We’re Still Rocking In 2019

by Redlance

Summary

Bechloe Week 2019 is upon us!! Rejoice!! I’ll be putting all my prompt for the week right here for easy reading.

Notes

Day 1: Soulmates
“Do you believe in soulmates?”

They’re lying on Beca’s bed in the middle of the afternoon on a Thursday, enjoying a rare moment of utter peace and quiet in the empty Bella house. Everyone else is busy with classes or work, or, in Stacie’s case, someone else’s hands.

They’ve been lying there for well over an hour, falling in and out of comfortable silence as Beca reclines on her back with Chloe draped over her body like a haphazardly placed blanket. She has one leg hiked up and resting across Beca’s legs, one arm wrapped snugly around Beca’s waist, and her head is nestled in the crook of Beca’s neck.

Beca can feel it every time Chloe exhales. Can feel it on her skin and where their upper bodies are pressed together. She’s content and warm, the fingers of one hand lazily stroking through locks of auburn hair, and she keeps drifting towards dozing in between her girlfriend’s breaths.

But underneath all that, her brain is still working. Thinking about things she isn’t actually, consciously, thinking about.

And that’s when the question sneaks past her lips, moving sleepily and causing her to mumble. Above her, Chloe stills, then adjusts the angle of her head until Beca can feel the pleasant burn of baby-blues watching her.

She lets her own eyes slowly flutter open and she allows herself a moment to walk back over their last few seconds, back through the hazy fog of a lazy afternoon snuggle session, until she reaches the moment when words had decided to leave her.

She tenses and though the involuntary action is infinitesimal, the way Chloe’s fingers curl into Beca’s shirt tells her that Chloe felt it.

She can’t even remember what she was thinking about that would have prompted such an uncharacteristically philosophical comment to be conjured up, let alone spoken aloud.

“Soulmates?” Chloe clarifies, her mouth moving not quite as lethargically around the word as Beca’s had. There are twin twinkles of surprise glimmering in Chloe’s eyes, along with a sparse dusting of
mirth.

Because Beca doesn’t say stuff like that. Beca doesn’t generally think about stuff like that, so she isn’t sure where the question has come from but it’s out there now and she can tell Chloe is only just barely resisting teasing her.

“Yeah,” Beca croaks after a few moments, deciding against trying to rephrase the question into something less embarrassing. She clears her throat and runs her tongue across suddenly dry lips.

Chloe spends a long moment studying her. Brilliant blue eyes flickering over Beca’s face, taking her in or looking for something, as a small crease appears between her brows and it’s just as Beca’s about to ask why she’s frowning that Chloe speaks.

“No.” It’s said with such easy finality and Beca finds that the word unexpectedly takes the wind out of her sails. Teases the air from her lungs in a way she hadn’t anticipated at all.

Because Beca hadn’t thought she cared about this stuff. It isn’t supposed to matter to her. Chloe is supposed to be the hopeless romantic of the two of them.

“No?” Beca echoes, dumbly, feeling inexplicably upset and now she’s embarrassed for a different reason.

“No.” Chloe shrugs and, just like that, lays her head back down where it had been resting before Beca had opened her mouth.

And Beca wonders if Chloe can hear how hard her heart is pounding. Wonders if Chloe knows why it is because Beca isn’t sure that she does and maybe Chloe can explain it to her.

Beca doesn’t think she’s ever even thought about soulmates before this moment.

“I think…” Chloe begins, slipping her fingers into the V-neck opening of Beca’s shirt and brushing the tips across her collarbone before lying still. “I think the idea of soulmates makes things too convenient. Like it’s an excuse for if things fall apart. If it doesn’t work out, then they just aren’t the one, right?” It’s a question that isn’t looking for an answer and Beca stays silent, listening to Chloe as she returns to rhythmically threading her fingers through red hair. “It gives people an easy out and I don’t, I don’t want or need an easy out. I don’t think love should be hard but I don’t think it’s all
Something about that makes Beca think about her parents. How good they’d been for a while and then how things had ended. It forms a lump inside her chest that puts pressure on her rib cage and makes it hard to breathe.

“I don’t want to think that someone was predestined for me.” Chloe’s breath tickles her neck again and there’s an odd sort of solidity to that invisible vapour. An undeniable tangibility that tells Beca Chloe is right there. Warm against her side. “I want to know that I chose my person, that it was me. That I looked at you and said, ‘her. I want her for the rest of my forever.’ I don’t want to think that someone else decided that for me. I want to know that I did this.” She shifts her hand to squeeze Beca’s shoulder. “That we did. Not that it was something that just couldn’t be helped.”

Everything is quiet for a moment then, but there’s enough of a charge in the air between them that Beca knows Chloe isn’t quite finished yet.

“But I guess, in a way, it couldn’t be helped.” And Chloe lifts her head again, this time using her grip on Beca’s shoulder to leverage herself a little higher until she’s looking down at Beca. “I mean, you’re super hot.”

Beca scoffs. Rolls her eyes. Blushes.

“You’re such a weirdo,” she mutters, as her heartbeat slows back down to normal and the lump inside her chest starts to break apart and disintegrate under Chloe’s smile.

“Too bad you’re stuck with me forever, huh?” Chloe grins above her and Beca lets the hand that had been in Chloe’s hair drift to her cheek, where it lingers so that her thumb can brush lightly across smooth skin.

“What, you mean you didn’t come with a receipt?” Beca arches an eyebrow and watches as Chloe opens her mouth to yell at her. But before she can, Beca uses the hand on Chloe’s cheek to guide her down into a slow kiss that playfully asks for forgiveness, which Chloe gives without a second thought.
A day late because I was out playing Edge of The Empire until 10pm last night and that's an hour past my bedtime.

Beca Mitchell’s first day as an intern at Residual Heat goes, more or less, the exact opposite of how she’d been expecting it to.

