the very least.”

“They do, don’t they?”

The blonde nods, before continuing. “But I think you’re forgetting about the tingles.”

“The tingles? Are we in fourth grade again?”

“We are not in fourth grade, and the tingles are very important. It’s a fact, Amy, and the basis of every good love story. The tingles are always there, and they are always needed.”

Raising the coffee mug to her lips, Amy remains silent as she takes a sip. Again with the good points. “You think I should chase the tingles?”

“I think you owe it to yourself to chase the tingles.”

Lowering the mug down with a thump (thank god it was empty), Amy squared her shoulders and
looked at her friend with a new-found determination. “Okay.”

“Okay?”

“Yes. Okay. I’m going to call him. I’m going to chase the tingles.”

Clapping her hands excitedly, Kylie ignores the stares from people at surrounding tables, and cries out triumphantly. “Now, do it now! Before you chicken out!”

She laughs again at her friend, and shrugs her shoulders with sadness. “I can’t, I haven’t saved his number yet. It’s still on the napkin at home.”

Jumping up from the table so quickly the chair she had previously been residing in falls to the floor with a crash, Kylie reaches out for Amy’s hands and pulls her up from the table. “Then what are you waiting for? Let’s go!”

Giddy with excitement - or was it nerves? - she threw down the money to cover their meals, and ran out of the restaurant with her best friend.

Time to dive in head first.

Chapter End Notes

I hope this story is growing on you as much as it is to me! It's my very own little engine that could. Kudos and comments are always, always welcome!
As he nervously waits on the corner of Hook St, Jake watches the crowd as all the nameless faces continue to pass him by.

His sweaty hands shift from the pocket of his favourite jeans, to his jacket, to the wall behind him, before running through his hair and starting the process all over again. It’s ridiculous how fidgety he was. It was just a date. He’s been on lots of dates before. Tons, even.

But this wasn’t just any date. This was a date with Amy Santiago. The woman that had occupied a part of his mind ever since they ran into each other over a week ago. The woman that had been slowly driving him to the brink of madness until his cell finally beeped, with her text waiting on the other end.

And now he was here, on a Saturday afternoon, waiting for her to meet him and take her on their date. Hopefully, the first of many. Depends on how the day goes, really. No pressure, Jake. Nope, everything is super chill.

Glossy dark hair enters his peripheral vision, and it’s embarrassing how quickly his heart starts pounding. Turning towards her, he smiles, visibly relaxing when she returns it with her own.

“Hey there,” he started, awkwardly frozen as his mind began to quickly debate how to greet her. Do I wave? Shake her hand? Kiss her cheek? Why the hell hadn’t he thought about this before now? “I’m so glad we’re doing this.” he fumbled out.

Biting her lip slightly, Amy tucks her hair behind both of her ears, before responding. “Me, too. It’s really great to see you again.”

You’re staring, Peralta.

Clearing his throat, he reaches into his jacket pocket, proffering two tickets as he speaks. “I thought we’d do something different, if you’re up for it. I bought us tickets to a mini-golf course not far from here.”

She giggles as she looks at the admissions in his hand, nodding in agreement. “That actually sounds
great. I haven’t been in years though, I’m going to be a little rusty.”

“Same here. Come on, it’s down this way. This is going to be fun!”

It’s around an hour later, and seven courses in, that Amy says something that hits Jake right in the core.

“So what you’re telling me is - this wholesome, fun, innocent game … is actually just a lesson in MATH?”

She shrugs, paying no attention to the devastation that has crossed onto his face. “I mean, everything is an equation, if you want to get technical. But how could you not see it in this? It’s angles, measuring the pitch, taking external conditions into consideration … it’s basic trigonometry.”

“I’ve gotta admit, Ames … you lost me after equation.”

Rolling her eyes, she picks up her putter and moves over to the next course - a seemingly simple cylinder shaped grassy section, internal miniature walls jutting out from different angles before reaching the cup. She ducks her head, as though in concentration, and Jake pretends he didn’t notice her blush after he called her Ames.

“It’s pretty simple, when you think about it,” she shrugs again, lining up her shot as she narrows her eyes in concentration. “One smooth stroke, and you’re in.”

“One smooth stroke, and you’re in, title of your sex tape.” The words come out of his mouth before his obviously dysfunctional filter has a chance to stop it. Oh god, he just made a sex tape joke at Amy. Oh god, he hasn’t had a chance to slowly lead her in to his stupid sense of humour. OH GOD, she was absolutely going to dump him. Before she was even officially dating him. Ohgodohgodohgodohgod. He squeezes his eyes shut for a moment, desperately wishing for a rewind button, then opens again to look over at the girl in question, trepidation obvious in his gaze. She’s staring at him. Oh no, this is how it ends.

Amazingly, she smiles. And then says truly the last thing he was expecting her to say. “How did you know about my sex tape?”

She is perfect. She is literally the perfect woman.

His laugh comes out as a bark, unexpected but full of mirth. And relief, to be honest. “Wow, I was not expecting you to say that.”

Laughing along with him, Amy shakes her head and admits, “I wasn’t expecting to say that either.”

“Not a connoisseur of sex tape jokes, I take it?”

“Not usually, no. But I think today, I might just make an exception.”

God, he wants to kiss her.

“Care to make it interesting?” he wagers, raising his eyebrows in what he hoped was an intriguing manner.

Tilting her head to the side, she gauges him suspiciously. “Maybe. What did you have in mind?”

A giant grin breaks out over his face. “A competition for who can come up with the best golf themed
Throwing her head back, she laughs - *man, she has a great laugh* - then lowers her head back down to look Jake square in the eye. “You’re on, Peralta.”

The rest of the afternoon ran by quickly, hours flying by as they moved through the courses, slowed down only by fits of laughter as they continued to find new creative entries.

“Are you staring at my putt? Title of your sex tape.”

“Talk birdie to me … title of your sex tape.”

“Get it in the hole - title of your sex tape.”

“It’s got a little bend in it, title of your sex tape.”

“Can’t get a good grip on this stick. Title of your sex tape.”

Finally, with ribs that were aching from too much laughter, they reach the final course. A novelty copy of a pontiac, painted red, with three cutouts at the front, and three tailpipes at the back - one which obviously led straight to the final hole.

Amy approaches this game with the same amount of concentration dressed across her face as she has for the previous games, narrowing her eyes and studying the ground as she does some sort of equation in her head. It has honestly been Jake’s favourite part of the whole day, aside from the sex tape jokes. She’s a beautiful woman, anybody could see that. But it’s when she focuses herself on the task in front of her - *really focuses* - that she just shines. And he’s falling for her. Hook, line and sinker.

Amy looks up suddenly, and he has the grace to blush when she catches him staring at her. “So, do you think you’ve figured out the winning move?”

She smiles shyly, nodding slowly as she lines up to take her putt. “I know I keep harping on about it, but it’s all about the angles. What might look like the obvious choice, probably isn’t. It’s hard to tell what’s hidden under the pontiac, but I think I’ve got it. Get ready for the perfect move, Peralta.”

Right now, all he can think about is what perfect move he would need to make before he can finally kiss her.

His thoughts distracting him, Jake doesn’t initially notice that Amy has taken her shot; running quickly to the tail end of the makeshift car as she waits to see if she succeeded. It’s her frustrated groan that pulls him out of his daydream, watching as her ball falls out of the pipe on far left, dropping onto the green and rolling to a sad stop a foot away from the cup.

“Damn it, it was not supposed to fall out of that hole - I was aiming for the far right.” pointing dejectedly at the offending result. “That hole was not the goal.”

Instantly, Jake bursts out laughing - dropping his head back as he lets go of his putter, ignoring the clunk of it hitting the turf beneath him. He reaches up to wipe the tears from his eyes, and that’s when he notices that Amy isn’t laughing. In fact, she looks a little indignant that he was. *She doesn’t realise what she said.*

“Come on, Ames - you clearly just won!”

“I don’t know what you’re talking about, Jake. Open your eyes, I clearly missed the mark!”
Stopping his laughter, concerned that more would hurt her feelings, he smiled reassuringly at her before taking a step closer in what he hoped was a comforting manner. “I’m not talking about the game, silly. I’m talking about the bet. Didn’t you hear what you just said?”

Furrowing her brow, Amy stares at him for a moment, clearly lost. Then, a gasp, and a hand over her mouth to hide the giggle that was about to escape. “That hole was not the goal - title of your sex tape!”

He throws his hands up in the air triumphantly, not caring that he lost. “Yes! Ladies and gentlemen, we have a winner!” Amy turns bright red, and laughs along with him.

“Well then, I guess that means you owe me dinner!”

“M’lady, you are about to be taken to the finest pizza establishment in Brooklyn. Prepare to be amazed.”

It’s close to two hours later that they amble out of Sal’s Pizza, clutching their overstuffed stomachs. Amy had been dubious about the establishment, he could tell from her politely concerned face as they walked in. Truth be told, he hadn’t ever brought dates to Sal’s, favouring the anonymity of various restaurants throughout the city. But there was this strange need for transparency with Amy, and while the decision to take her there was on impulse, it made perfect sense.

He may have slightly regretted it, though, when the owner bounded over to greet him, noticed his date (not a regular sight for Sal to see, he knows) and proceeded to give him an embarrassingly non-discreet wink. Returning a various points through the night, he filled Amy’s eager ears with tales from Jake’s childhood; and Jake was fairly certain his face stayed red for the entire duration.

Offering to walk Amy home, they fell into step together, and for a few minutes they were quiet.

“Oh, thank you for taking me there, Jake. It’s obviously somewhere that holds sentimental value” she says quietly, breaking the comfortable silence.

Rubbing his hand on the back of his neck for a moment, Jake nods before responding. “Yeah, Sal’s was somewhere I used to go to a lot as a kid. I guess, as I grew up, a lot of things changed … but Sal’s never did.” There had been a certain level of comfort that had come from walking in and seeing the same tables, the same napkins, and Sal’s booming voice greeting him every time. A sense of normalcy, when everything was complicated.

“I can tell,” she replies, looking up at him with a smile as she moves her hand from her full stomach and drops it to her side.

He waits a few moments, then casually brushes his hand against hers. Whoa. So he hadn’t imagined the sparks the first time they met. She doesn’t pull away, so he brushes again, this time trailing his fingers down the outside of her hand, before taking the plunge and reaching out to interlock her fingers with his. Neither notices the other as they both drop their heads down and smile.

Remembering their conversation from earlier in the night, Jake clears his throat and asks “So, when do you think you’ll sign up for the academy?”

She’s silent for a moment, and he begins to fear that he misunderstood her earlier. He can’t have, though - they ended up talking about Jake’s career in the force, and how much he loved being a detective. There’s no way he mixed that up. Did I, though?!
Finally, she speaks. “If I could, I would sign up tomorrow.” Looking up at him from the corner of her eye, she pauses for another moment before continuing. “It’s all a little complicated, really.”

Nodding in understanding, he lets her words fade for a moment; waiting to see if she was going to elaborate. “Look, I don’t want to brag, but I’ve been told that I’m a pretty good listener.” he glances over at Amy, a sly smile on his face. “And this is not me putting any pressure on you, whatsoever. All I’m saying is - if you want to talk about it, I’m more than willing to listen.”

She looks up at him, blushing when he catches her eye, and nods. “It can be a bit of a long story … are you sure you’re up for it?”

He squeezes her hand in response, and when she smiles at him, he can feel his heart just about leap out of his chest. To be honest, she could read him the dictionary, word by word, and he’d still be fascinated.

Squeezing back, she stares ahead and begins telling him about her family, and all the indecision that follows her. Together, they walk the city streets as one - Jake living up to his humble brag as he lets Amy speak her mind.

Before either of them realise it, they’ve reached her apartment. It’s only as she raises her head from a particularly long description of all of her brother’s differing personalities that she stops suddenly, looking up at him with sad eyes and mumbling, “This is me.”

He’s pretty sure his face mirrors hers in that moment. There’s no way that he’s ready for this night to end.

“Amy, I had the most amazing day with you today” he says, keeping a hold of her hand even though they’ve stopped walking. He’s not sure if he ever wants to let go.

She nods with a smile. “Me too, Jake. I can’t remember the last time I had so much fun.”

He swallows nervously, his Adam’s Apple bobbing in his throat as he tries to steady his racing heart. “I really want to see you again” he confesses, pulse slowing down then racing up again as she readily agrees - “I’d really like that.”

They fall silent again, both of them watching the other as they begin to inch forward. Jake takes in a deep, steadying breath before whispering “I really want to kiss you right now.”

Blushing through to the tips of her ears, Amy holds his gaze before replying. “I really want you to kiss me right now.”

It’s all he needs to hear: and before he can even think, Jake is moving his head towards Amy, brushing his lips against hers and applying the lightest amount of pressure. Releasing his hand from her own, she moves until both are resting against either side of his face, holding him close as she reciprocates, increasing the tension as she breathes him in.

His arms move to wrap around her, holding still against her back as he moves closer, licking her bottom lip gently and intensifying the kiss when she opens her mouth. Their tongues tangle together softly, shyly, each scared to go too far, but neither willing to pull away.

The need for air becomes too much eventually, and with a quiet but reluctant moan, he pulls away. Her eyes still closed, Amy subconsciously leans forward with him before pulling back, blinking rapidly as both of them struggle to regain composure.

“Wow.”
“Yeah …. wow.”

Reaching out to brush a strand of hair back behind her ear, Jake lets his thumb linger, rubbing against her cheek softly as she smiles at him.

“I’m going to try my best to at least wait until I’m home before I call you,” he admits with a shy laugh. “But, I can’t guarantee that I won’t think about calling you as I walk home.”

She laughs in response, lifting her hand to adjust the collar of his jacket. It must have been mussed up a moment ago. Not that he remembers anything other than the feel of her lips against his. “Just know I’m going to answer, whenever you do call,” she responds with a soft smile.

He bites his lip as he struggles to contain his smile. Leaning forward for one more chaste kiss, Jake takes a step back before the impulse to pick her up and drag her into her bedroom becomes uncontrollable. “Goodnight, Amy.”

Another shy laugh, and for a moment he wonders if her impulse was the same as his in that moment. “Goodnight, Jake.”

Grinning like a kid on Christmas morning, he takes another step back, walking backwards for a few more steps as he wills his mind to tear his eyes away from the beautiful woman in front of him. She giggles as she waves, moving up the stairway and into her building, and it is only then that Jake can finally breathe again. His hand itches to reach for his cell and send her a quick text, but he resists - at least for another block or two.

You’re in deep, Peralta.

Chapter End Notes

This chapter was longer than the others, but I had such fun writing it! I really hope you enjoyed it. Please feel free to leave comments/kudos, and feed my hungry heart!
My Heart Is Beating Like A Jungle Drum

Chapter Summary

A second date, and time to make a decision.

Chapter Notes

Apologies for being so late in updating this - I've been unwell, and work has been crazy! Fear not, I have not abandoned this story - there is more to come!

Please stick around at the end for A Big Question regarding the next chapter :)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Brooklyn.

Chapter Five - My Heart Is Beating Like A Jungle Drum

It’s 45 minutes into date number two that Amy realises she is bored out of her mind.

It had been an impromptu date, admittedly. At least on her end. She’d been a little bit preoccupied lately, and had honestly forgotten all about their plans until she received the text half an hour before they were supposed to meet. Definitely too small a window to disperse any sort of polite decline. And so with a heavy sigh, she had quickly changed into something more presentable, and met Teddy at a nearby restaurant.

Which brings her to the present, looking at Teddy with glazed eyes and only half listening as he spoke. It wasn’t fair on him to be like this, she knew. But as the minutes ticked by - feeling like hours - Amy couldn’t help but compare him to Jake.

Jake, who had recently given her a heart-stopping kiss, and easily catapulted himself to the top of her Best Kisses of Her Life list.

Jake, whom she had been texting non-stop since their date four days ago.

Jake, whose smile lit up any room. Whose touch made her shiver. And who made her laugh harder than anyone she could ever remember meeting.

Focus, Amy.

“So then I met up with this local distributor, who had branched out to the bohemian blends, and that started a whole new line of brews for me to try - lucky catch, right?” Teddy prattled on, not seeming to notice that Amy’s mind had begun to wander.

Plastering on the brightest smile she could manage, she nodded in agreement, hoping that it would be
enough to spur the conversation on with minimal involvement on her end. Poor Teddy. It really wasn’t his fault. He’s genuinely a nice guy, and if things had happened in a different timeline, it might have even been his smile she would be craving to see. But … it wasn’t.

Her cell vibrated from it’s position in her pocket, and her hands began itching with the need to check it. Training her eyes on the man in front of her, she tried to distract herself by asking, “So, how is it that you know my family?”

Raising his eyebrows at the sudden change of topic, Teddy cleared his throat before speaking. “Uhhh, my mom is in the same art group as yours, I think. Somehow at one of their group sessions, the topic of their children - and their love lives - must have come up,” he shrugged. “I’ve got to admit, I don’t normally let her get involved in things like that. But there was something in the way your mother described you, with such a sense of pride, that I couldn’t resist the chance to meet you.”

Reaching across the table to touch her hand, he smiled, and Amy tried her hardest to resist the urge to recoil as he continued to speak. “And I think I speak for both of us when I say, they might be onto something here.”

The mention of her mother had given the quiet voice in the back of her mind a platform, pushing all of her earlier doubts to the surface once more. There was always a part of her that thrived on a sense of duty - honour thy parents, follow the rules, succeed by working hard. And it was that need to keep her parents happy that had led her to this very moment.

Her phone vibrated again.

Throwing a tight smile in his direction, she grappled between the urge to read her texts and the need to keep her mother happy by trying things with Teddy. Removing her hand from underneath his under the pretence of scratching her nose, she nodded in a noncommittal response and reached for her glass of wine.

“This is pretty nice wine, you should order one” she said, holding the glass by the stem and swirling the liquid softly.

“Good to know … I’ll probably stick to my pilsners, though.”

Holding back a sigh, she nodded again as he continued.

“I’ve actually been experimenting with my own home brew - I’d love to pour you one some time.”

Raising her eyebrows, Amy dodges the invitation with a question of her own. “You brew your own? That must be very time consuming.”

“Yes, but so rewarding! What I really found was ..” his voice faded into the background as her thoughts wandered again.

Yes, Teddy was her mother’s choice. But her mother hadn’t ever met Jake. And part of her knew that she would love him. And, really … when all is said and done, her mother would want her to be happy, right?

His voice drifted forward again. “It just got a little messy, is all.”

“It just got a little messy, title of your se-“ Amy blurted out before realising her audience. Blushing as she looked over at Teddy, she lowered her glass and shifted in her chair. “I’m sorry, would you excuse me for a moment? I need to use the ladies room.”
Waiting until she’s out of sight and near the restrooms, Amy gives in to temptation and pulls out her cell to check her texts. And tries to ignore the butterflies that instantly start fluttering in her stomach when she sees they are from Jake.

He had been true to his word after their first date, and had texted her about twenty minutes after walking her to her apartment. In any other circumstance, that would have catapulted him to the Creepy Category. But she would be lying if she said she hadn’t been sitting at home with her phone in her hand, silently willing him to send her something. Neither of them had been ready for the night to end, it seemed.

From there, it had turned into an easy flow of messages - from simple questions about the others day, to funny anecdotes they knew would make the other laugh. It was astonishing how easy it was with him. She felt as though they’d known each other for longer than they had, and she was pretty sure he felt the same.

He had just finished work late, it seemed, and was curious what she was up to tonight. *Maybe see a movie?* the text read.

Instantly, she wanted to text back an enthusiastic yes.

But she was still on a date. With Teddy. A boring date, yes. But still.

Hovering her fingers over the buttons for a moment, Amy quickly writes out her dilemma and sends it through to Kylie, needing a voice of reason in this moment. Barely a minute goes by before the response comes through, telling her to *get the hell out of there and go chase the tingles, woman!*

She probably could have predicted that one.

With a thumping heart, Amy quickly types out a text to Jake - *Love to! Where should we meet?*

Quickly ducking into the restroom to buy herself a little more time, Amy steels herself before returning to the table. God, what she’d give for a notepad, pen, and an hour of peace right now.

Throwing on her politest smile, she sits down opposite Teddy and places her clutch on the table next to her hand. “Listen, Teddy …”

“Is everything ok, Amy?”

Nodding, she continued. “I’m so sorry, but I just don’t think this is going anywhere.’

Silence falls over the table.

Clearing her throat nervously, she soldiered on. “I … I know that both of our parents are hoping for us to get together, but I’m just not feeling that spark. And I’m really sorry if I led you on, or if you feel more than I do, but I can’t keep seeing you.”

He blinks at her, eyes blank as he takes it all in. “I’ve gotta say, this feels like it’s coming out of left field.”

Shaking her head sadly, Amy replied in a soft voice, “If this had been a different time, and there had been different circumstances, then maybe it would have worked. I just think we’re different people, that’s all.” Raising herself out of her seat at the end of her sentence, Amy smiles at Teddy one last time as he stands to meet her. Leaning forward, she drops a kiss on his cheek, and says goodbye.

The fact that he didn’t see it coming tells her everything she needed to know. They weren’t
compatible, and no desire to keep her mother happy was going to change that. It was time to chase after her own heart. And right now, it was calling for Jake.

An hour later, she’s nestled in comfortably in a darkened theatre, arm brushing up against Jake’s. They’re watching a movie … she thinks it’s a comedy. She can’t be sure. Not when her eyes keep drifting towards the man next to her.

The light from the screen in front of them lights up his face, catching him in the moment as he smiles at the scene playing out. Her heart skips a beat. God, he’s cute.

He glances over at her and she looks away quickly, thankful that the darkness hides her blushing features. And if she didn’t know better, she’d swear she could see him smiling at her blush.

Biting her lip, Amy puts all her focus on the screen in front of her. By now it was too late to understand what was going on in the movie, but she could at least give the impression that she hadn’t spent a good part of it staring at her date. Reaching for the popcorn that was safe in the holder between them, she pretended not to notice when Jake reached for a snack at the same time, their hands brushing as they each grabbed a handful.

Watching him from the corner of her eye, she tries to play it cool as she reaches for more. Again, their hands brush - his hand lingering this time. Smiling now, Amy shakes her head at how silly this all seems. But still she reaches for the popcorn again, and breaks into a full blown grin when this time Jake reaches for her hand, twining his fingers with hers and bringing their arms down on to the armrest between them. It had been his call to get popcorn. A brilliant decision, it turned out.

It was ridiculous, she reasoned, to be acting like they were teens again. But she also kind of loved it. She loved the way he took the ordinary and made it exciting. And she loved the tension that crackled between them.

Laughing at the movie in front of them - yep, definitely a comedy - Amy took the opportunity to squeeze Jake’s hand as she reached forward with her free hand for a few more kernels. He squeezes back, and she wants to jump for joy.

