The Perfect Storm

by ChloeDeRosier

Summary

Skiing trip goes wrong in all the right ways...

Notes

See the end of the work for notes
Lacking In Packing

Passport - check, phone - check, headphones - check, charger - "Darling, do you happen to know where I left my phone charger?" I murmured as I kept rummaging through my purse. I used to think of myself as a very simple woman, yet with all the stuff I stored in my purse, the charger always seemed to be missing in action. But, then again, would I ever know where my bloody charger was? Probably not.

"Have you checked the living room yet?" Frank yelled from the bathroom, with a slight frustration one might find unnecessary in the already frustrating act of packing.

"Yes, Frank, I checked the bloody living room, no need to yell at me," I never did understand Frank's need for perfectionism and keeping things in a tight order. I quite loved my mess for all my life, because where's the fun in perfect? Right, can't find that either.

I sensed his arms around my waist before he came to hug me from behind, "Sorry darling, I did not mean to yell at all, it is just a tiny bit annoying that you cannot seem to keep your things together, that's all. But we'll work on that, won't we?"

Just as he was about to kiss my shirt-covered shoulder, I escaped his hold, "Right," I replied rather coldly, sympathizing with the weather outside.

Frank shrugged, his lower lip disappearing under his teeth, "You cannot possibly be angry with me, Claire?" Not realizing it was a rhetorical question, I was about to reply when he stormed off back to the bathroom. "If we want this relationship to work Claire, we need to compromise. When I say keep your things in order, that's what I expect you to do."

My rage started building up, however, fighting before a trip was probably bad luck, so I decided to put this under the rug for now. "Frank," calmly, I continued, "I agree with compromising, but let's continue this discussion when we arrive at the hotel." For added value, I finished with a classic, "Please, darling."

Determined not to wait for his response, I retreated to the bedroom in the search for my missing charger. I just could not understand Frank's need to fight all the bloody time. I am getting seriously tired for having to explain my way of living - he was supposed to be my rock for Christ's sake, not the wind blowing me further away from him.
Like a cherry on top, my phone started ringing and buzzing in that annoyingly classical iPhone ringtone. Frustrated, I answered without looking at the caller ID, “What?”

“Oh,” a female voice said sheepishly, “I hope I am not on yer murder list, ClaireBear,” said the irritatingly perfect voice of a more perfect owner.

“Geillis, thank God. I’m sorry, I am just angry that I cannot find the bloody phone charger for the last thirty minutes, and I swear I could kill somebody.” I took a deep breath, then continued, “Preferably Frank.”

“Ach, what did he do now?”, before I had a chance to answer, Geillis continued, “I told ye Claire, two years ago if memory serves me right, that he was a boring-old-slow party pooper. Ye need someone fun and young with undying energy that will bring ye to life, instead of pushing ye to an early grave. I also -”

“Geillis,” I interrupted, startled by her not so wrong observation, “I do not have the energy to tell you how wrong you are, even though you cannot be more right, nor I have the energy to protect Frank’s virtue, because he does not deserve it, but please talk about anything else.” Another deep breath, “Please.”

“Did you check under yer bed?”, perfectly calm voice vibrated through my phone. Frowning, I asked, “What?”

“Did you look for the charger under yer bed, Claire,” chuckling, Geillis went on. “Ye know, that thing ye literally just sleep on -”

I rolled my eyes so hard, for a second I was scared they would rather not go back. “Thank you, Geillis. Truly. But, I am hanging up now and my sex life is none of your concern, thank you very much.”

Every perfection was somehow flawed, arguing that said perfection did not even exist. The great example was Geillis’ perfect voice juxtaposed with her blemished laughter. When I tried to listen close enough, it almost resembled the screeching sound a chalk would make if you were devilish enough to scratch it across a greenboard.

After said laughter followed a serious tone, “What sex li-” Before I crossed a line of not being perfectly appropriate, I hung up and bent to look for my charger under the bed.
I felt like screaming, frustration turning into depression. Where could it be? It’s a stupid bloody charger, and I would bet my right hand that I left it on the bed, right next to my purse.

The huge and the ugly and the very much ancient yellow cuckoo clock, that Frank got as a present from one of his also ancient historian friends, sang eight times, startling me from my depressed revere. As I jumped from under the bed, Frank entered the room, his eyes narrowed on me while confusion lit up his face.

“I was looking for my charger, however its eight o’clock Frank, we have to go. The guys are probably waiting for us on the parking lot.”

Not giving him time to argue how we could’ve taken a train or flew by a plane, instead of driving a car for “endless hours,” I took my purse from the bed and brushed past him, moving to the main door.

“Darling?”, Frank said amused, while approaching the main door and holding a phone charger, “It looks like a accidently placed your charger in my travel bag. How uncanny of me.”

“You have to be fucking kidding me,” had I not been in the building hall already, I would have been screaming from the top of my lungs right now. Yanking the bloody charger from the constant source that has driven me crazy for months, I turned on my heels, and spoke coldly over my shoulder. “We will have to work on you differentiating others’ assets from your own, won’t we darling?” I could have been crowned the Queen of Sarcasm right about now.

As I pushed through the exit door of my building, I was hit with an icy cold February-yet-classical Edinburgh winter spice, contrasting my flushed-from-anger cheeks and fury-filled eyes.

But all the waters in the world calmed as I locked eyes with a man who was like a sun to my rainy day. He was leaning on the back door of his brand new jet-black Range Rover, with his broad shoulders and endless outline of tight muscles peeking through at least three layers of clothing.

He was beautifully tall and very manly. His coppery red hair danced about his shoulders, with the wind blowing it all around his head. His deep blue eyes were still locked on my golden ones. We were contrasting in all ways, yet I could argue there were thousands of sparks flying in between us.

He sent me his famous smirk, and I was under his spell and happy to be there. I started towards the
car, completely forgetting the man behind me, and could not wait for the adventure to begin.
The Road Trip

I felt weak in my knees and stood stock still when I looked over his left shoulder, and saw that she was sitting in a passenger seat. Un-believ-able.

I passed coldly by my dream man, and opened the passenger door. I yanked the girl by her awfully perfect, waist-long blond hair, and out of the rich ivory seat, got her arms in my left hand and started punching her with the other, literally, wherever I could reach.

I also added my legs to her abdomen, just to be sure I got her.

The reborn fury pounded in my ears, preventing the ability to hear her pathetic screams and sobs.

He probably read my face like a book, as only he uniquely could, and brought me back from my fantasy.

His beautiful manly low voice reached my ears and washed the fury away. “Hi Sassenach.”

After all the times I prayed for the ground to swallow me whole, now would be the perfect timing for my prayer to come to life.

His gaze lowered on my now tomato-like cheeks, the consequence of utter embarrassment always followed by my directing of a serial-killer movie, starring myself as the killer, and of course, herself as the victim.

“Hey,” I barely whispered as he approached me and kissed my burning cheek, leaving an even hotter imprint of his perfectly full puffy lips to linger on me, sheltering me from the icy wind.

I could not move for all the tea in China, while he moved towards Frank, whom I haven’t even noticed was standing right by my side.
I could feel Frank stiffen as the two men shook hands. “Good Morning… James.”

Ugh, I hated hearing his beautiful name from Frank’s mouth. Frank Randall knew just about how to butcher anything beautiful in this world.

A calm, neutral-toned voice, with just a tiny bit of amusement, answered, “Morning Frank. How are ye?”

Jamie and my two-year boyfriend continued exchanging vague remarks, while I concentrated on my boyfriend. It did not even sound right calling Frank that. He was too old for the label. Yet, somewhere deep, deep, emphasis on deep, down inside my heart, I could remember that he was there for me when I needed comfort the most.

Two years ago was when Claire Beauchamp became a surgical resident. I just moved from London to Edinburgh, and did not know anyone. It was hard and very emotional, since for the most of my life, I was alone.

My parents died in a car crash when I was five years old. Sometimes, I did not even get it how I came to survive the crash. What made me so special?

I guess I haven’t lived long enough to do something I would be punished for. But, then, what did my parents do to deserve such unforgivable punishment?

Nevertheless, I was adopted by my uncle, Lambert Quentin Beauchamp. He was an archaeologist, which meant we never had a place to call home for longer than 3 months, one of the reasons being the hotel lifestyle.

As much as my schoolmates at that particular location thought it was an amazing place to live at, it wasn’t really. I was never comfortable nor content, but I accepted the situation, because I had Lamb. He was my only family and I loved him infinitely.

However, just as I moved to Edinburgh, I got a call. The call, that shakes the ground under your feet and betrays all the gravity around you. I was told that Lamb was in an accident while working his digs, in Egypt. He passed away at the hospital, and was buried in Cairo.

Since I was starting my residency, I never got the chance to even visit the grave of the most
important person, and the only person, in my life.

Shortly after my first month at the Royal Infirmary Edinburgh, I met Frank at one historic conference I went to. It was regarding ancient Egypt after all, and I felt as if that was the least that I could have done at the moment, for Lamb.

Frank was the only constant for me at that time, he helped me through my sorrow and depression, and showed and gave me love. However, he was the type of person who expected everything in return. Tit_for_tat.

Approximately four months later, Geillis came as a fellow resident to the RIE, and I felt as if there was still hope lingering in the shadows for happiness in my life. She was my best friend, a sister I never had, witty and a bit rude, but not to me, brutally honest, beautiful and smart. As it was expected with Scots and their numerous family and friends, with Geillis came Angus, and with him came Rupert, and my personal favourite, James Alexander Malcolm MacKenzie Fraser.

Jamie.

I turned to the man in question, and I found myself staring at his profile-perfect jawline, the smallest of dimples highlighting his cheek. He was astonishingly dapper, dashing, handsome, yet not mine to look at with the hunger I knew I had in my eyes.

He was a friend. My friend. We were friends. I had Frank. He had, well, her. Not really though, I had to remind myself, because they were not together, at least not officially. But she was crazy about him. And to say I hated her, would be a huge understatement.

Speak of the devil, as she slid the automatic window down and started butchering the comforting silence.

“Jamie, sweetheart, shouldn’t we get goin’. We are losing time, plus I am gettin’ rather bored. Could use yer funny stories and -”

Her ugly blue eyes, filled with genuine loath, reverted to me. She lifted her non-existing brows, and flashed a fake smile, “Claire, I didna see ye there. Ye look,” she took a second to scan me from head to toe, “Weel, ye always look -”
Thankfully, Jamie interrupted her annoyingly high-pitched voice. I would try and explain her voice more, but it's one of those unique disasters. You'd have to hear it for yourself, and then visit the ear doctor, for safety reasons and all.

“Ach, we’re coming, alright,” I smiled at his clearly frustrated tone. Everytime she got on his nerves, which was nearly all the time, was a personal win for me.

Jamie turned to me, “Ready, a nighean?” Even though it was a rhetorical question, I nodded, because I wanted him to read my face and see just how much I wanted to go. With him.

“Yes, come on darling,” Frank pushed passed Jamie, took my hand in his and started towards the car.

I must have dozed off, when I felt Frank’s not so gentle arm, pushing me to consciousness.

“Hmm, what?” Ever since I was a child, I have been a grumpy waker. It was my biological response from being taken away from my favourite activity - sleeping.

I heard Frank take a deep breath, “I have been trying to wake you for the last 5 minutes. We took a stop to recharge the car.”

