Beneath These Scrubs

by Krash33

Summary

AU: Dr. Solo and Dr. O'Hara meet in an ER one night. Their journey after an accident that connects them in ways they've never experienced before.

Notes

Go easy on me, I'm a first timer. I know there's little interaction in the first chapter, but it'll definitely pick up. No worries! Comment to let me know how great or shitty my first piece is!
And just like that it happens.

The adrenaline pumping through your veins, the sounds of others prepping rooms, doing charts, pages over the PA system, the sound of your rubber soles thumping against the white, sterile tile of the seemingly endless hallway...

You love the way everyone steers clear of you running through the wing, your destination downstairs five floors on the opposite side of where you are. Your pace quickens when you're near the double doors about a yard away from the elevator. You wait with a woman who looks distraught, her face laced with pure sadness and defeat. You glance over your shoulder once more and step into the elevator only filled with two other people.

"3rd floor, please"

You listen to the sad woman while you hit G and 3. You know it's urgent when you receive another page requesting your appearance. You repeatedly hit the button hoping that for once the elevator will humor you and descend faster to the lowest floor. You let out a huge sigh you didn't know you were keeping in and watch the sad woman step out onto the third floor. You briefly wonder if she received bad news not too long ago or if she was permanently upset with something in her life like that. You hit the close door button and refocus on where you're going and why.

The bell finally dings and you look ahead, head up, eyes sharp while you roll your neck and crack your fingers and stretch out your arms. You step out onto the floor and take in the chaotic scene playing out in front of you.

The ER isn't your forte, but with many years experience and the fact that you're an attending, you find yourself down here quite often helping whatever patient needs your expertise.

"Dr. Solo! Over here, Room 3. Major car crash, four were brought in, five still on site or en route to us. We need all hands on deck." The nurse hands you the chart with chicken scratch scribbled all over it, a site you're used to and have no trouble comprehending.

You quickly read it over, snap on some gloves and remove your stethoscope from around your neck as the nurses bring you up to speed on the extent of her injuries as you listen to her heart. The woman is in her 50s, unconscious and looking like she took the brunt of the accident. Her leg is being cut out of her pants and her left eye is swollen shut with multiple cuts on her face, blood in her hair and all over the pillow. Her collar bone and left arm look smashed up, drawing the conclusion that the car was hit from the left side and she must have been the driver driving the three other passengers who are now being tended to by her colleagues and ER nurses.

Her heartbeat is stable and you know you aren't needed here. You record her heart rate and blood pressure that are both being monitored on the machines she's hooked up to. The nurses are quickly cleaning, stitching and bandaging her facial lacerations, the charge nurse already calling ortho to come consult on the leg and upper extremity injury.

Your gloves are off and you walk back into the wing looking at the whiteboard seeing who needs help. You don't see any rooms that aren't in need of another person or a consult so you find the nurse who gave you the first patient.

"The patient needs ortho, so I'm no longer a help there. When are the other victims expected to com-
"MAKE WAY. We have five victims, all female, all seem to be in their late 20s/early 30s. From the other car involved in the accident, not as banged up as the first round but still need our attention."
The EMT interrupts your question and you spring back into action.

You see your colleagues each approaching a gurney and you get the last one. With one scope, the women seem to be cut up in one way or another, not too badly injured, but that's only on the surface and pre-testing for internal injuries.

You look down at the woman lying on the bed, the only patient with a neck brace on you notice. A nurse is on the other side of the new bed, pushing it into an empty exam room. The nurse quickly hooks her up to the machines, getting her heart rate, blood pressure and other vitals up and running.

The woman's eyes are closed while you run through the check up looking for any open wounds, broken bones, damaged anything. You remove your stethoscope again to listen to her heart. You glance to your right checking her heart rate and BP noting that they are normal but the sound seems off to you. You haven't heard a heart beat quite like this before and you try to put your finger on it before you hear a voice mumble from underneath you.

"Hi, you're okay, you're safe. You're in the hospital after a car accident. I'm Dr. Solo, you're in good hands. Can you tell me your name?"

The woman's eyes were wide and panicked, her heart rate picking up sounding the machine she was hooked up to. She tried moving her neck but it was being stabilized by something. Her IV in her arm prevented her from lifting it up all the way to try and remove the brace from around her neck.

"Hey, it's okay. The EMTs put that on for repercussions, you're okay. Nothing more than some cuts and bruises. Maybe a broken arm. Can you tell me your name?" She asked again and looked down into the woman's eyes, noting how they looked outrageously bright even for reflecting the fluorescent lights above them.

"K-Kelley... Dr. Kelley O'Hara." She shut her eyes tightly, swallowing hard as she realized she was in the ER. Her heart began to calm as she breathed deeply, knowing she was alive and wasn't seriously injured.

"Hi Kelley, let me just go through the standard nerve test and I'll see what I can do about that brace, okay?"

Kelley blinked and tried to nod but couldn't so she settled on slightly raising her arm and giving a weak thumbs up.

Dr. Solo brought her little flashlight out and click it on and tested Kelley's reflexes and reactions.

"Pupils are responding, good. Follow my finger for me with your eyes."

Kelley looked left then right, up then down.

"No sign of brain injury, no sign of a cardiac event, just a cut up face and a broken wrist. You'll probably have tenderness in your neck and a light headache for a bit, but no concussions or neck injuries. I'll have the nurses patch you up and ortho fit your cast."

Kelley followed the doctor's words and checked off an emergency room check up list she often has to go through. She internally groaned about her broken wrist but was relieved to know that that was the worst of her injuries. She looked up to the doctor who she realized was expectantly looking at her, waiting for an answer to a question she must have missed.
"Did you hear me?"
"No, I'm sorry... What was the question?"

"Do you have a pre existing heart condition?"

"Yeah, I have LQTS, Long QT Syndrome"

Dr. Solo nodded knowingly and recorded that on her chart, and took her stethoscope off one more time to listen to Kelley's heart again. She heard the irregular beat and looked at the heart rate monitor seeing the spike and then the regularity of the electrical currents.

"Looks like the adrenaline from the accident gave you a shock. I'm going to have the nurse watch your heart rate, give you doses of beta blockers as needed. I'm sure you've been through this before. It looks like my work here is done but I'll be back periodically to check up on your chart to ensure you won't turn on me and make me look stupid."

She smiled down at Kelley and noticed something changed in her demeanor.

"What's up? You're okay, I don't lie."

"No, no I believe you its just.. How are my friends? I forgot that they're here and were involved and I was driving and oh my god what if I killed them? What if I killed the people in the other car?" Kelley's heart rate picked up and her chest started to rapidly rise and fall, her eyes widening and her hands grasping the railings.

"Kelley, KELLEY! Listen to my voice. They're okay. Your friends and the other passenger are okay. No fatalities, no threatening injuries. Just take a few deep breaths, okay? There you go..."

Kelley slowly released her grip on the sheets and breathed deeply to calm her heart rate. She closed her eyes and listened to the doctor instructing her on how to breathe and for how long. Once she felt calm again, she opened her eyes and noticed the blue eyes staring into her. She took sucked a breath in when she noticed how sharp and clear her eyes were. Dr. Solo smiled at her, patted her hand and recorded one last thing on her chart.

"Now, if you would excuse me, I am going to check on your friends and have a nurse come clean you up and give you a report on your friends' statuses. See you soon, try to stay calm so I don't need to bring out my inner zen again, okay?"

And with that Dr. Solo chuckled and left the room, turning to her right to step back into the wing.

She thought about the hazel eyes that shone under the harsh fluorescent lights and the way she seemed to calm her down in fear that she would cause major arrhythmias to occur while she began to panic. She was intrigued that she's another doctor, she looked so young, probably an intern fresh out of med school. She wondered what her specialty is or will be, where she's interning, what happened in the car accident... She made sure she wasn't needed in the ER anymore while all of the victims were stabilized, attended to and only one needed surgery, her first patient she saw that needed a shoulder surgery. She signed off on the couple of charts, found the charge nurse and told her about the patient in Room 6 that needed stitches and to keep an eye on her friends for her. The charge nurse agreed and quickly learned the statuses of the other women to give a brief summary on them for the patient in Room 6.

Dr. Solo walked back to the elevators to return to the attending's lounge before she checked on her patients admitted to the cardiac wing. She sat on the couch shared with her fellow attendings and
thought about the accident. More specifically the young doctor in Room 6 who sparked her interest after an intense staring contest and small anxiety episode. She was definitely going to go back down after her rounds to check on her and make sure she was alright. It was out of character for her to check on a non-cardiac patient, but there was a pull towards this Dr. O'Hara and she wasn't going to ignore it. Dr. Hope Solo doesn't really do people or feelings, but the look in those hazel eyes drew her in.

Her pager beeps twice and she sits up after lounging on the couch getting lost in her thoughts looking down at the small, black cube in her hands. "ER Room 6. Non-emergency, asking for you"

A faint smile ghosted Hope's lips as she clipped the pager back onto her scrub bottoms and stood on her Nike clad feet. She left the attending’s lounge and quickly made it to the elevators faster than she did before.
Room 6 houses those hazel eyes that drew you in, made you look twice, made you eager to look into them again... What was it about them? Because they were so bright and filled with so many emotions at once that you don't think you even possess a single one at any given moment?

Your thoughts are interrupted as the elevator dings and the door slides open. You push yourself off the back wall you were leaning against with your shoulder and uncross your arms that are usually protecting your upper body.

It's been a total of 20 minutes since you left the hazel-eyed doctor in Room 6 and every second has been occupied by thoughts of those eyes and that woman looking up at you. You're eager to see why you're being paged back for a non-emergency and why she wants to see you.

You don't have another second to question the page when you walk into her room and watch the nurse check her IV bag and hear her ask Dr. O'Hara if she needs anything else before she finishes her rounds. When she declines any extra pillows or another sip of water, the nurse politely smiles and excuses her way past you and out the door.

The woman looks so small in the hospital bed and you aren't sure whether it's her small frame or the fact that her brow is furrowed in a distant look written across her freckled face, making her whole being seem tiny. So many questions come flooding into your mind that you don't realize that those hazel eyes are staring at you, waiting for you to look into them once again.

You hear a faint sound of someone clearing their throat and your eyes shoot up to meet the gaze of Dr. O'Hara. Once again you realize you're leaning against your shoulder in the doorway with your arms folded protectively over your chest, head cocked to the side a telltale sign that you've been brought out of a deep thought.

"How's your wrist, Dr. O'Hara?" Hope flicks her gaze to the green cast and back to the green and brown irises that seem to have brighten up in the past 30 minutes.

She lifts her arm up and smiles, "The doctor let me pick the color of my cast so I'm a happy patient"

You smirk and hold back a chuckle, pushing off the door frame and taking a few steps to her bedside.
"I'm assuming green is your favorite color then?"

"Yeeeup, it must be my Irish blood."

"Irish, huh? I couldn't tell with the last name 'O'Hara'" Hope half-smirked while watching Kelley examine her green cast probably thinking about what her friends will say.

Her friends.

"Do you know how my friends are doing? A nurse never came to tell me how they are and I just figured that y-you would know because you said you would tell m-"

"Breathe. You ramble a lot. Is it because you're nervous for their well-beings or because you're a squirrel?"

"I'm not a squirrel! I'm a concerned friend! I just want to know how they're doing" Kelley pouts and tried to cross her arms but her cast makes it a little too difficult.

"Okay, okay I believe you," Hope puts her hands up in defense and raises one eyebrow at Kelley.

"What are their last names? I'll look up their statuses" Hope pulls out the wheely stool next to the computer in the room and signs in, hands hovering over the keyboard waiting for the doctor's friends' names.

"Heath, Morgan, Harris and Krieger"

It feels like forever that Dr. Solo is typing away on the hospital computer searching for her friends' names.

"Did you find their files? Are they okay?"

"Calm down, squirrel. The system is acting up."

"That's surprising, isn't this supposed to be the best hospital in Boston?"

Hope glances over her shoulder and squints her eyes down at the challenging eyes glaring back at her.

"You are something else, Dr. O'Hara. Now, would you like to know how your friends are or not?"

"Yes please, how are they?!"

"Let's see..."

Hope clicks a blank space on the screen repeatedly to waste a little more time to annoy Kelley.

"SO?!"

"Sooo... They're all fine. No need to work yourself up anymore, Dr. O'Squirrel"

"Dr. O'Squirrel, really? Reaaaally?"

The annoyed look that Hope came face to face with almost made her laugh but the little attitude she saw flash in those eyes she's been thinking about recently told her not to.

"My apologies. Since the whole confidentiality thing exists for us doctors, I will tell you that they are all stable, awake and will be discharged at the same time you will be."
"Do they have broken bones? Major lacerations? Concussions? Anything?!"

"You know I can't tell you that, Doctor"

Hope closes the files and logs out of the computer, spinning her chair completely around to face Kelley completely. She leans back, legs crossed and per usual, arms crossed in front protectively.

"Please, Dr. Solo? Haven't I've been through enough pain?" Kelley pouts and lifts her cast up giving Dr. Solo puppy dog eyes that nobody can refuse.

"Nice try, O'Hara but puppy dog eyes and pitiful pouting doesn't work on me." She smirks as she leans forward, patting her cast and standing up.

"Are you always this mean to patients, Dr.?

"Only the ones who page me down here to ask about their friends and not for emergencies."

Kelley's cheeks redden and she darts her eyes from Hope's face to the white sheet, back up to Hope's face.

"I'm sorry, I was just really worried and like I said, the nurses never came by and I didn't know what else to do and,"

"Oh my god, you really are a squirrel, huh O'Hara? What's your specialty?" Hope cocks her head to the side amused by Kelley's ramblings and almost touched by her concerned manner for her friends, almost.

"Pediatrics..."

"OH MY GOD!" Hope let's out a barked laugh, "oh that is priceless. I'm sure the kids love having one of their own taking care of them!" Hope keeps laughing, eyes closed, head thrown back while unbeknownst to her Kelley removes a pillow from behind her back and chucks it at her face.

"Peds... The squirrel in pediatr- UMF!" Hope's jaw drops open and closes just as quickly, her eyes burning holes into Kelley's eyes, her hands grabbing the railing at the foot of the bed.

Kelley challenges her glare and cockily smirks up at the now-quiet Doctor waiting for her to speak.

When she doesn't say anything, just icily stares at Kelley, Kelley starts giggling and sits up on her knees, careful not to rip the IV out of her noncasted arm and holds her hand out to shake Hope's.

"Truce, Dr. Solo? No more squirrel jokes and I won't hurl pillows your way?"

Hope weighs out the options in her mind before she takes a small step back and shakes her head no while a small smile forms on her face.

"Not a chance, you squirrel. Now if you'd excuse me, I have actual patients who need me and are waiting for me to make my rounds." Hope has her back turned away from Kelley, one foot already past the threshold.

"Wait! Do you know when I'll be discharged?"

Hope turns around and looks down at the small doctor, making note that it was her physicality and not her sad demeanor that made her seemingly tiny in the hospital bed. Her genuine concern for her friends seemed to be wiped off her freckled face, replaced by what is probably her normal happiness.
"Let's see," she glances down at her watch, "it's 4:00 now... In about 2 hours. Your IV bag is almost empty, your arm is ready for St. Patrick's Day and your facial laceration has been stitched up... They're just keeping you here to make sure that your heart beat is stable and no sign of arrhythmias anymore. And for your friends?" Hope takes a couple steps toward the hospital bed and leans down closer to Kelley.

"Are just fine, like I said. You'll be leaving together. But due to the accident, you may want to call another friend or family member to take you all home. That jeep of yours probably isn't looking too pretty." Hope stands back up and checks her pager as it beeps.

"Duty calls. Hearts can't save themselves, unfortunately. It was nice meeting you, Dr. O'Hara. I hope your wrist heals quickly and your forehead doesn't scar too badly. Take care."

Hope looks back into those hazel eyes that captured her intrigue the first moment she looked into them and noted how they were still bright under the fluorescent lighting, but for a different reason.

"Thank you, Dr. Solo I really appreciate your help and taking time out of your day to help calm my nerves about my friends' statuses. Even though you're mean to me and my "squirrelly-ness" I guess you're a pretty good doctor."

Both Hope and Kelley are smiling, Hope's being small almost a smirk and Kelley's shining brightly. The small moment is broken when Kelley suddenly remembers something.

"Oh! Will you do me the honor of being the first person to sign my cast? Since you took great care of me in your wonderful establishment and all" Kelley cheesily smiles up at Hope eyeing her sharpie in her top scrub pocket.

Hope shakes her head in disbelief at this little squirrel Doctor that for some reason captured her attention. Between the mystery of her eyes, challenging looks she dared to give the serious, evil Dr. Solo and the audacity she had to chuck a pillow at her face while she was laughing, Hope figured there's a reason this kind, genuine woman became her patient an hour ago.

"I mean I guess I can" Hope clicks her sharpie open and leans down grabbing the green cast and tapping the end of the marker on her chin a couple of times before she smiles and presses the marker down on the cast.

Kelley is staring at Hope's face the whole time watching the slight raise of her eyebrow, the faint smile on her lips and the way her tongue peaks out against her upper lip as she continues to write on her cast. Another click of the marker breaks Kelley's gaze and she looks up to see Dr. Solo already in the doorway.

"Take it easy, squirrel. I don't need you in my ER again."

Kelley sticks her tongue out at the doctor and smiles, thinking that this woman standing in the doorway of her ER room is someone like she's never met before.

"I'll try my best, Dr. Solo. Try not to say anything too mean to patients to avoid a pillow coming at your face."

Hope laughs and shakes her head, patting the doorframe twice and nodding her head once. And just like that, she's gone.

Kelley keeps her eyes fixed on the doorway as she replays the banter between her and this mystery doctor. All she knows is that her name is Dr. Solo and that she has the bluest eyes she's ever seen.
And that she can be quite a meanie in a time of panic.

Kelley has this desire to page her again just to talk to her more but she realizes that she'll be going home soon with her friends and that she needs to find out how to get them all home. The lime green cast flashes in the corner of her eyes and she looks down at it.

"Maybe it isn't the best idea for squirrels to drive. Take care, Dr. Hope Solo"

The black cursive contrasting with the vibrant green of her cast is mesmerizing to her. That, or the full name of the doctor that caught her attention and kept it.

Hope Solo.

She never wanted to get to know a person as much as Hope Solo.

And little did she know, Hope Solo felt the same way.
Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

A day in the life of Dr. Solo.

Chapter Notes

I want to develop the characters, I don't want to just dive right into the relationship between these two. I'm sorry if the slow burn is annoying, I gotta do what I gotta do, homies. Again, let me know how you're feeling. Comments make me write faster and post sooner. Let's see what Dr. Solo's day is like.

The alarm blaring wakes Hope up at exactly 5:15 AM. It's the first step in her daily routine that she follows the same way every week.

She rolls out of her bed, wiping the little sleep she got out of her eyes and begins to stretch. Stretching and a 3 mile run is a must before she starts her long day at the hospital, not even coffee can wake her up the way her physical activity does. She strips off her shirt and sleep shorts and throws on her compression shorts, sports bra and dri-fit shirt as well as her mid calf socks. Her color coordinating outfit is accented with her black and purple Nike free runners and her arm band that holds her iPhone and house key during her run.

She focuses on her goals she sets for herself the day ahead and makes mental checklists of what patients need and certain labs she'll need to double check before specific surgeries she'll have later.

Being a cardiologist at the age of 33 is a tiring, extremely tedious career to take on, but graduating high school 2 years earlier than peers your age, going through the excelled program in college and completing med school and residency within 7 years plus 5 years experience of being a cardiac surgeon at the best hospital in Boston will lead you to become the youngest cardiothoracic attending in Kennedy General Hospital's history.

You don't take your position or title lightly, especially since you worked your ass off fighting for the number one spot in your field since you were 8 years old.

Your passion is cutting up people's hearts and fixing valve or ventricular disorders, unclogging arteries, or whatever the problem the patient has that relates to the heart. The muscle of love and emotion is your specialty, which is ironic due to your self-defined cold heart and others perception of your lack of one.

It's your job to keep your patients' hearts warm and pumping to keep them alive, both on your table and years to come after that. Other than neuro, you have the most stress and importance of fixing your patients' lives on your shoulders.

Your run always seems so short when you get caught up in your head and before you know it, your feet halt in front of your townhouse door. You pull the key out of your armband and let yourself into
the house. Sasha and Onyx, your dogs run to your feet and lick your hands and face as you lean
down to unlace your sneakers.

"Hi guys, okay okay I love you too, that's enough!" you scrunch your nose in mild disgust and laugh
at how their ears are always perked up. You wish you had more time to spend with them, but luckily
your neighbor comes to let them out and spend time with them when you're stuck doing an overnight
or a couple at the hospital. The Doberman pinschers are your best friends and you love them because
they love you, unconditionally and unwaveringly.

The next step in your routine is to pop a kcup in the keurig, fill the dogs' bowls, take out the fruits
and vegetables you want to use for your breakfast smoothie and then make your way upstairs to
shower and change.

After your shower, you throw on jeans and a v-neck, grab your bag and head downstairs to whip up
your smoothie. You pour the coffee into a travel mug to take with you for your morning rounds and
blend the smoothie to drink before you leave.

Saying bye to Sasha and Onyx is never an easy task, but you throw them each a rawhide and hope
that it lasts them more than 10 seconds to distract them from your absence. Coffee cup in hand and
keys in the other, you turn to leave and get in the car to drive to work.

The 20 minute commute seems longer everyday with the amount of traffic that Boston has. How is it
even possible for this many cars to be going towards the same place? Luckily it's only 7:15 and you
don't need to be there until 8 to start your day. You turn up the radio and start bopping your head to
the beat of "Hotline Bling" and furrow your eyebrows at the stupid lyrics.

"How is this even a song?" You dismiss the stupidity and just keep it on since you know all of the
other channels won't be playing anything. The cars ahead of you have moved a total of 10 ft these
past 15 minutes and you're not sure if you rather be stuck teaching interns for a month or stay in this
city traffic for another minute. You sigh and lean your head back and pick up your travel mug to take
a sip of the black coffee you brewed 20 minutes ago.

Placing it down, you look out of your passenger side's window and see a squirrel running along a
wire between two posts adjacent to the thruway you're on. A squirrel, an animal you haven't paid
much attention to or given any thought of until Dr. Kelley O'Hara.

You wonder how she got home yesterday evening and if she enjoyed your message on her cast. Her
bright green cast that matched her personality and brought out the green hue in her eyes. Those eyes.
You don't understand why this woman has taken up your thoughts, thoughts that are usually centered
around cardiothoracic surgeries or shaving seconds off of your 3 mile run every morning.

The truth is, you don't like to think about anyone for longer than 10 minutes and that's if you like
them enough to tolerate them for that long. Patients are different because they are your priority, but
small doctors who show up in your ER and throw pillows at you and make you consider breaking
the rules are not. It's a different feeling, but you shake it off and store it in the back of your mind for
later when you realize you're out of traffic and pull into Kennedy General's parking lot.

You change into dark blue scrubs, throw your lab coat embroidered with "Dr. Hope Solo,
Cardiothoracic Surgery" on one side and "Kennedy General Hospital" with the little logo on the
other. You pull your long, dark brown hair into a pony tail, double check your shoe laces are tight
enough and pull your stethoscope around your neck. Time for rounds, time to continue your day.

"Dr. Solo, Mr. Littleton is complaining of chest pain even though there are no signs of stressors in his
vitals. Mr. Scher is wondering when you'll sign off on his discharge. And this is the chart for the
admitted patient from last night. Your fellow Dr. Johnson did it for precautionary measures but would prefer if you go over the labs again to ensure he is fine."

You take all of the information in and check over those charts before you make your way down the hallway to see each patient. You make little notes here and there of their progress and only have one instance that you need to perform CPR and use the defibrillator to shock a patient back into a stable heart rate.

"Mr. Scher is definitely not being discharged today."

Your day goes on and is unusually calm you realize as you’re eating your salad in the hospital's cafeteria. Usually you're interrupted by a page or need to run to the ER for a consult, whatever the job calls for. You stab another piece of spinach and tomato and are midbite when your pager doesn't disappoint and interjects on your quiet lunch.

"Scher. 911"

You slam your chair back, leaving your salad and half eaten sandwich on the table before you sprint to the nearest elevator. You repeatedly jab the up button but it's taking too long for your liking, so you throw the door open to the stairway and begin your ascent up 5 flights of stairs to your cardio wing. You're there in under a minute and push yourself past two nurses.

"What's the situation?"

"He wanted to leave, got up and felt pain running through his arm. Thought it was nothing until he was short of breath and fell to the ground. Heart rate monitor signaled tachycardia, adenosine didn't slow his heart down."

The heart rate monitor started to alarm and Hope's eyes tracked his rate while listening with her stethoscope until it started beeping faster.

"He's in v fib. I need the defibrillator, charge to 200. CLEAR!"

Shock.

They wait for the reset of his heart but he's still in ventricular fibrillation.

"Charge to 400. CLEAR!"

The thump of Mr. Scher's back rising and hitting the bed is the only sound in the room at the moment. Then a small beep returns to the heart rate monitor. You watch as his heart rate is stabilized and breathe a little sigh of relief. You know surgery is the next step after he needed to be defibbed twice. You pass his chart off to the nurse after scribbling a note down and make your way to the nurses station to see what surgeries you have planned today and if you can push one off to squeeze Mr. Scher in.

You're about to sit down at the computer when you hear a voice say, "Delivery for Dr. Solo" You look up and see a FedEx guy holding a bouquet of flowers. The surprised look on your face is quickly replaced with curiosity as you thank him and take the vase from his hands.

The flowers are gorgeous, a beautiful mix of wildflowers with hues of purples and blues, two of your favorite colors. You look for a tag or card that tells you who they're from when you're distracted by a small stuffed squirrel holding a heart in its little paws stuffed in the middle of the bouquet.

You instantly know who bought you these flowers and a bright smile graces your face, big enough
to let the wrinkles in the corner of your eyes show. You let out a small chuckle and see that a card is placed behind the squirrel. You open it and note how messy the handwriting is at first glance.

It reads,
"Dr. Hope Solo,
You're right. Maybe squirrels shouldn't drive unless they want to end up in the ER of Boston's best hospital with a cast around their tiny paw. But I know a squirrel who is very thankful for the treatment she received by the Attending Cardiothoracic Surgeon at Kennedy Gen. (I looked you up to send you these) I hope to see you again soon, of course under different circumstances, to thank you again for your care. Maybe over a cup of coffee? (555)4337519.

Dr. Kelley O'Hara"

You didn't realize how hard you were smiling at the note until your fellow, Dr. Johnson comes up behind you and grabs your shoulders.

"What the hell, Johnson?! You were this close to having to do CPR on me. Christ..."

You put your hand on your chest and feel the organ that you work on and specialize on every day beating a mile a minute.

"Relax, Solo I'm just curious to see who delivered these flowers to my bitter, dark best friend."

"They're from a patient I helped with in the ER last night. No big deal" you shrug it off and tuck the card back with the squirrel in the bouquet.

"No big deal?! You don't even receive flowers like that from patients who get a triple bypass done by you. Or any open heart surgery!"

"Whatever, it's just a nice gesture. You know I don't even like flowers"

"True, but what's with this cute little squirrel? Holding a heart?"

Jones plucks the little squirrel from the flowers and examines it.

"It's a long story and the heart is probably because I'm a cardio surgeon, dipshit." You take the squirrel back from his hands and put it back within the flowers and finally open up your schedule on the computer, the task you came there to do.

"I need you to take over the aortal surgery at 12 for me. Scher needed to be shocked twice today and I need to go in there and fix the ventricular walls and the AV valve."

"Sure, not a problem. Only if you tell me who sent you these though."

"I told you, a patient from the ER. Now please go have one of your interns prep Scher so I can pull off yet another life saving surgery like the badass surgeon I am."

You smirk at Johnson as he rolls his eyes and sets off to find one of his idiot interns.

"I'll get this out of you eventually, Solo. I will."

"Yeah, whatever. I'll see you for Mrs. Lin's surgery at 3, dumbass."

And with that you click on a few more surgeries, rescheduling them until they're in an order that works better for this last minute surgery. You push out of your seat to go scrub in and you catch a
whiff of the wildflowers next to the mousepad.

You take the card out from between the stuffed squirrel and the flowers and slide it into your scrub pocket. You think about the message and the possibility of seeing Dr. O'Hara again when you realize she gave you her number.

Her number. Which means it's your turn to reach out and contact her. Should you call her? Would that be weird? You don't even know the woman yet you have this weird pull to call her and agree to a cup of coffee with her. After all, she gave you her number to contact her, it's not like she doesn't want you to call, right?

You shake the thoughts away again to make your way to the attendings lounge to put the card in your bag and grab your favorite scrub cap before scrubbing in in the OR.

As you're vigorously washing your hands, you let your mind wander back to the little smiley face she signed the card with and the question mark next to the suggestion of talking over coffee.

You lift your now sterile hands up and stand there for a minute debating on whether or not you're going to call. You grab a towel to dry your hands off and push your back into the door to enter the OR.

You're going to call and you're going to agree to drinking coffee with this woman who looks too young to drink it.

You're going to see Dr. Kelley O'Hara again. But not until you save Mr. Scher's heart from failing.
Chapter 4

Chapter Summary

So was she hot?

Chapter Notes

Decided to include a little interaction between the gals and Kelley after their discharge from the ER. This chapter doesn't include any O'Solo interaction, but next chapter is when it begins. Thanks again for the comments and kudos, really boosts my confidence. Let me know how you're feeling, homies. Enjoy!

After the nurse checked your IV, made sure your heart rate was stable and that your stitches are all clean and patched up, you are cleared to sign your discharge papers. It feels great to stand again, despite the soreness of your muscles and fatigue from the come down of your adrenaline high after the crash. You check your phone and don’t see any texts, which isn’t uncommon because the main people you talk to are also admitted in the same ER as you.

After gathering your phone and wallet that were retrieved from the car and placed in the plastic bag they put patients’ belongings in, you slowly make your way to the admin desk to sign some insurance papers and ask about where your car was towed so you can call them in the morning to go look at the damage and go from there.

“Wow, the medical professional was the one to get the cast. Didn’t expect that one.” Kelley turned around at the sound of her friend’s voice and instantly smiled at the taller blonde.

“You look like you weren’t even in the damn car and you’re almost as clumsy and destructive as I am. Now how did that happen, Harris?” Ashlyn lightly pushed her and laughed at her smaller friend, glad she and the other three ladies were okay.

“Have you seen the other gals? I haven’t heard anything about you four other than you’re all stable, conscious and being discharged at the same time.”

“Tobin and I were in the same room because they didn’t have enough rooms I guess, but we haven’t heard anything more than you have about Alex or Ali. I tried using my Harris charm to get the exact same info you did on them though. I almost lost it when I couldn’t find Ali.” Kelley gave Ashlyn a sympathetic smile which brightened when she saw the three other women in question walk up to the admin desk to sign the same paperwork Kelley had to.

“Well hello ladies! Glad to see we’re all alive after what happened.” Kelley smiled and hugged each friend, none of them with broken bones or visible injuries other than a few cuts here and there. Ashlyn moved to hug Ali and wouldn’t let go for what seemed like forever. Alex and Tobin smiled knowingly at the couple and went to the desk to sign their paperwork to allow their friends to have their little reunion after 4 hours of not seeing each other and being left in limbo.
I was worried about you, Princess. I wasn’t sure if I had to break the news to you that you’ll have scars on your pretty face due to the accident or not.” Ashlyn smirked as Ali lightly smacked her tattooed arm and stuck her tongue out at her ridiculous girlfriend.

“Very funny, Ash. I only have this bad boy though” Ali showed a stitched up laceration on her left bicep, a good sized shard of glass cut her arm as she was sitting in the backseat behind Kelley, where the car hit them from the side.

“Now that’s going to leave a badass scar, I’m digging it, Krieger.” Ashlyn wagged her eyebrows at her girlfriend and laughed at her suggestive comment, nothing out of the ordinary for the blonde to say.

“Wow Kell, it looks like you win this round of who has the best injury. Is it your wrist?” Tobin spoke as she and Alex returned to the other three women all sitting in a family room provided by the hospital for families to wait for their loved ones to be admitted, discharged or be seen during their visit in the ER.

“Yeah, I think my reflexes brought my left arm up to protect my face as my right hand was on the wheel and when the car crashed into us, the force shattered my pisiform and cracked the top of my ulna.”

“At least you got a cool cast out of the deal. Wait, did somebody already sign it for you?” Kelley internally groaned. Leave it to Alex to be the observant one.

“Yeah, my ER doctor who checked me out. She was really cool and looked up your statuses letting me know you guys were okay. We joked around a little, it was a nice distraction.”

“Checked you out, huh? Was she hot?” Ashlyn smirked and received a smack on the back of the head from Ali.

“Babe, watch it, I could have a concussion!”

“Oh shit, I forgot I’m sorry. Are you okay? Did that hurt you?”

“I’m just playing, I don’t have one, neuro cleared me.” The joke earned another slap on the back of her head. She pouted and rubbed her head leaning away from Ali who tried to kiss her cheek.

“Stop being stupid or inappropriate and I won’t do that anymore.” Ali smirked at her and turned her attention to Kelley.

“So was she hot?”

“You two are so bad! I don’t know! She was my doctor, I didn’t look at her in that way!” Kelley’s cheeks reddened as she answered all flustered from the question her two friends asked.

“Dude, what does it even say?” Tobin asked the most obvious question and grabbed Kelley’s cast to read it.

“Maybe squirrels shouldn’t drive. Take care, Dr. Hope Solo” Tobin read out loud to her friends and quirked her head in confusion.

“Kell, what does that mean? Is she calling you a squirrel?”

Kelley smiled at the instance when Dr. Solo asked if she was a squirrel due to her rambling on about her friends and her guilt. She smiled even brighter when she came back down to Room 6 to look up
her friends statuses’ and calm her nerves about their wellbeing. She looked up from the signature on her cast at her friends whom were waiting expectantly for her to explain the doctor’s message.

“I kept going on and on about how I was nervous about you four and I wasn’t sure if you guys were okay or not. I worked myself into a panic and she calmed me down and asked if I was a squirrel because of it. I rambled on again and she called me Dr. O’Squirrel and yeah… I’m a squirrel in her eyes.” Kelley finished telling them the story with a smile on her face and chuckled under her breath when she remembered the reaction on Dr. Solo’s face when she threw the pillow at her.

“I think I want to meet this doctor that has you smiling like this.” Ali interrupted Kelley’s train of thought with a raised eyebrow and smile.

“Ohhh I totally agree. Did you fall for a looooove doctor?” Ashlyn laughed and made kissy faces at Kelley while the other women laughed at her immaturity and dorkiness.

“Will you shut up? I am not in love and I don’t see her in that way! She’s a professional who made sure my heart condition was fine and that you idiots were fine, thank you very much!”

“Oooo touchy, good going Ash,” Alex sent Ashlyn a fake glare in her direction then turned herself towards Kelley and patted her knee, then looking back at Ashlyn and trying not to smile, then back to half-assing comforting a flustered Kelley.
“Tobin asked Ali, Ashlyn and Alex and they all nodded and gave a collective “Yeah!”

“Yeah, yeah whatever. I’m just glad we’re all okay and that the worst injury was little casty here” Kelley raised her cast in the air and waved it around a little bit.

“Now since my car is damaged and towed, how are we getting home?” Kelley asked the other women.

“Well a cab is out of the question because it would cost too much…” Alex offered and the others nodded their heads in agreement.

“Let me call my brother and see if he can pick us up! I’m sure he can. One sec.” Tobin grabbed her phone and stepped out of the family room to make the call.

“When we tell our families we were in a car accident and then in the ER, they’re going to go crazy.” Ali said and realized that they hadn’t told anyone where they’ve been, not like their families were expecting them to contact them earlier because they were going about their daily lives and wouldn’t have known this was going to happen, but still.

“Alrighty, Jeff will be here in 15 minutes, we’re all good in the transportation department, mes amis.” Tobin returned to the room and plopped down in her seat next to Ashlyn.

“He’s the best. I can’t wait to go home and take a nice relaxing bath.” Ali put her hand up in front of Ashlyn’s face, “No funny ideas, Harris.” Ashlyn rolled her eyes and pouted while crossing her arms like a petulant child. The other ladies laughed at her childlike behavior and shook their heads, already expecting this reaction from her.
The five of them sat there and signed Kelley’s wrist after they elected Alex to go ask the admin desk for a sharpie because she’s the sweetest out of all of them and people rarely say no to her. Ali drew cute hearts next to her name and a princess crown on top of “Princess Ali”, Alex wrote her name and a nice little “Get well soon”, Tobin signed “Tobs” and Ashlyn drew a shark with her name coming out of its mouth along with a dinosaur standing next to it.

15 minutes flew by as Jeff double checked Tobin to make sure she was safe and then hugged each of the women and led them to his SUV. Thankfully he had a 8 passenger SUV so they could all fit. They insisted Kelley got the front seat and nominated Ashlyn to ride in the way back while Tobin, Ali and Alex rode in the second row. They listened to music that Kelley turned on, the popular mainstream radio station and all sang along to What Do You Mean by Justin Bieber. Soon Ali and Ashlyn were first to be dropped off at their apartment, then Alex at hers then Kelley at hers.

“Thank you again for the ride, Jeff. So sweet of you to drive us crazy girls home.”

“Absolutely, anything for Tobs and her friends. You guys are awesome and I’m just glad you’re all okay after the accident. If you need a ride to the towing place tomorrow, hit Tobin up with a text so she can let me know, I wouldn’t mind driving you.” Tobin nodded in agreement and held her fist out to Kelley for a fist bump which she reciprocated.

“I appreciate the offer, but I'll be okay! You two must have gotten the compassionate genes that me and the others didn’t.” Kelley jokes and makes sure she has her house key before stepping away from the SUV’s open window where Tobin is now occupying the passenger seat.

“If you change your mind, let us know!”

“I will, thank you again!”

“Later, Kell” Tobin gave her another fist bump before Jeff turned the car on and drove down the street.

The morning after the accident, Kelley was stiff and sore but received a good night’s sleep after the tiring day she had yesterday. She picked the crusty boogers from the corner of her eye and stretched the sleep out of her stiff limbs while yawning. She’s glad she called the Chief at her hospital yesterday to tell him about the accident and that she would be out of surgery and practice for the next few weeks due to her cast. He was relieved to hear she was okay and told her that she could just catch up on paperwork and charts until she was cleared and got her cast removed.

After grabbing a plastic bag to wrap around her cast to prevent it from getting wet during her morning shower, she started the coffee pot and retrieved the newspaper from in front of her apartment door, out in the hallway where it was delivered every morning. Even though she’s a child most times, she likes to keep up with current events and read about the world around her while she has her cup of coffee.

After her shower, she wraps her hair in a towel, throws on a pair of joggers and a tshirt because of the mild autumn weather that Boston was experiencing the first week of October, and made her way to the kitchen to pour herself a cup of coffee and begin to read the Sunday paper.

She was flipping through the ads when she saw an ad for a flower delivery service that advertised how fast and inexpensive it was. She thought about how much she loves flowers and receiving them before she flipped the page to look at the Target ad. She was recounting how many times patients’ mothers had sent her flowers as a token of gratitude for helping their kids and performing life altering and saving surgeries on them.
She smiled at the memories when the idea hit her. Maybe she should send a bouquet of flowers to Dr. Solo to show her gratitude for the care and time she gave her. Or maybe she shouldn’t. But maybe she should and this is an appropriate way to thank a doctor, right? Kelley flipped through the Target ad without paying any attention to the products printed on the page while debating whether or not she should send flowers to the blue eyed doctor.

“I don’t even know her specialty…” Kelley said to herself staring at the coffee table in front of the couch.

Before she knew it, she grabbed her phone and opened her Google app to search “Dr. Hope Solo, Kennedy General Hospital, Boston, MA”

Tons of links showed up to her professional career, the top result showing her dressed up and holding an award. Kelley absentmindedly smiled at how proud of herself she looked and clicked the image. The caption read, “Dr. Hope Solo appointed Attending Cardiothoracic Surgeon, youngest attending at Kennedy General and the first female cardio surgeon to be nominated and appointed by the Board.”

Kelley was more than impressed by the title Dr. Solo possessed and was shocked that an attending at such a busy and important hospital gave her the time of day when she asked the nurse to page her. She was in disbelief and the newfound knowledge of the doctor’s title made the final decision of the ongoing internal debate of whether or not she should send flowers.

She exited the google app after she remembered what wing cardio was in and called the florist service. She told them to pick out a bouquet with wildflowers and told them she would pay extra for them to throw in a stuffed squirrel.

“The only stuffed squirrel we have is one holding a heart between its hands, is that okay, ma’am?”

Kelley thought that it was perfect because she was a heart doctor and immediately agreed to the stuffed animal. She then told the worker what she wanted the message to say until she got to the end. Should she ask to meet her outside to talk with her and thank her again in person? Or would that be too weird and seemingly stalkerish? Does Dr. Solo even have time to grab a cup of coffee let alone want to meet her for coffee?

Something inside of her told her to include the invitation for coffee, telling the worker to add a question mark to the end to make it more open and not a demand or an imperative statement. She supplied the guy with her number and to sign it with a smiley face and her name. It was 9:30 AM when she called and he said it would be delivered to the hospital by 11. She thanked him and hung up sitting back against her couch with her coffee mug gripped in her right hand.

Kelley stared into the creamy coffee thinking about the order she placed and dragged her gaze over to her left hand that was resting on the arm of the couch. Her eyes found Dr. Solo’s signature and she felt her cheeks rise in a smile. She knew she made the right decision in sending the flowers to her.

Now it was up to Dr. Solo if she wanted to see Kelley and Kelley would be waiting in anticipation for a phone call or text from an unknown number.

She placed her mug on the table and picked up the Arts section of the paper and got lost in the reviews of different galleries in Boston. She caught herself smiling again when thinking about bickering with the cardio surgeon again.

She just hoped Dr. Hope Solo would want to see her again. And unbeknownst to her, Dr. Hope Solo, who was 10 minutes away in downtown Boston, just scrubbed into Mr. Scher’s surgery and made the decision to see Dr. O’Hara again.
Chapter 5

Chapter Summary

“Are you a coffee expert as well as an attending cardiothoracic surgeon, or are you just a nerd?”

Chapter Notes

Sorry, homies! College work calls. I was thinking about ideas for this chapter whenever I was writing a paper instead, if that makes anyone feel better. Patience is a virtue though, right? Anyways, let me know what you're feeling! Enjoy!

Whenever you have a day off, it usually involves catching up on laundry, grocery shopping, any household cleaning you don’t get to on days and nights you don’t work and sitting down with a book you’ve been trying to read for weeks while simultaneously throwing the ball for Onyx and Sasha and sipping your cup of coffee.

Today on your day off, you still wake up and go for your early morning run, bringing Onyx and Sasha this time because you aren’t in a hurry and can change up your pace. Upon your arrival, you bring out your French press and coffee beans to make a cup of coffee that isn’t instantly brewed from your Keurig, and ingredients to make protein pancakes and a fresh fruit salad. You make sure the dogs’ bowls are full before you make your way upstairs to shower and change.

You dry off and make your way to your closet and dresser unsure of what to wear for the rest of the day. Today’s the day you’re meeting for coffee with Dr. O’Hara and you don’t know what to wear. Why does it even matter? It’s coffee at a café you frequent on days off or during breaks you have during your workday. That’s why you suggested it, you enjoy the coziness there and the silence it brings to your chaotic life.

The autumn air is a little chillier than usual today so you decide on dark skinny jeans, your grey sweater that you love on days like these and your boots that hug your calves and end right before they hit your knees. You look at yourself in the mirror and are content with how the outfit looks before drying your hair, letting it fall in its natural waves on your shoulders and applying a little eye makeup before you head downstairs to cook breakfast and sit down and enjoy it for the first time in forever.

Enjoying your freshly pressed coffee after the dishes are done and your food is gone, it’s 8 am which means you have three and a half hours until you’re supposed to meet Dr. O’Hara at Café Aroma in downtown Boston. You pick your book up that you’ve been trying to read for the past two weeks and get lost in the 4th chapter, the part about the couple meeting for the first time, exactly where you left off. The couple in the book meet in a coffee shop and are complete opposites, but a connection is already there, you can just sense it immediately. You wonder about the fact that complete opposites are able to find a connection within each other, something you doubt you’ll ever find in your life.

Your life hasn’t been exactly easy these past 33 years but no one outside of your family members
and 2 or 3 close friends would know that about you. Sure every intern or visiting doctor thinks you’re a huge bitch with a stick up her ass and that strangers think you’re the worst person in the world because of your resting bitch face, but they don’t know who you are or why you’re closed off. No one knows the true meaning behind your tough façade and you like to keep it that way. Being abandoned and disappointed time and time again doesn’t help your trust issues nor does it help you being friendly and open to every person you come in contact with. Dr. Hope Solo is the ice queen of Kennedy General and you’re aware of the title that past patients, interns, doctors and visitors alike have given you. Thanks to Johnson, he keeps you in the know of how coldhearted you are on any given day and the new name they dub you whenever you aren’t nice enough. And the fact that the woman in your book reminds you of yourself, distant, cold and closed off can find love in a normal, kind and loving man makes you think that maybe, just maybe, you can in the future.

Sasha and Onyx startle you out of reading your book when the letter carrier delivers the mail to your mailbox on the front steps. You shake your head at their overprotectiveness and reach down to give them a scratch behind both of their ears before you give the command of “down” in which they both lay near the door, heads perked up just in case. You open the door and grab the mail, sorting through the junk you receive from local businesses, scholarly magazines written about cardiothoracic surgery and bills for the month that you keep meaning to switch over to paying them electronically, but your busy life seems to prevent that.

“Oh, up,” you tell the dogs and they stand up happily going back into the living room to play with their toys and lounge.

You catch a glance at your watch on your left wrist and see that it reads 11:15, 15 minutes before you’re expected at the café.

“Shit!”