Another few minutes pass as Amy gets into the movie (better late than never, right?) before she begins to feel a pair of eyes on her. Glancing to her left quickly, she giggles as she catches Jake in the act. Looks like she’s not the only one distracted. Her giggles quickly fade, though, as he holds her gaze, unashamed to be caught looking at her.

Her heart begins to race as he moves his upper body forward, resting his forehead against hers for a moment as his eyes pierce hers. Oh, the stories he could tell with those eyes. She holds his gaze, and her breath, as he moves closer still - closing the gap until his lips are on hers.

She falls into the kiss, moaning quietly into his mouth as he keeps a grip on their joined hands, using his free one to run his fingers through her hair. The kiss deepens, and they move together in synchronisation. Now, they were definitely acting like teenagers. And she couldn’t care less.

Reluctantly, she’s the first one to pull away - in order to catch her breath - but nothing could pull the smile off her face this time. Looking over at Jake, who sported just as wide a grin as her, she leaned into his ear and whispered, “I think we’ve missed too much of this movie, do you wanna get out of
here?”

He’s out of the seat before she can even finish the sentence.

They’re walking now, along the river front, taking in the scenery as the lights from the city glitter against the waves. It’s a comfortable silence, with her hand in his, and she could walk along this path forever.

She wanted to tell him about Teddy, about the date that she had cut short so that she could meet him instead. And while she knew that she didn’t technically owe him any explanation - they weren’t even dating, not officially, there was an overwhelming need for her to always give him the truth. And for someone whom always held a little back in relationships, it was proving to be quite refreshing.

Breaking the silence, she begins. “So, you should know I was on a date earlier tonight.”

The hand holding hers stiffens slightly, his stride losing tempo for a moment before he corrects himself.

“His name is Teddy,” she continues, “and I had been set up with him by my mother on the day that I - we - ran into each other.”

Jake remains silent, but doesn’t drop her hand, or stop walking. Taking this as a positive, she continues.

“On our last date, I told you about how I feel there’s this unspoken pressure from my family for me to follow their lead, do you remember?”

He nods slowly.

“Part of that pressure for me comes from my mother’s desire for me to find a man and settle down. Antiquated, I know, but as the only daughter it kind of comes with the territory …” she explains with a shrug. “And it was my need to keep her happy that led to the dates with Teddy - one before our date, and then the one tonight.”

Jake slows down at this, keeping his eyes trained on the water for a moment before looking over at her. The sadness in his eyes was killing her. “You honestly don’t have to explain yourself to me, Amy. It’s not like we’ve put any labels on … whatever this is, yet.”

“Yet.” she repeats, with a smile. “And I know I don’t have to explain, but that’s why I want to.” she grips his hand in hers, dropping her free hand to his chest and holding his gaze as she prepares to rip off the proverbial band-aid on the wound that was her heart. “I left that date tonight, to come see you. Because you are all I have thought about, ever since that day at the coffee shop. And right now, I can’t imagine spending time with anyone else. You were right on that first day when you said, there’s something here. And finding out what that is, is way more important to me than holding up to anybody else’s expectations.”

He remains silent for a moment, and Amy begins to panic as her overactive mind begins to race. And then he smiles, and reaches to hold the hand placed across his front. “I’m not sure if you’ve noticed yet, but that frantic pounding you can feel under your hand is my heart.”

She laughs in relief, before shaking her head in reply. “I hadn’t noticed, no … but only because my
heart is doing the same.”

Leaning down to break the distance between them, he captures her lips with his, and it’s like the first kiss all over again. Dropping her hands, he wraps his arms around her, and the kiss deepens. Right now, the world outside - and all it’s problems - cease to exist.

And Amy doesn’t want this night to ever end.

Chapter End Notes

Okay, so here is the big question - when it comes to Jake and Amy finally having sex in this fic, do we want smut, or do we want NO smut? Coz I can go either way. I love writing it (check out my other work, After The Audit, if you want to suss out my style), but I don't want to lose anyone. If you have an opinion, let me know below! Your answers will be the deciding vote!
Chapter Summary

The third date leads to Jake & Amy spending the night together

Chapter Notes

Sexy times are ahead! I threw in a little bit of smut, because smut is awesome. Perhaps more will show up as this fic continues ..? I don't want to alienate any readers tho, soooo ...

I know I normally alternate POVs and this should technically be Jake's turn, but I feel way more comfortable writing sex scenes from a female perspective, so I'm using my creative license on this one.

Title comes courtesy of 4 Drink Amy at the beach house - because we all love 4 Drink Amy.

Brooklyn.

Chapter Six - Bangarang

It was 8pm on a Thursday night, and Amy Santiago was currently pushed up against a wall, getting the life kissed out of her by none other than Jake Peralta.

They had just finished date number three - an intimate dinner at a nearby restaurant she had been dying to try, followed by a walk through the park that separated their two neighbourhoods. His hand had never left hers the whole night, and she had never felt more secure with someone she was still getting to know.

The conversation that had been flowing all night suddenly died when they reached her apartment, and as she looked up at him, not yet willing to let go of his hand, the electricity between them crackled.

Ever the gentleman, he had offered to walk her to her door, and that gesture had brought them to where they were right now. Pressed up against the outside of her building, holding each other so closely it was hard to tell where one ended and another began, both of them lost in a goodbye kiss that had long since passed the point of politeness. The desire that had been building up between them had reached it’s tipping point, and as he cradled the back of her head to avoid her colliding with the brick behind, Amy knew that tonight needed to be the night.

Breaking the kiss as she took a gulp of air, she moved her arms to run through his hair, careful not to
hit the buzzers on her left as she continued. She hadn’t met most of her neighbours, and did not want their introduction to be based on her explaining why making out with a hot guy had disturbed their peaceful night. Shifting her right leg until it was wedged between both of his, Amy changed the angle of their embrace slightly and giggled at the low moan that escaped Jake’s lips. Keeping her fingers tangled in his hair, she blushed as she pulled him closer, dropping a quick kiss to his lips before asking, “Do you wanna come up?”

His eyes sparkled as he look over at her, the lust obvious in his eyes as he licked his lips and nodded. Hand tightening around her waist, he dropped his forehead to hers before kissing the tip of her nose. “I really do.” Another kiss, this time to her lips. “But we don’t have to … I mean, we can just drink coffee or something.” One more kiss. “There’s no pressure.”

Throwing him a cheeky smile, she shifted again until she brushed up against his crotch. “Nope, no pressure,” she giggled as he groaned again, pulling him in for a deeper kiss. “Come upstairs with me, Jake.”

Hands gripping her waist as he pulls her away from the wall, Jake throws her a wide smile, moving slightly as Amy fumbles through her bag, looking for her keys. Holding them up triumphantly, she turns to unlock the front door, leaning against Jake as he moves to cuddle her from behind. His arms were wrapped around her now, his lips dropping kisses to her neck as she turns the key, and as she opens the door, he refuses to let go - instead choosing to move in sync with Amy, legs moving with hers as they stumble towards the staircase.

She wriggles loose with a giggle as they approach the stairs, gripping the bannister as she starts the ascent. Never before has she been so glad to live on the second floor. Hearing the sound of his footsteps behind her gives her a moment to take everything in, and as they round the landing and walk towards her door, the nerves slowly start to set in. Are we moving too quickly?

Shuffling to a stop as she reaches her apartment door, Amy unlocks it before resting a hand on the number plate screwed into the top, turning slowly towards Jake. The butterflies in her stomach had returned, and she tried to slow her thumping heart as she turned her face upwards to catch his. Kind eyes met hers, and just like that, she was calm again.

He reached out to stroke his thumb against her cheek, cupping her face with his palm as he moved closer, eyes never leaving hers. “I meant what I said, Ames. There’s no pressure here.”

Reassurance had never been so sexy. She nods in response, turning the knob with the one hand behind her back, and pulling him into her apartment with the other.

Letting out a low whistle as he enters, Jakes nods in appreciation as he takes in her home. “Nice place you’ve got here.”

She stops to hang up her purse and jacket, before moving to stand beside him, shoulder brushing up against him as she looks over the apartment with him. “Thank you, it was a lucky find a few years ago. I don’t ever want to leave.”

He turns his head to look at her, taking advantage of her proximity by gripping onto her hand again. “I know the feeling.”

She should be rolling her eyes at the cheesiness - really, she should. But all she wants to do is melt. It was ridiculous, but for the first time in her life, she was finally getting what everyone was talking about when they wrote about falling in love. Not that she was in love. No, that was ridiculous. Yes, definitely ridiculous. Quietening her mind, she tips her head upwards and pushes herself up to the top of her toes, leaning for a kiss as she twists her body towards him.
He leans down to meet her halfway, and it’s as though someone flipped a switch. Suddenly, the slow burn that had been flickering all night ignited into something bigger as hands and lips began to wander all over. Jake’s jacket was quickly discarded onto the floor; shoes were kicked off and scattered to wherever they landed, and the buttons on his shirt were quickly being ripped open by Amy’s eager hands. She rakes her hands down his chest, absorbing his moans with her kisses as her fingers roam.

Moving his hands down to her butt, Jake grips her tightly before lifting her in his arms, moving his hold to her waist as she wraps her legs around him. “Second door on the right” she mumbles against his lips, in-between kisses as he begins to move down the hallway.

Fumbling with the door knob while keeping on hand firmly on her ass, he eventually succeeds and walks the two of them into her bedroom. All is dark, save for the lamp on her bedside, and the change in atmosphere slows down their kisses as both of them try to catch their breath. Her hands, which had taken up residence in his hair as soon as he’d lifted her up, began to move down his face, tracing the lines of his cheek and rubbing her thumb against his lower lip. Kissing her thumb softly, he moves his hands to her waist, holding her closely as she unhooks her legs and begins to drop them to the floor. She moves slowly, deliberately letting their bodies rub against each other as she holds his gaze, smiling as she takes in the lust in his eyes.

“Amy ..” he moans softly, moving his hands to her hair as he grips tightly and pulls her in for another kiss. She reciprocates with a moan of her own as their tongues begin to tangle. There’s nobody who kisses like Jake Peralta. Of that she is sure.

His hands move further down, playing with the straps of her dress as her left hand strokes the side of his face. He pulls back gently, kissing her lightly on the lips before speaking. “We don’t have to, you know.” His fingers continue to fiddle with her dress, his nerves becoming more evident as he speaks. “I meant . . . I don’t want you to feel like we’re rushing into anything.”

Politeness has never been so desirable, she thinks to herself as she smiles up at him reassuringly. She reaches for one of his hands, still playing with her straps, and moves it further down until he’s cupping one of her breasts. “I want you, Jake.”

His smile is shy for a brief moment, blushing adorably as she holds his hand against her chest. And then, with the flick of his wrist, his free hand pulls down the strap of her dress, venturing around to the back as he grips onto the zipper. The sound of it’s descent breaks through the noise of their heavy breaths, and as she feels the material loosen Amy turns, pushing him towards the bed and smiling deviously when the back of his knees hit the mattress. His eyes never leave hers as he falls to the bed, hands reaching out for her as she steps back slightly.

Crossing her arms in front of her, Amy slowly pulls down the straps of her dress, quietly thanking herself that she’d had the foresight to put on a matching set of underwear this evening before letting the fabric pull away from her skin, dragging it further down until it pooled at her feet.

Growing up in a household of seven brothers, Amy had never really known the beauty of her curves. It was obvious as her body developed that she was different from her brothers (something she knew before, of course, but when boobs start to grow, it can be hard when you have nobody in your age bracket to turn to.) Favouring loose shirts and jeans that blended in with her siblings, it had become easier as she got older to wear clothing that hid what lay beneath. In the odd occasion that she would dress up in something that showed off the dips and curves of her figure, any male attention would immediately have to contend with a mixture of seven younger and older brothers - not to mention the looming threat of the patriarch of their family.

It had been a natural progression, then, to stick to ambiguous items of clothing and blend in. She
knew the power of the right dress - if Kylie had taught her anything, it had been that. She knew when to bring out the big guns, but had never really learned to celebrate her curves. When it came to sex, she preferred low to no lights, and always under the covers.

But as she stood here and now, skin bared and Jake looking at her, Amy had never felt more at home with herself. His eyes raked over her body, taking it all in, but she didn’t feel uncomfortable. She felt cherished. And it was so sexy.

“You’re so beautiful” he whispered, eyes never leaving hers as he reaches for her once again. She moves forward to hold his hands in hers, taking comfort in the grip of his fingers against her own as he pulls her closer. He releases her as she gets closer, letting his hands wander over her bare skin as his drops kisses to her chest, mouthing her through the lace of her bra as she digs her fingers into his shoulders. His shirt was still draped over his shoulders, and she pushes it away, sighing softly as his hands leave her skin briefly while she discards his shirt to the floor. Propping one knee up onto the bed, she moves to straddle him, relishing in the skin to skin contact that comes from this new position.

The bulge in his pants was getting more prominent now, and she takes advantage of her new placement to grind against him, kissing him with more fervour as his hands dig into her hips. He moves quickly to unclasp her bra, throwing the garment across the room as he holds her tightly to him, mouth never leaving hers and they continue to explore each other. Her hands reach down for the button on his jeans, making quick work of the fly and lifting herself slightly to give him the room he needs to pull down his pants, kicking his legs until they’re off, immediately forgotten about as he twists and pushes her down into the mattress.

He stops then, pulling away with a gasp of breath, stroking her face as he takes in the scene before him. Amy lays on the bed, naked save for her panties: hair splayed out beneath her, chest contracting as she, too, tries to catch her breath. She should feel exposed, with the way he’s looking at her. But as his fingers move down her face, his lips mouthing the words so beautiful, she can’t help but feel that maybe, for the first time in a long time, she was really being seen. He leans down to kiss her again, pushing one leg between hers and tangling their tongues together, and all coherent thoughts disappear from her mind.

One hand moves lower, dipping into her underwear. He releases a lustful moan when he finds her there, wet and ready, and when she reciprocates with a stroke of his member through his boxers, his moans turn louder.

“Jake …” she whispers, almost breathless as he pulls down the last bit of fabric from her body before doing the same with his. His cock lay hard between them, brushing against her apex as they tightened their grip on each other, kissing as though their very lives depended on it. He moves her up the bed slightly, stopping as her head rests on the pillow, and pulls away with a gentle kiss to her lips.

“Do you have …?” he whispers in the small space between them, eyes locked on hers as their legs continue to tangle. She nods, reaching with one hand for the drawer in her bedside table, pulling out a condom and holding one corner between her teeth, giggling softly as he reaches down to mirror her, ripping the packet open with his own teeth and making quick work of the item. His mouth returns to hers, hands gripping around her waist as he positions himself, waiting for a brief moment before pushing forward.

Amy moans into his mouth as he enters her for the first time - he was bigger than she was used to, but there was a gentleness in his movement that allowed her body to adjust without any real discomfort. He pulls away slightly, watching her carefully as he goes deeper, moving slowly and
tenderly until their pelvic bones meet. Waiting there, he kisses her softly, chastly, not willing to move until she’s ready.

Running her fingers through the curls at the front of his head, Amy moves to wrap her legs around his waist, giving him the signal that she was ready for more, and together they begin to move.

There’s always been a sense of awkwardness that comes from the first time with any new man, Amy thinks to herself as Jake begins to thrust. Neither knows what works with the other: it’s all new territory, and it can take a few tries before things start to really spark. But not this time. It’s like he’s attuned to her - almost as though he came preset with the knowledge of where she likes to be touched, what sets her alight and what could be passed up completely. His mouth wanders to her neck, leaving hot kisses against her skin as he moans, mumbling words about how good she feels, how much he likes her, and how he never wants this to end. She tries to reciprocate with her own sentiments, but all she can manage is a moan as he continues to move inside her, his pelvis rubbing against her clitoris making it more and more difficult to think about anything other than the sensations that were running through her body.

His hands move to her lower back as he gains speed, changing the angle of his thrusts and building up the friction between them. Together they moan, whispering each other’s names as they hold on tightly. Amy moves her head to the side, dropping a kiss to a spot behind Jake’s ear, and his responding groan only encourages her to continue. He moves his head towards her suddenly, noses clashing in the motion, and together they laugh before their tongues tangle again.

Moving faster now, Amy’s fingernails drag down Jake’s back as she begins to reach her climax, briefly worrying that she’ll harm him before crying out, tightening her legs around him as she squeezes her eyes shut, calling out his name into the almost dark room. His movements turn erratic in response, chasing his own release as he holds onto him, and with a groan into her neck he stills.

They hold each other for a long while after, catching their breath and leaving the occasional kiss against each other’s skin. Out of all the moments of the night, this felt the most intimate, and neither was willing to let go just yet.

Eventually, he pulls away, shifting his weight as he takes care of the condom before coming to rest beside her. Without thinking, Amy moves until she’s resting against his chest, laying still as she listens to his heart pound beneath her ear. His hands move to her hair, running his fingers gently through the strands as they lay together.

“That was …”

“I know.”

“I mean … “

“Totally.”

Smiling into his chest, Amy twists slightly as she looks up at Jake, biting her lip as his moves his hand to her waist, holding her close to him. “Stay the night?” she asks shyly, blushing softly as his hand shifts lower.

He moves his head towards her, pulling her in for what had to be the gentlest kiss of the entire night. Lingering against her mouth as he pulls away, he kisses her once again before speaking softly.

“There’s no other place I’d rather be.”

She kisses him again, loving the touch of his soft lips against hers, before returning to her position
against his chest. As their collective breathing begins to slow down, and the room falls quiet, she closes her eyes to take in the moment - to take in the feeling of laying there in Jake Peralta’s arms. Tonight had been perfect, better than anything she could remember, and she was beginning to wander if anything could ever be better than how she felt right in this very moment.

As she begins to fall asleep, she says a quick thank you in her head to chance encounters - and to coffee stained t-shirts.

This was the beginning of something amazing, she could feel it.

Chapter End Notes

I really, really hope you enjoyed this. And I also really, really hope you leave kudos or comments (or hey, even both!) I live for the validation. xx
Chapter Seven - You Make Me Feel Like The One

It’s still early morning when Jake stirs from his sleep, eyes squinting against the sunlight currently peaking through the blinds and onto his face. Too early, he thinks, blearily staring at the numbers illuminated in the alarm clock on his bedside. There is, however, a pressing need in his bladder that had clearly pulled him from his sleep, his head dropping back into the pillow as he comes to the realisation that he is definitely going to have to get up.

There is movement beside him, and he turns slightly to the left and takes in the sight of a sleeping Amy Santiago. A very peaceful, very beautiful, and very naked Amy Santiago.

It had been six weeks since he had run into her at the coffee shop. Four and a half weeks since their first date on the golf course, and three weeks since they’d first spent the night together. Three weeks of what he can only describe as crazy good sex. And he knows how that sounds - sex is always great for guys. But the two of them together was something else.

She lay beside him now, bare except for the sheet that pooled at her waist, and he took the moment to stare.

In the past, he’d always entered into relationships with one foot out the door. It had become a rule of his to make sure that he never stayed over more than once a week, never texted more than is socially acceptable, and never went too deep in conversation, save from hurting the heart he permanently wore on his sleeve. But this was different. They were different. Since their first night together, they had rarely been apart, and it had never felt more right.

It wasn’t even about the sex, either - although, he had to admit, that was a very happy side benefit. There was a sense of familiarity that came from each other’s company: nights where the conversation rolled on into the early hours of the morning, phone calls that took up entire lunch breaks, and evenings that comprised of nothing more than takeout on the couch. She was incredible - so intelligent, so kind, and endlessly beautiful. And he liked her. Really liked her. He was definitely falling deeply into - ahem -like with her.
He scoots out of bed slowly, moving backwards and not taking his eyes off her as he exits, trying his best not to wake her. She would notice his absence and start to feel cold soon - if he knew anything it was this: for someone so warm hearted, she was permanently cold … a medical marvel for sure - so he moved quickly, tiptoeing across the floor as he made his way into the bathroom.

As he returns, he pauses again at the foot of the bed as he takes another look. The light that had been in his eyes now raked over her body in his absence, making her dark hair shine in a way that he was sure was only reserved for Disney princesses. She had shifted in her sleep, reaching out for him with her left arm, and looked so peaceful that he almost didn’t want to disturb her with his return. Getting kind of creepy with the staring there, Peralta he thought to himself, willing his feet to move back to his rightful place by her side.

She stirs in her sleep as he lays back down, burrowing her head further into the pillow before shifting her body closer to his, not stopping until she had nestled herself in-between his willing arms, resting her head on his forearm and turning it into a makeshift pillow. His heart skips a beat as he uses his free arm to brush away the stray strands of hair from her face and she smiles, sighing softly as she begins to wake. Getting kind of creepy with the staring there, Peralta he thought to himself, willing his feet to move back to his rightful place by her side.

“Early. Cold.” she mumbles against his lips, dropping her head to the base of his neck, resting against his shoulder in a place that she fits so perfectly into that he only knows it now as Amy’s Spot.

“I know, I’m sorry about that. We really need to talk to sun about this schedule.”

She laughs softly, the sound muffled by his neck as the feeling of her breath against his skin sends tingles up and down his spine. “I’m going to write a strongly worded letter.”

“Great idea, Ames.” he begins to trail his hand up and down her back, revelling in the softness of her skin as he continues. “I do have some good news, though.”

She lifts her head briefly from the crook of his neck, eyes doubtful as she waits for him to continue.

“Today is Saturday. AKA … the day we both have off.”

Her smile lights up the room as she stretches out against him, legs tangling with his. “Well, that is good news!” Reaching out with one hand to stroke the hair away from his forehead, Jake can’t help but lean in to her touch, craving more even in these early hours. Yes, he was definitely falling into like with her.

Her smile turns cheeky, his heart starting to pound as he takes in what he is quickly learning to be her devious look - eyes twinkling slightly and the dimple in her left cheek deepening as she formulates her plan. “I have an excellent idea .. “ she starts, lowering her hand to cup his cheek as she continues. “You should take me to breakfast.”

He raises his eyebrows in faux surprise, smiling as he pretends to consider her idea while he formulates his own plan instead. “Cool, cool … How about I make you breakfast, instead?”

She pulls away slightly, narrowing her eyes as she studies him carefully. He’s never wanted to be studied so much in his life. “Make me breakfast?” she asks, still assessing him with her steady gaze. “You cook?”

Mouth dropping in mock indignation, he reaches out to playfully grab at her nose, laughing as she wrinkles and shakes him off. “I’ll have you know, Miss Santiago, that the bedroom is not the only room that I am amazing in.”
Rolling her eyes in response - but not refuting his claim, he notices - she shrugs her shoulders with a laugh that mirrors his own. “I’m so very sorry, Mr Peralta,” she starts, copying his tone. “I’ve just never seen you do anything more in a kitchen than unpack takeout.” She moves closer again, reclaiming her previous position. “I guess you’re just going to have to prove me wrong.”