I yawned, smudged my eyes, stretched my arms and legs as much as the limited, yet surprisingly spacious car offered, and turned to face Frank.

“Do you need me to recharge the car?”

He frowned, “What? No.”

I yawned again, “Then for the love of everything that’s holy, why did you wake me?”
I seemed to irritate him, it wasn’t quite visible, but I could sense it in the air between us. One would call that the benefit of being lovers. I, on the other hand, would call that the cost of being Frank’s lover.

“James suggested we take a break, eat breakfast while the car is charging. But, of course, you can stay and sleep. I don’t think he would mind much.”

He was passive aggressive, my Frank, but two could play this game. “Oh, well now that you mention it, I could kill for a club sandwich.”

Before I closed the car door, I looked at Frank who was still sitting behind the passenger seat. “Are you coming. Should I say you would rather stay in? I don’t believe anyone would mind.”

Frank slammed the door shut, and we started towards the little vintage cafe, perpendicular to the gas station.

Glass windows replaced the walls, leaving no surprises as to what was behind the large, carved wooden door.

Just as I was about to yank the door open, my palm betrayed me and let go of the door-knob. I couldn’t move. It was as if the concrete below me swallowed my feet.

I felt terribly nauseous.

Dinner from last night slowly made its way through my oesophagus and as soon as it touched the back of my tongue, I turned forty-five degrees to the left and emptied my stomach in the trash can next to the door.

Frank never had this much embarrassment shown on his face, “For Christ's sake Claire. What are you doing? Are you ill?”

I wasn’t even pretending to listen, I just brushed his “worries” off with the wave of my right hand. I opened the door and pretended that everything was fine.

Not like Jamie was kissing Laoghaire behind the glass wall, in the open space of the cafe, where everyone would guess they were a couple.
Have I missed something.

Were they … together … ?

Swallowing bile, I moved to the happy couple.

We ate in silence. I could feel Jamie’s eyes on me for the length of time we were at the cafe. I felt that pathetic rush of comfort, that he at least wasn’t looking at her.

However, I did not return the gesture. I was not the one he was kissing. Looking at me won’t cut it.

Laoghaire was laughing at something dull Frank said, and I just prayed to keep the club sandwich in my stomach.

After the incident between me and the trash can, I only hoped for a cup of oolong tea, but of course Frank could not keep his historical mouth shut.

So, as soon as Jamie heard I vomited, he excused himself from the table, and brought me the very oolong tea I wanted, plus my favourite club sandwich I did not want.

He made me eat the very last crumb on my plate. I knew he worried, but I did not want his pity.

The only time I would ever think Laoghaire was right, was when she murmured something incoherent regarding male power, and how we should go back to the car. I had no idea what the girl was talking about, until I heard Jamie’s stubborn voice.

I turned one-eighty and saw two red-faced clowns, one being Jamie and another being Frank, arguing before a female cashier, about who would pay for a 20 pounds worth of breakfast.

The woman looked like she was holding a chainsaw below the cash desk, and was counting the seconds when she would cut off the clowns’ heads off their necks.
I silently thanked her, and went to the car.

After driving for seven hours straight, we came into sight with *Le tunnel sous la Manche*, the Channel Tunnel connecting *Folkestone* and *Coquelles*.

It was not the best laid plan, this road trip. I did agree more with Frank’s idea of taking the plane, it would’ve been a much shorter journey. However, Jamie thought it would be fun to drive through UK, and I did not mind that either, since I would not be the one driving.

As soon as we reached the French soil of *Pas-de-Calais*, we and “*Bonnie*” - Jamie’s precious new car - boarded the Eurostar train, which would drive us through the French night all the way to *Annecy*, an alpine town near the Swiss border.

It was around one in the morning, when I stirred from my sleep, the most probable cause of waking being a not-so-comfortable train-bed. I decided to get dressed and go to the open bar for a cup of tea.

We were supposed to reach Annecy in less than forty-five minutes anyway, and we were on board of Eurostar train for about one hour and fifteen minutes.

The only reason we took a car with beds, was because Frank insisted that after midnight, even an hour of sleep would be precious. Nobody bothered to fight the man, since none of us cared.

I left the sleeping beauty behind, and went to the open bar.

I could sense my heart skip a beat before it even did the action - it was just a normal response my heart would give whenever in Jamie’s presence. I turned around to my right, and saw him, all handsome and beautiful looking through the window, observing the gorgeous silence of French nights.

No matter how much my brain was screaming “*Beauchamp, go back! This is a disaster. S.O.S.*” my heart was lounder, and I couldn’t do anything but listen.

“Can’t sleep?” My voice was barely hearable, but Jamie seemed to hear me all right. With a slight shake of his head, his voice caressed my eardrums, “Nah. Laoghaire snores worse than Murtagh and my Da combined.” I could not help but grin from ear to ear, “She needs her beauty sleep too, right?”
Jamie flashed his porcelain white teeth at me, “I bet 50 quid she’s worse than Frank. The lass has no filter.”

Laughter won out, “You are on, mister.”

I could not help but blush as Jamie kept staring at me. It was weird and wonderful at the same time, and I was speechless for a minute.

“Something on my face?”

“Nothin’ but beauty,” blushed I was and blush I did more. He was breaking my heart, and I couldn’t seem to find oxygen. “Jamie…” I whispered, “I think I should go.”

“No, Claire. Mo nighean donn, I’m sorry. I wasna thinking, I know that Frank -”

I interrupted before this conversation crossed thousands of inappropriate lines, “I’m going. We’ll meet at the exit do take the car, right?”

Jamie seemed to lack oxygen as well, “Claire …”

“Right?” I repeated stubbornly.

“Aye,” unshed tears were stinging my eyes for the sadness in his voice, but this was neither a time nor place to discuss the forbidden attraction between us.

The next thing I knew was that Geillis yanked open my side door of the Range Rover, and showed me out of the car. She was all over me, laughing and screaming my name like I was the Queen of England.

Behind her huge red hair, I saw the sign, “Bienvenue dans Les 3 Vallées”
And the alpine adventure was ready to begin.

Chapter End Notes

I hope you like this chapter. It did not turn out just how I imagined it, but I hope it will do for now. Please tell me what you think, it motivates me so much to read your amazing comments.
We must have missed a turn somewhere along the road. There was no way in hell that we could be in this hotel. It was **enormous**, to say the least. *I could not wait to get under the covers of an equally enormous bed. Hopefully equal.*

Even though it was around three in the morning, the exterior of the hotel was bathed in bright lights.

On the left side of the hotel were two columns of smaller windows. There was a large sign attached in between second and third row of the aforementioned windows, reading “**KOH-I NOR HOTEL *****.**” The middle part of the establishment was full of large double-sliding windows and balconies spreading approximately six stories towards the mountain tops surrounding the hotel, while on the right side, I could notice a long spiral staircase inclosed in a glass frame.

Les 3 Vallées included three neighbouring valleys, with each of the valleys well known for popular resorts. For Belleville (the valley) it was Val Thorens (the resort), Allues - Méribel, and Saint-Bon - Courchevel.

We were of course located in the most prominent of the resorts, Val Thorens. It was famous for many five-star hotels and apartments, as well as numerous restaurants, clubs and spas. Most importantly, the neverending wide ski slopes that were surrounding the resort.

“Jamie reserved a five-star hotel for us?” I whispered to Geillis, still looking at the view in front of me.

“It’s amazing, isn’t it?” Geillis yelled in my ear.

“I know it’s well after midnight, but the lack of sunshine doesn’t affect my hearing, Geillis.” Ever since I met her, she was quirky and loud, and just when I thought I got used to it, she kept surprising me.

Geillis giggled, “Sorry. Rupert, Angus and I hit the club after dinner. Seems the music numbed my ears.”

Geillis, Angus and Rupert came three nights before us, and they would leave three nights before us,
too. The arrangement was made because Jamie’s “Bonnie” could not fit in more than four people, so Geillis was stuck with the children.

Rupert is Jamie’s cousin, and Angus is Rupert’s best friend, or what Jamie would say “high school sweethearts, the two of them.” When Geillis read about the plan in our whatsapp group, she left the chat. Told ya, she was and always will be a drama queen.

“What happened to Rupert and Angus being childish and “too boring to have fun wi’,” I continued whispering, in case the kids jumped out of nowhere and got in on the hot gossip.

“I wouldna ever guess they can party. They’re like the devil himself,” she smiled, but I frowned, not thinking that was the kind of partying I would like to witness.

Geillis’ eyes lit up with unfamiliar warmth as she continued, “Plus, Rupert is kinda shaggable. Like, a lot.”

Oh, there it was. I thought the nausea I had hours ago calmed down, but she was back in business. “What? Didn’t you say less then two weeks ago that Rupert’s gross for coming on at you, and that “I’m too hot and out of his league, ClaireBear,” I scrunched my fingers into air quotes, just for dramatic effect.

“Claire, that was the past, and this is the present. And tomorrow night, if he finally grows balls to kiss me, will be the everloving future. Ye ken?”

“I most certainly ken-not. Where did the shallow Geillis go. Darling, are you okay. Maybe you’re ill. It must be the clean oxygen and, -”

I was rudely interrupted by my now blushed best friend. “I wasna shallow, Claire. I just thought Frank was a skinny, smart-arsed freak-show with no half a gram of muscles,” she took a deep breath, “Now, Jamie on the other hand. -”

I was seconds from interrupting her when Frank came over, “Darling, go grab your suitcase and let's check in. I need to sleep.” The gentleman that he wasn’t, I pushed him to the right so that I could pass by him and get to Bonnie’s rear. Oh, that sounded so wrong, I was lucky Geillis was out of my mind’s earshot.
I was about to use my biceps that are quite literally the size-of-a-popcorn, and pray to lord that I could manage and get my suitcase out of the trunk, when I felt goosebumps on my neck welcome the familiar musky breath, “Move over, Sassenach.” My heart skipped a few beats, but I complied nonetheless, while watching him one-handedly place the suitcase in front of me.

“What were ye thinkin’ tryina to lift this massivity wi’ yer wee arms?”

What?! How dare he?!

“I am not that weak,” I lied.

“Aye, ye are, Sassenach.” Jamie continued to laugh, I blushed.

“And just for your information, my suitcase is not that heavy,” I lied again. “You’re just exaggerating to make yourself look like a bloody Hercules -”

Jamie’s sexy and breathtaking smirk stole the words out of my mouth. All jokes aside, his smirk should be in prison, because it was certainly killing me at this point.

“Whatever helps ye sleep at night, Sassenach,” he kissed my cheek, took the suitcase aforementioned, and headed for the main entrance of the hotel.

I couldn’t move again. Jamie’s kisses did weird, yet not-so-uncomfortable things to my legs.

Once I felt the strength come back, I ran after him. “Jamie, wait. You took my suitcase,” he stopped, and spoke over his shoulder, smirk in place. “Dinna fash, Sassenach. I’ll have it delivered to yer room.”

I blushed, again, thinking about the fact that Jamie knew where my room was. I couldn’t seem to find any words, so I returned the smile, and went back to get Geillis and Frank.

Just as I exited outside, I could hear Laoghaire whining and calling for Jamie. She was saying something between the lines of, “Jamie! Where are ye? I canna lift my suitcase!” And et cetera.
I grinned, thinking about how Jamie was probably at my room right about now.