You throw the mail on the island counter in the kitchen, grab your phone off the coffee table and make sure your keys, wallet and other necessities are in your purse. You stop in front of the door and do a once over of your outfit, pulling your sweater down a tad and running your fingers through your hair. You pull your boots on that you brought down from your room earlier and grab your purse.

“Bye, babies! I’ll be home soon, be good!” You call out to the dogs before you leave before rushing downtown.

Ever since Dr. Solo called, you haven’t been able to sit still for more than five minutes at a time.

It’s been 6 days since you were in the grocery store, deciding between Lucky Charms and Cap’n Crunch, an ongoing battle you have with yourself when you absentmindedly answered your phone without glancing at the number.

“Hello?”

“Hey, Dr. O’Hara?”

“Yeeees, this is she.” A rustle of the boxes is heard from the other end of the phone call. Kelley is flipping the boxes over in her hands while her cell phone rests between her ear and her shoulder.

“Do I go for the marshmallows or the berries that I like…?” Kelley says under her breath, forgetting that she’s on the phone for a hot second.

“I’m sorry, what was that?”
“Oh shoot! Sorry, who is this again?” Kelley gave up and threw both boxes in her cart, keeping the phone between her ear and shoulder to use her right hand to push the cart since her cast was still wrapped around her other.

“It’s Dr. Solo” She clears her throat, “Dr. Hope Solo from Kennedy General”

Kelley’s eyes widen and her heart began to race, she stopped in the middle of the cereal aisle, thankfully she was grocery shopping at 10 pm so barely any customers were there.

“H-hi, how are you? I’m glad to hear from you!” Kelley recovers and stands straight up, now holding the phone directly to her ear.

“I’m good, just finished my last surgery for the night and finally found time to call you. I’ve been busy with non-stop surgeries at the hospital. I apologize for not calling sooner.” Hope is picking at a loose thread on the attending’s lounge couch, nervous for speaking to Dr. O’Hara on the phone.

“I totally get it, I’m a doctor too, ya know?” Kelley nervously chuckles and situates her phone back on her shoulder to go to the dairy section for milk to accompany her cereal.

“Yeah, I remember. So…”

“So…? Oh! When are you available for coffee? My bad, I didn’t mean to be rude and not ask.” Kelley mentally chastised herself while picking up a gallon of 2% milk and then a half gallon of chocolate milk, one of her true loves of her life. Well, next to cookies and dogs.

“Don’t worry about it, it’s not a big deal. My next day off is actually this Saturday. Is that okay?” Hope bit her bottom lip, a nervous habit she had as well as tapping her thumbs against the table, counter or any surface her hands were resting on.

“Saturdayaaaay… Saturday seems perfect! Any particular place you want to go?” Kelley thought about her schedule and asked Hope’s preference while turning to the produce section.

“Have you heard of Café Aroma? It’s downtown, 5 minutes from the hospital. It’s very quaint and they have fantastic roasts there.”

“Are you a coffee expert as well as an attending cardiothoracic surgeon, or are you just a nerd?”

“I am from Seattle, I take my coffee very seriously, thank you very much, doctor.” Hope purses her lips while kicking her Nikes up on the foot rest the lounge provided in front of the couch and crossing her one arm over her body, tucking her right hand under her left arm.

“Seattle, hm? Can’t wait to learn more about you, Dr. Solo. Saturday at Café Aroma, at?”

“11:30? Is that enough time for you to watch your Saturday morning cartoons and collect your acorns for the day, Dr. O’Hara?”

“Oh plenty of time, you’re so considerate.” Kelley says sarcastically, throwing a bag of carrots into her cart while perusing the section for peppers.

Hope smirks on the other end and holds her laughter in, thinking about how funny her young squirrel comment was before saying, “11:30 at Café Aroma on Saturday, October 10th. I’ll see you then, Dr. O’Hara. Don’t be late.”

“I’ll see you then and I’m never late! Bye, Dr. Solo.”
“Bye, Dr. O’Squirrel.” Hope hung up before Kelley could protest her nickname and leaned back into the couch thinking about how strange this coffee date will go.

Not a date. A meeting. A meeting between two professionals. Definitely not a date of any kind, no. That would be weird, Hope thinks to herself.

Kelley shakes her head at her phone before sliding it into her pocket and taking inventory of the groceries in her cart. All she needed was some bread and she was set. She usually hates grocery shopping, but it flew by while talking to Dr. Solo. She smiled to herself thinking about the cardio surgeon who is merciless when it comes to picking on her younger age and squirrel-like behavior.

It’s now 11 am on Saturday the 10th when you’re still undecided on which pair of pants to wear. Leggings or jeans? You want to be stylish and comfortable at the same time, but are unsure of which pair will match your light jacket and scarf better. You opt for the light washed jeans knowing they’ll pair better with your light brown jacket and white v-neck covered with a pale blue and purple scarf that looks like the colors infuse and make flowers in some spots. You pull on your ankle boots that much your jacket and apply light eye makeup before you shake your hair out and run a brush threw it a few times. You’re all set to go.

You leave your apartment at 11:15 hoping you’ll make it in time. Thankfully your car was fixed and the other driver’s insurance paid for the damages since she was the one to run the red light. Your jeep is merging onto the thruway heading towards downtown and you let your chance breathe for a minute. The chilly air is accompanied by a bright sun today and you pull your aviators out of your middle console. You feel a light flutter of butterflies in your stomach and question yourself why you’re nervous. You’ve actually been to this café dozens of times and know that Dr. Solo wanted to join you for coffee, you didn’t pressure her.

It’s 11:27 when you reach the destination and pull onto a side street to park your car so you don’t have to pay for parking that adds up while living in Boston. You step, more like jump, out of the jeep, grab your bag and check your hair in the side view mirror. You make your way up the street towards the café and round the corner to enter.

You see her sitting at a two seated table next to the window in the back of the café. She’s scrolling on her iPhone with her eyebrows furrowed at whatever she was reading. You push your aviators up on your head and shift your bag higher up on your shoulder. You don’t realize you’re staring at her from the doorway until the bells on the door chime behind you, a stranger in need of caffeine pushes past you and her eyes look up to meet yours.

The feeling you get every time you make eye contact with her shoots through your veins and you smile, taking a deep breath to will your heart rate at bay. The last thing you needed was to have a panic attack brought on by your heart condition and have Dr. Solo calm you down again.

She offers you a close-lipped smile and waves her hand towards herself to signal for you to come over to the table she’s occupying. You make your way over, taking in the calm vibes she’s giving off and you hang your bag on the corner of the chair, pull it out and take a seat across from the blue-eyed doctor.

“I’m surprised you made it on time, Dr. You seem like the type who is scattering around at the last second.” Hope smirks as she slides her phone into the front pocket of her jeans, leaning to her left side to get better access to it.

“I am offended that you would think that,” Kelley mocked offense and put her right hand over her
heart, her jaw slacked and eyebrows scrunched in mock hurt.

“Are you saying it isn’t true?”

“I am saying that I am on time and you are just the type to arrive like 40 minutes earlier than the given time!”

“I’ll have you know, that I only got here about…” Hope checks her watch and looks back up to Kelley, “4 minutes ago. Not late, not too early, a good amount of time before the meet time.”

Kelley squints her eyes at Hope and raises her casted wrist up at her. “This,” she moves around a few times, “can slow a girl down, ya know! It isn’t easy showering and dressing yourself with one hand. Or driving for that matter.”

“Don’t play that card on me, I’m not a fan of excuses.”

“Excuse?! It’s a valid reason for not being as early as you are!”

“Okay, okay calm down, squirrel. Maybe we should get you some decaf, hm?” Hope challenged, smiling at the perplexed look on Kelley’s face.

“You go from insulting me, to making fun of me, to invalidating my injury, to playing it off? Oh, you are so paying for my coffee, Solo”

“Solo? Isn’t it Dr. Solo according to you? I’m fairly certain I wrote my first name on your cast, if I’m not mistaken.” Hope emphasized her point and tapped her finger on her signature on the lime green cast before cocking her head to the side, with a confident smile on her face, eyebrows raised.

Kelley could’ve sworn her cheeks were on fire at the moment, not from embarrassment, but she couldn’t pinpoint any other emotion as an excuse for it. She looked at where Hope’s finger rested on her casted wrist before looking up into the mystery eyes as she refers to. She thought her cheeks were definitely blazing now if they weren’t before.

“I’m sorry, Hope.” She popped the sound of the p at the end of her name for emphasis and a cocky smiled graced her face to rival Hope’s as she did it. Hope never heard her name come out of someone’s mouth like that before and she felt something in her stomach before removing her finger and crossing her arms over her chest.

“It’s okay, Kelley,” Hope said her name with a little more force, smiling as the other doctor’s smile faltered for a millisecond before brightening. “Let’s go buy you that coffee now.”

Hope rose to her feet, pushing her chair in and pulling her sweater down a little while grabbing her wallet from her purse that hung on the corner of her chair. She froze when she felt a foreign, warm hand on top of hers stopping her from moving it.

“I was joking about you buying my coffee, Solo. It was my idea to come here, let me pay.”

Before Hope could protest, Kelley took the wallet out of her hand, placed it back into her purse and stood there expectantly.

“It’s just a cup of coffee, my pediatric surgeon salary probably doesn’t come close to your attending cardiothoracic surgeon’s salary, but I’m sure I can swing it.” Kelley winked at Hope and Hope never thought her jaw opened and shut that quickly before.

Kelley left no room for rebuttal as she confidently turned around, knowing Hope wouldn’t pick up
her wallet again and walked towards the counter to place their order. She honestly had no idea where that wink came from, but glad it shut Hope up long enough for her to forget about the who was paying ordeal. She turned to her left and surely Hope was standing there without her wallet in her hands. She smiled at her, nodded once and turned to the cashier to give her their order.

“Hi! I’ll have a medium roast with room for milk for here, please. And…” Kelley looked over to Hope as she supplied, “I’ll have my usual, Rachel, but for here please.”

Kelley turned to her in confusion and saw the small smile Hope gave the cashier. She looked back to the cashier who was also wearing a small smile and giggled at the confusion that painted Kelley’s features.

“I guess you do come here often, don’t you?” Kelley shook her head slightly and handed her card over to Rachel the cashier who in turn handed Kelley a pen to sign the receipt.

“Out of curiosity, do you sign your receipts with Dr. Kelley O’Hara or just Kelley O’Hara?” Hope glanced over Kelley’s casted arm and watched her right hand scribble her signature on the small piece of paper.

“Just Kelley O’Hara, the doctor is reserved for official documents, charts or autographs.” Kelley smirked at Hope’s eye rolling and Rachel overheard and laughed, taking the receipt and pen back from Kelley and telling them that their order would be up in a minute at the pickup counter.

“You are something else, O’Hara.”

“Is this going to be a thing now? We call each other by our last names? No first names, not even the title of doctor in front of our surnames?”

“Oh so we’ll be speaking on a regular basis that this is a concern of yours, Dr.? ” It was Hope’s turn to smirk as Kelley’s cheeks reddened again and rolled her eyes.

“If I do say so myself, Solo, I think that you secretly tolerate me. So yes, I have a feeling we will be speaking on a regular basis.” Kelley grabbed her mug as it was presented to her and Hope grabbed hers right after.

They walked to the counter where they supply sweeteners, dairy products, stir sticks and napkins to make your coffee perfect for your tasting pleasure. Kelley added an inch of milk to hers while Hope stood there and watched her, mug grasped in both hands just waiting for the smaller woman to finish so they could walk back to their table.

 Kelley turned around, “What? You drink black coffee?”

Hope smiled at her and took a small sip from her mug, signifying that Kelley was correct, keeping eye contact over the brim of the mug.

“Of course you do, why am I not surprised?” Kelley shook her head and made sure to not spill her coffee on their walk back to the table. For a surgeon, she was pretty clumsy outside of the operating room.

As they both got situated and placed their mugs on the table, Hope leaned back, crossing her arms as usual while observing Kelley try to remove her jacket with just one abled hand.

“Here, let me.” Hope moved over to Kelley’s side and pulled the jacket off of her shoulders, grazing the top of her back between her shoulders while doing so. Kelley took a sharp breath in and sat up straight, letting her arms fall to her sides to allow the jacket to slide right off.
“There. Better?” Hope asked as she hung up the jacket on the back of Kelley’s seat and returned to her own, scooching herself back towards the table, placing both hands around her mug.

“Y-yeah,” Kelley cleared her throat, “Thank you. I told you it isn’t easy functioning with this thing!” Kelley raised her cast again and placed it back on her lap before grabbing her mug with her free hand and taking a sip. She let the coffee sit on her tongue for a moment before swallowing the creamy liquid and allowing a content smile to settle on her lips.

“It’s my favorite coffee here in Boston.” Hope said watching the smile on Kelley’s face. “But it doesn’t even compare to Seattle’s coffee.”

“Seattle, that’s right. What brings you to the east coast, Solo?”

Hope’s jaw visibly clenched and Kelley could’ve sworn her heart did at that sight. What was going on with her body’s weird responses today?

“I went to Harvard Med so I figured I should stay here for my residency and career, right?” Hope said a little too dryly to seem like a positive thing, but Kelley dismissed it.

“Well it was clearly the right choice, Attending. How does it feel to wear those dark blue scrubs every day?” Kelley wagged her eyebrows at Hope and wore a cheesy smile, hoping it would let Hope relax again.

It worked as Hope playfully rolled her eyes and let herself forget about her past before med school, momentarily.

“It feels great. I earned the title and I definitely earned those scrubs.” Hope paused and took a sip of her coffee. “What about you, O’Hara? Where are you from, where are you working?”

“I’m from Georgia, actually. So I’m not from the east coast either, Solo. I work at Boston Children’s Hospital, only 10 minutes from here and 15 minutes from Kennedy General.”

“Yeah, I’ve actually visited there for a consult on a patient that had a heart defect that none of the surgeons there could figure out. I mean, it isn’t their specialty though, it’s understandable why I had to consult.”

“Relax, I didn’t get offended this time. Trust me, I know exactly which patient you’re talking about. It was 4 years ago while I was doing my residency. Everyone spoke about how amazing you are and how remarkable it was to pull of that surgery after your diagnosis.”

Hope shyly smiled and looked down, feeling bashful about her abilities for once while being praised by Kelley. She knew she was great at her job, but hearing it come from Kelley made it different for some reason.

“How old were you at the time, 12?” Hope regained her confidence and smirked at Kelley.

“The age thing again! Am I ever going to hear the end of it?”

“Nope.”

Kelley groaned, “I was 23, not that young.”

“Do you know how old I am, O’Hara?” Hope asked out of pure curiosity.

“You’re 33, I saw that when I Googled you.” Kelley said suddenly embarrassed at the fact she
looked Dr. Solo up even though she told her that when she sent those flowers.

“I am indeed 33. So you being what, 27? You’re like a baby in my eyes!”

“I’m a first year fellow as a pediatric surgeon, get off my back, woman!”

Hope let out a loud chuckle at Kelley’s exclamation, out of the norm for her usual quiet giggles or stifling her laughter. Kelley beamed at the sound and took a sip of her coffee proud of the fact that her minor outburst evoked that sound from the other doctor’s mouth.

“It is too easy to get you worked up, squirrel. Way too easy.” Hope smiled and saw that her mug was almost empty.

She lifted the mug to her lips, tipping her head back and easily gulping the last big sip of her black, dark roast coffee. Kelley watched as the muscles in her neck contracted when she swallowed and unconsciously licked her lips before catching her top lip in between her teeth. She needed to figure out why she has been reacting so weirdly lately. Hope placed her mug back on the table and rested her elbows on it, folding her hands and placing her chin on top of them. Kelley released her top lip and cleared her throat.

“I’m surprised you actually have a day off. I’m sorry if I took up some time you have to do other things.”

“Don’t be. It’s a pleasant change in my usual day off routine.” Hope lifted her eyebrows while she smiled and dropped them back down, turning her head towards the window, watching the hustle and bustle of the city.

“I wanted to thank you once again for the time you allotted me in the ER, again. And my friends are also appreciative. They told me to tell you that.”

Hope looked back over at Kelley and smirked. “You told your friends about me?”

Kelley almost spit out her mouthful of coffee when she saw Hope smirking at her after asking that question. She knew it wasn’t meant the way she was thinking it was, but it still caught her off guard.

“Y-yeah, they saw your signature on my cast and were curious. I explained to them how you told me they were okay and being discharged at the same time I was.”

Hope nodded and looked back out the window. “I appreciate the flowers you sent me. Not many patients do that for me, so it was an unexpected yet nice surprise.” Hope didn’t have to tell Kelley she hated flowers, she didn’t want to upset the sensitive squirrel.

“Really? I’m surprised. So many patients’ mothers send me flowers, but then again, it’s probably because I deal with kids and it’s entirely different.”

“From time-to-time I’ll receive a thank you card, maybe even a gift card, but that’s reserved for huge surgeries. Like coronary artery rupture type surgeries.”

Kelley laughed at Hope’s widened eyes and hands making an explosive motion, cheeks puffed out while making sound effects to sound like a bomb went off. This silly action didn’t seem like it was a regular thing for Hope and Kelley secretly prided herself in being allowed to see it.

“Well, if I was your patient again you could expect another bouquet of flowers and maybe another stuffed squirrel too.”

“That was a nice touch, very subtle.”
They both laughed at the stuffed squirrel that Kelley added to the flowers. Kelley was glad Hope didn’t take the heart between its paws the wrong way and saw the cardio reference to it.

Hope glanced at her left wrist to see that they’ve already been there for 2 hours, mentally noting that time flew by while it seemed like they were only there for 20 minutes. Kelley noticed Hope check her watch, “Time to get going?”

“Yeah, I have to go home and walk my dogs. I forgot to tell my neighbor that I wouldn’t be home so I have to go be a responsible dog owner.”

“You have dogs?! Oh man, I wish you could stay longer so I could hear more about this life you live, Solo. Seems different from what I picture.”

Hope stood up and helped Kelley shrug her jacket back on, one arm through each hole at a time.

“Oh so you picture my life too? Interesting, O’Hara, interesting.”

Thankfully Kelley’s back was turned away from Hope so that she couldn’t see the wince that formed on her freckled face. Was that stupid to say? She turned around and saw that Hope already had her purse on her shoulder, leaning herself against the chair by her hand resting on top of it.

“Don’t flatter yourself, Solo. I’m just saying!”

“Mhmmm, okay. Well thank you for buying my coffee, I appreciate it.”

“It was my pleasure. You can pay for the next round.” Kelley said before she turned and started walking towards the door.

Hope realized what she said and caught up to Kelley, reaching behind her to grab the door handle not realizing where she was placing her hand. Their hands touched and both of them felt a jolt run up their right arms, both retracting their hands quickly at the same time.

“S-sorry, I didn’t realize you were already trying to open the door.”

Kelley looked behind her, regaining her composure from that weird shock, “Watch where you put those hands, Solo. I’ll text you when I’m free some time. We’ll do this again.” And with that, Kelley winked at the internally flustered Dr. Solo and pulled her sunglasses back over her eyes.

Hope hadn’t realized she was now the one left standing in the doorway staring after the retreating figure of Dr. Kelley O’Hara before a different stranger pushed past her to order their coffee.

“You are something else, O’Hara.” Hope smirked and left the café, walking towards her car to go home and walk the dogs.

“Definitely something else.”
Chapter 6

Chapter Summary

Beer and chocolate chip pancakes?

Chapter Notes

Here's a general apology, homies: I usually post on my phone, so any format or grammar errors that don't make sense are all my fault! I apologize! I reviewed Ch. 5 and laughed when the chapter title was "Chapter 8" I have no idea why I typed that? Anyways! I'm also apologizing for the not as frequent updating, being in college and working is tiring and stress to the full, man. It makes me sad when people don't comment, I feel like all of you hate me, haha! Enjoy, O'Solo shippers :)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It would be a lie if Hope had said she wasn’t waiting for a text from Dr. O’Hara.

Her phone was clutched in her hand every single second, or at the very least lying around in arm’s length to reach and answer if it went off. The ringer volume was always on the highest level, even in the OR when she surrendered her phone to the nurses to answer if it went off.

Dr. Hope Amelia Solo was not one to wait around for someone to text or call her. No one was that important to distract her from her work or deep thinking that occurred in her mind daily.

But a certain small, freckle faced doctor has certainly invaded her thoughts since two Saturdays ago when they met for coffee.

Hope doesn’t have many friends aside from Johnson, Lloyd and Karev, all colleagues whom she works with at the hospital. They were the only three who have come the closest to be inside Hope’s mind and figure out why she’s so cut off and distant most of the time.

Levi Johnson, her fellow cardiothoracic surgeon, Carli Lloyd, the attending neurosurgeon who is the second-youngest doctor to become an attending next to Hope and Alex Karev, the attending pediatric surgeon who is almost as sarcastic and touchy as her were all whom she considered her best friends. They were the first group of surgeons who she talked to and actually tolerated through Harvard Med School, their residency at Kennedy General and all advanced in their fields at the same hospital together.

And they have all definitely noticed something different about their good friend recently. She’s not as feisty as she usually is and isn’t quick with her retorts to their playful insults and banter. They haven’t prodded her on the subject though because they know better than anyone to let her come to them or else she’ll close faster than the C-Wing’s elevator.

“Solo! What are you doing after your shift?” Johnson yells down the hallway making his way to his friend doing paperwork at the nurses’ desk.
“Why, what do you have planned?” Hope slowly lifts her head from her patient’s chart and purses her lips, squinting her icy blue eyes up at her fellow doctor.

“Maybe a couple of beers with Lloyd and Karev? We all get off at the same time.” Johnson smiles at her, flashing his perfectly straight and white smile knowing she’ll roll her eyes and shake her head at him.

And she does just that.

“I’m glad you’re buying. Are we all meeting in the lobby at 8?”

“Like usual, boss! See you, then!” He flashed his smile again before popping a piece of gum into his mouth and throwing the balled up wrapper at her.

Hope swatted it and made a mental note to throw a few straw wrappers at him later in retaliation. She was glad she made a close friend in Johnson. He was laidback, just the right amount of fun and jokes and incredibly smart. Even though Hope got the title and position of attending, he was just as good and would someday be on top, she knew it. Her mother would ask every time she came to visit why they weren’t a thing because he’s “such a catch” and “have you seen that smile?!" He was like a younger brother to Hope and she just didn’t seem in that way. He was protective over her, though when it came to other male suitors who tried to capture her attention in bars or clubs.

She was also happy that Lloyd and Karev were her other best friends that were there for her through everything. From mental breakdowns to breakups, graduating and being honored as the first female attending, they were there for everything.

Carli was brilliant and her specialty in neurology only exemplified her brilliance. Her brilliance matched with her humor and beauty made her one of the most well-rounded individuals Hope has ever met. She isn’t a show off with her skills and doesn’t see her self-worth as much as Hope would like her to. She’s smart inside and out of the OR and can read any situation like a pro.

Karev is an asshole who is a huge teddy bear in the inside of the scruffy, bad boy exterior. He came from nothing and made himself into something without the help of family members or friends. He was compassionate and understanding of anyone’s background and knew the right things to say, even if they were hard to hear at some times. Working with kids is perfect for him because the teenagers love his sarcasm and sick humor, while the younger kids love his caring and nurturing vibes he gives off around them.

The three of her friends were all different yet similar in that they understood her and quietly gave her space when she needed it or weren’t too over the top while she succeeded at something. Whether she liked it or not, they knew her better than she did.

After charting her last patient, she read that it was 6 pm, time for her last scheduled surgery of the day.

She went to scrub in into OR 3, ready to perform a single bypass on an elderly patient. She hated working on kids and elderly patients because of how fragile they were. She felt more pressured while working on them and made sure her work was even more superb as compared to the young adults and adults she works on.

Tying her protective mask on and making sure her scrub cap is holding her bun’s loose hairs, she washes her hands and arms thoroughly singing the ABC’s 4 times before she is ready and sterile. Backing up into the door with her hands up, she approaches an OR nurse who has her surgical scrub gown ready to step into and her gloves ready to snap on.
“Everyone ready to get this started? Mrs. LaSalle, are you all ready to be up and running again?” Hope smiles behind her mask, hand resting on her patient’s shoulder.

Mrs. LaSalle nervously nods before the anesthesiologist asks her to count back from 50 and knocks her out.

“Alright. 10 blade.” Dr. Solo asks with her hand out, awaiting the scalpel to be placed in her hand. She grips the scalpel in her hand, pointer finger putting pressure on the blade to make a 10 inch incision down the middle of the patient’s chest.

“Sternal saw.” Hope whirs the saw a couple of times getting use to the feeling and sound of the saw before carefully dividing the sternum in half to gain access to the heart lying underneath.

“Cover and seal the opening” Hope demands and moves down to Mrs. LaSalle’s left leg.

“10 blade,” She demands with her palm open again. She makes another incision to remove an artery in the leg to use in the heart.

After an hour, she has successfully removed a healthy, good sized artery to use in the patient’s heart where she had to connect one end to the aorta, the biggest artery in the heart and the other end to connect to the end of the coronary artery that is blocked. Connecting an artery to the aorta and bypassing the damaged artery isn’t as easy as it seems.

Another hour passes after she has taken the patient off of the circulator and receives stable, strong vitals from Mrs. LaSalle.

“Another successful bypass, folks.” Hope thanks everyone, removing her mask and gloves in the scrub room, removing her surgical top and stepping out of the OR.

She’s had many success stories in her surgical days, and unfortunately some failures which are never taken lightly by the prestigious doctor. But even ordinary surgeries like a coronary bypass procedure, that turn out to be successful put Hope in a good mood. She loves to complete her job and complete it well.

She packs up her stuff and changes back into the outfit she came into the hospital wearing this morning, composing of jeans and a simple shirt and a peacoat that matches her boots. The autumn air was chilly and she was not one to underdress. She threw her scrubs into the laundry basket in the attendings’ lounge and made her way down to the lobby.

“There she is, Dr. Bitch and her expensive boots!”

“Shut up, Johnson” Hope said approaching her group of friends, punching him in the arm.

“Ow! Stop working out so you can’t hurt me anymore.” He pouted and rubbed his arm that he knew was already forming a bruise.

“How was the bypass you had?” Lloyd asked, walking next to Hope while the boys walked in front of them.

“It was good. Usual procedure, no complications thankfully. Made me a little nervous that she’s 72 though.”

“It always does. But you’re a beast and she will be in a few weeks, too.” Carli nudged Hope’s shoulder with her own, stepping out of the hospital onto the busy streets of downtown Boston.
“Yo Solo, going to score any hotties tonight?” Karev turned his head and asked behind him.

Hope rolled her eyes and smirked with one side of her mouth upturned, “I will if you actually score.” Lloyd and Johnson both let out an “ooo burn!” that made Karev stop and playfully push Hope and make a dumb face at her.

The four of them laughed and kept walking a couple more blocks down the street until they arrived at Revere’s Tavern, named after the Boston native, Paul Revere who is famous for the whole “The British are coming!” warning (that actually never happened).

It was their usual bar that they frequented after shifts, especially when surgeries didn’t go well or they had a shitty day down in the ER after a mass accident that landed dozens of patients in their care.

They grabbed a table towards the middle of the bar while Johnson went up to the bar to grab them each two beers. The bartender, Kyle, became their friend after 10 years of coming there and he always loved seeing the group of doctors in his joint.

“Heeey!” Kyle squealed and leaned over the bar to hug Johnson who reciprocated the hug and flashed his beautiful smile, loving the energy and excitement from his bartending buddy.

“Kyle, my man! Can I have 8 Sam Adams’? All of us are here tonight.”

“Keep calling me your man and I’ll take you up on that offer, Pearl.” Kyle joked, calling Johnson Pearl because of his shiny white pearls as teeth. He also already had a boyfriend, whom all four of the doctors have met and approved of.

“Go have a seat with them, I’ll bring them over to say hi to the others.” Johnson smiled at Kyle and did as he was told, finding the table they claimed and making his way over.

He heard a loud, adorable laugh behind him and turned around towards the bar he was halfway away from and saw a shorter, brunette who had freckles covering her face and a smile that could rival his own. He saw that Kyle was making her laugh and saw her side profile when she turned to bend over and laugh at his joke. Her eyes were beautiful and reflected the hanging lamps over the bar.

“Wow, what a beaut” he said to himself and made his way over to his friends to tell them about this hot girl at the bar.

“Guys, look at that beautiful woman at the bar. I heard her laugh at one of Kyle’s probably lame jokes and she’s so hot. And her eyes reflects how bright and pretty her smile is.”

Karev and Carli were into girls, Carli being into both genders like Johnson was. Hope is straight but always plays along with them to judge whether a girl was attractive or not. They all looked over after their conversation of the Chief’s new plans for the surgery program was when they interrupted by Johnson’s proclamation of the seemingly most gorgeous woman ever.

Karev whistled while Carli nodded in agreement, craning her neck from behind Hope to get a better view. Hope sat there in shock and didn’t say a word or move an inch, other than her throat expanding while she swallowed nervously.

“Solo! Yo, Solo!” Johnson vigorously shook her shoulder trying to snap her out of her daze while he felt her hand grip his for a few seconds before throwing it off of her.

“What’s going on? Are you having a stroke? Come on, I just dealt with a stroke earlier.” Lloyd
whined and looked at her friend.

“I uh, I know her.” Hope said slowly without batting an eyelash, raising concern from her best friends.

They all paused and waited for her to continue, knowing that if they asked the hundreds of questions they had for her, she wouldn’t tell them a thing.

“She was the patient who sent me flowers.” Hope said, still not letting her gaze fall from Kelley’s head thrown back in laughter, clutching a bottle of beer in her right hand, her left hand still casted.

Johnson raised his eyebrows and let out an exasperated, “WHAT?” before shaking her shoulder again to get her eyes to meet his.

“Seriously!?! She’s so hot, dude!” Hope finally met his eyes and narrowed hers, looking right into his soul.

“Do not even think about it.” Hope warned him, giving him a knowing look that he would try to take her home tonight.

“Why not? I wasn’t her doctor, you were!”

“Wait, she sent you flowers?” Karev asked, staring at her ass that was in his line of vision.

“After that car accident a couple weeks ago, she was my patient in the ER I admitted and worked on. Carli actually consulted on one of her friends, I guess.”

“Ohhh yeah, I remember that accident. Her friend was hot, too. Her name started with an A, tall blonde with tattoos, ripped, crazy fashionable, but she kept asking for her girlfriend who was also with them.” Carli said disappointedly but shrugging, never one to be a homewrecker.

“What happened after the flowers? Did you contact her to thank her or what?” Johnson asked, prodding to get some information out of her.

Hope looked down at her thumbs, nervously tapping the table and bit her bottom lip. “W-we had uh coffee two weekends ago. At Café Aroma…”

“Are you two friends now or what? She must’ve been really fucking funny or charming for Dr. Ice Queen to tolerate her.” Karev commented, raising his eyebrows in disbelief, popping a peanut in his mouth that was supplied at every table.

“She’s tolerable, yes. She’s funny and smart for being a squirrel…” Hope smirked and kept her head down thinking about their previous banter.

“Squirrel? What…” Lloyd questioned out loud not following what Hope was saying.

“After coffee she said she would text me sometime to meet again for coffee but she hasn’t.” Hope blurted out, watching Kelley take a swig of her beer, silently chuckling and making a mental comment about how weird it was for such a little squirrel to be drinking alcohol.

“Are you okay with that?” Johnson carefully asked, knowing his friend doesn’t allow others in to easily, but based on her reaction, this woman was different.

“It’s just a fellow surgeon who happened to be my patient and thanked me over coffee. No big deal if she didn’t text me, I’m not one to care.”
“Well if you don’t care, let’s see how you act with her now because she’s coming this way with Kyle.

Hope’s eyes shot up and saw Kelley hold four bottles of beer while Kyle held the other four, both laughing at how she really had to focus on not spilling the alcohol because of how clumsy she was. She didn’t know what friends of his he was talking about, but figured she would help him bring over their beers after taking up 10 minutes of his bartending time while he was gathering the beers for his friends as he said.

“Heeeeere you go, my rich bitches!” Kyle said, placing his four bottles down in front of Lloyd and Karev while Kelley finally looked up after placing the bottles of beer in her hands.

“How are you? How has work been going?” Kelley nervously asked, biting her thumb nail but quickly lowering her hand when she remembered it was rude to do so in front while conversing.

“Work is fine. I’m still fixing hearts on a daily basis.” Hope said, reaching for a beer that Kelley placed in front of her and taking a long swig, hoping that the alcohol would cut the tension she felt.

“That’s always good to hear… I’ve been so busy at work, that’s…that’s why I haven’t been able to text you.” Kelley said shyly, looking down at the table then into the icy blue eyes that were staring holes into her.

Karev snorted around the bottle pressed to his lips and took a few gulps out of his, wondering what the hell is going on between this gorgeous girl and his dark best friend.

Hope shot him a glare, noticing Carli’s confused look and then glanced to her right to see Johnson completely in awe of the young doctor. She realized how confusing and strange this must seem to them, due to the fact that she never lets anyone into her life, especially if her best friends don’t know who they are. She picked up her bottle and chugged the rest of it while Kelley intently watched her, subconsciously licking her lips at her neck muscles once again and wishing she had her own beer that she left at the bar.

“Follow me.” Hope demanded, pushing back from the table and walk around it to stand next to Kelley and nodded her head towards the outside so they could talk.

“I’ll be right back. Stay here and I’ll explain,” Hope ordered and the three friends just nodded and watched her depart with Kelley quickly on her heels.

“I don’t fucking know, man…” Johnson and Karev shook their heads while Carli was already finished with her beers, walking up to the bar to grab another round.

“I apologize again for not texting you like I said I would. Since I’m not active, I had to catch up on months’ worth of paper work and charting. I’ve literally been sitting in my office non-stop.”

Hope leaned against the brick wall of the bar and crossed her arms, partially for protecting herself and partially because the night air was chilly and she left her coat inside.

“Hey, don’t worry about it. It’s not like I was sitting around waiting for you to text me. I’m not a
loser, ya know.” Hope said with a small smile, knowing she was guilty doing just that. She would get so excited when her text tone would chime and then let her spirit fall when she saw it was just Karev or Lloyd.

“Oh I’m sure you just sat there with the phone up to your face, Solo, waiting for your favorite squirrel to text you and drink coffee with you again.” Kelley smirked and shoved her hands in her pockets. Well one of them because her cast didn’t really fit into the denim pocket in her jeans.

“And why would I do that, O’Hara? To be annoyed with your ramblings and immature banter you start?” Hope asked with a hint of teasing in her voice, showing Kelley she was kidding but still trying to appear to be serious.

“Please! I think you like me around, Solo. I make that stoic expression melt right off of your face. Go ahead, you can admit it. I won’t tell your buddies back in the bar that you actually like somebody.” Kelley teased, flicking her hand towards the door of the bar as a sign for Hope to walk back in there.

“You are sure of yourself, aren’t you O’Hara? What makes you think I like you so much to let you be my friend, let alone tell my other friends that you exist?” Hope raised one eyebrow, snuggling her hands further under her crossed arms to keep them warm.

“I’m just a cute, little squirrel! You can’t deny that! I think I’m slowly worming my way into that cold heart of yours.” Kelley giggled, causing Hope to smile and roll her eyes.

Kelley shivered as a gust of wind blew across them and tried crossing her arms.

“Hey, apology accepted, we were both busy at work and get caught up. No reason to perpetuate this any longer. I’m fucking cold and you seem like you are too. Let’s go back inside, I’ll introduce you to my friends. Deal?” Hope outstretched her hand to Kelley who vigorously nodded and met her hand halfway between them.

“Deal.” She shook the surgeon’s hand, feeling the same shock jolt up her arm like she did when their hands met on the door handle at the café. For being cold, Hope’s hand was warm and soft, matching her voice that wasn’t expected when she opened her mouth.

They both dropped each other’s hands and walked back into the bar, Hope being polite and holding the door open for Kelley to enter. They made their way back to the table when Hope grabbed Kelley’s right arm stopping her from walking.

Kelley froze and looked up, feeling that weird shock again. Hope leaned down quite a bit to speak into Kelley’s ear, “Just so you know, my friends all think you’re the hottest woman ever. Don’t let that inflate your already huge ego though.”

Kelley shivered and followed behind Hope who stepped in front of her and led them to the table.

“Idiots, this is Dr. Kelley O’Hara. O’Hara, these are my idiot friends.” Hope made the introductions and took her seat, picking up a bottle of beer.

“Hi, friends. I’m sure you aren’t idiots like Solo says you are, she’s just a meanie.”

Kelley’s choice of words made Johnson laugh, exposing his beautiful smile.

“Hi, Dr. Hope here didn’t tell us you were one of us.” Johnson smirked.

“I’m surprised Hope,” Kelley said her first name empathetically, “speaks about me at all. What has she said?” Kelley asked sounding innocent and cocking her head to the side while shaking Johnson’s
Karev and Lloyd laughed at the challenging, almost bashful look on Hope’s face when Kelley said this. They were going to like this girl.

“Hey, Alex Karev. Nice to meet you.” Karev held his beer towards his chest, other hand outstretched to shake Kelley’s.

“Kelley, nice to meet you too, Alex.” Kelley shook his hand, smiling kindly at the scruffy man.

“Call him Karev. No one really calls him Alex. I’m Carli Lloyd, either name works for me.” Carli and Kelley shook hands, both smiling.

“I’m Levi Johnson, by the way. Only my mother calls me Levi, though. What’s your specialty, Kelley?”

“I am doing my fellowship in peds at Boston Children’s Hospital right now.” Kelley answered, thanking Carli who slid her a beer. She took a sip while she looked at Hope over the bottle she had attached to her lips.

“I’m the attending surgeon of pediatrics at Kennedy Gen, no way!” Karev said excitedly holding his beer out to clink it against Kelley’s. She reached her beer out and clinked hers against his and laughed at the gesture.

“Gotta love the kids!” Kelley exclaimed, earning a chuckle from Hope, “Because you’re one of them, O’Hara.”

Hope’s friends laughed in disbelief at how playful she was with the other doctor, that side of her only being seen by them.

Kelley rolled her eyes at yet another jab at her age and turned her attention to Johnson and Carli.

“What are your specialties since Dr. Solo over here is too busy making fun of my age to answer questions I have?” Kelley smirked, Hope’s chuckle filling her ears.

“I am actually her fellow in cardio. I have to deal with her every day.”

“That must be horrible, I am so sorry.” Kelley mocked sympathy and pat Johnson’s shoulder a few times with a frown on her face.

“Yeah, yeah whatever” Hope squinted her eyes at the two and waved them off before taking another sip of beer.

The three friends and Kelley laughed, then Carli cleared her throat and said, “I’m the attending surgeon of neuro.”

“Neuro?” Kelley whistled like a bomb was falling from the sky, a sound you hear in cartoons, “Smarty pants with stable hands, I guess!” Kelley joked and tipped the top of her bottle towards Carli who ducked her head shyly.

“Yeah, unlike you, Dr. Clumsy!” Hope quipped and Kelley stuck her tongue out at her.

“You two seem like you’ve known each other for years the way you two banter.” Johnson said observantly.

“She just doesn’t want to admit that I’m a funny, MATURE person that she can tolerate. She always
jabs at the fact that I’m 27 and squirrely as she puts it.” Kelley looks at Hope pointedly, leaving her room to rebuttal like she usually does.

“Alright, fetus, no need to get snarky and full of yourself again.”

“Fetus? That doesn’t even make sense, grandma!”

Collective oooh’s came from Lloyd, Karev and Johnson at Kelley’s jab at Hope being 6 years older than her. They waited for a retort but only the barking laugh from Hope’s core came out. They’ve heard this sound plenty of times, but never in front of other people who Hope didn’t know well enough to laugh that loudly in front of. They definitely knew there was something special about this woman.

“You, squirrel, are something else,” Hope points her empty bottle towards Kelley, “And this grandma,” pointing the bottle towards herself, “needs another beer. Thankfully Johnson is buying. Would you like another one, O’Hara?” Hope asked, standing from her seat and making her way to Kelley’s side of the table.

“Yes please. I’ll have whatever you’re having.” Kelley smiled at Hope who nodded and made her trek to see Kyle and get her beers.

“So, I heard you three think I’m hot?” Kelley questioned the three, amused by the shocked and embarrassed faces all three of them were donning.

They were absolutely, positively sure that this woman sitting in front of them was something special to make comments like that and have Hope’s initial trust for her to tell Kelley something that her friends had said.

The next morning, many beers later, Hope rolled over in her bed to be met with Karev’s snoring body.

“Ugh, what the hell?” She smacked him with her arm and when he didn’t budge after a few slaps, she rolled out of bed and quickly slammed her eyes shut when the sun was coming in through the curtains. She drank one too many beers last night, most likely because she knew she didn’t have work the next day. She left Karev in her room while she grabbed a change of clothes to wear after her shower. Coffee was definitely the next step.

Carli and Johnson were passed out in the living room, Carli on the couch and Johnson on the floor. She laughed at the bickering that probably went on between the two deciding who would get the couch while Karev was sober just enough to sneak into Hope’s room. The idiots were drunk enough to forget that Hope had a guest bedroom, but she wouldn’t complain at the hilarious sight she was met with at the moment.

She took her phone out and snapped a photo of Carli sprawled out on her stomach, one leg hanging over the arm of the couch, while the other was dangling off as well as her right arm was. Johnson was passed out in front of the couch, Carli’s leg on top of his back while he laid spread out like a starfish, no pillow underneath his head or anything.

She took the photo and went to make a full pot of coffee, maybe two, for her friends.

She sat on the counter, scrolling through her emails and Facebook while waiting for the first pot to finish brewing. She knew the smell would wake her friends up and she poured them each a mug. She took the milk and sugar out, knowing they all take it differently, while she drinks it black.
“Fuuuuck. Need. Coffee.” Carli said, wiping her eyes and stretching her arms above her head being the first to smell it. Johnson was ensue when he was stepped on by Carli getting off the couch.

“My neck and my back kill, no thanks to you, Princess.” Johnson threw at Carli while she weakly flipped him off and poured a little milk into her coffee.

“How did you two sleep?” Hope asked, hiding her smirk behind her mug.

“Fuck off” Both of them answered, wincing at the volume of their voices.

Karev came downstairs a few seconds after without a shirt on, in his boxers.

“You took your pants off last night?” Hope questioned, grimacing at the sight of her best friend in just his boxers.

Incoherent grunts came from Karev as he poured a bunch of sugar in his coffee as well as milk and drank a huge gulp.

They all snickered at the disheveled appearance of their friend, knowing he didn’t sleep well with much clothing on. How Johnson and Lloyd allowed him to take the bed with Hope was beyond them. They must’ve been drunk.

They were all quiet, nursing their hangovers with their mugs of coffee allowing the warm liquid to warm and sober them up.

“Have another mug for me?”

All four of their heads turned at a messy haired, sleepy Dr. Kelley O’Hara standing in the doorway of the kitchen.

Hope spit her coffee out onto Johnson who jumped back in surprise and quickly grabbed the kitchen towel hanging from the oven handle.

“O-O’Hara, I didn’t know you stayed over last night.” Hope was in shock and currently hyperaware of her appearance and surroundings.

“Yeah, you said it was okay for me to crash here last night when you guys left the bar. I’m sorry, I can go let me just grab my stuff…” Kelley nervously rambled, embarrassed that maybe she overstayed her welcome and made it extremely awkward among the group of friends.

“Hey, hey no you’re okay, you squirrel. I wouldn’t offer my house to crash in if I didn’t mean it. Here, let me get you some coffee.” Hope said a little too loudly towards Kelley making them all wince and curse at her, their heads pounding.

“Shit, sorry. I hurt my own ears with how loud that was.” Hope grimaced and turned around to pour Kelley a cup of coffee and went to start another pot, knowing everyone was going to want another glass.

“Ah man, I gotta go. My shift starts in like 45 minutes, I can’t be late.” Karev looked at the clock in the kitchen and downed the rest of his coffee, heading upstairs to grab his stuff and hurry to the hospital to shower there and get ready.

“So do I since my attending is off today.” Johnson glared at Hope and finished off his coffee as well. “Thanks for the floor to sleep on and the coffee, Solo. I’ll see you tomorrow.”
“Bye guys, catch up with you later.” Hope called after her friends, a little quieter this time for the sake of her head and the two women in her kitchen.

“And with that, I’m leaving too, Solo. I’ll see you around tomorrow.” Carli winked at Hope, and waved bye to Kelley who was still on the first few sips of her coffee.

It was just the two of them left alone in the kitchen after the others left until Sasha and Onyx came bounding into the kitchen. Kelley almost threw her coffee up in the air when she saw two huge dogs come running at her.

“STOP.” Hope commanded and the Dobermans stopped dead in their tracks, ears perked up waiting for their owner to say something else.

“Down” Hope said, pushing her hand down towards the floor to signal them to lie down.

“Holy shit! Your dogs are huge, Solo,” Kelley slowed her heart rate down and placed her coffee down on the island countertop, “And so freaking cute! Can I pet them?” Kelley questioned, looking like a kid on Christmas.

Hope chuckled, “Only if you want to be licked to death.”

Kelley slid off the stool and took turns alternating between the two dogs, only having her one hand available to pet one dog at a time.

They both licked her face and nuzzled their faces into hers, showing that they loved her and the attention. Kelley giggled at the feeling and threw her arms around their strong, wide necks to bring them in closer and hug them.

“They seem to like you, huh?” Hope said amused, one arm crossed over her body, the other hand holding her mug up to her lips. She was leaning against the counter watching her beloved dogs give love to this tiny doctor in her house.

“Just like their owner does.” Kelley smirked up at Hope and continued to giggle at the excitement and affection she was receiving from the dogs.

Hope shook her head and cleared her throat after a sip of coffee.

“So… Want to go grab breakfast? My treat?”

“Only if they serve chocolate chip pancakes. That’s my favorite hangover food.”

“Chocolate chip pancakes it is, youngin.” Hope laughed at her own quip and took another sip of her coffee, head tipped back, eyes closed relishing in the taste of the dark roast on her tongue.

“Will you show me where your shower is, granny? So I can freshen up and get my youthful looks back.” Kelley was right in front of Hope, who must have moved while her head was tipped back drinking her coffee.