He raises his eyebrows to show her that he accepts the challenge and lifts the sheets, attempting to leave the bed and start his masterpiece in the kitchen, but freezes when the movement of said sheets revealed the rest of her body. Easily the best thing he’d ever seen in his life - and despite seeing it on a regular basis for a few weeks now - still something that managed to take his breath away. Granted, he’d never set foot in any art museum. The classics had their benefits, no doubt. But this was better. Her tan skin contrasting against his. The dips in her body as her waist meets her hips. The curves of her breasts, and the smile that graced her mouth as his eyes wandered. She was perfection. And nobody could convince him otherwise.

“I … I’m not sure I can do anything just yet,” he mumbles as she watches him, watching her. “Not with you looking like that.”

Throwing him a coy smile, she takes the sheets out of his grip, holding them closer to her body as she pushes him gently out of the bed with one foot. “Move it, Peralta. I’m hungry. And maybe, if you’re lucky, I’ll work up an appetite for something else.”

He’s only in the kitchen for a few minutes before he feels her presence behind him, arms wrapping around his waist as she drops a kiss to his shoulder.

“No breakfast in bed?” he asks as he turns slightly, accepting another kiss as he cracks an egg into the mixing bowl. She rests her cheek against his shoulder blade as he returns his attention to the task at hand, shaking her head in response to his question. “I got lonely. Plus, this is something that needs to be see to be believed.”

He laughs as she tightens her grip around his waist. “Like the proverbial tree falling in the woods?”

Nodding, she continued. “If Jake makes something from scratch, but nobody is around to witness it, did it really happen?”

He laughs again, louder this time, temporarily forgetting the ingredients in front of him as he holds onto the hands wrapped around him. He can feel her shake behind him, lost in her own laughter, and his heart starts pounding all over again. He wants this. All morning, every morning, every day.

Clearing his throat, he refocuses. “Alright then, Ames. Move back, and prepare to be amazed. I’m about to make the most delicious pancakes you have ever had.”

She leaves one last kiss on his shoulder, pulling her hands away and perching herself on the opposite counter as she continues to watch.

For a few moments the kitchen falls silent, Jake running through the recipe in his head as he goes through the motions. Pulling a frypan out of the cupboard near him and turning the burner on, he runs a quick inventory of the items in front of him before realising he was missing some equipment. “Hey babe, could you please pass me the spatula from the top drawer?” he asks, mind still focused on the pancakes.

As the seconds pass (and no spatula appears) he turns in confusion, half expecting to find the room empty. But she had remained in her position, still clad in the plaid shirt she had pulled off of him last
night, sitting on his kitchen counter. The look on her face, though, was unreadable - half smiling, half confused, head cocked to the side and a soft blush colouring her cheeks. He furrows his brow in confusion - what had just happened?

Then she speaks. “What did you just call me?”

Frantically switching his brain into reverse gear as he replays the last few moments, his heart comes to a stop as he realises. Babe. He called her babe. *Oh god.* Stalling, he turns back to switch off the burner, hand lingering on the knobs as he quietly prays for the world to open up and swallow him whole. He knew eventually that he would do something stupid and stuff this up. And now he’d gone and called her a pet name, way too early in the game. *Damn it, Peralta.* He turned around and walked slowly towards her, trying desperately to formulate an excuse for his slip of the tongue.

“Babe. I called you babe.”

The smile grows on her face as she reaches out for him, pulling him closer and linking their fingers as she studies him. “I’ve never been called babe before,” she responds, blushing further. “I kinda like it.”

And just like that, his heart starts beating again. The endorphins rush through him, a smile breaking out on his face as he squeezes her hands. “Yeah? Well, I kinda like saying it.” Truth be told, he’d been calling her babe in his head for over a week now - and it was only his distracted mind that had led to the morning’s slip of the tongue. *Stupid pancakes.*

Releasing his hands, she runs both hands up his arms, linking her fingers again as they reach the back of his neck and pulls him in for a soft kiss. “Mmmm…” she moans against his lips. Her hands wander into his hair. “What other names do you have for me?” Another kiss.

He laughs softly, shaking his head. “Uh-uh, no way.”

“Oh, come on! There must be others.”

Pursing his lips, he shakes his head in response. He has an idea of what he wants to call her, and it wasn’t a term of endearment so much as a public declaration. His love, his girlfriend, his everything…. and one day, some day, *if he was really lucky*, his wife.

Unaware of any of this internal monologue, Amy continues as her fingers stroked through his hair. “What about …. sweetheart? Honey? Dahnhling?”

He bursts out laughing at the last one, and she smiles back, triumphant to break his vow of silence. Dropping his forehead to rest on hers, he pauses for a moment, catching his breath before sweeping her up into a kiss that started out sweet, but escalated quickly. She was so addictive, everything she did just swept him up, and he hope that never changed. His hands moved underneath her (his) shirt, silently thanking all the gods when he found her bare underneath. Such soft skin, it was intoxicating.

Pulling away with a moan, she starts a trail of kisses along his cheek, leading towards his neck as his hands continue to wander. “There is one other name I kinda like …” she whispers into his ear, shivers running down his spine again.

He pulls back slightly, raising his eyebrows as he waits for her to continue. Words were failing him right now, and to be honest, most of his blood had started to head south. She opens and closes her mouth, eyes trained on him, hesitant as he silence and blushing deeply.

“How about … girlfriend? An - and boyfriend, of course.”
If he was to combine all the moments of his life - birthdays, holidays, celebrations and surprises all lumped together as one - this would still, easily, hands down, forever be remembered as one of his happiest moments. Ever. The beautiful girl in front of him had just asked if he wanted to go steady. And he wanted to shout it from the rooftops, write it on a billboard … hire a skywriter and tell the world.

Instead, he swallowed his heart, and removed his hands from beneath the shirt, resting them on either side of her face. Holding her gaze and smiling in an effort to relax her nerves, he leans in to kiss her gently. “Absolutely. That's my favourite one for sure” he answers, lips still touching as he goes back in for another kiss.

She whimpers against his mouth in relief, and deepens the kiss as she wraps her arms back around his neck. For the first time since moving in to this apartment, Jake realises what a perfect height his kitchen benches are. And just as things start to escalate, her stomach grumbles, the gurgling sound breaking through the silence and pulling them apart as they both burst out laughing.

“Oh gosh, I’m so embarrassed right now. Stupid stomach.” she drops her head to his chest, clearly mortified as she hides her face.

Jake continues to laugh, running his hand through her hair in what he hopes is a comforting move. “Obviously, I need to hurry up and cook these pancakes for my hungry girlfriend.”

She raises her head quickly, eyes bright as she takes in his words. “Say it again.”

“Girlfriend.”

Her eyes flashed. “That’s so hot. And if I wasn’t so hungry, we would totally be having sex right now. But …”

He laughs again, dropping a kiss to her forehead. “You know, I’m still waiting on that spatula.”

“Who am I to keep my boyfriend waiting?” Holding his gaze, she opens her legs slightly, pushing him away as she reaches down to open the drawer underneath her position on the counter. Fishing around for a moment, she eventually pulls out the spatula, holding it up with a victorious smile. “Here you go, babe.”

Now it was his turn to kiss her. This was getting ridiculous. “Ok, now stop distracting me” he demands lightheartedly, throwing her a quick wink as he turns back towards the stovetop. She giggles from her spot on the countertop, and as he pours the batter into the pan he hears her moving around the kitchen, setting up plates and turning on the coffee machine. This was turning out to be a perfect morning.

It had been 45 days since he first met Amy, and 23 since they’d slept together. And he couldn’t wait for the next thousand (or more, please let there be more!) days to start.

Chapter End Notes

How sweet is a fluffy Jake! I really hope you enjoyed ... please leave me comments and/or kudos - they feed my hungry heart. (and if you end up with Bruce Springsteen in your head after that statement - you're welcome! *wink*)
Chapter Summary

Kylie meets Jake, and imparts her wisdom on Amy.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Brooklyn.

Chapter Eight - The Greatest View

Clutching her drink as she watches the scene in front of her, Kylie breaks into a smile.

It was just after 9 on a Friday night, and she had been coerced into heading to a local bar by her best friend Amy. Shaw’s, from memory. It was okay, as far as bars go, but it was the watering hole of her best friend’s new boyfriend, and Amy had been eager for the two of them to finally meet. And she had to admit to herself - she had been dying to meet Mr Tingles.

Arriving half an hour earlier than planned, she had snuck into the bar unannounced, eager to watch from the sidelines before her subjects realised they were being studied. She sat at a round table in the middle of the venue, just enough people surrounding her that she blended in, and sipped her beer as she watched the happy couple at the bar.

He was cute, in a loveable kind of way, and she could see why Amy had been attracted to him. His smile really was something else.

They were talking animatedly as they waited for their drinks, upper bodies leaning towards each other as they strained to hear their conversation over the dull hum of the bar’s other patrons. He must have said something funny - not the first time, she’d noticed, since she’d been watching them - and she smiled to herself as Amy threw her head back in laughter, one hand reaching up to rest against his chest as she pulled him closer. He brushes her hair away from her face as she looks up at him, pulling her in for a soft kiss as their drinks arrive and go unnoticed. It was a sweet moment, even for someone watching from afar.

Suddenly, an older man interrupts her view. With Lego style hair and a round face, he was clad in several different shades of beige, and for a moment Kylie wandered if she had begun to hallucinate a Mervyn’s commercial. He was approaching her, she realised too late, with a studied look on his face and determination in his step. She was busted.

“You’re Kylie, aren’t you?” he asks, approaching her table and resting his drink across from hers.

Taken aback, she recoils slightly. “Yes … how did you know that?”

“I’m Charles Boyle, Jake’s best friend.” he states, introducing himself and reaching his right hand out to shake hers. “I recognise your face from Amy’s profile photo on Facebook, and she said you were dropping by tonight.”

“That’s some excellent detective work there, Charles Boyle. It’s nice to meet you.”
“Likewise” he nods, settling himself in to the opposite barstool, previously tucked into the table. “So, what are your thoughts on the happy couple?”

“Hard to say,” she hedges, not sure how much to reveal to this man just yet.

“Well, I think they’re great together. A perfect match. I can’t wait for them to get married, I’ve already started planning out my best man’s speech.”

Her eyes widened in horror. “I’m sorry, get married?! They’ve been only been dating a few months!”

Shrugging his shoulders, Charles takes a sip of his drink before continuing. “I’m a big believer in following your heart. When Jakey told me about how he met Amy, I could hear the wedding bells, I really could. It was clearly fate. And then I met her, and honestly, they’re perfect for each other. It’s like my Dad always says, the heart wants what it wants.”

Turning her head back towards the couple in question, Kylie stares at Charles from the side of her eye as she responds. “I mean, that’s a really nice notion, but how about we just let them date for a while before picking out their wedding invitations?”

“Sure, sure. Yeah. You’re right. I mean we both know they’re going to go with a matte white high quality strip with bevelled edges and cursive font … but sure, we can wait it out.”

Rolling her eyes slightly, she can’t help but laugh. This guy was obsessive, but endearing. “So tell me about yourself, Charles - when did you know you wanted to become a detective?”

Her distraction technique worked, as he immediately dives into a long, drawn out conversation that somehow involves cousins, burrowing and being a beta. Trying her best to keep up, she blinks quickly before something catches her eye from behind her new friend. Amy, her best friend. Amy, beautiful Amy, thank god you’re coming over here Amy, has finally noticed she’s here at the bar and is making her way over to her, eyes bright and wide smile across her face.

“You made it!” she exclaims as she reaches Kylie, immediately pulling her in for a hug. Returning the hug, she gives Amy the rescue me eyes as she pulls away. Her friend smiles in return, turning to her right and half-shouting (two drinks, she’s had two drinks - Kylie thinks to herself) “So, I see you’ve met Charles!”

“I was just telling Kylie here how my cousin Becca encouraged me to join the force … he’s such a supportive guy!”

Of course Becca is a guy, she thinks as she shares a look with Amy. She nods encouragingly, staying silent for fear of what could come next. Luckily, her tipsy friend knew just what to say.

“Let me tell you Kylie, Charles is the BEST. He tells stories like nobody else. And he has a heart of gold - you do, Charles!” Amy shouts as his face begins to go red. “And he’s so good with Jake …”

“Did I just hear my name being called?” a new voice interjected. Turning quickly, Kylie smiles at the new presence, studying the interaction as Jake leans in to plant a kiss into Amy’s hairline, his arm already moving to wrap itself around her waist.

“Babe, hey! Meet Kylie. My bestest friend” Amy cries out, pointing one finger towards her as she curls her other hand around her boyfriend’s waist.

Raising his eyebrows quickly, he turns to Kylie with a bright smile, reaching out with his free hand to shake hers.
“The famous Kylie! I’m so glad to be finally meeting you, I’ve heard a lot about you.” His smile really was very disarming. She nods in response, repeating the sentiment back as they fall easily into conversation. As tempted as she was to make him squirm, and put him to task with all the hard questions she could think of, there was something in the way the two of them stood together that told her everything she needed to know.

She can see, as the night wears on and the four of them continue to talk (and drink!), why Charles is so convinced that Jake and Amy are in it for the long haul.

It was the way he left his hand on the small of her back as they walked through the crowd to fetch another drink. It was the focused look on his face when she was telling a story, as though her voice was the only one in the room. The way he smiled at her, like she was the sun. But most of all, it was the look in his eyes - like he’d just found a pot of gold, hidden at the end of the rainbow. In a non-leprechaun way, that is.

And then there was Amy. Whose eyes lit up whenever he spoke her name. Who laughed harder at smaller things than Kylie could ever remember her doing - genuine laughter, nothing forced. Her hands were always near him, holding him close or gripping onto his clothing, but never seemed clingy. They were magnetic. And it was beautiful.

“And Boyle, the dartboard is finally free. It’s about time I reclaimed my title as King of the Darts.” Jake called over to Boyle, after close to an hour of talking amongst themselves. Sensing a chance to have some good old fashioned girl talk with her bestie, Kylie gives Amy the look before bidding farewell and good luck to the two men’s retreating figures. She watches as her friend’s eyes follow Jake’s retreating figure, seemingly stuck on her own thoughts before coming back to the present.

“So. Kylie. Big news!” She starts, smiling excitedly as she leans towards her. “I signed up for the academy today! I’m just waiting to hear back. But it’s finally happening!”

The strongest sense of pride runs through Kylie as she takes in her friend’s ecstatic news. This was the best version of Amy - the girl who knew what she wanted, and went for it.

“Yessss girl! That’s amazing. I’m so happy for you.” Lifting her glass, she clinks her drink against Amy’s in a cheers. “How did your parents take the news?”

The brunette’s eyes drop quickly, suddenly intent on studying the table beneath her hands as she pulls back again.

“Oh, well, I kinda haven’t really … Okay, they don’t know.”

Kylie waits.

“But I’m telling them. I absolutely am. I’m having dinner with them next week, and I’ll do it then” she nods determinedly, almost as though she was convincing herself more than anything. “I’d really like to take Jake with me, do you think he’d come?” she asks, biting her lip in concern.

“Amy, I’m pretty sure he’d join the circus if you asked.”

She shakes her head as she giggles and leans forward, the edge of her blouse getting caught against her arm as she moves and revealing a section of collarbone previously hidden. And lookie there …

“I'm sorry, is that a HICKEY I see?”

Pulling back quickly, she adjusts her collar in a self conscious motion as her face turns an undeniable red colour. “What? No! That’s ridicul-“
“Uh, uh. No way. I know a hickey when I see one, Amy Santiago. And THAT is a hickey. You have a hickey!” she sniggers, pointing with excitement at her friend’s neck. This was the best.

She drops her head in her hands, the mortification clear as the blush runs down her neck. Moaning into her hands, she shakes her head, still keeping it hidden from Kylie before she shrugs in resignation. “Okay, fine. Yes. I have a hickey,” she starts, raising her head but still not looking her in the eye.

Kylie is trying her best to stare her down, honestly she is. But she can’t seem to catch her eye. “Oh … you have more than one, Ames. I can tell.” That does it. Immediately her brown eyes flicker back and catch Kylie’s, the surprise in the accuracy of what she’s just said hitting her. For a moment, Amy just stares at her - mouth open, hands reaching up to clutch her jacket closer as she studies Kylie, trying to figure out how she knew.

And then she rolls her eyes, throwing her a coy smile that only grows bigger as she talks. “You know, one day you’re going to have to teach me how you do that. But yes. I do have more than one. They’re all over me, in fact. And all over him, to be honest. We can’t stop ourselves. And you know what? I don’t want him to.”

Kylie pulls back with an impressed smile taking over her features as she pulls her blonde hair away from her face, tucking one side behind her ear in an unconscious act of attempting to hear even more. “Ooooh, so the sex is good, I take it?”

“Good doesn’t even begin to describe it.”

Raising her eyebrows, she leans forward eagerly. “Tell me more, Sexy Santiago!”

“Kyles … I just … he … there’s just something in the way he touches me. I can’t explain it. It’s like all my senses are on high alert, 24/7. It’s ridiculous. Honestly. I’m 100% addicted.”

This may honestly be the best, greatest, happiest, most honest conversation she’s ever had with her best friend. And all she wants to do is just drink it all in. “I gotta say, the way you’re describing things, makes me a little jealous. And happy for you. Mostly happy. But yeah, the jealous thing too.”

Dropping her head again, Amy smiles softly before turning back to Kylie. “I never thought I’d be that girl that gushes about some guy. But .. “ she leans towards her friend, lowering her voice as her face turns serious. “I really, really like him.”

“Oh, Amy … you love him.” she corrected, eyes opening in sincerity as she watches Amy react.

“Oh, Amy … you love him.” she corrected, eyes opening in sincerity as she watches Amy react.

“Kylie! That’s INSANE. We’re still so new. There’s no way I could even possibly …” she drifts off, not ready to even say the word out loud.

Taking advantage of their closer positions, Kylie reaches across the table and clasps Amy’s hands, squeezing them in the gentle way that only the closest of friends can. “I’ve watched you all night. You should see the way you look at him. Hell, you should see the way he looks at you. I’m sorry if this hasn’t occurred to you yet, but I’m here to tell you - you are one smitten kitten.”

The table falls silent, the noise around them seeming to fade as Amy takes in what she had to say. Her brows remain furrowed in a mixture of confusion and disbelief, and her head still shakes slightly - almost as though her mind is still stuck on the thought pattern and refuses to go further. There was a look in her eyes, though, that kept Kylie silent. She recognised that look. She’d seen it hundreds of times throughout their years of friendship, and it was one of her favourites. It was the Santiago Solve.

Amy’s brown eyes swept over the bar, searching with increasing desperation until she found Jake
amongst the crowd. Her face softens, and she bites her lip before turning back to Kylie.

“Oh, God.”

Her hands had remained on top of Amy’s while this whole ride to epiphany had occurred, and she grips them tighter now as she holds on to her friend’s gaze. “I think it’s amazing, Ames. He’s a great guy. And for some reason, the two of you make perfect sense. I’ve honestly never seen you happier. And it’s so great to see.”

She blushes at Kylie’s words, brown eyes now showing her confusion. “Do you really think so, Kyles?”

Nodding slowly, she pulled back and rested her chin on her hands. “You know me, I’ve never been one to dive too deep, too quickly. But I’ve been watching the two of you all night. You move together like you’ve known each other forever. He definitely has my stamp of approval - even if you won’t let me call him Mr Tingles to his face.”

That puts a smile onto Amy’s face, breaking the tension a little as she shakes her head slightly.

“Is this crazy? I feel like this is crazy.”

“Crazy in love? I know, I’m sorry;” she pauses at Amy’s eye roll. “But .. if it’s good enough for Beyonce to write a song about it, it’s good enough to live it.”

A loud, celebratory shout breaks out at the back of the bar, startling the two women from their conversation as Amy looks over towards the noise - eyes softening as she watches her boyfriend raise both arms in victory.

“Look, Ames. Obviously I can’t tell you how you really feel, and I can’t give you any insight into where he’s at, either. But I can tell you what I see, and it’s amazing.”

She looks back over at Jake, smiling. “It is amazing.”

Kylie looks at her phone, raising her eyebrows as she pulls her chair away from the table. Looks as though that guy she’d been talking to online had the night off, and was keen to meet. Time to chase her own tingles, she thought. “Ok gorgeous, I have to go. Cupid calls. And you have some new hickeys to mark on your boyfriend.”

“I’m never going to live that down, am I?”

She smiles with a shake of her head. “Nope, not really.” Hugging Amy goodbye, she heads towards the door, turning back at the last step to take one last glance. Her friend had already gravitated back to Jake, and was clearly being told the story of his dartboard victory. Her smile was as wide as ever, and Kylie felt herself break into her own smile in response.

She had known Amy Santiago since her early high school days, and had seen her rise and fall through life’s obstacles as they had grown. But this was easily the happiest she’d ever seen her best friend, and she couldn’t wait to see where things would head next.

Chapter End Notes

Sorry it took me a little longer than usual to update - I almost hit a writer's block shaped
wall, but I think I've made my way around it! Title for this chapter is courtesy of Silverchair.

The next chapter is already half written, so keep an eye out for the next update :)

I've recently dipped my toe into the world of Tumblr - you can find me @dowealldreamthesame if you feel like dropping a line!

Comments and kudos are always, always appreciated. They feed my creative soul and encourage me to continue - they mean so much to me, so thank you!
Chapter Summary

A run in with an ex, picnic in the park, and some good ol'fashioned smut. :)

Chapter Notes

Okay, so - has anyone ever noticed that in S1 when Jake and Gina swap apartments, that suddenly Gina's/Jake's apartment no longer had a loft space? In Ebony Falcon, there is definitely a ladder leading up to the bedroom. But after The Apartment, every shot of (now) Jake's apartment, there is no loft space?! But it's the same apartment number, just suddenly a different layout ...?

Anyways - keep the loft space in mind, because the ladder that leads up to said space is important for this chapter. That's right, there's some Ladder Sex. And in the show, it's a thick, sturdy, bolted to the top kind of ladder. Definitely something that could handle a bit of action. So think of that when you read this.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Brooklyn.

Chapter Nine - Steal My Kisses

Jake had never considered himself to have a romantic bone in his body. Growing up, his household hadn’t necessarily provided him with stellar examples on how to make relationships work. Being raised solely by his mother, though, had certainly taught him the importance of the little details. He knew, then, that romantic gestures were important. He just had no idea on how to implement them.

Against his instinct, he had decided to take Boyle’s advice on how to surprise Amy. Vetoing the section where he shampooed her hair. That was a hard no.

His suggestion of a picnic in the park held a lot of merit, though, and when he’d suggested it to his girlfriend that morning, the way her eyes lit up in surprise told him he’d made the right decision. He quickly made a mental note to thank Boyle (with an additional thought that the less his friend knew about the rest of their day together, the better).

The organisational skills of his girlfriend had always been impressive, but it had been taken to a whole other level this morning after his suggestion. Within twenty minutes of the plans being made, Amy had a large tote bag slung over her shoulder, filled with a blanket, small pillows and enough snacks to fill the afternoon. A quick stop at a local deli for some fresh sandwiches had led them to what had become their favourite spot, the 99 cafe, for a necessary caffeine fix and a stock up of cold
drinks.