_Suck it Leery._

I was quickly brought back to reality by Frank’s falsetto, “Claire,” he took a dramatic breath, talking to me like I was demented, “I told you to get your suitcase from the car. So?” He was looking at me eager to hear my response.

*My dream man, a strong, true gentleman, took it for me. He is going to leave it in my room. I hope he leaves himself, too. And you Frank, can sleep with the mountain goats for all I care.*

I swallowed my pride, “I had it delivered in my room. We can go.”

Geiliss giggled, and I could swear she was looking at me like she could read every thought on my face. No. That was only Jamie’s thing.

“Jesus H. Roosevelt Christ, stop it, Geillis!” I yelled, clearly annoyed.

She giggled some more, “Stop what?”

I followed behind Frank, feeling like a puppy who’s just been yelled at. “Nothing. Good night Geillis.”

I heard her annoying laughter rise for two octaves, before disappearing behind the automatic glass entrance door.

I was woken up by the sunshine peeking in between much-too-lengthy beige curtains.
I turned to my side, the figure next to me still snoring away, so I moved to get up and towards the bathroom. I almost screamed when I saw the person reflected in the mirror.

My hair was disheveled, and pointing in all possible directions. Deciding the brushing would be very painful at the moment, I turned one-eighty and got in the shower.

The warm water was all I needed, after all. I shampooed my hair, and started tunelessly singing to something I picked up from the radio yesterday.

It could’ve been five or fifty minutes later that I exited the shower. I towel-dried my hair, and cleaned the mirror from the steam my hot shower made, before fixing the towel around my waistline.

As I locked eyes with my reflection, I couldn’t help but remember that night.

She was so beautiful. Her golden eyes looking at me like I was the only man in the entire universe. So bonny.

We were at Joe’s, and both she and I had gulped couple of incredibly and surprisingly good whisky. Wait, I take that back. I wasn’t surprised, it was in Edinburgh after all. And Scotland only has the good stuff.

I could remember that night like it was yesterday.

She was wearing black, high-waisted jeans that hung to that roundest arse perfectly. Like they were custom-made, just for her. She had a white crop-top, but the damned jeans covered up every centimeter of her pearly skin.

She was wearing a black lacy bra under the sheer white top, torturing me to infinity.

Her curly brown hair was tucked in a loose bun on top of her head, and she had silver hoops as the sole jewelry. So bonny.

After she said hello to everyone in our group, she turned to face me. Her whisky eyes locked on mine, and the sparkles were flying everywhere in between us.
I was sitting at the bar, on a bit squeaky stool. She stopped in front of me, her knees brushing my own.

She kissed my cheek, and I was burning in pleasure. “Hi,” she whispered in my ear.


The light in the pub was almost non-existent, but I could feel her blush.

“You are not so bad yourself, Mr. Fraser.” I was positive that I was the one blushing now.

We got to talking and drinking, we didna even notice the fact that the rest of our group wasna at the pub anymore.

“Where is everyone?” She asked surprisingly.

*Ydinna care! Turn back around. You’re supposed to be mine. Dinna leave me...*

“I havena the slightest clue, Sassenach.” It wasna strictly a lie, since I truly didna ken where they went, but I left out the fact of silently thanking Geillis for getting everyone out of the pub, and leaving us alone.

“Jesus H. Roosevelt Christ! Jamie look at the time!” I pretended to glance at my left hand, not really caring for the bloody time.

“Jamie, I have a morning shift tomorrow, I have to go.” She narrowed her eyes on my hands holding hers on the counter, “Sorry.”

I quickly got up and took her coat from her chair, “I’ll walk you home.” She tried to negate, but I wouldna budge.
Thank Christ for small mercies, such as Claire’s apartment being only two of blocks away.

The wind was stronger than this afternoon, letting Claire’s beautiful hair out of that tight bun’s captivity, and giving it free will to move simultaneously with the wind.

A hot wave passed threw me, and I noticed that she linked her hand to mine. We locked eyes and I squeezed her hand in resurance.

“This is me,” she said stupidly.

I brushed a lock of silky brown hair behind her ear, and leaned in to kiss her cheek. She must have turned at the same time, because the next thing I could remember is kissing her with months of held-up hunger.

She stroked her tongue down the length of my bottom lip seeking entrance, and I obliged. Her moan nearly had me pinning her to the nearest wall. Her lips were so velvety and smooth, and as her tongue stroke mine, I let out a deep-voiced moan.

That must have awoken her from this revier, as she pulled away from me, panting.

“Claire,” I was searching for her eyes, but she turned away from my gaze.

“Oh, no. I am so sorry Jamie.”

She took another deep breath, “I can’t.”

And she left me standing to fight the howling wind. *All alone.*

“JAMIE,” a high-pitched noise brought me back to my reflection in the mirror.

“What do ye want Laoghaire?” I havena the slightest idea why I brought her wi’ me. She was
incredibly annoying.

“WHAT DO I WANT?!” She was pounding on the bathroom door, yelling continued, “I NEED YE TO GET OUT FROM THE BATHROOM. WE ARE GOIN’ TO BE LATE FOR BREAKFAST. I’LL TELL EVERYONE THAT IT WAS YER FAULT.”

“Ffrinn, stop yelling. Ye are such a brat.”

She slammed the bathroom door, and I fell onto the bed.

I really needed to get out on the slopes today, or I dinna think I’ll survive this woman.”

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for all the lovely comments and kudos!! I hope you enjoy this chapter. BTW, I'm going on my spring break tomorrow, so chapter 4 might be delayed for the next weekend, since I don't have it written yet. But we'll see, I might have some spare time, who knows ;)
p.s. if you didn't notice, this chapter was a bit rushed due to my unfocused brain...hopefully it makes sense :P
It’s About Time We Faced The Music

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

If I concentrated hard enough, I could almost hear the silence screaming.

Jamie and Laoghaire sat opposite Frank and myself. I was relieved to see that there was a chair in between them. It made the view in front of me much more bearable. Geillis and the kids were out of sight, making the situation even more awkward. It was such a toxic energy and I was praying for a distraction to pull me away.

The ringing of my phone broke the awkward silence that was occupying our breakfast table. I looked at the screen and saw a bunch of platinum-blond wild curls, closely resembling a halo - ironically, since she’s more of a devilish nature. The owner of said curls was my attending, Dr. Julia Steward. Medusa was what we called her. Of course, Geillis started it, and we all came to love the nickname - it was well suited. It was her hair that inspired it at first. But, as the time passed, we learned to run from her gaze like the devil from the cross. She had these grey hooded eyes, which could cement you with one look. If it wasn’t clear enough, Medusa was impossible to satisfy, therefore making her the most hated attending in the Royal Infirmary Edinburgh.

The policy regarding residency in the RIE was pretty clear. First and second year residents were treated like secretaries. Fifty percent of my first year as a junior resident, I was filling out charts and running around making Medusa happy - ish. Other fifty percent was spent observing surgeries - from the gallery, or YouTube videos.

Been there, done that.

Thankfully, I started my third year residency in September, meaning I had much more freedom, plus, I had ten interns in my service, doing charts and pleasing Medusa for me. I could even do solo surgeries from time to time.

Frank stared at me with sharpness in his eyes that could slash the table in half. The look was telling the typical tale “Claire, don’t you dare leave the table to talk on the phone. It is embarrassing.” I mouthed that it was the hospital calling, and he shook his head in disbelief. Frank has never understood my vocation towards surgery, and I got used to the juxtaposition of his discouraging compliments.
I picked up a fancy burgundy cotton cloth off my lap, placed it next to my plate, and excused myself from the table.

“Hello,” I started at the same time Medusa was yelling my name. “- Beauchamp, why the hell aren’t ye at the hospital? I wasna able to get to Duncan, either.” I was confused to the point of being speechless. Before I could find words, she continued, “What the hell is goin’ on. Where are ye?”

“Um, Dr. Steward, Geillis and I are on our winter vacation.”

A legitimately surprised screeching voice yelled back, “WHAT? What am I supposed to do wi’ these dummies ye call interns. I canna even look at them,” she took a deep breath before continuing. “Claire,” the use of my name sounded very weird, being that she never called me by my first name before. Another deep intake of breath, following a whisper, “Be reasonable.”

I had zero clue why she was not notified of my absence, “With all due respect, Dr. Steward, it is impossible for me to come if the emergency is your inability to summon couple of interns -”

“Watch yer tone, young lady,” why people talked down on me like I was a child would never make sense to me. Nevertheless, I said with all due respect , what else did she want? “I am truly sorry,” I lied, “However, if there isn’t anything else resembling a real emergency of life and death, I really have to go.”

There was a long silence, and had I not heard the sirens of ambulance approaching, I would’ve thought that she hung up on me. “Never the mind, ye are useless, as always.” Auch, that almost hurt.

I could see Frank getting up, so I hurried towards the table and pretended to talk hospital stuff. “Yes, I see. Check his vitals and call me as soon as possible.” This seemed to ease his nerves, and I sat in my chair, now facing what happend to look like black truffles and caviar bruschettas. Wow.

I picked up my phone and texted Geillis, now starting to worry.

Me: Geillis where the hell are you? A do not tell me you returned to that club.

Me: And what the fuck is with this hotel? How much money does Jamie actually have? We’re
“Claire, don’t ye want to eat?” Jamie’s voice surprised me, and I dropped my phone on the table. I could feel my blood flowing through the capillaries in my face. I blushed more - if that was possible, embarrassed that I just talked behind Jamie’s back _in_front_of_him. We locked eyes, and all of a sudden, I was very hungry. Just not for food.

I let him read my thoughts on my face, replying nonchalantly, “Yes, of course,” taking the fork and knife out of yet another fancy burgundy cotton cloth, I looked at Jamie again, “Bon appétit.”

Breakfast was full of excruciating silence and stolen glances between Jamie and me. If I hadn’t know better, I would’ve thought Jamie was seconds away from jumping on me. I felt a rather uncanny feeling of disappointment that he hadn’t fulfilled my expectations in that moment.

Geillis, Rupert and Angus were a no show at breakfast, with Geillis’ ever short text confirming their absence.

**Geillis:** *Meet ye on the slopes!*

After breakfast, we all changed into our skiing outfits. I had a fire-yellow jacket and black slim-fit bottoms with zippers of pockets coloured to match with my jacket. Frank had a boring three shades of grey on him, and the audacity he had to tell me I looked like a circus clown, when he was the walking dead, was beyond me.

Jamie had a candy red jacket and dark denim-coloured bottoms. He looked beyond sexy, like he just got out of a photoshoot for top ten most sexiest men on earth, naturally him taking the first place. On the other hand, Laoghaire had a baby pink jacket with matching bottoms. Quite plain, like her personality.

An unfortunately familiar high-pitched voice came behind me. “Jamieeeeeee, I canna walk in these. They’re too heavy, and I’m so petite,” she finished with an unseductive smile, revealing her bleached teeth.
“Laoghaire, those are ski boots. They’re meant to be heavy, so a person petite such as ye,” Jamie said sarcastically, “doesn’a fall on the first try and break all the bones in their petite body.” I could not help but laugh. This girl was hilarious.

“Jamie, I dinna ken how to ski,” she finished lamely.

“What?” Jamie and I talked simultaneously. I nodded at him to continue.