It’s not that she’d thought she’d be making music the second she stepped through the door, it’s just that she’d thought, hoped, that she would be doing a little bit more than fetching coffee. Sure, sometimes someone would want a bagel or a doughnut, but those moments were few and far between and the thrill of excitement the change would give her waned considerably after the aforementioned food product was handed over.

The day begins with a nervous but enthused Beca Mitchell leaving the apartment she shares with her once-boyfriend, however brief that period was, now-best friend and ends with her returning to that very same place looking deflated and downtrodden.

“Who crapped in your cornflakes?”

This is how Jesse greets her, turning his head away from the video game he’s playing to look at her from over the back of the couch.

"The unjustly optimistic asshole who controls the part of my brain in charge of like, hope and expectations and shit." She drops her bag a few feet away from the door and kicks off her shoes before shuffling her way over to look through the fridge.

"Oh," she hears him say. "Bad day?"

She shrugs. "Totally normal and average."
"Ouch." He winces sympathetically, she can hear it in his voice.

"Why don't we have any food?" She lets out a huff and weakly shoves the refrigerator door closed, letting gravity do most of the work.

"Because we haven't gone grocery shopping?" His slight smile is anticipatory and Beca gives him what he's waiting for by letting out a mournful groaning sound.

"I hate grocery shopping." She stomps away from the kitchen and rounds the couch to drop down heavily onto the cushions beside him.

"But that's how the food gets to the fridge," he reminds her, patronizingly gentle. She shoots him a glare and he beams at her. "Wanna play Lego Star Wars with me?"

"Only if I can be the bear-thing."

"Chewbacca is a wookie."

"Whatever. I just like it when he pulls the arms off the other guys." She tosses her phone at him and, in one impressively fluid motion, he drops the controller he's holding and catches the flying cellular device in both hands. "Call for pizza." She reaches over and very carefully, and quickly, plucks the controller up from where it had landed perilously close to his crotch region.

"Chinese?" His counter is met with indifference as Beca shrugs and settles back against the couch cushions, hitting start to unpause the game and immediately getting beaned by a Stormtrooper.

"Seriously?! The one time they can actually hit a target?!" Beside her, Jesse makes a choked gasp of sound, but she refuses to look at him when he mutters something about movie references and exploding hearts.

The next day goes much the same way, as done the one after that, and the one after that.

In fact, three weeks go by and Beca doesn’t experience a single significant change of any kind.
Until the beginning of week four.

She’s fetching coffees - because what else would she be doing - for her boss, Sammy, and two of his underlings when she gets a text message from him asking her to bring an extra. It’s not just a simple ‘coffee, black, two sugars’ kind of thing, though. No, this is the kind of coffee a beautiful blonde woman with a chihuahua poking its head out of her purse orders while there are seven other customers behind her in Starbucks. Totally her prerogative, but also kind of pompous.

There are things like caramel syrup, honey, and soy milk. Beca doesn’t even know what soy milk is.

It takes her about fifteen minutes, but which time the other three regular coffees she’d made have started to cool, but she’s not going to waste any more time sitting around making new ones while she knows her boss will already be checking his watch.

“Screw it.” She grabs one of the office’s reusable drink holders and slots all four coffees snuggly into place, silently cursing Pretentious-Coffee-Guy as she spends off down towards one of the recording booths as fast as her little legs will take her.

She stands awkwardly in front of the glass door as she waits for the recording light above it to turn off, making eye contact with Sammy and flashing him the world’s most unconvincingly confident smile as she holds the drink tray aloft. Mid-waist to most everyone else.

The light goes off and, at Sammy’s wordless nod, Underling Number One gets up from his spot to open the door and let her in.

"Hi," Beca says, then immediately regrets speaking at all when nothing else follows, despite the fact that she’d made the greeting sound like something would. They all look at her like she’s stopped midsetence. She panics the heat from their stares threaten to burn permanent marks of embarrassment across her cheeks. "Coffee. I- your coffee. I brought it."

She ducks her head as she walks further into the room, past her boss who is leaning with his elbow on the edge of the soundboard. He has two fingers and a thumb pressed against the side of his head, holding it up, and Beca feels his eyes follow her as she crosses the small space and hands out the first coffee.

Thankfully, she deposits the correct beverage to the correct people until she's left with the one that,
were it a person, would be labeled as pretentious and high maintenance.

Beca lifts her head and looks around. There's no one else in the room and the booth is, oddly, empty.

"Uh," she's about to flounder further when the door to the recording room opens and turns everyone's attention - including Beca's - towards it.

"Oh my god, coffee."

The words are made indecent by the tone in which they're spoken. Groaned out like something that should be higher rated than the distinctly PG coffee she'd made and Beca almost drops the last remaining cup before she can hand it over.

Because there's a very bubbly, very smiley, very pretty redhead suddenly rushing at her and Beca's chest feels like someone has wound a rope around it and pulled tight.

“You're a life saver.” The unfamiliar, very pretty woman is standing close enough to Beca now that it makes the act of getting her coffee out of the drink tray a little more difficult than it should be but she doesn't seem to even consider taking a step backwards.

Eventually, she manages to wiggle it free and smiles brightly at Beca, and only then does she step back. She extends her free hand towards Beca and it's an offering that Beca can only stare at, as though she's forgotten what the appropriate response is.

"Hi, I'm Chloe."

Beca doesn't understand what's happening. Why the room is suddenly filled with sunlight or why there appears to be a chorus of angels singing somewhere behind her.

Her face feels hot.

She thinks it's sweating.
And the pretty woman - Chloe - is still standing there, watching, expectantly.

"Oh," Beca croaks, fumbling for words. “Uh, I'm-" and she catches sight of Sammy staring at her over Chloe's shoulder, looking annoyed and indicating his watch. "Leaving." Chloe’s expression drops. “Sorry. Um, it was nice to meet you.” She shuffles back towards the door and awkwardly adds a stiffly delivered “bye”, before disappearing through it.

The rest of the afternoon is a wash, finding Beca unable to focus on anything for longer than a minute and a half at most. When she gets home, she drops everything at the door and immediately goes to her room, where she drops down face first onto her bed and groans into the duvet.
"What's your favourite season?"