Making small talk with the owner as he waited for their coffee, Jake let his eye wander over the rest of the restaurant. It was mid-morning, and most - if not all - tables were occupied, a sure fire sign of a good establishment. If there is anything New Yorkers won’t stand for, it’s bad coffee. He spies Amy, scoping out the wares on a nearby shelf, and he smiles at her when she turns towards him.

She walks towards him now, biting her lip shyly as she comes closer before leaning into his chest and gifting him with a chaste kiss. Her hand moves to the back pocket of his jeans as they wait together for their drinks, and in this moment Jake believes that he has everything he needs for the rest of his life, right there in his arms.

And then, a familiar voice breaks through their companionable silence. “Jake? Is that you?”

His body involuntarily stiffens, the hand around Amy’s shoulder gripping her slightly as his mind registers the sound from behind him. He knows that voice. It’s been a year since he heard it, but it was hard to forget. It belonged to his ex. Sophia.

Just get it over with, Peralta, he thinks to himself as he turns slightly, plastering on a polite smile as he faces her. She looked the same as the last time they’d seen each other, although strangely enough, she doesn’t seem as pretty as he remembered.

“So, I see this is your girlfriend?” Sophia continues, a smile still on her face as she glances over at Amy, taking in the closeness of their positions.

Remembering his manners, Jake quickly clears his throat. “Yeah, funny that … Sophia, this is Amy, my girlfriend. Amy, this is Sophia - we used to date.”

Amy keeps her hand on his back as she reaches her right hand forward to shake Sophia’s, the polite smile on her face a practiced art. “Lovely to meet you, Sophia.” He smiles at their exchange. Not even running into her boyfriend’s ex was going to compromise Amy’s manners.

“Girlfriend, wow! How long have the two of you been dating?”

Amy’s hand moves from his back and runs down the inside of his arm as she responds. “A few months. We met right outside here, actually.” Her hand reaches his, intertwining their fingers and squeezing gently. Jake, for the most part, remains silent as the two women continue with the small talk.

It wasn’t that his and Sophia’s relationship had ended in an ugly screaming match with slamming doors. He wasn’t bitter about how they ended things, and running into her shouldn’t have rendered him as unable to speak as he currently was. But there was an overwhelming need to separate Amy from Sophia, to keep what they had now as far removed from his previous relationships as possible. They both had exes, he was realistic enough to know that. But what they had now? It was greater than anything that he’d ever felt before - and he wanted to do whatever he could to protect that.

Squeezing her hand in his again, Jake clears his throat. “Well, this has been … nice. But we’ve got to get going. Babe?” he prompts, turning to Amy.

“Yes! Places to go, things to do …” she smiles up at him, raising her eyebrows slightly before
turning back to Sophia. “Sophia, it was great to meet you.”

“Likewise, Amy,” Sophia responds, watching Jake carefully as she steps back slightly. “Jake, it was wonderful to run into you.”

Nodding in response, Jake grabs their drink order and turns towards the exit. Stopping for a moment, he turns back, hand still gripping Amy’s as he speaks. “You too, Sophia. I hope things turn out well for you.” And with that, he turns back towards the door, and walks away from his blast from the past.

The walk towards the park had remained relatively silent, and as they moved towards the perfect spot in the grass and lay out the blanket Amy had prepared, Jake could feel her eyes watching him carefully.

He had been more silent than usual, he knew that, and it hadn’t been deliberate. The morning’s events had stirred up a few different feelings for him, and he was still trying to process it all.

There was a large part of him that just wanted to blurt it all out to Amy - get it all off his chest and wait for her undoubtedly helpful advice. But there was another voice in his head, getting louder as the day wore on, that warned him not to say too much too soon - not wanting to scare her away, or open up too much and watch it all go up in flames.

Grabbing one of the small pillows, he lay down on the blanket, resting his head against the soft material and looking over at Amy. Bypassing the other pillow, she instead chooses to lay adjacent to him, resting her head against his stomach and twisting until her body faces his. He moves his hand automatically to run through her hair, threading his fingers gently through the strands and smiling softly as she blinks slowly in contentment.

For a moment, they lay together, eyes squinting against the sun as they took in the scenery around them. A small amount of snacks were laid out next to them, and in the silence Amy sets up some brie and crackers, handing one to Jake before eating one herself.

Finally, Jake summons up the courage to speak. The overwhelming need to talk to her, and tell her everything, was bypassing any other thought running through his mind. He didn’t want to hide anything from her, and the fear of her shutting him down was fading by the minute.

“So …. Before in the cafe, that was Sophia. Obviously. I don’t know if I ever got around to telling you about her.”

Head still resting on his stomach, Amy looks up at him with curious eyes, shaking her head softly as she waits for him to continue. This was one of the best parts about how they worked together. No pressure, just patience. And trust, above all else.

“She and I dated, for close to a year.”

Amy nods, still choosing to remain silent.

“It didn’t end in a bloodbath, or anything like that. It just kind of … ran it’s course, I guess. I don’t even know what she was doing there. The 99 definitely fell into my custody when we split. It’s nowhere near her place.”
She feeds herself another cracker, offering one to him as she waits for him to continue.

“I’m sure I seemed a little stand-offish when we ran into her today, and I’m sorry if that made things awkward. I just … you and her, you’re such different people. And I just never wanted to mix my past with her, with anything that you and I might end up being.”

Raising one hand slightly, Amy brushes a stray crumb off his chest. “I mean, I knew you had ex-girlfriends. It would be crazy to think that you didn’t. Just the same as I have ex-boyfriends. But the past is the past, Jake. It doesn’t need to play any part in our-your future.” she blushes at the end, realising the slip of tongue and the use of the words our and future together.

“I mean, logically, I know that … and it wasn’t though I was trying to hide her existence, because that makes no sense. She’s just so different from you, Ames, in so many ways. And I was different too, then, I think.”

“There’s a bit of a long-winded neurochemical reasoning behind that, but I won’t bore you with the details.”

He laughs softly, his hand continuing to run through her hair, almost a force of habit now. “There was always this wall around her. And I’m not exactly an open book, I know that. But … “ he drifts off for a moment, eyes focusing on the blossoming trees surrounding them as he debates on whether or not to continue.

After what he feels like is maybe too long has passed, he musters up the courage. “It’s just … she wouldn’t say I love you, you know? Like, I’d say it - we had been dating for a year, it made sense to say it - and she’d give me a smile, or a ‘love ya’ back. And I didn’t notice at first. Always ‘ya’, never ‘you’. But then she’d shorten it again, and just say ‘love’. It’d be all high pitched and smiley and it would probably be convincing if I didn’t think too hard. But then I started waiting for the ‘I’ and the ‘you’ parts. Because I think they’re the most important. I mean, love is just another word without the owner and the signifier. And I think I deserved the I and the You. But they never came. All she gave me was the noun. A short syllable that held no meaning.”

She’s watching him now, with wide eyes that began to fill with concern as he spoke.

“So, after a while, I just kind of stopped saying it. And I don’t know if she ever really noticed. But it was always me. Initiating a kiss … suggesting a night out … putting my heart on the line. She was pulling away, step by step, and by the time I noticed it, she was halfway out the door.”

As he says this, Amy shifts her body, twisting herself until her head no longer rested on his stomach, her elbows resting on the blanket and holding her up as she lays on her stomach and holds herself closer to Jake. His hand feels empty without her near. At this new level, he can see her eyes searching his, and part of him wants to surrender completely without another word.

Instead, she leans in to close the distance between them, brushing her lips against his softly before returning for another kiss. Her touch tells me everything I need to know, he thinks, as she pulls back with a smile. She got him. In a way that nobody else had ever really tried to do. He would never need to steal kisses from her, this he knew. And the only thing she had stolen was his heart.

She reaches over to the food next to them, pulling out one of the sandwiches they’d purchased at the deli and giving him half. “Thank you for telling me all of that, Jake. It means a lot to me.”

He smiles at her, tucking her hair behind her ear before taking a bite of his sandwich.

“I mean, it’s not super exciting to see that your ex-girlfriend is a mega fox, but there’s obviously
nothing there anymore, so …”

He lets out a quick laugh, swallowing his bite as he shakes his head. “You’ve got that all mixed up, Ames. You’re the mega fox in this scenario. Sophia was pretty, I’ll give you that. But you beat her, in every category, hands down. No contest - you come first.”

She smiles at this, leaning in for another kiss before throwing him a wink. “You come first, title of your sex tape.”

His responding laughter echoes through the park.

Hours had passed by before they decided to pack up and head back. Jake’s apartment was closer to where they had been, and they moved through the crowds and back to his place with the ease of two people that had known each other forever. Calling first shower, Amy had disappeared into the bathroom while Jake worked at putting something together for dinner - a combination of takeout in the fridge, mixed with the leftover food from their earlier picnic.

He could hear her moving around the apartment now, shuffling through the items that she had begun leaving at his place as he kept his back turned to her, focusing on the meal in front of him.

“Hey, Jake?” she calls out to him, her voice soft.

He glances briefly over his shoulder, dropping the kitchen knife in his hand and turning towards her completely as he takes in the sight before him.

She had changed herself into some sort of lingerie - a negligee, he vaguely recalls from the many frustrating times when Gina would mix her laundry with his - and it hugged her body in all the right places. Her hair down and tousled from her (and his) fingers constantly running through it, she stood before him like a literal goddess.

“I wanted to say thank you for such an amazing day,” she states, her left hand fiddling with the fine strap of her gown as she takes a step back, stopping only when she reaches the fixed ladder that led to the loft above them - an area that had remained unused since Gina had moved out of his apartment, all those months ago.

Resting her left foot on the lower rung of the ladder, Amy looks over at him with fire in her eyes. With one hand, she beckons him closer, smiling as he approaches. She holds his gaze as she wraps one hand around his neck, pulling him towards her and raising her lips to his.

His arms curl around her waist, gripping onto the silky material of her negligee as his tongue dives into her mouth. No matter how many times he kisses her, it never seems to be enough. And part of him wants it to feel that way, forever.

As her body moves closer to his, he leans forward, resting his elbows against another rung on the ladder, breathing her in and pushing one leg between hers. Moving his kisses to run down her face, his hands move higher until her body is exposed, only separating himself for the brief second it takes to remove the gown completely. She was naked underneath, and as his hands continue to roam, he sends a silent thankful prayer to all the gods and deities that ever existed for the creation of Amy Santiago. She was pure perfection, and for some reason, she let him be near her.

Her body was twisting around his now, one leg moving to wrap itself around his waist as the other
stays firmly planted on the ladder rung. Their kisses were growing more passionate by the second, and her hand dipped beneath the waistband of his boxers, pulling them down until her leg could take over, kicking them away as she leant her upper body into the ladder, pushing her lower body into Jake.

The feeling of her skin against his is something that he has yet to figure out how to describe. Her skin was soft - yes. Impossibly smooth, she moves gently and with such reverence. But there was something else, some thing that never failed to send tingles all over his skin. Her touch set his skin alight, every damn time.

He moves his left arm upwards, resting his elbow on a higher rung as he uses his bicep to support Amy’s back, pushing his fingers through the strands of her hair. His right arm shifts lower, covering the curves of her breast for a moment before skirting over her waist and heading straight towards her centre. Brushing gently through the curls he finds there, he moves lower again until his thumb finds her clit, rubbing in the pattern he knows she likes. She moans into his mouth, biting his lower lip softly as he pulls away with a smile.

“Please, Jake..” she whispers, leaning her head back into his hand. Resting his forehead against hers, he waits until her eyes open again, holding her gaze as he returns his hand to where she needs him so desperately. He dips his fingers in this time, watching as her eyes flutter shut involuntarily. She leans further into his touch, mouth open and eyes remaining closed as his fingers begin to move.

There have been many sensual moments in Jake’s life. While his number of partners may not be particularly high, as he’d grown older, there had been some particularly memorable moments that would forever rate high on his list. This had grown exponentially since he had met Amy.

But this moment here, with his girlfriend laying naked before him, leaning into his arm with her eyes closed and letting her body just feel, may be the sexiest thing he has ever seen.

Her breathing increases, and he knows that she’s not far away from release. And while part of him wants to give her everything she wants, he’s just not ready for this to be over. And so he leans in to kiss her lips softly, gently, before pulling his hand away. Her eyes open in protest, raising her leg to return it to his waist and smiling as he hooks his right arm underneath, bending her leg closer to her body as he lines himself up against her entrance.

He looks deep into her eyes, holding her gaze as he rubs the tip of his nose against hers, mirroring the action with his cock and absorbing her moans with his mouth as they kiss. Her arms wrap around his neck as he pushes forward, entering her slowly, revelling in the sensation until she is completely filled.

As their kiss breaks and they move to each other’s necks he begins to move, thrusting slowly as they get used to this new position. He’s lived in this apartment for years, and never had he thought to use the ladder for anything other than it’s intended purpose. And once Gina had moved out, he rarely set foot into the loft area, using the space above purely for storage.

But as they push and pull together, Jake gripping onto Amy tightly in an effort to avoid the ladder rungs digging into her in an uncomfortable way, he realised that he’d been crazy never to try. And that she was amazing for coming up with it. The angle of their movements; the handrails on either side that Amy could grip onto as his thrusts grew harder; the rungs at the bottom of the ladder providing the perfect grip for Jake to move his body just so. There was an intimacy in how close they were at this time, and it was definitely creeping up to the top of his Most Sensual Moments list.

Dropping her head back as she begins to moan, Jake uses his free hand to run down her chest. Her skin was warm, sweat beginning to pool on her skin as their movements became more frenzied, and
he squeezes her breasts one by one and drops his mouth to one nipple, kissing and licking as his hand moves to her butt, holding her close as her moans increase. His pelvic bone rubbed against her clit at this angle, providing just the right amount of friction to make Amy’s body begin to shake.

He slows his thrusts down slightly, wanting to prolong the moment, and she grunts in protest as he squeezes her tightly. Using her pelvis muscles to clamp down on him, Amy pulls him in for a kiss that sets fire to his heart. Groaning loudly, he pulls out almost entirely before slamming back in, setting a new pace as she throws her head back again, giving him access to her neck as he licks and nips while he pumps, placing sloppy open mouth kisses on the fading marks he had left on her skin during previous sessions.

With one hand still clutching the railing and the other gripping his hair tightly (he may even have a bald patch by the end of this), Amy squeezes her eyes tightly, breathing turning erratic as her toes begin to curl. “Oh my god, Jaaake …” she moans, reaching her climax and pulling him tightly towards her, silently begging for him to join her.

The feeling of her body pulsating around him is all he needs to tumble over the edge, sinking his teeth into her collarbone as he thrusts into her one last time, hand gripping her ass tightly as he spills inside her.

*My god, she’s incredible.* is the only coherent thought racing in Jake’s mind in this moment, holding her close as they both struggle to catch their breath. And then, *I am never going to be able to look at this ladder the same way again.*

The three little words that have been racing in his mind the past few days start to bubble up into his throat, but he knows that post-sex first declarations of love rarely rate high as romantic moments. Instead, he shifts his mouth from her neck, searching for her lips until they’re on his again. All the conflicting thoughts that had been swirling around his head were now cleared away. Suddenly he understood why Sophia could never say she loved him back. She simply didn’t. And what he felt now, with Amy in his arms, was far greater than anything he had ever experienced before. What he had with Sophia wasn’t love. *This* was love. She’s everything to him, he knows that now.

Gripping her ass with both hands, he lifts her into his arms, carrying her over to the bedroom and placing her gently on the mattress. She looks up at him, skin flushed from exertion and slick with sweat, and she’s never been more beautiful. “I was going to cook us dinner,” he explains between pants of breath. “But now, I’m *way* more interested in dessert.”

Planting a knee on the mattress as he begins to crawl towards her, his racing heart begins to calm. He needed moments like this, forever. And every touch from her made him believe that maybe, this time, it could really happen.

Chapter End Notes

Oh gosh I hope you all enjoyed this! Please leave comments and or kudos if you did - these are the things that spark joy to me.
Chapter Summary

L.O.V.E.

Lunch with Amy’s parents lead to some revelations.

Chapter Notes

My early Valentine's gift to you :)

Thank you so much for all of your kind comments and kudos. They make me so very happy. xx

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Brooklyn.

Chapter Ten - L.O.V.E.

It was a cold December morning that had not eventuated much further than Amy’s bed. They lay
together, feet rubbing against the others, smiling at each other as the room continued to fill with light.

“I bet you’re hard to get over.” he said softly, smiling softly at her as his foot travelled up her calf
slightly.

Blushing softly, Amy closed her eyes for a moment. The look he was giving her right now was
setting her heart into hyper speed. “I don’t know about that” she countered with an awkward laugh.

“I do. You’re amazing, Amy. I know this is a lot to say so early in the morning, and you’re probably
dying inside, but I can’t help it. Lying here, watching you smile, thinking of all the things we’ve
done together, places we’ve been … you’re amazing, Ames.” his smile grows as her face flushes
red, reaching out to stroke her arm as she buries her head into her pillow, trying to hide her
embarrassment. “And that’s how I know you’d be hard to get over. Once you catch a star, it’s hard
to see the sparkle in anything else.”

Shifting her head slightly so that she can catch Jake’s eyes, Amy waits a beat to see if she can get her
heart rate to slow down, and move it’s way down from her throat. The conversation she had with
Kylie only a week ago was racing through her mind. You love him, Amy.. It’s getting harder to
convince herself that her friend was wrong. Taking a gulp of invisible courage, she scoots her body
closer, stopping only when her hands are resting comfortably against his chest. “Maybe ….?” she
stammered, “maybe you don’t get over me.”

Raising his eyebrows slightly, Jake’s eyes widened as she spoke, the sunlight catching the honey
colouring in his eyes and making Amy’s heart start pounding all over again. It was early, and the
weight behind both of their words was filling the room with a sense of togetherness that both of them
wanted, but neither had been willing to be the first to say. “I mean, if you don’t want to … I know I don’t want to get over you. I don’t know that I could.” before another word could be said, Jake’s mouth closed over Amy’s, bruising her lips as he kissed her passionately.

Those three little words bubbled up her throat as his tongue tangled with hers, hands wandering over her body as she reciprocated. She loved him, it was true, and if his words are anything to go by, he felt the same. But the fear of rejection, of putting her heart on the line and watching it get crushed, was too much for her in this moment.

Turning up the intensity in each other’s kisses as she wrapped her legs around his waist, Amy pulled back to look Jake in the eyes, stroking his cheek with her thumb before throwing him a cheeky grin. “Maybe instead of getting over you, I just get UNDER you?”

His responding laugh turned into a growl as she brought her lips back to his, deepening as their hands wandered again. This was something they could definitely both get used to.

It had taken another hour for them to venture outside the bedroom, both of them slow to move but knowing that the day had bigger plans for them. Today was the day she’d organised to have a late lunch with her parents, and when she’d asked Jake if he’d like to join them, his happy smile and quick nod of acceptance made her heart skip a beat.

He was back in her bedroom now, nervously studying his reflection and pulling on the collar of his shirt. “Babe, are you sure I shouldn’t change? What about that other shirt I brought?”

Walking up behind him, Amy couldn’t help smiling to herself as she watched her boyfriend check and double-check his appearance. Today was obviously important to him, and his nerves were so endearing that they had the odd side effect of calming her own worries. She wraps her arms around his middle, clasping her hands together as she rests her head against his left arm, looking at him in the mirror. “Jake, I’ve told you - you look fine. I promise. Today’s going to be great.”

They’re going to love you, because I love you. The same thought keeps running through her head, watching him smooth down his shirt front one last time before turning towards her. He smiles, eyes crinkling as he leans down for a quick kiss. “You look gorgeous, by the way. But what about you, Ames? Are you nervous to tell your parents about the academy?”

The same damn swarm of butterflies that have been floating around her stomach for the past few days are released again, and she takes a quick deep breath before shrugging her shoulders, trying to seem relaxed. One glance at Jake and she knows it didn’t work. “Yes, kind of. Um. A lot, actually.”

He nods in understanding. “I’m sure it’ll be just fine. And if it isn’t, we’ll just run away somewhere. Dye our hair, change our names, live out in the middle of nowhere?”

Her eyes widen. “Maybe even open our own little book store?”

“Of course. One that maybe had a DVD section at the back? You know, for those that are a little time poor and are totally happy just watching the movie version?”

She laughs with him, shaking her head at the insanity of his suggestion. It was very rare for a movie to be better than the book it was based on. And the whole running away, thing. Obviously.

“Come on, Peralta. If we don’t go soon, we’re going to be late. And Santiago’s are never late.” she
turns to leave, stopping abruptly as Jake grabs one arm and pulls her back towards him. Keeping her in his gaze, he runs his fingers up and down her arm, and her skin tingles in response.

“I know you’re nervous. But it’s going to be fine, Ames. Whatever happens, we’ll figure it out.”

The way he’s looking at her right now, and the way he keeps using the word ‘we’ instead of ‘you’ or ‘I’, made Amy want to grab his hand and pull him to the rooftop, purely to stand there and shout to the world below how much she loved him. Instead, she swallowed her words and pushed herself up to her tip toes, laying a gentle kiss against Jake’s lips. She pulls away before he can deepen it, linking her finger through a belt loop in his jeans and pulling him out of the bedroom. She meant what she said earlier - the Santiago’s are never late.

Lunch had been going for just under an hour so far, and things seemed to be going well. To his credit, Jake had been holding his own. They hadn’t even had a chance to get settled at their booked table before Camila, Amy’s mother, began firing her questions in his direction.

While she knew her mother trusted her judgement, Amy knew there would also be a part of her mother that would be dying to know why her choice, Teddy, was not the one Amy had gone for. There was a loveable nature to Jake, and he had a truly special ability in being able to put people at ease, purely by talking to them. It was one of her favourite things about him (although, to be fair, that list was growing longer each day). So far, Camila had interrogated him on his job, income, living situation, education and plans for the future. So not a lot, really.

“And what about your parents, Jacob? Are they still together?” her mother asks, pausing as Jake shakes his head in response.

“Oh, no … they’re not together. They separated when I was younger, I think I was seven at the time.” Jake hesitates under Camila’s gaze, and Amy reaches for his hand under the table. “It was hard for me to understand for a long time, I’ll admit. But looking back, they made the right decision. I didn’t grow up in a household where my parents were constantly fighting, like some of my other friends did. And while I wish my father had been more present, if anything he has taught me exactly what not to do. And while I can’t thank him for that, I can definitely grow from it.”

Camila nods quietly in response, her eyes watching Jake as he speaks. To the untrained eye, she seemed non-committal. But Amy knew her mother’s looks, and she knew that Jake had just knocked it out of the park with his answer. Suppressing a victorious smile, she instead chooses to squeeze Jake’s hand in glee.

The lunch wore on from there, conversation mainly falling between Amy and her parents as they caught up on all the little details of each other’s lives. Jake had joined in where he could, offering a funny anecdote or work related story when things fell quiet. All the signs of her parents enjoying Jake’s company were there - and it made her relax more and more as they ate.