“Ye dinna ken how to ski, and ye are tellin’ us now? What were ye thinking? That I would carry ye on my back from mountain to mountain?” Jamie was more talking to himself than her.

“Jamie, honey , I am so sorry,” she smirked - I wanted to vomit from disgust, “Ye can teach me.”

“The hell I can,” he sat down to fasten his ski boots, “If ye canna ski, ye will have to learn -”

“Well aye, that’s what I just said, Ja-”

“At a ski school.” My jaw dropped to my knees, while Laoghaire began shaking her head from left to right shoulder.

“I canna go to ski school, Jamie. I am not a child.” And pigs can fly.

“I canna teach ye, I came her to ski wi’ my friends. If ye dinna want to go to ski school, take an instructor. I dinna care.”

“Fine,” she gave in too easily. “But after skiing, we’re goin’ shopping,” there we go.

“Whatever. Now finish wi’ those and let’s go,” Jamie stretched his arms and turned back to me grinning from ear to ear.

“I’ll text Geillis to meet us next to the ski school then,” I smiled and Jamie’s grin grew wider.
“ClaireBear, why, look at yer smokin’ hot body. I am impressed,” voiced my annoying best friend. We met with Geillis, Rupert and Angus next to the ski school where we left Laoghaire.

“You look great and... sober?” I asked through a giggle.

“For yer information, I wasna drinking since yesterday at the club. But Rupert and I stayed in the buffay,” she finished shyly.

“Jesus H. Roosevelt Christ, Geillis! Are you blushing?” I looked at her wide-eyed. I could not believe she was blushing. So out of her character, blushing that is.

“I_am_not,” she said, turning crimson.

“Oh yes, you are, my friend. What’d ya do? Kiss under the moon and shining stars,” I teased, and received an elbow to my stomach for pursuing.

“Nothing happened, unfortunately. We just talked, but it was amazing nonetheless.” Wow, I was speechless.

“Geillis, before I forget, what the hell is Jamie doing to afford this vacation and pay for seven people? It is totally insane.”

“Oh, that,” she shrugged her shoulders. “Weel, technically he’s no really payin’ for us.”

“Wot? You mean to tell me that we’re here for free. _Not_ funny Geillis. There’s no way I can afford this place, also -”

“It’s his hotel. That’s why he isna payin anything.”

“Oh,” I said dumbly. “But he never -”
“If ye want more answers, ask him. I dinna ken much, because Rupert doesna ken much, and he’s my source.”

“Not really good one, though.” I was still thinking about Jamie owning the biggest hotel in this resort, when Geillis purposely distracted me.

“Anyway, where’s the dumb blonde at?” Geillis was observing couple of kids on the conveyor belt. “Look at these munchkins. They canna be more than three. Aww, look at those tiny skis. Too cute.”

“You’re looking at her. Well, not straight at her, but she’s definitely there.”

“Wot,” Geillis raised her eyebrows in amusement. She loved to imitate my “very posh” accent.

“Ha ha, seriously? Anyhow, she’s there with the kids. She doesn’t know how to ski,” I pointed at the school with my forefinger.

“Don’t ye see? This is perfect,” Geillis winked at me and patted my shoulder.

“What do you mean “perfect”?"

She hissed, letting me know how irritated my dumbness made her. “Weel, ye and yer wee fox will be all alone. Together. Surrounded by snow and forests. Verra romantic, is it no?”

“We will most certainly _not_ be alone. What about Angus, Rupert and you?”

Geillis started laughing and clasped her hands together in amusement, “Sweetheart, I think ye missed someone.”

Confusion overwhelmed me, “Wot?”

“Frank. Ye left out Frank. See that slander frog-faced man, barely visible behind Jamie’s huge
biceps. The man ye call yer _boyfirend_ - Frank.”

“Oh God,” my cheeks were blowing fire, “Oh my God. I am horrible.”

“No, ye aren’t ClaireBear. Ye are just no in love wi’ that man. And as soon as ye realise that, the better. For everyone.”

“I know,” I whispered shyly, but before I was able to voice my concerns, I was interrupted with Angus squeezing the last breath out of me.

“Angus whatever-your-middle-name-is Mhor, let me down this instant!” I tried to wiggle out of his grasp, but to no success.

“Are ye women ready to kick the slopes,” he asked and his grip tightened before he let go of me and went to give Geillis the same treatment.

“Dare to touch me, and I’ll rip yer balls off.”

“What is wrong wi’ ye woman? I was just showin’ my love fur ye. And I get treated as a pig.” He faced Rupert and Jamie who could not stop shaking from laughter, “We men need to stick together, aye? Or these women will be the end of us.”

I could swear on my life that Jamie murmured “Hopefully” and looked at me. I stared back, until Angus turned towards Geillis and me and took his phone out of his pocket. “Jamie, will ye take a photo of Rupert and myself with the ladies?”

We all stared back in confusion, and then... I got it. Geillis and I wore matching outfits, except her jacket was black and her bottoms were fire-yellow as my jacket. Similarly, Rupert had green jacket and yellow pants, whereas Angus had yellow jacket and green pants.

Angus turned to Geillis and me then, “We are two sets of twins, ye ken. We better picture the moment. To have memories and such, aye?”

I could not help but gigle when Rupert smacked his head, “Aye, ye bod ceann. Ye need pictures as
memories, when yer brain is as hollow as a tube.”

“Bite ma bawsack ye radge wee shite,” Angus hit him back, and Jamie got in between before they progressed onto a battlefield.

“Okay, it is about time we go skiing, before I get yet another headache from your yelling.” Oh God, Frank.

“Let’s just snap the bloody picture and go,” Rupert cried and the four of us fake-smiled for the camera.

We were skiing until four in the afternoon, and then had to take yet another break for lunch, because Angus’s stomach developed a “black hole”, and ate every gram of food he consumed throughout the day.

I was half way through my crème brûlée, when Jamie proposed we carry on with skiing until one of the snowcats - snow grooming machine - grooms us with the snow.

“We have around thirty minutes before the chair-lifts close for the day. Do ye want to go for the last off piste for the day?” Angus, Rupert and Jamie rented out snowboards, while Geillis, Frank and I took skis. So naturally, I thought he was asking the guys, but his gaze riveted towards me.

Since we were equally divided between skies and boards, those were the groups we went down the slopes with. I was not very happy about spending time with Jamie only during lunch-breaks, when everyone was constantly around. Well, not everyone. Thankfully, Laoghaire was busying herself in the kindergarten learning how to hold ski sticks.

I would guess that Frank noticed Jamie’s gaze in my direction, and since he always had to stick his long-arsed nose in my business, he answered before I ever had a chance to swallow a bite of my crème brûlée.
“I think we shall call it a day. We are pretty tired, aren’t we darling?” We locked eyes, and I hope he got the memo of an old-fashioned stern look that pretty much said *fuck off you annoying-party-pooper-boring* man.

“Actually,” I pursued, “I might just be in for a little adrenaline-rising off-piste closure. It will be fun,” Jamie’s grin had a little resemblance of the one of Joker’s, making it a little creepy yet really cute at the same time.

Frank stomped his foot beneath the table, and rose from his chair, “Claire, we are tired after skiing the whole day. We are going back to the hotel.” I was furious with his sudden change of attitude, letting the anger linger in my calm voice, “Frank, if you are tired, go home. I am fine.”

He grabbed my right hand forcibly, making me drop the spoon I was eating my crème brûlée with, and pulled me to the side, out of earshot.

“Claire, are you out of your goddamn mind?” He spit in my face. “What are you doing trying to humiliate and disrespect me in front of the whole bloody restaurant?”

I gripped my hand into fists, and had to take in all the control I had in my body to keep them by my side, instead of glueing them to his jaw.

“I *disrespected* you? Are you fucking kidding me Frank? You degraded my right to an opinion in front of all my friends, treated me like a voodoo doll where you poke and I cry in agreement. That is not how relationships work Frank. You have to let me have fun and do things that make me happy, with people who make me happy. You cannot bloody control my every move or make decisions for me.”

I took a deep breath, mentally going over all the arguments I have to give, which were collected through the past two years.

“And I do not make you happy, Claire? Is that the point of all this blabbering? Last I thought, relationships were about compromising. We skied all day with them, because *you* wanted it that way, Claire. The last thing you can give me in return is to go back to the hotel with me. “*They are my friends, we should spend time with them.*” And what am I to you, Claire? A man who pities you? A shoulder to cry on whenever life fucks you over? When are you going to spend time with me? Please, for the love of God, enlighten me Claire, because I do not understand my purpose in your life. If you are so miserable with me, why are you with me then, Claire?”
This all hit very close to home, and I was fighting an already lost war. My tears were on the verge of spilling, but I would be damned to give Frank satisfaction of witnessing my pain.

“Frank, I think you should drink some water and calm down. People are watching us.”

“_I_do_not_care_about_other_people,” he nearly screamed through gritted teeth.

He seemed to look right through me, like I was a ghost he wasn’t able to see.

“Frank,” I pleaded, “Let’s go to the hotel, I think it’s about time we have the talk.”

I pushed past him and went to our table. I avoided everyone’s faces, knowing that if I locked eyes with anyone, I would turn into a waterfall of tears. I cried a river before, I could do it again, that was not the problem. I just did not want to talk about my relationship with anyone except Frank right now.

It was about time we either moved on together, or from each other.

Chapter End Notes

hi guyssss, i'm back from my vacation and have about three chapters ready to be proof-read and out sometime this week ;) i'm still not sure about a regular posting schedule, because my A levels are coming up and that will surely occupy 90% of my time :/ however until then, i'll try to post as much as my inspiration lets me :)

sorry for the minor cliffhanger, but the fifth chapter should be up tomorrow or on Wednesday, so bare with me :D

p.s. Medusa nickname was inspired by Grey's Anatomy <3 hope you enjoyed this chapter!!
It was about twenty minutes later that we reached the hotel. Frank came in before me, so I slammed the door of our hotel room shut, and hurried towards the bathroom.

I felt very nauseous, but I gave my best not to empty my stomach. I hated vomiting. It made me weak and powerless, even embarrassed. I decided to take a hot shower, clear my head, in order to make myself ready to face Frank.

I could not even comprehend when everything went south today, but it was the matter of time before we had to seriously discuss our relationship. I would not necessarily call it toxic or overly unhealthy, but it was far from perfect or even stable. Frank and I lost mutual respect towards each other about four months ago. He because of my kiss with Jamie, I because of his betrayal with his student. It would’ve hurt less if he slept with her from infatuation or attraction, even love. But to sleep with her out of spite for me, as a mean of revenge, was heartbreaking. Did I mean that little to him?

I would never want to stay in a relationship with someone who cheated on me. But Frank was a manipulator, the best of the kind. He made me feel tremendous amount of guilt for dunk-kissing Jamie. He made it impossible for me to forget what I did. Even now, I wouldn’t rule out that he was blaming me for the destruction of our relationship.

So when he cheated on me, I had no say. I couldn’t break up with him, because of the guilt inside my head that was silently screaming all the time. He made me think that his affair was the result of my infidelity. I could not even comprehend that he did worse by me. I could not see past my guilt. I was blinded.

So I gave in. I gave us a second chance, without having a choice of giving up. If anything medical school taught me, it was to know how to estimate the perfect time to give up, stop trying, and do better next time. It wasn’t the coward’s way to give up, it was the rational mind’s. When an illness is fatal or chronic, you would do anything in your power to heal it, to make it less.