"Fall."

"Why?"

"Because the sun goes away and everything starts to die, and I feel like I just really connect with that aesthetic."

“Wow. Are you always this optimistic?”

“I’m sorry my outlook on life isn’t all rainbows and gummy bears. We can’t all be little balls of sunshine, you know.”

“You’re such a grouch.”

“I didn’t ask to be here, remember? I’m here because you wanted me here. Just say the word and I’ll leave.”

“Oh, shut up and help me with this scarf.”

“How old were you when you fell in love with music?”

“Eight.”

“Didn’t even need to think about that one.”
“I remember, my dad brought home a record player he’d picked up at, like, a flea market or something I think. And he dragged it in and set it up, and then he brought a box full of records in from the garage.”

“He had records but no player?”

“Yeah, I don’t know. Maybe things got damaged in the move? Anyway, he’s so excited and just starts going through his entire collection. I don’t think I’d ever seen anyone that happy before. And I just… I knew, somehow. I didn’t know how or what, but I knew I needed to do something with music.”

“That’s so great.”

“Yeah. At least he gave me one good thing, right?”

“Were you ever close with your dad?”

“Uh….”

“Sorry. Too personal?”

“No, it’s just, you caught me off guard. Um… yeah. When I was little, my mom used to say I was a daddy’s girl.”

“Oh.”

“You sound surprised.”

“Well, given the current standing of your relationship….”
“Yeah, I guess. Everything kind of went to shit during the divorce. I blamed him, he didn’t know how to explain. I know I should, like, make it easier on him or something but there’s still this petty side of me that’s angry at him. That doesn’t think he deserves easy.”

“That’s tough.”

“I know. Everyone always tells me I’m too hard on-”

“No. Beca. I meant tough for you. To have to constantly fight with those two sides of yourself.”

“Oh.”

“Now you sound surprised.”

“I… yeah. I guess I am.”

“What’s your favourite flavour of ice cream?”

“I don’t really like ice cream.”

“What?!"

“What ‘what’? Not everyone likes the same things you do, Chloe.”

“No, but everyone likes ice cream!”

“Living proof that that isn’t true.”
“Are you like, some kind of alien?”

“Aubrey thinks so.”

“No, Aubrey thinks you’re a demon.”

“Ouch. Thanks.”

“Spawn of Satan to be exact.”

“She could at least be original.”

“Okay but… not even chocolate?”

“Nope.”

“Strawberry?”

“No.”

“Vanilla?”

“You know these all count as questions, right?”

“No way! That’s not fair!”

“You’re the one that wanted to play. I don’t make the rules.”
“You’re literally making them up right now.”

“Did you want to ask me about more flavours or….?”

“You suck.”

“Did you have any pets growing up?”

“I had a hamster when I was like, eleven? I think my dad bought it as an apology gift because he’d been fighting with my mom a lot.”

“What did you name it?”

“Hammy. I wasn’t very original.”

“That’s adorable.”

“It also died after like a week, so. That should have been a red flag for the impending dissolution of my parents' marriage. I decided I didn’t want any pets after that. Too much heartbreak.”

“Aww, Beca.”

“You love things and then they die.”

“So, that’s it? You’re just never going to love anyone or anything ever again?”

“I love my headphones?”
“That doesn’t count.”

“Oh, I love my laptop!”

“Beca…”

“I really love my mixing program.”

“You are infuriating.”

“How many peeps do you think you could eat in one sitting without throwing up?”

“Thirty-seven.” … “What? I tested it once. I don’t recommend it.”

“How do were you when you lost your virginity?”

“Chloe, oh my god. You can’t ask me that!”

“We didn’t establish those boundaries before we began, Becs.”

“I assumed it went without saying. Guess that’s on me.”

“It’s not like it’s a big deal. Here, I’ll go first. I was seventeen.”

“Dude, gross. I don’t want to know this stuff.”
“If it makes you that uncomfortable, I can ask something else.”

“No, it’s- whatever. Eighteen. Happy?”

“Sexstatic.”

…. “Oh my god.”

“Hey, you okay?”

“Dude, don’t sneak up on people. You scared the crap out of me.”

“I’m sorry.”

“Yeah, the giggling really seals in the sincerity.”

“Room on that step for one more?”

“I guess.”

…. “What’s wrong, Becs?”

“Nothing. I just… do you ever wonder if this is where you’re supposed to be?”

“Well, considering I failed Russian Lit-”

“Intentionally.”
“-I’m thinking that this is exactly where I’m supposed to be.”

“Is it, though? Or is it just where you want to be?”

“Does it matter?”

“I don’t know.”

“I think this is just your excuse to get out of playing games with us.”

“That’s not a game, Chloe. That’s an invitation to self-humiliation.”

“Oh, come on! It’s truth or dare. It's just a bit of fun.”

“That’s not my idea of fun.”

“Hey, Beca?”

“Yeah?”

“You ever make out with someone during truth or dare?”

“No.”

…. “Do you want to?”

“What was your first kiss like?”
“Ugh, Chloe. It’s like three a.m. Go to sleep.”

“I’m not tired.”

"Well, I am ."

…. "Becaaaaa.""Oh my god ! Fine! It was awkward and there was entirely too much tongue involved."

"Did you like him?"

"I don't generally kiss people I don't like, so yeah."

"What was his name?"

"Kevin… something. I forget."

"I see he made a lasting impression."

"I’m seriously going to start counting every question you ask me as one of your twenty. And it was like a lifetime ago. Do you remember the names of everyone you've kissed?"

"Of course." …. "We're not all sluts like you- ow!"

"You deserved that."

"Did you just pinch me?"
"I did. Now please, god, go to sleep."

“When you were a kid, did you ever do something that got you in serious trouble? Like, grounded for the rest of your life, no T.V., no music, no existing except for school kind of trouble?”