As their empty plates were cleared from the table, Victor, Amy’s father, cleared his throat and looked over at Amy.

“So, mija, when we spoke on the phone you said there was something important you were wanting to discuss with your mother and I.”

“Oh, yes …” Amy nods, glancing over at Jake and desperately trying to think of a way to stall the
conversation. He raises his eyebrows at her, nodding quickly in an act of silent encouragement. “So, you know how my college degree is finally finished?”

Leaning back in his chair, Victor nods - “Yes, mija. We are both very proud of how hard you worked at it. And we’re looking forward to you joining the business and putting your investigator cap on! Your brothers were talking about this just the other day.”

Damn it. “Weeelll … That’s kind of what I wanted to talk to the two of you about.” Shifting in her chair uncomfortably, she rests her arms on the table in front of her - twisting her fingers together in an effort to calm her nerves. “I’m not entirely sure that Santiago Investigations is the best fit for me.”

An awkward silence falls over the table.

“Amy, what do you mean by that?” her mother speaks, breaking the silence. Her brows were furrowed as she leant forward. “I - we - thought this was something you wanted to do?”

*Okay, here goes nothing.* Swallowing her nerves, Amy looks into her father’s eyes, holding his gaze steadily as she speaks. “I’m going to join the NYPD instead. I’ve already signed up for the academy - I start next month.”

Victor pulls his head back in surprise, blinking repeatedly as he takes in her announcement. Looking over at Camila, he raises his eyebrows at her - a silent conversation between a long married couple - asking without speaking if she knew anything about this. His wife’s blank stare confirms she didn’t.

Running a hand over his face, he pauses for a moment to rub his temples. Each moment feels like forever to Amy. Her heart is pounding - she knows that this wasn’t what they were expecting to hear. And while she’s confident in her decision - she knows she’s made the right choice - part of her still dies at the thought of letting her family down.

Finally, he speaks.

“Amy, if you were to do this, you would be the first Santiago in almost four generations to not join the company.”

“It’s not an if, Dad. It’s happening. I’ve already signed up. And I know that I’m breaking tradition. But … it’s just not where my heart lies. And I think you know that.”

He nods slowly, eyes drifting away for a moment. And then, they fall onto her boyfriend.

“So, Jake - what are your thoughts on all of this?”

Amy turns her head slowly, watching for Jake’s reaction with a mixture of trepidation and concern. Her father has the ability to make even the most steadfast person nervous, and she knows that Jake wants this afternoon to go well.

He blinks for a moment, before clearing his throat. “To be honest, sir - I think it’s amazing.”

Cocking his head to the side, Victor waits for him to elaborate.

“Amy spoke to me about joining the force on our very first date, and I could tell just from the way her face lit up that it was obviously something important to her. She’s been working so hard since she found out that she’d been accepted - I’ve helped her study, but that’s all. Your daughter has an incredible mind, which I’m sure you know, and is stronger than a lot of officers that are already on the beat. I honestly don’t think it will be too long before she’s teaching me things.”
Blushing slightly, Amy reaches under the table to hold Jake’s hand again, moving it from his thigh to hers. He squeezes her fingers gently, throwing her a soft smile as she squeezes back.

“You’re absolutely right, Jake.” Victor speaks, breaking through the small silence that had lapsed after Jake’s answer. Turning towards Amy, he continues. “Amy has a brilliant mind, and Camilla and I have loved watching her turn into who she is today. If this is what you want to do, that who am I to deny you?”

Now her face has turned completely red. Part of her wanders why she ever thought today was going to be a disaster. Of course her parents were going to be there for her.

“Thank you so much, Dad. I’m so proud to be a Santiago. And I’m sorry that I won’t be joining the family business … but I hope that I can make you proud of me.” she finishes softly, almost a whisper.

“We’re already there, sweetheart.” Camilla responds, reaching out to rest her hand on Amy’s right, the left still under the table clutching Jake’s.

“I’m not going to lie, Amy - I’m a little bit surprised by your decision. But you know that your mother and I will support you, in whatever you choose.” Victor reaches out to place his hand on top of her’s and Camila’s, sealing his words with a smile. It was everything she’d been hoping to hear.

Slowly, the butterflies were starting to disappear from her stomach. With Jake’s hand in hers, and her supportive parents giving their encouragement, suddenly all of the obstacles ahead of her seemed far more manageable.

Lunch long since over, Amy had led Jake to the waterfront, not yet ready to head home. The day had threatened to be such an emotional rollercoaster, and while she could not have been more happier with her parent’s reactions, there were still a few butterflies remaining.

Jake walked quietly next to her, holding her hand and watching her from the corner of his eye. It was as though he sensed that she needed a moment to think. He probably did - even without being a detective this man had been amazingly perceptive to her needs. She only hoped that she reciprocated in her own way.

Stopping for a moment to lean against a retaining wall, Amy twisted towards the water and tries to get her mind in order. She feels Jake behind her, smiling and leaning into him as he places his arms around her waist, leaning his chin against her shoulder. Taking a deep breath, she revels quietly in the feeling of him.

“So, do you think I passed the test?” he whispers into her ear, dropping a kiss to her neck afterwards.

Nodding enthusiastically, Amy smiles as she keeps her eye on the river. “Absolutely, babe. You smashed it.”

His hands tighten around her as he kisses her shoulder before resting his head against her again. “Your parents seemed okay with the whole police force thing, as well?” he questions, trying another avenue.

“Yeah. Honestly, everything went so well. I think I just needed a moment to take it all in, to process - you know?”
She feels him nod beside her, and she pushes herself away from the wall, twisting slowly in his arms until they’re facing each other.

“Thank you so much for being there for me today, Jake. It meant more to me than I can say.”

He smiles sweetly at her, brushing away the strands of hair that the wind kept blowing into her face. “Anytime, Ames. I’m here for you.”

*Always?* the word bubbles inside of her. And that’s when she realises why the butterflies refuse to completely go away. She’d said a lot today, but the most important thing still remained unspoken. And when he stands in front of her, looking the way he does right now, she’s not sure why.

Moving her hands so that they rested upon the lapels of his jacket, Amy pulled him closer for a brief kiss. As she pulls away, she holds him close - watching him carefully as she feels her throat dry up. “Jake, I - ”

A twenty-something rollerblader skates past, way too close for their liking, music blaring from the portable speaker in his right hand and loudly singing out of tune as he throws a wink in their direction. Amy glares at his departing figure. What a mood killer.

“Wow, who knew that people still roller bladed?” Jake laughs, turning back to Amy as he continues. “Please tell me my singing isn’t anywhere near as bad as that guy’s!”

Wrinkling her nose, Amy shrugs playfully. “Oh, come on! There’s no way … wait - what were you going to say before roller guy interrupted?”

She bites her lip. The moment was definitely gone. “Jake, I think you should take me home now.”

“Your wish is my command, babe.”

The drive back was quick but playful, with Jake turning the radio up high and singing along with the music in an effort to prove his ability. Thankful that he was driving, Amy laughed along beside him, wiping tears from her eyes as he tried a particularly high note. Whitney songs were not his strength.

He chattered happily beside her as they climbed the stairs to her place, matching his steps with hers until they were racing each other. Grabbing her as she reached the last step, she shrieked quietly as he pulled her towards him, kissing her cheek as they reached the landing and headed towards Amy’s door.

Squeezing her arm as she unlocks the door, he brushes past and walks into her apartment. With a smile, she closes the door behind him, her hands lingering on the locks as she watches him walk through her home with the ease of someone who’s been doing so for months. He’s running his hand through his hair now, letting out a deep sigh as he heads toward her bedroom. “Man, I am so wiped. Do you want the first shower, babe?”

She remains rooted to the ground, one hand still fiddling with the chain on the lock as her heart begins to pound. The words that she had been thinking all morning - all month, if she was being honest - were bubbling up into her throat, but she couldn’t will herself to move just yet.

“Jake?” she starts, quietly calling out his name. He turns, a curious look falling over his face as he realises she has yet to move from her front door.

“Yeah, Ames?”
“I love you.”

His body stiffens, the only response to her words. After a beat, he runs a hand along his face and takes a step closer, stopping before he gets too far.

“I’m going to need you to say that again.”

She smiles this time, hand dropping from the lock as she drops her bag to the floor and slowly begins to walk towards him.

“I love you.”

He blinks, eyes searching out hers. She’s pretty certain that her heart has relocated to the top of her throat. But still she keeps moving, stopping only when he’s within arms reach. He’s smiling now, still unsure but losing the confusion as she moves closer.

“I love you, Jake Peralta.” she rests her arms against his shoulders, locking her fingers as they rest behind his neck. “I do. And I know it’s still early in our relationship, and that it feels like its way too soon, but its the truth. I love you.”

“You do?” he whispers, the sound just barely audible as he watches her speak, eyes wide and unwilling to move from her face.

“I really do.”

He leans in then, placing the softest kiss on her lips before moving to rest his forehead against hers, eyes squeezed shut now.

“Ames.” he sighs in reverence.

“It’s okay. You don’t have to say anything back. I know it’s quick - maybe too quick, but I was thinking about how tonight went, and how you’ve been my number one supporter since our very first date, and I-” he cuts her off with another kiss to her lips, slightly more urgent this time.

Shaking his head as he pulls away - only the slightest of movements, she can still feel his breath against her skin - Jake brings his eyes back to her before speaking.

“Ames.” he sighs in reverence.

“Ames.”

Now it was her turn for the breath to be knocked out of her. Never before had she expected four little words to hold such gravity. But hearing them now was like a beautiful symphony.

“I love you, Amy Santiago. I think I’ve loved you for a while now. I’ve been saying it in my head for weeks. To be honest, I’m kinda surprised that I hadn’t blurted it out by accident before now.”

She laughs, relief and elation and love and pure joy now coursing through her body. Leaning into his touch again, she moves her hands from the back of his neck, cupping his face in her hands as she pulls him in for a kiss - the kiss, the kiss that tells the other just how much they mean to them. The kind of earth stopping, heart melting, glass shattering kiss that you get once in a lifetime, and that takes the rest of said lifetime to get over. He loves me! she thinks to herself.

His arms are wrapped around her now, hands wandering lower until they’re cupping her ass and pulling her impossibly closer as their kiss deepens. Bending slightly at the knees, he grips her tightly and lifts her up. They move together, her legs wrapped around his waist as he holds her against him, lips never leaving hers as they stumble down the hallway. Shower long forgotten, Jake lowers Amy gently onto her bed and joins her on the mattress.
They made love that night, slow and sweet, every other kiss peppered with whispered words of love - the freedom of finally being able to say out loud what they’d both been holding back raising the level of intimacy. This could be theirs, forever, if they wanted - and forever was the only thing on their minds.

Chapter End Notes

My goodness these two have stolen my heart! I hope you enjoyed this - I know it was extra fluffy but hey, Valentines, and other reasons!

Comments and kudos are always appreciated. Honestly, more than I can say.
Plaid Shirt Days

Chapter Summary

Guess what time it is? That's right - Time For Gina's Opinion!

Chapter Notes

Okay so I'm a little bit late posting this chapter, I'm sorry - life just got a little bit busy there! So I made this chapter a little bit longer, I hope that makes up for it! :) Title (and part of the chapter) inspired by All Too Well, one of my favourite TS songs (and you know Jake the Swifty totally loves it as well!)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Brooklyn.

Chapter Eleven - Plaid Shirt Days (and nights you made me your own)

"Othello - easy!" Amy proclaimed, as she quickly filled the crossword squares with the answer. From his vantage point, Jake smiled as he watched the glee take over her features every time she got one more question close to completion.

They had spent the last hour sitting on the wide windowsill of Jake's loft, snuggled into each other as the city below passed them by. Jake was resting with his back against the window frame, with Amy nestled in against him, his arms wrapped around her loosely as she concentrated on the newspaper in her hands.

The final examination that Amy needed to take before joining the academy was drawing closer, and the stress had begun to overtake her. This morning, in an attempt to lower the tension that was starting to radiate through her body, Jake had suggested a half-day ban on all studying. It had not been an easy victory - and he still wasn't confident that she'd make it to midday without cracking open her notebook - but it was worth a shot.

"Great work, babe" he mumbled into her hair, dropping a kiss to her shoulder as he moved his eyes to the street outside. The kisses, he had discovered, helped with the distraction process. Distraction Technique Number One, he decided.

The mornings were beginning to grow cool, and to be honest, he was surprised that she had let them stay here on the windowsill for as long as they had - he knew that she ran cold, if her insistent possession of the duvet each night had taught him anything. She was snuggled in to him now, legs between his and head resting against his chest, the only movement coming from her hands as she worked quickly to fill the empty squares. Perhaps it was distraction that kept her there. Or perhaps it was that four-letter word that both had recently said out loud, that simple syllable that had changed everything.
It had become forever imprinted in his mind, that moment a couple of weeks ago, when Amy stood at the door of her apartment, her beautiful eyes sparkling as she told him she loved him. As ridiculous as it sounds, Jake had felt the earth shift just a little that afternoon. It was as though the world had spun onto a different axis - one where someone as amazing as Amy Santiago could ever love somebody like him.

From that moment, all the weight surrounding those three words had drifted away. They fell from his mouth now with ease - a flick of his tongue at the roof of his mouth as he pronounces the ‘L’, the inevitable smile following the purse of his mouth as he finishes the ‘you’. It had become his new favourite thing to say - and it seemed as though Amy felt the same. Simple statements had become declarations (“I’ve just chosen a movie, and by the way, did you know that I love you?” … “I need to run down to the bodega for more coffee, and before I forget, I love you!” … or “Okay so there’s no more hot water, but that’s alright, because I love you!”) and if he never had to stop saying it, he would be totally okay with that.

Amy’s hand had stilled, and Jake flicked his eyes downward, taking in the now completed crossword that remained clutched in her hands. Her gaze had turned towards her study notes, from where they waited untouched on his dining table, and he could tell that she was itching to cast her eyes over them again. She sighs, dropping her head back into his chest without speaking.

Tucking his index finger underneath her chin, Jake tugs gently and raises her head to meet his gaze. “Ames, if you want to study, I’m not going to stop you. I know this important to you. I just think you needed to take a breather … focus on something else for a moment.” She nods with a small smile, snaking one hand from the newspaper and resting it against his cheek. “I have no interest in keeping you from something that you want to do - please know that.”

Biting her bottom lip, Amy nods again. “I know, babe. I’m actually do feel like I’m relaxing, and that’s all because of you. I just … Santiagos don’t fail, you know?”

“Amy, there is no way that you are going to fail this test.”

Her teeth continue to worry against her lip, the flesh increasing in plumpness as each bite pushes more blood forwards. He wants to kiss her - soothe the ache and distract her overactive mind. And so he does.

She blushes as he pulls away. “You’re very good at that, you know.”

Breaking into a smile, Jake asks - “What, kissing?” as he leans in for another.

Giggling in response, Amy shakes her head. “No! Well … yes, actually.” Another blush, and she shifts carefully on the windowsill, turning so she can face him properly and relaxing as he wraps a protective arm around her body. Tucking her hair behind both ears, she continues. “I more meant the distracting part. You have this way of easing my worries, Jake. You never make me feel like I’m overreacting, but talking it over with you just seems to make all the big issues seem so much smaller.”

Jake has never been great with his words, and today was proving to be no different. His heart was soaring as she spoke, but his brain refused to participate. Instead, he leans forwards to capture Amy’s lips in another kiss, hoping against all else that his touch could convey what he couldn’t seem to say. “I love you,” he whispered as they parted. It didn’t seem like enough. “So much.”

His hands roam along her back, fingers grazing gently against the plaid pattern of his shirt that she wore, stolen from his bedroom floor this morning. Checkered fabric had always been a personal favourite of his, but when you added the pattern to the already gorgeous features of his girlfriend,
there was no contest. Moving his fingers back to her front, he begins toying with the buttons, throwing her a cheeky wink when she looks up at him.

“You’ve got some smooth moves, Peralta” she whispers, reaching up to run a hand through his hair as she leans in for another kiss. She shifts again, legs growing numb in her current position, and she lets out a squeal when Jake temporarily loses his balance - dropping one leg onto the fire escape outside, crashing loudly as he hits the steel grates - hands moving from buttons to her sides as he grips her close.

Together they laugh, relief coursing through them as they push their heads together. “Couch?” Jake suggests, and Amy quickly nods in agreement before standing.

Pulling him along by the loose grip she had on his undershirt, Amy moved backwards until her legs hit the couch. She falls back, scooting to make room for Jake as he moves to join her. He kisses her with a renewed vigour, hands moving with purpose now as he makes quick work of buttons. She moans into his mouth, scrambling forwards again as she climbs into his lap and throws her arms around his neck.

It seemed as though the second Peralta Distraction Technique was working very well, indeed.

And, then -

Their bubble was burst suddenly, at the sudden unlocking of Jake’s front door, and an old but familiar voice quickly flooding the apartment.

"Yo, Jakester! You home, girl?"

"GINA?"

"The one and only!"

From his vantage point on the couch, Jake’s eyes widened in surprised as the larger than life presence that could only belong to Gina Linetti stormed into his apartment. His surprise at his friend’s sudden reappearance caused him to momentarily forget about Amy’s current state of undress, until she burrowed in closer to his chest in an effort to conceal herself.

Quickly, he worked with her shaky hands to button up his plaid shirt and cover her up. Her face had turned bright red, and out of instinct he wrapped one arm around her back, holding her close to his chest as he grabbed a nearby blanket and draped it across her lap.

"Oh, my b. I didn't think you'd have company over."

“Thanks for the vote of confidence, friend.”

“Whoa! The last I heard, you were all messed up about that Sophia girl.” At the mention of his ex’s name, Jake raises his hand in a silent request for Gina to stop.

“Yeah, well … maybe if you answered some of my texts, you might be a bit more up to date with things” he countered, raising one eyebrow as he gently stroked Amy’s back. “Gina, this is Amy. My girlfriend.”

Grimacing into his chest before she raises her head, Amy turns to smile at Gina, unfolding herself from Jake’s lap as she stands. She raises her hand in a friendly wave as Jake watches his oldest friend take her in. He’s known Gina long enough to know what she’s thinking, and the assessing gaze she was running over his girlfriend was beginning to make him a little nervous for what lay ahead.
“It’s lovely to finally meet you, Gina - I’ve heard a lot about you” Amy speaks, hands running quickly over her clothes in a quick self-conscious check that they had managed to get all the buttons. *Thank god they hadn’t gotten around to her leggings, yet!*

“Yeah, it’s nice to meet you too, Annie. Can’t say I’ve heard much about you, but that’s on Jake, isn’t it?”

“Read your texts, Gina. And it’s Amy, not Annie.” Jake responds with the roll of his eyes.

“Uhhh, I’ve been a little bit busy, starring in a dance revolution, Jacob! I don’t have time to read every little text that somebody sends me, alright?”

Shaking his head in exasperation, Jake stands and moves closer to the two women, dropping one hand on Amy’s shoulder as he reaches her. “Well Amy, this is Gina. My oldest friend, and apparently Broadway’s next biggest star.”

“Oh please, Broadway would be so lucky.”

Catching a brief pause in the conversation, Amy clears her throat before walking towards her study notes. “I should really give the two of you some time to catch up. I’m just going to get changed real quick and head down to the 99 for some coffee and study time.” She’s in Jake’s bedroom before he can even interject, and he turns back to Gina in exasperation.

“Great timing as always, G.”

She smiles at him, auburn hair catching the light as she shrugs with a sly grin. “What can I say? It’s a gift.”

Amy reappears, stopping by his side to drop a quick kiss to his cheek. “I’ll come join you soon, okay?” he whispers in her ear, one hand briefly resting against the small of her back. She nods quickly, smiling again at Gina before leaving the apartment, binders filled with notes clutched tightly to her chest as she closes the door behind her.

The silence at her departure is temporary, with Jake turning his attention back to his friend as she takes in the room before her. “Love what you’ve done with the place, Jake … the dusty shelves and old pizza boxes totally give the place a real ‘homely’ feel.”

He shrugs in response. If he was being honest, things used to be a lot worse. It had only been the regular appearance of a female - and not just any female … Amy Santiago, clean freak extraordinaire - that had made him clean up on a more regular basis. Sure, there were pizza boxes on the counter, but they were empty, and destined for the bin - he just hadn’t made the trip yet. *And dust, who cares about dust?!*

“So, what brings you here, Gina?” he asks, moving towards the kitchen to pour them both a drink.

“Can’t a girl drop in on an old friend?” she asks, settling onto a stool and leaning against his kitchen counter as she reaches for the offered glass. “Come and see my old playground?”

“Of course. I just haven’t heard from you in months. To be honest, I kinda expected to turn on SNL one week and see you and Dancy Reagan tearing up the stage.”

Now it was her turn to roll her eyes. “No, for some reason the producers never return my calls. Honestly, they don’t know what they’re missing out on.”

“Clearly.”
“We’re just on hiatus for a little bit. Andrea’s got this thing happening with her knee, and Michelle’s talking about going solo. You know how it goes.”

Completely unaware of any of the scenarios that would befall a dance troupe, Jake nods in what he hopes is a convincing manner. “Yeah, totally.”

If she noticed his false bravado, she wasn’t pouncing on it. “Right! And there’s this guy I met the other day who I kinda like, so there’s that … but never mind my stuff, what’s going on with you? Who was that mystery woman? Andy, was it?”

“Amy, Gina. Her name is Amy.”

“Potato, tomato. Dish, girl.”

He closes his eyes in a moment of exasperation as the familiarity of his friend’s erratic conversations begin to wash over him. Where does one begin describing Amy? Deciding to start from the beginning, he quickly retells the story of how they met.

“So … let me get this straight. You dumped your coffee on her, stole my t-shirt, took her for golf and crappy pizza, and she still wants to date you?”

“Sal’s Pizza is not crappy, and you abandoned your t-shirt. Along with all of your other clothing, might I add. And yes. She still wants to date me.”

Gina raises her eyebrows, taking a quick sip of her drink before continuing. “She sounds like a keeper, Jake. Does she know that you’re in love with her?”

Pulling back from his position on the opposite side of the counter, Jake furrows his brow as he studies the woman across from him. “I never said I was in love with her.”

“You didn’t have to. It’s obvious as hell. Well, to me anyway. So, does she know?”

“Yeah, she knows. And she loves me too, in case you were wondering.”

“I wasn’t. But good for you, Jake.”

He knows her well enough to know that this is probably the closest he’s ever going to get to a Gina Linetti Stamp of Approval. So he smiles, wide and bright, and nods at her words. “Thanks, Gina. It feels right, her and I.”

“Ugh! Don’t make me regret what I said, Jacob.” Gina replies, making a disgusted face in an attempt to hide the elated smile that had graced her face at his statement of happiness.