Nevertheless, you would reach a point where nothing else could be done. Where no matter how many times you defibrillate the patient, the outcome would be the same: they either lived or died. And when the point of dying occurred, that was not called giving up. That was called trying.

I tried to try with Frank again, but it just backfired. And now was the time to give up and move
forward with my life.

Somewhere deep down inside my heart, I was hoping that we would be fine. I didn’t remember my parents or their relationship, even though Lamb made sure I knew about their infinite love for each other. I had no experience in long-term relationships prior to meeting Frank. Uncle Lamb was a lone wolf. He had a woman from time to time, but nothing lasting more than a month.

He always used to say “Pumpkin, never dare to follow in my footsteps. Love is impossible to dig out in this profession.” I would just reply like any other six year old, “But uncle, I love you. Isn’t that love?”

And he, of course would say, “That’s a different kind of love, Pumpkin.”

“What do you mean?”

He would smile, “The love of your family is very special, sacred and forever lasting. The love of a lover while unique, has an expiration date. Like milk. The first couple of days you drink it, it's delicious, but two weeks from that it gets spoilt and ready to be replaced by new milk.”

I would just shrug my shoulders in indifference. Yet, as an adult, I now understood that Lamb’s heart was broken by someone dear to him and unknown to me. As a consequence, he never let himself love again. As a kid, I thought it was cool to have Lamb all to myself. Afterall, he was my only family. The only person on this world who loved me unconditionally. However, I came to a realization that I did not want to end up like my uncle. Alone. And I would not let Frank stamp my heart with pain.

I splashed cold water on my face and looked at the mirror above the his-and-hers sink. I couldn’t even recognize the woman looking back at me. I was born with dark brown curly hair. Frank never liked my natural hair, so I had to straighten it or pull it back in a ponytail. There was not one spark in my eyes. The look I was giving right now was sad and tired. I had to change and be able to breathe in my skin and be myself again. If Frank could not embrace that, I would perhaps find someone who could. Someone who could love me unconditionally, like Lamb, for all my flaws and strengths. Someone who would not expect it of me to change who I was, in order to accommodate their preferences.

I turned one-eighty and entered the shower. I let the warm water spill over me and take all the pain and sorrow away. I needed to feel fresh and collected. My emotions were everywhere, and I needed to gather them to one place and put a lock, enabling me to take control of my emotions. I let the tears spill freely down my cheeks. They blended in fine with the water.
The steam was starting to dominate the bathroom, so I wrapped up my routine and exited the shower. As I cleaned the mirror from the steam, I recognized my reflection again. My wet hair curled up around my shoulders, and, although my eyes were puffy and red from crying, they gave a lighter and stronger look.

Once I was settled, I exited the bathroom and found Frank on the balcony, with a drink in hand.

“Whisky?” He asked, his voice low and exhausted.

“Yes, thank you.”

“Frank,” I swallowed a generous sip of very good whisky, “I think we came to a dead end. I think we tried our best, but we are just so different. And I do not want to fight anymore. I don’t have energy for it.”

“I understand,” he said calmly, leaving me staring back in surprise.

“You do?”

“Yes. As much as it pains me to say it, you don’t love me. I am not sure you ever did. I understand that your affection lays elsewhere and before you argue, I think I understand that too.”

“Frank, I -”

“Let me finish, please.” He waited for my response and I nodded. This was not how I expected this conversation to go.

“I understand that you are grateful for the version of myself from two years ago. But we changed, and now we want different things. I thought I wanted this, but I don’t. I never wanted to make you love me. I approached our situation from a wrong angle, and I think I realise that.”

I exhaled, “We are good people, Frank. We are just not good for each other.”
He seemed not to pay attention to me, “I get uncontrollably furious when I see you with James. You are always smiling, blushing or laughing. I cannot recall the last time a made you laugh, Claire. It is unforgivable to keep you for myself and not make you happy.”

“You used to make me happy, never forget that.”

“I won’t. But I think it’s time for me to go. I will not make you follow me, and if ever you feel like being friends in the future, I will be there.”

I could not understand a tinge of sadness in my heart, “Thank you. Truly.”

Just then, did I notice his suitcase next to him. “You are leaving,” I stated breathlessly and matter-of-factly.

“Yes, sadly, there is nothing holding me back anymore.”

He finished his drink, stood up and walked to our door. He turned towards said door, and over his shoulder, whispered “Goodbye, Claire.”

Before I had time to blink, he was gone. I was too confused and overwhelmed with emotions, that I needed to lay down and catch some rest. Hopefully, by the time I wake up, I would know how to process what just happened.

“Wh.. wha.. whe...what?” I was startled from my nap by a loud beeping noise. I started to get up when I noticed the bed was much lighter. I turned to my left and faced the emptiness of the bed. Frank. Oh God. I felt horrible, but finally free. I hoped that wasn’t making me a bad person.

The beeping sound led me to our balcony window, and I was relieved to have found the source of the noise. It was a snowcat. I looked at the clock and groaned in frustration. It was one in the morning, and there was no way I could go back to sleep.
Just as I thought to make some tea and read a book, I saw a gleam of blue and red lights reappearing in the sky. I went out to the balcony and saw the lights emerge from “Le Malaysia.” That was the largest underground club in the area - I would know, since Geillis couldn’t wait to tell me how good it was.

As I was looking at it, the exterior wasn’t that impressive. It was made of white wood - from what I could tell, and the shape resembled an igloo.

However, the interior that was under the ground was supposed to “blow yer mind, ClaireBear,” citing hyped Geillis.

As I was weighing the costs and benefits of making a rational decision to either stay in and read a book, or go out and have some fun, I came to the conclusion that gin was always better than tea, and I had no gin in my room. Of course, the rational part of my mind told me “Just call room service, Beauchamp,” but my more socially acceptable - Geillis approved - and irrational part told me “Go out and have fun. You are single and ready to mingle. And drunk-dance.”

The next thing I knew, I was sitting at the bar of Le Malaysia, holding my fourth - or was it fifth? - glass of gin. The music was out of my forté, and the people here seemed to be quite younger than me, so I focused on drinking. And so far, I was doing rather amazing.

I waved my forefinger at the bartender, showing my empty glass that needed some serious refilling.

“Oh, C’est beaucoup de gin pour une dame,” a beautiful french-accented voice said somewhere near me. Maybe it was the french gin talking in my head, but when the voice started blabbering in a record speed, I had to put a stop to it. I turned to my right, hoping that the source of the voice was on that side. “I have no idea what you just said. But, I’ll take it as a compliment that you think I look French,” I said through a laugh.

My vision cleared, and I saw that there was no one there. Just when I thought I was pissing drunk - or not far from it, I felt a feather-like pat on my left shoulder, followed by a girly giggle. I matched the giggle with a beautiful, short blonde woman with striking blue eyes. She started laughing after seeing the amount of confusion that was swimming on my face.

“I said that is a lot of gin for a lady,” she was pointing on the numerous empty glasses in front of me.

I contradicted with a snort-like noise, “As you can see, I’m no lady,” I finished with a more than a tinge of sadness in my voice.
“Oh, ma chérie, you are a lady broken by a man,” she stated matter-of-factly while I was looking through my empty glass, wondering where the hell was the bartender to fill it up.

“Am I right?” It looked like this woman was more of a wreck than me. Why else would she talk to me? Why would she care?

“Comme ci comme ça,” Before she was able to say anything, I added, “Now, don’t go all French and furious at me, because the list of words I can pronounce is as short as this stupid glass. You come to a club, and the least you expect is for them to have nice long glasses that can hold more than a sip of alcohol. Don’t you think?”

She was giggling, “Sure. So, who broke your cœur, um -”


“What a pretty name. I am Louise de La Tour,” she shook my hand.

“Wow, if my name is pretty, than what is yours? Are you an aristocrat or something?”

“Non, but my parents wanted a name fitted for an aristocrat’s wife, if you will.”

“I don’t think you’ll find anything but hrony twenty-one year olds here.”

Louise laughed some more, “I think you are right. Tu es très amusant.”

“Sure,” I was about to get up and head back to the hotel when Louise stopped me, “It will be easier for you to talk about it. It does not have to be with me, but trust me, ma chérie, it will be better.”

So I told her my “sad” story, without going into too much details, because at the end of the day - she was a stranger. She could be a serial killer and I could be her next target, for all I knew. She didn’t look it, but I was raised not to judge a book by its cover.
“Oh, mon Dieu. I am so sorry, Claire,” I was about to pull my it’s-fine-I’m-a-survivor face, when she talked again.

“I am also feeling that you are not telling me everything.” Oh no, she was not buying what I was selling.

“I ‘ave a feeling there is another man. Am I right?”

“Why are you asking questions you know the answers to?”

“How do you know if I know?” She was incredulous, but I could see amusement forming in her eyes.

“Because... I have a glass face, so I know everything is on display for everyone to see. But, I also think that you speak from experience, and that because of that you think you can help me, but I’m not sure if I am quite ready for that,” I concluded.

“Maybe, but I also do not think drinking is an answer.”

“Careful Louise, I am not an alcoholic, no need to go there,” I voiced more anger than I was feeling, but again, who was she to judge?

Of course, she read my mind like French Vogue, “My intention was not to judge nor pry, my apologies. I was just trying to help, because I’ve been in your shoes before, and I learned from my mistakes.”

This day brought too much negativity, plus all the alcohol I drank made me very tired and yearning for my bed, so I gave myself an out.

“Hypothetically saying, there is a man. _ The_ man of my dreams, beautiful, funny, hard-working, and more importantly, respectful. He respects me and treats me like an equal, and he also thinks what I do is “phenomenally brave.” I never got such support from Frank, and I am craving for it. I worked hard to get to where I am, and no man will degrade me again like Frank did.”
“You are scared,” it was not a question, but a statement. “But why? If your mystery man is everything you want, why not give it a try? What scares you?”

“You are asking a lot of questions, and I am quite drunk to comprehend all that. However, hypothetically, I am very insecure of my body and my capabilities. Those are still raw scars, and I am working on healing them, but it is just too soon.”

“Claire, life is short. There is not enough time for you to worry about what ifs and what nots. You need to live in the moment. Look at the people around you! They are dancing like someone is skinning them alive, and their singing is far from melodic, but they are embracing their insecurities and having the best time.”

“Louise, I don’t think you understand -”

“Tell him.”

“What?” I was dumbfounded.

“Tell your man what you are feeling.”

“Oh, that. No. that's impossible.”

“Why?”

I shrugged my shoulders, “Well, he is here with someone. I don’t think he likes her at all, but still. The fact is that he brought her here for a reason, and he probably doesn’t like me like that anyway.”

I took a deep breath, “I mean, why would he? I do not look like a twenty-two year old barbie, I am a woman who is living in the real world. I don’t have a lot of free time to go to the clubs and get pissing drunk, or anything fun like that. I am in my third year residency, and have a lot to study for my exams - if I ever plan to become a surgeon. He is young, and should not wait around for years, until I would be finally able to have some spare time.”

Louise seemed to ignore my whining, while following her own accord, “Do you love him?”
I felt butterflies and other unfamiliar sensations flow through my body, “I… I… I don’t really know. I do feel something very strong for him, I am just not sure if that is love.”