“When I was fourteen, there was this local deejay I was obsessed with. No one really knew who she was and she’d only ever play these pop-up raves that appeared every few weeks.”

“Raves?”

“Don’t laugh, they were cool. Anyway, there was a rumour that one was happening a couple of blocks from where I lived. I was with my dad that weekend, so I told him I was staying over at a friend’s house to study or whatever.”

“Appealing to the Professor side of him.”

“Exactly. Problem was, I didn’t tell that friend to cover for me.”

“Oh, Beca. Rookie move!”

“It’s not like I did this a lot! But I made it to the rave and snuck in through the back because they were carding people at the front and there was no way I was getting in even with a fake I.D. I think I was there for about an hour before my cell phone started ringing. And ringing, and ringing.”

“Oh, no.”

“You laugh, but it wasn’t funny at the time. I’d like to be able to say that I didn’t care, but I was actually terrified. Eventually, I had to answer and tell him where I was. He came to pick me up and like… remember what I told you he was like when he picked me up from the police station freshman year? It was like that but times a thousand.”
“Ouch.”

“Yeah. I don’t think I saw sunlight outside of school hours for a solid month.”

“Was she hot?”

“Who?”

“The deejay.”

“Couldn’t see her face.”

“But did she give off a hotness vibe?”

“A hotness vibe? Seriously?”

“You know exactly what I’m talking about.”

“Sure, fine. Whatever. She gave off a hotness vibe.”

“So, you’ve always been a slut for musical people. Good to know.”

“Why are you like this?”

“What was your first date like?”

“Ugh, horrifying. My dad played chaperone.”
“Oh no.”

“Oh yeah. We went to see a movie. My dad sat, like, right behind us and when my date tried to put his arm around me, my dad leaned forward and whispered something to him that made him move his arm so fast, I was afraid it was going to pop out of the socket.”

“Did you ever find out what he said?”

“No. Weirdly, I never thought to ask. I was just mortified.”

“Maybe that’s the root of your aversion to watching movies.”

“Oh my god! I bet you’re right.”

“I usually am.”

“Hey, Bec. You busy?”

“No, just messing around with something. What’s up?”

“How do you feel about carnivals?”

“Uh… I don’t? I mean, I don’t think I have an opinion? I’ve never been to one.”

“Are you serious?”

“….yes?”
“Grab your coat.”

“What? Chloe, I can’t-”

“You can. Where’s your jacket? That purple one with the- ah-ha!”

“Ow! Can you not throw things at my face?”

“Stop complaining and put it on. We’re going out.”

“Chloe….”

“I’m not leaving until you do. I can stand here all night.”

…. “I honestly don’t know how I put up with you. Or why.”

“Because you love me.”

“See! This is fun!”

“Why are there so many people?”

“Well, Beca, unlike you, the majority of the human race actually enjoy having fun. They even seek it out!”

“Shut up.”

“In all kinds of different ways, sometimes with friends-”
“Chloe.”

“Sometimes alone. And there are so many different ways to have fun, too.”

“I get it! I get it.”

“Will you please stop being such a sourpuss? Come on, I’ll buy you some cotton candy. Sweeten you up.”

“You’re afraid of heights?”

“I’m not.”

“Oh. So that’s not why you’re sitting on this bench with your head between your knees while I rub your back?”

“I think I’m going to puke.”

“Aww, Beca, I’m sorry. I wouldn’t have made you ride the Ferris wheel if-”

“It’s okay. It’s not your fault. I didn’t know.”

“But now we do, so no more rides that are any higher than five feet off the ground.” … “Are you gonna be okay?”

“Yeah. Things aren’t spinning anymore.”
“Oh! Beca! It’s a horse racing game! I am **awesome** at this! Will you play?”

“Sure, as long as there’s no actual horse riding involved.”

“You’re a dork.”

“You’re the one hanging out with me.” … “Also, I’m going to need my hand if you want me to play.”

“Oh, Beca. This takes skill.”

“Which one do you want?”

“What? You’re the one who won, Chloe.”

“Ugh, you’re so dumb. I didn’t win it for me.”

“Oh.”

“So, which one?”

“Um. I- the polar bear?”
“Oof, thank you.” … “Here you go.”

“Oh, wow. This is heavier than I thought it would be.”

“Well, you did pick the biggest prize.”

“Figured I should get the best bang for your buck.”

“What do you want to do next?”

“So?”

“Hmm?”

“Did you have fun?”

“I actually did.”

“Well, you don’t need to sound so surprised.”

“No, but like, I am. I’ve never… I didn’t know if I would. But I did. So, thank you for forcing me to come.”

“You don’t need to thank me.”

“Why are you laughing?”
“Beca…. You know this was totally a date, right?”

“What?”

“At least, to me it was. And it’s okay if you don’t want it to be, I just thought you knew? But it doesn’t seem like you do. So, I wanted to let you know.”

“A date? Like, a romantic-type date?”

“Mmhmm.”

“Oh.”

“But like I said, if you don’t want it to be then-”

“No. I mean, yeah. I mean-” …. “I do. Want that.”

“Good. Then I’m glad our first date was a success.”

…. 

“Hey, Chloe?”

“Yeah?”

“First dates usually end with kisses.”

“Mm, sometimes they do, yeah.”
“... Can this one?”
“This is the worst thing that has ever happened to me in my entire life.”

Beca Mitchell, snarky, sarcastic, raccoon-eyed would-be music producer to the stars, is freaking out.

“This is suicide, do you realise that?” She glances around at the rest of the Bellas, hoping to find one other person with even the smallest shred of similar understanding. No one else looks the slightest bit concerned and, for the life of her, Beca can’t understand that. “They’re going to kill us.”

“Beca, please don’t be so dramatic.” Aubrey sighs, checking her makeup in one of the full-length mirrors dotted sporadically throughout the locker room they’re in. “You’ll frighten Denise.”

Denise looks up at the mention of her name and she does look a little wild-eyed, but Beca has been with the Bellas long enough to know that that’s how Denise always looks before they go on stage.