Hope took a sharp breath in while the hazel eyes that plagued her mind were crystal clear staring into hers.

“You mean so you don’t smell anymore? Of course. Right this way, O’Hara.” Hope regained the slight slip of her composure and placed her mug on the counter before making her way to the foot of the stairs to lead Kelley to the shower.
After showing Kelley the workings of the shower and giving her fresh towels, Hope went to her room to brush her hair and find shoes that matched her outfit.

“Do you have any clothes that I can borrow?” Kelley’s voice filled the air in Hope’s room where Hope jumped in surprise in her closet from the voice she wasn’t expecting to hear.

“Jesus you scared me! And you’re like 5 inches shorter than me and much skinnier than I am. What clothes am I going to loan you?” Hope asked, with her hand on her chest, trying to still her fast paced heart.

“Don’t you have any old clothes you keep around? Like college sweatshirts or anything? I’ll wear my leggings from last night.”

Hope really looked at the sight of Kelley standing with wet hair, some plastered to her face, wearing a towel wrapped around her torso, tucked together on the left side of her body. She couldn’t tear her eyes away from the sight for some reason until a pillow hit the side of her head.

“What are you staring at, Solo? Give me a damn sweatshirt!”

Hope snapped out of it and went back into her closet to pull on her shoes and find a smaller sweatshirt for Kelley.

“Here, it’s my freshman year Harvard crewneck. It’s a medium, but I’m sure it’ll be fine.” Hope tossed the sweatshirt to Kelley who did a once over and smiled.

“How impressive, I’ll be wearing a Harvard sweatshirt owned by the one and only Dr. Hope Soloooo” Kelley cheered loudly, giggling during it.

Hope shook her head at the small doctor and giggled herself. “Just put it on so we can go.”

“You got it, doc. I’ll meet you downstairs.” Kelley saluted and smiled as Hope shook her head and walked away.

She made her way downstairs to fill up the dog bowls and put the abandoned mugs in the dishwasher. She made sure she had her wallet and keys before waiting in front of the door where the foot of the stairs were that led to the upstairs.

“O’Hara, let’s go! I’m starving!” Hope yelled up the stairs, growing impatient and hungrier by the second.

“I’m coming, I’m coming! Relax!” Kelley said, running down the stairs, sliding to a stop at the foot of the stairs not to hit the door.

Hope looked at Kelley’s outfit. Her black leggings, Harvard’s color crimson crewneck and high socks pulled up over her leggings. She threw her hair up in a bun and applied light makeup to her eyes.

“Looking good in crimson, O’Hara. Are those my socks?” Hope glanced down at Kelley’s feet and back up into her eyes.

“I needed to borrow some… Is that okay?”

“I mean I guessss” Hope playfully responded, rolling her eyes and shrugging her shoulders.

“Thank you! I will return them promptly. Ready to eat? I am SO hungry!”
“Yeah, yeah let’s go O’Hara.” Hope opened the door for her and ushered her outside.

She was curious to see how breakfast was going to go as they recounted last night’s events.

“How did Dr. Hope Solo reach the point of eating chocolate chip pancakes after a night of drinking with her best friends on her day off?

Dr. Kelley O’Hara was definitely a game changer and Hope wasn’t really sure why.

Chapter End Notes

Next update will be breakfast and then a fast forward to a big step in the story. I am a sucker for Harli’s friendship and I think Hope and Karev from Grey's would get along, so why not add them? Drop me a line, let me know what you're thinking! :)
Chapter 7

Chapter Summary

The squirrel and the referee

Chapter Notes

Has it really been 2 weeks since I've updated this?! I am SO sorry, homies. I've been dealing with moving and midterm season so I had to put this on the back burner. Hopefully you're all still out there, eager to read! I'm going to try my very best to post more often! But academics and personal life will prevent that from happening sometimes. Hopefully this is long enough to make up for my absence. ENJOY!

"Will you pass me the syrup please?" Kelley asked over a mouthful of bacon.

"Syrup? What, because chocolate chips, powdered sugar and whipped cream isn't enough sweetness for you?!" Hope asked partially amused, partially disgusted as she slid the bottle of syrup across the diner table.

"What?! I have coffee and salty food to balance it out, Ms. Egg white and steamed vegetables omelette!" Kelley quipped as she shoved her first forkful of overly sweet pancakes in her mouth.

"I like to put things that are good for me inside of my body, not diabetes in the form of breakfast food" Hope commented, raising her second mug of black coffee to her lips. "And it's Dr. not Ms."

"Shhhh, just eat your boring geriatric food while I enjoy my life." Kelley smiled with her mouth full of pancakes, her cheeks puffing out like a squirrel's would if it had a mouthful of acorns.

"You are ridiculous" Hope chuckled and placed her mug down, finishing up her omelette.

"Tell me something about yourself, Solo." Kelley washed down her pancakes with coffee, reaching for her other strip of bacon.

Hope stopped mid-chew and glanced up at Kelley, "Like what?"

"I don't know! What's your favorite color? Who's your favorite athlete? When's your birthday? Do you ever wish you could speak to animals? How quickly does your hair grow back after a haircut? What's your most prized possession? Anything!"

Hope placed her fork down after finishing her omelette and leaned back, eyeing Kelley carefully, like she was going to stop talking if she made any sudden movements.

She cleared her throat, "Maybe you should stop drinking coffee."

Kelley was about to protest when Hope raised her hand up signalling for Kelley not to speak before retracting it and holding her thumb up.
"My favorite color is a dark blue, my favorite athlete is either Manuel Neuer or Mia Hamm, my birthday is in July but I'm not telling you what date, I wish I could speak to my dogs so I guess, my hair grows fairly quickly, most likely at an average rate and my most prized possession is my name plate in my office that reads "Dr. Hope Solo, Attending Cardiothoracic Surgeon", okay? Know my whole life now?"

She finished holding up 6 fingers counting off all of the questions on her fingers.

Kelley stopped eating after hearing Hope's favorite color, surprised the other doctor was even answering one of her questions.

"Well shit, alright, cool!" Kelley said after snapping out of it and turning back to her pancakes like Hope didn't just rattle off these random facts about herself that she inquired about.

"You're so weird, you know that O'Hara?" Hope watched Kelley mix her whipped cream and syrup together before licking it off the fork and stabbing a bunch of pieces of cut up pancake on her plate.

Kelley just shrugged, chewing her life away over the breakfast food, looking around the diner at other patrons.

Hope looked at this woman whom she barely knows yet has spent a good amount of hours with between the hospital admittance, a coffee date, drinking at the bar with her friends and breakfast the morning after. She doesn't do this, she doesn't just make random friends and not stress out over social interactions that she tries to avoid except for with patients and patients' families. Hope thought about why she's easily being nice to this woman and appeasing her by going to a diner for chocolate chip pancakes while she could be catching up on a good book and drinking tea. She didn't know what to think about this and was certainly going to analyze this later when she went back home. But for now, she would allow herself to enjoy the younger doctor's company.

"Ughhh, I'm so full!" Kelley let out a huge sigh and patted her stomach a few times for emphasis.

"You ate 3 huge pancakes, 4 strips of bacon and scrambled eggs and downed it all with a cup of coffee and a glass of orange juice. How do you stay so petite?" Hope curiously inquired.

"I work out like 4 or 5 times a week and have a fast metabolism I inherited from my mama. Plus I barely eat while I'm at work because I'm always busy. You know how that goes, Dr."

The waitress walked over, placing the bill on the table and reassured the two women that were wasn't any rush for them to leave. Hope grabbed the bill and placed her card in the cardholder before waving Kelley off who tried snatching it out of her hands.

"It's my treat, remember? You paid for coffee last time." Hope said and handed the bill to the waitress who grabbed it and said "Be right back!"

"Yeah for one cup of coffee, not my hangover feast!" Kelley glared, upset that she wasn't able to pay for her own food.

"Hey, you said it yourself, my salary could probably cover it. Don't worry about it, you'll grab the check next time." Hope used the words "next time" to mock Kelley and chuckled when she saw her eyes squint towards her.

"Don't use my words against me, Solo. Keep it up and there won't be a next time that I'll grace you with my presence." Kelley placed her hands under her chin, batting her eyelashes and smiling her megawatt smile at the older doctor.
"And that would be a bad thing because...?" Hope jokingly said, finishing her last swig of coffee and putting her card back in her wallet then signing the receipt.

"I know we're going to be great friends, Solo. Don't deny it! YOU'RE SO EXCIIIIITED AND YOU JUST CAN'T HIDE IIIIIT!" Kelley loudly sang, drawing the attention from several other patrons, causing Hope to hide her face in her hands and swatting her hand towards Kelley to stop singing.

"What?! Too loud for you?" Kelley smirked and smiled at the other customers

"Are you ready to leave Dr. O'Hara? I don't feel like being run out of here by angry customers with their forks and knives in their hands threatening to stab us if you sing The Pointer Sisters again!"

Hope stood from her seat and slipped her coat on, tucking her wallet into her pocket and waiting for Kelley to stand and follow her cue to leave.

"Do you need a ride home?" Hope asked, gesturing her hand with her keys as they walked down the sidewalk to Hope's Land Rover.

"Where are we? One sec." Kelley stopped walking and looked at what street they were on.

"Mmm nope! I live like 6 blocks away, I should probably walk off my feast. Thank you for breakfast though and letting me crash at your house."

Hope slid her hands in her back pockets, "Yeah, no problem although I somehow think you snuck in and wanted to scare the shit out of me this morning, but I guess you're welcome."

"Yeah, because I know where you live and where your guest room is in your house, yep!"

"Hey, when do you get that cast off and go back to surgery?" Hope inquired looking at the lime green cast that has been signed by doctors, nurses and friends a like since she first signed it a few weeks ago.

"Next Wednesday and I'm so excited! I miss it. The rush, the challenge, the gratification, the cute little faces of the kids..."

Kelley listed off her favorite things of pediatric surgery and realized how much she missed it these past few weeks. On the bright side, she's caught up on all of her paperwork and charting for the past few months.

"I understand, I would miss it too. Well, I'll let you enjoy the rest of your Saturday. I'll... Talk to you soon?" Hope asked, unsure if she should even say that.

"You bet your old ass, Solo!" Kelley said loudly, slapping her on the arm before smiling brightly.

Hope let out a hearty laugh and playfully pushed the smaller Doctor.

"Impossible. Have a safe walk home. See ya"

"Have a safe drive. Talk to you later, Hope!"

"Bye, Kelley!" Hope added more false, playful excitement to her goodbye to match Kelley's and elicit a smile from the squirrel, which it did.

It was October 30th, a week since the breakfast at the diner.
After a text from Kelley asking a whole list of her favorites and her experience at Harvard, the question stemming from the sweatshirt she is keeping hostage from Hope, provoked a nonstop text conversation between the two.

Whenever Hope wasn't in surgery, she would have her phone glued to her hands, texting Kelley about anything and everything. Sure, personal stuff wasn't really discussed because Hope was definitely not ready for that, but she was starting to slowly see a friendship build between them.

Kelley made her admit once or twice, that Dr. Hope Solo is friends with a squirrel who makes her laugh more often than she usually does and “let’s the meanie out and the goofy in” in Kelley’s words.

Kelley liked the fact that Hope wasn’t just another person to spill their whole life story to at the drop of hat, because she honestly wasn’t like that either. Sure she was loud and tried to make everyone laugh and smile with her antics, but she didn’t open up as easily as she appears she would. Over the past week, she’s learned more about Hope and her personality than she has with anyone else in that amount of time. Usually it took her months to learn that much information about a person. She could sense what safe ground to cover was and what was a little touchier to bring up.

Kelley just got off the phone with her doctor discussing her cast being removed next week Wednesday when she heard her phone ding. Her heart slightly picked up at the sight of Hope’s name on her screen.

“What did the doctor say?” The text read, making Kelley smile at Hope’s scarly perfect timing.

Kelley typed back, “Next Monday is when this bad boy comes off! Can’t wait to get back into the OR! I miss surgery :(

Kelley finished her PB&J before putting her dish in the sink and had to run out and buy her costume for her friend’s annual Halloween party.

She got into her car and plugged her phone into the car charger and plugged her aux cord in as well. Her Prius was her baby and she loved how ecofriendly it is and just the perfect size for her 5’5 stature.

I Want You to Want Me by Cheap Trick came on shuffle and she belted out the lyrics, occasionally playing the air guitar when the electric guitar solos would come on.

She pulled up to the nearest Party City and shut her car off, reading her latest text from Hope who has now been named “Hope Yolo” in her phone. She let Hope know that was her new name in her contacts and she could’ve sworn she felt the eye roll exuding from her iPhone. Kelley’s name in her phone was “Squirrel” which she wasn’t surprised about at all.

“You have 5 days left you can get through it. What are you up to?” Hope had texted Kelley, or rather one of the OR nurse’s sent for her because she knew Hope had a surgery scheduled for right now.

“I’m at Party City trying to pick out a costume for my friend’s Halloween party tomorrow. Any suggestions?!”

Kelley exited her car and made her way into the store, walking into dozens and dozens of people crowding in the store making it almost impossible to move.

All of the women’s costumes were sexy this or sexy that, but Kelley was into the funnier stuff. Her phone dinged in her pocket when she was trying to dodge a bunch of people out of her way,
including children taller than her. It was the day before Halloween so obviously it was going to be a 
zoo in there.

“Be your true self.” Hope texted which made Kelley snort with laughter at how lame that was.

Just as she was going to send her response another text came onto the screen which read, “A squirrel.”

That made Kelley die laughing, earning her looks of confusion and annoyance from everyone 
around her.

“That was really good, Solo. I can’t see the costumes, all of these people are in my way, I can barely 
move >:((

Hope responded instantly, a sign that told Kelley she was out of surgery now.

“Just wait a second, you’ll be able to see.”

Kelley looked confusedly at her phone, not understanding what that meant and typed, “What does 
that mean?!”

She pocketed her phone for the time being and tried pushing her way through a group of 8 year olds 
who wouldn’t stop fighting over which Ninja Turtle each of them was going to be.

“NO! I wanna be Michaelangelo!”
“No way! I’m the oldest, I get to pick!”

“We all know Leonardo is the coolest one, he’s the leader and is super smart!” Kelley added to the 
argument, debating which fictional turtle was the best.

“Nuh uh! Raphael is the best, he’s super strong and mean to the bad guys!” An 8 year old girl 
chirped in.

“What?! But Leonardo is number one! He’s the boss of the other 3, like the line leader of the 
Ninjas!”
The 8 year olds stopped and considered that fact, Kelley stood there proudly with her hands on her 
hips.

“Proud of yourself that you won an argument against cartoon characters against a bunch of kids?” A 
familiar, soft but strong voice said next to her ear making her shiver than freeze.

“Hope? What are you doing here?!” Kelley said excitedly, not expecting her new friend to be there.

“I have 3 hours before my next surgery and it’s a minor one, my residents can prep them.” Hope 
said, shrugging off the fact that she drove to the suburbs out of downtown traffic to meet Kelley at 
Party City.

“And by the way, Donatello is my favorite. He’s charming and super smart, yet he doesn’t show his 
nice side all of the time. He’s silent but deadly.” Hope explained to the kids who looked up at her 
with wide eyes.

“I wanna be Donatello!”
“No way, I wanna be him! You can be Michaelangelo!”
“Why can’t I be Donatello?!”
The kids started arguing, now convinced that Donatello was the coolest Turtle, persuaded by Hope’s explanation.

“Wow, you know… Now that I think about your explanation of Donatello, you are definitely just like him. You’re smart, quiet and aloof, it makes sense that he’s your favorite.” Kelley thought about it, nodding her head at each one of her points she was making.

“Yeah yeah, I’m not here to discuss Ninja Turtles, I’m here to help you pick out a Halloween costume.”

“But I already told you, I can’t see! Look at all of these people! I’m surprised you could even find little ol’ me in the crowds!” Kelley half whined, half exclaimed.

“I know that’s why I’m here to help you. Here,” Hope extended her hand to signal for Kelley to hold her hand.

For some reason Kelley immediately froze and stared at Hope’s hand, a weird feeling coursing through her body.

“Hellooo? Earth to O’Hara? You want a costume or not?” Hope waved her hand in front of Kelley’s face to snap her back to reality.

“S-sorry! I got lost in thought, probably over those damn turtles! Yeah, let’s do this!” Kelley grabbed Hope’s hand and felt that shock she feels every single time they touch.

“Excuse me, coming through!” Hope shouted, dragging Kelley closely behind her, barreling through the crowds of people using her bigger frame to push people out of the way.

Kelley gripped Hope’s hand not wanting to get detached from the doctor’s grasp and get lost in the sea of customers.

“Here we go,” Hope said pulling Kelley in front of her right in the front of the ads to see which ones caught her eye, “now you can see. I draw the line at picking you up or putting you on my shoulders though.” Hope joked and let go of Kelley’s hand, crossing her arms over herself, protecting her from the sea of people she was immersed in and to not touch other people.

“You’re the best!” Kelley shouted, turning her head back to make eye contact with Hope. She was smiling so hard at the older doctor, she was sure her cheeks were going to cramp up. Hope smiled down at her and motioned for her to turn back around and find out what she wants to dress up as.

Hope perused the ads too to see anything that Kelley might want to dress up as and found it annoying that all of the female costumes were labeled as sexy while the men just had the normal version of it.

“Hope!” Kelley shouted, turning around and grabbing Hope’s bicep, shaking her back and forth out of her excitement.

“Look!” Kelley pointed at a squirrel costume that was categorized under the junior boys section.

“You think I’ll be able to fit into it? It’s supposed to be for middle school boys…” Kelley asked, hoping she would be able to, asking Hope for her opinion.

Hope started cracking up and brought her hand to her mouth trying to silence the volume of her laughter.
Kelley was thoroughly amused at the laughing woman in front of her, a sight she loves to see that she’s only seen once or twice since they’ve met. Hope is reserved and serious 97% of the time, so this was always a special view. Kelley quickly snapped a photo of the close eyed, head thrown back, right hand grasping her heart, huge smiled Hope Solo. She was definitely going to show her this later.

Once Hope settled down, she looked down at Kelley and held back a few chuckled before nodding and saying, “Yep. You’ll definitely fit and it’s definitely fitting. I mean, I was kidding when I told the OR nurse to say that but wow this is fantastic.” Hope shook her head in amusement and extended her hand out once again to Kelley, “Ready to go try this bad boy on?” Kelley vigorously nodded and grabbed Hope’s hand again, thankful that her taller and muscular friend could navigate their way through the crowd.

“Hi, I need a large in the juniors squirrel costume please!” Kelley told an unhappy worker. He turned around into the backroom to retrieve the costume while Hope scoped out where the fitting rooms were.

He came back and gave her the package, walking away to handle his probably thousandth customer of the day.

“Fitting rooms are right over there” Hope pointed to the door on the left and waited for Kelley to make her way over there before she followed.

5 minutes later, no thanks to Kelley’s cast, the squirrel costume fit perfectly and she stepped out of the room to show Hope her wonderful idea in person.

“So?!”

Hope looked up from her phone taking in the sight of Dr. Kelley O’Hara dressed in a squirrel costume. She started laughing, a laugh that made her eyes squint before raising her phone up and snapping a few photos of a smiling, posing Kelley.

“This is priceless. I am a genius”

“I love it, and the fact that it’s a onesie?! I’m never taking it off. I am fully embracing my squirreliness now.” Kelley struck a few more poses, turning around for Hope to see.

And the idea hit her.

“Oh my god! What are you doing tomorrow?!” Kelley asked, excitement making her voice raise a little.

“I have work until 8 pm and then I’m going home. I don’t really celebrate Halloween.” Hope nonchalantly said, skeptically looking down at the younger doctor.

“One second, let me change first!” Kelley ran, or rather scurried, back into the fitting room to change back into her normal clothes.

A few minutes later she came back out, costume placed back in its packaging.

“I think you should come to the Halloween party with me tomorrow night! It starts at 9 and goes until whenever! It’s so much fun!”

“I think I’m gonna pass on this one.” Hope said, quirking her eyebrow at Kelley.
“Please?! You should come, it’ll be so much fun! I will stay by your side the whole night, I won’t throw you to the wolves!”

Hope took in her words and thought it was sweet that Kelley considered the fact that she wouldn’t know anyone else there and she would be extremely uncomfortable if Kelley wasn’t talking with her.

“I don’t have a costume, so I guess I can’t go.” Hope shrugged, warming up to the idea second after second seeing the puppy dog eyes Kelley was trying to pull.

“We’ll get you one now! What do you want to be?!” Kelley asked, fully committed to get Hope to attend the party with her now.

“O’Hara, I haven’t dressed up in years, yeaaaars. I have no idea! And anything with the word “sexy” in front of it is a definite no. But I’m not going so it doesn’t matter.”

An hour later, Kelley and Hope sat at Café Aroma again. After the trip to Party City and leaving with a squirrel costume and a referee costume, Hope decided she definitely needed caffeine to accept the fact that she was going to a Halloween party tomorrow after a long day of surgeries.

“Are you pumped?! I know I am! Drinking and Halloween themed food? Plus all of the cool costumes? It’ll be fun, I promise!”

“I’m holding you to that promise, O’Hara. This is a big deal for me to go out, especially at someone’s party I don’t even know.” Hope said, sipping her double espresso, pursing her lips at Kelley.

“If it makes you feel better, I’m only going to know like 2 or 3 people there. So I won’t have any reason to ditch you during the shindig, okay?!”

“Shindig… And you say I’m old?!?” Hope chortled, shaking her head at the other doctor.

“Whatever! You don’t have much longer before you have to be at the hospital, my friend, you need to get moving.” Kelley slurped the rest of her café mocha down and pushed away from the table, waiting for Hope to stand up.

Hope stood up, shrugged her jacket on and picked her phone up to place in her scrub pants pocket before zipping up her jacket.

“I’ll text you after my surgery. I can’t believe you talked me into this. I try to be nice and help you out by choosing a costume, yet I get persuaded into attending a party.”

“It’ll be fun! Leave your car in the overnight lot tomorrow, I will pick you up at the hospital at 8:30, gives you enough time to shower and put your costume on there!” Kelley was ecstatic that she convinced Hope to come with her tomorrow night. She wanted to hang out more and grow this budding friendship between the two of them. Plus she wanted another familiar face with her.

“Whatsoever you say, O’Hara. Talk to you later,” Hope said, turning to make her way to the car.

“The squirrel and the referee! Nothing beats that!” Kelley shouted at Hope’s retreating figure who kept walking and raised her hand and flicked her wrist to show that she had heard her remark but wasn’t going to respond.

Kelley pulled up to Kennedy General clad in her squirrel costume and picked her phone up to text
Hope.

"I'm here! Let's go, ref!"

Kelley hit next on her phone to play the next song in her shuffle and put the car in park, waiting for Hope to come down. Drunk In Love by Beyonce came on and there was no doubt that Kelley was about to put on a performance.

"WE BE ALL NIIIIIGHT, LOOOOOOOOOOVE! LOOOOOOOOOOVE!"

Kelley was singing her irregular beating heart out, accompanied by using her phone as a microphone.

Two loud knocks on her window made her jump in her seat and turned the volume down, placing her hand over her heart to make sure she wasn't going to go into cardiac arrest.

"Holy shit! You scared me!" She said to Hope who opened the passenger side door and climbed in.

"Maybe you shouldn't be performing while you're expecting someone, Ms. Knowles." Hope smirked, dragging the seat belt across herself.

"It's actually Mrs. Carter, she's married to Jay Z now, thanks very much!" Kelley stuck her tongue out and let herself look at Hope's costume.

"Oh I need a better look, get out of the car!"

"Seriously? I just got in and buckled my seat belt already, O'Hara!"

"Just get out for a second!"

Hope rolled her eyes, unbuckled her seat belt and stepped out of the car, Kelley already out of the car waiting.

It didn't fail to make Hope laugh again at the hazel eyed doctor's squirrel costume.

"You look so good, so official!" Kelley happily said, amused and impressed at Hope's costume.

Hope was wearing black skinny pants, a white and black striped shirt with the first button unbuttoned and a black hat adorned with a whistle and a yellow and red card sticking out of her back pocket. Her hair was in a low bun so the hat would fit and she had her usual black watch on with her black and white Nikes.

"I also like the fact that you're specifically a soccer ref with the yellow and red card, your favorite sport!" Kelley was completely loving Hope's costume and knew they were going to have a great night.

"Thank you, I'm glad you realized that tiny detail." Hope raised her eyebrows and smiled, looking at Kelley's complete costume.

She was in her brown and gray onesie like costume, a huge tail attached with ears on the hood, she drew a black nose on her ow with whiskers on her cheeks and a volleyball sized stuffed acorn she left in the car. It was so fitting for the squirrel that she is.

"Your costume really shows what's in the inside, Squirrel" Hope smirked and opened the door, Kelley walking back to her side and doing the same.

"Ready to partaaaay?!" Kelley asked enthusiastically and jolted back against her seat when Hope blew her whistle. Hope just smiled at her and buckled herself back in while Kelley started the car and
turned the volume back up.

"DRUUUUNK IN LOOOOOVE!" She belted out, pulling away from the curb and making her way to her friend's house.

They got to the party at 9:15, the house being in a neighboring suburb. Her friend Heather always hosted the best parties and she couldn't wait to share the experience with her newest friend, Dr. Hope Yolo.

"HAO! You really have outdone yourself this year! I'm loving the decorations!" Kelley shouted, hugging Heather when she found her in the kitchen making some sort of colorful, Halloween themed alcoholic punch.

"Thanks, KO! Dave really got involved this year and helped me with putting everything up on the house this year. Who is this?!" Heather asked pulling away, looking at the taller woman standing next to Kelley.

"This is my friend, Dr. Hope Solo. She's an attending cardio surgeon at Kennedy Gen. She's the one who took care of me after the accident." Kelley said, looking at Hope and smiling up at her.

"Nice to meet you, Dr. Solo, thanks for taking care of our girl here!" Heather shook her hand, smiling.

"Hope is fine, Dr. is reserved for the hospital. Thank you for having me." Hope shook her hand and smiled a charming smile, "I really didn't have a choice, it's the Hippocratic oath us doctors take." Hope smirked and chuckled as Kelley lightly punched her in the arm.

"I'm glad you made it! Kelley was super excited that you're coming, as am I! Loving the costume by the way, KO. You kind of are a squirrel, huh? I'll be right back!" Heather laughed, bringing the punch bowl out to the dining room where other food and drinks were set up.

"KO, as in Kelley O'Hara, but why hey-oh? I don't get it." Hope questioned, not knowing where the nickname came from.

"Heather Ann O'Reilly, H-A-O, HAO!" Kelley explained, seeing the understanding look grace Hope's face.

"Got it, makes sense," Hope nodded, twirling the whistle lanyard between her fingers, "I like her, she realizes you're squirrely too"

"I look so adorable in this costume, I'm just going to ignore you! Let's get some food, I'm starving!"

The night went on, food was eaten and drinks were drunk and Hope had met a couple of people Kelley was friends with.

"Hey, dance with me!" Kelley shouted over the music that had increasingly gotten louder over the few hours they were there.

"I don't dance, O'Hara" Hope said over her cup of alcoholic punch, taking another swig as Kelley stomped her foot.
"Come on! I need a dancing partner, everyone else is already dancing with someone! PLEEEASE?!" Kelley whined, tugging on Hope's arm to put her punch down and accompany her to the dance floor.

"Oh my god, okay let's go, one song!" Hope placed her cup down and allowed herself to be dragged by the smaller doctor.

Danza Kuduro by Don Omar came over the sound system and Kelley immediately started swinging her hips and letting herself get lost in the Latin music. She was tipsy, a drink or two away from being drunk and allowed herself to get lost in one of her favorite dancing songs.

Hope watched Kelley dance among the other costume-clad party goers and was taken aback by the rhythm and maturity of her dance moves. She expected a little shimmy or fist pumping or something but not this rhythmic hip rolling woman. She was buzzed herself, not as tipsy as Kelley was though. They had the same amount of drinks, but Kelley was obviously more of a lightweight.

"Come on, join me!" Kelley pulled Hope towards her and turned around, her back facing Hope's front.

Hope watched Kelley in front of her again to get a sense of her rhythm so she wouldn't look dumb dancing with her. Kelley rolled her body and shook her hips really showcasing her ability to dance to Spanish music. Hope rolled her hips forward and backwards almost matching Kelley's pace.

Kelley backed into Hope and ground her ass into Hope's front once, then rocked her hips from side to side, hands in her hair and then up in the air letting loose.

Hope didn't know what to do and wasn't sure what her body was doing. The last time she danced like this was in college and at a frat party her then-boyfriend made her go to. But she was in Kelley's position and her friend was in hers so she wasn't sure what the person standing behind did exactly.

Without thinking about it much longer, she was rocking her hips in time with Kelley's as another song came through the speakers, it was more of an island tone to it, Turn Me On by Kevin Lyttle she identified the song from her college days.

"For the longest while we jamming in the party, and you're wining on me pushing everything right back on top of me yeaah yeah" The lyrics boomed through the speakers and Hope slightly smiled at the memories this song brought back to her happy college days and her crazy friends, drunk on beer from a keg, packed into a frat house with a bunch of Harvard kids letting loose.

She was pulled out of her nostalgic thoughts when Kelley grabbed her hands, placing them on her waist, getting lost further into the music. Hope's hands were stiff at first, but relaxed against Kelley's sides as they danced a little longer. She was having fun and enjoyed the fact that she was allowing herself to let herself have fun and dance, a little too closely, with her new friend.

Kelley swayed her hips back and forth before Temperature by Sean Paul came on and she turned around out of Hope's hold on her sides, "I need a quick drink and then I want to dance again. You up for that?!" Hope smiled and nodded, leading them to the table to grab some mixed Halloween cocktails. Hope downed hers and Kelley did the same, both meeting each other's gaze and challenging the other to drink even more.

Two cocktails and a few shots later, both doctors were hammered and dancing even more loosely and provocative than before. Kelley was straight up grinding against Hope while Hope was grinding back into her, hands gripping her waist and Kelley's arms thrown behind her, wrapping around
Hope's neck.

Other party goers would watch them from time to time, commenting amongst each other how close they were and how hot the scene was. Everyone knew Kelley was gay, but they weren't sure if the other woman was her girlfriend or not. She didn't mention anything to HAO and introduced her as her friend, so they must be extremely drunk to be dancing like that. She knew how handsy Kelley could get with alcohol in her system and bass booming music playing.

More reggaeton music played and it was 1 o'clock in the morning, only a few people had left. The party was still going strong and Kelley didn't lie when she said that HAO threw the best parties. She did, however forget to mention that everyone always ended up passed out drunk from the strong punch and abundance of liquor and beer served.

Hope was feeling warm and happy dancing with Kelley and letting the alcohol control her body. She hasn't let loose in a while because of her control issues, but she was glad that this squirrel friend of hers had somehow convinced her to come, drink and dance. She definitely knew Kelley was something else and an interesting friend she acquired.

They kept dancing and dancing until they sat down, exhausted from dancing for two hours only taking breaks to drink even more alcohol.

"Want another shot, Solo?" Kelley slurred and challenged Hope who was smirking down at her with her fingers playing with her whistle again.

Hope blew her whistle and chuckled, "Game on."

The sun on her face woke her up and she squinted her eyes open and winced how bright it was.

"Shit," Hope rolled over to face herself away from the window and screwed her eyes shut, opening them slowly to try to wake up.

She was met with the sight of light brown tousled hair, a freckled face with her black face paint mostly smeared off and a mouth partly open with little snores coming from the sleeping body.

She looked down and saw that Kelley was only in her bra and underwear, the blanket half off her body allowing Hope to see underneath it. She then realized she was only wearing a bra and underwear too.

"What happened?" Hope asked herself the question and subconsciously pulled the blanket over both of them. She had no idea how she got home or why Dr. Kelley O'Hara was in her bed, both of them not wearing clothes.

She looked up at the ceiling, trying her best to remember what happened the night before, or rather 6 hours ago, at 3 am. She was interrupted from her blank thoughts when she heard a raspy voice say, "You tell me."
Chapter 8

Chapter Summary

Blue Gatorade and a tickle fight

Chapter Notes

I am the shittiest updater on this site but I have valid excuses! I've been out of wifi for this long because I moved! It just got hooked up today *eye roll* Don't hate me too much. This chapter changes the story a little. I still love you guys, enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

She looked up at the ceiling, trying her best to remember what happened the night before, or rather 6 hours ago, at 3 am. She was interrupted from her blank thoughts when she heard a raspy voice say, "You tell me."

Hope’s heart hammered in her chest. Why the hell was Kelley O’Hara lying next to her in her bed? She slammed her eyes shut, partially due to the blinding sun and partially because she hoped that she would disappear if she did so.

“Solo, we danced and had one too many drinks last night. I’m just messing with you” Kelley laughed, sitting up, pulling her hair up into a messy bun.

“Jesus Christ, I feel how many shots we did last night,” she said pinching the bridge of her nose and slumping her head forward.

Hope couldn’t say anything at that moment, she just didn’t know what to say.

She took in the sight of Kelley’s abs flexed as she was sitting upright, her stomach toned with a six pack chiseled into the skin. She was mesmerized by the one beauty mark she had on the right side of her stomach. There was only one freckle on her stomach compared to the hundreds on her face.

“Yo, Solo! Don’t make me scream at you, I’ll make my own head throb if that means making you wince because of your headache.” Kelley snapped in front of her eyes glazed over staring down at the bed, not knowing she was watching her abs flex and relax with her sitting forward.

“S-sorry,” Hope clears her hoarse, dry throat looking for a glass water that usually Drunk Hope would leave out for herself. “Last night got the best of me, I guess…”

“I guess so. I need water and motrin and clothes and…” Kelley listed off, moving to get out of the bed, obviously not as shy about the fact that she was in her underwear like Hope was.

“I’ll go get you a glass of water, let me just…” Hope said, sliding out of bed not caring she wasn’t wearing clothes either or whatever.
Kelley was stretching her arms above her head, head tilted back on her tippy toes to stretch all of her muscles and didn’t notice Hope standing outside of the bed. She looked to her right to see Hope standing in front of her dresser rummaging through a drawer deciding on clothes to wear.

Kelley sucked a breath in, seeing Hope’s tanned skin contrasting with the black bra and matching panties she was wearing. She never realized how muscular Hope was and she couldn’t stop herself from noticing her body.

“Are college sweatpants okay? You can just roll them up so they’re short enough for you and I know you like my sweatshirt so much so…”

“What? Yeah, yeah that’s fine!” Kelley didn’t even know what she was agreeing to but didn’t want Hope knowing she was just blatantly looking at her body. She accepted the sweatpants and tshirt that were offered to her and said a quick thanks before slipping into Hope’s bathroom to freshen up and definitely splash copious amounts of cold water on her face.

About 10 minutes later, Kelley walked out feeling refreshed, headache still prominent within her skull but not as grimy nonetheless.

She followed the faint whistling of Dr. Hope Solo standing in front of the stove, pushing eggs around with a spatula.

“Coffee is in the pot, there’s a mug out for you. I have the milk and sugar out for you too, I know you take both.” Hope said, not turning around but hearing Kelley’s footsteps approach. Sound was still sensitive to her ears so she picked everything up.

“Sweet, thanks!” Kelley said enthusiastically but at a reasonable volume so she didn’t hurt her own head or Hope’s.

She saw three pills lying next to her mug and popped them in her mouth before pouring herself a quick cup of coffee and swallowing the pain relievers.

“What’s on the menu, chef?” Kelley playfully said, taking a seat at the same stool she did the morning after she drank with Hope and her friends.

“Scrambled eggs, turkey bacon and toasted protein bread with avocado, salt and pepper. Sound good or do you want me to add 60,000 grams of sugar and fat for you to enjoy it?” Hope said, turning her head to the side, showing her raised eyebrows and playful smirk on her face.

“That sounds absolutely delicious, thank you, Chef” Kelley offered a smirk of her own definitely enjoying the nickname she gave her, one Hope couldn’t see because her back was turned to her but she could definitely hear it in her voice.

“Great, because breakfast is served.” Hope plated their food and turned to the counter, setting the plates down, fetching her own mug of coffee from next to the stove and grabbing orange juice from the fridge as well as two glasses for them.

She poured them each a glass of freshly squeezed orange juice then picked up a slice of turkey bacon, munching on it and letting herself think about last night. She really hoped she didn’t make a fool of herself.

“Damn Solo, this is so good! Are you a chef as well as a heart surgeon or is it just an impressive hobby?” Kelley said over a mouth of avocado toast.

“First of all, chew and swallow before you speak, I don’t want to see pseudo-guacamole in your
mouth and second of all, everyone should know how to cook.”

Kelley gave her a weird look and took another bite of her toast.

“Oh let me guess, you burn everything that you try to cook?” Hope asked, one eyebrow raised fork pointed at Kelley

“That’s not entirely true! I make a mean sandwich!” Kelley tried defending herself at the accusations

“Sandwiches don’t require cooking anything, O’Hara”

“Whatever. Did you have fun last night? I told you my friend’s parties are always fun!”

Hope quickly chewed and swallowed the mouthful of eggs she had and placed her fork down, washing it down with orange juice.

“Yeah, the liquor was top shelf, that’s for sure.” She nervously chuckled, playing with her glass in front of her.

“Isn’t it always… But I didn’t know you were such a good dancer! You have some moves, Solo” Kelley said impressed and recounting some of the songs they danced to.

“Honestly? I’ve never danced with someone like that, I just winged it…” Hope admitted nervously hoping Kelley wouldn’t completely make fun of her.

“What? Seriously?! Damn, you just have some natural rhythm then! I like to get a little touchy when I drink and dance, so apologize if I was too close last night. I really only remember a few dances here and there.”

Hope didn’t know if Kelley remembers that she was full on grinding on her for more than a couple of songs or that she looped her arms around her neck while rolling her hips back onto Hope but she wasn’t about to be the one to bring it up.

“You were fine, don’t sweat it, O’Hara. I can handle my own” Hope said challengingly, sipping a cup of coffee wishing it was much stronger than she made it.

Kelley phone rang and she excused herself to the other room to take it.

Hope cleaned up their empty plates and rinsed them before placing them in the dishwasher and putting everything away. She poured herself another cup of coffee and took a seat on her deck, thankfully she was wearing a hoodie and sweatpants for the crisp November 1st air that Boston supplied her.

She heard the door slide open and saw an excited Kelley in front of her face bouncing up and down.

“Was that an acorn factory offering you a lifetime supply of nuts, Squirrel? Why are you so excited?” Hope eyed the bouncing in place woman.

“I’VE BEEN OFFERED A FELLOWSHIP AT KENNEDY GEN AS A PEDIATRIC SURGEON!” Kelley exclaimed in excitement, pumping her fist in the air once and gritting her teeth giving her what some would describe as a “game face.”

“Wait, Kennedy Gen? As in the hospital where I work?” Hope was trying to process what her friend just told her.

“Yeah, that’s the one, Solo! We’ll be coworkers now!” Kelley did what someone would most likely
Hope’s head was spinning more so than it was when she first woke up with the worst headache she’s ever gotten. She didn’t know what to say to Kelley because she didn’t know how she felt about the situation yet. She kept thinking about him and what happened in the past. She got lost in her own head before a loud voice broke her out of her trance.

“Hey, earth to Solo! We’ll be working together now, aren’t you happy to hear that?” Kelley asked, excitement still at an all-time high that she got offered the position at the best hospital in Massachusetts.

“Yeah, Kelley I think so, that’s so great” Hope quietly offered, seemingly more interested in staring down into her coffee mug.

“You think so? Come on, Solo I know your tough exterior secretly likes me underneath. We can become better friends this way!”

“I’m just trying to process it is all.”

“What’s there to process? I’ll be working with you and Karev, Johnson and Carli now!” Kelley’s excitement died down a notch.

“I don’t know how to feel,” Hope admitted, looking up at Kelley who had the most confused look on her face.

“Wow, alright Solo… I thought you would be happy for me. I mean it’s a big deal for a surgeon to be hired there, you should know that.”

“I’m happy for you, I am. It’s just weird for someone I know outside of work to become a part of my work environment. Karev, Carli and Johnson are different because I met them there. There’s just a different dynamic.”

“And I can’t become a part of that dynamic? Hope, it’ll be weird for a couple of weeks but we can obviously keep it professional.” Kelley went from excited to frustrated in .02 seconds.

“I guess we’ll see…” Hope was still apprehensive about the fact that her new friend that she already let her see herself without clothes on and drunk and vulnerable twice already. She didn’t mix her outside people with her work people; it just wasn’t something she was comfortable with.

“Yeah, I guess we will.” Kelley said bitterly, arms crossed over her chest, standing up from her chair and storming into the house, grabbing her stuff and slamming the front door behind her.

Hope jumped at the slamming door and knew she had to figure something out because she didn’t want to explain to the Chief why she was being so weird around the new doctor. And truth be told, she didn’t want to lose Kelley as a friend.
Thursday came way too quickly for Hope’s liking when she walked into the attending’s lounge to change into her scrubs.

“You didn’t tell me your friend was my new fellow, Solo” Karev said, tugging his shirt over his head.

“Can we please not talk about this? Treat her like your other fellows, Karev and don’t talk about me.”

“Look, I know this must be weird for you ever since Ja-“

“Don’t.” Hope put her hand up and glared at Karev to get her point for him to stop what he was about to say.

He sighed and put his hands up in surrender, “I’m just saying I get it and so does Lloyd and Johnson. We won’t say anything or tease you about an “outside” friendship, kay?”

Hope let out a breath she was unknowingly holding in and let her shoulders relax for a minute.

“Thanks, Karev. You’re still an idiot though” She bunched up her shirt and threw it at his face, giggling at her childish action.

“Yeah whatever, just get dressed so we can save some lives today, alright?”

“Alright.”

“Now go find Johnson. Dude was up my ass earlier telling me about some big procedure you two have today. Please shut him the hell up, I can’t take his yammering anymore”

Hope rolled her eyes and pulled her hair in a ponytail then sliding her lab coat on. She was going to forget about the tension that was bound to arise between her and Kelley seeing each other at some point and focused on the big surgery she and Johnson were teaming up on to complete.

“Now that is how you save a woman’s life, Solo!” Johnson said, blood pumping with adrenaline after a 9 hour surgery that took a couple bad turns.

“Yeah, yeah let’s just see how she holds up post-op.” Hope smirked, taking her scrub cap off, sinking into the lounge’s couch, kicking her feet up, arms folded covering her eyes from the harsh fluorescent lighting.

“I’ll check you later, I’m going to go check in with our patient’s nurses to make sure I get updates every hour to make sure she’s stabilized” Johnson excused himself, earning a thumbs up from Hope who hadn’t moved her arms from covering her eyes.

She must have dozed off for a minute or two because she was being shaken awake by someone who smelled quite familiar.

“Here, I ran into Johnson and he told me about your big surgery. You need to eat something.”

Hope slowly opened her eyes, slightly disoriented from her nap that she didn’t even realize she took until she felt a tiny bit of drool at the corner of her mouth. She glanced at her watch and saw she was out for almost two hours.

“K-Kelley?” Hope squinted, seeing those hazel eyes she was hung up on a month ago when she
showed up in her ER.

“Here, you need to eat.” She nudged her arm to sit up and eat the salad and half a sandwich she offered her.

“You didn’t have to do this, I know you’re pissed off at me.” Hope sat up, rubbing her face into her hands a few times, trying to rub the sleep out of her features.

“Just because I’m confused and a little pissed doesn’t mean I’m not your friend, Solo. I’ve come this far and learned too much about you to go back now” Kelley smirked, chuckling at her words.

“Look,” Hope started to try and explain herself but was cut off by the smaller doctor.

“Hey, you don’t have to explain anything to me, just eat your salad” Kelley nodded towards the container on the table in front of the couch.

Hope nodded acknowledging that Kelley really didn’t need an explanation and she was thankful for the food she brought her after her stomach growled loudly.

“Dr. O’Hara, to the rescue!” Kelley struck a superhero pose and laughed at the fake annoyed look on Hope’s face.

“Thank you for this, I wouldn’t have eaten if you didn’t bring me this. How did you even find the attendings’ lounge?”

“A little birdy told me during a kidney transplant on a little boy today.” Kelley smirked, knowing she wasn’t being discreet whatsoever.

“Karev, got it” Hope nodded, knowing he would tell her if it meant that she would bring food and energy to her.

“He is phenomenal in the OR, really orchestrates his nurses and me. I am very pleased with this fellowship so far and it’s only day one.” Kelley kicked her feet up on the table like Hope’s just were, hands folded behind her head, a huge grin on her face at her new position and new hospital.

Hope wolfed down her salad realizing it had all of the toppings she loved on it. Over a bite of fresh spinach she asked, “How did you know this is my normal salad? I’ve never ordered salad with you.”

Kelley peeked to her left and smiled sheepishly at Hope, “I may or may not have asked the cafeteria workers what the famous Dr. Solo gets on her salad and her usual sandwich.”

Kelley grinned at Kelley appreciating the fact that she went above and beyond for her with a simple thing like asking a worker what her usual order was so she would enjoy it. Despite Hope’s history telling her this was a bad idea, she knew she wasn’t being rational. She wanted Kelley to excel in her fellowship here and grow as a surgeon at the best hospital maybe even on the East Coast, but she still had her reserves.

“You didn’t have to do that. But thank you, Kelley. I really appreciate it.”

“Yeah, yeah don’t get all soft on me now over some rabbit food. Just eat your sandwich and drink this Gatorade. They said you normally get a bottle of water but I figured you’d need a little sugar and electrolytes to get some energy back. Is blue okay?” Kelley slid the bottle across the table that Hope stopped and grabbed with her hand.

“All I drank when I used to play soccer. How do you just guess these things?” Hope unscrewed the
bottle and took a big gulp washing down her turkey and Swiss sandwich.

“Everyone usually loves the blue kind, plus it’s one of your favorite colors so I just took a chance.”

“Do you usually take chances? Not knowing the consequences or reactions you’ll receive?” Hope asked almost a rhetorical question, assuming she already knew the answer.