Employing the Peralta Distraction Technique number 3 (techniques 1 and 2 involving kisses and therefore remaining exclusive to Amy), Jake changed the conversation back to Gina, placing both hands flat on the counter as he leans forward to stare her down. “Now don’t think I didn’t notice your sly mention of a new guy back there - one that you kinda like? Now it’s your turn to dish, girl.”

“Oh please. You and I both know that I don’t like anyone. Present company included.” He rolls his eyes at the obvious lie. “But okay, yes, I met a guy. And he seems alright, as guys go. Really cute, great smile … smoking hot bod, obviously.”

“Obviously.”

“His name is Milton, which is a bit of a downer, but I don’t think it’ll be a deal breaker. I mean,
there’s definitely variations of that name that I could use. And he can’t help what name he was given at birth. Not everyone had telepathic conversations with their mother via the womb like I did.”

Jake blinks at that, and (wisely) decides not to question it.

“More importantly,” she continues, “He’s been a real gentleman. Like, opening doors and shiz. It’s nice, I’m not used to guys doing that. I gotta say, I kinda like it.”

“Gina, I’ve been telling you for years that all of those things are how gentlemen - myself included, of course - do things. But - ” he pauses, raising his hand as he sees the impending reaction in her facial expression, “BUT, I am happy to hear that you’ve found someone that finally treats you the way you deserve.”

Pushing away from the counter, Gina nods at Jake’s comment as she begins looking around again. “You’re right Jacob, I am a Queen, and it’s about damn time I found myself a Prince. Now, where’s all the stuff I left behind? You didn’t take it to goodwill, did you? There were some irreplaceable items in there. Please don’t tell me you took it to goodwill.”

Shaking his head at her obvious change of topic (she’s never been good at the serious conversations, but neither has he really), Jake points towards the loft. “No Gina, I know better than to give away any of your things. It’s all up there in your old room.” He tries not to blush when his gaze falls on the ladder, and his mind tracks to his and Amy’s earlier tryst.

As she marches up the ladder, Jake reaches for his phone and sends a quick text to Amy to see how she’s going with her studying. His heart skips a beat when she replies quickly, encouraging him to join her. The amount of heart-eye and kissing emojis included in the message suggested that perhaps his distractions were still working - definitely a positive, considering the strain she’d put herself under recently. The stress braids that had appeared in her hair had definitely been an interesting development.

Gina’s voice breaks through his thoughts as she descends the ladder, a worryingly small portion of the amount of clothing he knows is up there now clutched in her hands. “Okay, Jakester, I’m outies. Milty and I are heading out to lunch and I want to make sure I look good. Don’t be a stranger this time, okay?”

Raising his eyebrows as Gina stalks through the room, grabbing her purse as she passes, Jake responds. “For the billionth time, Gina, read your texts and then we won’t be strangers. But seriously, it was great to see you today - if you’re staying in Brooklyn for awhile, we should definitely hang out.”

She nods quickly, already distracted as she whips out her phone and starts tapping. “You too, Jacob. It’s been a blast.” Pausing for a moment, she looks up at Jake with a rare display of sincerity crossing her face. “For realz. You look happy, Jake. And I hope you and Arnie stick together. She’s put the shine back in your eyes.”

He blushes, unprepared for an attack of sincerity from his oldest friend. “Thank you, Gina. But seriously, her name is Amy. No fooling around.”

“Alright, alright, Amy it is. Jeez, you make it sound like I’m going to be saying it forever.”

*Maybe that’s the plan*, he thought to himself as he waves Gina out of the apartment. Moving quickly as he changes into something more presentable than his old sleepwear, he grabs his keys and slams the apartment door behind him - eager to return to Amy and grab a coffee from the 99.
It’s later that evening when he wakes from his slumber, body still covered by rumpled sheets as he stretches out an arm and finds the bed empty next to him. Early morning, really, if the time on the alarm clock Amy insists on having on her bedside is anything to go by. He blinks in confusion as he looks around the room, finding it empty. Both of them had collapsed earlier that night, exhausted after the resurrection of Peralta Distraction Technique number two. But now, he was alone.

A soft shuffling of papers cuts through the silence, and Jake turns his head toward the hallway as he throws the sheets back and stands with a quiet groan. Slipping on a shirt and a pair of boxers, he heads towards the sound, treading quietly so as to not startle Amy.

He stands for a moment, unseen in the darkness of the hallway as he watches her. She’s in the kitchen, with her notes taking over the counter and a small lamp providing the only illumination. Hunched over her notes, she runs her hand through her hair, gripping the roots as she shakes her head in frustration before grabbing a pen and scribbling more notes in the margin. The tension in her shoulders had returned, and he was pretty sure he could see that a few braids had returned.

Crossing his arms in an effort to keep himself warm in the cooler evening air, he steps into the light and clears his throat before whispering “Hey babe, whatcha doing?”

Her head whips up, clearly startled by his sudden appearance, and she looks sheepishly down at her notes as she makes a futile attempt to cover up the papers with her hands. “Oh, you know, just hanging in the kitchen.”

He nods, smiling gently as he moves closer. Resting beside her, he leans back against the counter and runs a hand through her hair in what he hopes is a comforting gesture. “Yeah, I’d say that’s a usual activity for two in the morning.”

She blushes, tucking her hair behind both ears as she looks back down at her notes. “I just … I woke up a little while ago, and started running through my notes in my mind, but there was one bit that I couldn’t remember. And I didn’t want to wake you, so …”

He moves his hand to her cheek, stroking her skin softly as he shuffles closer. “You don’t have to explain, Ames. I know this stuff is important to you. I get it. Can I help you, though?”

Looking over at him, her eyes soften as she moves one hand from her notes and rests it against his chest instead. “Got any more distraction techniques up your sleeve, Peralta?”

He winks, pulling her in for a soft kiss before nodding. “I’ve got a lot of good stuff to offer, babe.”

“A lot of good stuff to offer, title of your sex tape.”

He laughs, the sound of his joy bouncing off the walls of his quiet apartment. “Get back to your notes, Santiago. I’m going to make you some hot chocolate, and then we’re going back to bed.”

Ruffling his hair, she nods before turning back to the papers strewn across the countertop. He moves quickly behind her, grateful that he’d remembered to restock his fridge earlier in the week as he prepares them both a warm drink. As he waits for them to heat up, he reaches over to the radio and turns it on, smiling as a familiar song filters into the silence.

Amy raises her head as she leans against the counter, a small smile crossing her face as she turns slightly in an effort to hear the music better. Closing her eyes she begins to move softly to the
rhythm, and Jake watches from his corner, captivated. *She's so beautiful.*

He moves forward after a beat, reaching out a hand and sighing happily when she takes it. Without another word being said, she folds into his arms and together they begin to sway across the kitchen floor.

Jake feels Amy relax against his chest, the scribbled notes on his counter long forgotten. Finally, he feels her shoulders loosen, and he pulls her closer before dropping a kiss to her neck. It seemed out of all his techniques, this one was proving to be the most successful.

Neither of them are particularly skilled dancers, and for the life of them, they *cannot* remember the name of this song. But here in this moment, they remained wrapped in each other’s arms with the light from the small lamp casting their shadows across the floor.

Behind him, the water in the jug boils, and the cups on his bench remain untouched as the music continues. Right now, Jake and Amy had all that they needed, and everything else could wait.

Chapter End Notes

Soooo, how did I do? I hope you enjoyed it! I’ve loved reading all of your comments, and the kudos keep my heart beating (it’s a scientific fact!) Please feel free to leave one, or both - they make me so happy!
Home Is Wherever I'm With You

Chapter Summary

Amy finishes up at the academy, and raises questions about their future.

Chapter Notes

Ok so I had to do a *little* bit of a time jump, but ... the academy is a six month program, guys. It felt meaner to drag that out than it did to press fast forward, so ... here goes nothing!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Brooklyn.

Chapter Twelve - Home is Wherever I’m With You

There was an uneven ridge along the edge of Amy’s thumbnail. An irritating - and oddly sharp - anomaly on an otherwise perfectly manicured set of nails. She rubs her index finger along it now, over and over, feeling the slight rise irritate her skin. It’s been on her to-do list for weeks, to file her nail back and put it back into formation with the others. She’s glad for the distraction right now, as she sits and waits on this bench in the middle of the city.

This had been the final week of her academy training. One final test result, and she would be an officer of the NYPD. It had been a long six months, filled with long nights of memorisation and epsom salt baths to soothe her sore muscles, but it had absolutely been worth it.

Her residence in Brooklyn, thankfully, meant that she didn’t have to move into the academy for the entire six months. She was one of the lucky ones, who got to go home every night and decompress the day. Even luckier, she thinks, because when she got to go home, she got to fall into Jake’s arms.

The last six weeks of the course had proven to be the most demanding, and in an effort to give her all, she had opted to stay in one of the leftover vacant dorms so that she could devote herself entirely to the process. It had been the hardest weeks of her life, both physically and emotionally, and she had never been more grateful for the existence of modern technology, and the miracle that is FaceTime. She had missed Jake more than she could have anticipated. Her body had been reset to seek out his in the night, her hands felt empty when they weren’t curled around his. They had been dating for eleven months, but she was finding it difficult to remember a time when they hadn’t been together.

But she was nervous now, as she sat and waited one block away from the academy, one leg bouncing up and down in a nervous tick that her mother was forever chastising her for. Jake had insisted on picking her up on her last day, stating that he wouldn’t be able to wait another minute before they could be back together. But that had been the bravado of two lovers saying goodbye before six weeks of separation - and there was a part of Amy that was a little bit terrified that he
wouldn’t be as eager to see her as they’d first anticipated.

There was no indicator from him that made her feel this way. Their phone calls had been consistent, the conversation had never died (and always, *always* ended with I Love You), and they may have, once or twice, used FaceTime to give themselves the illusion that they were falling asleep next to each other. (Thank god for wifi, amiright?)

Jake’s words were sweet (how he considers himself unromantic, she’ll never know), and her phone was full of texts from him - ranging from sappy messages explaining how much he was missing her, to some of the more *ahem* adult variety. So she knew that her fears were most likely unjustified. But still, she waits: with her heart in her throat, shaky legs, and an uneven thumbnail.

His voice breaks through her thoughts, the recognisable tone calling out her name - “Ames!” and her head whips up, eyes widening as she searches the crowd for a face she’s beginning to know better than her own.

Suddenly he’s there, striding towards her with a smile so wide she’s surprised it hasn’t split his face in half. She rises, still kinda nervous, unsure if she can still stand in the one spot with all of the anxious energy vibrating through her. He draws closer, and in an instant she’s moving - abandoning her bag on the floor as her pace quickens with his, almost breaking into a run as her eyes begin to well with unexpected tears.

She crashes into him, throwing her arms around his neck and holding tight as his fall to her waist, pulling her tight against his chest. For a moment, neither can speak, faces buried into each other as they breathe and reset.

“Hey, hey … what’s wrong, babe? Why all the tears?”

Amy shakes her head, not willing to admit the feelings that she now realises were totally irrational. “I just really missed you. I love you so much,” she whispered, tasting the salt of the tears his thumb hadn’t swept away as she drops her head to his chest.

“I love you too, Ames. Come on, let’s get you home.”

It was a little over two months ago that the two of them had moved in together, foregoing the loft apartment that Jake had lived in for years and deciding to stick with Amy’s. She had been expecting more of a protest on his end - it would have made perfect sense, given how long he’d lived there and...
the history within it’s walls - but then he floored her with a humble shrug of his shoulders and the words that her happiness meant more to him than keeping his own apartment, and if she hadn’t fallen in love with him already, she definitely would have right there and then.

There was a deeper sense of togetherness to everything now. There was the contrast of his plaid shirt against her floral duvet cover as he would dress in the morning; the framed limited edition Die Hard poster that was hanging comfortably next to her impressionist paintings. It was his grey toothbrush, sitting in the glass next to hers. His impressive sneaker collection taking pride of place on the wall adjacent to her bookshelves. He had been the missing piece to her puzzle - one that she’d never known to be lacking until eleven months ago.

They sat together on the couch now, with her head tucked under his chin and resting on his shoulder. She had been very touchy-feely since their reunion this afternoon - dare she say it, clingy - always keeping one hand on him as they returned to their home. Her hand on his thigh as he negotiated traffic, watching him with a smile as he sang along to a song she should probably know. Resting in his back pocket as he dug through the front pocket for their house keys (why he didn’t keep them on the same keyring as his car keys, she’ll never figure out). And wrapped around his waist now, holding him tight as she closes her eyes and breathes him in, finally allowing her heart to return to its regular beat as they sat in relative silence.

She’d half expected them to be having sex by now - or, at the very least, halfway there - but the initial heavy making out that had begun after they walked through the door and Jake pushed her towards the couch had morphed into something sweeter, something gentler. It had become more about revelling in each other’s presence, and less about scratching an itch, and it strangely felt more intimate.

After a good half hour of catching up on everything the other had missed, Amy stands and stretches, throwing her hands towards the ceiling as she arches her back and waits for her muscles to shake. From his position still on the couch, Jake laughs, and she looks over him with curious eyes.

“You look like a cat, when you do that.”

She laughs in response, before narrowing her eyes playfully. “Are you trying to get me to curl up on your lap, Peralta?”

“Consider it an open invitation.”

Still laughing, Amy shakes her head and turns towards their bathroom. The salt baths she had taken at the academy (an insider tip Jake had given her when she first mentioned her aches) had been very helpful in easing her sore muscles, and it was what she felt she needed right now. “I’m going to draw myself a bath, try and soothe the aches a little,” she called out to Jake in explanation, pulling her t-shirt off as she walks down the hall. Warm hands wrap around her waist, and Jake kisses her shoulder as she leans into his embrace. He whispers a question in her ear, asking if she would like company, and a simple nod is all she can offer.

The bathwater is hot against her skin, pulling her senses into high alert as she steps into the tub and waits for Jake to join her. He moves to stand behind Amy, settling himself against the edge before widening the space between his legs for her to nestle in-between, resting against his chest as the water level rises and bobs against their bodies. They sighed in unison, feeling the tension slip away as the warmth spread through them. This is what she had missed, more than all the other things
combined - these quiet moments, where the rest of the world seemed to fade away.

Taking advantage of the solitude, Amy reaches for the cloth and starts swiping gently across Jake’s skin, watching the rivulets of water run down the length of his arm as he moves his hand into a lower angle, letting the droplets skim down to the tips of his fingers before dripping against her leg. She repeats this motion, over and over, seemingly mesmerised by the movement of the water but inwardly trying to find the best way to voice the question that had been laying dormant in the back of her mind for over a month.

“So, Jake … there’s something that I’ve been meaning to ask you for a little while, now.” she begins, her voice softly bouncing off the bathroom tile as she continues the motion of the cloth against his skin.

He hums against her skin, kissing her hair as he waits for her to continue.

“Assuming everything has gone well with the final exam, and I pass and actually become part of the NYPD … what happens next?”

He extends his fingers, flexing them quickly as he voices his surprise. “You mean they didn’t tell you what happens after graduation?”

Amy shakes her head, realising the vagueness of her question. “No, I mean … yes, they told us all about that. I just mean …. what if I’m posted to some precinct that’s far away from here?”

“Then you’ll commute?”

“I could, but if I want to commit everything to the role, I’m going to want to be the first on shift, and the last to leave. What if my commuting time means an extra hour each way, on top of all of that?”

“Oh. Well … then we’ll move.”

“To somewhere that meets in the middle?”

He shrugs behind her, the movement of his chest rubbing against her shoulder blades as she waits in silence. “I guess. I mean, maybe I’ll commute?”

“Don’t you need to be close by, in case you get a lead and need to move quickly?”

His whole body stiffens this time, the sound of the bathwater lapping against the porcelain edge the only sound echoing through the room. She waits, and after a moment she realises he’s not going to respond. Twisting her upper body so that she can catch his eyes, her heart sinks as she takes in the guarded look that now crosses his face.

Finally, he speaks. “Ames, where are you going with this?”

It’s her turn to shrug this time, temporarily lost for words as she struggles to understand where his mind is going. “I just … what if this job pulls us apart? What if we end up working at different ends of the city, and we see each other less and less? Things are so great right now. I’d hate to lose it all.” Pausing, she reaches a hand up to rest against his cheek. “Wouldn’t you?”

Jake nods, the tension in his jaw lessening as she keeps her hand in position, stroking his five o’clock shadow with her thumb. He closes his eyes for a moment, taking a deep breath before watching her carefully.

“For a moment there, I thought you were going to suggest that we break up.”
The horror on her face is evident as she stares back at him, eyes wide as she shakes her head. “Oh god, no! Jake. No. Definitely not.”

He laughs now, relief evident as he moves to kiss the hand stroking his cheek. “Well, now that that heart attack is over … I don’t know what to tell you, babe. I know it sounds like I’m brushing it off, but I just think that whatever comes at us, we’ll find a way to figure it out.”

Nodding, Amy’s eyes roam over Jake’s face, re-committing to memory the little details their six week separation made her feel like she’d forgotten.

After a beat, he continues. “Look, I don’t want to sound crazy here, but whatever happens, you and I will find a way. If I have to catch three trains and a bus to get home to you, I’ll do it. If you have to wait for a chance to transfer to a different precinct, so be it. If we need to move, I’ll start packing. Whatever it takes, Ames. I’m here for the long haul.”

Her heart flutters in her chest as he speaks, and tears threaten to well in her eyes again. It was something that had always been kind of suggested, but never really spoken out loud, until today. The long haul. He wants this to work, just as much as she does.

“I don’t know if I’ve mentioned this today,” she whispers with a sly smile, “but I love you, Jake Peralta.”

“You may have said something about that, once or twice.”

She lifts her head towards his, meeting him halfway as he draws her in for a kiss. It’s quick, and before he has the chance to pull away she moves her hand to the back of his neck, pulling him back and capturing his lips again, this time deepening the kiss as she twists more of her body carefully. The tub was not particularly large, and the water level was already dangerously close to the top.

The passion that had sparked in their earlier makeout had returned, and as she rose to her knees to increase the intensity of their kiss the water sloshed loudly against the porcelain in protest. Tiny waves of water leapt off the edge, crashing onto the tile floor below as their hands moved against each other’s bodies, moving in familiar patterns that somehow still felt new. Breaking for a moment to catch their breath, Amy raises her eyebrows at Jake’s flustered gaze, thankful that he seemed to be just as affected by the moment as she was.

She grinds her hips against his, and he moans in response. “Maybe we should move this to the bedroom? You know, before we ended up with a swimming pool on our bathroom floor?”

His head nods eagerly, and she giggles as his hands tighten around her waist and attempt to lift her from the water. His feet follow hers as they hit the floor quickly, Amy only have a brief moment to yank the plug out of its position before Jake is tugging her towards the bedroom. They fall onto the soft mattress with a thud, hands reaching out to return to their previous caresses as Jake begins a trail of hot kisses along her line of her shoulder. All the pent up energy of six weeks without her boyfriend had reached its peak, and as she dug her nails into his skin she bends her knees, separating them slightly to accommodate him as they move closer together. She could feel him, hard and wanting, against her inner thigh, and she knew that her body was already reciprocating in kind.

His kisses turn gentle again, her fingers combing through his hair as she pulls away. She pants beneath him, watching him with wonder and he lowers his head slightly, leaving another gentle kiss on her lips before resting his forehead against her own. There was a different look in his eyes, one that she couldn’t place, but it kept her captivated as she stared back.
“I mean it, Amy. I am completely in love with you. I can’t imagine my life without you. Whatever life brings us - I am all in.”

She blinks quickly, trying desperately to fight the tears that are threatening to escape from her eyes. It was everything she had been thinking herself, from early on, and everything that she’d been hoping that he would be feeling as well. He was it for her.

Using the hand that was still buried in his hair to pull him back down, she kisses him with everything she has. He enters her while they kiss, tongues tangling as they begin to move. And for a moment, Amy understands what all the great poets were writing about. Why there were so many movies, books, plays and songs written about this.

It was the reason why the fairytale princess would stay locked in the tower, waiting ever so patiently for her One True Prince (or Princess, if she prefers).

It was worth all the songs written, worthy of every painting with their gentle strokes against the canvas.

It was an all-consuming, tongue tie-ing, unable to speak kind of thing.

A knock-you-down, heart exploding, hold a boom box outside their bedroom window playing their favourite song kind of feeling.

It was love, in its purest form, and she was so grateful to have found it in Jake.

Chapter End Notes

In all seriousness, I really truly hope you have enjoyed this series. Interest is starting to fade I feel, so I may begin to wrap it up, but I have to say thank you so much to everyone of you who has dropped me a line, and/or pressed that blessed kudos button. You’ve helped me gain so much confidence in my writing, and it is worth it’s weight in gold - truly.

Please - feel free to continue with your comments/kudos, they keep my heart beating better than anything else I know! xx
Real Love is Never a Waste of Time

Chapter Summary

Jake's family history, and drinks with friends. (Bonus content: Four Drink Amy!)

Chapter Notes

First off I just want to say a huge THANK YOU for all your comments and kudos. Part of me never wants to end this fic, but I don't want to drag it out, either. I'm so incredibly grateful to have such wonderful readers, and every time I get a notification about a comment or kudos, my heart smiles just that little bit wider. So thank you - so much!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Brooklyn.

Chapter Thirteen - Real Love is Never A Waste Of Time

Jake can still remember the first time he came to believe that love was just a fallacy.

He had been seven years old, and had spent the previous night cooped up in his room with his back to the wall and an open comic book long forgotten on his lap. He had gotten so used to nights just like this, learning to keep his headphones nearby, an attempt to block out the sound of his parent’s fighting.

It was never predictable, their arguments. Sometimes his mom would keep up the facade, pretend to be unaware that his dad’s afternoon golf sessions were anything but. Sometimes, he would notice a strange looking wig in their bathroom and hear his mother’s voice shouting down a phone line. And other times he could honestly feel the storm brewing - the tension crackling across the room as the sun’s light faded and yet another ‘commitment’ would keep his father from arriving home on time.

Each night, he would absorb the hurt tone in his mother’s voice and listen to the feeble attempts that his father would make to justify his actions. He put a clever amount of sincerity into his words, a skill well-crafted after years of spinning lies, and Jake would almost be able to pinpoint the moment that his mother’s resolve would come crashing down.

Sometimes, the nights would turn deathly quiet, and he would wake in the morning to the discovery that his father was staying at a nearby motel. It would only ever last a few days, before one would come crawling back to the other, and the cycle would begin again.

This particular night however, he had listened helplessly as his mother began to cry. He heard her body slump against the wall shared with his room, felt the scrape of her back against the structure as she dropped down to the carpet. There was an uncharacteristic tone of defeat in her voice,
surprisingly loud as she told her husband that she simply couldn’t do it anymore.

The following morning, when Jake awoke and headed into the kitchen for breakfast, something was different. Nothing had changed. Everything was the same, and yet something was different. And that was when his mother sat him down, distracting him with smiley face pancakes, sat across from him and told him that his father wasn’t coming home.