“Chloe,” Beca says, pointedly ignoring Aubrey, “I really don’t want to die in this outfit.” She gestures down at the flight attendant get up.

“No, you’d rather meet your demise wearing grunge-era reject clothing and seven-inch spikes in your ears.” Aubrey smacks her lips together to smooth out the lipstick she’d just applied.

“Aubrey.” Chloe’s tone is warning, but it’s not as though Aubrey ever heeds it, and so Chloe walks the short distance over to where Beca is standing, her heels clicking on the tiled floor with each step. “Come on,” she says, tugging at the sleeve of the jacket Beca is wearing. “It'll be fun.”

“Fun?” Beca barks. “Fun? Do you know where we are right now? Did you hit your head on a locker door when we came in?”

Chloe rolls her eyes.

“I don’t get why you’re so freaked out. We’re bringing music to children!” Chloe says it like they’re curing cancer.
“These are high school children, Chloe.” Beca really hits the words hard, trying to drive home the intense importance of them, as though Chloe hasn’t understood what she’s trying to say yet.

“So?”

“They’re going to murder us when we step out onto that stage! Don’t you remember high school?! What the other kids were like? Teenagers are monsters, Chloe!” Beca’s hands are flailing as she talks and, if she weren’t so caught up in her fear, she might laugh at the way Chloe’s eyes are following them.

“What are you talking about?” Chloe huffs a laugh, then frowns at Beca, bemused. “High school was awesome!”

“I miss it sometimes,” Stacie sighs. “But then I remember that I don’t have to deal with high school boys anymore and it’s not so bad.”

“Oh… my god.” Beca brings her hands to her head and holds them against the sides of her face. “Did I step into the freaking Twilight Zone?”

“Nah, girl,” Cynthia Rose pipes up from somewhere behind Stacie. “High school was Hell.”

“See! Thank you!” Beca folds her arms across her chest.

“But… I loved high school.” Chloe’s frown has deepened and Beca feels it like a hard prod to her gut.

“Of course you did. You were probably, like, head cheerleader or something.” Beca doesn’t mean for it to sound so reproachful, but she knows it comes out that way.

“No,” Aubrey cuts in, moving to stand next to Chloe, partly in front of her, as though her proximity will shield Chloe from Beca’s acidic tone. “That was me.”
“Right,” Beca nods, “of course you were.”

“I was in band,” Chloe adds, quietly, and Beca’s head tilts so far to one side that it has to be close to snapping clean off her neck.

“You were in band?”

“Yeah.”

“And you still loved high school?”

“Why would being in band have made me dislike high school?”

There’s a collective chuckle that circles the locker room, but Beca is too astounded to laugh.

“Were you… popular?” she hedges, then feels one of the fuses in her brain blow when Chloe nods. “Where did you go to school, Pleasantville?”

If Beca were to stop and think for a second, she’d realise that this experience would only ever make sense coming from Chloe Beale. That it isn’t as outrageous as she thinks it is, purely because of who it is that’s involved. Chloe could have been on the Mathletes and she still would have been crowned Snow Queen at the Winter Ball or whatever it was this fairytale high school called it.

“Beca, just because everyone hated you in school, that doesn’t mean you get to make Chloe feel bad about her own experience.” Aubrey is glaring daggers at her and Beca feels herself flush at the implication.

“I’m not trying to make her feel bad!” She looks past Aubrey and catches Chloe’s eye. “I didn’t mean to make you feel bad. I just, I literally do not understand how what you’re describing is possible. Or how any of you are just calmly standing in the girls’ locker room minutes before we’re about to step out onto a stage in front of hundreds of adolescent hormone farms.”

“You can always just stay back,” Aubrey suggests, too sweetly to be sincere, and Beca’s eyes narrow.
“I didn’t say I wanted to stay back.”

“No, but you’re kinda acting like you do and if you don’t want to perform with us, that’s fine.” She flashes Beca a smile. “I’m sure we won’t even miss you.”

Somewhere unseen, Lilly imitates the sound of a record being abruptly stopped, just as Amy lets out an, “Oh, damn.”

Beca grits her teeth. She’s being goaded, she knows she is, but Aubrey is looking so smug.

“No, I’m good,” she grinds out. “Ready when you are.”

With their allotted performance time drawing close, Aubrey walks by Beca with a smirk and exits the locker room.

“Glad that was settled without any super awkward moments,” Amy says as she shuffles past and one by one, the Bellas all follow Aubrey out until it’s just her and Chloe left.

“Thanks,” Chloe smiles and, at Beca’s questioning look, continues. “Aubrey didn’t mean that. It wouldn’t be the same without you.”

Beca feels her heart warm microscopically at that.

And she’s sure that the only reason she suddenly wants to hug Chloe is because Chloe is so close to her, their chests are practically touching.

Beca never wants to hug anyone.

Gross.

“Whatever,” she deflects, blowing out a breath. “Let’s just get this over with.”
They walk down the corridor to the assembly hall together, Chloe with a spring in her step and Beca dragging her feet like she’s on her way to the gallows. They take their positions on stage behind the big red curtain and Beca holds her breath as the Principal introduces the Barden Bellas and the curtain is lifted to reveal them.

They are met with underwhelming applause, some snickering, and maybe a cricket or two.

But when Beca glances over, Chloe is still smiling.

And really, that’s the only thing that gets her through the performance.
This whole thing with the U.S.O. Show has been amazing. It had taken Chloe back to those days - those many days; too many, one might say - of being a Bella. Of course it had. She’d meant what she’d at the bar that night, she’d do anything to sing with the girls again, and if that meant dealing with D.J. Khalid and getting into what had to be the most unexpected hostage situation that could have ever possibly been in the cards, then fine.

Because there was nothing in the world that Chloe loved more than singing with her sisters. Just being in the same room as them all again at the aquarium show had been wonderful, despite how mortifying that had ended up being.