“I do. I learned that I needed to or else I would be stuck with regrets or perseverating on the ‘what ifs’, ya know?” Kelley turned her head to the left, still against the back of the couch with her hands behind her head.

Hope took in what Kelley told her and let it sit in her mind for a bit. She asked a question based on a simple decision of what color Gatorade to get her, yet Hope was having an internal battle about letting her worries and concerns about having a friendship at the hospital. She knew it was possible to do because she has three best friends here but an outsider is the red flag. But knowing Kelley after the past month, she knows she’s different. She just has a feeling and hopefully it isn’t wrong.

“You okay? You stopped eating your sandwich and you’re just holding it.” Kelley asked, nudging her leg against Hope’s to get her attention.

“Hm? Yeah, I’m fine. Just tired after that 9 hour surgery I guess.” Hope let out a little chuckle, and she was being honest when she said she’s tired. But that’s the type of thing she loves about her job. Working for so long and getting the end result she and her patient wanted. Being a surgeon was rewarding as much as it was disappointing when a patient didn’t make it or an unknown factor is thrown into the mix, throwing you off guard and forcing you to go in blind.

“You’re a rockstar here, huh? Every OR nurse I meet is like, “If you have the chance to work with Dr. Solo in cardio, make sure you take it” or “Dr. Solo is the best surgeon around here, don’t get on her bad side” or “Dr. Solo talks so much about you, you must be special” Stuff like that” Kelley ended nonchalantly with a smirk.

“Yeah that sounds about right, the nurses lov- WAIT, I do not talk about you, you little liar!” Hope turned to Kelley who was silently laughing now.

“I wanted to see if I could slip that in there without you noticing and just agreeing to it!” Kelley was full blown laughing now and it made Hope smile to hear the very familiar sound.

“Oh you think you’re sneaky, Squirrel?” Hope had a sly smirk on her face before she attacked Kelley tickling her abdomen and sides.

Kelley’s eyes shot open and her laughs grew louder, “Solo! Stop, AHHH, stop! I am so” Kelley was trying to breathe to get her words out through laughter, “ticklish! Solo!” She was doubled over in laughter, her arms not strong enough to resist the tickle attack from the older doctor.

“Say surrender and I’ll stop! Say it” Hope loved watching Kelley not being able to control her laughter and laughed herself.

“N-NEVER!” Kelley mustered up all of the strength she had to grab Hope’s hands to stop the sources of torture.

Hope was caught off guard that Kelley was able to do that and found her arms pinned above her head, Kelley halfway leaning over her, other half still planted on the couch. She didn’t realize just how close Kelley’s face was to hers when she smelled bubblemint gum, the only gum Kelley chews because according to her it’s the best of both gum worlds.
“I think I won, don’t you?” Kelley gave her a cocky smile, although she had a momentary burst of strength, Hope wasn’t even resisting her restraint now and Kelley knew she was just holding her arms up, Hope didn’t fight her.

Hope looked down at the cocky smirk on Kelley’s face and up to her hazel eyes and repeated it. She made eye contact with Kelley and was about to tell her how pretty she always thought they were but she was interrupted by a loud knock on the door.

“Huh Solo, looks like the fresh meat has you beat already. I’m impressed, O’Hara” Karev said, plopping down in a matching chair to the couch adjacent to it.

Kelley whispered, “this isn’t over, Solo” with a smile before releasing her hands and kicking her feet back on the table in front of them.

“She thinks she can just tickle me and get away with it. But nope, I am the champ this time! I stopped the almighty Dr. Solo” Kelley finished with a bright smile and sat up with her fists on her hips like a powerful, brave knight or something.

Hope was still recovering from the thought of almost telling Kelley her eyes were pretty. She didn’t know why O’Hara made her think like this or even cause her to launch a tickle attack on her because tickling is not something Dr. Hope Solo did.

“Shut up, Karev. You too, Squirrel!” She shot them both looks and pointed in both of their directions.

“I am definitely Team O’Hara from now on. She is a freaking beast at peds and in the OR. Sorry, Solo” Karev popped some skittles in his mouth that he bought from the vending machine before making his way into the lounge.

“Whoop WHOOOOP! Thanks, dude it means a lot.” Kelley smiled and gave Karev a fist bump, glad her fellow thinks so highly of her and likes her.

“I’m glad Children’s didn’t send me another annoying doctor, I am sick of the baby talking, clueless, slow surgeons. I got lucky I guess” Karev shrugged, thinking out loud mainly to himself and popped more candy into his mouth.

“Must be the luck of the Irish!” Kelley chuckled at her own joke and looked over at Hope who would usually have some sort of remark for her but was once again lost in her own world.

“Leave it be, she’s had a weird day plus her big surgery tired her out I’m sure” Karev insisted, slapping Kelley’s hand away when she went to reach for some skittles.

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“She was napping on the couch when I came in to deliver her dinner for her, she might be still coming out of that sleep” Kelley motioned her hand to signal Karev to give her some candy.

He rolled his eyes and leaned forward, sprinkling some into her open palm. She threw them all into her mouth and smiled, a true child at heart.

Hope was still in a daze, trapped in her own thoughts and staring off into space her eyes fixated on a Picasso replica on the farthest wall. Why was she so comfortable around Kelley?

She has never taken a liking to someone so quickly, let alone get drunk with them twice and dance with them the way they did at the party. Or have them wake up in her house the morning after heavy drinking not once but twice. Much personal information hasn’t even been disclosed between the two doctors yet Hope felt a weird connection to Kelley than she did with Johnson, Karev or Carli. She
couldn’t put her finger on it which scared the shit out of her. Should she continue to be friends with someone that came so easily? Or should she retreat back to her old ways and keep her guard up to not ruin someone else’s life again with hers?

Her chest became tighter and the voices of Kelley and Karev bickering over which skittle flavor is the best became distant to her. She had to get out of there, it was becoming too much for her. She abruptly shot up to her feet and grabbed her bag to go home. She needed space and she needed fresh air and the stifling, sterile air and white tiles and lights didn’t help her cause. She ran out of the lounge without looking at either one of her friends and ran to the staircase, the elevator being too much for her to handle. Running down 5 flights of stairs and to her car, she then allowed herself to panic in her driver’s seat.

She started hyperventilating and rubbed her sweaty palms on her scrub pants covered thighs. She clenched her jaw and relaxed it what seemed like thousands of times trying to control her breathing. She did her deep breath exercises and tried relaxing her shoulders. Tears were burning behind her eyelids and threatening to escape. Crying was one of the things Hope hated to do, but whenever she had panic attacks it was inevitable.

She managed to deep breathe her way out of the attack and relaxed her body a bit. She collected herself before putting the keys into the ignition. Thankfully her shift was over and she didn’t have to be back until 9 am tomorrow morning for another big surgery.

She knew she was going to be receiving hundreds of texts from Kelley asking what the hell happened and she wasn’t sure she would want to answer them.

Kelley was making her freak out and she hadn’t figured out why yet. Perhaps distant would help her come to conclusion, or perhaps not.

Hope leaned her head back against the headrest and took a deep breath in again and let it out with a sigh, not knowing what to do about Kelley. She wanted a friendship with her but why was it taking such a toll on her mind? The only thing she could think of was that Kelley could possibly be another Jason, but that chance was very slim to none, like -97%.

She slammed her palm against the steering wheel just thinking about her ex-boyfriend and what he did to her and the hospital. To this day it still pisses her off enough to punch a hole in the wall.

She knew Kelley wasn’t like him at all and her judgment of character has improved since then, but she didn’t trust herself as much as she would like to yet.

She just hopes she figures this shit out before Kelley is fed up with her weird behavior and possibly shutting her out.

Meanwhile back in the hospital, Kelley gave Karev a look of pure confusion and shock, waiting for him to tell her what just happened.

“Relax. She probably overthought herself into a panic and didn’t want us to see her freak out. It’s happened numerous times.” Karev leaned back in his chair, not surprised at all over his friend’s actions.

“Karev! She just darted out of here faster than frickin’ Usain Bolt and you tell me to relax? She’s probably hyperventilating on the ground or something! Hope Solo does not freak out, it isn’t in her nature!” Kelley was wildly gesturing her hands around, working herself up.
“You don’t know her well enough yet. Give it time, give her time. She’ll tell you what happened or at least apologize for just running out.”

Kelley wasn’t convinced Hope was okay but she knew better than to prod the guarded doctor. She didn’t want Hope to be upset with her for trying to stick her nose in her business, but she just wanted to make sure she was okay.
Kelley really liked Hope and she knew that Hope at least tolerated her. She never made a friend as easily or quickly than she did with Hope. The guarded doctor was unlike any of her other friends in that she didn’t ask about Kelley’s life but rather waited until she wanted to tell her about herself. She knew there was a weird connection between the two of them, explaining why they got along so well and didn’t overstep boundaries others who consider themselves friends usually did.

Kelley took her phone out of her pocket and opened a new text window to send the older doctor a text. Her thumbs hovered over the keys before she tapped the cancel option and locked her phone. She just had a feeling that tonight wasn’t right to check up on her, but maybe tomorrow.

At Hope’s townhouse, she was in her bath soaking away the tension her anxiety attack caused with her phone in her hands. She almost looked like Rev Run with a towel behind her head, propping it up and allowing her to read her phone in the tub without getting it wet.

She was scrolling through her emails before she had a fleeting thought of texting Kelley to let her know she was okay and that she apologizes for just running out without an explanation. She opened a new text window and typed in “Squirrel” but deleted it and decided against texting her. Maybe space was the best option so she could figure out why the hell she was feeling and thinking like this.

She put her phone on the counter behind her and submerged herself underneath the water. This shit was harder than her 9 hour surgery.

Chapter End Notes

Who’s Jason? And are these two going to figure out why the hell they're so connected but reserved?
Chapter 9

Chapter Summary

Time flies when you're having fun

Chapter Notes

I am SO sorry it's been almost a month... I promise I'm still here even though my life is crazy at the moment. I hope you're still with me, homies. Much love xx

It’s been exactly 5 days since Hope abruptly left the hospital and had a panic attack, leaving a very confused Kelley behind.

Hope managed to steer clear of the smaller doctor in the hospital for the majority of the week. She knew she needed to talk to Kelley and try to minimally explain herself, but she hadn’t worked up the courage to do so. She threw herself into her cases and scheduled surgeries, dodging the few concerned glances her friends shot her way when she didn’t answer right away with her quick wit or put her two cents into their conversation.

The truth that she didn’t want to admit to herself, let alone anyone else, is that Kelley O’Hara scared her. The only other person that has ever scared her is her nephew, but that’s a whole different story and much more physical.

She didn’t let anyone, not ex-boyfriends, not her family members, no one in easily. Johnson, Karev and Carli built her trust over the past years but it still took that long and it wasn’t an easy task for any of them to be let in and see the true Hope Solo.

So when she felt her and Kelley getting closer in the short amount of time that they did, she panicked. Literally.

There’s a connection between the two of them that she can’t pinpoint and has tried and tried to figure out this past week, but nothing. She has no idea what the pull is to the childish, wild, free-spirited goofy friend of hers.

She always listened to her gut though. After everything that went down two years ago with Jason, Hope never ignored her gut instinct again. She ignored it once with him and it destroyed a little piece of her since. But rationally, she knew Kelley was different. She wouldn’t do what he did, she knew it.

That’s why when her gut told her to open up to Kelley more and get to know her better and slowly let her in, that’s exactly what she decided to do.

“Have you seen Kelley?” Hope approached Karev in the lounge, the first one to initiate conversation
in over a week with anyone.

Karev looked a little surprised but quickly turned curious when Hope looked a little nervous.

“Yeah, she’s my fellow, I see her all day every day, Solo. What’s up?” He asked, bending over to tie his sneakers.

“I want to clear things up with her. I’m sure she freaked out when the three of us were in the lounge last week and I bolted out of there. You’ve obviously seen me like that once or twice but she hasn’t and I didn’t want her to see me like that.” Hope looked down at her fingers absentmindedly picking the skin at the side of her thumb with her index finger nail.

“Hey, it’s all good, dude. I explained to her that sometimes you get worked up and dip out, that you just need some time to cool off by yourself when you go into overload mode.”

Hope dragged her eyes from her fiddling hands up to the back of Karev’s head as he was sitting on the bench, bent over and tying his other sneaker.

“Ow! What the hell, Solo?!” Karev rubbed the back of his head, an annoyed grimace on his face.

“That’s what you get for saying I get worked up and that I go into overload mode. I am cool, ice cold, Dr. Ice Queen. No overload mode for me.” Hope glared at him with a playful smirk on her face, hands on her hips.

“Yeah, yeah whatever! You’re welcome for not delving into details about your panicking tendencies! And you’re forgiven for slapping me in the back of the head.” He stood up and grabbed his lab coat.

“Now, if you’d excuse me, I have rounds to attend and sick, dying babies to heal with my amazing skills.” He pulled on his coat, popping his collar with extra umph.

Hope rolled her eyes and chuckled at her friend, secretly being appreciative that he didn’t tell Kelley anything about her or her “tendencies.” He’s a great friend and sees how similar they are, probably why they became friends in the first place.

Karev was almost outside of the room when he turned around and tossed Hope his pager. She was confused but looked down at the message which read, “Another fight w/ Coll. Soccer v Football, see u soon”

Hope tossed the pager back and looked at Karev like he had two heads, but felt the corners of her mouth turn upwards.

“Room 405, you’re gonna want to see this.” Karev smiled and left leaving Hope even more confused.

The pediatrics wing was never her favorite floor at all. Kids made her uncomfortable as it was, but sick kids and kids who were near death freaked her out even more.

The only time she enjoyed being around kids is when they’re knocked out on her operating table so she doesn’t have to verbally interact with them.

But yet here she was, passing by nurses in flower and cute, little animal clad scrubs and other healthcare professionals dawned in pink and decorated ID tags. Hope felt so out of place that she
wanted to lock herself in her dark gray room and wallow in her dark and twisty self just to get rid of all of the bright and cheerful stuff around her.

Her feet brought her to Room 405 and she knew she had the right room when she heard that high, loud voice screaming about something trivial with a 6 year old.

“Collin, soccer is WAAAY better than football! It’s the original football!” Kelley exclaimed, hands in the air, head leaning towards the small kid in the bed.

“No no no! Football is so much cooler with the helmets and the tackling! It’s so much funner to watch, Dr. K!” Collin had his arms crossed over his chest, shaking his head while arguing his sport of choice.

“Soccer players tackle! They sliiiide tackle, have you ever seen them do that before?! It’s so cool, like a ninja doing it so fast and secretive! Slide tackling is so much funner!”

“Is not!”

“Is too!”

“Is not!”

“Is too!” Kelley and Collin’s heads snapped to the doorway when they heard a third party’s voice enter the room.

“Soccer is so much cooler, they play a rough sport and tackle without any helmets or protection except shin guards!” Hope supplied, leaning against the doorframe of the hospital room.

“Really?! I didn’t know that! But they have cool plays and have really cool touchdowns!” Collin yelled, growing more excited about the sport he was debating for, already opening up the conversation to another person.

Hope laughed and shook her head, “soccer players make plays! They’re just sneakier about it so you don’t even know they did until they score a goal, which is like a touchdown!”

“But what about the funny dance after they score?!” Collin cocked his head to the side, being more and more convinced.

“Oh they have thee coolest dance moves, I promise! They even lay on the ground and pretend to make snow angels in the grass too, or jump kick in the air like ninjas or secret spies!”

“Wooooah! Cool! Maybe you’re right, Dr. K! Soccer might be funner than football..”

“Although funner isn’t a word, it’s more fun,” Hope supplied, not being able to pass up the opportunity for a grammar lesson.”

Collin nodded in understanding and went back to playing his football video game on his Gameboy.

Hope willed herself to look over at Kelley who was sitting in the visitor’s chair awestruck. She looked like she got smacked with the dumb stick the way her jaw was wide open and eyebrows furrowed in confusion. Hope let out a little snort and moved her hand to cover her nose and mouth.

“I-I.. what? How are you? Where have you been?” Kelley shook her head and slowly stood up, careful to approach Hope.

“I’ve been thinking, Squirrel. I didn’t mean to alarm you last week, I just froze and freaked out over
something stupid. I didn’t mean to just leave you hanging and ignore you. I’m sorry.” Hope cast her gaze down at her hands that were now playing with her stethoscope, not wanting to see Kelley’s reaction.

“As long as you’re okay! Jesus, you scared me! But Karev told me not to worry, even though I may have just a little… I’m glad you’re back in my presence so I can charm you with my personality even more now,” Kelley raised her eyebrows, placing her hands under her chin and flashing Hope a megawatt smile.

Hope chuckled and rolled her eyes, gently and playfully pushing Kelley by the shoulder.

Kelley laughed and looked at Hope’s eyes, happy to see there was a gleam of something in there. Before she abruptly left in the lounge, she didn’t see that hint of something in them, she didn’t see anything at all.

Hope looked down into Kelley’s noticing they were extra bright at the moment and was going to comment before a little voice interrupted them.

“Dr. K, are you ready for our rematch?!” Collin asked, holding up the second Gameboy so they could play another round of Mario Kart together.

“Oh you’re so on!” Kelley scurried over to the bedside, connecting their Gameboys and setting their game up.

“Should we let Dr. Hope play the winner after this game?” Kelley asked Collin, smiling up at Hope who looked like a deer in the headlights.

“Yeah, she’s so cool!”

“I agree.” Kelley warmly smiled at Hope before fixing her gaze back on the DS to whoop some 6 year old ass.

“I told you that you shouldn’t have played as Bowser! He slows you down! You should’ve stuck with Yoshi and the first cart that showed up!” Kelley explained, whining here and there.

“How was I supposed to know that the little green fucker was better than the mean, badass looking one?!?” Hope defended herself, questioning the information given to her by the smaller doctor.

“I can’t believe that’s your first time playing! What did you do during your childhood?!” Kelley asked in disbelief, reaching for the prepared fresh fruit the cafeteria supplied that afternoon.

“You don’t want to know…” Hope mumbled under her breath, reaching for a water bottle and banana once they reached the cold section of the cafeteria line.

“What was that?” Kelley asked not hearing what Hope said from beside her.

“I said I was reading books about anatomy and biology.” It wasn’t a lie, but it wasn’t what she just said.

“I could’ve guessed that, you’re a surgical genius! Medical extraordinaire!” Kelley exclaimed, raising her arm up in a regal manner, pretending to announce the Queen of England’s entrance or something.
Hope rolled her eyes, the usual when it comes to spending time with Kelley, and decided on a Greek salad for lunch today.

She looked over and saw what the younger doctor had on her tray- A peanut butter and jelly sandwich, a fruit cup, a bag of mini cookies, a bag of Doritos and a chocolate milkshake.

They paid for their meals and found an empty table next to the large window overlooking the busy streets of downtown Boston from the second floor.

“I still don’t understand how you manage to eat like that and still be fit. You would think you’d be 500 pounds and bed-ridden” Hope said, pointing her fork down towards Kelley’s tray.

“I already told you, I work out quite a bit and I have a fast metabolism! Plus this food is super good and makes my taste buds happy.” Kelley took a chomp out of her sandwich, smiling as she was chewing like a little kid pleased with the PB&J their mother provided in their lunch.

Hope shook her head and stabbed her fork into the spinach, feta and grilled chicken and popped it into her mouth. She was glad that a simple apology appeased Kelley and they were back to their bantering selves. She didn’t want things to be awkward between them.

November flew by.

November is always the month that seems to fly by the fastest and with Thanksgiving, comes many injuries coming from the kitchen.

Bostonians were filled to the max, the actual maximum capacity, at the hospital and that means all hands were on deck. Sure most cases were just a hand that needed to be stitched up after cutting the turkey went awry, but the amount of ER nurses and doctors weren’t enough for that day.

Kelley and Hope found themselves sitting next to each other giving a mother and her son burn treatments on their stomach and shoulder after the little boy ran into his mom who was holding the hot turkey pan.

He ran into her while chasing his cousin which jolted his mother who then spilled turkey grease on her apron, onto her stomach and some splashing out to hit the boy’s shoulder. Two hours later and they’re being treated by two doctors who are laughing at the incident, thinking about the two of them being in that situation.

“You would be Carter over here and I’d be Ms. Palmer. You’d run into me chasing a squirrel or something and I’d end up hurting the both of us because of it.” Hope snorted, shaking her head while cutting the graft that would go over Ms. Palmer’s burn area.

“Wait, why would there be a squirrel in the house?” Kelley scrunched her eyebrows in confusion and tilted her head, cutting the sutures that surrounded the new skin on the boy’s shoulder.

“With you, who knows.” Hope finished the graft, apologizing to Ms. Palmer who winced and suppressed her pain while the treatment occurred.

She placed a bandage over the healing area and wrote on her Rx pad for a pain killer for the mother, handing her the script.

“Alright, little man, you were so good! So brave and strong.” Kelley wrote a script for a different
pain killer children use and an antibiotic to kill the bacteria and infection that was bound to appear on
the open skin.

She high fived him and ruffled his hair, saying goodbye and telling them both to follow up with the
ER doctor in a week and to call if there are any concerns with the healing process if something
happened.

“Two down, 50 to go,” Kelley huffed, cracking her neck and fingers.

“Happy Thanksgiving, Squirrel.”

It’s been three months since this smaller woman showed up in the ER. Three months since she
discovered her abnormal heart rate/rare heart condition. Three months since she found something in
those green hazel eyes. Three months since she has made the fastest, strangest friendship ever.

But in those three months, Dr. Hope Solo has discovered that Kelley loves action movies and would
prefer to be the bad cop in a “good cop/bad cop” situation. She learned that her favorite drink is
chocolate milk and she also played soccer at Stanford. She has two siblings and both of her parents
are in her life and she loves to surf whenever she’s near the ocean.

Hope has also picked up on her nervous and excited tendencies, the way she adjusts her watch
around her wrist while she’s speaking to an attending or chief. How she scrunches her nose and
squints her eyes while she laughs and that she wants to move into an apartment that will allow her to
own a dog soon.

Hope has learned all of these things in the past three months and yet it feels like it’s been two days
since they’ve met.

The fact that they talk and move around each other so effortlessly and carefree makes Hope happy
and scared at the same time.

She doesn’t want to be a completely open book, but have Kelley read each chapter before she hits
the dark and twisty ones where she would slam the book so quickly that the bound would come
undone.

She’s afraid to let another human into her life because she’s afraid. She’s afraid she’ll be way too
vulnerable and allow Kelley to know her and that she’ll be too freaked out and not want to be her
friend anymore.

She’s been through this process three different times with Karev, Carli and Johnson and her gut each
time told her that it was okay, that they were genuinely interested in knowing her as a person.

So when her gut told her to stick with the friendship between her and Kelley, she did. She listened to
everything the younger doctor said and even provided a bunch of information about herself to
Kelley.

The dark and twisty stuff hasn’t been brought up yet and Hope wanted to keep it that way for as long
as she could until she 100% knew that Kelley wanted to stick around.

“Tobs, I don’t know what to get Yolo for Christmas…” Kelley said, picking up the mini basketball
and tossing it back to her friend.
“What does she like, dude?” Tobin questioned, squaring up to shoot the mini ball into the small basket hung up on Kelley’s wall in her living room.

“She likes surgery, reading, her dogs, being sarcastic…” Kelley turned and pseudo-dunked the ball into the plastic rim.

“Why don’t you get her a new book? Has she talked about any new ones she’s been wanting to read?”

“Nope, she’s just always reading during her downtime. She tries to discuss books but I think she gets the hint to stop while my eyes glaze over when I tune her out and think about donuts.”

Kelley picks up the ball again after Tobin shot, walking over to the couch and plopping down next to her.

“Oh dude, how good does a donut sound right now?” Tobin licked her lips, throwing the ball up and catching it repeatedly.

Kelley swatted it out of the air and turned to Tobin, “will you focus?!”

Tobin sighed and kicked her feet up on the coffee table in front of them, bringing her hand up to her chin, stroking the imaginary beard and looking like she’s in deep thought.

“What about something funny and personal that only you two will understand but she would appreciate it?”

“Like a shiny new stethoscope or a live squirrel I find in the park?” Kelley listed off things that described the both of them.

“No like think about really funny times you guys had and get her something that represents that awesome and hilarious moment between you two.”

Kelley was deep in thought and it finally hit her. She sat up straight and snapped her fingers, “I thought of something! But first, let’s go to the bakery and grab a donut because I really want one.”

Tobin sprang up and opened the door, stepping out to leave before Kelley said, “Don’t you think you should put some shoes on, dude?”

Tobin looked down at her feet and shrugged, slipping her feet into some sandals before holding the door open for Kelley.

“Tobs, it’s winter time. You do get that, right?” Kelley asked, slipping her coat on and sliding her feet into boots.

“It’s not snowing, so I’m all good, bro. No worries”

At least she was wearing a beanie and a jacket, Kelley thought while she rolled her eyes and grabbed her wallet.

Hope was rubbing off on her, she used to rarely roll her eyes but now she found herself doing it much more frequently.

“So what are you doing for the holidays, Solo?” Carli asked, sipping her cup of mediocre coffee as she and Hope sat on a bench outside together.
"What I usually do- Take shifts here and help out in the ER with the inevitable holiday injuries idiots get themselves into." Hope sipped her black coffee letting the bitter liquid sit on her tongue before swallowing, letting it warm her up.

"We should have a Christmas dinner with Johnson and Karev. We can have Johnson cook since he's the only one who knows how."

"Hey, that's not true! I can cook and you know it."

Carli bumped her leg into Hope's letting her know she was just playing around. "You could even invite Kelley if you want to. The three of us like her a lot." Carli suggested, sipping the coffee again.

"Oh I don't know. Do you think it's too soon or too weird? I bet she already has plans with her family down in Georgia anyways." Hope tried to cover the slight disappointment she felt in her stomach when she suggested that Kelley wouldn't be there for the holidays.

"I don't know, Solo. She seems like she's staying put this year, or so I've been told." Carli smirked behind her cup, holding it with both hands to keep her warm. Why were they outside anyways?

"You two talked about it? She didn't tell me her plans," Hope said almost defensively and slightly offended, "But whatever, that's cool I guess." She tried playing it off but Carli knew she was sort of upset.

"Listen, we were just talking about what we usually do and I asked, don't get so defensive so quickly" Carli could read her friend pretty well after 10 years of knowing each other and knew what she was feeling by reading her emotions and reactions.

Hope sighed and took another sip of the hot liquid thinking about whether or not to invite the squirrel.

"Alright."

"Alright?"

"Yeah, alright. I want to invite her. I guess this can be her official "Hope Solo's close friend" invitation." Hope peered out over the streets of lightly snow covered Boston, making a decision while people watching.

"Woah, alright Solo! This is big, I'm excited. What are you going to get her for Christmas?" Carli asked, turning towards Hope after her proclamation of new friendship.

"Oh shit, I have no idea." Hope's eyes widen and she pulled her bottom lip between her teeth to think about what to get the younger doctor for the holiday.

"Well can we think about it inside? I'm fucking freezing!" Carli shivered from the gust of cold wind and shoved her hands in her coat pockets.

They made their way back into the hospital and into the attendings lounge to shed their winter gear off and put their lab coats back on.

"What are you going to get the little one for Christmas?" Carli wondered out loud, looping her stethoscope around her neck.

Hope just shrugged her shoulders and checked her watch for the time.
She had no idea what to get Kelley for Christmas, but she knew it had to be good.
Chapter 10

Chapter Summary

Christmas decorations and the magic doctor

Chapter Notes

See? Two updates in two days! I still love you fellow O'Solo Trash members :) This made me happy writing this chapter, let me know if it made you all warm and fuzzy too! We're getting somewhere, homies! Enjoy xx

“Are you so excited for Christmas in a couple of weeks?!” Kelley asked, bouncing from foot to foot, hands clasped in front of her.

You hold back a chuckle and just smile at her and shake your head at how childlike she is.

“I guess so, I don’t do much for the holiday…” You say, seeing how she reacts to your unequal amount of enthusiasm for the holiday.

“You GUESS so? Don’t you love the music and the movies and the cookies and the lights?!?” Kelley listed off animatedly, a vibe of sunshine and excitement radiating from her whole being.

“I don’t really participate in any of that, O’Squirrel. I tend to spend my holidays in the ER so other doctors don’t have to be here and actually get to celebrate with their families.”

You stop and compare two types of toilet bowl cleaner, Lysol and Clorox being the options.

Kelley takes the Clorox one out of your hand and places it in the cart without saying anything about how it’s better the choice.

You shrug and push the red cart down the cleaning supplies aisle looking for a pack of new sponges.

“That’s not fun, Dr. Yolo! You need to celebrate this year. The first Christmas of our friendship will not be spent casting broken limbs from people falling off their rooves from hanging Christmas lights up there. We already spent Turkey Day there; we need to get you in the festive spirit!”

She made another decision for you again picking the 3 pack of sponges with the scrubby part on the other side compared to the 5 pack with the shittier scrubby part.

You sigh as you turn the cart, going towards the shampoo aisle. You both have the day off from work and she wanted to run errands with you hence why she’s following you next to the cart picking products for you in the aisles of Target, or Tahget as pronounced by the Bostonians.

“Would you like to come to Christmas dinner this year? Johnson and I are cooking at my place and the Three Musketidiots are coming and we all want you to come.”
Hope snuck a glance looking up from the Treseme bottle at Kelley to gauge her reaction.

The sudden restriction around your arms makes you jump in the air and yelp, causing the bottle of shampoo to fall and break open on the white tile in front of you.

“Oops… I’m just so excited! Yes I would love to come! A friends’ Christmas celebration, what could be better?!” Kelley squealed in delight, constricting your arms even more.

“That bottle of shampoo in my cart not broken would be nice…” You grimace down at the liquidy gel substance.

“I’m sorry! Let me go find a worker to clean it up,” Kelley steps away from you going on the hunt for a worker until you wrap your hand around her bicep and keep her in place.

“Just leave it,” You suggest, not wanting to be the culprit of spilling a product.

“Hope!”

“Kelley?!”

“We can’t just leave it there! What if someone slips and falls?!”

Kelley protested your suggestion, gesturing all over the place and started rambling about safety precautions.

“Oh my god, I get it I get it!” You put your hand up in front of her to signal her to stop talking.

“Go find a damn worker and I’ll be near the Christmas stuff…”

You hold your smirk down, trying to stay serious to see if your plan will work.

“Wha-what?! Christmas stuff, without me?” Kelley pouted, giving you her puppy dog eyes that you swear has no effect on you whatsoever, yet you’ve found yourself in some weird predicaments when you caved.

“Time is of the essence, little one! We can’t have our cake and eat it too,” you push the cart away from the shampoo bottle and head over to the Christmas section.

“But the shampoo… and the safety hazards…” She sounds torn between staying there and finding a worker or following you to look at all of the holiday decorations.

You hum to yourself and reach the end of the aisle and turn your cart to the left until you feel a heavy weight added to the cart.

You look forward and see the younger doctor standing on the bars in the front of the cart, holding on to the edge of it and facing you with a huge ass grin.

“I think you made the right choice, O’Hara” You say, smiling at her pushing herself away from the cart but still holding on to it.

Her back is arched in the air until she squats down, still holding on to the cart with her butt near the floor.

“Careful or I’ll accidentally tip the cart up and you’ll land right on your ass.” You tease and smirk at her.
She huffs and stands back up on the cart, sticking her tongue out at you and swivels her head around to see the display of all of their trees and lights for sale.

She smacks the cart a few times signaling for you to stop it so she can jump off and go explore. You follow her around with the cart, enjoying the different colored lights and cute decorations they have.

“Are we going to decorate your house?! Ooo, we could get Sash and Ony matching Christmas outfits!” She says excitedly, clapping her hands and jumping in place.

You smile at the nicknames she gives your babies that she’s come to know quite well these past months and you groan knowing that somehow you’re going to be wrapped up in all of this when you don’t want to at all.

$350 and a car load of Christmas garb later, you make it home with everything unloaded from your Rover.

“How did you manage to talk me into getting all of this crap?”

You look around at the multiple bags scattering the floor full of lights, ornaments, inflatables, wreaths and these two plush penguins who sing “We Wish You a Merry Christmas” that Kelley informs you that it’s the two of you.

“Christmas is in two weeks! We need to get started!” Kelley yells, hands in the air like a mad woman.

“I don’t know where to start… Although I would like to start with a cup of coffee.”

You nod in agreement with yourself and head over to your beloved Keurig before popping a dark roast pod in there to give you the energy you so badly need.

“Wait, wait!” Kelley stops you before rustling around in a couple of bags before prancing over to you and handing you a mug that says, “Keep Calm and Don’t be a” on one side and, “Cotton Headed Ninny Muggins” on the other.

“What the hell is a cotton headed ninny muggins?”

Your face is twisted up in confusion not knowing what this Christmas squirrel bought you. Well technically you bought it, but she placed it in the cart.

You hear her gasp and look to see her hand to her chest, face in shock and you think she might be having a heart attack.

“Hey, hey are you okay? Is it your heart?”

You place the mug on the counter and move to open the junk drawer in the kitchen to grab your extra stethoscope.

She grabs your hand to stop you, feeling the jolt of electricity run up your arm per usual, and cocks her head to the side, mouth still agape, eyes wide.

“You’ve never seen Elf before?” She barely gets out through her surprised demeanor.

“Elf? Mmm nope, can’t say that I have. Is that where the saying is from?”
You close the drawer and pick up the mug again inspecting the phrase on it again.

“You are a sinner.” She points at you and jerk your head back at her serious tone.

“I cannot, CANNOT believe you haven’t seen my number one most watched, favorite Christmas movie. This is tragic, this is blasphemy!”

She all but screams, gripping your shoulders and shaking you back and forth.

“Is it really that good? I’ve only seen a few Christmas movies before. I didn’t watch Christmas movies or go all out while I was growing up, Kell.”

The mix of the nickname she gave you and the heartbreaking fact that her childhood wasn’t fun especially during the best time of the year melts and breaks your heart.

You take your hands off her shoulders and stand up straight.

“Here’s what’s going to happen. We have approximately 17 days until Christmas, which means we are going to watch the 25 Days of Christmas movies within those days. Now I know what you’re thinking, “How are we, the busy and amazing surgeons we are, going to be able to watch 25 movies in just 17 days?” but I assure you, my friend, we will accomplish this. And during every movie or movies, we will have Christmas snacks and hot chocolate and wear Christmas attire. This will be the best Christmas you’ve had yet. You can bet your ass on that one, Solo.”

You stare at her like she just told you she was actually 6 ft tall and you blink a few times at the woman who has her hands on her hips standing like a superhero looking you in the eye and nodding.

“Oh yeah, it’s going to be amazing.” She squints her eyes, slowly nodding and tapping her finger to her chin already scheming the days to come.

You nod your head unable to react to the plans she just laid out in front of you and know that you’re in for a lot more than you expect.

After 5 hours of decorating both the interior and exterior of your home, going out to buy a real tree because Kelley insists you shouldn’t have a fake one, and both of you chasing the dogs and wrangling them in to put their outfits to see if they fit because you two argued over whether they’d need a large or extra-large, you finally finish.

You plop down on your couch next to Kelley and hand her a beer before taking a huge gulp of your own. She gladly accepts the bottle and takes a long swig of her own before resting her chin on top it, arms crossed.

“This house looks damn good!” She compliments her decorating skills and physically pats herself on the back.

You roll your eyes and take in your surroundings noticing how much cozier the house felt. You can’t deny it, the squirrel doctor did a pretty good job laying it all out and adding her creative touch. The tree was the perfect size for your townhouse living room and was decorated in gold tinsel, red ornaments and a big gold and red star on the top.

The rest of the house had garland and lights strewn along the edges of the windows, doorways and followed the lines of the ceilings. Three stockings were over the fireplace each red with a gold H, S
and O on them. It was nice to see your house festive for once and looked to your right to see a sleeping Kelley O’Hara on your couch, beer abandoned on the coffee table in front of you.

You laugh at the sight in front of you and place your bottle next to hers before grabbing the remote for the lights and dimming them so they wouldn’t prevent her from sleeping. The sound of hushed classical Christmas music, a type of holiday music you two compromised on, the crackling coming from the fireplace and now the light snores of the sleeping woman next to you are the only things that you focus on.

You sit back against the couch, your body turning towards your friend and you lean your head back on your hand that is being propped up by your arm that’s supported by the back of the couch.

Your gaze flickers between the flames coming from the fireplace and the way it illuminates the face of the snoring doctor besides you.

Reflecting on the past few months you’ve experienced with your new friend has been so weird and new. No one has ignited the childlike spirit deep deep deep within your soul like she does. While you two were hanging the lights outside of your house and putting the inflatable on your back deck, as requested by Kelley so that all sides of the house would be decorated, she picked up a snowball and threw it at your back which ultimately led to a huge snowball fight.

That wouldn’t have happened this winter or any winters to come if you hadn’t had met her. You look down and see this goofy little squirrel twitch in her sleep and you feel a warmth of what? Joy within yourself? You can’t put your finger on it but you know it has something to do with how alive and spirited Kelley is. It just rubs off on you and you’re aware of it, whether you admit that to her or not.

You stare into the fireplace, mesmerized by the flames while you think about the amount of time she has weaseled her way into your life.

You were so scared not too long ago about letting her in and showing her your weak side, but it seems like your gut is telling you that it’s okay and so far it’s been more than okay.

The fact that she wants you to experience a Christmas like you’ve never had before is a sign that she wants you to be happy and that she is willing to take her time and spend it with you this holiday season then go back to Georgia and spend time with her family who she always speaks so fondly of.

You’re so deep in your thoughts like you usually find yourself in that you didn’t even notice that she shifted her position so her head is laying in your lap now.

You look down and see her facing your body instead of the fireplace, arms curled against her chest, legs bent with her feet pressed against the arm of the couch. Her eyebrow is furrowed in her sleep and you take a second to wonder what she’s dreaming about.

Without thinking, you run you finger down her forehead to her nose to relax her facial muscles. Her eyebrows raise as a reflex and she snuggles her head further into your leg. With the hand that isn’t holding your head up, you run your fingers through the messy hair that escaped her loose bun.

You hear a content sigh leave her mouth and you realize what you’re doing.

It was just a reaction and you pull your hand back, letting it rest on the other leg that Kelley’s head isn’t occupying.

She grunts in discontentment before smacking her lips a couple times and snuggling against your right leg again.
You force your eyes to leave her face and look at the fireplace again getting lost in your thoughts once again.

Kelley O’Hara definitely made you feel warmer than you have been in a while and you aren’t sure that you mind.

A week has passed and you’ve been so busy at work with surgeries you’ve spent more time in on call rooms than at your house. Thankfully your neighbor Lily is cool about watching the dogs while you’re stuck here.

In the past 7 days, you’ve had a total of 10 major surgeries and 20 other procedures that weren’t as lengthy or challenging but that still wiped you out.

This is what you live for. The pumping of their hearts on their own after heart damage or a mishap that left them struggling to circulate blood through their bodies. You love the fact that you know the heart and circulatory system so well that you can figure out what’s going on the moment you listen to their heart and see a few scans.

It’s what you’re trained to do and it’s what you’ve always wanted to do. Fix hearts.

You’ve wanted to fix hearts ever since you’ve witnessed your father having a heart attack and not knowing what to do except call 911.

You’ve wanted to fix hearts ever since your mother never recovered from hers being broken.

You’ve wanted to fix hearts ever since yours went cold and has been damaged since.

So when you get a new patient and have to repair their heart, you step up to the challenge and make it your mission to fix them.

When Karev pages you, you think you might kill him from waking you up from your nap. You haven’t slept well in days and now you have the chance after your major surgery and before your last minor procedure of the night and your bonehead friend wakes you up.

You squint to read the message and roll your eyes before grumbling and rolling off the bed onto your feet. You stretch your sore limbs out before grabbing your lab coat and yawning into your hand.

Back to the pediatric wing and back to all of the cutesy shit surrounding you. You find Karev in Room 405, the same room you argued with little Collin over which sport was cooler.

You stand in the doorway and see Karev and Kelley interacting with the little boy in his bed. You clear your throat to make your presence known and lean against the doorframe.

“Dr. K you brought the cool doctor back!” Collin said excitedly, pumping his little fist in the air.

“I did indeed, little dude! She’s the magic doctor I was telling you about!” Kelley said, grabbing his leg and shaking it back and forth to get him even more pumped up.

“Magic doctor, huh?” You push off the doorframe and stand in front of Karev and Kelley waiting for them to explain why she was summoned.

“Yeah, little man, Dr. Hope is going to fix your heart for you,” Karev explained, telling Collin the good news but keeping eye contact with Hope.

You nod in agreement and give Collin a small smile, “I’m the magic doctor alright! These two are going to be my helpers while I work my magic and make you all better”
“Then I get to go home?!” Collin looked at the three doctors, hoping he’d finally get to leave after all of the tests and waiting for a new heart.

“If my magic is as amazing as it usually is, you will be home in 14 days.” Hope figured how many days post-op would be for a transplant for a kid and gave him her best prediction.

“YUS!” He pumped his little fist in the air again before wiggling his butt in the hospital bed focusing on the Barbie doll and toy dinosaur he had.

Hope jerked her head in the direction of the door to let Karev and Kelley know that she wanted to speak to them outside.

“Alright, we’ll be back soon, cool cat. We have to set everything up for the magic show later. I’ll have Nurse Amy come in and check on you, okay?” Kelley held her fist out for a fist bump and smiled when he returned the gesture.

“I’m guessing a transplant tonight?” Hope inferred, looking at her two friends.

“Yep, just received confirmation from the donors list that they found a match for him. And it’ll be here in 5 hours.” Karev explained, happy that the kid finally got a match for this to happen.

“And you need me to perform the transplant because…?” Hope questioned, knowing the two of them would be able to do it on their own without her, so she was genuinely curious.

“Because he has cardiomyopathy and when we ran the CT scans, the muscle was much more damaged and weakened than we thought and we don’t want any unnecessary complications with the removal because of it. We need a cardio expert in there and I guess that would be you, Dr. Solo” Kelley smiled at her, knowing the older doctor would take on the case.

“I know, I know I’m pretty damn great at my job,” she smirked and chuckled.

“Can I have a copy of the scans to see this kid’s heart?” She asked, holding her hand out for the file.

Karev placed it in her hand and nodded at both of them, “I have to go check on two more kids before I call Berkshire General to get the heart.”

Hope was reading the test reports and scanning over the CT scans when she felt eyes on her. She looked up to see an excited looking Kelley, “Yeeees?” She asked tentatively.

“It’s our first surgery together!” Kelley said in her excited tone, one that Hope has grown to identify rather quickly. The woman was always excited about something or another.

“Yes, it is” Hope said nonchalantly going back to review this boy’s medical history and current status before heading into surgery in 6 hours.

“You aren’t excited to work together?! I’ve never seen you in action other than the time you were my doctor in the ER but that doesn’t count because it wasn’t surgical!”

“You’re right, but don’t be too excited… I don’t like too much excitement in my OR. I encourage positive vibes and energy, but nothing extreme that it throws everything out of whack.” Hope gently warned

“Are you superstitious or something? I wouldn’t have ever guessed that!” Kelley looked skeptical but still excited
“I personally only have a 8% mortality rate and the hospital has a 29% mortality rate, so yes, I am a little superstitious when it comes to my OR and what happens. Ask Johnson, he’ll tell you all about it.

“Oh man, what if I mess something up in there? Does that mean no 25 Days of Christmas movies anymore?” Kelley looked like her puppy was going to be taken away from her with the look on her face.

“Relax, you’ll be fine. Just follow protocol and assist with Karev and everything will go smoothly.” Hope smiled at Kelley who was looking more at ease.

This was going to be interesting.

The transplant went smoothly and Hope was glad and interested in seeing how well the squirrel did in the OR, especially under her pretty strict conditions. She stepped up to the plate and definitely made the surgery smoother.

Hope had the next day off due to her crazy non-stop work week and was so grateful that she would be able to sleep in.

She offered for Kelley to come over to squeeze their 10th movie in on their list. They have 15 more movies to go in 10 days. They’ve already had double featured nights where they watched two movies after work and have been going strong despite the hectic work week.

Tonight was no exception as How The Grinch Stole Christmas was next on their list. They had a routine down where they would change into their Christmas pajamas, make their Christmas snack and hot chocolate and sit on the couch and watch the movie.

Hope actually enjoyed the Christmas films and was eager to compare the last one to the next. She didn’t admit that to Kelley though and pretended to put up a fight when they had to put their Christmas onesies on. Hope’s was red and white striped so she looked like a giant candy cane while Kelley’s was designed to make her look like a reindeer with a hood attached with plush antlers sewn on.

Hope was already on the couch clad in her onesie while Kelley brought a plate of gingerbread cookies and two mugs of hot chocolate out. Hope was getting sick of the constant sweet beverage, so Kelley mixed it with decaf coffee to balance the sugar and bitterness out.

“Ready to start?” Kelley asked, grabbing the remote and aiming it towards the TV waiting for Hope’s confirmation.

“Yeah, start it up, squirrel” Hope smiled sipping her drink and snuggling further into the couch. Kelley pressed play and grabbed two cookies before kicking her feet up on the coffee table. She handed a cookie to Hope before taking a bite of hers and pretending to be the gingerbread man screaming because she bit his head off.

Hope snorted and shook her head at the act and act hers limb from limb, much more tortuous in Kelley’s opinion.

As the movie rolled on, Kelley was quoting it word for word getting excited at the part where the Grinch goes into town and is awarded as the Holiday Cheermeister.

“This is the funniest part!” Kelley looked over to tell Hope but saw that she was asleep.
She leaned her arm across the back of the couch she’s become accustomed to and took her time studying the woman’s face, noticing how tired she looked. Hope kept her updated with the big surgeries and procedures she had and saw them all on the surgery board in the hallway. She knew how hard she worked and how much energy she put into each case. She admired how strong and skillful she was, especially when it came to Collin’s case.