She had been careful to point out that Roger Peralta’s actions were never to do with a lack of love. *He loves you, more than you know!* she exclaimed to Jake’s dubious face. None of what she said made sense. All the movies and tv shows he’d ever watched had told him that people that loved each other stayed together. If his father loved him, he wouldn’t have walked away.

Love was, therefore, a waste of time. A meaningless four-letter word that only worked in scripts, playing out in ridiculous movies with overpaid actors, or fairytales written so long ago that their originality had long since been twisted to suit the masses. It wasn’t real, and the sooner he came to terms with that, the better.

He hated how optimistic he would feel every time a weekend with his dad would roll around. Every time, he hoped that this time would be different. And every time, he would come home disappointed. He would chastise himself, glaring at his reflection in the mirror and trying to ignore all the way he could see his father’s face in his own. The years rolled on, and the catch-ups grew less and less frequent, and his theory on the ridiculousness of love only solidified. His mother loved him, this he knew. But she was an exception to the rule.

Growing up, he had adopted a fickle attitude into all his burgeoning relationships. Keeping his dates cheap, and quick, there was never any given opportunity for the conversation to run deep. A fear of yet another rejection left him engaging in one-night stands, or frantic second-date sex, never allowing any quiet moments to linger afterwards; never any bodies cooling in tangled sheets with gentle words bubbling into their throats.

It wasn’t particularly hard to find a date: chase some mutual gratification and move on. Avoid deeper moments with a well-timed joke, or an accidental-on-purpose losing of somebody’s phone number. It wasn’t until Sophia entered his world, and challenged him to stick around, that he had even considered making an effort - to lower the fences that surrounded him and allow somebody else attempt getting to know him. So, when she too walked away, ignoring his declarations of love; he spent months berating himself - because this was exactly the reason why he never tried.

And then Amy Santiago had come (literally) crashing into his life, and everything had changed. She had seen the scars on his heart, and had slowly begun healing them, one by one. Her gentle touch and loving words had made him realise the most basic of truths - that he was worthy of love - great love, real love, and that she was more than willing to offer such. The day that she stood in her apartment, looking more beautiful than ever, and told him she loved him, was easily one of the greatest days of his life. There was no doubt in his mind that she was the best thing to have ever happened to him.

He was watching her now, from his position sitting adjacent to the table, as she worked the room with her charming smile. Tonight, they were attending a mixer, an opportunity for the new officers to mingle with current members of the force - meet the higher-ups and various other staff members from neighbouring precincts. She was wearing a red dress, with lipstick to match, and he could not
keep his eyes off her.

It would be a cliché, to say that the dress was wearing her, but in this case, it really felt true. It hugged her curves in all the right ways - complimenting her body but also maintaining a professional image. There were superiors here, after all. But he knew what lay underneath the fabric, and he was absolutely itching to grab onto the zipper that he had helped close earlier in the evening, and encourage it’s descent.

Amy was still relatively new to the force, but her tenacity and eagerness to learn had quickly garnered her a reputation as one of the best of the new recruits. He could see the spark of recognition of her name in their colleague’s eyes as the two of them had moved about the room - and he was so incredibly proud to see her finally chasing her dream occupation. Amy was amazing, and it was so great that others were beginning to see it.

She was at the bar now, grabbing the two of them a drink. It was later in the evening, and as the hours had passed, the higher-ranking officers had moved on and left the younger officers to their own devices. Finally, free from the danger of Drunk Amy saying or doing something inappropriate in front of a future mentor, she had parked Jake at a nearby table, dropping a kiss to his cheek with the promise of returning with champagne. She turned towards him now, holding two flutes in her hands with a triumphant smile.

His heartbeat started skipping as she walked towards him, throwing him a private smile as she draws closer. “One glass of bubbly, coming up!” she says, offering him the glass in her right hand.

Foregoing the empty chair next to him, Amy instead opts to plant herself onto Jake’s lap - her back towards the table as she wraps her right arm around his shoulders.

“Well hello there, Officer Santiago.” he whispers in her ear, dropping a chaste kiss to her lower neck as he wraps his left arm around Amy’s waist for support.

Her grin widens as he calls her by her title, skin shivering from his kiss. “Hi there, Detective Peralta.”

Stroking his hand gently along her waist, he moves to meet her eyes before speaking. “How’s your night been, babe?”

Taking a sip of her champagne, Amy smiles against the edge of the flute and nods. “I’m really glad we came tonight, Jake. It’s been so great to meet everyone.”

“Really glad we came tonight, title of your sex tape?” he responds with a wink.

Looking over at Jake with a wry smile, Amy crinkles her nose. “Not your best, babe.”

He nods in agreement. “Yeah, it was worth a shot. But in all seriousness, it looked like you were enjoying yourself. And it’s excellent that you finally got to meet Captain Holt.”

At the mention of his C.O., Amy’s eyes lit up and the hand resting on his shoulder tightens in excitement. “Oh my gosh, I loved him! Jake, he is everything you could want in a captain. I absolutely need him to become my rabbi.”

Raising his eyebrows in surprise, Jake chuckles softly. “Really, you liked him that much? I always find it hard to get a read on him, he’s so stoic.”
Shrugging her shoulders gently, Amy moves her hand to the base of his neck, index finger resting against his hairline. “I think that’s what I like the most. He just takes it all so seriously - it's so black and white with him, it’s refreshing.”

He’d never really thought about it that way. “Yeah, I guess you’re right. He’s definitely different from any other captain I’ve had. You never know though, Ames. Maybe one day you can transfer from the 8-3 and join us over at the 9-9.” He drains his glass as he finishes speaking.

She shrugs again. “Maybe, yeah. I mean, I’m really enjoying the 8-3, but working under Holt’s wing is definitely enticing.”

“And a little side-benefit, working with your super hot boyfriend would be amazeballs.”

Throwing him a wink, Amy laughs softly. “Well, that goes without saying.”

He answers her with a warm smile, turning his head towards the room as he scanned the remaining crowd. Besides them, there were only ten or so other people still in attendance. He wasn’t ready for the night to be over, but the event was clearly reaching its end.

Reaching across Amy to place his empty flute on the table, Jake moves his now free right hand to rest on her legs. “I think this night might be drawing to a close, babe. There’s a few from the 9-9 that have kicked on at Shaw’s, should we join them?” His hand moves to her thigh. “Or … should we head on home?”

Her eyes were warm as she considered the options, leaving a gentle kiss on his temple before speaking. “I could go another couple of drinks. Why don’t we drop in and say hi, see where the night takes us? Sound okay?”

He tightens his hand against her thigh, squeezing gently as he moves his head until their lips meet for a gentle kiss. “I’ll go wherever you go, babe.”

Another hour has passed, and the crowd at Shaw’s was proving to be as entertaining as ever. The detectives had greeted Jake and Amy with a cheer when they entered the establishment, quickly ushering them to the bar for a drink to catch up with the rest of them.

With three drinks now safely under her belt, Amy was currently dancing up a storm on the dance floor, taking on Terry in what could only be interpreted as a hybrid robot/running man dance off. Watching from his position at the bar, Jake can barely suppress his smile as he watches the two of them battle it out. Amy is many things, but a dancer she is not.

“So Jake, how do you think the mixer went for Amy?” Boyle said, interrupting his thoughts as his partner walks over to join him at the bar.

Tearing his eyes away, Jake turns toward Charles and nods slightly. “Pretty well, I think. How about you, Boyle?”

“Oh, just great. Although, the chef didn’t take on my suggestion for a goat leg stew, which is disappointing - the hooves really bring an intensity to the meal. But, that’s their loss, I guess.”

Jake nods, hoping the disgust isn’t evident on his face.
Charles continues. ‘It was nice, though, to catch up with old colleagues. I’m glad you suggested I come along, it’d been so long since I’ve been to one of these things.’

Finally grabbing the barman’s attention, Jake orders two beers for himself and Boyle, and turns back to his partner with a smile. ‘Yeah, it made for a nice change to see everyone off duty, I must admit.’

Nodding in response, Charles looks over at Amy before turning back to Jake. ‘And what about what we talked about the other day, have you given that any more thought?’

Repressing the urge to sigh, Jake gives Boyle an exasperated stare at the sudden subject change, and shakes his head. ‘I keep telling you, I was looking in the jewellery store window for a present for my mom. I can’t help if there were rings on display.’

‘Sure, sure, Jake.’ He grabs one of the bottles the bartender had placed on the bar, taking a long draft before continuing. ‘I’m just saying, it wouldn’t be your craziest idea. Not by a long shot.’

Remaining uncharacteristically silent, Jake chooses instead to study the label on his bottle, thumbnail scraping along the edge until he begins to feel the sticker lift from the glass. He can feel Boyle’s eyes on him, and he knows that Charles doesn’t believe his excuse about looking for a gift for his mom. To be fair, he’s right not to. He had totally been busted looking at rings - engagement rings, to be exact. Totally lost in his thoughts, as he pictured each and every ring on Amy's slender fingers, feeling like Goldilocks as his gaze moved from ring to ring. This one too big, this one too small … he’d never heard Boyle coming until he was literally breathing down his neck. And now here they were, trying to discuss all the thoughts that Jake was reluctant to even consider in his own mind, let alone vocalise.

‘I don’t know, Charles … Don’t you think it might be a little too soon?’ he manages to mumble, eyes flickering nervously to Amy, checking that she was still safely on the dance floor and out of hearing range.

Settling into the barstool next to his, Charles places his bottle down on the bar with a soft thud. ‘The two of you have been dating for just over a year now, right?’

Jake nods, still choosing to remain quiet. ‘I just … I didn’t grow up with the best example of a healthy relationship, you know? Part of me worries that

Taking a swig of his beer, Jake turns in his barstool and angles his body towards Charles. ‘I just … I didn’t grow up with the best example of a healthy relationship, you know? Part of me worries that
one day I’ll turn out just like my dad. And I can’t bear the thought of doing that to Amy. I don’t want to rush her into something if I’m just going to bail out when things get hard.”

Shaking his head vehemently, Charles pushes his beer bottle away before leaning in closer to Jake. “The very fact that you’re worried about it should tell you that it’s not going to happen. You are not your father, Jake. You’ve proven that over and over again. And I know you love her. You get literal heart eyes every time you look at her. It would be disgusting, if I wasn’t so invested in the two of you.”

Choosing to ignore the last comment, Jake looks over again at Amy, catching her eye this time as he smiles at her. She smiles back, winking at him before putting her attention back on Terry. Jake turns his head back to Charles, eyes turning serious again as he speaks. “I know she loves me. There’s no way that’s even in doubt. And I’d like to think that she’s ready. I …. I just need to be sure, Boyle. If she said no …”

Charles drops his hand to Jake’s forearm where it rests against the bar. “Trust me, Jakey. There is no way she is going to say no. Call it a hunch.”

“Say no to what?” a new voice interrupts, startling the two of them out of their conversation. Jake turns quickly, smiling at Amy at her new position next to him at the bar, her slightly drunk mind studying them curiously.

“Ahhh, hey Ames! Boyle was just saying, there’s no way that you’re going to say no to another drink.”

“Aw, yeah! Drink number four, come at me!” she calls out, grinning as she wraps her arms around Jake’s shoulders in an effort to steady herself. He turns quickly, wrapping one arm around her waist and resting his fingers against her ribs as he pulls her closer. Her perfume wafts over him, calming his overactive mind while he gestures for another beer from the bartender. She grabs it quickly when it arrives, gulping down a third of it before offering the bottle to Jake with a soft smile.

“That one’s all yours, babe,” he answers with a shake of his head. “What do you say we get out of here after you’ve finished your drink?”

She nods happily, taking another sip as she moves impossibly closer to him. “Remind me on the way home, I need to tell you about how I kicked Terry’s ass in the dance-off.”

Jake laughs in response, shoulders shaking as he looks over at his friend’s defeated face, retired now to a booth with the rest of the precinct. “You beat the sarge? Well done, babe!”

Amy raises her head proudly, nodding as she drains the last of the beer from her bottle. “Damn straight. When it comes to dancing, I’m the sergeant of the dance floor.”

“Well, in that case, well done Sergeant Santiago!”

Her eyes flash at him, arms returning to his neck as she pulls him closer. “Oh my god, say that again.”

“Well done, Sergeant Santiago?” he repeats, unsure if that’s what she meant.

“That is so hot, Detective Peralta.”

Raising his eyebrows as he realises what’s happening, Jake’s smile turns sly as he leans in closer, until only the two of them can hear. “Well, just between you and me, I can’t wait until I get to call you Captain …. Captain Santiago.”
Moving her hands to either side of his face, Amy pulls Jake in and lands a hard kiss on his mouth, absorbing his surprised gasp as she presses her lips against his. She pulls away just as quickly, locking eyes with him as she gazes through half-lidded eyes.

“Take me home, Jake.”

He moves without haste, nearly kicking out the barstool from underneath him as he grabs Amy’s hand and moves through the crowd. She squeezes his fingers as they wave goodbye to their friends, and he stops at the door to grab her jacket and ensure she’s warm before braving the weather outside.

Opting to hail a cab instead of the drunken stumble home, Amy wraps her hand around Jake’s upper arm, holding him close as they huddle in together for warmth. Kissing her hair as he rubs his spare hand up and down her back, Jake smiles down at Amy as she tips her head up at him with an unreadable look.

They share a brief kiss, and as the cab arrives Jake begins to hope that maybe this time, Boyle’s hunch was completely right.

Chapter End Notes

IS BOYLE’S HUNCH RIGHT, YOU GUYS?

Feel free to leave comments/yell at me below. And every time you leave kudos, another angel gets their wings. ;)

It was just past seven at night, and Amy had a lot on her mind.

She knew that today had brought in a particularly difficult case for Jake. He and Boyle had been out chasing a lead on something else when they intercepted a callout - for all available officers to respond.

He’d called her not long after leaving the scene, and thankfully she’d been near her phone. Trying to keep the conversation light, he’d asked her about her day and made the occasional joke. But he was forgetting that she knew him - could hear the shake of his breath in the silent moments. Could almost feel his hand trembling as he gripped his phone against his ear. Something had rocked him to the core, and as much as she wanted to pry it out of him, Amy also knew that at that moment he just needed to hear her voice.

So she spoke, about everything and nothing, going into ridiculous details about a B&E that her and her partner had intercepted earlier that day. Described the designer sneakers the perp had been wearing when he tried to run (rookie mistake, doesn’t he know they’re not designed for practicality?), and told him how the detectives in her precinct already seemed familiar with the perp’s record. She continued, feeling as though she was rambling, until slowly his breathing started to return to normal. He was laughing at her jokes by the end, offering her cool one-liners to use on her next takedown, and she knew she’d brought him back.

After he ended the call, Amy searched through the scanner for reports of activity around Jake’s
precinct. Unfortunately, she found exactly what she was looking for. A multiple homicide, victims as young as 4. Father seen fleeing the scene. Her heart broke at the thought of it.

She had beaten Jake home that afternoon, and had spent the first half hour cleaning in an effort to distract herself. Debating in her mind whether to bring up the case with Jake, or wait to see if he would mention it. Bringing up something that had clearly upset him was not something that she was keen to do. But bottling up emotions and hiding the effects they had on you never proved to be successful - and the thought of him struggling with that on his own was worse than anything other scenario she could conjure up.

When he walked through the door 40 minutes after she had, Amy turned and threw her boyfriend a soft smile, squeezing his arms gently when he leaned in for a kiss hello. She watched as he trudged defeatedly into their bedroom to get changed, busying herself with the takeout menus as she calls in to order from their favourite Chinese restaurant.

He’s back in the kitchen by the time the call is over, wrapping his arms around her from behind as she relaxes her hands on the bench. Leaning down to kiss her neck, he sighs deeply against her frame, and Amy closes her eyes slightly as her skin shivers from his touch.

“Long day, babe?” she asks softly, resting her left hand against his. He links their fingers as she does so, squeezing harder than normal as he responds.

He lifts his head. “The longest.”

Turning her head slightly to the right, Amy watches Jake from the corner of her eye, trying to gauge his state of mind while a million different sentences run through her head. In the end, the simplest statement wins out. “I heard about the case you and Boyle were called into.”

His head drops, resting in-between her shoulder blades as he nods against her skin. Another sigh, this one quieter but still just as effective. She lifts her right hand to rub against his forearm, fingers toying with the cuff of the old NYPD sweatshirt he’d thrown on while she waits for him to continue.

After another moment of silence, she continues. “Do you want to talk about it?”

“No. Yes. I …. I don’t know.”

Pulling her hand away from his grip, Amy turns until her back is resting against the counter and she’s got Jake in her sight. There’s a sadness in his eyes (and something else that she just can’t quite place), and all she wants to do is heal him. “You don’t have to talk about anything you don’t want to, Jake. I just think that it might help you process it a little bit.”

He leans in closer, placing a soft kiss on her lips, and she lets him take whatever he needs. His hands, having never left her waist, grip her just that little bit tighter.

When he pulls away, his brow is furrowed and he clears his throat before speaking. “We’re detectives, you know? This is exactly what we’ve been trained to do. Assess the scene, look for clues, remain objective. But this one … Ames, I just …”

This time it’s her turn to lean forward, resting her forehead against Jake’s as she breathes him in and nods. She’s not a detective - not yet, at least - but she’s learnt in her time with Jake that a person can only compartmentalise so much. And that some cases just stick with you.

Moving her hands until they are resting on either side of his neck, Amy gazes over at him and whispers, “Every time you think you’ve seen the worst, something else comes along.”
He nods in response, pulling her into a hug as his head returns to the dip at the base of her neck. “It was just more than I was expecting, I think” he mumbled, and she holds him just that little bit tighter.

Before too long, he’s pulling away and smiling down at her, the sadness a little less obvious in his eyes. Reaching one hand up, Amy runs her thumb along his brow line, dropping one more kiss onto his forehead. “I know you know this, but I’m going to say it anyway,” she begins, moving her hand to card her fingers through his hair. “I’m here for you, Jake. Anytime, anywhere. I love you.”

Another nod, accompanied by a smile this time, and he leans in for another, quicker, kiss. There’s still something in his expression that she can’t quite put her finger on, but she knows not to push for too much.

The takeout would be at least another twenty minutes, this she was pretty confident on. (They weren’t the fastest restaurant in town, but their Moo Shu Pork was absolutely worth the wait). Taking the opportunity to excuse herself for a shower, Amy emerges a short while later and walks back into the living room to look for Jake. She finds him on the couch in a seemingly relaxed position, save for the fingers that were drumming incessantly against the furnitures arm. He stared blankly at the TV screen in front of him, and from her position in the hallway she watches the lights dance across his face, highlighting all the features that she holds so dear. His brow was still furrowed, and his eyes kept darting from side to side. He was clearly lost in thought, and she was dying to know where his mind was.

A knock on the door breaks Amy out of her thoughts, and she turns quickly towards it to greet the delivery man. As the smell of their dinner permeates the room, she moves quickly to pay and walk to the kitchen, deciding to forgo plates and grabbing forks only. Her eyes remain on Jake as she reaches the couch, spreading the containers out and settling in next to him, throwing him a smile when he grabs her offered fork and offers her first pick of the dumplings. Ever the gentleman.

They eat quietly, distracting themselves with an NYPD Blue marathon that she knows Jake loves to dissect (“There’s no way that DNA was figured out that afternoon. It takes at least three days, Ames! At least!”) and once they’re both done Amy moves in closer to Jake, resting her head against his shoulder in a move that has become so familiar it is almost second nature. One hand is resting on her thigh now, but the other still drums an irregular beat against the couch’s edge, and questions begin to bubble up into Amy’s throat.

Choosing to wait him out, she stays next to him until the episode is over, moving away only when the credits roll as she stands and begins to clear away the empty containers. It isn’t until she’s turning away that she hears Jake clear his throat, and she pauses when he speaks.

“Hey, Ames?”

Turning slowly, Amy turns to look at her boyfriend curiously. Hopefully, he was finally ready to speak about whatever was on his mind. “Yeah, babe?”

He’s moved forward a little, sitting at the edge of the seat as he looks up at her. “Do you think that our childhoods shape us into who we are?”

Dropping her head to one side, Amy studies his expression carefully before responding. “I mean, it can do, but I don’t think that it’s always that simple.”

“How so?”

“Well, there are always lessons to be learnt, especially when you are young. But, in my mind, it’s what you do with those lessons that shape you. You could be taught to see and do everything, and
still end up resenting it all. Or you could live a more sheltered life, and choose to see the beauty in every little thing.”

He nods, the faraway look returning to her eyes, and it’s the last thing she wants to see. Casting the takeout containers to the side, Amy sits on the coffee table opposite him, scooting forwards until her hands rest against his upper thigh. His answering sigh is deep, and he turns his face back towards her.

“Do you think that I could turn out like my father?”

Raising her eyebrows in surprise, Amy is quick to shake her head. So this is what had been bothering him. “Jake, no. I really don’t.” Her hands tighten against his skin, digging in until his eyes meet hers again. “I can’t stress that enough, babe. There is no way you’re going to turn out like your father.”

“How can you be so sure, Ames? What I saw today … there’s no way that I could do what that man did. But we’ve been looking up his record all day, and so far we can’t find a single thing - except for a shitty upbringing. And it just got me thinking. What if there is some version of my father, lying dormant inside me?” His eyes shone with unshed tears, and Amy moves forward slightly, pushing one knee between his and resting her forehead against Jake’s.

“The very fact that you are worrying about it, tells me everything I need to know. I can’t offer any explanation as to why the events of today took place. But I do know this - you are a kind, gentle, loving man, who would give me the earth if I asked for it. There is no way that any child of yours could ever feel anything less than that.”

Jake leans forward and kisses her, so gently that she fears that he himself is about to break. His mouth lingers against hers, pressing again for another kiss before pulling away. From their position on either side of her legs, his fingers continue to tap with nervous energy.

“Do you … I mean, could you ever ….” he clears his throat, shaking his head as he closes his eyes briefly. “What I mean is, do you ever think that someday, maybe, you might consider having kids with me?”

The surprise in the sudden change of topic makes Amy pull back slightly, and she can Jake’s expression fall slightly at the movement. Are we having The Talk, right now?

But in a moment, the most simplest of answers came to her. She looked into his earnest eyes, reading now the nerves that lay there and the subtle way his breathing had started to increase, and she knew. She knew what her heart had decided a long time ago, but hadn’t passed the message on to her mind - that she wanted this, and she wanted it with Jake.

Tiny tyrants with messy curly hair and arms that hugged you just right. Long nights with crying babies and her husband singing lullabies off key. Warm brown eyes and disarming smiles, and watching them grow with Jake beside her.

She wanted to be old and grey with Jake. She wanted to be a Mom, and later an Abuela, filling a household with photos and memories and endless stories.