She absorbed what I told her for a long time, and finally stood up from her chair, “Claire, ma chérie, I think you are very enamoured with your hypothetical -” she air quoted and enunciated every syllable in a mocking tone - “man. You just need to let go of your subconscious thoughts, and let your cœur do the talking. Now, let’s get you to your room, and tomorrow when you are sober, you will think about how to proceed further.”

I yawned in agreement, and she nudged my shoulder, “Never forget to have fun Claire. Nevermind your profession, everyone deserves to have fun and be happy.”

We reached my room and I surprised the both of us when I hugged her, “Thank you Louise, for your honesty, advice, help and most importantly that you listened. I needed this.”

She hugged me back, “Bien sûr. Also, I was stood up from a blind date, so you were there for me to. In a way.” She laughed and I could not help but giggle myself.

I unlocked my door and turned to her, “Goodnight Louise. Hope you find someone worthy of you and not some old, boring aristocrat.”

“Thank you, bonne nuit.”

I closed my door, and moved to turn the lights on when I noticed a shadow next to the leather couch.

I gripped my purse tight and tried not to scream, “Frank is that you? Did you forget something?” I switched the light on in a record speed, and nearly fainted from relief. Then confusion followed when the tall figure departed the couch and in three large steps was a breath away from my face.

“Claire, I’m in love wi’ ye,” I must have gasped incredibly loud, because the next thing I knew, I was silenced by the softest lips and the tightest grip on my waist, preventing me to move. Little did he know, that even wild horses couldn’t keep me away.
it was time to let Frank go, but I still wanted to give him a "fair" farewell and not to diminish his character a lot.

anywaaay, sorry about the delay of this chapter, I had it written and while I was proof-reading it, I realized that I don't like it, so I had to rewrite it, which took some time.... hope you like it ☺

p.s. my French is about as good as Claire's, so I had to rely on google translate... I know that using google translate for complex sentences was like using wikipedia as a reference for school essays, but I did my best, so don't @ me 😃
beginning could be PG 13...just saying

I couldn’t move. Literally could not move, due to one giant Scot holding me captive against the wooden door of my hotel room. I also couldn’t breathe, the consequence of focusing on the more important things at hand. Like kissing back. However, not liking being neglected, it wasn’t long after the oxygen made its way to the top of my priority list.

As I detached my lips from his, I bumped my head on the damned door behind me. By reflex, my arm flew to comfort the back of my head. Thank the Lord for my mass of curls.

“Christ, Sassenach. Are ye okay?” I tried to wiggle my way out of his grasp, to no avail. “Jamie, let me go. I need to breathe.” I was freed from his hold, and I already regretted my decision, yet I hurried for the table in front of my bed. I took an Evian from the little fridge beneath the table, and gulped half the bottle.

The awkward silence that I hoped would not appear just seconds ago, captivated my room. I screwed the cap back on the bottle and gently shoved it on the table.

As I dared to lift my eyes towards the door, I came in view with the man of my dreams. His blue eyes darkened by lust, his crimson hair slightly disheveled, his chest heaved in quick rhythm with my own, and his hands were stored in the pockets of his devilishly slim jeans. His impassive face wasn’t giving him away, whereas he was probably reading mine as easily as skimming through a sports magazine. Our eyes locked, but neither tried to act upon our desire.

It then occurred to me that in my dreams, it was never this much awkward. I always knew how to approach him or what to say. Not that much talking was done in my dreams. Now though, I found myself glued to the floor beneath me, and very mad that I could not seem to gather any strength to move. My frustration travelled down my arm, and that was when I realised I was still holding the water bottle, now all crushed, bent and wrinkled down the middle.

As I turned my attention to the short-lived Evian, I felt familiar warmth coat my neck. Right on cue, goosebumps welcomed the iron-hot breeze. “Sassenach,” Jamie whispered in my ear, gently biting my earlobe. I did not even think before easing myself into his touch, pushing my back to collide with
his rock solid front.

“Oh God,” was all I could muster to say when his tongue made an appearance and started tip-toeing around my earlobe. It was dead silent in my room, save our alacritous breaths and oddly satisfying sounds of my continuous torture of the plastic bottle in my hold. His hands were roaming around my waist, whilst his tongue started a teasingly slow path to my neck. I cocked my head slightly towards the door to give him further access.

Frustration long forgotten, I let go of the bottle and placed my arms on top of Jamie’s, entwining our fingers on my waist. “Jamie,” I pleaded, to an unknown cause, but knew I needed more. After placing a loud hungry kiss just below my jawline, he took me by the waist, turned me around in the air and placed me into a seating position atop the table. I automatically opened my legs and pulled him by the arms closer to me. His mouth was on my neck in seconds, and I felt as if I was on my very own cloud nine - featuring James Fraser.


“Claire,” oh no, my name was only reserved for serious talk, therefore my frustration was back in place. “Where is Frank?” I took a deep breath, bracing myself for what was surely to be a heated discussion.

“Well, Jamie, I do not think that’s the right question to ask me.”

His bewildered face was staring at me, “What do ye mean it isna the right question? Of course it is,” he shrugged his shoulders and moved my leg in order to get access to the mini fridge.

Shocked at his dismissal, I fought back. “No, Jamie, it isn’t.”

After he drank what he seemed to think was a satisfactory amount of water, or in this case - the whole three hundred milliliters of water - he tossed his bottle in the bin next to the fridge and took hold of my still-sprawled legs. I couldn’t help but swoon a little while watching his neck muscles flex and his Adam’s apple swiftly move while swallowing all that water.

“What’s the question then?”
All of a sudden, I got very uncomfortable with our close proximity, but could do little about that predicament, since Jamie would not let go of me for all the tea in bloody China. “The question is…” I spoke with more force than particularly necessary, “- why is Laoghaire here?”

“She isna here,” he tried for nonchalance, but not today and certainly not with me.

“I don’t mean in my room, Jamie. And I know you know that. So, the question is, why did you bring Laoghaire on this vacation?”

His hold on my legs tightened, “Weel, she wanted to come and I couldna tell her that she canna.”

What? “Of course you could, Jamie. And for your information, I don’t plan on sitting on this table forever, it isn’t very comfortable, my bum’s hurting. So, the sooner you answer the damned question the sooner we can proceed to the next step.”

“Weel, if ye can just answer my question, I might be able to do something ‘bout that bum hurtin’ of yers.” I slapped his hands away before anything indecent occurred. “Jamie, please stop distracting me. Why is she here if you hate her that much?”

He shrugged his shoulders and went few steps backwards, seating himself on the edge of my bed - or is it his bed? We’ll have to come to that at some point. “I dinna hate her, Sassenach. She fancies me and I would’ve broken her wee heart if I told her she couldna come. Plus, her father is one of the shareholders in my company, and he talked to me about her having an interest in me. I said I would give her a chance, and I have. I dinna like her, but I also canna go around and make my shareholders mad. Although, she is quite annoying.”

“Jamie, for Christ’s sake. If she is annoying to you, why did you bloody kiss her at that gas station?” He blushed. “I dinna kiss her, she kissed me, and when I realised what she did I backed away. Anyway, she knows I have hots for another lass, and that is the end of that.” He finished off with his famous smirk, that had me boiling with desire all over again.

“Really,” I teased. “And who’s this lass the King of Men has the hots for?”

His laughter will be my new choice of poison - it even preceded binge-eating French fries. “Claire, come here,” his hand patting his thighs summoned me. However, the long forgotten drunkenness came as reminder when I jumped of the table and nearly lost my footing, but before Jamie could ruin the moment by helping me, I ran towards him - Tom Cruise style - and hopped on his lap, straddling
him. “We’ll talk about yer drinking tomorrow then,” Jamie said while nuzzling in my neck. “Now, where’s Frank?” I breathed out, both in pleasure and surrender, “After the fight at that restaurant, we came here and had a highly civilized talk, really, and then he was gone.”

I pressed closer to Jamie, “What do ye mean gone?”

“Well, we broke up…”

“Why?”

“Reasons,” this time I was trying my luck with nonchalance. Although, I would never have thought that he was about to give in. “Fine, we’ll talk tomorrow. Can I kiss ye now?” He teased.

“Didn’t stop you earlier, why ask now?” I teased back, while admiring his beautiful blue eyes sparkling with lust.

“Claire…,” he murmured while softly biting down my jaw.

“Fine, yes_you_can,” and everything else was forgotten when he gently pressed his lips to mine. His hands travelled to my bum on his lap, and all the numbness from before disappeared. I thought I was going to explode from the amount of desire my body was channeling for this man in front of me. “Jamie,” I pleaded, hoping he would get the clue.

“Christ, Sassenach, you have the roundest arse I have ever seen.” I felt a weird feeling of pride, which earned Jamie a very sensual kiss. I bit his lower lip and then eased the sting with a brush of my tongue, asking for entrance. He opened his lips to me, and our tongues met in a hurry of pleasure. I had kissed a decent amount of men in my time, but kissing Jamie could never even start to compare. His arms were busying themselves from my waist to my bum, my arms around his neck, and our tongues dancing in a very slow and sensual rhythm.

I was struggling with unbuttoning his very posh and very gorgeously dark burgundy shirt, when his fingers stopped me instead of helping me. He started buttoning himself up and I couldn’t help but punch him in the chest. “Hey, I was taking that off!” His chuckle made me even more angrier, “Jamie. Take. It. Off. Now!”

“Sassenach, ye are pissin’ drunk,” he stood up, with me in his arms, my hands around his neck and
my legs around his waist holding on for dear life.

“Jamie, where are you taking me?”

“Weel, to bed of course,” he said through mild astonishment, like how dared I ask. “Oh, I like it,” I started kissing him, because honestly, I just could not get enough of that full, sweet and plump mouth.

“Mo ghraidh, I willna do anything less than worship ye with my love, but I would like ye to remember all the times I loved ye, therefore you_bed_now.”

“Uh, bossy, are we?” I muttered through showering him with quick kisses. “Claire, I am not even sure if ye will remember this, but I hope to all that's mighty and holy that ye do.” At this point, he is taking my heels off, and peeling me from my crazy tight dress, leaving me under the covers in just my underwear. “Christ, Claire, ye are the most beautiful woman I have ever seen.” If it was possible to blush even more, I did just that. Then I smiled and locked eyes with him, “You are not bad yourself.”

“Weel, if I recall right, ye called me the King of Men...so...I guess if ye say it then it must be true.” I looked at him with as much possibility of a bemused look as my amusement would let, “Cocky, are we?” I earned myself another dose of his full on belly laugh - my poison. “Sleep now. I will see ye at breakfast, right.” He kissed my forehead, than my nose, and finally a soft kiss on my lips. “Right,” I barely whispered with sleep slowly but efficiently overtaking me.

I was awoken by the loudest bumping noise to ever be heard, and my gigantic hangover was not helping one bit. However, I couldn’t help but smile an ear-splitting smile when I reminisced about last night. It was just so perfect in so many ways. Jamie telling me that he was in love with me, and that Laoghaire annoyed him even more than she did me, was just icing on top of a cake. It still felt out-of-this-world that someone like James Fraser would fancy someone like me, but that just made me smile even more. To know that he liked me for who I was and for what I had to offer just makes me cry happy tears. I reached for my phone to see that it was eight in the morning. Perfect. I might have had four hours of sleep, maybe less.