She was in no means happy that she got into a car accident a few months ago with her friends, but she was glad she found such a good friend in the big, bad Dr. Hope Solo. She knew people, including Hope, thought it was an unlikely friendship but for some reason they clicked. They bantered and bickered, laughed and joked, and just felt comfortable around each other like they’ve known each other for years.

Kelley knew a good person and friend when she came across one and automatically knew Hope was going to be a best friend of hers. Ever since they met eyes in the ER and after Hope calmed her down after her panic attack and checked to make sure her friends were okay, she knew they were going to be close.

So when Hope leaned into her, head nestled between her arm that was on the back of the couch and her chest, she automatically wrapped her arm her waist which made the older woman snuggle deeper into the younger doctor’s body.

Kelley subconsciously leaned down and placed a kiss on top of her head, smoothing the hair over with her free hand and resting her cheek on top of Hope’s head. She felt closer to Hope than her other friends and didn’t really understand why.

She was happy with how much they’ve learned about each other and how their friendship has grown stronger recently.

She was content with Hope sleeping against her and willed her eyes to look at the screen to watch the rest of the movie.

She stifled her laughter as to not wake the sleeping doctor when she realized that Hope really was the Grinch. A good person deep down who everyone thought was mean and evil, but really he was misunderstood and bitter after not being treated nicely.

Kelley looked down at Hope again and let her mind wander to think about Hope’s past and what she went through. She knew she didn’t have the happiest past and childhood but never prodded for information to allow her the freedom and decision to tell Kelley when she was ready. Karev, Johnson and Carli all hinted at the fact that Hope didn’t have it easy and that’s why she had such a hard exterior, but never delved into details to respect her friend’s privacy.

She knew Hope would talk about it when she wanted to, learning that you can’t force her to talk about anything unless she was ready.

And Kelley would wait.
Chapter 11

Chapter Summary

Shots, shots, shots, shots!

Chapter Notes

Two more finals and then I'm free! I may or may not have written this to procrastinate studying but hey! At least it's a new chapter. Enjoy, let me know what you're feeling, homies!

3 days after Collin’s heart surgery, Hope and Kelley found themselves being convinced to go out with Johnson, Carli and Karev at a new club that just opened up in downtown Boston called Impulse.

It was obviously packed on a Friday night and the 5 doctors weren’t sure if they made the right decision to come here with hundreds of people packed into the modern, hip dance club.

Kelley and Hope took a separate cab than the other 3 because they were coming from Hope’s house after watching one of their Christmas movies.

Kelley had brought her clubbing outfit and pajamas to the hospital to just bring with her when she went to Hope's house afterwards. She was excited to have a fun night out with her friends and knew that they all needed it after the week they’ve all had in surgical land.

“Hey Hope...” Kelley called out from the guest bedroom walking towards Hope’s room to ask for an extra brush she seemed to have forgotten in her bag.

Hope didn’t hear her coming from down the hall as she was listening to Flex (Ooh, Ooh, Ooh) by Rich Homie Quan in her tight skinny jeans and black bra while she was looking for a shirt to wear. The song came on shuffle from a playlist on Spotify and she liked the beat so she found herself dancing to it. She has been in a good mood recently, not really knowing why, but not thinking much of it either.

“Hey, do you have a br-“ Kelley’s question was cut short when she took in the sight before her.

Dr. Hope Solo leaning back and dancing with her arms in front, rolling her shoulders and really feeling the beat of the song on. Kelley’s eyes trailed down from her upper body, to her muscular back that rippled with each movement from her arms, to her ass in those sinfully tight jeans, down to her toned muscular legs in said jeans.

Kelley tried wetting her lips but her mouth was much too dry at what she was seeing and couldn’t rip her eyes away from Hope’s moving body. Where was her shirt? Where was Kelley’s saliva in her mouth? Why was she ogling her good friend?
Her thread of questions that attacked her mind were cut short when Hope turned around looking like she had just been caught robbing a bank.

“H-hey, Squirrel, like my dance moves?” Hope blushed, offering the lame line to try to rid of the embarrassment painted on her face.

Kelley had yet to reply or even notice Hope was speaking to her, instead her eyes trained on the taut abs and the belly button piercing she didn’t know she had. The prevalent 6 pack that was chiseled into her stomach and flexing obliques almost made Kelley faint.

“Kell?”

The nickname snapped her out of her trance and she found Hope’s confused eyes staring back into hers.

Kelley subconsciously brought her fingers to her wrist to feel the quickening pulse underneath her fingertips, partially a nervous habit and partially a reassuring gesture to make sure her arrhythmias aren’t acting up.

“Do you need something?” Hope asked, one arm stretched behind her body, playing with the bottom of her hair that was flowing down her back.

“Yeah… yeah,” she clears her throat, “I was wondering if you had an extra brush I could use. I forgot to pack mine in my bag.” Kelley tightened the grip around her wrist to ground herself in the moment.

“Oh sure, one sec” Hope walked into her en suite bathroom and pulled out a drawer to find her extra brush she doesn’t use often.

She handed it to Kelley, her finger accidentally brushing against hers and her hand twitched from the spark she felt. It was so weird that this kept happening to her, but she brushed it off like she usually did.

She flexed and stretched her hand a few times behind her back before turning back to her closet to find a shirt for their night out.

Kelley held the brush in her hand and was staring off into space trying to comprehend what she just saw and what she just thought while looking at her friend.

She felt like she was invading Hope’s space by staring at her like that and shook her head a few times to get those thoughts out of her head before looking down at the brush and back up at Hope who was flipping through shirts.

Say something, you idiot. She probably thinks you’re a freak or something.

“I didn’t know you had your belly button pierced,” Kelley blurted out, mentally smacking herself on the forehead. Smooth, O’Hara, smooth.

Hope was caught off guard at the comment and looked over her shoulder at Kelley.

“Yeah, I’ve had it pierced since I was 16,” she chuckled at the memory, “during my rebellious days.” Hope shook her head at her past, teenage self before turning her attention back to the goal at hand.

“It looks good on you..”
Jesus Fuck, O’Hara, really?! It looks good on you, that’s what you say?! Kelley thought to herself before physically smacking her forehead this time and rubbing her face with the hand that wasn’t gripping the brush for dear life.

Hope chuckled and threw a “thanks” over her shoulder before finally deciding on a shirt to wear out.

“You think this is good?” Hope held up the shirt to her body and looking down at herself to see if she was in agreeance with her initial choice.

She slid it over hear head and poked her arms through the holes before yanking it down at her preferred length.

It was a grey sleeveless shirt with thicker straps that was tight around her chest and stomach where her abs were clearly visible through. It had shimmery sparkles or sequins running down the sides giving it enough shine for the otherwise simple top.

“You look… wow!” Kelley managed to only get those 3 words out, mentally chastising herself for not being able to talk.

Hope blushed and ducked her head a little, “I’ll obviously wear a jacket to the club and take it off when we get there. It’ll probably be hotter than hell in that place.”

Kelley couldn’t do anything other than nod before deciding she needed to snap the hell out of this weird trance she was in and get her ass moving.

“You look great, Yolo” Kelley smiled at the doctor who was now finding shoes to wear.

“I’m sure you’ll look just as great, squirrel. Go get ready! We leave in 30 minutes!” Hope noticed the time and practically shooed Kelley into the guest bedroom to get ready herself.

30 minutes later, Hope found herself leaning against the railing to the upstairs staircase scrolling through her Facebook feed. She should’ve guessed Kelley would take forever to get ready to go out.

She didn’t hear the footsteps descending down the stairs but felt the warm presence in front of her.

Hope looked up and felt her breath hitch in the back of her throat and eyes widen for a moment.

Kelley was wearing a black dress, cut mid-thigh that clung to her legs and the rest of her body. Hope saw the sides and how there was fabric cut that left two diamonds of skin showing through. The straps were an inch thick, that probably weren’t necessary because of how tight the dress was it could stay in place on its own.

She was wearing black heels that gave her a few inches, almost as tall as Hope would be if she wasn’t wearing wedge booties on her own feet.

“How do I look?” Kelley asked, holding her arms out to the side, slowly turning around for Hope to make a good judgment.

Hope noticed there was more skin showing through the back cut of her dress just at the small of her back.

She swallowed and met Kelley’s gaze, “You look stunning, squirrel. You actually clean up well.”
Kelley rolled her eyes but blushed at Hope’s compliment and swatted her arm with her clutch.

“Are we driving there?” Kelley asked, sliding the cropped but warm jacket on for the mild December night in Boston.

Thanks global warming.

“No no I called a cab for us. I have a feeling we’ll be drinking so I didn’t want to risk it.” Hope shrugged and slid her own jacket on before sliding her phone and wallet in her pocket.

“Ooo, Dr. Solo planning on drinking too much? This will be fun” The mischievous glint in Kelley’s eyes made Hope nervous but excited.

Who knew what that squirrel was ever up to.

So 20 minutes later, they found themselves walking into Impulse finding their friends to meet.

Hope reached out to guide Kelley through the crowds of people instinctively placing her hand at the small of her back, meeting skin she forgot was accessible there.

Kelley didn’t seem to mind so she continued to guide her through the hundreds of people of the dance floor to find the back left corner behind the bar that their friends texted them that they were sitting at.

Hope leaned down to speak into Kelley’s ear, “Do you see them?”

Kelley slightly jumped at the movement but not enough for Hope to notice before looking around through the flashing lights in the darkened club, trying to see past the crowd of people.

She caught sight of her friends, heads thrown back in laughter all nursing a beer.

She turned to speak into Hope’s ear like she did and had to slightly raise onto her tip toes to reach the older doctor’s ear. Despite her heels, Hope had a 2 inch heel from her wedges, still a little too tall for Kelley to reach.

“They’re right there, here,” Kelley grabbed Hope’s hand to be the leader now.

Hope felt that damn spark run up her left arm again and allowed Kelley to be her guide now. She was excited to see her friends outside of the confines of the hospital walls.

They came to stand in front of the table where Johnson, Karev and Carli were sitting and they all exchanged greetings, a fist bump from Karev to Kelley, a wave to Carli and a high five from Johnson. Hope gave them all a smile and a head nod as to say, “Sup, bitches” in true Hope fashion.

Kelley once again leaned up to speak into Hope’s ear, “I’ll go grab us some drinks. Want a beer?” Kelley pulled back waiting for Hope’s response, tucking a strand of hair behind her ear.

Hope noticed the little action for some reason, noting that she probably has done that thousands of times but never really noticing until now. A small smile ghosted over her lips before turning to speak, “I’ll actually have a double shot of Jim Beam on the rocks. Want money?” Hope reached to her back pocket to grab her wallet but she felt Kelley’s small but strong hand on her forearm ceasing her movements.

Kelley gave her a look that told her no, much like the one from the first time they had coffee together at Café Aroma and just nodded at her with a closed lip smile and raised eyebrows.
Hope shook her head at the retreating figure and moved to sit down next to Carli on the one side of the table.

She looked at the faces of her friends since they were being unusually quiet.

“Why are you idiots not spewing nonsense like you usually are?” Hope questioned, one eyebrow raised at her weird best friends.

Karev just raised his one hand in defense with his eyebrows raised before picking his bottle up and taking a long swig of beer.

Johnson had this huge confused smile plastered on his face and laughed at the skepticism coming from his boss friend.

Carli looked smug and tilted her head towards her friend with the “Mhmmm okaaay” look and picking up her bottle as well and taking a huge mouthful into her smiling mouth.

“Hello?! Is it my outfit or something?” Hope questioned, starting to get peeved at the lack of responses she was getting from her friends.

She shrugged her jacket off and took another look at her friends trying to figure out why they were looking at her like that.

“Johnson, speak or I’ll tell Chief that you want to be stuck in scut for a good month or two.” Hope challenged, wishing Kelley would hurry up with her drink.

Johnson looked like he was going to throw a tantrum before opening his mouth and shutting it, repeating the action a few times.

“Yeah?” Hope prodded, knowing he would give in and tell her what they were thinking because no one wants to be like the medical interns and do scut.

“It’s just that you and Kelley are pretty close, that’s all.” He finished, smiling behind the glass bottle and tipping his head back taking a few gulps.

“Yeah, we’ve become close these past few months, but you guys already knew that. Especially Karev who I’m sure told you two about me panicking and leaving Kelley and him behind in the lounge. What’s the point?” Hope was becoming increasingly defensive, what she usually does when she feels awkward or attacked.

“It’s not a bad thing, it’s a good thing, that’s why we’re all smug and quiet about it.” Carli offered, explaining their train of thought with their stubborn best friend.

Hope was confused with their answers and sat there with a look on her face that said, “tell me more, morons”

“Dude, we’re just happy that you two are good friends and are getting along so well. We’re happy to see you happy with an outsider.” Karev supplied, tipping the neck of the bottle towards her, arms shrugged as if what he was saying was obvious.

“Call me dude again and I’m gonna punch you in the groin” Hope smirked evilly at her laidback friend, “but okay. I guess I kind of understand where you guys are coming from. She’s different. I can’t explain why we’re close so quickly, but it freaks me out…” She mumbled the last part, not saying these things out loud yet.
But of course the 3 of them heard her and shared knowing glances as Hope played with the coaster in front of her, getting lost in her thoughts.

“Hey, she’s a good person, she’s honest and genuine, a big goofball” Carli said, nudging her shoulder with hers, “I have a good feeling about the kid, and you know I have a fantastic sense of character.”

Hope smiled at her best friend and shook her head at the other meaning behind that, referencing Hope’s past.

“You guys know how I always have a gut feeling and follow it 99% of the time?” Hope asked the table waiting for them to nod or say a “yeah.”

“I just have this gut feeling that she’s good. She’s a good one, a friend like you guys who I’ll… who I’ll let in.” Hope finished, slowly looking at the reactions from her best friends.

They all seemed happy for her, Karev with a lazy half smile, Johnson with his perfect teeth showing with his eyes sparkling and Carli slowly nodding with a smile of her own gracing her face.

“I think we speak for all of us when we say she gets the best friends’ stamp of approval and that she’s a great person, Solo.” Johnson spoke for them, smiling his big smile surrounded by scruff.

Hope rolled her eyes but laughed and smiled at her friends. They were idiots, but her idiots, idiots that she trusted.

“Speaking of the squirrel, where the hell is she? It’s been at least 10 minutes and she isn’t back” Hope now noticing the absence of her friend since she was preoccupied with the semi-deep conversation she was having with her friends.

“Oh shit, yeah. She’s probably waiting in an obscenely long line at the bar. I mean look at all of these damn people.” Karev said, finishing his beer.

“I’m gonna go up there to keep her company. It’s the nice thing to do since she’s buying my drink, right?”

“You never say shit when we have to buy you a drink, Boss” Johnson said with a fake annoyed look on his face before breaking out into another smile.

That dude loved to smile and he had every reason to with a smile that made all of the ladies and fellas swoon over him.

Hope rolled her eyes and flipped him off before standing up and making her way through the crowded club to find the squirrel near the bar.

At first she couldn’t find the small doctor but with a quick glance to the right she caught sight of that dress.

Hope felt something heavy in her stomach when she saw some guy standing in front of Kelley, trapping her between the bar and himself. He was easily 6 ft, with a fresh haircut and cleanly shaved facial hair. He seemed to be muscular at this angle and dressed with a casual yet nice button down with straight leg pants.

Hope felt her hands flex and fist at her sides when she saw him lean down to speak into her ear like she was earlier.
Then Hope felt heat take over her whole body when she saw Kelley’s face. She looked annoyed and frightened at the same time, a look that she’s never seen on the smaller doctor, not even when she was in her ER on a stretcher.

The guy reached out and placed his hand on her side and leaned down again to say something to her again. Kelley wanted to escape but knew she was trapped between this guy and the counter top behind her.

“Dude, I’m not interested for the 15th time, so will you please excuse me so I can go find my friends?” Kelley made a move to push past him but this dude wasn’t having it.

“Woah, woah hey I’m just here to offer you a good time. Let me buy you a drink and we can sit down and get to know each other, before we really get to know each other…” He brushed his hand over the diamonds of skin showing on Kelley’s side. She tried moving out of his grasp and started getting really nervous and scared before she felt his hand leave her body and his face move away from hers.

“Hey, Kell! What was taking so long? We’re missing you at the table!” Hope looked into her eyes, winking as to tell her she was okay that she was there to handle this jackass.

“Get your hands off my friend, bud. She didn’t seem to like you the first few lame attempts you threw her way so what makes you think she wants you now?” Hope questioned, standing straighter than normal, arms crossed over her chest.

“Listen, I was just getting Kell here to come get to know me. I know she’d love it if I brought her home with me tonight.” The guy smirked at Kelley, reaching out to touch her again.

Hope did not like that one bit.

“First of all,” she grabbed his arm and bent it back onto his back so quickly she wouldn’t be surprised if she dislocated his shoulder, “do not call her that,” she tightened her grip on his wrist and pushed his arm further into his back, “and second of all, if I ever see you near her again I will personally break your fucking arm and pop you in the mouth for that shit you’re saying.” She pushed further into the dude, his face almost on the bar counter. “Got it?” He just whimpered in response which wasn’t good enough for Hope.

“I said, Got. It.” She gritted through her teeth, his face fully on the counter now.

“Got-got it.”

She shoved him against the counter and made sure he scurried away before turning her attention to Kelley to make sure he wouldn’t bother her again.

“And are you okay?” Hope’s voice softened looking down at her friend who had wide eyes, mouth slightly agape.

She didn’t get an answer but she felt a pair of arms wrap around her waist and a head pressed to her chest.

The scent of Kelley’s perfume mixed with the alcohol surrounding them overwhelmed her nose and she felt intoxicated before even taking a sip of whiskey.

She wasn’t a fan of hugs but felt like she needed to reciprocate the kind action to comfort her friend who was so scared moments earlier. She wrapped her arms around Kelley’s shoulders waiting until the shorter woman let go.
“You saved me, Yolo” Kelley loosened her grip from around Hope’s waist, but her arms still hung there loosely while looking up into her newly dubbed favorite eyes.

Hope smirked and chuckled at the look of awe on Kelley’s face, but felt her cheeks get warm in response to the sentiment.

“Seriously! That creep was totally freaking me out and I wasn’t able to get away from him and then the big and bad Dr. Solo came to my rescue, so thank you” Kelley hugged her again.

Hope let herself smile at Kelley’s words and allowed herself to enjoy the hug of gratitude from the squirrel clinging onto her. She wanted Kelley to be the first to pull away so that she had enough comfort from it and decided she was feeling better.

And not even 5 seconds later, Kelley pulled back completely and lightly punched Hope in the shoulder.

“You’re pretty tough, huh?” Kelley smirked which Hope returned and playfully rolled her eyes.

“I didn’t like the fact that he didn’t even care that you were visibly uncomfortable and continued to be a pervert. Men are pigs and think they can speak to women however they choose and I’m not about that.” Hope shook her head in annoyance and disgust, “Plus I don’t let my best friends to be treated like that.”

Kelley couldn’t even try to hide the huge grin on her face and Hope tried to play it cool but eventually allowed a big smile to overtake her face as well.

“Best friends, hm? I knew I’d work my O’Hara charm on you, Solo.” Kelley looked at her with an open mouth smile and shot her fingers up in the form of guns to point in Hope’s direction.

Hope couldn’t help but bellow with laughter at the sight of Kelley and had to rest her hand on Kelley’s shoulder to support herself as she was doubled over with laughter. She was absolutely and hilariously ridiculous.

Kelley loved getting that reaction out of Hope. She reached behind her and grabbed their drinks before turning to face the older surgeon and holding out the double shot of whiskey on the rocks that Hope ordered.

Hope took the glass that was presented to her and removed the tiny straw from the glass, an unnecessary addition to the drink in her opinion.

She took a large drink from the glass and closed her eyes, head tipped back, allowing herself to relish in the burn of the dark liquor making its way down the path of her body.

Kelley licked her lips before taking a huge gulp of her vodka cranberry removing the lime wedge from the rim of her glass.

They met each other’s eyes before that challenging gaze appeared that they’ve seen in each other’s eyes and have experienced at HAO’s Halloween party a couple of months ago.

This was going to be trouble.

Both women downed the rest of their drinks. Hope went to approach the bartender to order them another round but that spark lit her side on fire when Kelley placed her hand there to stop her from ordering before leaning further and getting the bartender’s attention.
“And 20 shots of tequila please, just add it to my tab” Hope overheard Kelley tell the bartender before her eyes popped out of her head.

“What the fuck are we going to do with 15 shots of tequila, O’Hara?” Hope asked incredulously thinking that they were going to end up in their hospital’s ER tonight from alcohol poisoning.

“Relax, Yolo, in case you’ve forgotten there are 3 dorks at the table waiting for us to return and hang out with them. Now, be a good doctor and take your drink to the table and I’ll take mine so we can drink them before our round of shots are delivered.” Kelley smirked, handing Hope another whiskey on the rocks with raised eyebrows.

Hope knew she was fucked. Utterly fucked tonight. The equivalent of 4 shots of whiskey and 3 shots of tequila? She wouldn’t be surprised if she woke up naked in the trunk of a car on its way to Vegas in the morning.

But Dr. Kelley O’Hara silently challenged her and she never backed away from a challenge.

“Let’s go.” Hope smirked, sipping her drink before placing her hand on Kelley’s back again to guide her to their table.

“Finally, where the fuck have you two been?” Karev practically shouted over the increasingly louder music booming.

“Long story, we’ll fill you in later. But Kelley has a surprise for all of us coming soon, so just wait” Hope said, taking a long drink from her glass and sliding in next to Carli.

Kelley followed suit and sat next to Johnson, bumping her shoulder into his and doing a little shoulder dance against him which he returned. They both smiled and giggled at themselves and their lame little dance moves.

“Round of tequila shots?” The other bartender came over with a tray full of 15 shots of Patron, a couple of salt shakers and a bowl of lime wedges.

Carli shifted in anticipation of being plastered, Karev rubbed his hands together like Tom about to catch Jerry, Johnson put his head in his hands already feeling tomorrow’s hangover, while Hope and Kelley met each other’s eyes across the table as if to say, “game on.”

Kelley grabbed the first shot glass, taking a lime and placing it on a cocktail napkin in front of her before locking eyes with Hope and licking her hand before sprinkling salt on it. She picked up the shot glass, raising it in the air, “For us badass surgeons and our hard work!”

She licked her other hand quickly, eyes not leaving Hope’s, tossing the tequila back, slamming the shot glass down and picking the lime up to suck on.

She cleared her throat and shook her head, already feeling the warmth of alcohol spreading through her body.

“Who’s up?” Kelley looked at her friends, a playful smirk on her lips, challenging the next person.

“Give me” Hope demanded, still staring into Kelley’s eyes, hand out waiting for a shot.

Kelley cleared her throat again and let her eyes leave Hope’s, tossing a shot glass, a lime wedge and pushed the salt shaker in her direction.

She met Hope’s gaze again, before taking another drink from her second vodka cranberry.
Hope’s tongue darted out and wet her hand before sprinkling salt on the wetness, “To letting loose tonight and no work tomorrow!”

Hope quickly licked the salt off of her hand, slamming back the Patron and sucking on her own lime, wincing at the amount of bitterness in her mouth.

They held each other’s stare for a few moments, the competiveness building up within both of them.

Karev cleared his throat, sensing the tension between his two friends. He just took a straight shot of tequila without the salt or lime to just get the alcohol in his system already. He sucked in a deep breath before reaching for another one.

Johnson and Carli shared a knowing glance between each other at the competitive side of Hope, but smiled at each other at Kelley matching her fierceness. They knew they could have fun with this, especially if the two women already had different liquor in them. They took their own shots before scheming silently, already knowing what the other was thinking.

Everyone 3 shots in and other alcohol flowing through their veins later, they found themselves on the dance floor.

The bumping trap remixes of songs came through the speakers and the 5 doctors found themselves almost moving in slow motion to the deafening bass.

Karev and Carli had found really attractive women to dance with, both of them being grinded on by their respective dance partners.

Johnson found a hot guy to dance with, both dancing front to front, sexual tension very present between the two. Hope looked over and saw the two making out and whistled for her friend.

Then came Hope and Kelley who found themselves in similar positions that they were in at the Halloween party. Hope was completely trashed, much more drunk than at the party, and knew the tiny voice in her head preventing her from letting loose 100% was going to be silenced after one more shot.

“Kell, I want one more shot and then I’m done for the night.” Hope slurred, her mouth almost pressed against Kelley’s ear.

Kelley’s hooded eyes looked up into hers and lazily nodded, “I’ll take one with you!”

They stumbled their way to the bar before Kelley turned to Hope, her eyes widened and an evil smirk on her face.

“Oh no, I know that face. What are ya thinkin, squirrel?” Hope leaned against the bar, arm propped up to support herself.

“Let me take a shot off of your body, I haven’t done a body shot in soooo long, like college long” Kelley giddily slurred, wanting to relive her college days from only a few years ago but seemingly longer than what her drunk brain remembers.

“What? No, that’s so weird,” Hope tried to protest with a look of confusion, intrigue and happiness on her face.

“It isn’t! I used to do it with my friends allll the time, just one, please” Kelley attempted her best pout and puppy dog eyes, hands folded in front of her to complete her pathetic begging look.
Fuck it, Hope thought. She sighed and agreed, “Why not?”

Kelley jumped up and down for a second and clapped her hands together.

“What do I do? I’ve never been involved with this type of thing before” Hope told Kelley before squinting her eyes and cocking her head to the side trying to rack her drunken mind of what a body shot entails.

“First, you’re gonna lay on the bar,” Hope’s eyes shot open at this and she opened her mouth to protest before Kelley interrupted her, “and then I’m gonna place some salt on your body somewhere to lick before I pour a shot down your stomach and drink it that way. Then I’ll suck on a lime and you know how quickly I take shots so it’ll literally be over in 10 seconds.” Kelley tried explaining it the best she could before looking at Hope’s face for a reaction.

Hope seemed nervous but intrigued at it so she nodded and shrugged her shoulders never being one to back down from a challenge once again, “Let’s do this.”

Kelley leaned forward to talk to the bartender that seemed to like her enough for this to happen and asked if Hope could lie on the counter for a body shot. She seemed all about it and eager to watch.

“You ready?” Kelley smirked at Hope who seemed nervous but excited at the same time.

Hope just nodded again and hopped up on the counter before swinging her legs up to place them down on the bar. The bartender had removed everything near them so they could do this. Some people looked over at them, but for the most part, everyone else was enraptured by the bass booming music.

Kelley had the Patron next to Hope’s side and a salt shaker in her hand.

“You ready for this, Yolo?” Kelley looked down at Hope’s hooded eyes that were clouded over.

“Yeah, I’m ready… Have at it, O’Hara” Hope gave her full permission before taking a deep breath and releasing it when Kelley pushed her shirt up.

Kelley let her eyes roam the abs she ogled over earlier in Hope’s bedroom and watched as her muscles contracted with every breath she took.

“Where do you want me to put the salt?” Kelley questioned, trying to do this without staring at her best friend’s toned stomach for much longer.

“Wherever is easiest access for you is fine, I don’t really care” Hope shrugged, looking up at those hazel green eyes she found herself lost in every now and then.

Kelley gulped knowing exactly where the best place for the salt to lay was. Hope gave her permission and out of character didn’t care for once, so she was going to chance it.

“And for the lime, Solo? Do you care where that’s placed?” Kelley questioned again, wanting to make sure Hope wasn’t uncomfortable. They may be hammered, but consent no matter what the action was is key.

“Again, I’m down for whatever. But get the show on the road, Kell, my stomach is exposed for all of Boston to see” She snorted at herself before closing her eyes and silently chuckling.

Kelley took the distraction to her advantage and placed the lime over Hope’s lips, telling her she needed to bite it and hold it between her teeth. Their eyes locked and Kelley could’ve sworn she saw
something she’s never seen in Hope’s eyes before.

She ignored it and let the lime go before dipping her head next to Hope’s and nudging her jaw to have her head roll to the side to gain access to her neck.

The muscles there were just as toned and prominent there as they were in her abs. Kelley glanced at Hope and back to her neck, bowing her head down and licking a trail from her pulse point to 2 inches down her neck aligning with her throat.

She felt Hope jerk her head a little and saw the muscle flex before she sprinkled the salt on the line of wetness that Kelley trailed.

Without another moment, Kelley took the shot glass and poured the cold liquid from just below Hope’s sternum and let it flow down her abs.

Kelley was positioned just below Hope’s navel and the piercing she commented on earlier.

Kelley rested her bottom lip on Hope’s lower abs and sucked the alcohol that was streaming down the core of her abs. She licked up the alcohol that settled in Hope’s navel and licked up the center of her stomach.

She used her fingers to guide Hope’s jaw back to facing her. She noticed that Hope’s eyes were a darker shade but didn’t dwell on the fact too much before leaning over and biting the lime out of Hope’s mouth, sucking the bitter juice from the fruit wedge.

Kelley felt that shot in her blood now and felt even lighter than she did 5 minutes ago before she suggested this.

She reached over and grabbed a napkin to wipe up any excess alcohol and saliva on Hope’s body. She pulled her shirt back down and waited for Hope to sit up.

“So, how was your first body shot?” Kelley asked, a big drunk smile plastered on her freckled face.

“It was s-so good,” Hope managed to get out through her rapid breathing.

“Good, I knew you’d be okay! Now get your shot before we head back to the dance floor!”

Hope didn’t even think about the salt or lime and slammed her shot back so quickly you wouldn’t even think she just took one.

The weird thoughts she was having needed to go and the alcohol helped her cause.

“Let’s go dance, O’Hara” Hope said, determined to have even more fun on the dance floor.

Hope was the first to wake up as always. She felt a bright, warm light on her face and moved her head in that direction.

But then she felt a weight on top of her that usually isn’t there when she wakes up.

She saw a mess of light brown hair sprawled across her chest and felt the heat of a face pressed against her chest as well.

Through her squinted eyes, Hope made out the features of Kelley’s profile snuggled into her chest and registered their tangled legs against each other.
Kelley’s hands were balled up and fisted into her shirt that she doesn’t remember changing into last night.

Last night.

Nothing was coming back to her except right before they had their first drink and that asshole tried getting in her pants.

Based on the headache and sore body she was feeling and the nauseous upset in her stomach, she knew that was only the beginning of their night.

She slammed her eyes shut when she tried to open them more, but the sun was way too bright for her liking. Maybe I should invest in black out curtains, she thought to herself.

She laid there trying to remember anything from last night but she couldn’t recall anything. She squinted at her alarm clock and saw that it read 8 am.

She didn’t have to get up today and kind of couldn’t if she wanted to because of the 130 pound snoring doctor on top of her.

Not wanting to wake her up, she closed her eyes and tried to fall asleep again. Less than 5 minutes later, the smaller woman stirred and lifted her head up slightly before wincing and laying her head right back down on Hope’s chest.

Kelley knew that Hope was awake by her breathing patterns and mumbled a, “good morning, Yolo” before snuggling further into her body.

“Morning, squirrel” Hope mumbled back before brushing Kelley’s hair to one side. Kelley leaned into the contact of Hope’s fingers in her hair and sighed happily. Until she realized what she was doing.

Her head shot up and she loudly groaned at it before rolling off of Hope, right onto the floor.

Hope couldn’t help but laugh at the disheveled and disoriented doctor below her.

“Holy fuck, how much did I drink last night?!” Kelley held her head, elbows propped up on her knees.

“If your headache is as bad as mine, we both drank way too much last night.” Hope massaged her own temples and slid back down on the bed and pulled the covers up.

“Jesus, I am never drinking again…” Kelley mumbled, searching for her phone to see what time it was. She grabbed Hope’s accidentally and opened it without knowing, accidentally opening a text from Carli.

She froze and swallowed hard looking at the photo on the screen.

Hope noticed how quiet she had gotten and rolled over to look down at the floor where her friend was holding her phone.

“You okay?” Hope questioned, confused as to why Kelley had her phone and was staring slack jawed at it.

“Um, here…” Kelley reached up and handed Hope the phone to see the picture Carli sent.

Hope confusedly grabbed her phone and read the message from Carli saying, “Dr. Hope Solo
reliving her wild college days ;)” Hope opened the photo and zoomed in on the photo, also increasing the brightness on her phone to see the photo clearly even if her eyes didn’t agree with that.

She looked down at the phone and saw herself laying on the bar, shirt pushed up, with Kelley licking assumingly alcohol from her stomach.

Hope swallowed dryly and locked her phone screen to glance at Kelley on the floor.

“What the fuck happened last night?”
Chapter 12

Chapter Notes

I tried getting this up before Christmas, I did! These two are too cute for me, it's starting to progress, my friends. Hope everyone had a good holiday! Let me know how O'Solo's Christmas made you feel. Much love xx

See the end of the chapter for more notes

December 24th and the 5 doctors gathered in Hope’s house to enjoy Christmas Eve dinner. Johnson, Carli and Karev all commented on how nice the decorations were and that Kelley must have taken the reigns on that project because Hope never decorated her house.

Johnson and Hope worked side by side in the kitchen, this meal not being the first they prepared, while Carli set the table and Karev and Kelley were yelling at a boxing match that had been shown on whatever sports channel was playing.

“Come on!” Hope heard Kelley yell in the living room which was attached to the kitchen. The kitchen was almost the center of the house where the living room was attached to it on the left and the dining room behind a wall to the right where the entrance of the house is. The staircase going upstairs was right in front of the front door, the dining room left to it. The only other thing on the first floor of the house was the back deck.

Hope raised an eyebrow at the screaming and Johnson just laughed at how much they were into an already recorded match. She shook her head with a small smile and continued cutting the potatoes next to a turkey-basting Johnson.

The other 3 didn’t really know what was on the menu other than turkey, but they’d be grateful for whatever home cooked meal is in front of them. Being surgeons in a big city didn’t really call for much time to cook for yourself, but rather pick up a to-go sandwich or salad with a cup of coffee you so desperately need after not being able to go home that night.

Turkey, scalloped potatoes, roasted asparagus and butternut squash are the components of the menu, almost paralleling Thanksgiving but with a much classier touch, Johnson’s words, no one else’s.

The only thing that needed to be finished was the potatoes to be thrown in the oven and to let the asparagus finish cooking, but then they’re dinner would be served.

“We’re having wine, right? I put wine glasses on the table,” Carli inquired while walking into the kitchen and popping a grape in her mouth.

Hope swatted her hand at Carli, “that’s for after dinner, watch it! And yeah, choose a wine that will pair well with turkey.” Hope gestured towards the wine rack that all of her friends knew very well.

Carli innocently shrugged at being scolded, then nodded in understanding about which wine to choose. She moved her feet quickly and popped another grape in her mouth before jumping back and towards the wine rack before Hope could stab her with the knife she had next to her.

She settled with just shooting her friend a glare before starting on the dishes so they didn’t have
much clean up to do after dinner.

Johnson sat on a stool at the counter swirling his water in his glass while looking down at the moving liquid.

Hope finished up the dishes, wiping her hands on the kitchen towel and double checking the timer before turning around and seeing her usually upbeat, happy friend looking uncharacteristically glum.

“What’s up?” Hope asked, leaning across the counter by supporting herself with her forearms, hands folded, head cocked.

Johnson continued to play with the glass of water not wanting to really discuss what he was feeling. He had the nice distraction of cooking for a couple of hours, but now that the prep is done and they’re just waiting on a couple of things to finish up in the oven, he was forced into his mind again.

Hope noticed his hesitance and took a few seconds before opening her mouth, “When you’re ready…” He glanced up at her and both of their blue eyes met, a phrase both of them say when the other, or Karev or Carli, have something on their mind but aren’t ready or aren’t in the mood to discuss what’s going on.

Johnson nodded at her, a faint smile ghosting over his lips before his face went back to pensive and upset.

Hope patted the counter twice before pushing off and going to go check on the “kids” in the living room.

Karev was leaning forward, elbows resting on his knees, back straight up in anticipation of the knock out in the last round.

Kelley was seemingly calmer in her body language, leaning back against the couch with her legs propped up on the coffee table crossed at the ankles. But her signature nervous habit was observed by Hope, the fiddling with her watch.

When the crowd was building up on the TV, Hope flicked her eyes from Kelley to the match televised. The one guy looked like he was about to pass out, one more hit and it was over.

“FUCK YEAH!” Kelley jumped up, fist in the air before pulling it down to her side and doing a celly move that hockey players usually do in celebration of a goal.

Karev shook his head at his guy losing before reaching to the coffee table and grabbing his beer, taking a swig and putting it back down. He leaned forward to grab the wallet out of his back pocket while Kelley was doing the running man in place next to him.

“He held a $20 bill between his fingers raising it so the standing Kelley could just reach out and take it.

“Thaaaank you!” Kelley grinned at Karev and put it next to her clutch which was on the coffee table next to her own beer she was nursing.

She watched the replay on the screen again and decided to dance around again, turning around and seeing Hope stand behind the couch.

“Jesus you scared me!” Kelley put her hand on her chest, dance moves halted.

Hope just laughed at her 2 idiot friends before her and reached for the beer in front of Kelley. Kelley
realized what she wanted and handed her bottle over to the hostess of the night before putting the money in her clutch.

Hope took a few sips of the beer and checked the label. This wasn’t normally the beer she bought.

“Kell, where did this beer come from?” Hope inquired, head tilted and beer outstretched to give back to the smaller doctor.

Kelley’s soul smiled whenever she heard Hope refer to her as Kell, the newer nickname that happened to just roll off of Hope’s tongue and it just stuck.

Kelley moved to walk around the couch, in front of Hope, before taking her bottle back and reading the label.

“It’s Yuengling lager not Sam Adams for once. I brought it over here last week.”

“How did I not notice that you have your own beer in my fridge?” Hope questioned, half amused, half alert.

Kelley just shrugged before tipping the bottle back and finishing off the amber alcohol with a loud, “ahhh, refreshing!” She giggled and moved to go place it in the return bags where all of the returnable bottles and cans go.

Karev looked at Hope in a weird way which Hope questioned quickly.

“What?”

“Nothing… It’s just you know you’ve been spending a lot of time with someone when their beer of choice takes up residency in your fridge.” Karev smirked, standing up to turn the TV off and join his friends in the other room.

Hope just shot him a look and turned around leading them both into the kitchen.

Johnson was busying himself checking on the food that just came out of the oven, Carli was sitting next to Kelley at the counter scrolling through her phone and of course Kelley O’Hara was throwing grapes in the air and catching them in her mouth.

“What do you think you’re doing, O’Hara!?” Hope raised her voice, startling Kelley who fell off the bar stool.

Kelley winced when she hit the floor, her face taking a lot of the impact. Hope’s eyes widened before she hurried to be by Kelley’s side.

The 3 other doctors winced and gave a collective “oooo” when they heard Kelley’s side of her face smack the ground.

Sasha and Onyx came barreling downstairs when they heard a loud noise and the reactions that followed. They stopped next to Kelley and sniffed her, looking around to see if anyone else was the reason she was hurt.

“Hey, she’s okay guys. Look, she’s okay” Hope spoke to her dogs, pointing down to Kelley.

“Kell, you are okay right? I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to startle you like that. Are you hurt?” Hope asked, crouching down and trying to remove Kelley’s hands from her face to see any damage.

Kelley just squinted up at Hope after removing her hands, a huge shiner already forming around her
Hope vocalized her thoughts and said, “Oh shit…” before she heard an “Yeah, oh shit!” come from the smaller doctor’s mouth.

Kelley moved her hands to pet the dogs standing above her, rubbing behind their ears and smiling at her furry guardians.

Carli, Karev and Johnson just looked on at the moment between their friends not wanting to overcrowd Kelley and not wanting to get in Hope’s way.

“Here, let me help you up…” Hope cradled the back of Kelley’s head just in case she smacked her head harder than expected and had a concussion or something. She helped Kelley into a sitting position, one hand cradling her head and the other behind her arm supporting her weight.

“I’m okay, just need some ice for my eye…” Kelley pouted up at Hope, her left eye already darkening and swelling.

Hope’s heart fluttered at the sight, not completely breaking but enough to get her feeling guilty and feeling bad for scaring the squirrel so badly she lost her balance and fell.

“Oh, I’ll get you some ice,” Hope spoke in a hushed tone, incase Kelley’s head hurt.

She slowly stood up when she was sure Kelley could sit up on her own. She looked over at her friends all staring at them before speaking up, “Don’t just stand there! You’re all doctors, get me some ice” Hope barked out, growing impatient with her friends that were doctors for Christ’s sake.

Carli seemed to snap out of it first, grabbing a clean kitchen towel and removing ice from the ice chamber component in Hope’s high tech fridge. She bundled it up and passed it over to Hope who crouched back down.

“Hold this to your eye and I’ll get you back on your feet” And before Kelley could even respond, Hope wrapped her arms around Kelley, picking her up bridal style before angling her body down so Kelley’s feet could hit the floor.

“You got it?” Hope quietly asked, with her arms still supporting Kelley’s back and thigh.

Kelley wasn’t sure if it was the impact from hitting the floor or the single beer she drank, but she was feeling much lighter than before with Hope’s arms around her.

“Yeah yeah, I’m good. Thank you,” Kelley lazily smiled at Hope before placing the ice on her eye.

She flinched at the coldness but got used to it quickly and pressed just a little bit on the swelling, not enough to hurt her eye of course.

“Well, one injury down, I’m surprised there hasn’t been anymore.” Karev commented, looking at Kelley who was pouting like a little kid who got their wish for a new toy at the store denied.

Before anyone else spoke up, Johnson clapped his hands together and said, “Dinner is ready!”

Carli moved to the dining room to pour water and wine into the glasses, Karev brought over the side dishes and Hope brought Kelley into the dining room and helped her sit down even though they knew there wasn’t any need for that.

Johnson carved the turkey and placed it on a platter to bring to the table, the last one in there. He set
the platter down before taking a seat at the other head of the table, Hope occupying her usual spot at
the other head.

Karev sat alone on his side where Carli sat in her usual spot with the newest addition next to her, Kelley to her right between her and Hope.

“This looks amazing, can we chow down now?” Karev asked, rubbing his hands together quickly, licking his lips.

Hope rolled her eyes before nodding and reached out to grab the serving spoon before she stopped.

“Wait.” Everyone stopped and looked at their friend.

“I uh… just wanted to say that I’m happy you guys are my family and that you’re here tonight for the holiday… I guess… Okay, eat”

They knew that was Hope’s way of saying that she loves them but not trying to be too mushy and deep about it. They gave her a smile and nod in response before placing the food on their plates.

Kelley removed the ice from her eye, placing it next to her plate and grabbing the serving fork to grab some turkey. Karev nibbled at the asparagus, usually not being a fan of green vegetables, but ending up liking it. Carli nodded in approval at the potatoes, sending Hope a quick thumbs up before digging in again. Johnson seemed to be doing better while smiling at something Kelley said while he cut up his own food.

Hope just watched her friends, her family, enjoy themselves while sipping her wine and placing it down. This was one of the best Christmases in years that she’s had and she couldn’t shake the thought of Kelley being the one to complete the holiday.

Karev, Carli and Johnson left after dessert was served and the house was tidied up after their meal. They had this weird tradition where they didn’t open each other’s presents in front of each other which ended the night sooner than to be expected. So under her tree, Hope had 3 presents underneath.

It was just her and Kelley watching their final Christmas movie on their list. How they finished all of those movies while being surgeons at a demanding hospital? Who knows.

The swelling around Kelley’s eye went down, just the deep purple and blue circle around it. Hope felt so bad about giving Kelley a black eye on Christmas Eve and kept repeating her apology over and over again. Kelley loved hearing Hope being so upset over it, a little crack in the heart made of rock.

“I know you don’t open presents in front of the 3 stooges, but can we open presents in front of each other? Just our thing?” Kelley asked, giving her best attempt at puppy dog eyes with a huge shiner.

Hope looked down at the smaller doctor next to her on the couch and knew she wouldn’t be able to say no to that face, especially with the huge ass bruise she caused to appear on it.

“Yeah, we can do that. You want to open them now?” Hope leaned forward to scoot off the couch before Kelley’s hand on her leg stopped her.

If that stupid electric spark didn’t stop shooting through her nerves every time Kelley touched her, she was going to lose it.
“Can… can we open them tomorrow morning?” Kelley asked timidly, not even asking if she could stay the night earlier.

Hope realized that opening them tomorrow morning implied that Kelley wanted to sleep over and spend Christmas morning together. She gulped and darted her eyes around the living room.

She took a deep breath and looked over at Kelley, “Sure, that sounds good.” Hope replied softly, allowing herself to change her holiday traditions for the woman once again.

With Kelley’s eye lighting up and her smile growing that big, Hope knew she agreed to the right thing.

“Hope! HOOOOPE! HOPE YOLO!” Kelley excitedly screamed, jumping up and down on the king size bed that Hope was in, a pillow now pressed over her ears to attempt to block out the screaming coming from the smaller doctor.

Kelley kept jumping, either foot flanking Hope’s body, jostling her up and down under the gray blanket and white sheets.

“If you don’t get up, I’ll sing! Elf style! I’m siiiingiiiiing! I’m in your bed and I am singiiiiii- OOF” Kelley landed on her side, across Hope’s legs luckily catching herself with her arm.

Kelley realized Hope smacked her down with the pillow she was using to drown out Kelley’s voice when she looked up at Hope’s smirk on her face, with her eyes still closed. Kelley took a minute to look at the freshly woken up doctor.

Her dark locks were all over the place, frizzy strands sticking up every which way, her big t-shirt shifted by moving in her sleep towards the left, the lazy smirk on her face and finally her hooded, blue eyes staring back into hers.

“Mornin’…” Hope grumbled, running a hand down her face to try and rub the sleep out of it then up into her hair at a sorry excuse of taming it.

“IT'S CHRISTMAS, YOLO!” Kelley squealed, clapping her hands together and moved to stand up again to jump on the bed.

“Yeah, yeah I get it Kell, get down now” Hope reached her arm up swatting the air a few times trying to make contact with one of her limbs to halt her actions.

Kelley relented and not so gracefully plopped down right in front of Hope again. She leaned forward on her hands and knees and got close to Hope’s face.

“Are you going to get up now?” Kelley tried whispering, but wasn’t very good at it so it came out as more of a hushed tone.