Before that, she hadn’t seen Aubrey in months, hadn’t seen most of the girls in person for over a year, and sure they had their group chat going twenty-four-seven and video calls were great, but it wasn’t the same.

As a whole, the experience has been great. Fun, weird, wet, and emotional, but great.

And then there was Beca.

At this point, Chloe feels like there has always been “Beca.” She can’t remember what it was like to not have the girl in her life. To not live with her, laugh with her, and occasionally fight with her.

To not love her.

Chloe doesn’t think about it as intensely as she used to. In the early days, when Beca was still a surly, standoffish new recruit, Chloe hadn’t been able to stop herself from thinking about it. She’d pushed the boundaries of Beca’s personal bubble just to get closer to her, to test the waters and see which way they would ripple.

They had, of course, rippled in Jesse’s direction and as much as that had hurt, Chloe had made peace with it. She’d had to and she’d hoped that peace would stem the flow of feelings on her end until they eventually trickled into the occasional drip that manifested itself as an intense fondness, rather than a deeply emotional infatuation.
But that hadn’t really happened.

She still thinks about what it would be like to be with Beca like that, even though she knows she shouldn’t. That it isn’t right or fair. She still feels it in her gut whenever Beca smirks at her or laughs at one of her jokes. Still hugs Beca tightly and tries not to feel too much. Still flirts and calls it friendship.

But all those things are done in passing now, just part of Chloe’s everyday life. She isn’t hyperfocused on what things mean between them anymore, because she knows.

Chloe is Beca’s friend, Beca’s best friend, and Chloe knows that she’s lucky to have that.

So lucky that she’d never dream of pushing anything now. Of making any kind of move that might rock the boat the wrong way and cause more wrong-ripples that might capsize them at this point. It’s just too big a risk for Chloe to take.

Losing Beca is not an option.

She’d rather lose herself to the melancholic sadness of unrequited love.

So, this trip, while amazing overall, has had tough spots for Chloe. She’s been reminded of all those moments when “what if” was a hopeful question she asked herself late at night. When Aubrey had watched her with careful eyes and quietly whispered for Chloe not to get too close. When Beca Mitchell would catch her eye during Bella practice only to cockily lift a brow and pull an addictive thrill of excitement through Chloe.

A thrill she’s still chasing, even if her pace is more of a gentle stroll these days.

The longing has never gone away. Desire had burned a hole right through her until she’d been forced to stitch the singed edges of herself together or risk losing a vital organ. But it was still there, hiding behind that poorly stitched patchwork she’d tried so hard to make look like the rest of her.

Confident, happy-go-lucky Chloe.
Secretly in love with her best friend.

She’d resigned herself to the fact that she’d probably never move on and so when she saw Chicago, a flicker of hope had flared to life.

He was cute, funny, and he seems to like her.

Seems, present tense, because he has just kissed her back.

It’s sweet and nice, and Chloe had felt so, so confident when she’d grabbed him by the front of his uniform. Because she likes him, she really does, and she’s so stupidly hopeful that this is it.

This is how she moves on.

“Wow,” he says, once the kiss ends. “Not that I’m complaining, but what was that for?”

And Chloe’s about to laugh and accuse him of being as dense as a deep dish, but then she opens her eyes and the ones looking back at her aren’t the right shade of blue. They’re looking down at her and the hands on her arms feel too heavy, and suddenly she can’t breathe.

But Chloe has gotten good at hiding.

“Just wanted to say thank you for being an awesome tour guide!” she says, plastering on a fake grin, and his brow furrows but he doesn’t stop smiling.

“Do you thank all your tour guides this way?” He lifts an eyebrow but it looks all wrong.

“Only the really good ones.” Chloe winks at him, then lets go of his jacket and takes a step back.

“So, uh, do you maybe wanna-”
“I’m sorry,” she cuts in, her expression twisting towards apologetic, “but I actually have to run.”

“Oh.” He nods, puts his hands on his hips and tries not to look dejected. “Right. You probably have a big party or something.” She must look confused because he continues. “For your friend.” He gestures to the building she’d just exited. “She was pretty amazing out there.”

Chloe feels like someone is injecting acid into her aorta.

“Yeah,” she manages, though her voice cracks. “She is.”

And she has to get out of there, now, because she knows Beca is nearby and she can’t see her right now. She kisses Chicago’s cheek and leaves him with a goodnight that, to her, sounds an awful lot like, “I’m sorry.”

She barely hears Aubrey when she bumps into her and brushes her off with the overdone excuse of not feeling well.

She knows Aubrey will see right through it.

She just doesn’t care.

She doesn’t turn the lights on when she gets back to the hotel room and the tears that spill over onto her cheeks the second the door closes behind her don’t do anything to make navigating any easier.

She hits her upper thigh on the side of the desk and even though it’s dulled compared to everything else she’s feeling right now, she lets out a sob as she exclaims in pain.

She unzips her boots and kicks them off, then rips off her jacket and throws it blindly into the corner of the room. She’s angry now, at herself, at Beca, at the world, and even though she knows this will pass - she knows because she’s been here before and survived - it still feels like she’ll die here in this moment. Suffocate or drown under her own feelings.
She doesn’t know what to do, there’s nowhere for her to go, and so she stands at the sliding glass doors at the far end of the room. Stares out at the beautifully lit city on display before her, and cries.

“Chloe?”

She jumps. She hadn’t heard the door open or even noticed the light from the hallway seeping into the room. Her eyes snap into focus and she catches a glimpse of a silhouette before the door closes and casts everything back into darkness.

She knows it isn’t Aubrey. Had hoped, even though Aubrey doesn’t have a key to the room she’s been sharing with Beca.

“Shit,” she mutters, swiping at the underside of her eyes and wiping her cheeks.

“Are you okay?” The space between the main door of the room and where Chloe is standing must have shrunk because suddenly Beca is there with a hand on her elbow and Chloe is jerking away before she can stop herself. The moment of silence that follows is heavy with surprise. It’s practically radiating off of Beca. “What’s going on? Aubrey said you left in a hurry.”