Yet again, my anger was long forgotten when I saw three text messages from Jamie.

Jamie: Canna believe that just happened. Claire, ye rock my world!! xxJAMMF
Jamie: Drink some water when ye wake up, I hope yer hangover isna killing ye. If ye canna handle the pain, I am just one phone call away… xxJAMMF

Jamie: Text me when ye wake up, I am killing my nerves on a treadmill… xxJAMMF

There are no words that could describe the depth of feelings I have towards this man. None would do my feelings justice, so I pray my actions would be enough of a translator.

Me: I’ll be fine when I see you!! Would love to keep this for ourselves while we figure everything out. Hope that’s okay with you. I had an amazing end of the day, thank you!! xxCEB

His reply was instant, so much that it got me scared for him. Didn’t he say he was on a treadmill?

Jamie: Ye are very welcome, mo ghraidh. xxJAMMF

Me: James Fraser! If you are texting and running at the same time, I may not have who to call if my hangover doesn’t stop. See you at breakfast… xxCEB

Jamie: Dinna ken what yer talking about…xx

My swooning session was cut short by the continuous insults on my door, that Jamie’s messages managed to completely mask out - until now. I marched to the mini fridge and took an Evian. While I was swallowing the water, the thoughts of how much all this mini fridge experience would cost me quickly vanished when my conscious mind reminded me that I was very well acquainted with the owner - very well indeed.

I moved to the bathroom to take my robe, and fast-brush my curly mass of hair, to no avail since it always had a mind of its own. But, just in case that the owner in question was the one jumping my door, I sprayed myself with my favourite Bvlgari - Rose Goldea, and dared to unlock my door. On the second thought, Jamie did not seem to bother with knocking when he broke into my room last night, so, the chances of this being him would be very slim - quite unfortunate.

I could not help but groan in disappointment when I saw Geillis smiling from ear to ear. Something told me that my thunder was about to be stolen by her. Awsome.
“Wow, ouch Clairebear. So nice to see ye too,” with one hand she touched her heart and with the other she drew an invisible tear escaping her eye, mocking me.

“Sorry, I am afraid I’m suffering from unwanted hangover this morning,” I pull my robe closer around me and let her in my room.

“What? Claire, please dinna tell me ye went clubbing wi’out me,” she took hold of her head with both hands, which was supposed to represent confusion.

“Fine, I won’t tell you. Do you fancy a cup of tea?” I ask nonchalantly, hoping to skip talking about last night. I was always a horrible liar, and if I start talking about the events of last night, there would be no way to conceal the fact that Jamie and I almost slept together.

“‘Do I fancy a cup of tea’, she asks. Claire, if ye tell me anything except that ye were drunk from boredom and missing me, I might not be able to forgive ye.”

“It was very boring indeed. There was this girl, Louise.” Of course, my best friend didn’t stray from letting me know how she felt about me having other friends, so she shoved her forefinger in her mouth and scrunched her face in disgust. I, however, continued with some dignity that was left in me, “- and she just made me talk a lot, while I was drinking even more. So...not so fun.” There. That wasn’t completely the truth, since Louise really helped me with our chit-chat, but I would rather bury myself alive than tell Geillis that. It also wasn’t a lie, since I was quite bored before Louise came, and I did drink a lot.

“Good, I’m glad ye suffered.” She moved to the balcony and opened the drapes of the large window, revealing nothing. Literally nothing.

“Hey, where did the mountains go?” My confusion was cut short by Geillis’ amused giggle, “Silly, they didna go anywhere. It’s the fog.” Wow, that was some dense fog right there. I would rather have guessed that somebody painted the windows dirty white.

Geillis met my perplexed face, hence the elaboration, “Since the slopes are invisible for the day, we all thought to spend today indoors, playing pool or chilling at the spa. What d’ye think?”

As long as Jamie’s with me, I don’t think I care. “I’m fine with whichever.”
“Why did ye go drinking in the first place, Claire?”

“Frank left,” I said emotionlessly and matter-of-factly.

“Claire,” she took a deep breath, “Ye should never joke about such serious topic. Now, seriously, why d’ye drink?”

“I am telling you Geillis, we broke up and he left.”

“No?”

“Yes, I mean do you see him here?” I was a bit taken aback when Geillis started looking around the room like a child who just ate fifteen bars of chocolate. “NO WAY? HE’S GONE? OMG, that’s amazing.” Scratch that, now I was taken aback. I mean, I knew she never liked him, but to be this excited was over-the-top disrespectful.

As if reading my mind, she turned from the balcony and hugged me. “I’m sorry Claire, but he was horrible for ye and I am just happy that ye finally realised it.” I hugged her back, “I know, thank you.”

“Anyway, while we’re on the topic of men - minus Frank, -” Oh no no no, please don’t mention Jamie, please don’t mention Jamie “-Rupert and I shagged. And mighty heavens, it was the best shag ever.” Oh thank God. “Wow, I am not sure what to say really. Congratulations? I’m happy for you?”

“Weel, ye should be, it was spectacular. I mean, the way he moved and -”

“Thank you Geillis, but I’d rather you stop with detailed description right now.”

“Right. I still canna believe Franklin is gone. Nah, of course I can,” I could forever hate her laughter, I really, really could. “So, are ye ready for breakfast, now that ye are single and ready to mingle?” She smirked while successfully teasing me.

I blindly took some clothes from the wardrobe and prayed they would make a decent outfit for the indoor adventure that was sure to be had. Before I closed the bathroom door, I threw Geillis a very bemused look, “I’ll just take breakfast. You keep the mingle for yourself,” and I jumped in the
shower before Geillis started her philosophy on the importance of intercourse for having a healthy mind.

This would for sure be the longest day of my life, and it barely started.

Chapter End Notes

thank you so much for all the kudos and comments!!! it means the world to me that you guys enjoyed my story so far
Let The Games Begin

Chapter Notes

some nsfw towards the end

See the end of the chapter for more notes

I have never in my life wanted to eat breakfast as much as in this moment. I also never wanted anything in my life as much as I wanted her. And that wasna just because I could feel the electricity striking my body whenever I was close to her. It was even worse when I touched and kissed her last night. My body was on fire, and she wasna the water that would extinguish the fire, but rather the fuel that would cause conflagration in my body. That fire canna be ceased nor would I ever want it to be.

I wasna particularly unhappy before Claire came into my life, but I was definitely acquainted with loneliness and I knew that something was missing - or someone. Even though I had my share of women, they never ignited these kinds of feelings that I was now experiencing. There was a fling here and there that would fill the void for a short period, like what I had with Mary. She was a broken lass and I was a broken lad. We both knew that two broken people willna result in anything permanent, but we helped each other out. We had respect in between us, which was enough. We met at “The World’s End,” which was a notorious nightclub, where single and broken people would come and seek comfort in other people who mirrored their emotional status. I was twenty-two years old, and I am not proud of the membership I had to that club. It is one of my biggest secrets and regrets, and I planned to leave it that way forever.

That year when I turned twenty-two years old was the year of emotional drainage. I was still in the University of Edinburgh, studying economics even though that wasna my first wish, however, my Da wanted it that way, so that was it. I had one year of university left, and then I would come to work for my Da’s company, “Fraser & Co.”

Everything was planned in advance, but life doesna happen like ye want it to.

My father died of an unexpected heart attack on a Tuesday morning, and I was pronounced as the new CEO of “Fraser & Co.” by Tuesday evening. Everything was a blur. I had to finish the remaining year of courses in two months, while I was both in training and taking over my Da’s business. It was verra hard for me, and I didna cope well wi’ my loss. I lost my mother when I was six years old, and I wasna ready to lose the only parent I had left. My sister Jenny was married and had three bairns already, so it was different for her. She had a family, and it wasna right for me to intrude, even if she insisted I come and stay with them at Lallybroch, I just couldna.
I felt hopeless, angry and sad. The world as I knew it was falling apart in front of my eyes. I soon found comfort in “The World’s End.” It was just about meeting up with random, strange women, but also socializing that I used as a distraction from what I was faced with. I wasna prepared to be a leader of a multi-million pound company.

I joined the club, but there was only one woman before Mary. She was a drunken encounter and it was a one night stand. Fortunately for me, Mary was the second woman I met there and we saved each other from that place which had all the power in the world to destroy us. Mary was a young widow and she sought human contact to kill her loneliness before said loneliness killed her. Our relationship was brief, matter of two weeks, but she made me see that the grass was indeed greener and that my father’s death shouldna be the death of me. We helped each other grieve the ones we lost, and after we felt better, we decided it was for the best that we part. I will, however, always be grateful for her.

It wasna much later that I realised what I have done, which only motivated me to study hard and learn how to manage my Da’s business. For him. In the matter of weeks, I was the youngest owner of a multi-million company in the world. “Fraser & Co.” was a company that was buying out smaller businesses and reselling them. However, after I took over, I felt a sudden need for change. Hence, I transformed “Fraser & Co.” into “Fraser’s Distillery,” which was and still is the largest whisky distillery franchise in the world.

Now, six years later, the business is growing and succeeding better than ever before. I bought seventeen luxury hotel resorts all around the world, one of which, of course, was the Koh-I-Nor here in French Alps. All the hotels are owned by “Fraser’s Distillery,” except Koh-I-Nor, which I bought for my pleasure only.

I still dinna think that Claire knows much about my company, but I like it that way. For now, she doesna have to ken about my past and what I did in order to get myself to a better place. Of course, I couldna tell her the full truth of why I had to bring Laoghaire here either. I canna even try to imagine what I would do if Claire willna be able to understand. I verra much need her to understand.

Her father wasna just one of my shareholders, but he was also the owner of “The World’s End.” He knew I was a member and he threatened to expose me if I didna give his daughter a chance. By that time, I already new Claire and was crushed and heartbroken that she was in a relationship with a man that wasna me, so I took the bait and met Laoghaire. I didna need more than fifteen minutes to figure her out. She was a young, rich and dumb daddy’s lass. Did I mention she was also incredibly annoying? As well as needy and kinky in all the unpleasant ways possible. I told her father that I gave her a chance, but we were just two very different people. I managed to get him off my back, but Laoghaire is like a leech who is sucking her way under my skin and she isna about to let me go.

However, now that I have a real chance wi’ Claire, I dinna care what I have to do to get Laoghaire off my back. It started this morning after I woke up from the couch when I realised that she shouldna
be in the same room wi’ me, when we aren’t even together. Her anger and bruised ego are the reasons why she willna be at this breakfast table today, thank Christ.

So aye, I have never in my life wanted to eat breakfast as much as in this moment, because I will be eating it wi’ the woman of my dreams and darkest desires for the first time since we ignited an inextinguishable fire in between us.

I felt her before I saw her.

My skin prickled in the most pleasurable of ways, and all my senses concentrated only on her, wiping out the rest of the world around us. But then I saw her… My breath was gone in a second and my heart threatened to leap out of my chest. She is the most beautiful woman I have ever seen in my life.

Her curly wig was loose around her shoulders, just how I liked to see it. She was wearing black leggings that fitted her like a glove, hugging her curves perfectly. She paired the leggings with a few sizes bigger light pink hoodie which was cut to just under her belly button, with a matching colour nike sneakers. She prepared herself for staying indoors, which was fine wi’ me, since the plan was to hit the billiards or bowling alley. Although, I would’ve been equally happy - if not a lot more happy - if the two of us just stayed in my suite today.