Hope chuckled at the child in front of her face before rolling her eyes and lifting the covers off of her. Kelley moved off the bed before the covers could envelope her into the bed and bounced on her feet excited for presents.

Hope reached her arms up and stretched her whole body out. She yawned before rustling her hand around with her hand and stuck it out to guide Kelley out of her room to go downstairs.

Kelley bounded down the stairs before Hope and ran to sit next to the presents under the tree while
Hope stopped in her tracks and saw the bunch of presents under her tree. Minus the couple of things she got Kelley under there, the wrapped packages definitely multiplied since last night.

She looked at Kelley who was shaking a box expecting to hear what the gift was. Hope once again rolled her eyes while smiling before getting her Christmas mug out and brewing herself a cup of coffee.

“Kell?”

“Yeeees?” She shouted back from the living room floor.

“Do you want coffee?”

“Yeeeeeess.”

Hope laughed at the same answer she got, just the questioning tone left out in the second reply.

Hope grabbed Kelley’s mug out of the cabinet before brewing her a medium roast K-cup, not Hope’s usual dark roast. Adding Kelley’s preferred sugar and milk ratio, she picked up both mugs and headed towards the gifts and her small friend.

She placed both mugs on the coffee table and scooted down to sit next to Kelley.

“You wanna tell me why there are so many damn gifts under the tree?” Hope raised her eyebrow, questioning Kelley as to why she got her so much.

“It’s our first Christmas! I wanted to make it memorable and I found some stuff I thought you’d like…” Kelley made an “oops” face and shrugged before turning her back to grab her coffee. She took a small sip and sighed in contentment before taking another and placing it back down.

Hope watched her skeptically, now thinking that she didn’t get her friend enough now.

“Yolo, I know that you’re thinking you didn’t get me enough, but trust me, it’ll be fine!”

“Well, let’s get into it then, shall we, Squirrel?” Hope asked Kelley a small smile on her face hoping the gifts she got would suffice.

Kelley grabbed a medium sized box before handing a box to Hope so that they could open at the same time.

“Go ahead, I want you to open first” Hope motioned for Kelley to open the present before she opened hers, not liking the idea of opening her present from Kelley just yet. She always felt awkward opening presents in front of people, hence her and the other doctors’ tradition.

Kelley hesitated at first wanting Hope to open one at the same time but once she saw the reassurance in Hope’s eyes she took a deep breath and tore into the wrapping paper.

“Wow, you’re really good at wrapping presents…” Kelley commented before hooking her finger under the last piece of tape.

She saw a Nike shoe box and her eyebrows knitted together in confusion and surprise. Her eyes flicked up to Hope’s whose eyes were peering over her mug as she was sipping her coffee. Hope nodded towards the box encouraging Kelley to finally open the damn box.

Kelley opened the shoe box and gasped when she saw brand new soccer cleats, Nike Hypervenom Phantom IIs in red bronze, part of the new chrome pack.
“H-Hope… These are too much, I can’t believe… Oh my god…” Kelley was speechless at the expensive and thoughtful gift.

“Stop, it’s Christmas, right?” Hope used Kelley’s reasoning against her and smiled at the extremely happy woman in front of her.

“You’ve been mentioning how you want to get back onto the pitch so I figured you could use some new boots… Red bronze was the closest to Stanny red in the chrome pack. I hope they’re okay. I also got you size 7s because you mentioned that Nike’s for you are true to size and I didn’t want to get them too s-“

Hope was cut off with her explanation with Kelley’s arms wrapped around. She threw herself so hard towards the older woman that Hope had to catch herself with both hands behind her back. She removed one of her hands bracing herself, strong enough to hold them both up with one arm, and wrapped it around Kelley’s waist.

She smiled at the little squeals of excitement coming from her friend. She noticed that Kelley was a very close hugger and felt her facial features pressed into her neck, eyelashes moving and tickling her skin. She could feel the heat of

Kelley’s breath against her collarbone, making her shiver and subconsciously pulling the squirrel closer to her body.

Kelley abruptly pulled back deciding it was time for the hug to end and grabbed Hope’s shoulders shaking them still screeching in excitement, not being able to form words

“I’m glad you like them, Squirrel. You better put them to good use.” Hope took another sip of her coffee and placed it down before bracing herself to open the gift.

She never wanted to make a face or say something that told the other person that she wasn’t fond of the present, that’s why she hated opening them up in front of the giver. It was just too awkward for her.

Kelley cleared her throat, “I absolutely LOVE my cleats, Hope! I am in awe and I just can’t believe that’s one of my gifts… I’ve been looking at boots online and I know that these weren’t cheap.”

Hope just provided her with a shrug, one hand up with her palm facing upwards with an “oh well” look on her face.

Kelley just shook her head at the graciousness of her friend and picked up one of the cleats before examining it. She saw the KO on the right cleat and grinned at the initials she used to draw on her boots before her college’s club soccer team. She picked up the other one and saw number 5 on it smiling even brighter at her chosen number she wore all throughout her soccer career from pre-k to her last years of playing for an intermural team at Stanford.

She placed them back in the box and hugged Hope again so grateful for this amazing gift.

“You listened to me talk about my glory days…” Kelley had a lazy smile on her face, eyes brighter than bright.

“Believe it or not, I actually listen from time to time, O’Hara. I’m glad I got this right for you.”

They smiled at each other before Kelley raised the box and gave it a quick peck before placing it down and out of the way to give Hope all of her attention.
Hope knew it was time to open the gift and started tearing the paper. She was impressed so far at Kelley’s wrap job and mentally noted to comment on that later. She wasn’t like Kelley in ripping apart the paper to shreds but took more time in opening it up. She ripped the last piece of tape off and turned the box around. It was a Nike box as well, but not a shoe box like Kelley’s.

Hope did her famous eyebrow raise while looking at an excited Kelley before opening the top of the box. Her heart picked up at the sight of brand new goalie gloves lying in the box.

They were gray with white and crimson details with Dr. Solo on both of the tops of the cuffs and the number 1 on the inside of the wrist.

Hope grabbed each glove in her grasp and felt nostalgic memories of her soccer days come rushing back to her. Soccer was her saving grace from her broken family life and even continued to play in a club at Harvard despite her hectic school load.

She mentioned it to Kelley briefly that she missed playing, but didn’t think she’d have the same idea as she did by buying soccer gear for her.

“Kell… Wow. I am so… Thank you” Hope looked into Kelley’s eyes trying to convey how much she loved her gift.

Kelley’s smile widened even more if possible and nodded, “Absolutely! I’m so glad you like them, I had to guess what size you wore but the person at the Nike store told me that these were the best. Try ‘em on”

Hope removed the paper stuffed in them and slid the first glove on, the fabric bringing back the feeling of sliding her game day gloves on. She adjusted the strap before sliding the other glove on and strapping it down as well. She flexed her hands in them, “They’re just my size, Kell. They’re perfect…”

Hope trailed off feeling way too sentimental for her liking at the moment. She looked at her gloved hands once more before sliding them off and placing them back into the box.

“Looks like we’re going to have a lot of soccer days ahead of us, hm?” Kelley asked, grinning like a fool at the job well done on her part.

Hope nodded and laughed at the two of them playing a pickup game in the Commons or at her alma mater’s field.

“Open the next one, Squirrel” Hope pointed at a smaller wrapped box under the tree near Kelley for her to grab.

Kelley picked up another box for Hope and handed it to her to open after she opened the one in front of her.

Kelley ripped open the paper to reveal an expensive looking ornament. She threw her head back in laughter when she held it out on her finger.

Hope giggled in response to the joyous and humored woman before grabbing her phone and snapping a photo of Kelley laughing, holding out the ornament that Carli helped her pick out. She was going to send her the photo later and thank her for confirming her decision to purchase this for Kelley.

“It’s perfect! It’s me in ornament form!” Kelley spun it around looking at the woodland creature, laughing again at how cute and perfect it was.
“I figured you needed a squirrel ornament to add to your tree next year.”

“I don’t have a tree this year though, can I hang it on yours until we take it down?” Kelley asked, hopeful glint in her eyes.

“Yeah, of course. Here,” Hope slid the ornament off of Kelley’s finger and sat up on her knees right behind Kelley to place it on the perfect branch right in front of the small doctor.

Kelley felt chills run up her spine that contrasted the heat radiating off of Hope’s front that ever so slightly touched Kelley’s back.

“There,” Hope whispered near Kelley’s ear, “perfect.”

Kelley squeezed her eyes shut before clearing her throat and sitting back down on her heels, mirroring Hope’s position.

“Okay, okay open yours!” Kelley regained her slight lapse of composure before encouraging Hope to open the next gift.

Hope took her time to remove the tissue paper from the gift bag. She peered into the bag and saw a brown fuzzy thing. She reached her arm and grabbed the plush toy before removing it out of the bag.

It was Hope’s turn to throw her head back in laughter at the gift. It was a rather large stuffed squirrel wearing a lab coat and a tiny plush stethoscope around its neck.

Kelley recorded her opening the gift and took a photo of the eyes crinkling and wide smile on Hope’s face after seeing the stuffed animal.

“This is fucking hilarious! It’s your size and everything! Look at it, look at it!!” Hope squeaked out, clearly amused by it.

Kelley had yet to see this childlike side of Hope and was absolutely mesmerized by the way her eyes shone, the crinkles at the corners of her eyes, the huge smile plastered on her face, the way her voice got higher when she found the stuffed animal so amusing… It made Kelley warm inside and gave her the urge to evoke that reaction out of Hope thousands of times over again.

“It’s so when I’m not here you have a squirrel to step in and keep you company. Other than the dogs of course… Speaking of which!” Kelley whistled for her best furry friends to come open up the presents she bought them and to spend time with them on Christmas morning.

The thumping of the dogs running upstairs and then down the stairs followed by the clicking of the nails on the hardwood floors made both Hope and Kelley smile. They ran to both women, Sasha favoring Hope while Onyx favored Kelley. Sasha has been a mama’s girl ever since she came home with the older woman.

“Hey buddy, I got you and your sister something too,” Kelley used one hand to scratch between Onyx’s ears while grabbing 2 big gifts bags from underneath the tree.

“For youuuu,” nudging the bag towards Onyx, “aaaand for you,” placing the other bag in front of Sasha and Hope.

Kelley helped Onyx pull out a new bone, two new big Kongs, a new ball and a bag of her favorite treats.

Onyx wagged her tail so excitedly that her whole butt was moving, making Kelley laugh and rub her
Hope loved seeing her dogs take to Kelley so quickly and shower her with their unconditional love. She felt Sasha nudge her hand and looked into her waiting brown eyes. Hope chuckled and helped her open her own gift bag.

Inside was a bone for her, durable squeaky toys made specifically for big dogs or just destructive dogs, a bag of her favorite treats and a new leash since hers was getting too old and crappy.

“Wow! Kelley spoiled the shit out my babies, huh?” Hope asked in a slight baby voice placing kisses along Sasha’s face before rubbing her ears and putting everything back in the bag except for the bone that she knew Sasha was eagerly anticipating.

Kelley did the same and gave Onyx her bone, both of the dogs trotting towards their dog beds on the opposite side of the living room.

“I’m so glad they love their gifts! I could never forget about my best furrrriends,” Kelley smirked at her lame joke which elicited a giggle from Hope.

“You didn’t have to get them all of that, Kell. You could’ve given them a stick and they’d be content if you just are here.”

“Hmm… what about you, Solo? Would you’ve been content if I just graced you with my presence on Christmas?” Kelley inquired, picking up her coffee that she abandoned and didn’t need to sip anymore, the heat long gone.

Hope processed the question thrown her way and bobbed her head side to side as if she had to think about it. In all honesty, she had no idea that she was going to find herself opening presents on Christmas morning with the squirrel in her house. If Kelley would’ve shown up later without presents, she thinks she would be content with her company.

“Yeah, I think I would actually.” Hope smiled, glancing at the dogs gnawing on their bones before making eye contact with a smug Kelley.

“What?” Hope asked, the eyebrow going up.

“Nothing, nothing… Just knew you’d fall for my O’Hara charm. Sooner or later everyone falls for it and the big, bad, scary Dr. Hope Solo did too is all I’m sayin’” Kelley smirked at the older doctor placing her mug down.

“Is that so? Me falling for the O’Hara charm? I don’t think so, squirrel. No chance in hell.” Hope challenged her, a smirk growing on her face to match the younger doctor’s.

“Alright whatever you say. You’ll realize it soon, just give it a little time.” Kelley reached over and grabbed another gift for Hope.

“Here, open this one. I think it may be my favorite” Hope grabbed the package skeptically, but placed it in her lap and began the dainty process of opening a gift.

It was a plain white box so there wasn’t any indication of what the present may be. Hope took the top off the box and her jaw dropped at the present inside.

A brand new stethoscope, the tubing in Harvard crimson with gray ear tips and a silver chest piece. It was top notch in medical supplies land and most have cost Kelley a fortune.
“Now who’s the one spending too much on me? Kelley, this is amazing. You know me pretty well…” Hope was enamored with her new stethoscope, wanting a new one since her current one is from med school.

“Do I know you pretty well or is it that O’Hara charm I’ve been working on ya?” Kelley waggled her eyebrows giggling at her comments.

Hope picked it up and saw the number one engraved into each ear tube. Her number. Just like her jersey, just like her gloves.

Hope wrapped it around her neck, feeling the new weight of her beautiful new stethoscope.

“Oh obviously it’s Harvard colors and the number one as your jersey. But it’s also to symbolize how you’ve been number one your whole medical career, Yolo. Number one in your class, number one among interns then residents and now as the number one cardio attending. Just wanted you to have a reminder of how great you are and how fantastic your work is.” Kelley ended her spiel, rambling more than she wanted to but overall content with her explanation.

Hope felt tears prick her eyes but she blinked them away, not allowing Kelley to see her cry. Especially an emotional cry. She gripped the stethoscope in both hands and cleared her throat. That meant more to her than Kelley could’ve imagined. Yeah she knew all of these things, but sometimes forgot when work became frustrating or other doctors, especially doctors new to the hospital, didn’t seem to remember the huge accomplishments she’s made as a 33 year-old female surgeon in the 2nd hardest specialty.

But other than colleagues and patients’ families not knowing or remembering the fact that she worked her ass off to become number one, it was the fact that her family was never in her life to see how hard she worked to prove them all wrong and not to become one of them. She rose as number one as she promised herself she would when she graduated high school and flew across the country to attend one of the best universities in the United States.

She was so appreciative that Kelley took the time to get this customized for her and put so much thought into it for her. She could tell that the smaller doctor wanted this to be perfect for her yet she really had no idea how much that all really meant to Hope.

Hope cleared her throat feeling herself get choked up.

“Kell… I can’t even begin to explain how much this gift means to me. Thank you so much, I love it.” She cleared her throat again, harshly blinking her eyes again at the emotions coursing through her threatening to leave her body via her eyes.

“I’m glad you love it, Hope. What I said is the truth. You’re number one and I’m proud of you for all the hard work, dedication and passion you put into your career.” Kelley grinned at the older doctor placing her hand on her knee.

“Merry Christmas, Hope.”

“Merry Christmas, Kell.”

The rest of the morning consisted of the two doctors opening the rest of their presents before they made breakfast, well Hope made breakfast and Kelley watched, watching the first few episodes of Season 1 of Glee that Hope unwillingly bought Kelley but was encouraged to by Carli, and enjoying the warmth of the fireplace and the new warmth between the two of them.
That Christmas morning changed something between the two women and they didn’t know where it was going to lead them.

Chapter End Notes

Also, if anyone was wondering what I imagine Johnson to look like it's Matt Bomer. His smile and eyes are ridiculously bright and perfect! Another note, I think Sasha and Onyx are both female dogs? I wasn't sure but took my best guess!
Chapter 13

Chapter Summary

Bets, bets and more bets

Chapter Notes

These assholes are always drinking for some reason. Happy New Year's from O'Solo and company! Enjoy :)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Hope, I swear to god if you block one more shot..." Kelley growled out in frustration.

Hope smirked while squirting water from her Gatorade water bottle into her mouth. She pulled her Under Armour thermal down before moving her hands around in her gloves, punching each of her hands into the other.

Kelley took a quick sip of water before dribbling the ball between her feet just relishing in the tapping of the ball on her boots. She really missed soccer, but she wasn't too fond of Hope at the moment saving every ball she's sent into the goal.

"Come on, Kell. Try me again" Hope got down in her ready position waiting for Kelley to shoot another ball towards her.

Kelley had a lot of force and speed behind the ball, she knew she could get one past her, but obviously Hope wasn't going to tell her that.

Kelley touched the ball once before winding up, planting her left foot and striking the ball hard with her right foot. She watched as it was going toward the bottom left pocket of the goal past Hope. But she was wrong. Again. Hope got to the ball in time and pushed it out of the box with her outstretched right hand.

"Damn it!" Kelley growled out in frustration before finding the spare ball they brought and kicking it all the way down the other half of the pitch.

Hope realized the younger doctor was really getting worked up over this. She slid her gloves off and walked toward the fuming woman standing 10 feet away from the box.

Hope tentatively placed a hand on Kelley's shoulder feeling the muscle there tense up but relax once she realized it was just Hope attempting to comfort her.

"I can't help it I'm so good.." Hope said, half jokingly and half seriously.

"I don't understand. Have I lost my touch? I used to be so fucking good. Breaking records as a forward, winning a bunch of awards..." Kelley got lost in her own head recounting her amazing soccer days.
"Hey," Hope slightly pulled her shoulder back to encourage her to look at her, "you are an amazing striker. I think you might've sprained my wrist a few times actually. I'll be sure to tell the chief you're to blame for me not being able to operate." Hope tried getting Kelley to lighten up just a little bit and it seemed to work when a small smile played at the corner of her lips.

"It's either I've lost my touch or you're just super amazing at goalkeeping like everything else you do, Yolo."

Hope smirked before shaking her head, "you definitely haven't lost your touch, Kell. But I meaaaan I am a pretty amazing GK, sooooo..."

Kelley pushed Hope's shoulder before rolling her eyes and chuckling at the smiling goalkeeper in front of her.

"It must be the gloves I gave you for Christmas" Kelley glanced at the gloves tucked under Hope's arm before making eye contact with her.

"Well maybe I need to return your boots because they're not getting the job done, huh?"

Kelley pouted annoyingly up at her, crossing her arms over her chest still pissed over not scoring.

Hope saw the pout coming before she even finished her sentence and braced herself for the puppy dog eyes.

"Let's make a bet, step this up a little more to put some pressure on you."

Kelley's ears perked up, never backing down from a challenge, involving alcohol or not.

"I'm listening..."

Hope had to think about the wager she'd be willing to make if Kelley ended up scoring on her.

"How abouuut... Loser has to pick up the other's monthly ER shift."

Kelley opened her mouth to protest but Hope cut her off.

"And they have to buy the winner dinner at whichever restaurant they choose." The eyebrow went up with a sly grin appearing on Hope's face.

Kelley stood there for a moment deciding if she was willing to take an ER shift and be forced to go to a fancy Japanese steakhouse, food she really wasn't into but Hope loved.

She really wanted to put at least one ball behind Hope though so she finally agreed with herself to accept. She held out her hand to shake on the deal.

"You're on, Solo."

"Rules first: You have 3 shots. Crossbar obviously doesn't count. And it has to be a PK."

Kelley almost screamed at the last rule not being able to get a few touches on the ball first, but relented and told herself she had this.

"Deal."

They shook hands, Kelley going to retrieve the ball and Hope sliding her gloves back on, adjusting them to her preference.
Kelley placed the ball down, turning it a few times to be at the specific spot she wanted it to launch off of.

She kept her eye on the ball before taking a deep breath and releasing it. She raised her arm to signal to Hope she was ready.

She took two large steps back before glancing up at the goal, looking directly into Hope's eyes so she wouldn't give away where she was going to try and sink the shot.

With a few short steps and a planted foot, Kelley struck the ball and watched it go right to Hope's outstretched hand, successfully blocking the shot from going into the net.

Kelley silently cursed under her breath before stretching and shaking her limbs out. She had two more shots and she really wanted to beat Hope at this.

Hope passed her the ball before stretching her own arms out and gearing up for the next shot.

Kelley placed the ball in the same exact place, took the same number of steps away from the ball, but didn't look up once at Hope this time. She knew where she wanted to aim this ball and hoped her face or hips didn't give it away.

With a few tiny steps she wound up and hit a beautiful shot off of her foot. She looked up and saw the ball soar to the upper 90 with killer rotation on it. Hope had one finger on it, but it brushed off of it and hit the back of the net.

Kelley couldn't contain her excitement and jumped in the air, pumping her fist and letting out a "fuck yeah!"

She brought both hands to her hair and pushed back the crazy flyaways that slicked back into her damp hair.

The grin on her face was almost painful pulling at her lips that were becoming chapped due to the cold Boston air surrounding them.

Hope was sitting on the ground not yet getting up from her dive and slid her gloves off placing them down next to her.

Kelley made her way over to her friend, sitting in front of her, knees bent so her cleats were planted in the ground.

"I guess I won..."

"I guess you did."

Hope couldn't even be mad at the smaller woman for scoring on her. It used to infuriate Hope when a ball went past her, the sound of it hitting the back of the net.

But since it was Kelley, the one who had at least 40 shots on goal without a single victory, but managed to strike a perfect ball in the upper 90, she couldn't be mad if she tried.

"Are you pissed?" Kelley asked carefully, not wanting to send the goalie into a bad mood.

"Not at all, I'm proud actually. You did it" Hope smiled at her, happy that her friend defeated her frustration.

"Really?!!"
"Really."

"Think you're going to feel the same way when you're being puked on and having to do hundreds of sutures in the ER next week?"

"Next week?! Why the hell didn't you tell me your rotation was the first week of January!" Hope managed to get out, her eyes widening.

"Oops...?" Kelley had a semi-guilty look on her face but a playful smirk took over.

"Oh, that's it... You better run, O'Hara. You better put those forward legs to the test and get away from me before I get your ass." Hope lowly threatened already starting to get up and pounce.

Kelley sprung up on her feet already a step ahead of the older doctor, sprinting towards the opposite net.

Kelley squealed like she always did when being chased. She momentarily looked back to see Hope hot on her heels. She faked one way and cut the other hoping to lose the goalie from being within arm’s length of her. She peeked over her shoulder again to see if she lost the goalie until she felt a strong arm wrap around her waist.

"EEEEEE HOPE! PUT ME DOWN! PUT ME DOWN, YOLO!" Kelley squeaked through her laughter. She was squirming around in Hope's grasp but knew that the older doctor was much stronger than she was.

"Apologize! Say you're sorry for not telling me it was so soon!" Hope managed to demand through her own laughter.

She tightened her grip around Kelley using her other arm to support the smaller woman and hoist her up even more.

"NE-NEVER!" Kelley was laughing from deep within her belly, the giddiness stemming from being chased and now Hope's hand tickling her sides.

"Two words, squirrel! Then I'll stop! Go on!"

Kelley was going to pee her pants if she didn't surrender but wanted a little bit of leverage in this situation. She used all of her strength to turn in Hope's grasp and kissed the older doctor's cheek. It was the only thing she was able to do with her arms being restrained and her legs airborne.

Hope tightened her arm around Kelley but ceased the tickling attack.

Hope cleared her throat, feeling like the sun came down and touched her cheek personally. Her cheek was reddening and soon felt her whole face warm up.

She tried shaking off the reaction before whispering in Kelley's ear, now coming down from the giddy and playful high they were in.

"Just say it, Kell."

Hope felt Kelley tense in her arms before hearing a hushed, "I'm sorry."

Hope let Kelley down to the ground but didn't release her arm from around her waist. Loose enough for Kelley to turn around and face Hope, but not enough to let her move away without stretching Hope's arm.
Kelley's hands came from hanging down at her sides to bunching up Hope's Nike jacket in the middle of her chest.

Hope's strong arm around her waist and the close proximity made her head swim.

She held Hope's gaze and felt her neck heat up, reaching her face. Her heart was racing and felt the cold tingling run up her spine, a telltale sign that she was extremely nervous.

Hope was feeling much similar in the fact that her face was still hot from the kiss on the cheek she received. Her fingers were drumming against Kelley's back while she looked into her eyes.

There was the warmth again that she felt nights prior on Christmas.

The heat between them was there, like a cloud of steam surrounding just both of them and not the rest of the world.

Hope couldn't describe it and Kelley couldn't either.

Hope looked down at Kelley's lips and felt the grip on her jacket become even tighter when she did so. She returned to meet Kelley's gaze who she saw in her peripheral lick her lips.

She had no idea what was happening but didn't question it. She was too caught up in the warmth, the electricity of the moment, to bother to tap into her non-stop thoughts racing around in her brain.

She felt the grip on her jacket get even tighter before it was released.

She glanced down and saw Kelley's arms rest at her sides again.

With that action, Hope dropped her arm from around Kelley and took a small step back, slowly coming out of the cloud they were both in.

They stood there staring at each other, neither saying a word. They didn't know what to say, honestly what the fuck just went down?

“Uh, so what are you doing for New Years?” Kelley asked, coming out of the fog a little earlier before Hope did.

Hope’s eyes shot to meet hers.

She had a weird feeling about this.

“So! Yo! Earth to Soloooo,” Johnson waved his hand in front of the attending, snapping his fingers a couple of times to bring Hope out of her deep thinking.

“Hm, what? Get your hand out my face.” Hope swatted at Johnson’s hand before turning to meet his eyes across the room.

It's been two days since Hope and Kelley played soccer at the local high school’s field. Two days since she felt encompassed by that strong warm feeling that had surrounded them.

Kelley texted her once after they parted ways at Hope’s house where Kelley had to ride back to pick up her car. It read, “Let me know about NYE” and Hope had yet to reply to her friend. She was
holding back for some reason. There was the obvious confusion seeping into every single space of her mind, but there was this growing feeling in her heart, her stomach, her nerves. She couldn’t pinpoint it and it was driving her mad.

“Maybe if you’d respond and not get lost in lala land!” Johnson bit into his apple giving Hope a look.

“What do you want?”

“I have a few things to ask, actually. One: Did you decide who was doing the bypass surgery at 3 today? Two: Any plans for New Year’s Eve? Three: What’s going on in your head that you won’t respond to your best friend while he attempts to get your attention for 5 minutes?” He finished and spun his apple around in his hand looking for the best place to take another bite. Satisfied, he found a nice big piece that he happily sunk his teeth into.

Hope rolled her eyes at all of the questions but figured he deserved answers.

“I am, I don’t know and nothing.”

“I’m only happy with one of those responses. Do you want to do the usual and go out to grab beers with the others? Revere’s Tavern?”

Hope paused, clicking her pen that she was using for paperwork before she zoned out. If she went out, they’d invite Kelley and she wasn’t sure she wanted to see the smaller doctor again. There was this unsettling feeling that she wanted to figure out before she saw her again. But at the same time, she didn’t want to tell her friends what she was thinking about or the feeling she felt on the soccer pitch.

“Yeah, that sounds good. I don’t think too many people will be there, instead being on Boylston St. to see the ball drop.”

Johnson finished his apple throwing the core into the garbage can next to the door. He squirted some hand sanitizer onto his hands, rubbing it in before leaning back into the chair.

“Okay, so. You’re doing the bypass, the 5 of us are going to Revere’s and you have yet to tell me what’s on your mind.”

Hope rolled her eyes at her friend’s persistence but shouldn’t have expected anything less.

“Wait a minute! Before you even try to grill me on my thoughts and shit, what happened at Christmas?” Hope questioned him, eyebrow going up, legs crossed as she leaned her side against her chair, arms folded.

“I was just thinking about how much I miss my dad. It hit me really hard this Christmas even though he’s been gone for 5 years.” Johnson sadly supplied, shrugging his shoulders.

Hope nodded in understanding. The death of Mr. Johnson was rough on her friend and it took the support of Hope, Carli and Karev to help him through it. She remembers how emotionally tolling it was on him and she basically had to drag his ass to and from work so he wouldn’t get fired.

“Hey, it’s okay to still think about it and allow yourself to feel even 5 years later. I’m here.” Hope leaned and patted her friend’s thigh before leaning back in her chair watching the ranging emotions flash across his face.

“Anyways, what’s up in that brain of yours?”
“Really, nothing. Just thinking of a bunch of different shit at once, nothing important.” Hope picked her pen back up to try and get some more paperwork done before her scheduled surgeries.

“I’ll buy it for now, Solo. But when you’re ready… Okay?” Johnson smiled at her, trying to get a small smile from her.

“Okay.” Hope nodded appreciatively at him dropping it for now because she wasn’t even sure what she would tell him.

“Now go away, you’re distracting me from my work, loser” Hope playfully demanded with her finger pointing to the door.

“Ma’am, yes ma’am!” Johnson stood, saluting his attending and friend.

It was 10 pm on New Year’s Eve, the doctors wrapping up their work day at the hospital and getting ready for their night ahead to ring in the New Year.

They opted to just change and get ready at the hospital so they didn’t have to drive all the way home and then figure out a carpooling system. They brought their change of clothes and decided on walking to the bar and leaving their cars at the hospital, taking cabs home after their night ended.

Karev wore a simple button down, with jeans and a nice winter jacket. Johnson, always being the more fashionable of the group, wore a black dress shirt, silver bow tie, nice pressed pants and an overcoat to complete his look. They both looked handsome and finished getting ready in 10 minutes. Well 20 minutes for Johnson because he had to perfect his hair.

Meanwhile, Carli and Hope were getting ready in the attending’s lounge, locking the door so no one else would come in and disrupt them. Carli decided on a silver dress that hugged her body with long sleeves, a small heel on her shoes, hair down with light makeup. Hope wore a sleeveless black dress that stopped right before her knees, showing off her calves. It had splashes of gold sequins flaring from the bottom of the hem and at the top of the dress near her sternum. Hair also down with light make up that Carli suggested, they were both ready.

Hope couldn’t help but feel nervous about seeing Kelley tonight. Karev took it upon himself to invite the youngest doctor before Hope even had to ask him.

According to her idiot friend, she was really excited to come. But she knew Kelley was going to be upset at the fact that she never replied to her text asking about plans for NYE. It was going to be a weird night.

Hope felt it in her bones already.

They all agreed to meet down in the lobby before heading out and the boys were already waiting there for 10 minutes, the time now being 10:30. Karev and Johnson were discussing basketball predictions for the Celtics versus Nets game when they heard a few pairs of heels click. They looked up and saw their two beautiful friends.

“You ladies clean up nicely.” Johnson commented, smiling at the beauty of his friends.

“Shut up, asshole” Hope pushed his shoulder, “I guess you guys do too.”
“Where’s Kelley?” Karev asked, being the first to notice she wasn’t with the other ladies.

Carli and Johnson glanced around while Hope stared at the door of the people and movement coming in and out of it.

“Hope, have you heard from Kelley?” Carli asked from behind her.

Hope simply shook her head no without looking at her friends, not wanting to turn around and see the woman.

Karev spoke up, “I’ll text her to see where sh-“

“SORRY! Sorry, I’m here, I’m ready!” Kelley came running in heels towards her friends trying to get her earring on.

“Slow down, you’re good! You look really nice, maybe even better than me!” Johnson joked, nudging Kelley’s shoulder.

Kelley took in the appearance of her friends noting how attractive this group really was. She noted that Johnson and Carli matched, Karev wasn’t as dressy but that’s just who he is. And Hope? Well she couldn’t tell because she was turned around.

She hadn’t spoken to Hope since they played soccer 4 days ago and wasn’t sure why Hope hadn’t responded to her text. She was excited that she had New Year’s plans since Karev asked her, but she had asked Hope first, not even her other best friends.

She admitted that she felt something strange between them after they goofed around and Kelley kissed her cheek to get her to stop tickling her. She didn’t know what was happening between them or the cloud that surrounded them, but she didn’t want to think about it anymore. She was going to push it to the back of her mind once again and just enjoy herself.

“Hey Yolo,” Kelley said softly taking a step toward her smoothing down her dress in the process.

Kelley was wearing a gold and black shimmering dress that was cut to frame her torso, fanning out the rest of the way and stopped mid-thigh. There was a sheer strip cut into the front of the dress that started at the neck and stopped 3 inches above her belly button. Her light smoky eye makeup that included gold and black eyeshadow made her hazel eyes pop and accented her freckles.

Hope willed herself to turn around and face the woman who has been consuming her thoughts recently. She turned on the sole of her foot and almost lost her footing when she saw the smaller doctor in front of her.

Hope swallowed and felt both eyebrows raise at the sight of Kelley in front of her. She looked amazing and was showing more skin than usual, especially with the sheer, see through cut in the front of the dress.

She stopped taking in every detail of Kelley’s appearance and made eye contact with the waiting eyes.

“Hi,” Hope cleared her throat, “you look amazing.”

Kelley felt the blush run up her neck and onto her face at the compliment.

“You don’t look too bad yourself,” Kelley took a risk and tugged at the fabric of Hope’s dress not knowing if they were still in a weird place.
Hope just smiled at her before turning her attention to the three other surgeons who were all staring at them.

“Are you losers ready to go or what?” Hope asked, daring them to say anything dumb.

“Yeah, yeah we’re ready! Are you? Carli asked amused starting to pick up on some stuff.

“Yup, let’s hit it!”

The tavern was decked out in all silver and gold, the colors of new and old.

The walk was a bunch of playful banter between the "adults" who really acted like children, Carli and Hope not really falling under that though.

Kyle was bar tending and was looking super dapper in his black button down with his sleeves rolled up the to the elbows with a gold tie, his hair looking perfect as usual.

"Hey, bitches! You're all lookin' mighty fiiine tonight! Oh my god, Carli Lloyd you are looking fieeeerce. Turn around, turn around!" Kyle twirled his finger to signal her to show off her full dress.

Fanning himself with his hand, "Girl you need to dress up more often. Get all the honeys and fellas lookin' like that.” He winked at her before commenting on everyone else’s attire.

"So! What are we drinking tonight to ring in the New Year together? Whiskey? Gin? Something other than beer, you boring bitches..." Kyle rolled his eyes in a playful way but still wanting them to spice it up.

"I don't think these two want tequila," Johnson smirking piped up, gesturing between Hope and Kelley.

They both turned red in embarrassment remembering the picture they saw, both not recounting that night’s events still.

"Oh my god, what happened?! I mean they do say tequila makes her clothes fall off..." Kyle mumbled out, his interest peaked.

"Nothing, you shut your mouth," Hope said pointing her finger into Johnson’s chest, "and you," pointing at Kyle, "get me a round of shots for us. Two each to start off with, whatever alcohol you choose. I'm going to grab a table before it gets too crowded.” Hope tossed her card on the counter before walking away to find said table.

The four other doctors looked at Kyle with confused expressions but they quickly followed Hope, not complaining that she was the one buying the drinks.

A few minutes later, Kyle came over with their shots and requested cocktails each ordered. He had a strict no beer rule tonight and told them they'd each get a free drink if they stuck to it.

Knocking back their shots and sipping their drinks, the surgeons were already feeling loose after a hectic few days at the hospital.

“This is delicious. What is this?” Kelley asked sipping her pretty pink cocktail eyeing it skeptically.

“I think it’s a Pink Gin Fizz, made with gin, grapefruit and orange juice with probably a bunch of sugar in it.” Johnson commented, remembering the one Kyle made him a couple of years ago.
Kelley nodded her head, “Hmm, I like it. I could definitely see myself drinking a bunch of these because they taste so good.”

“You better slow your roll there, squirrel. Don’t want you getting sick or a little wild on us, right?” Hope questioned, a playful bite to her tone.

“What’s wrong with being a little wild, Solo?” Kelley quirked her eyebrow, tongue finding her straw before sipping her drink keeping eye contact with the older doctor.

Karev cleared his throat, “I say we have a little bet tonight. All of us.”

Hope and Kelley’s eyes met, both breaking out into laughter at the bet they made on the soccer pitch.

“What’s so funny?” Carli questioned, glancing between her two friends, obviously missing the joke.

“Nothing, we just made a bet a few days ago. Do continue, I’m listening” Kelley turned her full attention to Karev waiting to hear what this challenge involved.

“We all have to find someone to kiss at midnight. Whoever doesn’t have a person to kiss has to buy next outing’s drinks for all five of us” Karev pitched the idea.

“What? Karev, you’re a fucking moron.” Hope commented, not amused at this bet.

“I’m in, I do love me some randoms…” Johnson smirked. Of course he was in, he picked up anyone, anywhere, anytime.

“Come onnn, you know how I am with shit like this, Karev” Carli groaned, already dreading having to find someone to be her New Year’s kiss.

“I’m down, it won’t be too bad. Plus free drinks? Hell yeah!” Kelley raised her gin cocktail, accepting the challenge.

“Come on, Solo. Or else you lose by default and have to buy us the drinks next time. Are you really willing to buy me and our lovely friends top shelf liquor numerous times over that night?” Karev knew she was going to give in and accept the challenge, he just had to say the right stuff.

Hope rolled her eyes, her friends really were pieces of work sometimes. She wasn’t in the mood to kiss a random person tonight, but as already proved, she didn’t back down.

“Fine. But what happens if we all end up kissing someone?”

“Good question! You have to get their number too. No number, you lose. Everyone in?” Karev looked at everyone around the table holding his fist in the middle.

They all agreed, Carli and Hope not too amused, but Johnson and Kelley all for it. They bumped fists and drank their drinks, picking at the peanuts and pretzels on the table and discussing their last few days. The playful banter and bickering always making an appearance.

“Kellz?” Kelley looked up mid-laugh at one of Carli’s jokes and saw her 4 friends standing there; Tobin, Alex, Ashlyn and Ali.

She jumped up and hugged them, “Oh my god! You guys made it! How was the other bar? How are you?!” She smothered them each and squeezed them a little extra from the alcohol in her blood.

“It was pretty chill, but nothing too exciting. Not a good enough atmosphere to celebrate the New Year in. How are you doing, Dr. O’Hara?” Ashlyn asked, wiggling her eyebrows being the usual
goofy person she is.

“I’m busy but happy! It’s amazing, guys like so much better than Children’s. How is my favorite couple?” Kelley giggled out, draping both arms around Alex and Tobin.

“Hey! What about us?” Ali asked, pouting like the princess she is, grabbing Ashlyn’s waist.

“Yeah, yeah we all know Kelley loves us more,” Tobin joked, winking at Kelley and grinning devilishly at Ashlyn and Ali, rubbing Alex’s lower back.

“I miss you guys. Can we please hang out soon? I miss my gals.” Kelley frowned, going to turn around to grab her drink to finish it. Then she realized her other friends were all staring at the interactions with mixed reactions.

Johnson and Karev were smirking, probably thinking about how hot the four other women were. Carli was just smiling at how nice and happy the five women were. Hope on the other hand. Hope looked pissed off at something, like an intern bumping into her or someone hid her favorite scrub cap.

Kelley met her eyes to see the emotions in the irises finding them mixed with too much to pick out any emotion in particular. She took a sip of her drink before placing it down and moving off to the side and motioning for her friends to come closer to the table.

Her two worlds were about to collide and she was more than eager for her friends to meet.

“Gals, these are my wonderful doctor friends. This is Levi Johnson, cardiothoracic fellow, too handsome for his good but a killer heart. Just call him Johnson.” Kelley smiled at him, Johnson returned it and waved at the four ladies.

“This is Carli Lloyd, neurology attending, incredibly smart and focused, but is so funny she doesn’t even know it half of the time.” Carli shyly waved and sent them a small smile not really knowing what to do.

“My partner in crime on the peds wing, Alex Karev, only call him Karev or he’ll become a huge baby. He’s the pediatrics attending, making me his fellow and he graciously puts up with me… Or do I put up with him?” Kelley asked giggling, earning a laugh from all of her friends. He held his glass up to Kelley’s friends and offered them a half smile.

“And this,” Kelley took a huge breath, “This is THE Dr. Hope Solo, first woman and youngest cardiothoracic attending at Boston Gen. I call her Yolo, but don’t call her that, she won’t like it very much. The big and bad surgeon known around the hospital, but a goofy child deep deep down, I promise. My best friend…” Kelley looked at Hope and gave her the biggest smile.

Hope’s stoic expression softened at Kelley’s words and eyed each one of Kelley’s friends not letting her guard down just yet around them. Hope noted how gorgeous each of them was and how her three other friends are probably drooling at the sight of them.

“Surgeons, meet the gals!” Kelley held both arms to showcase her friends who all laughed at her typical antics.

“Tobin Heath, the chillest one of the group who goes with the flow and has the most calming aura. Soccer coach and trainer extraordinaire, runs the best camps for kids.”

“And here we have her girlfriend, Ms. Alex Morgan, the sassy but sexy lady” Alex rolled her eyes but smiled at Kelley being used to the attention from her friend.
“Alex Morgan here is a physical therapist, specializing in soccer related injuries and prevention, working directly for the USWNT. I love those free tickets!” Kelley earned a laugh from everyone again but continued on.

“Ali Krieger, the sunshine of everyone’s, but most importantly, Ashlyn’s life. Kriegs here is a German teacher at Mass. Prep, the ever prestigious high school where students end up at Ivy Leagues. Also a soccer coach for the girls soccer team, just coming back from a championship!”

“And last but certainly not least, Ashlyn Harris. One of Boston’s most well-known tattoo artists who gave me my first tattoo, for the folks who don’t know. Resident badass, actually a huge ball of mush, don’t let the sleeve fool you.”

“And I am Dr. Kelley O’Hara, the amazing cardio fellow at Boston General where I met some amazing people,” her eyes flicked to Hope.

“I’m the cute Georgia peach that everyone loves to pick on because of my stature and childlike spirit.”

Everyone laughed and agreed at the fact that they all loved picking on their silly friend.

“So now that everyone has met, let’s drink and celebrate 2016 coming at us liiiive!” Kelley exclaimed, downing the rest of her drink. Ushering her friends to the bar to get her something to drink.

“Kell, put their drinks on my tab,” Hope called out to her.

“What?! No way, either I’ll pay or they got it, no worries Yolo.” Kelley grinned at her, the grin that appeared while she was drunk.

Hope shook her head, “Just do it, it’s fine. We’ll find another table to push together so they can sit with us. Go.”

Kelley looked at Hope like she just saved her the last cookie from the batch.

“You’re the best!”

“I know I am. And ask Kyle for another round of shots for us, please.”

Kelley went to the bar to retrieve their alcohol and tell her friends drinks were on Hope, in which they all persisted that they pay her back or buy her drinks, but Kelley shot them down knowing Hope wouldn’t want that.

Kelley listened to her four friends discuss something revolving around the USWNT while she leaned against the bar. She was so happy that her 8 closest friends were celebrating the New Year with her tonight. It really symbolized the whole old and new concept. Her night was just getting started and she was already tipsy, a great sign for a great night.

Kelley and the eight friends all sat around at the table laughing about different topics and getting to know each other better. A lot of alcohol was consumed and everyone was at least tipsy, half being drunk already.

Hope was more reserved and sat back to listen and observe more than anything. She remembered the women when Kelley came into the ER and begged her to look up the statuses of her friends. She
noted how kind and funny they all were, just like Kelley, just like Johnson, Carli, even Karev. But not Hope.

None of them were like Hope and that made her uneasy. Why was Kelley friends with her when she wasn’t really the type of person to be in her circle?

She watched as Kelley sat between her and Alex, laughing at a joke Johnson made making Kelley laugh hard at it, grabbing Hope’s thigh under the table and Alex’s arm which was resting on the table. Hope’s leg tensed but relaxed when she felt the warmth of Kelley palm against her skin. As a reaction, Hope placed her hand on top of Kelley’s, surprising Kelley but didn’t make a move to retract her hand even when she removed her hand from Alex’s arm.

“Guys, it’s 11:50. We have approximately 10 minutes to find our kiss. With that said, we need to get out on the makeshift dance floor to find our smooches.” Karev suggested, making a move to stand up after downing his whiskey cocktail.

The doctors followed suit, downing their drinks and shots that were abandoned.

“Wait, what?” Ali asked, confused at what Karev was talking about.

“There’s this bet between the five of us that we have to find someone to kiss when it hits midnight. We challenge each other a lot.” Carli supplied knowing she’d be pretty confused too if someone just randomly said that.

The four gals looked at each other and chuckled already having their midnight kissing partners right next to them.

“Oooo! They’re handing out party hats and horns!” Kelley yelled, jumping up and making it her mission to go get her group some.

The group got up and dispersed on the dance floor, dozens of people already dancing and getting ready for the countdown.

The doctors were scoping out seemingly single people to kiss while Hope stood near the table, not really wanting to jump in at the moment. She figured if she had another drink she would be completely drunk and wouldn’t worry so much at the last minute.

She saw two shots of whiskey on the table and knew they’d finish her off so she just went for it. She felt the burn down her throat and let out a breath, shaking her body feeling all warm now.

She was about to step onto the dance floor before she saw Kelley talking to a taller brunette at the bar. The woman was pretty, with a great body and bright smile that rivaled Johnson’s. Her tan skin complimented her brown waves and accentuated her wonderful jaw line and bone structure.

Kelley was giggling at something she said, the woman taking a step closer to her adjusting the party hat she half haphazardly strapped onto her head.

Hope thought she was going to crush the shot glass closest to her hand at the sight, her blood was boiling at the woman touching Kelley’s arm and leaning in even closer.

Hope wasn’t jealous. No. Why would she be? She just didn’t like Kelley’s space being invaded like that. She checked her watch and saw there were two minutes left until midnight.

She glanced around the bar and saw the four gals dancing together, all having a great time. Johnson found a guy who he was chatting up while dancing with, Karev already kissing a woman amidst the
crowd of dancers and Carli backed up against a wall by a woman who looked like Kelley’s friend Ashlyn almost. Everyone was occupied except for Hope. And Kelley was being occupied by this, this woman.

She wouldn’t let her friend be invaded like that and knew she had to step in. 11:59 read on her watch and she knew she had to help Kelley escape this woman’s grasp before midnight so she wasn’t pressured into kissing her. Yeah, that sounded about right, right?

She mustered up her best “bitch walk” people around the hospital call it and strutted over to Kelley at the bar. The main TV was counting down the last 20 seconds of 2015 when she was 10 ft. away from Kelley.