Chloe can’t even begin to explain and when Beca is met with only more silence, she grabs Chloe’s elbow again, holding tight this time and pulling Chloe around to face her.

And there’s enough light from the moon and the lights outside for Chloe to see Beca, but even if she couldn’t, it’s not as though she hasn’t memorised every curve and line of her face.

“Hey, talk to me.” And Beca sounds so concerned, so open. Like Chloe can tell her anything.

But all that does it make her start crying again.

And this is the last thing she wants to be doing; crying in their hotel room and worrying Beca, who’s leading them both until they’re sitting down on the edge of the nearest bed. She can feel Beca’s panic in the way her hand stutters as she moves it to rub circles across Chloe’s back.
“Chloe, what’s-”

“I tried, you know,” she whispers, brokenly. And just like that, those seams she’d sewn so many years ago come undone. “I tried so hard and it never-” her emotions get the better of her for a second and she lets out a sob, before covering her mouth with the back of her hand until she’s more or less sure it’s safe to talk again. “It’s never enough.”

“What isn’t? Chloe, please, you’re scaring me.”

“I tried not to feel this way. To make it go away. You have to believe me Beca, I don’t want to feel like this. Not when…” she trails off, still looking at the floor, too afraid to say it. “I thought Chicago would… I thought he’d help. He’s nice and handsome, and I like him.”

Beside her, Beca shifts uneasily and the hand she’s using to rub circles over Chloe’s back stalls.

“Is this because of him? Did he, like, brush you off or something? Because I saw you guys kissing earlier and I thought-”

“I thought so, too.” Chloe laughs, but it’s humourless. “I thought kissing him would fix everything. I thought I’d feel more for him instead of… god. I can build everything up but nothing ever goes where it should.” Chloe lets her eyes drift closed as Beca’s free hand fumbles for one of her own and squeezes it.

“Where does it go, Chlo?” And Beca’s trying so hard to understand, though Chloe knows she’s lost.

And maybe she’s just too defeated. Maybe if Beca hadn’t obviously followed her back, if Chloe had some more time to sort herself out, maybe she’d be stronger.

But she isn’t.

“It always comes back to you.”

She’d thought it would feel more freeing than it does, but she still feels bound. Wound up in ropes and ties that she can’t shake.
“It- what?” Beca’s oblivious confusion usually a source of endless humour for Chloe, but she doesn’t have it in her to laugh right now. “To me? What are you-”

“Please, just… stop. Stop for a minute and think. Because I can’t.” Chloe swallows and finds it hard to force the saliva past the lump in her throat. “I can’t say it any other way. Please don’t make me. It’s too hard.”

So, there’s silence, and it lasts almost too long for Chloe to bear. She can hear her own heart pounding in her ears and the fingers wrapped around hers slacken so just, and that’s when she knows Beca’s brain had decoded the riddle.

“Oh.”

It’s not a happy “oh.” It’s not even a surprised “oh.” Chloe doesn’t know exactly what kind of “oh” it is, but she knows what kind it isn’t.

She pulls her hand away and folds her arms across her chest, trying to make herself small as they sit together in the dark.

“It’s fine. You don’t have to say anything. I’ve been dealing with this for years, you just,” she wipes away another errant tear, “caught me on a bad day. I’ll be fine. Please just forget this happened. Please? I can’t… lose you. I just need some time. Alone.”

She wants to grab Beca, wants to squeeze her as she begs, desperate to make sure Beca understands how important this is. How important she is, to Chloe.

She needs Beca to know that she’s a mess right now, but everything can go back to the way it was tomorrow.

So, she tells her that.

And, wordlessly, Beca stands. Complies with Chloe’s request and walks away from where she’d been sitting.
Chloe hears the door open, hears it close, and lets the tears flow anew.

“Okay, but like, what if I don’t want to forget?”

Chloe gasps, jumps, and turns to see Beca’s outline still standing in the hallway.

“Why are you still here?” The words are wet and filled with the shocked surprise that’s being pumped through Chloe’s veins.

“I asked you first.” There’s a strange mix of uncertain confidence in Beca’s step as she makes her way back over to Chloe. Like she’s certain of something but isn’t entirely sure what that is yet. “What if I don’t want things to go back to the way they were tomorrow?”

Chloe’s mouth won’t work, she can’t feel her limbs, and all she can do is track Beca’s movements with her eyes until Beca is standing in front of her, looking down at Chloe.

“I mean,” Beca purses her lips. “What if something finally moved forward?”

Once upon a time, Chloe had felt hope. She’d harboured it for months into their friendship, until Jesse, and then had wrangled into something more manageable over time. Stuffed it into a box and taped it shut.

But tape grows brittle after a while and the lid of the box all but explodes off at Beca’s question, but the only tell Chloe’s body gives away is the curling of her fingers into the mattress. The fear she might fall over or float away suddenly a very real threat again after so long.

“I don’t know,” she answers, honestly. “I don’t know what happens then. I’ve never…” then, helpless, “I don’t know.”

Beca hums, thoughtful. Serious. Like she’s giving the answer some deep consideration.

“Okay.” Beca’s hand reaches out in slow motion, her fingers drifting over the top of Chloe’s head,
brushing back her hair and pulling an old familiar thrill through Chloe. “Now you go.”

It takes Chloe a minute.

“Why are you still here?”

With a smile that’s half trepidation and half bravado that Chloe can see right through, Beca reaches down for Chloe’s hand and takes hold of it again. She steps back, wordlessly bringing Chloe to her feet, and lifts her hand until she can leave Chloe’s resting against her shoulder.

Then she drops her hands to Chloe’s hips, lets a little more confidence slide into her smile, and brings their lips together.
Forget Me Not

Chapter Notes

Well, there was never any chance I was going to get all these done on time, was there? Realistically speaking. But I do plan on filling all the prompts, regardless. I’m just back at work so, you know, I’m exhausted when I come home at night and my brain refuses to think beyond “food. Sleep.” Nevertheless, I didn’t forget about this prompt!! ...no? Why are you booing. How rude.