Thankfully, this epiphany took mere seconds to manifest itself. For every millisecond of silence seemed to cause Jake to shrink smaller and smaller. Lifting her hands up to rest on either side of his neck, Amy smiles brightly and the man in front of her, the love of her life. “Jake, there is nothing to consider there. I absolutely do. I cannot imagine it any other way.”
The relief on his face nearly brings her to tears, but before she can react he’s back in her space, kissing her like there is no tomorrow. This was obviously what had been playing on his mind all afternoon, and she wished that she had figured it out earlier.

“I love you, Amy. So much.” he mumbled against her lips, pulling her in for another kiss and increasing the intensity.

Eventually pulling away in a gasp for breath, Amy smiles against Jake’s lips and whispers, “That is, of course, working on the idea that you would want to have children with me …?”

“Are you kidding me, Ames? I should be so lucky!” he pulls away, staring at her with bright, incredulous eyes as she giggles in response. Her face begins to flush, and she runs her hand through Jake’s hair once more.

“I love you, Jake Peralta. And I’m sorry if I haven’t said this properly, but … you’re it for me. The last stop. There is no way that I can imagine any kind of future that doesn’t have you in it.”

His answering grin could light up the room, and she’s pretty sure hers matches. They share another kiss, and Jake pulls her into his lap as his hands begin to roam.

“That doesn’t mean we start trying tonight, Detective,” she warns, pulling back slightly as his hand begins to slide up underneath her shirt. “You’re forgetting I’m one of eight - the Santiago’s are fertile people. And call me old-fashioned, but I’d really like to go about this in the right order.”

He laughs in response, keeping his hand where it is but not moving any higher. “Relax, Ames. I’m not suggesting we go out and buy a crib tomorrow. It’s just great to know we’re both heading in the same direction.” Leaning in for another kiss, he continues. “But … you know what they say about practice …”

Amy smiles against his mouth, breaking the kiss as she responds. “Practice sounds perfect, babe.”

As they move towards the bedroom, takeout boxes and old TV re-runs long forgotten, Amy feels a sense of contentment wash over her. She could have this, forever, and it would never be long enough.

Little did she know, there was a jewellery box tucked safely away in the back of Jake’s desk drawer that held the promise of forever, and that someday soon, there would be a ring on her finger.

Chapter End Notes

This story has become a part of my heart, and I truly hope you're (still) enjoying it!

Please feel free to leave your comments and kudos, they are easily the best parts of my day.
The Moon, The Stars

Chapter Summary

Jake, Amy, and a very important question.

Chapter Notes

Title courtesy of Sam Smith, from the song Lay Me Down.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Brooklyn.

Chapter Fifteen - The Moon, The Stars (They’re Nothing Without You)

The tips of Jake’s fingers drag across Amy’s skin, eyes crinkling in joy as he watches the shivers run through her skin in response. He could almost map it, her reactions to his touch. He watches the tiny goosebumps as they chase after him, rising then falling just as quickly.

This was a body that he knew better than his own. The tiny moles that were scattered along her body were a continuous game of connect-the-dot that he was always ready to play. There were tiny scars in hidden places, some new and some of them healed so well that there was only the slightest of bumps to give away their presence. Each told a story - a perp whose knife had managed to make its mark before being knocked down by her partner, an older officer who was forever on the lookout for his rookie sidekick. A game of catch with her brothers that had gone horribly wrong when she tripped on an exposed tree root and fell onto a wayward branch. Old burn scars, from her first job working at the local burger joint, manning the fryer.

All of these things came together to form the beautiful woman before him, and if she were a book, he’d read her over and over - cover to cover. Amy was incredible. And if he was very, very lucky, one day soon she would be his wife.

Jake’s mind wanders to the ring box, currently tucked safe in the back of his sock drawer having recently been relocated from his desk at the precinct to their apartment. If everything went to plan, tonight would be the night, and he had been praying to all the powers in all the universes that nothing would hold them back.

His hand continues to wander, resting momentarily on the curve of her waist and Amy’s voice breaks him out of his reverie. “You know, if your hands keep moving like that, there is no way I’m getting to work on time.” He looks up at her in surprise, having not noticed that at some point she’d woken up. Her eyes, warm chocolate and full of love, gazed over at him and a small, secret smile was resting on her face. Instinctively, he leans forward to lay a gentle kiss on her lips.

“Morning, babe. Sorry, I didn’t realise I’d woken you up.” He blushes, knowing that she can’t hear
his thoughts but still feeling as though he’d been caught in the act.

“It was a pretty great way to wake up, so you’re forgiven.” she smiles over at him, blinking slowly as her mind wakes up. “It’s early, though, and your day off. Why are you awake?”

He shrugs, shoulders bunching up his pillow as his eyes roamed her face. Even minutes from sleep, she was beautiful. “I was having the most amazing dream, where this incredible woman kept telling me she loved me.” His hand begins to move again, tracing the edge of her skin as a soft blush begins to surface on her face. “And then,” hand continuing to wander, “I opened my eyes, and realised that you were actually beside me for realz.”

“You’re very smooth for six in the morning, Peralta.”

“I know, who would have guessed?” he replied with a short laugh, wrapping his arm around Amy’s waist now and pulling her closer. He nuzzles his face into her neck, breathing in deeply and smiling when her responding laughter echoes in his ear.

“I’m not even ashamed to say it’s totally working for me, either.” Her lips start to trail along his hairline, reaching for his mouth as Jake raises his head again. His grin isn’t entirely smug, but is absolutely in love, and he pulls her impossibly closer under the sheets.

What a way to wake up.

It had been several hours since their morning tryst, and the smile had yet to leave Jake’s face. And not just because of the sexy times. Not entirely, anyway. Today, after all, was the day that his plan for Peralta’s Operation: Proposal, or the POP plan as he liked to call it (coz he was going to pop the question, get it?), was going to go ahead.

After he had kissed Amy goodbye, he had waited a decent half hour for any reason for her to turn back before launching into action.

Step One: The Supplies.

Three months ago, while Amy was finishing up her last few weeks of training at the academy, Jake had unwittingly struck up a friendship with the woman who lived across the hall, Mrs Connelly. She owned two small dogs; and when he had moved in, Amy had given him a brief description of their neighbour, explaining that they didn’t get along very well because Amy’s allergies meant that whenever they crossed paths, she was quick to make a getaway.

The older woman had felt affronted by this, and despite Amy’s attempts to explain, never seemed particularly interested in clearing the air.

He was surprised, then, when after a particularly long day at work, Jake had trudged up the staircase with a heavy sigh and almost ran straight into the famed Mrs Connelly. She had moved quickly, hoping to avoid what he assumed would be a withering gaze as he left the space clear for her to move past. Instead, she had smiled warmly at him, striking up a conversation that left him wondering if this whole thing was just a giant misunderstanding. As the days wore on, they built up a friendship - Jake offering to walk her dogs whenever she felt she couldn’t, and she offering containers of home cooked meals after he explained that Amy was away. The older woman had felt affronted by this, and despite Amy’s attempts to explain, never seemed particularly interested in clearing the air.

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that the door at the end of their floor, (that for as long as she had lived there, Amy had thought to be an unused supply closet) was in fact the door to their very own rooftop balcony. And the key to that door was held by one Mrs Connelly.

Sensing his interest, the older woman had offered up the key to him and encouraged him to explore the new space. It was a rooftop, much the same as all the rest, but when he craned his head back to take in the uninterrupted view of the stars, Jake knew that Amy would love it. And in a moment he envisioned it all - twinkling fairy lights, soft music playing, a candlelight dinner, and Amy in his arms. He quickly made plans to make a copy of the key.

After he had picked her up from the academy, Jake announced his new-found friendship with their neighbour, and Amy had rolled her eyes affectionately, mumbling something about the Peralta Charm with a knowing smile on her face. Choosing to keep the rooftop a surprise, Jake had simply nodded and ended the conversation with a kiss. At that moment, he hadn’t been planning a proposal - but looking back on it now, he was glad that he’d kept the secret.

Thankfully, he’d been able to spend some of his spare time in the weeks leading up to today with acquiring more fairy lights than was probably necessary. To begin the set up, he had quietly gotten to work with hanging them from every possible surface on the rooftop, stretching them out over their heads and casting a beautiful glow over the area. Then, he gathered up every candle he could find, and spent over an hour of the operation strategically placing them so they created a path for the two of them to follow later that evening.

Next was the meal. In previous weeks, Jake had begun picking up cooking tips from Boyle, under the guise of not wanting to order takeout on such a regular basis. He was fairly certain that Charles was suspicious (he still hadn’t let go of the afternoon he had busted Jake looking at engagement rings) but thankfully, he hadn’t pushed the issue, and instead provided Jake with a step by step recipe for lasagna that he declared ‘foolproof’ or, rather, ‘Jake-proof’.

Jake stood in the kitchen that day, studying the recipe over and over as he followed the rules ever so carefully. There was nothing romantic about a burnt dinner, and he was determined not to fail. After sending a few quick texts to Boyle to double check a couple of steps, he stood back from the oven, sending quiet prayers that the meal inside would come out perfect before discarding his dirty apron and moving on to step two.

Step Two: The Speech.

There were pages and pages of notes in Jake’s phone that held different versions of what he was praying would turn into the perfect proposal. Before he’d met Amy, he had been admittedly terrible at expressing his emotions, and while he was better with her, he was still terrified that in the moment he wouldn’t be able to say everything that he wanted to say. His mind had churned out different declarations over and over, but nothing ever felt right. Amy was a well-read woman, who had poured through some of the greatest love stories ever told, and he feared that anything he had to say would instantly pale in comparison.

Searching the internet had done him no favours - when statements like ever mine, ever thine, ever ours and you have bewitched me, body and soul, and I love, I love, I love you existed, his feeble attempts of you make me so happy and you have the cutest, sexiest butt I’ve ever seen just didn’t seem to cut it.

Rubbing a hand against his face in frustration, Jake throws down the pen that had remained unused in his hand, and his eyes fall on a framed photo of the two of them that took pride of place on the kitchen bench. Their faces took up the whole space, a selfie that Jake had instigated after a perfect day at Coney Island. They were laying on their stomachs, side by side on the sand, both resting on
their elbows with Amy’s shoulder tucked under his. His smile was wide and bright, and Amy’s face was turned towards him, forever caught in the moment of kissing him on the cheek. Her eyes were open, though - crinkled in a smile but lit up with joy, the love obvious as her lips rested against his skin. It had quickly become one of their favourite photos, and a smaller version of it was tucked into his wallet.

He remembered the way her hand had held his across the gearstick as they made their way home, their car one of many crawling down Ocean Parkway. And he remembered the shower they’d shared once they were home again, brushing sand off of each other’s bodies as their laughter bounced off the tiles around them.

That was the thing about falling in love with Amy, and wanting to marry her - there had never been a singular moment, that ‘ah-hah!’ feeling of this is the one. Rather, it had been an accumulation of moments, all leading to the fact that this life they had built together was everything. She was his home, and he was hers.

He still recalls the first time he’d stood in his old kitchen and called her babe, only for her to switch the cards and start calling him boyfriend. He knew, even then, that he wanted more than that - to call her his fiancee, his wife, the love of his life.

He knew whenever she came home from work with a takeaway from Sal’s in her hand, foregoing the fifteen other pizza joints that were on her way home. When her head nestled against his every night as they watched TV together, throwing him a happy smile when she realises he’s recorded all of her favourite shows that work commitments had caused her to miss. He knew every time he held her in his arms - whether they were at the deli, in line for movie tickets, or simply laying in bed at the end of a long day. There was never going to be anyone that knew him better - nobody that he would want to know him better. Amy was The One.

And sure, they fought sometimes - he knew that the road to forever wasn’t always smooth. She wasn’t perfect (though she came pretty close), and neither was he, but she was perfect for him.

Jake looks back down at the blank pad of paper in front of him, and suddenly inspiration struck him. His hand moved quickly over the the pages, hand smudging the wet ink as the words poured out, and it was his only hope that his mind could properly translate all the feelings that were running through his heart.

Step Three: The Ring

As it turns out, planning the perfect proposal takes up a lot of your day. Between setting up the rooftop paradise, moonlighting as a MasterChef and writing out the Greatest Proposal Ever, Jake’s day had completely gotten away from him. It was only as he received a text from Amy (complaining about how long her day had seemed and how glad she was to finally be on her way home to him), that he realised the time and that he needed to get his butt into gear.

Jumping into the shower, he made sure to use the shower gel that Amy had bought him, and after towelling off he quickly dabbed on the cologne he knew to be her favourite - the one that never failed to bring her nose deep into his neck, breathing him in with a contented smile on her face.

Flicking his eyes to the clock in the hallway as he made his way to their bedroom - less than half an hour to go - Jake reached for a simple button-down, pairing it with grey slacks and a tie. Charcoal grey and knitted, it had become a favourite of theirs, and as he looped it around his neck, the memory of Amy leading him into their bedroom by that very tie played over in his head. She had secured his hands to the headboard of their bed with it, and the night that played out afterwards would forever be burnt into his memory. So yeah, it was safe to call it a favourite.
Letting out a shaky breath as he reaches into his sock drawer, Jake fishes around the back of the drawer until his fingers wrap around the velvet box hidden inside. Holding it in his hand brought the reality of the moment to the forefront, and his heart begins to pound - excitement, fear, joy and terror all mixing together and releasing scores of butterflies into his stomach.

The ring that lay inside had once belonged to his Nanna - a simple band with two small stones nestled together, forever side by side. It had spoken more to him than any of the rings he had looked at in any of the stores, and had been given to him one afternoon when he and Amy had made a visit to his Mom, Karen. Since meeting her months earlier, Amy had insisted on their catchups becoming a regular occasion, telling Jake that family was one of the most important things in life. He loved his Mom, but his visits had admittedly grown less frequent, and he loved that Amy demanded better. Karen loved her, too, he could tell - and it was on one quiet day, while Amy was busying herself in the kitchen, that she had jumped quickly off the couch, pulling out a velvet box from a hidden space on the mantle and handing it to Jake with a proud smile.

He’d looked over at her with surprise written all over his face - he had been looking at rings, but hadn’t spoken to Karen about proposing to Amy at all, but after a wink from his Mom he knew that it was true when they say that mothers really did know best.

The sound of their front door opening pulled Jake out of his thoughts, and as he heard Amy’s keys drop into the bowl by the door, he quickly tucked the ring box into his pocket, wiping his sweaty palms against the fabric as he headed towards the living room.

His pace quickened upon hearing Amy call out his name, and he rounded the corner with a smile on his face as he spoke. “Hey babe! You’re home!”

Step Four: Amy.

The surprise in her face was obvious as she took in his appearance, turning quickly to dismay as she threw her hands into her hair in obvious shock. “Oh no, did we have plans tonight that I’d forgotten about? Jake, I’m so sorry!”

Chuckling softly, Jake shakes his head as he makes his way over to her, dropping a gentle kiss to her forehead as he pulls her hands down from her hair and tangled their fingers together with a gentle squeeze.

“You didn’t forget anything, babe. I’ve planned a surprise for you.”

She watches him warily now, mind obviously running to the last time he tried to surprise her and ended up nearly setting the kitchen on fire (emphasis on nearly, thank you very much).

“I know what you’re thinking, but it’s going to be great. I promise. There’s just a couple of things I’ve got to take care of while you go get changed. I’ll be back in half an hour to take you there.”

Amy sniffs the air delicately, wariness fading as she takes in the scent of a well-cooked meal. “Can you give me a hint?” she asks with a hopeful smile.

Shaking his head, Jake kisses her softly before pulling away. “No way. Just trust me, Ames. Go get changed, wear whatever you feel like, and I’ll be back before you know it.”

She nods, biting her lip excitedly as she hangs up her jacket and moves towards their bedroom. He waits until he hears the shower turn on before moving through the kitchen, removing his homemade lasagna from the oven and grabbing the copy of the roof key from where he’d hidden it on the highest shelf. Balancing the meal delicately in his arms, Jake paused for a moment, making sure that
Amy was definitely in the shower, before sneaking out the front door and heading up towards the roof to set up the final pieces.

Amy is ready when he returns, hands fiddling with the back of her earring as she studies her reflection in the mirror. She turns towards him, eyes bright with wonder, and he falls in love with her all over again.

She was wearing a blue dress in a soft floral pattern, and it looked stunning on her. Her hands twisted nervously in front of her as he approached, a soft blush filling her cheeks as his eyes travelled down her body.

Jake had a ring in his pocket, and Amy smiling brightly in front of him, and suddenly he couldn’t breathe.

After what seems like an eternity, his lungs finally remembered their role. Taking a deep breath, Jake swallows his nerves with a smile and reaches for Amy’s hand wordlessly. She takes it without hesitation, her eyes warmer now that he was in front of her, and he pulls her towards the door before the temptation to drag her into their bedroom proved to be too strong.

She walks towards the staircase, turning back towards him in confusion when he stays still and tugs on her hand. Biting his lip, he whispers “This way, babe” before leading her towards the mystery door.

“Jake, why are you leading me towards the supply … oh my god, there’s stairs!”

He’s laughing now, holding her closer and refusing to let go of her hand as he pulls her towards the steps that lead up to the roof. They pass the third floor with ease, and when he rests his hand against the top of the fourth floor staircase he pauses, turning to make sure he had Amy’s full attention before pushing the door open with a flourish.

She takes it all in with a gasp, and relief floods through Jake’s body.

The candles that he had raced up to light mere moments before had thankfully stayed lit, the flames lighting up a path for the two of them to follow as they headed to the centre.

Fairy lights strung above them provided the light for the rest of the rooftop, and Jake led Amy over to the middle, where he had set up a table for two. Over to the side, a portable speaker played music softly, his phone resting beside it. He watches her as she looks over the entire scene, the elation clear on her face as her smile grows wider and wider.

Amy looks over at him, shaking her head in wonder and mumbles, “How?”

Leaning in to plant a gentle kiss on her lips, Jake stays close and whispers against her skin, “Turns out the Peralta Charm can be very handy.”

“I could’ve told you that, babe.”

He blushes, the nerves beginning to get the best of him, and wraps his arms around Amy’s waist. She responds in kind, hands resting on his shoulders as she smiles up at him. “Jake, this is amazing. I don’t know what I did to deserve this, but thank you so much. I love it. I love you.”

Dinner now forgotten, Jake pulls Amy closer and they begin to move to the music that played behind them. Her dancing skills had not improved by much in the time that they were dating, but he’d long since mastered the art of leading her in a gentle rhythm, and she rested her cheek against his shoulder with a soft sigh. If she notices his racing heartbeat, she doesn’t mention it.
They lean against each other for what feels like forever, submitting themselves to the music and the opportunity for an uninterrupted moment with each other. Her hands move from his shoulders to the back of his neck, linking there as she tilts her head up to take in the view of the starry sky, and he feels as though he can see the entire galaxy reflect in her gaze. The entire rooftop scene was beautiful, but it was nothing compared to the woman in his arms.

Nervously clearing his throat, Jake tightens his grip around her waist and begins to speak.

“I’ve put a lot of thought into when I would do this. I didn’t want to wait until one of our birthdays, or an anniversary, or Valentine’s Day or anything like that.”

Amy looks up at him with a slightly furrowed brow, the question obvious in her eyes as she waits for him to continue.

“I just didn’t see a reason to dress this up with anything other than the most simplest of facts - that I love you, more than I ever thought possible. It just needed to be a normal day, just another Friday, because being with you is what makes it extraordinary.”

They had stopped dancing now, only swaying side by side as Jake spoke. Neither of them could concentrate on anything else. She moves one hand from the back of his neck, carding her fingers through his hair in a move that has become so familiar to him it almost works to reset his racing heart. Deep brown eyes stared up at him, and she whispered his name in a question, and he knew that this was it. This was the moment.

He pulls away slightly, running both hands down her arms as they pull away from him, and holds her gaze as he gets down on one bended knee. His perfectly prepared speech immediately flies out of his head, but this time Jake wasn’t worried. He knew what he wanted to say.

*Here goes.*

“Amy, I am so in love with you.”

With a small gasp, Amy covers her mouth with one hand, and her eyes begin to glisten with unshed tears.

“Your hands are the only ones I want to hold, and your lips are the only ones I want to kiss, for the rest of my life. I love how you think, I love how you laugh, and I love how you make me feel. I love that you always need just one more blanket when we’re cuddling on the couch. I love your dorky dancing, and I love that you let me sing along to all the songs, even though my voice is terrible. I love how you’ve never given up on chasing your dreams. And I love that even on the crappiest of days, one smile from you makes everything okay again.”

She blinks, and the tears begin to fall as she reaches one hand out to cup the side of his face.

“I want to be with you until we’re old and grey, shouting out to each other because we keep forgetting to turn on our damn hearing aids. We’ll be the old couple on the porch, yelling at the neighbourhoods kids to get off our lawn. The oldies with their grey hair, lying in bed on the cruise ship, holding each other’s hands as the ship slowly takes on water. And then when we die, we’ll be ghosts together, haunting up the place & pulling pranks on all the people that gave us shit over the years. I want it all, Ames. And I want it with you. And I’m so, so hopeful that you want it with me, too.”

She nods quickly, reaching her other hand up to wipe away her tears.

“I would be the luckiest man alive if you would be willing to share your life with me. I promise that I
will love you forever, and spend the rest of my life just making you happy. I love you, with everything that I have.”

His hand reaches into his pocket, grabbing onto the velvet box as his nervous fingers fumble to open it. With a triumphant smile, he turns back to the love of his life, offers her the ring, and speaks the most important words he’s ever had to say.

“Amy Santiago, will you marry me?”

With tears streaming down her face, Amy looks down at him with the brightest smile he’s ever seen. She nods quickly, and with a shaky breath she responds.

“Jake Peralta, I will marry you.”

He’s off his knees and in her arms before he even realises he’s moved, and the kiss they share is filled with more passion and love than ever before. Eventually he pulls back with a smile, reaching for her hand as he pulls the ring from its cushion and slides it onto Amy’s finger, stopping only once it is resting comfortably at the base of her hand. The diamonds catch the light and shimmer against her skin, and before he has a chance to explain their origin she’s pulling him back in for another kiss, deeper this time as her arms wind around his neck.

They stay together on their rooftop for longer than either had planned - the candles long since burnt out and the carefully prepared dinner truly forgotten as they held each other closely under the stars.

There was so much promise for their future. They would live, with each other and for each other, no matter where the road lead them. There would be highs, and there would be lows, but just as fate had thrown them together on that fateful morning in front of a coffee shop, they knew that no matter what, they would have each other.

For better or for worse.

Chapter End Notes

This is the end, my friends, the end ... this story has been a labour of love for me. Originally I had a completely different storyline in mind, but I’m so happy with what it became, and it makes me endlessly happy to see that it was enjoyed by you.

I wanted to end this story before it became to strung out (beating a dead horse, so to speak) but I'll never say never to returning if something inspires me. In the meantime, trust that I have another story in the works, and I would love to see you there!

Thank you, from the bottom of my heart, for all of your comments and kudos through all 45,000 words of this fic. Without you, I probably wouldn't have even gone further than the first chapter, let alone make it through fifteen.

I truly hope you enjoyed this version of their love story.

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!