By the 17th second, Hope and Kelley’s eyes met and Hope saw something flash in those hazel eyes that always captured her attention.

Kelley nervously swallowed seeing the way Hope was stalking over to her and Katie? Krista? She really didn’t remember the stunning woman’s name in front of her.

She turned her attention to Hope who stood next to her, almost touching.

“Hey Kell,” Hope said lowly, close enough to Kelley’s ear that she could hear with the loud music and even louder TV. 14 seconds.

Kelley had goosebumps on her arms and felt her neck heat up at the sound of Hope’s voice.

“Hey, Yolo. Want a hat?” Kelley offered her a gold party hat.

Hope took it and strapped it on her head, leaning in to whisper in Kelley’s ear. “I’m here to rescue you from this chick.”

Kelley’s eyes shut at the warmth of Hope’s breath on her ear but opened when she felt Hope shift next to her.

“Rescue me?”

10 seconds.

Hope just nodded and grabbed her hand leading her away from the brunette before sending her a wave over her shoulder with a smirk on her face. She had accomplished her goal.

“She was pretty cool, Hope. You didn’t have to do that for me, ya big softie” Kelley lightly punched Hope’s shoulder.

“She looked like she was invading your space and I didn’t want you to be uncomfortable.” Hope shrugged, a smile not leaving her face since leading Kelley away from the woman at the bar.

6 seconds.

“Oh shit! Hope! We don’t have any to kiss!” Kelley shouted over the last seconds of 2015 being announced by everyone in the bar.

Hope panicked knowing she waited too long to find someone to kiss. She didn’t want to lose the damn bet.

3!
Hope and Kelley were forced to be flush against each other by the pushing of the crowd all gathering in the middle for the final countdown.

2!

Hope looked down at Kelley who had to grab her bicep to brace herself after being pushed by another person, which led Hope to react quickly and slide her arm around Kelley’s waist to keep her from falling. Kelley looked up at Hope, subconsciously licking her lips tasting the alcohol she previously drank. Hope saw that action and licked her own, feeling that same warmth surrounding them.

1!

It happened so quickly. Within a matter of a second.

Hope’s plump bottom lip was between Kelley’s thinner lips, lazily sliding against each other. The softness of the kiss was unreal, the pink skin glided over each other like they have been for years. Kelley could feel the little moisture of the kiss coating her top lip but paid no attention to it.

She was so wrapped up in this kiss that she forgot her own damn name. She rose on her tip toes to lean even further into the kiss. She felt Hope shift her arm around her waist, grabbing it tighter but bringing her other hand up to cradle the back of Kelley’s neck, pressing her further into the kiss. The warm hand made her lean her head against it out of reaction, melting into the touch. Kelley moved her hands from around Hope’s arms grabbing her face with both hands. Her thumbs rested just below her cheek bones, the other fingers encircling the back of her head.

The warmth between them rose, their cloud becoming smaller and tighter. The electricity shooting through their nerve endings and veins just intensified the kiss, bringing each other flush against each other.

The feeling of Kelley’s tongue slightly swiping at her bottom lip made her let out a hot breath against Kelley’s mouth, opening her own to allow Kelley to enter her mouth. The wet warmth from their tongues meeting made them both moan at the same time.

That broke them apart, slowly parting lips that stuck to each other just slightly before they pulled away completely.

Blue eyes met hazel ones, hands still in the same position gripping the other. They both noted that their eyes had darkened, the heat in their stomachs growing and the electricity still shocking their lips. They kept their eyes locked on each other not moving or saying anything. The hot breath hitting the other’s mouth, breathing each other’s air.

Without another second to pass, they pressed their bodies together again roughly pulling the other against them. They found themselves kissing more urgently this time, two kisses before their tongues met again.

They were so wrapped up in each other that they didn’t even notice the rest of the crowd scream, “HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!”

It was a new year indeed. And what was to come was certainly new for the two women.

Chapter End Notes
Ohhhhh shit! Have a Happy New Year, homies! Drop me a line, I'm dying to know how this is chapter will settle with you guys! 2016, let's do iiiit
Chapter 14

Chapter Summary

What a great start to the New Year.

Chapter Notes

Writer's block and work are my excuses this time around. My sincerest apologies, homies! Oh no, O'Solo! Keep it together, ladies! Let me know what you're thinking post-NYE kiss

"Do you wanna talk about what the fuck just happened back there?!" Johnson yelled, fast walking to keep up with Hope.

"Hope, you need to talk to me. What was that?" Johnson sped up and grabbed her arm to stop her and turn her around.

She yanked her arm out of his grasp and continued walking, quickening her pace.

Johnson sighed jogging to walk in stride with his friend.

After macking on this hot dude, he looked up to find his friends to wish them a Happy New Year and found Hope and Kelley embraced in an intense make out session. He thought he mistook Hope for a different chick because as far as he knew she was straighter than straight. When they shifted their heads, he got a clear look at Hope's face and thought he was going to drop dead at the sight.

He knew the two women were close, but not that close.

He set off to go find Carli and Karev to see if they knew what the hell was happening. Pulling them both away from their respective women, he pulled them about 8 feet away from Hope and Kelley kissing quite a few minutes after the ball drop.

None of them had a clue how to approach this or how to react. Sure they knew Kelley was gay, but Hope? Their straight Hope tonguing the newest member of their friend group?

They know alcohol wasn't an excuse for this because you don't kiss your friend like that regardless of it being New Year’s Eve or not. A peck maybe but that's pushing it, especially with the serious, guarded Hope Solo.

"I guess they both really wanted to win the bet..." Karev piped up after a few moments of silence among the trio.

Carli and Johnson couldn't even be annoyed at his stupid comment because of what was happening in front of them. They all looked at each other, still at a loss of what to do. They glanced back at the
two women through the commotion of the hyped crowd.

Hope pulled back, physically confused and in shock. Kelley's arms were loosely draped around her neck now and looked up at her, equally as confused.

They saw Hope take a step back, taking both hands from Kelley's hips and pushing her back at the shoulders. Not forcefully, not to hurt her, but enough to distance them.

Hope crossed her arms and looked down at her feet, looking like she heard the worst news of her life. She turned and walked away from Kelley not even looking back at her. She grabbed her card from Kyle and the clutch from the table nearby and practically ran out of the bar.

Kelley was still standing in the middle of the bar, strangers passing by her every which way, screaming, laughing, singing. She looked so lost and upset that it rivaled one of those ASPCA commercials.

The trio looked at each other then back at Kelley, then to the door where Hope had just run out of. Silently dividing their attention, Johnson grabbed his coat and ran out to talk to Hope. Karev and Carli figured they'd she would need them more than Hope would and made their way to the lone woman in the midst of joy and commotion.

She looked up and saw their shocked yet sympathetic looks and knew they had just saw what transpired between herself and Hope. She felt her body tense, all muscles freezing once she realized what they just did.

A slight tremble of her bottom lip and the rushing of pressure coming from behind her eyes ready to break through was it. She felt the knot form in her throat and her nostrils flare. Then she cried.

Carli and Karev rushed to her side, Kelley turning into Karev to cry on his chest. Carli was always awkward in these situations but rubbed Kelley's back soothingly to help comfort her.

They looked at each other knowingly, not having to say a word. Carli helped Kelley into her jacket, handing Karev his and grabbing Kelley's purse shoving her own clutch into it. Karev took one side while

Carli took the other, supporting Kelley by holding her up to get into a cab outside. Carli slid in while Karev placed Kelley into the middle before getting in himself and providing Carli's address. His apartment was smaller and Carli's was most likely clean and ready to have someone over, unlike Karev's.

They were in for an interesting night, their thoughts jumping to how Johnson was handling Hope and how Hope was managing.

What a great start to the New Year.

Hope’s jaw was clenched, the bone even more defined with her teeth grinded together. Johnson knew this was the biggest indicator that she was either extremely emotional and holding it in, or that she was so pissed off she was going to kill anyone or anything that bothered her at the moment. He had to tread carefully but not too softly.

“Hope.”

She stopped in her tracks, “What do you want?”

Johnson halted his own walking and stopped just a little bit in front of her taking the advantage to
“What happened back there?” He asked, not accusingly anymore but out of concern for his friend and his own interest.

“Nothing, I’m not talking about it.” Hope made a move to walk around him but he put his hand on her arm to stop her.

“Hope, that was not ‘nothing.’ That was definitely something, something I don’t think you really understand fully.” Johnson looked at the way Hope refused to make eye contact, jaw still clenched, her features showing the emotions bubbling up inside of her. He knew it was a matter of minutes before she freaked out and let her feelings take over.

She stared off into the traffic of the city, at all of the lights illuminating the city that had been her saving grace and source of heartbreak at the same time. She made eye contact with a concerned looking Johnson before saying, “I’m going home. I’ll see you on Sunday.”

Her tone signified that there wasn’t room for any discussion and she didn’t want to be bothered or contacted until she saw him at work on Sunday, grated she wasn’t called in the next day.

Johnson watched her slide into a cab before dejectedly sighing and standing alone on the busy sidewalk not knowing what to do. His best friend just partook in something he doesn’t think she was aware of what it implied or what the consequences would be. Thinking about Kelley and his other friends, he pulled out his phone to see a text from Carli, “Karev and I took her to my place. Come over if you want”

Johnson replied, “On my way now. No luck” knowing Carli would understand that he didn’t get Hope to say a single thing about what happened. He honestly had no idea what was going through Hope’s mind. Or Kelley’s for that matter.

He hailed a cab and supplied Carli’s address hoping his two friends were handling Kelley alright. What a start to the New Year.

They all had keys to each other’s houses so it wasn’t too hard for Johnson to enter Carli’s home. He slipped his shoes off and hung his coat on the hooks next to the door before loosening his tie and unbuttoning the cuffs of his sleeves to roll them up his arms.

Rounding the corner into the living room, he was met with the sight of the TV set at half-mute, the lights dimmed and the fireplace on probably just for comfort since it wasn’t too cold outside. Carli was curled up in her armchair, head propped up on her hand looking at the other half of the weird incident in the bar.

Kelley was silently crying with her head in Karev’s lap who was rubbing her back with one hand and stroking her hair with the other. His ex-girlfriend used to love those actions when she was worked up so he thought they would comfort Kelley too.

The sight of Kelley broke Johnson’s heart. The usual bubbly, goofy, happy squirrel was crying onto their friend’s lap, face covered in red blotches from crying, hand curled under her chin, the other wiping at the streams of tears rolling down her face. Her face was twisted in confusion, the small woman looking like a lost child.

Johnson nodded at Carli who returned the action before looking back to Kelley. Karev felt someone standing near him and looked up to meet his friend’s eyes before offering a sad, half-smile and then
looking back down at Kelley. Johnson was going to attempt to get her to talk, the one out of the
group to always try and mend everyone, and talking was key.

He crouched down in front of Kelley to fill her line of vision before pushing a few strands of hair out
of her face, softly caressing her head.

“Hey, Kell” Johnson cooed, trying to be soft and warm with her, sensing she was more of the
sensitive type.

Kelley cried harder at the nickname, Johnson mentally chastising himself with the slip of the name
that Hope usually calls her.

“Hey, I’m sorry, I’m sorry… Shhh, you’re okay.” He stroked her hair a few times, running the back
of his hand along her cheek to calm her tense muscles and attack of tears.

“Alright, Karev is going to keep holding you while I get you a glass of water and a change of clothes
okay? Cry it out, you’re okay” He softly whispered to her, afraid she might release a round of fresh
tears if he said something else wrong. He looked back at Carli before standing back up and jerked his
head in the direction of the bedroom. She understood the gesture and also rose to her feet to follow
him.

They closed the door behind them just in case Kelley would be able to hear them converse over her
crying somehow.

“What should I give her to wear?” Carli asked, looking through her dresser for the small doctor.

“Probably sweatpants and a tshirt, comfortable and loungey.” Johnson sat on the bed thinking about
the situation the five of them were in.

Carli pulled out a Harvard shirt before thinking about the sweatshirt Hope gave to Kelley, putting it
back in her drawer as to not remind Kelley of the older woman. She settled on an old soccer tee and
a pair of grey sweats and laid them next to Johnson on the bed.

As if reading his mind, Carli spoke, “I have no idea what the fuck just happened in the bar and I
have no idea what either of them was thinking during it or what they’re thinking and feeling now.”

Johnson shook his head, rubbing his face into his hands. The alcohol was still in all of their systems
but it seemed to sober him, Carli and Karev right up. They had to figure out why the kissing even
happened and how to handle the aftermath of their two friends.

“Anything with Hope at all?” Carli asked, shifting on her bed, sitting with one leg tucked under her
opposite.

“Nope. I basically chased her down the street and once she finally stopped, she couldn’t even look at
me. I thought she was either going to commit murder or have an emotional breakdown by the looks
of her. She was pissed, Car. And all she said was, “I’m going home, I’ll see you on Sunday.” And
then she got into a cab.”

Carli sighed, knowing her best friend wouldn’t contact any of them or return their texts or phone
calls, forcing herself to deal with her emotions alone until Sunday at work where they’d try to talk to
her but she’d shut them down saying she was too busy with surgeries or paperwork.

“What a mess… Any theories?” She turned and looked at Johnson lying back with his hands
covering his face.
“I have no idea… Kelley’s gay, right? So maybe she thought Hope was another woman and then realized it was Hope when she pushed her away?” Johnson answered unsurely.

“I think she would know it’s her best friend before sticking her tongue down her throat. Kelley’s a lesbian, that makes sense she would kiss another woman, right. But Hope? Why would she kiss Hope and why was Hope clearly kissing back? I don’t get it.” Carli shook her head confused as to what her two friends were thinking and doing.

“We better get her to bed so she’s comfortable in the morning.”

“Yeah, you’re right… I’ll send a text to Hope even though she’s not going to read it, just to let her know we’re still here for her.”

Carli stayed in her room after shooting a text to Hope, volunteering to help Kelley change and let her sleep in her bed tonight. When Karev carried her into Carli’s room, she was passed out mostly due to the amount of alcohol she consumed and partially from the amount of crying that took place within the last hour and half. Karev laid her on the bed with Johnson in tow with a glass of water, box of tissues and a couple of Tylenol for Kelley to take in the morning. Karev and Johnson left the room, Karev sleeping on the couch, Johnson on the chair and Carli in the guest bedroom.

Carli slipped Kelley’s heels off placing them next to the bed before positioning herself to prop her up to unzip her dress.

“Alright O’Hara, I’m going to unzip your dress so you’ll sleep more comfortably…” Carli felt the need to talk Kelley through the process of undressing her out of respect and because she felt totally awkward doing this in the first place. But she sucked it up and went through with it because she’s loyal, damn it, to her friends and family.

Kelley’s head slumped forward resting on Carli’s shoulder, arms limps at her side, while Carli unzipped the dress down from the nape of her neck to the middle of her back. Carli laid her back down before slipping her arms through the straps and pulled the dress down her torso. She had to raise her lower back to slip it off completely down her lower body. She had an underwear clad Dr. Kelley O’Hara in her bed and she tried looking everywhere but the almost naked woman in her bed. Jesus Christ this was awkward.

She picked up the tee and sweatpants, lifting one of Kelley’s leg at a time to slip into the comfortable pants. She hiked them up and made sure they were tied tight enough so that they wouldn’t slip off in case she was a wiggly sleeper. The harder part was going to put the t shirt on the smaller woman, the process being more complicated with the holes she had to put Kelley’s limbs and head through.

She put Kelley in a sitting position again, holding her back for support and using her free hand to tug the top over Kelley’s head. It took three tries and a little rough tug before it was around the doctor’s neck, messing her hair up to cover her face in the process. Carli used her hand to push it back before pulling the shirt down a little bit and laying her back down to place her arms through the sleeves one at a time.

“There. Wasn’t so hard, huh? Nice and comfy.” Carli smiled victoriously at her hard work, pulling the blanket over Kelley’s body and turning the lamp off and turning to leave.

“Hope.”

Carli froze in her spot, slowly turning around to see if she was hearing things or if Kelley just called out Hope’s name.
“Hope, please.”

Carli knew she definitely heard that. It came out of Kelley’s lips as more of a whimper than anything. Carli had no fucking idea what to do in this situation. Should she walk away and pretend she never heard that?

Or does she stay to make sure she’s okay? Happy Fucking New Year.

“Hope, stop.”

Carli really wanted to know what Kelley was dreaming about that entailed Hope and Kelley begging for something and telling her to stop. She stood at the foot of the bed still not entirely sure what to do.

“I’m sorry. Hope. Hope. Hope!”

Kelley jolted out of her sleep, sitting up, breathing heavily. She looked around the unfamiliar room, panic rising. Carli noticed before she made her way to Kelley’s side.

“Hey, hey there, O’Hara. You’re okay, you’re at my house in my room. Why don’t you go back to sleep?” Carli quietly suggested, rubbing Kelley’s back to calm her down.

“Wha-what? Your room… Why?” Kelley was confused, disoriented from drinking, crying and being suddenly woken up.

“It’s okay, I’ll explain in the morning. Just lie back and close your eyes,” Carli guided her to lay down, “Yeah, there you go… Try to sleep, I’ll be here in the morning.”

Carli rubbed her arm until she heard a light snore and saw Kelley’s breathing even out. Phew. Close one.

She made sure the water, pills and tissues were there for her in the morning before she turned the lamp off and snuck her way out of the room.

Her head was pounding and she was convinced her eyes were swollen shut from how puffy they were. She forced her eyes to open when she pushed the hair out of her face and smacked her lips a few times to wet her dry mouth. She turned her head to the left and saw a glass of water and some Tylenol waiting for her. She slowly sat back, leaning against the headboard before reaching out and grabbing the painkillers and water.

She sighed in relief as the cool liquid quenched the desert building up in her mouth. She noticed the box of tissues and cocked her head to the side. Why would she need tissues with her water and pain relievers?

She wasn’t sick, she wasn’t crying...

She was crying. She was sobbing last night.

It all came rushing back to her. Running late for their night out, drinking cocktails and taking shots, laughing and joking with her friends, seeing her other friends, everyone drinking more and becoming acquainted, drinking more, free party hats, some woman flirting with her, Hope approaching her.

Hope approaching her.

Kelley slammed her eyes shut at the memory, embarrassed and upset all over again.
Hope approached her, “rescued” her, they kissed, stared into each other’s eyes, kissed more, kissed a lot more, Hope pushed her away, her world stopped, Karev and Carli helped her, Carli’s living room, crying uncontrollably on Karev’s lap, Johnson trying to comfort her and accidentally using the nickname Hope calls her, repeating apologies over and over again until she presumably passed out.

And now she’s here. In Carli’s sweatpants and sitting in her bed.

Fuck she was so embarrassed. She rubbed her temples from the impending headache bound to take over her entire head before the pain relievers kicked in and got rid of it.

What happened last night? The kiss happened so quickly. Why would they even be kissing in the first place? All she knew was that she needed to take a day to figure out what the fuck she was thinking last night and work out whatever is going on in her mind because this wouldn’t go over well in the future, she just knew it.

Kelley made her way out of bed before looking down and seeing her shoes and dress laid out on a chair in the corner of Carli’s room. Kelley smiled at her friend, grateful for her care and support. She made the bed before slipping out of the tee shirt and sweatpants, folding them nicely before placing them on the corner of the bed and slipping back into her dress and heels.

She opened the door to make her way to the kitchen to see if Carli was up to thank her for everything last night. When she walked down the hall and rounded the corner, she was met with a sleepy looking Carli, Karev and Johnson sitting at the table each nursing a cup of coffee and a muffin. She didn’t expect all three of them to be here and staring at her.

“I uh…” Kelley was at a loss for words at the three sets of eyes staring at her expectantly. Of course with her luck all of them would be waiting up for her.

“Kelley, are you okay?” Johnson asked, taking in her puffy eyes and unusual awkwardness.

“Yeah!” she said a little too chipper, “I was just heading out. I have some errands to run on my day off, so…” She awkwardly pointed behind her toward the door. She moved to turn around before taking a deep breath in, raising her shoulders, “thank you for last night. You guys are amazing, and I love your support and care for me when I was a mess. I’m sorry you saw me like that. With a mixture of alcohol and confusion and her face, I just…”

“Hey, O’Hara, it’s okay. That’s what we’re here for.” Karev offered her a small smile trying not to be as mushy as she was.

Kelley appreciated that and the love and concern written on all three of their faces.

“Thank you again, I love you guys. I’ll see you Sunday.” She waved at them before making her way out of the house where she let her emotions out. The usual happy, spunky, obnoxious doctor was a hot sobbing mess for her friends to clean up.

Jesus Christ work was going to be fun on Sunday. Hopefully she wouldn’t run into Hope before she figured her shit out.

That dreaded Sunday came around and neither Hope nor Kelley was anywhere near ready to talk about New Year’s Eve or their reactions following it.

Hope stayed true to word and didn’t respond to a single text her friends sent her. Carli, Karev and Johnson all tried sending at least one text trying to gage her feelings on what happened and to remind
her that they were all there for her, but no response. She locked herself in her house for all of Saturday to clean the house, which meant trying to clear her mind. She walked the dogs for a bit longer than she usually did, bringing them on a tiny trail near her house. She read a book, made some tea after her dinner to relax, she laid out her clothes for tomorrow, took a shower, finished her laundry, went online and paid bills. Hope did everything and anything to ignore thoughts about Kelley and NYE.

When Hope was cleaning her house, she found one of Kelley’s t-shirts she must’ve forgotten when she stayed over one night. Hope held it thinking about her. Was she okay? Did she hate Hope now? What was she thinking about all of this? She didn’t want to think about her anymore and threw the t-shirt into the hamper to add to her load of laundry.

When Hope was finally in bed for the night, pillows propping her body to sit up in bed, she took her iPad and scrolled down to review her schedule for tomorrow. She only had one surgery scheduled tomorrow morning at 8:30, so literally half an hour into her shift and that’s it. It was an hour tops for this surgery so she was going to have quite the boring day until someone in the ER needed a cardiothoracic consult or emergency surgery on their heart. She opened the notes app on the iPad to write down a list of groceries she needed to pick up tomorrow night after noting all of the stuff she doesn’t have in her fridge earlier when she was making dinner.

The last note typed always opens if you exit the app on it and she uses this app everyday so Hope wasn’t surprised when she was she left a note open. She started reading it and realized it wasn’t her post.

“Hey Yolo, you just fell asleep on the couch next to me and I had too much hot chocolate so I’m hyped on sugar meaning I’m not going to fall asleep soon. Did you know that you lightly snore? I mean not enough to keep me up or wake me, but still loud enough that I can hear. I just looked down at you sleeping and your nose twitched and I stifled my laughter so I wouldn’t wake you up! HAHAHA, you might kick my ass when you see this note because I messed up your meticulous lists and thoughts about work or a new workout plan. But I think you secretly love my goofball self, don’t lie! Sleep well, I’m going to see you in the morning when you have to shake me awake because I’m going to be getting less sleep than you! Night night, Yolo. I hope you’re having sweet dreams. Love, Squirrel”

And at the bottom of the screen she drew a squirrel and a stethoscope, both sketches looking pretty damn rough but Hope knew what they were.

Throughout the note, Hope felt her smile grow and grow at her weird little friend. Best friend. Something more? She cleared her throat, and went on making her grocery list noting to buy the type of beer that she preferred and not Kelley’s since that’s all she had in the house.

Marking the last of her items, Hope locked her iPad and accidentally hit the home button while putting it down making her see her background again. It was a selfie of Hope and Kelley in their Christmas pajamas in the kitchen, Kelley sitting on the counter with Hope standing with her back to Kelley’s front both laughing with joy written across their faces.

*She remembers that moment clearly. She was making them their hot beverages for the movie that night while Kelley was playing Trivia Crack that she downloaded on Hope’s iPad.*

*“Who was the 32nd president?”*

*Hope was busy changing over the KCups from hot chocolate to a special café mocha one that Kelley had bought Hope a pack of and didn’t really hear what Kelley asked.*
“SOLO! We have 15 seconds here! Get your head in the game! Do you want lemonhead3175 to beat me?!”

Hope turned around looking at Kelley like she had two heads which quickly turned into a “what did you just say because I think you’ve lost your mind” look.

“How Amelia Solo, who the hell was the 32nd president of the United States?!” Kelley asked, one hand holding the iPad the other waving furiously in the direction of Hope.

“How many seconds do we have left?” Hope asked, making her way over to the counter to look at the screen.

“SEVEN! This is game winning question!”

Hope looked at the screen and chose Franklin D. Roosevelt, knowing he was the 32nd president but didn’t want to get it wrong if he wasn’t even an option.

“YEEEEUS!!! I win! Screw you, lemonhead!” Kelley made a fist and looked up toward the ceiling with her eyes scrunched shut in pure victory.

Hope shook her head at the sight laughing at how serious the little doctor was about this trivia game.

“You are the best, Yolo! Ugh, saved my Trivia Crack lovin’ ass! Come here” Kelley reached for her to come stand between her legs.

“What are you doing?” Kelley was using her free hand to try and turn Hope’s shoulder around signifying that she wanted Hope to stand with her back facing her.

“We’re taking a winning selfie, now cooperate, please” Kelley grabbed her shoulder again and pulled her back towards her so she could outstretch her arms above Hope’s shoulders to snap the best selfie.

“I don’t do selfies, O’Hara and especially not in my Christmas pajamas for Christ’s sake.” Hope tried stepping away but Kelley locked her legs around her waist, tugging her back to lean against the counter and her upper half against Kelley.

“Now say FDR!” Kelley smiled so brightly at the camera, Hope with an annoyed look on her face.

“FDR” Hope grumbled out, wanting to get this over with.

“You need to smile for at least one and then we’ll be done!” Kelley crossed her legs even tighter around Hope’s torso.

“Squirrel, I already told you, I’m not a selfie taker. What’s wrong with the first one?” Hope turned her head to the side to talk to Kelley, hands supporting her on the counter behind her. Kelley dropped her arms onto Hope’s shoulders for support while she still held the iPad in her hands.

“We don’t have any pictures of us with you smiling, ya loser. Now smile for the camera, please!” Hope turned her head forward again to look at the iPad, putting on a fake smile to get this over with.

“A real smile, Yolo.” Kelley demanded, looking at her on the screen. She had a great idea to get a real smile out of the older doctor.
“Can we just get this over with before I’m arrested for first degree squirrel slaughter?” Hope rolled her eyes, hands now on her hips, still trapped by Kelley’s ridiculously strong legs may she add.

“Okay, here we go!” Kelley brought her arms back out again to take the photo before she paused, “Wait, will you take it instead actually? You have longer arms”

“You realize this now? Give it to me” Hope growled and grumbled, holding the iPad out to take the damn selfie.

“Don’t forget to smile!” Kelley said lowering her head to be positioned closer to Hope’s. When she saw Hope about to tap the screen, she wrapped her left arm around her shoulder, left hand in the middle of her chest. She took her right hand and lightly tickled her ribcage, the spot she realized was ticklish one time on the couch when Kelley accidentally brushed her hand over it.

Hope had a huge smile on her face, eyes squinted from laughing at being tickled yet somehow kept her arms steady to take a clear photo. She took a few just in case she was indeed moving her arms and she didn’t want to do this again so she took a bunch to satisfy the squirrel tickling her.

“Here, here stop!” Hope got out through her laughter, handing the iPad over to Kelley, “May I go back to preparing our drinks now or do you not want to watch the movie tonight?” Hope asked, an eyebrow raised knowing that Kelley would never miss the chance to watch a Christmas movie.

“Don’t joke like that! Here, go on” Kelley released her legs from around Hope and swung them back and forth while looking at the photos she captured of them.

Kelley grinned at the five photos in the album. The first one was the one Kelley took with her smiling and Hope looking grumpy. She swiped to the next one and saw Hope’s big, beautiful smile. Kelley loved seeing her smile like that, without reservation or worrying about showing her emotions. Kelley was smiling down at her, face a few inches away and slightly above Hope’s since she was sitting on the counter above her.

She swiped to the other three and they were relatively the same as the prior one but they looked even happier. Hope threw her head back in the last picture and Kelley had her arm wrapped tighter around her shoulders and scrunched her nose up while smiling at her starting to giggle at tickling Hope and the laughter that came from her.

Kelley loved that photo, especially in their contrasting green and red pajamas they wore. She made it Hope’s background before locking the iPad and putting it down on the counter and hopping off just in time to grab her mug from Hope and walk to the couch to watch their movie.

That night, Hope fell asleep against Kelley and Kelley took it upon herself to leave Hope a little note on her iPad since she was too hyped from her hot chocolate.

Hope double checked her alarm and went to sleep thinking about that night and how happy she was.

Kelley walked into the hospital with her Little America Herschel backpack strapped on her back, beanie on her head with a grey sweatshirt, jeans and grey Timberland boots. Most people would peg Kelley for an Ugg wearing type of gal, but she was into Timbs which were much more practical.

She grabbed a coffee from the coffee cart stationed in the lobby before entering the elevator to go up to the main locker room where residents and fellows kept their stuff and changed. Attendings and the Chief had their own lounges and locker rooms because of their rank, and some doctors with seniority would share their space.
Sunday was always a weird day at the hospital, usually a game of hit or miss plaguing the ER, and it didn’t help that Kelley only had one scheduled surgery for today. Karev had two but they were pretty simple procedures so he didn’t need her help.

She went to the locker room to put her stuff in her locker, #5, and changed into her scrubs for the day. She left her long sleeve thermal underneath it because it was a bit chillier outside today than it has been in the past week.

Her pink scrubs and black undershirt was a contrast that she loved seeing in the mirror. She worked her ass off her entire life to earn the position she’s in today.

She grabbed her phone and slid it into her scrub pants pocket and hung her stethoscope around her neck making sure her ID card was clipped to her lab coat when she slid it on. She tied her hair up in a ponytail, usually wearing a bun, and slipped her glasses back on her face. Her contacts weren’t ready to be picked up until Monday so she was stuck wearing her glasses for this shift.

Kelley made her way out of the locker room with her coffee in hand to check the surgery board and double check to see that she only had the tonsil and adenoid removal at 10 am. She confirmed it when she found her section on the board “O’HARA, OR 2 10 AM” in her row and nothing else. She turned on her Adidas clad heels and made her way to the doctor’s mailboxes to see if she had anything from other specialties or paperwork to fill out.

Seeing as she had nothing else to do, she went to go visit the 10 kids she currently had in the peds wing. She loved making them laugh and loved to play with them especially when she had to use her imagination and dive into the depths of her childlike mind.

That lasted until 9:45 when she was paged by an OR nurse that they were prepping now for her T&A surgery. She took the silly mask off in one of her patient’s room before ruffling her hair a little bit and promising to come and visit before she was discharged.

She went into the prep room to sterilize her hands and get gowned and gloved before working her magic. She was wearing one of her favorite scrub caps with stars on it, a good scrub cap always giving a surgeon an extra boost of confidence.

“Hello everybody! Excited to help out little Noah here?” Kelley asked, a scrub nurse tying up her surgical gown. She stepped towards the operating table to see a 9 year old boy looking scared as ever.

“Hey Noah, I’m Dr. O’Hara and I’m going to be taking those things out of your throat that have been hurting you lately. Are you scared?” She asked, mask not covering her mouth yet.

He nodded his head yes while the nurses were finishing up connecting the leads to his chest and abdomen that connected to the heart rate monitor. The IV was put into the back of his hand and he was ready to go, just needed his anesthetic to knock him out for the duration of the surgery.

“You don’t have to be scared, okay? I am so good at this procedure that I can do it with my eyes closed! Can you imagine that?! Plus I have a secret,” Kelley leaned in to whisper, “I also know magic…”

“No way! That’s so cool! Are you gonna perform magic tricks on me?” Noah asked, no longer scared.

“You bet I am! I’m going to make them disappear so your throat won’t hurt anymore. Plus when you wake up and go home, you get to eat popsicles for like two whole weeks!” Kelley said.
enthusiastically trying to help Noah’s fear.

Noah just smiled up at her. “I’m not scared anymore.”

“That’s good, buddy! And I promise I’ll be here to check up on you after you wake up, okay?” Kelley asked, holding her gloved fist out for him to bump.

“Okay!” He fist bumped her and looked up at the guy with the mask looking thing.

“Count back from 100 for me, bud” The anesthesiologist told him lowering the mask over his face to inhale the anesthetic before he was knocked out.

“Alright people, let’s do some magic up in here!” Kelley exclaimed, opening the mouth with a gag and used stretchers to keep Noah’s mouth open and wide for her to get in the back of his throat to cut those suckers out.

“T dissector” Kelley had her hand out waiting for the OR nurse to hand her the tool before making the incisions to remove the swollen glands from his throat.

After removing his tonsils and adenoids, Kelley wrote his script for pain medications to be administered within the next two weeks and filled out her paperwork for charting and filing purposes.

“Good work, crew! Thanks for another successful surgery!” She called out before removing her gown and gloves, leaving her scrub cap on and watching the nurses prep Noah for post-op care from the prep room window. She washed her hands again and made her way out from the OR wing back up to the peds wing to file her surgical report.

When she stepped into the elevator her pager beeped. She read it with one foot in the door, thankfully no one was in the elevator or waiting to get on. It read, “ER consult STAT” She slid her pager back into her pocket before hitting the 1 button on the elevator instead of 6.

She stepped off the elevator and rounded the corner into the bustling ER. She walked up to the nurse’s station asking where they needed her, a nurse telling her ER room 2.

Quickly entering the room she saw the ER attending Dr. Emily Murphy listening to 5 year old’s heart beat while nurses hurriedly worked around the bed to hook him up to different machines and insert an IV of meds into his arm. He was screaming bloody murder and the sound made Kelley want to rip her ears off.

“What do we have?” Kelley asked, taking the paperwork from the nurse, glancing at it before looking up at Emily.

“4 year old male, rushed in from the Commons, found impaled on a metal stake near the playground. Parents are present in the waiting room saying he was jumping around on the playground and fell onto this stake in the ground,” Emily paused and pointed to the 16 inch metal stake sticking out of the kid’s chest.

Kelley’s eyes widened at the size of the thing before snapping her gloves on to examine the metal. The kid started screaming even louder before she even touched it.

“Hey, Henry! Henry! Hi, sweetie I’m Dr. O’Hara. It looks like you got a really bad boo boo, huh?” She said close to his ear so he would hear her over his screaming. She smoothed his curly hair back
and wiped the tears from his cheeks as they fell.

“I’m going to remove this mean metal out of you so you can go back and have fun on the playground soon, okay?”

She watched as the pain meds made him relax and out of it before making her way towards the stake.

“Jesus Christ…” She muttered, poking and prodding around the metal sticking out of poor Henry’s body.

She tugged a little at the metal and knew it wouldn’t be able to come out that way and that surgery was the best option.

“What are you thinking?” Emily asked, watching Kelley look at the stake.

“Definitely surgery. Page Dr. Johnson have him come down here for a consult.” She directed at a nurse who got right on that.

“You don’t want Solo to help with this?” Emily asked, jotting something down on the chart.

“She probably has another surgery to deal with and Johnson can definitely handle it. I’m not worried.” Kelley shrugged, playing it off that Johnson was good for the job because number one, he was more than good for it and two, she didn’t want to see Hope just yet.

“Dr. Johnson said he isn’t available at the moment he’s in surgery for another couple hours but Dr. Solo is free.” The nurse informed Kelley before paging Hope.

“Guess it doesn’t even matter, huh?” Kelley said, not too enthusiastically before checking Henry’s sats, heart rate and blood pressure. All were fine before his blood pressure started dropping.

“BP’s dropping, push 15 mcgs of dopamine, get the BiPAP machine” Kelley told the nurses, monitoring his levels.

“IV in” The nurse said, placing the oxygen mask over his mouth and nose.

“BP is rising, patient is stable.” Kelley listened to his heart beat through her stethoscope and hung it around her neck again. She removed her gloves and threw them in the trashcan before hearing a familiar voice.

“What do we have?” Hope asked Emily, looking at the charts Kelley just was before the blood pressure incident happened.

“4 year old male, impaled by a 16 inch metal stake lodged into his upper left quadrant. BP just dropped 70/40 before he was stabilized by 15 mcgs of dopamine.” Emily explained the case again to Hope while Kelley took in her appearance.

She was wearing dark blue scrubs with her hair in a bun, lab coat was off and her scrub cap was still on just like Kelley’s was, meaning she just came from surgery as well. She looked exhausted yet rested at the same time, confusing Kelley but before she could explore that any further Hope spoke up.

“We need a MRI before surgery can happen and I’d like a copy of the scans to find the best approach to take.” Hope told the nurse and Emily not realizing Kelley was in the room yet.

“Dr. O’Hara already ordered one, he’ll be sent up there very soon. I think you can handle this, keep
me posted.” Emily left the room and handed the chart she took from Hope to the ER nurse.

Hope’s head shot up at the mention of Kelley’s name and caught her looking right at her. Hope looked away and down at the metal stake sticking out of the patient.

She didn’t say a word when she put gloves on to examine the entrance of the stake near his lower left lung area. Like Kelley, Hope tried giving the stake a little tug but it wasn’t going to come out of there easily.

She knew surgery was the best option but needed those scans first.

“Call the lab upstairs to see what the holdup is for the MRI. This kid needs to have this thing removed immediately. It’s close enough to his damn heart…” Hope told the nurse in an urgent tone.

“What if you skip the scans and go right to surgery?” Kelley piped up, being the first one to speak.

“I’m not going in there blind, O’Hara.” Hope had a slight bite to her tone, even using Kelley’s last name and not her first or nickname like usual. This didn’t go unrecognized by Kelley.

“You and I both know there’s a high risk of infection and waiting around for an MRI isn’t going to help that. Antibiotics will only do so much.” Kelley bit back, not being defensive or mean, but being serious without any trace of her usual happiness.

“The chance that I hit a major artery or vein this close to his lung isn’t the best move, don’t you think? I’d rather see where the stake is located to map out which major vessels it’s near or has punctured.”

“Then get an ultrasound to explore the area, see if there’s any fluid to rule out the lung being punctured and listen to the chest cavity. If the stake was to hit a major vessel blood would’ve filled up the quadrant already.” Kelley said surely not playing around.

“And if the stake is suppressing said vessel?” Hope asked, eyebrow raised feeling challenging.

“Then you repair it quickly before he bleeds out and proceed to repair the tissue damage from the entrance wound. I don’t understand, you’ve seen a good amount of these cases in your career, in your specialty, I’m sure.” Kelley had a sharp tone getting impatient with Hope.

“You’re right, I have had many cases similar to this in my specialty, and every time I called the shots on said cases and have been successful in every single one thanks to what? An MRI.” Hope spat out, growing annoyed with Kelley challenging her opinion.

“You’re risking infection, this is a metal stake, Dr. Solo, not plastic, not wood, metal. The longer you wait the longer infection could reach the lungs and then what? Either use your attending’s rank and get him in the lab now or use the portable ultrasound.” Kelley stepped forward looking into Hope’s piercing glare.

“I’m your superior, Dr. O’Hara. You may collaborate with me when it comes to pediatrics, but you do not get to order me around. Clear?” Hope stood taller, inching towards Kelley, crossing her arms across her chest.

“Oh crystal clear, Dr. Solo. You’re in charge, not little old fellow Dr. O’Hara, I get it. I just hope our patient doesn’t die before you pull your head out of your ass and make a decision.” Kelley started off using a sweet tone before biting at the last sentence she said, sizing up Hope even though she was four inches taller than she was.
“Excuse me?” Hope asked incredulously, eyebrows furrowed together with a look of offense and attack written across her features.

Suddenly Henry’s sats dropped and the machines started beeping like crazy. His blood pressure dropped again and he was going into shock.

“It’s your call, Solo.” Kelley said, pushing another dose of dopamine before listening to his chest cavity to make sure there wasn’t any fluid.

The nurse came back in and marked the levels and checked his IV bags.

“Lisa, call up to the OR and book a room and tell them we’re on our way now.” Hope told the nurse while maintaining eye contact with Kelley who was on the other side of the ER bed. “And please notify the parents that the patient is going into emergency surgery to remove the stake.

Hope and Kelley rushed up to the OR with two other nurses and Henry before removing the stake from his chest. Only a couple of complications ensued before they successfully removed the stake, which was a few minutes away from infecting the surrounding area based on the inflammation and discoloring of the cavity tissue. The area was irrigated, stitched and the perforated cavity was closed up and bandaged.

Kelley was going to have fun explaining the good sized scar on Henry’s side already coming up with stories he could tell his friends in the future.

Kelley and Hope were in the prep room washing their hands after the surgery before Hope spoke up.

“Do you want me to tell the parents it was successful or do you want to?”

“You can tell them, you are my superior after all.” Kelley shook her hands to remove excess water before ripping a paper towel from the roll aggressively and removed her scrub cap while exiting the room.

If this was how it was going to be during every case they shared, their friendship would never recover.

Happy Fucking New Year.
Chapter 15

Chapter Summary

"I'll be there."

Chapter Notes

Hey homies, it gets a graphic in this chapter regarding sexual violence so be aware and proceed with caution.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

"Can I have a moment with Dr. O'Hara please?" Hope approached the nurses station where Kelley was typing at a computer, most likely charting for patients.

The nurses looked between the two doctors who they've seen been friendly up until now, sensing the tension.

"Alone?" Hope said sharply glaring at all of them.

They all scattered away with charts and all sorts of medical supplies in their hands.

"You know that this is their station, right? I don't understand why you have to be so mean to them..." Kelley trailed off, writing down notes on several pieces of paper not looking up at Hope.

"I didn't know you wore glasses." Hope said completely disregarding Kelley's comment, standing at the counter of the station above the desk Kelley was working at, elbows propped up to support her, her fingers drumming against it.

Kelley pushed her glasses up on her head before ceasing her writing but not dropping the pen. She let out a deep sigh and rubbed her eye before looking up at the older Doctor.

"What do you want, Hope?" Kelley asked tiredly.

"What happened down in the ER, look-"

"Save it. I understand you're my attending and superior before anything else. But as a colleague and... friend..." She sighed at the title because who knows where they stood at this point, "as whatever, you needed to swallow your damn pride or ego, whatever the hell makes you feel all high and mighty, and make a decision based on the circumstances." Kelley slid her glasses back down, clicked her pen closed and clicked it back open before jotting something down on a post it note then clicking the pen again and putting it down.

Hope stood there in shock at what Kelley just said to her, never knowing this side was even inside of the small doctor.

"If you're looking for an apology, I don't have one for you. I made a judgment call and based on
what we saw in the OR, I don't have to deliver the whole "I told you so" line because that's unnecessary and immature." Kelley pushed her glasses back on top of her head and closed the manila folder that held her papers and placed the post it on top of it, sliding it back into the charting slot on the desk. She stood up to talk to Hope face to face.

"Is there anything else, Dr. Solo?" Kelley asked, checking her watch and crossing her arms in front of her body resembling Hope in many instances.

Hope still stood there shell shocked at this bitchy Kelley, not being able to reply to her rude, feisty comments. She's never heard Kelley this serious and it scared the shit out of her. She felt out of place, out of body almost at the situation she put herself in by coming up to the pediatric wing to try and call a truce.

"Yeah, Dr. O'Hara," there was a sharpness to Hope's tone that made Kelley slightly shiver, "I respect you as a fellow Doctor, but when it comes down to it, I call the shots. I'm in charge. Me, not you." Hope pointed her finger at her chest and then in the direction of Kelley. "You're correct, you were right and the infection almost spread to his lungs, so good call, Doctor. I don't need an "I told you so," I can admit when a colleague does a good job," Hope leans in further across the counter where Kelley is still standing there with her arms crossed, hardened look on her face, "but if you ever subvert my plan of action again and throw a hissy fit like you did post-op, your ass will be on probation per Chief's orders. Got that?"

"Got it. Loud and clear. But so you're clear, I don't give a shit who it is, Chief included, if I think there's a better plan of action especially when it comes to underage patients, I don't back down."

Kelley steps around the counter to come toe to toe with Hope, both glaring at each other full of anger and bite.

"Oh, one more thing," Kelley leaned in to speak closer to Hope's left ear, "last time I checked, you didn't have a problem with my ass. Well at least not with grabbing it on Friday night anyways."

And with that, Kelley went into Noah's room to check his progress after the surgery she performed on him earlier.

Hope felt her blood boiling but filled with something heavy making her chest pound. Her hands were balled up into fists at her sides before she slammed her right fist down on the counter. She gritted her teeth before turning around to say something more to Kelley when she realized she was in the room diagonal from the station.

She saw the younger Doctor crouched down by his bedside laughing at something probably only she and a kid would understand. She watched as she threw her head back in laughter and shook the hands of Noah's dads who were probably thanking her for being so awesome.

Hope needed air and she needed it quickly.

Kelley verbally coming at her and the last comment she made, and her interaction with the kid and his parents, and those stupid fucking glasses made it hard for Hope to breathe. She gripped the counter top and closed her eyes feeling herself begin to grow hot and her nerves all standing on end.

It hit her all at once. She started hyperventilating and couldn't get control of her thoughts.

Her friendship with Kelley and how much they've grown closer. New Year's Eve and that kiss. The intense kiss where she doesn't who initiated it or when the decision was made or what it meant.
Getting a taste of Kelley's seriously bitchy side and feeling smaller when Kelley spoke in such a harsh tone. She wasn't sure of anything that she was feeling and it made her panic.

Feeling herself close in on herself, she slid to the floor with her back against the station's wall, both hands still fisted supporting her hung head. She started slowly rocking not handling the fact she couldn't breathe or think clearly until she felt a force grip her.

Someone's arms were around her and it made her tense even more. They felt familiar though and she allowed them to pick her up.

She was panicking and unable to physically support herself but she saw who it was and allowed them to help her to the supply closet for privacy.

"Hey, you're okay. Let's take some deep breaths together, here, place your hand on my chest and follow my breathing patterns, okay? There ya go, nice deep breaths to get some oxygen flowing through you. I got you, I got you." They rocked in rhythm, riding out the attack together.

Hope’s breathing began to normalize and she had stopped crying, when she started to cry? She had no idea but it happened every time she panicked. She took a deep breath in and let a shaky one out, relaxing her hands.