The car accident hadn’t been Beca’s fault. At least, that’s what everyone keeps telling her. Her friends, family, her insurance companies; they all blame the other guy. The drunk driver that had drifted into oncoming traffic right as Beca rounded the bend.

The car had flipped, rolled twice, and landed on its side about twenty feet from the shoulder. Beca doesn’t remember it, but that’s what all the eye witness accounts had said happened.

In fact, there’s a whole chunk of that day missing and the first thing Beca remembers after leaving the house with a packed SUV that morning is waking up in the hospital three days later. The room around her had been empty and still, the beeping and nondescript hum of medical machinery being the only thing to disturb the silence.

She’d been intubated and the memory of the panic she’d felt at being unable to swallow correctly, realising there was a foreign object nestled somewhat painfully in her throat still makes her shiver even now, months later.

As far as injuries go, she thinks she got off light. A broken arm and two fractured ribs were nothing compared to what the damage could have been, she thinks, as she stands at the kitchen sink and stares out through the window at nothing, absently stirring honey into a hot cup of tea.

She remembers the way her insides had frozen like ice water had been poured into her veins the second she gained enough cognitive mobility to understand that the other occupants of the car weren’t within her line of sight. Panic had erupted and something - maybe the sharp spike in her heart rate - had alerted a nurse, who had shown up with an apologetic smile and soft words, and sedated her.

The next time Beca woke up, the tube in her throat had been removed and Aubrey and Jesse were at
her bedside.

“Chloe.” She’d winced, immediately regretting speaking, and Jesse had jumped to his feet to pour her a glass of water, which Aubrey had taken and brought the Beca’s lips.

“Sip,” she’d instructed and for one of the very few times in Beca’s life, she’d listened to her former captain.

“Where’s Chloe?” she’d tried again after a few moments, relishing the way the cold liquid soothed her burning throat. Then, tears stinging her eyes and fear squeezing her chest, she’d asked, “Where’s Izzy?”

“Hey, Iz?” Beca glanced at the rearview mirror and watched as big blue eyes looked up from where they’d been fixated on the small toy keyboard that was playing through one of the five pre-programmed melodies accessible by pressing brightly coloured buttons along the top of the keys. “Play Mama’s favourite.” In Beca’s periphery, she could see Chloe shifting against her seat belt, turning to watch over the back of the seat.

With the kind of wide, mischievous grin that only toddlers are capable of, the little girl in the car seat lifted her chubby little hands and brought them down hard, hitting as many keys as she could in one blow.

Beside Beca, Chloe’s laughter is loud and full, a melody in striking contrast to the nonsense noise being emitted from the back of the car as little fingers tapped manically across the keys.

“I think she’s going to be a prodigy,” Beca said, grinning at Chloe.

“Well, if she’s anything like her mommy,” reaching across the console between them, Chloe took hold of Beca’s hand and laced their fingers together, “she’s going to be pretty great at whatever she sets her mind to.”

“Looking to get lucky tonight?” Beca asked, cheeks tinted red and mouth rapidly drying as she watched Chloe snare her bottom lip very purposefully between her teeth, before flashing Beca the kind of ‘bedroom eyes’ that should be illegal in public.

“Maybe. You think my odds are good?”
“I’d say there’s probably a pretty good chance.”

"Izzy is fine. She's being kept in for observation, but there are no broken bones, nothing severe. Just a cut above her eyebrow." Aubrey had kept her tone carefully calm and Beca had felt some of her panic wane momentarily. But when Aubrey didn't continue, Beca felt tears spill out onto her cheeks and roll hotly towards her chin.

"Where's Chloe?" She'd sat there, on the verge of a breakdown, and watched as Aubrey and Jesse exchanged looks. And she'd snapped. "Where is Chloe?!"

"Bec." Jesse had reached out, placing his hand over Beca's trembling one. "She's in I.C.U."

And Beca's whole world had crumbled to dust.

"She's stable for now," Aubrey continued. "They had to do surgery but they were able to remove the rebar…"

Aubrey's words had faded into a fog through which Beca could only hear her heart. Thudding overtime as it disintegrated from the bottom up.

Chloe spent two weeks in an induced coma. Beca had been released after a few days and asked Jesse if he could pick her up. He and Aubrey had been watching Izzy and Beca had been desperate to see her.

They went to see Chloe and Beca tried to explain as best she could that, "The doctors have made mama go to sleep so that she can feel better." Izzy had seemed to take it in stride.

They got the call at 3 a.m. The nurse on night duty had to repeat herself twice before Beca understood what she was being told.

"Mrs Mitchell is awake."
She'd called Jesse, again, and he and Aubrey had raced over. Jesse stayed with Izzy while Aubrey drove Beca to the hospital.

"It wasn't your fault, Beca," Aubrey's words cut through the silence like a clever.

Beca doesn't turn from where she's staring out of the window.

They spoke with the nurses when they arrived and were warned that they wouldn't be able to stay long. That "the patient" needed her rest.

The second Beca entered the room, the very instant she laid eyes on Chloe, she burst into tears.

"Don't cry…." Chloe's voice was hoarse and broken, and Aubrey immediately instructed her not to talk.

All Beca wanted to do was hold her. But there were wires and tubes everywhere, and she didn't want to hurt Chloe any more than she already had.

She settled for taking hold of Chloe's hand and gently laced their fingers together.

Chloe glanced down at the action, then looked back up at Beca. She opened her mouth to say something, turning her body slightly, and then yelped in pain.

"What- why is, oh my god, ow, what did they do to me?" Chloe began fussing with the sheets, pulling them back and hiking up the side of her gown until she could see the bandages covering her side. "What is that?"

"The surgery, they had to, you were-" None of Beca's attempts to explain were ending where they should.

"They were supposed to remove my nodes, not my kidneys!" Chloe cried, voice cracking from lack of use, and a little from the pain.
And that was the first sign that something was wrong.

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