She was accompanied by Geillis, who was - in contrast to Claire, wearing a pair of faux leather jeans and a strapless white crop top, wi’ a pair of uncomfortably high black heels. I would guess that the outfit was chosen for Rupert’s eyes.

As I pivoted to the left, I could see that Rupert was equally enchanted by his lass as much as I was wi’ mine. Angus, however, was oblivious to the women and kept playing games on his phone.

“Good morrow, fellas. How are ye this fine morning?” Geillis sat opposite Rupert and next to Angus, who was sitting in front of me, while Claire set on the chair next to mine.

She leaned in and kissed my cheek, “Hi.” I felt the friend below my waist twitch in excitement, while I had to muster the energy that just travelled down to my cock, in order to greet her. “Hi, Sassenach. How did ye sleep?”

She was visibly blushing now, and I was pleased to see that I had the same effect on her that she had on me. “Like a baby. You.”
I got closer to her, until my mouth was touching her ear, “I couldna fall asleep for some time after I left yer room.”

“And why is that?” She asked through a whisper, while I bit her earlobe seductively, “Weel, ye see, there was this lass that left me wi’ a hard, throbbing and painful problem to deal wi’ all on my own,” I teased and retreated to my seat, before we started looking suspicious.

She took a deep breath and shifted in her chair, while fiddling with an empty glass. “Really? And what did you do with this problem of yours?”

We locked eyes, and I let my famous smirk do its magic, “That is for me to ken, and for ye to wonder.” Her mouth formed a slightly crooked O, but I could see the desire burning in her golden eyes. She blushed, and was now matching with my red Ralph T-shirt.

“Jamie…” She whispered, but was interrupted by a waiter who presented us with menus, and was now filling her empty glass wi’ water. Before he could fill the glass to the top, she snatched the half-full glass of water and gulped it down in a second.

Angus let his phone down and looked at Claire, “Weel, someone’s thirsty.” That got me to involuntary cough, and look at Claire, who was now shielding herself with the menu.

“So, I’ve been thinkin’,” Angus broke the silence, which caused Rupert and me to laugh.

“Ye have the ability to think?” Rupert teased.

“Could’ve fooled me,” I added while flipping through the menu.

“Ach, haud yer wheesht, the both of ye! I ’m bein’ serious,” his brows snapped together from frustration, creating a perfect unibrow.

“Of course ye are Angus, of course ye are,” Geillis giggled.

I felt Claire’s hand on my thigh squeeze in warning, but it wasna doing anything to ease the situation in my pants. “What were you thinking about, Angus?”
Angus bowed his head to Claire, “Thank ye Claire. As I was sayin’, I’ve been thinking - weel actually reading, and I thought we can go back to Orelle tomorrow, since the weather should be nice and sunny.” He paused to look at his phone, “Anyway, I thought if the weather was good, we could go up to the highest peak of Val Thorens, which is around three thousand and two hundred meters tall. It was closed the other day, so we couldn’a go then.”

“That’s actually a good idea, mate,” Rupert continued to talk, while I placed my hand on Claire’s mid thigh. She looked at me shocked, her eyes widened, while I started drawing circles on her inner thigh wi’ my thumb. “Two can play this game, Sassenach,” I mouthed wi’ a smirk that had her head flying back instinctively.

After we finished the breakfast, we headed to the bowling alley. Some of us were more excited than others. When I said some, I meant Angus. He always had this freakish obsession wi’ bowling. Might be the big balls he’s obsessing wi’. Now that I thought ‘bout it, I didn’a see him wi’ a woman for nearly four years. Maybe he decided to play for the other team, if ye ken my meaning. Yet, he always knew how to repulse the prettier half. ‘Twas his only natural talent, except for playing games on his phone.

While we’re talking ‘bout games, I glanced opposite me to a big screen above the lanes, which was a proof of how good Angus has been so far. ‘Twas Claire, Angus and Geillis against Rupert and me. We thought the lasses wilna have a chance if they were alone. And of course, we were right.

No matter how many times Claire has punched me in either my arm or my chest to prove her strength, when she took anything that was heavier than a 12 kilos ball, she came short, not knocking out more than five of ten pins. Geillis was something else. She couldna stand no’ being in heels, and she let the whole France know it when she put on the bowling shoes and growled in frustration, something along the lines of “THESE MONSTROSITIES ARE FLATTER THAN JAMIE’S ABS.” I didna ken if ‘twas a compliment or no’, but I patted my abs anyway - in a ‘ye go lad’ kind of way.

I couldn’a even recall the number of times Angus cursed every Saint in Scotland for Claire’s and Geillis’ untalented ways. I wanted to punch his face back to Scotland for cursing Claire, but deep down I knew he wasna thinkin’ straight.

Either way, group “ Boobies ” - named by Rupert, and I’d rather watch the grass grow than ask how would Rupert know ‘bout Angus’ chest size, to keep it politically correct and all - won over us one hundred to seventy-six. After the war was over, we went for a short lunch break, before comin’ back for some Ronnie O’Sullivan worth snooker time. If Angus was the King of bowling, I was the King of snooker - besides being the King of Men, of course.
I feel ashamed and embarrassed, but I canna stop staring at her perfect round arse. The way she bent when she had to get to the right angle in order to make her move, she was practically begging me to look.

We have been playing snooker for the last hour and a half, and I could swear to the Gods, if she was to bent her plump arse one more time, I would have to do something about it.

Angus got bored right after we started playin’ - guess he doesna like losing much, so he retreated to his room. That left Rupert and me against Geillis and Claire.

I circled the table, and not-so-accidentally brushed my hand over Claire’s lower back. I heard her whispered moan that set me on fire all over again.

I took my cue stick and lowered it on the pool table. I didna have many options, so I opted for a blue ball - irony bein’ that I have two of those between my legs right now. In order for my move to be successful, I had to strategize for a moment. I pointed my stick to the cue ball, than pushed it towards one side of the table, in order for it to go to the opposite direction and hit the blue ball by the side, pushing it straight to the side pocket. Ronnie O’Sullivan has nothing on me.

I could feel Rupert clapping his hands in excitement that we were leading, while Geillis was crying in frustration how “ ‘Tis no a fair game, I canna play in heels.” Christ woman, make up yer mind. Now ye canna live wi’out heels, then ye canna do anything in them. Weel Geillis, ye made yer bed, now ye have to lie in it. I would have said something, but all I could concentrate on was Claire’s burning gaze fixed on my lips. In less two seconds, I was by her side. I took her by her hand, and walked and talked.

“I need to speak wi’ Claire. Ye dinna have to wait for us.” I ignored Rupert’s amusing whistle and pushed Claire into the storage room. I secured the lock, and before I knew, I had Claire pushed against the door, panting in my mouth.

“Christ, Sassenach. I think I will die from wantin’ ye.” I kept my mouth firmly on hers while I took her by her round arse, giving her space to lock her legs around my waist. Our tongues danced together in urgent need, while her arms locked around my neck.

“Jamie, I want you inside me,” and I had to control every muscle in my body, in order no’ to finish wi’out even getting down to it.
“Christ, Claire. I canna be gentle about it,” I lowered my mouth to her neck, while she was busying herself wi’ the hem of my shirt. I swiped my hand on the table behind us, ridding it of random objects, before lowering her onto it.

“I don’t want you to be gentle, Jamie.” Claire practically growled in frustration while trying to lift my shirt. I let go of her for long enough to strip off my clothes, while she lifted her hoodie, revealing her perfect, full breasts stored in a black lace bra.

“Christ,” I took hold of her hips, nudging my way in between her thighs. We locked eyes, and that was when I noticed her mouth slightly opened, her lips bright red and swollen from my kisses. Her eyes are hooded, her chest moving abruptly in rhythm with mine. I didna think I could’ve been more in love wi’ her than in this moment, when she canna wait for me to love her.

“Claire, ye are the most beautiful woman I have ever seen.” I could see her blush, even through the dim lighting of the storage room. Before she tried to counter-argument my compliment, I sealed our lips, and let my arms to roam around her back and unclasp her bra. While I was slowly and sensually pulling the straps of the lace bra down her arm, I riveted my gaze to her eyes, and through all the desire that was flowing in the golden depths, there was also shyness? maybe even fear. She quickly looked away from me.

“Sassenach, look at me,” she smiled, but hesitated. I lifted her chin wi’ my forefinger, locking eyes.

“Tell me...please.”

“I just don’t want you to be disappointed, Jamie. I -,” she took a deep breath, “- I never...”

“Claire, what is it? Ye’re scaring me,” she bit her lower lip. “I don’t want you to be disappointed, because I don’t have a lot of experience, since I never had an orgasm before,” the last she said to her chin. It was barely a whisper.

Ifrinn. “Sassenach, I think ye mean that Frank doesna have any experience, but ye have no idea how happy I am right now, ‘cause in some way I will be yer first. Also, after I’m done wi’ ye, ye willna be able to remember anything but how I made ye scream in ecstasy.” And in one smooth pull, I had her legs around my hips, her knickers snatched to the back of the storage room. I took her by her hips and lowered her on my raging length.
“Oh God, Jamie. Don’t stop.”

“Please… don’t’… sto - AH.”

I looked at her face, and realised then and there that she canna be more beautiful than when she is loved by me. “Are ye okay?”

“Oh...yes, Jesus...”

I smirked before attacking her mouth, “Nah, ‘tis just me, mo cridhe.”

She screamed wi’ every pound I gave her. There was nothing better than her walls clenching around me. ‘Twas a home I planned on coming back to at least three more times tonight.

“Jamie. Harder. Faster. NOW!”

“Yer wish is my command,” and I slammed into her, our mouths fighting for dominance.

Bang.

“Jamie, I think I’m -”

Bang.

“- going to -”

Bang.

“…come…,” her whisper did it for me. She was milking me into oblivion. And I never wanted her to stop.
After we gathered all our clothes - well not all. This bruise on my ribs showed how angry Claire was for my impulsive ripping of her knickers. She was talking something ‘bout a walk of shame, but I just silenced her wi’ my magic kisses.

We exited the storage room hand in hand, and headed towards the restaurant for dinner. We locked eyes, and I couldna be more in love wi’ her than now.

As we were entering the restaurant, I collided wi’ something wobbly. I looked down and was speechless. My heart was beating so hard I thought it was goin’ to jump out of my chest.

I could barely acknowledge Claire’s gasp, and suddenly her hand was out of my grasp and covering her mouth.

In front of me was a little boy wi’ brown curly short hair. What struck me almost to death was his face. It was a mirror image of my own. My full mouth - check, my blue eyes - check, my strong jaw - check.

“William, darling. Where are you?” A strangely familiar voice came from the other side of the door.

“Ah, there you are. William, what did I tell you about wandering around?”

The boy was staring at me, so the woman followed his gaze and we locked eyes. There was no question that she was the boy’s mother. They had the exact same hair, as well as posture.

And then it hit me.

Geneva.

My drunken encounter six years ago at “The World’s End.”
Chapter End Notes

hope you enjoyed this chapter....it all goes roller coaster from here, so buckle up!!

End Notes

hi guys :) don't at me, this is my first fic (got inspired while eating lunch lol)
nevertheless, hope you enjoy the story (the plan is for this to have multiple chapters, but we'll see how it goes) :D

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!