She slowly opened her eyes and closed them again, feeling her energy spent already from the sudden attack. She took another deep breath and leaned against the shelving behind her.

“Did she see me?” Hope said shakily and tiredly, slowly blinking and feeling all of her nerves leave via her pores. She hated the fact that she got all sweaty when she panicked, almost as much as she hated crying during an episode.

“Who, Hope?” Carli softly said, hating seeing her friend so anxious and feeling so helpless when she had a panic attack.

“Kelley. Did Kelley see me out there panicking?” Hope asked again, her tired eyes searching Carli’s face for any indication that she did or didn’t.

“I honestly don’t know. I was looking for you and asked one of Johnson’s interns where you were and they said you went into the elevator to go somewhere and I had a feeling you’d be up here. When I didn’t see you in the halls, I went to the nurse’s station to see if they knew but none of them were there and then I saw you on the ground and I knew you’d want privacy. So, here we are. I didn’t see Kelley out there at all, but I still don’t know if she saw you or not.” Carli explained, sympathetic glances at Hope who she knew cherished her privacy.

Hope sighed and rubbed her face with both hands, “I really fucking hope she didn’t see me.”

Carli took a chance, “She’s one of your best friends, she would’ve freaked out silently like we all did when we first experienced it with you, but she would’ve helped you just like I did.”

Hope stiffened when Carli said, “best friends” a label she doesn’t think applies to them anymore.

“We exchanged a few choice words before it happened, Car. I’ve never seen her like that… Like, she was a huge bitch. I couldn’t believe how nasty she was being.” Hope replayed their argument in her head but felt herself getting worked up again and shook the thoughts of her head.

“If I know Kelley like I think I do, you must’ve provoked her and said or did something to piss her
off.” Carli thought it might’ve been over the New Year’s debacle but kept her thoughts in.

"She basically questioned my authority over a case we got both consulted on and that shit doesn’t fly with me.” Hope sat up straighter, her alpha personality and thought processes coming out.

"Christ, Hope... You know she's more sensitive than most. But by the looks of it, she can hold her own and can dish it right back, huh?” Carli nudged Hope with her elbow trying to elicit a small smile.

"Why is she so frustrating? I don't get it, I just... don't" Hope couldn't put into words what she was feeling, but then again she couldn't pinpoint her emotions to save her life.

"Do you want to talk about it?" Carli suggested, knowing Hope understood what topic she brought up.

"No." Hope was quick to respond not leaving Carli much time to reply.

"I'm not ready. I'm not ready, Car” Hope started getting worked up again, clenching her jaw to try and keep her feelings at bay.

"Alright, I won't bring it up again. But you owe it to yourself to work whatever you're feeling out and allow yourself to feel and express those feelings. You have us as support, don't forget that.” Carli softened her tone but directed a firm stare into Hope's eyes to try and convey that she was serious and obviously wouldn't push her or judge her.

"Thank you. I appreciate it, I appreciate you."

"I'm here all the time... No seriously, I mean the hospital.” Carli patted the white tiled floor before chuckling at her own words.

"Alright you dweeb, maybe we should get back to work." Hope glanced at her watch and stood to help Carli up.

"I only have two surgeries today. What the fuck is up with that?” Carli questioned out loud.

"Hey, I just got out of my only one for today so I'm in the same boat.” Hope shrugged at Carli and turned to open the door to exit the supply room.

"Maybe Chief sent them all to St. Luke's as an early April Fool's gift!” Carli joked making both her and Hope laugh at the ongoing April Fool's prank war between the two hospitals.

As they stepped back out onto the pediatrics wing, Hope stopped abruptly causing Carli to run into her back.

"What the hell?" Carli asked straightening her lab coat out before standing on her tip toes to peer above Hope's shoulder at the cause of her stopping.

She saw Kelley, in glasses?, standing at the counter writing something down in a file before placing the pen between her teeth to hold while she grabbed a few more files. She handed the folder that she just wrote in back to the nurse in exchange for more files. She smiled and thanked her, Kelley always being kind and respectful to the nurses.

Carli glanced up at Hope and saw that her jaw was clenched yet again, her cheek muscles flexing as well as her neck muscles flexing while she swallowed hard.
"Do you want me to go distract her so you can just slip out? She's pretty small, I'm sure I could take her if she tried getting past me..." Carli's mind wandered off to picturing her and Kelley fighting and the outcome. She didn't have much time to think about it when she sensed the missing presence of Hope standing in front of her. Her head shot up to see where her friend went.

"Oh shit." Carli muttered to herself.

Hope had sauntered over to Kelley at the nurses' station who was writing in another file. As a doctor or healthcare professional, it's all that you do, and Carli loathed it.

Carli could hear a nurse speaking at the station meaning she would be able to hear Hope and Kelley's conversation if she stayed where she was.

"Listen, O'Hara. I don't know what you're thinking or feeling about Friday night, but I don't want it to be brought up again, okay?" Hope was standing in front of her, but facing the station so Carli was able to see both of them, not Hope blocking Kelley. She could tell how defensive Hope was just by her body language. The arms crossed, the one foot planted out to the side, the jaw clenched, head tilted ever so slightly upwards.

This wasn't going to end well.

Kelley started laughing, pissing Hope off in the process.

"What's so funny?" Hope harshly asked, not in the mood to joke around, especially when discussing the topic of NYE.

"But of course you want to control when we talk about it. I mean, why wouldn't you?" Kelley chuckled bitterly, anger building up again.

"What's that supposed to mean?" Hope inched closer.

"It's supposed to mean that you think you can dictate everyone's actions and if they don’t agree with you then you lash out at them. Does that sound familiar to you at all?" Kelley asked, her body posture equally as defensive.

Hope saw a few nurses move around their desks behind the counter out of the corner of her eye and knew that she didn’t want to discuss or argue in front of them. Their presence became increasingly annoying to

Hope because she valued her privacy and didn’t want to be open in front of them.

“Will you please leave?! Jesus Christ!” Hope snapped, barking at the four nurses who stopped what they were doing, heads shooting up with eyes full of fear and shock.

Before the charge nurse was going to finally speak up on behalf of them, Kelley cut in. She moved flush against Hope tilting her head up in attempt to make eye contact with Hope before reaching up and fisting her scrub top pulling her down a bit.

“Stop. Talking. To. Them. Like. That. Now.” Kelley’s voice dropped significantly lower, gritting each word through her teeth that were clenched. Her eyes were dark and full of fire that made Hope nervously gulp and not fight being pulled down by the smaller doctor.

“You want the respect you think you deserve for being THE Dr. Hope Solo? Then fucking earn it and stop being such a bitch towards your coworkers who work their asses off and do all of the dirty work.” Kelley firmly said, pulling Hope down even closer, only three or four inches away from her
own face so she would understand she’s not playing anymore.

Hope could feel Kelley’s breath hit her lips and she felt a fire ignite in her lower stomach and her blood rushing to her face. Kelley released her top before running her hand over her pulled back hair then over her mouth. Hope missed the warmth for a millisecond before she realized what just happened, especially in front of the nurses.

Hope straightened out her scrub top, pushing her scrub cap back and cracked her knuckles. She didn’t want to continue this argument here and knew it would get ugly quickly if Hope snapped at the nurses again.

She cleared her throat, “Dr. O’Hara, will you follow me to my office please?” Her voice was neutral, not showing any sort of emotion or reaction after Kelley had just talked to her like that.

Kelley scribbled one last thing down in the file before closing it and sliding it across the counter for the nurse’s to put away. She smiled at them before tucking her pen into her lab coat pocket and pushing her glasses up on top of her head. She glared at Hope before turning to walk to the staircase, not wanting to be in a closed space in the elevator with her. Plus, her office was one floor down so it was pointless to take the elevator anyways.

Hope followed her, having to reopen the door that led to the staircase because Kelley didn’t hold it open for her. She rolled her eyes before seeing that Kelley was already halfway down the stairs before Hope even began her descent.

Kelley stood in front of the door, arms crossed staring down the hall. Hope sighed before removing her ID badge to swipe through the lock to open her office. She flicked the lights on before lazily holding her arm out to usher Kelley into the room. Kelley maneuvered as to not touch Hope while she walked through the doorway. Once again, Hope rolled her eyes before closing the door which automatically locked.

She moved to stand in front of her big office chair behind the desk and gestured for Kelley to sit down on one of the two chairs in front of the desk. She shook her head no before moving to look out of the good sized window that looked down on the busy city of Boston. There was light snow covering the streets and neighboring buildings and the cars rushing by. Kelley took a time to take a deep breath and catch up on what has happened between her and Hope.

They had been best friends after almost four months of knowing each other, the connection being there instantly when they met in the ER. Over the four months they had spent a lot of time together whether it be seeing each other at work and eating lunch together, or going to their favorite café for coffee and alternating paying for each other. Or going to the gym together and taking the dogs on long walks and hikes on their shared days off. Then they spent almost every night watching Christmas movies and hanging out at Hope’s house, cuddled up together and usually falling asleep on each other. Kelley had spent more time at Hope’s house than she did at her own apartment. They knew each other minus their respective pasts that neither try to broach the subject of. It was like the last piece of their friendship puzzle. But Hope is so damn closed off and distant when it comes to her personal past that it frustrates Kelley to no end.

“Kell…” Hope called to her softly, hoping she’d move from the window and take a seat.

“Don’t call me that.” Kelley whipped her head around and practically snarled at the older woman.

Hope visibly deflated already feeling the tension build back up after a few minutes of silence.
“Will you please sit down?” Hope tried again, her voice softer than earlier that day.

Kelley fully turned her body around and stood there in front of the window taking Hope’s office in.

The walls were a deep currant color, the bookcases and desk a dark cherry wood. She noted the degrees and certificates lined on the wall behind her desk that was immaculate. The different folder organizers lined on one half of her desk were color coated with little tabs sticking out to keep the paperwork in order. The big office chair was a dark brown color to match the walls and dark wood of the furniture. She had a plant sitting in the corner diagonal from her desk and a standing lamp in the opposite one. She had an abstract painting that included different shades of red and browns and beiges in it. The name plate on her desk was shiny, the overhead light reflecting off of it. It read, “Dr. Hope Solo MD, Attending Cardiothoracic Surgeon” and was placed right in the middle of the big desk that held a desk calendar, a stack of papers and a holder for writing utensils.

The office was very Hope.

“We can’t avoid talking about New Year’s forever, Hope.” Kelley finally spoke up taking a couple of steps to stand in front of the desk but not taking a seat just yet.

She heard Hope audibly sigh and saw her rub her face with her hands before keeping them there and letting out a long exhale into them.

“I don’t think I can talk about it, Kelley…” Hope chewed on the skin around her thumb nail.

“We kissed.”

“I know.”

“A lot.”

“I know.”

“Would you happen to know why we did?” Kelley asked carefully hoping that she wouldn’t interpret it was putting the blame on her.

“Me?” Hope started getting defensive again. Kelley rolled her eyes, of course she was.

“I’m not saying you initiated it, relax. I honestly don’t know who started it or why we even kissed, I was hoping you’d have an answer.” Kelley walked slowly to stand in front of Hope who was leaning against the desk.

“I don’t want to talk about this, Kelley…” Hope reiterated her disinterest for discussing the issue.

“Well you need to! You need to stop acting like it didn’t happen or that it didn’t affect us because clearly,” Kelley gestured between the two of them with a flailing hand, “we’ve been affected!”

“I know it happened and I know our friendship has changed, okay?! We fucking made out like hormonal teenagers in the middle of Revere’s on New Year’s Eve in front of strangers and our closest friends! I acknowledge the fact that it happened, I do, but I don’t want to talk about it. Not now.” Hope raised her voice, her emotions starting to peek through, which she was having none of.

“Stop shutting me out, Hope! I’ve stuck around and I know all of your favorites, your fears, your joys in life, which scrub cap is your favorite, the way you take your coffee, which side of the bed you prefer, the way you double check your schedule every night before work the next morning, the routine you have when bathing the dogs! I know everything about you except for whatever the fuck
has happened in your past to screw you up so badly! Let me in!” Kelley wasn’t screaming but she
sure as hell wasn’t using her indoor voice.

“Screwed up…?” Hope quietly said with a bitter taste on her tongue. “You think I’m screwed up?
You don’t know the half of it, Kelley. You don’t know me!” She shouted, standing up straight with
her arms still crossed.

“Then tell me. Tell me what broke you so I can help fix you.” Kelley took a step to stand close to
Hope, trapping her between herself and the desk.

Hope quickly looked away at Kelley’s words. They hit Hope hard and quick, like a left hook during
a boxing match. She kept her eyes planted on her feet, jaw clenched and muscles tense.

“Please, Hope. Just let me in, let me see the side of you that you hide from everyone else. I’m not
going to judge you and I’m not going to be put off by past events. Please…” Kelley whispered
reaching a hand out to rub Hope’s forearm.

Hope stiffened and trailed her eyes up from Kelley’s feet to her eyes.

“I can’t. I just can’t, Kell.” Hope whispered back, voice raspy from the impending emotions bound
to take over.

Kelley felt her eyes starting to water from the defeat and emotional tone laced in Hope’s words. She
gripped her arm taking a step even closer.

“Hope…”

Hope’s pager went off that startled both of the doctors who were standing in silence. Hope unlocked
eyes with Kelley before checking her pager that requested a consult in the ER. She pocketed it
before staring back down into Kelley’s eyes and clearing her throat to rid of the emotions that may
have lingered.

”I have a consult.” She simply stated, sounding like nothing had just happened minutes prior.

“Can we talk about this after our shifts? Please?” Kelley sounded like she was begging, making
Hope feel bad.

“Sure. My place?” Hope offered weakly, not looking forward to the conversation they were going to
have in which Kelley will try to pry into her past.

“I’ll be there.” Kelley nodded and took a few steps back slowly still maintaining eye contact. She
stopped and her gaze intensified. “I’ll be there.” She repeated but with a deeper meaning behind the
three words.

Hope watched her open the door and escape into the hall.

What was she thinking?

It was 8 pm when Hope came home to an awaiting Kelley perched on the railing on the front porch.
She put her car in park and collected her bag, thinking of excuses she could use throughout the
duration of the conversation. She didn’t want to do this.

“Why did you wait out here? It’s cold outside, ya know.” Hope asked Kelley who was wearing a
gray beanie and sweatshirt with a backpack on her shoulders and gray timberland boots in which her straight leg jeans tucked into.

“I’m comfortable. Plus I didn’t want to let myself in since we’re fighting.” Kelley watched Hope locate the house key from the bunch she had on her key ring.

Hope didn’t say anything in reply to the fighting comment and instead opted to open the door and turn the foyer lights on. She waited for Kelley to pass through the doorway before closing the door behind her.

Kelley started removing her boots before Sasha and Onyx came barreling down the hallway to greet her.

Onyx licked her face since she was bent over and jumped on her slightly using a paw to nudge Kelley that had knocked her on her ass.

“Onyx! Down.” Hope commanded, disapproving of her dog’s behavior, especially since it may have hurt Kelley. Onyx laid down, ears lowered as she knew she behaved badly.

“She’s okay, she was just excited to see her favorite person ever.” Kelley smiled at her canine buddy who was laying down in front of her and used the opportunity of sitting on the floor to take her boots off easier.

She placed them on the mat next to the door and got on all fours to crawl towards her furry friend.

“Hey Ony, you’re okay. I know you didn’t mean to knock me over, I know. You just get really excited, just like me…” Kelley was laying on her stomach, propping herself up on her elbows and used one hand to scratch behind Onyx’s ear and the other to scratch beneath her chin.

Hope stood there with Sasha sitting next to her feet, catching herself smile at the sight that she always loved seeing.

Sasha and Onyx were puppies that she adopted from the Boston Animal Shelter that had found them in a box just tossed to the side near a dumpster. She went to the shelter that day to find a dog to love and bring home and when she saw the two sharing a kennel, she knew they were meant for her to take care and raise. She instantly fell in love when they climbed on top of each other trying to stand to reach Hope’s fingers poking through the metal gate/door.

She’s had them for two years now and has grown so close to the Doberman sisters who are truly the best companions.

So when they quickly took a liking to Kelley, especially Onyx, her love had grown even more for them and made her proud.

“You want to lie around in the foyer all night or do you want to talk in the living room?” Hope asked, looking down at the small doctor and dark haired dog.

Kelley planted a huge kiss to Onyx’s nose and was licked furiously in response. She scrunched her nose up at the amount of slimy dog spit coating her cheek but didn’t move away from her sign of affection.

“I'll get up, I'm coming.” Kelley giggled when Onyx licked her nose and turned her head away to stop the onslaught of puppy love. She stood up and followed Hope into the living room to finally talk about what happened, dogs in tow.
Kelley unceremoniously plopped on the couch while Hope carefully sat on the other end facing Kelley with one leg tucked underneath the other, her arm stretched across the back.

“I grew up in a broken home in Richland, Washington. My parents divorced when I was 6 and I stayed with my mom and my brother Marcus. My father was a Vietnam vet who was in and out of my life up until my senior year of high school when he died. Even though he wasn’t my sole provider, we were close and I defended him whenever family members would try to talk shit about him. I was a mess when he died, I was so lost. That’s when I made the decision to move to the east coast and to commit to Harvard.” Hope didn’t beat around the bush and explained her messed up childhood to Kelley without looking at her to see her probable disgusted face. If she wanted to know about Hope, she was going to hear stuff that would probably make her flee.

“I threw myself into my studies more so than I did in high school to distract me from the pain I felt caused by my father’s death. He was a troubled soul but always found time in his bullshit to come to my soccer games or take me to sporting events when he came around. He was a huge part of my life despite the disappointment from my mother and brother. I watched him die.” Hope paused, taking a deep breath in. She heard Kelley lightly gasp at her statement but couldn’t bear to look at her. She continued on.

“I watched my mom suffer from heartbreak caused by him time and time again when he wouldn’t show up the first six years of my life and then continue to let Marcus and me down when he said he would attend birthday parties and holidays but never came. It crushed her to know that even if they weren’t in love anymore, he wouldn’t come to support his kids.” She stopped to clear her throat, continuing to pick at the string hanging off the blanket draped on the back of the couch.

“We went to the park when he was in town and called me to see if I wanted to hang out with him, which of course I did. Even at the age of 18 I wanted to be close with him after years of him being absent. We were at the neighborhood park when he had a heart attack right in front of me. I didn’t know what to do so I ran to the payphone along the sidewalk that lined the grassy field and called 911. I stayed with him trying to get him to respond until the medics came and rushed him to the hospital via ambulance. I rode with him on the way and looking at all of the tubes and wires… It broke my heart to see him so helpless. This giant man was being taken down by one cardiac episode while he battled much more difficult things during his life. That’s when I decided I was going to be a cardio surgeon.”

Hope got up and walked into the kitchen to grab a couple of water bottles, unscrewing the cap of hers and taking a sip before capping it and putting it down, placing the other in front of Kelley.

“My childhood was shitty, my adolescence was shitty, and the beginning of adulthood was shitty. I haven’t been happy throughout my life, Kelley. I’ve been through more downs than ups and haven’t been able to trust anyone until I met Carli, then Johnson, Karev and you. In college, I never dated guys, only slept with them because I didn’t trust any of them to stay in my life. I wasn’t ready for any sort of commitment other than my studies. But two years ago, there was a guy I had gone out with a couple of times, Jason, who I thought was attractive, funny and witty enough to hold a conversation with and not be annoyed with stupidity. He was a fellow doctor actually, Karev’s fellow in Peds.” Hope paused and willed herself to go on and finally put it all out there. “We were in a relationship for a year, meeting while he was completing his residency and I had just gotten the promotion to attending. In a couple of months it’ll be two years since we broke up and a two years since I was raped.”

Hope finally looked up at Kelley to observe her reaction and response to her pouring her heart out to the woman. Kelley’s eyes held unshed tears and her hand was fiddling with her watch.
“Why are you nervous?” Hope asked, picking up on her nervous habit.

“Because I don’t know what to say for you to understand that I’m not leaving you, Hope.”

Hope felt the heat behind her eyes and the dryness in her throat expand. She didn’t want to cry now, she was already showing weakness.

“Don’t say that. Not yet, anyways… Please.” Hope rasped out, her throat not allowing her to speak normally.

“No, it doesn’t matter what you’ve been through or what you’ve experienced, I will not allow you to push me away so easily. You’re my best friend, Hope.” Kelley reached across the couch and grabbed Hope’s hand ceasing her from pulling at the same damn string.

Hope gained strength from Kelley’s proclamation and her hand being held, urging herself to finish up her, what she thought was going to be a shorter, version of the bad shit in her life.

“We were together for a year but with work being so demanding especially with my new position and his last year of residency, we didn’t have time to be…intimate. He would always try to engage me in sex in on call rooms or in the locker room, even in supply rooms. But I was never comfortable with him enough to have spontaneous sex. Sure we had sex plenty of times before that but we were either at my place or his. One day at work, I had a super crazy schedule filled with surgery after surgery and had about 10 minutes to find whatever food I could and inhale it like a vacuum before I was needed in the OR again. He had followed me down the hall and roughly pushed me into a supply closet before he,” Hope took a deep breath, “before he ripped my scrubs down and had his way with me. I fought him, I scratched the fuck out of his arms and punched his chest repeatedly before he pinned me against the wall and his body. He was muscular and too strong for me to be able to push him away. He choked me with one hand and used the other to force my legs open. He kept saying, “Now who’s in charge.” And “This is what you get for not giving it up.” And “You deserve this.” I couldn’t breathe. I have never been so fucking scared in my life, not even when my father went into cardiac arrest. Carli had found me slumped against the wall with bruises circling my neck, a black eye and a busted lip after he beat the shit out of me after he finished. I was in such shock and had no sense of time or anything.”

Hope had felt a few tears escape her eyes and run down her cheeks before hurriedly brushing them away and sniffling once.

“Ever since then, I’ve been wary of letting anyone else other than Carli, Karev and Johnson in, especially of fellow doctors in the hospital. I was broken and cold for a good year and a half until a couple of months before I met you. I was finally going out with the Three Stooges, talked more to colleagues, enjoyed music and books again… And then you came along and it scared the shit out of me that we were getting so close so quickly. I hadn’t made any new friends since Karev and that was 8 years ago. I don’t just let anyone in, especially after years and years of heartbreak. I can’t stand the thought of letting someone in again and being destroyed all over again.” Hope looked at Kelley who had tears streaming against the wall with bruises circling my neck, a black eye and a busted lip after he beat the shit out of me after he finished. I was in such shock and had no sense of time or anything.”

She opened her mouth to speak and shakily replied, “I’ll always be there, Hope. I’m not a fleeting person in your life like your father and I’m definitely not a monster like that piece of shit Jason was. I’m here to stay.” Kelley gave her hand another squeeze.

“Even after New Year’s Eve?” Hope sounded like a kid asking a question after they were disappointed when plans were cancelled or a promise was broken.

Kelley’s heart broke at the tone of voice Hope used. She put it together that Hope thought the kissing
would push Kelley away and right out of her life, and putting off discussing it would be putting off Kelley’s exit from her life.

“Especially after New Year’s Eve.” Kelley wanted to get through to Hope that she wasn’t leaving no matter what and that she had meant it.

“Does that mean we can be best friends again?” Hope asked, reaching over to wipe the tears from Kelley’s cheeks.

“I never stopped considering you my best friend, you dork. Just thought that you hated me and I had no idea where we stood.” Kelley smiled at the kind gesture of Hope wiping her tears away.

“I’m sorry we argued so much recently. I was so scared…” Hope admitted, surprising herself at being so open and emotional about it.

“I was too. But we’re Dr. Yolo and the Squirrel, we can get through anything, right?” Kelley moved their joined hands back and forth, shaking Hope’s arm in the process.

“Right.” Hope smiled at Kelley being so receptive to her past and reassuring her that she was a permanent fixture in her life.

“I think that’s enough talking for tonight, don’t you? We can talk about Friday night some other time. Let’s go to bed.” Kelley suggested, nudging Hope’s leg with hers.

Hope agreed and stood up, helping Kelley stand up as well. Kelley tried reading her eyes before she wrapped her into a tight hug. Hope felt herself melt into the contact and wrap her arms around Kelley’s shoulders even tighter when Kelley squeezed around her waist.

When Hope lied awake that night listening to Kelley’s snoring after she checked her surgery schedule twice and carrying on with her bedtime routine, she thought about how she had just opened up about huge parts of her past with Kelley. She felt like she could trust Kelley and she didn’t know why, but every time she looked into those hazel eyes, she knew she was safe.

Hope was glad that she had such a strong friendship with Kelley even though it continued to scare the shit out of her.

Unbeknownst to the doctors, their friendship would evolve into something stronger with the weeks to come.

Chapter End Notes

So my chapters got all sorts of fucked up when I posted Ch. 14 and fixing them was the biggest hassle ever! (Not really, but come on) So I ended up having to sacrifice the chapter that Thanksgiving was in. Oops! *Shaggy voice* It wasn’t me! Thanks for reading, loves. This chapter really pushes us through the first stage of O’Solo! Drop me a line! xx, Krash
Chapter 16

Chapter Summary

Kelley swears a lot and more beer makes an appearance.

Chapter Notes

First day of the Spring semester today, homies... Let's all take a moment of silence for all of the sleep I'll be losing. Anyways! I had trouble writing this chapter, so feedback would be much appreciated simply because I have no idea how I feel about it. But it's taking us places! Hopefully.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It had been a little over two weeks since Hope opened up and shared her most traumatic and private stories of her past with Kelley. They had spent the last two weeks sharing even more personal disappointments, successes and past events that occurred in their lives, reaching a new level of understanding and knowing each other.

Usually friendships don't move this quickly or intensely, no one would think that they've only been friends for four and a half months, instead several years. Hope and Kelley both took note on how quickly they've become attached, but since their big fight a couple of weeks ago, they have treaded carefully with not saying the wrong thing.

So here they were two weeks later at the local high school's field accompanied by Tobin, Alex, Ali and Ashlyn to play a pickup game of soccer. The winter warmth prevailed leaving the grass unfrozen and barely covered in snow, the green and brown blades peeking through.

"AHHHHHH!!" Kelley squealed, dropping her bag and running from the parking lot to the middle of the pitch where her four best friends stood. She wasn't running towards anyone in particular but hoped that someone would catch her when she leaped. Tobin had the honors and easily held her when Kelley wrapped her legs around her and squeezed her tightly.

"I missed you guys! EEEEE!!" She squealed again giving Tobin one last squeeze before unwrapping her legs from her and hugging Alex and Ali tightly before turning to Ashlyn and carrying out their "bro handshake" as they dubbed it.

"How are you, my ladies?! Give me the deets about your past few weeks!" Kelley excitedly asked, remembering her stuff and sprinting back towards her bag to grab it and meet them back on the sidelines before apologizing and asking them to continue while she pulled her cleats on.

"Daaaamn Kells! I know being a doctor pays nicely and all, but look at those babies!" Alex commented on the new Hypervenoms Hope had gifted to her for Christmas.

"Oh, thanks! Hope gave them to me for Christmas! Look, they're even customized!" Kelley held up one of her cleats showing her friends the 5 and KO, beaming at one of her favorite gifts from
"Hope bought these for you?" Ashlyn asked, eyebrows shooting up threatening to reach her hairline.

"She did indeed, one of my favorite Christmas gifts ever! I was so shocked and amazed when I opened the box. She's great, and it was so funny because I bought her a pair of keeper gloves and had them customized too! Like we were reading each other's minds or something..." Kelley pulled her other boot on before tying her laces, double knotting them like she always has.

"Kells, are you and H-" Ashlyn was cut off by Kelley.

"Yolo! Hey you, finally!" Kelley shouted at the older woman getting up to greet her.

Hope approached the five women from the parking lot, aviators on blocking out the bright winter sun, the soccer pants Kelley had bought her and a light jacket with what presumably Kelley figured a thermal and a long sleeve under armor shirt underneath. She had her backpack slung over one shoulder and keys in the opposite hand that wasn't holding the backpack strap up.

As she approached the five other women, she pushed her sunglasses up on top of her head, pulling her hair back in the process. She adjusted her backpack to hike it up higher on her shoulder before holding her arms out to receive the hug she knew was coming, a hug that always happened when Kelley greeted her.

"How was it?" Kelley asked, her question muffled by her face against Hope's shoulder. She pulled back in time to hear Hope say, "A little too bloody for my liking but I tracked the bleeders and repaired them quickly before any damage could happen. Those little fuckers..." Hope squinted her eyes and pursed her lips thinking about how frustrating surprise bleeders were during surgery.

"I'm glad you got out on time though! I was just lacing my boots up" Kelley adds, bending over to double check that they were as tight as she liked them.

"I guess I should get ready then so I don't hold us up any longer..." Hope caught eyes with the gals, smiling shyly at the women. The last time she saw them was before the whole kissing debacle that she and Kelley still had yet to discuss, so she was a little shy to be around them at the moment.

"You're okay, no worries!" Ali piped up, reassuring Hope that they weren't going to hound her with questions.

Hope smiled gratefully in her direction before taking a quick seat on the cold ground to remove her sneakers and pull her cleats on. Kelley was distracted by Alex and Ali talking about who knows what while Tobin and Ashlyn were just passing the ball between them. Hope took in Kelley's friends and how they seemed to fit into her life. Their differing personalities were interesting to Hope, but not surprising at the same time, because she knew Kelley could befriend anyone.

She tightened her laces before standing back up, throwing her sneakers into her backpack before taking her sunglasses off of her head and finding a hair tie to pull her hair into a ponytail with. She pulled out an ear warmer headband, Nike brand of course, and slid it on over her head and then pulled it up to keep her ears warm while playing. Sure it was warm for a winter day, but it wasn't anywhere near spring weather. And Hope always prepared for the cold. She grabbed her gloves before walking over to the five women chatting.

"We're discussing teams. 3 v 3 obviously, but who on which team?" Alex filled Hope in, inviting her into the conversation as well.

"Well, we have two goalies, Ashlyn and myself, right? So it's up to the field players" Hope supplied,
slipping her gloves on.

"What about Tobin and me on Hope's team and Alex and Ali on Ashlyn's team?" Kelley suggested, looking at her friends' faces.

"Since when did we become the captains?" Ashlyn asked while laughing looking at Hope, clapping her on the shoulder which made momentarily freeze but let out a chuckle at the question.

"I think that sounds good! I'm a defender, Alex is a forward and Ash is a goalie! And then you have Hope as a goalie, Kells can play anywhere so you could use her as defense and then Tobs could play as a forward." Ali explained why the teams could work, agreeing with them.

"Sounds good to me!" "Yeah, that's cool!" And "Let's do iiiiiit!" were all said.

The ladies left their bags at the sidelines to jog to the center of the pitch, Tobin bringing the ball with her.

"This is going to be an interesting game. Full field with only two field players on each team? Holy shit..." Ashlyn mused, ready to play the sport she and the others loved.

"Ready to chase me around, Lex?" Tobin teased, smirking at her girlfriend.

"Funny, I was going to ask you the same thing." Alex quipped back, sly smirk on her face when Ash began a countdown to start the game and got to "1, GO!"

Alex got possession of the ball and already knew how hard it was going to be to face her two friends. Ali ran up the flank and they passed the ball twice before Tobin posted Alex and won the ball. Her and Kelley took off down the field but Alex and Ali were hot on their trails, slowing them down and forcing them to play man-to-man basically. Only having four field players in total playing full pitch is quite difficult, but with six competitive women? It was the only way.

They agreed to play only 45 minutes worth, excluding the half time and second half because of how exhausting playing the whole length of the field is. And in the first 35 minutes, Alex and Tobin have gotten shots on goal but Ashlyn and Hope saved all of them.

It was the 40th minute when Kelley had a throw in because she and Ali had fought for it and Ali kicked it out of bounds. She and Tobin had a silent conversation in which their little plan had come together in the matter of 10 seconds. Kelley threw it to Alex who was being manned by Tobin and purposely threw it so Alex would gain possession.

"It's okay, Kell!" Was heard from the other half of the field where Hope watched and thought Kelley had messed up.

Alex began sprinting down the field with Tobin right next to her not even being beat by an inch. Kelley had blocked Ali from sprinting pretty much, running in front of her, switching from running forward and backpedalling towards Hope. Tobin knew Kelley was going to prevent Ali from a break away so she surged forward just a little bit and masterfully stole the ball away from Alex, sending the ball behind the two of them. She spun and took off, sprinting away from Ali and Kelley, knowing she had a shot if Alex hadn't caught up to her yet. Ali had broken away from Kelley and was running up to her on the left. Tobin looked up and saw she had Kelley open but not for long because Alex came rushing down the field. She elastoed Ali and sprinted just shy of the baseline before skillfully sending a cross into the box where Kelley's volley had successfully made contact with the back of the net, sending both her and Ashlyn falling in the box. Kelley sprung up, running to Tobin, kicking the air once before jumping on her good friend. Tobin and Kelley shouted whatever came to
their minds, amazed at how beast that was. They were out of breath and sweaty underneath their layers, but excited as hell. Kelley checked her watch and called to the others that there was two minutes left to the game.

Alex looked like she was going to murder somebody, more specifically Kelley, while Ali made sure Ashlyn was alright both wearing displeased expressions themselves. Kelley jogged down the field, Tobin right behind, to reset the match. Alex and Ali brought the ball to the center, whispering a plan to even the game.

Kelley gave Hope a thumbs up, who returned it, before turning around to see Alex with the ball and Tobin keeping up with her. Kelley saw Ali run right behind Tobin and knew that some sort of switch was about to happen.

Kelley ran to defend Alex instead of Ali, knowing what was happening unbeknownst to Tobin. Alex passed Ali the ball behind Tobin making her turn to Ali, but then the ball was right back at Alex's feet and she broke away. Kelley knew she would surge forward and threw a slide tackle in there, kicking the ball out of bounds, causing Alex to jump over her outstretched legs.

"God damn it!" Alex grumbled out, running her hands on top of her head out of frustration. Ali ran to retrieve the ball for a throw in and knew to use Alex's speed to their advantage. She threw the ball to the opposite sideline knowing Alex could outrun Tobin and Kelley, which she did. She stood out of bounds with the ball on the line before juking Tobin, which never happens, and passing it to Ali who had posted Kelley right outside of the box. Alex sprinted toward the box feeding it to Ali who fed it right back. Alex took a powerful shot toward the upper 90 and could've sworn it was going to go in before Hope leapt and pushed it right above the crossbar. Kelley made sure the ball didn't go in before checking her watch and screaming "GAME!"

She high fived Tobin and hugging her quickly before jogging over to Hope who was getting up. Thankfully she was fully standing when Kelley ran over to her because Kelley flung herself into Hope's arms, wrapping her legs around her waist and her arms squeezing her around her shoulders. She snuggled her face into Hope's neck, smiling like a fool the whole time.

"That was amazing, Yolo! I am thoroughly impressed at what you just did!" Kelley squealed, looking down at Hope's beaming grin. Hope had her arms tightly wrapped around Kelley's lower back, where they ended up out of reflex when Kelley flew into her arms.

"I'm just doing my job." Hope said modestly, knowing how good she is but not wanting to gloat.

"I'm so proud of you! Such a good goalkeeper. Must be those gloves!" Kelley smiled even wider, playfully winking at the eye rolling but smiling Hope. Kelley squeezed her one last time before unwrapping her legs and jumping down. Kelley threw an arm around Tobin and Hope, smiling like an idiot, still out of breath from playing. Ashlyn, Ali and Alex all looked like children who were told they were leaving the amusement park.

"Good game, Lex." Tobin tried to reach out and touch her girlfriend's arm who harshly shrugged it off before glowering at her.

Hope leaned down to whisper, "oh shit" into Kelley's ear who looked up at the raised eyebrows and uh oh face Hope modeled.

"That was an incredible save, dude. Totally beast" Ashlyn held her fist out for Hope to bump it, which she did, and then moved to stand in front of Tobin and Kelley putting them each into a headlock under both of her arms. "And you two knuckleheads did almost as good of a job as my A's over here did." Ash was always rougher with Kelley and Tobin, the two women like younger sisters or "bros" to her.
Alex still glared at the winning team, arms crossed staying back.

"I thought we had it when Alex took her first touch before launching it toward the net. But damn Hope, you got hops!" Ali laughed, already getting over the loss and impressed by Kelley's goalkeeper friend.

"Thank you, years of experience I suppose. In all fairness, you and Alex made incredible passes and plays the whole game." Hope commented, sensing how tense Alex was at losing. She turned to her, "Alex, you were such a beast out there. I am definitely terrified of your type of striker when it comes to blocking shots. I thought you had it for a hot second, seriously. You're an amazing player, wish I had you on my team back in the day when it counted for team stats and all of that." Hope was quietly talking to Alex, the other women turning their attention to them but not being able to hear what Hope was saying because of her soft voice.

They did notice how Alex's hardened expression was replaced with a small smile and a handshake between her and Hope.

Tobin thought this was her chance to make her girlfriend happy with her again and stepped in front of her while the others walked back towards the sideline to collect their belongings.

"Are you okay?" Tobin asked, rubbing Alex's arm, looking into her eyes to register what she was feeling.

"Yeah, I'm all good now. Just hate losing, you know that..." She chuckled, pulling Tobin in for a hug and a quick kiss.

"But I guess that's what I should expect from my overly skilled, amazing baller of a girlfriend, huh?" Alex teased, pulling Tobin into her side to walk towards their friends.

"I'm glad the competitive queen has calmed down." Ashlyn jested, poking Alex's stomach a couple of times.

"Yeah, yeah... We all know I hate losing." Alex swatted at Ashlyn's hand and shrugged it off before leaning down to unlace her boots.

"We were so good though, am I right?!" Kelley asked Tobin and Hope, jumping on Tobin's back causing them both to topple over and then wrestle on the ground. Alex just shook her head at them and Ali started to tell Ashlyn not to join, but being a little too late when Ashlyn pounced on them and joined in on the rough housing.

"Welcome to the gals!" Alex and Ali told Hope, shaking their heads and chuckling at the three grown women rough housing near them. Hope shook her head as well laughing at Kelley and her friends.

Welcome to the gals, indeed.

"How stereotypically lesbian of us! Grabbing brews after a pickup game of soccer" Ashlyn commented while the six women sat around a table at a bar just outside of downtown Boston.

"Cheers to that!" Alex raised her glass up before taking a large swig from her beer.

Tobin followed suit, clinking her glass against Alex's before taking a longer sip, leaning back and sliding her arm to rest against the back of Alex's chair.
"Here here!" Ali sing songed already half of her beer gone, being a pro beer drinker after living in Germany for five years.

"Not everyone is gay here, ladies! Hope doesn't bat for our team." Kelley casually added over the rim of her stout glass.

"Oh, my bad! I didn't know, sorry about that..." Ashlyn nervously scratched the back of her neck, flashing an embarrassed smile and look to Hope.

"It's okay, all of my close friends, male and female, are into women so I'm used to the whole talking about and checking out girls. Comes with the friendships I guess," Hope shrugged picking at the coaster her glass rested upon. She made quick eye contact with Kelley before shooting a smile to Ashlyn.

Kelley felt her heart sink at the reassuring comments Hope supplied, not understanding why since she already knew Hope was straight. She pushed the thoughts away before facing Hope who was on her right. "You talk about chicks with Carli?! Why can't I picture that?" Kelley asked, amused at the thought of her two friends talking about women Carli would be into.

"It's like talking about guys with Johnson, I don't know! It's all the same to me, pretty much."

"Funny, that's what Ali said when someone asks her about being bi!" Ashlyn snorted through her laughter, earning a pinch under her arm from Ali.

"Ow!"

"That's what you get for being a doofus!" Ali sassily said, sticking her tongue out at her girlfriend.

"So Hope, Kelley showed us her cleats you got her for Christmas. You know, my birthday is coming up..." Tobin joked.

"She did, did she?" She looked at a beaming Kelley who was placing her glass down after finishing off her beer.

"Yeah and I went to UNC, so Carolina blue would be just fine for my customized pair, or a blue close to it." Tobin supplied, glancing at the slightly blushing Doctor.

"I'll see what I can do." Hope bashfully replied before finishing off her own beer.

"Looks like we need another round. I'll just go up to the bar and order. Same brews?" Hope asked, already standing up to make her way to retrieve their drinks. She was answered with nods and "yeah, sures."

She was across the bar to order their drinks before Ashlyn threw a balled up piece of napkin at Kelley who was playing with the foam from the bottom of her beer.

"Hey! What?" The piece of napkin hit Kelley in the face causing her to look up to find the culprit.

"Are you and Hope fucking?"

"Jesus Christ, Ash!" "Oh god." "Here we go..." Were all heard from the table before Kelley was able to pick her jaw up from the floor.

"WHAT?!!" Kelley yelled so loudly all of the bar patrons turned in their direction, some giving confused looks, others dirty and annoyed.
Ali held her face in her hands in disbelief at her girlfriend's brash question, shaking her head at the bluntness.

Alex was sort of interested but would never ask flat out something like that. Tobin supported her head with one hand looking like she was on high alert, the other hand fiddling with her own coaster.

"Are you and Hope, ya know… friends with benefits? I'm getting the vibes, man." Ashlyn wasn't fazed at Kelley's loud response, her girlfriend's annoyance or her friends' reactions.

"What the fuck?! You're reading the vibes totally wrong, dude! We are best friends, just like the five of us are collectively!" Kelley started whisper yelling but it led to a slightly raised voice.

"Well that doesn't say much..." Tobin mumbled, referring to the time they all had played spin the bottle at HAO's annual Halloween party a few years ago.

 Kelley swatted her hands towards Tobin almost like shooing her away from the conversation before turning back to a cheeky Ashlyn.

"Have you lost your mind? You just heard the previous conversation, Hope is straight! My straight best friend!"

"Uh Kells, is that why you and her were getting it on on New Year's Eve...?" Ashlyn asked semi-seriously.

Kelley thought she was going to pass out at the question, feeling on the spot. She forgot her friends were there that night and had seen her and Hope making out on the makeshift dance floor. She hadn't thought about that night in a couple of weeks, trying to focus on her and Hope's friendship and not fighting. She didn't get the chance to figure it out on her own yet, and Ashlyn asking about it was like ripping open stitches she had just given herself. Haphazardly done sutures one would throw together in the middle of a jungle without medical supplies. Enough to stop the bleeding, but shitty enough to rip open at any given time.

She didn't know why she and Hope were sticking their tongues down each other's throats and grasping one another as if they were going to disappear into thin air at any given moment. Hope was straight. Hope was her straight best friend. There weren't any benefits in the picture, it wasn't who they were. The more she thought about it, the less of an explanation she had. She couldn't even answer Ashlyn's question and before telling her that she was in fact unable to, Hope had sat down next to her again.

She felt a hand on her back. "You okay, Kell?" Hope's soft voice asked making Kelley look at her. Hope's eyes were blue and bright as always, always bringing Kelley back to the first time she got lost in them. Her head was slightly ducked to create a more private conversation between the two, only Kelley being able to hear Hope and vice versa.

Kelley looked across the table at Ashlyn briefly before making eye contact with Hope again, "I'm okay." She said, offering a small smile to her friend. Hope nodded a couple of times, patting Kelley on the back and sliding a fresh beer in front of her.

Kelley smiled appreciatively before taking a sip and leaning back in her chair to withdraw herself from the conversation. She heard her five friends chat and laugh about something in the background, but Kelley got lost in her own thoughts again.

She began to think about how she felt before the kissing commenced, how happy she was to be surrounded by all of her friends to ring in the New Year. How good she felt with a few drinks in her
only enhancing the buzz and joy from the presence of her friends. She was so happy that night, so full of positive energy and excitement.

She felt invincible.

She felt invincible when Hope had "rescued" her from the woman she was talking to. She felt invincible when she saw the big smile grow on Hope's face when she was satisfied with her "heroics." She felt invincible when Hope's lips met hers.

The electricity and energy that flowed through Kelley's veins were enough to power the whole world and achieve global peace. The feeling of kissing Hope was nothing she had experienced before. Maybe the thrill she got when she performed her first major surgery alone successfully. Or the freezing cold water she emerged from that re-energized her after riding out her longest wave ever. But nothing compared to how alive and invincible she felt locked in a heated embrace with Hope.

Her best friend Hope.

Hope whom cooks her meals at her townhouse knowing Kelley had nothing but chocolate milk and old takeout in her own fridge.

Hope who knows that she stole her old Harvard apparel whenever she stayed the night and didn't stop her from taking anymore, only giving empty threats to take it all back if she didn't stop.

Hope that loves her dogs so much, Kelley thought that they were the luckiest dogs in the world to receive that much unconditional love.

Hope who was extremely moody if interns woke her up for a non-emergent case that they could've easily handled or had Johnson take if it was too difficult.

Hope who didn't like to always reply with a verbal response and gave a nod or a raised eyebrow instead.

Hope whom she loves.

Love.

Kelley loves Hope.

Of course she loves Hope.

She loves the way Hope sang along to pop music on the radio even though she denies liking the genre at all. And the way she crinkled her nose while witnessing all of the sugar Kelley ate. And the way there's a new book beside her bed every week because she always made time to read despite her hectic work schedule. And the mahogany teakwood candles placed all around her house because it's her favorite scent and wanted the whole house to smell the same.

And oh did she love the way Hope pronounced her s's in words, her bottom tooth being the only one crooked out of all of her teeth to cause the sound. And the way she always watches people no matter where they are because besides reading, people watching is her favorite past time. And the way her eyes lit up despite how exhausted she was from work when she saw the dogs greet her at the door, or when they find a stick to show her on their walks. And the way she always carries herself while at the hospital, knowing she's top dog and all of the work she put into becoming the best.

Kelley loves Hope because of her contrasting personality with her own that everyone is afraid of. Her stubbornness and temper are enough to scare anyone away, but the smaller things like the
particular way she sets her OR up or the icy glare she sends anyone's way that upsets her friends or patients. She loved her flaws, like the five moles on her face and that crooked tooth. And her routine habits like checking her schedule twice before bed and stocking the fridge a similar way after grocery store trips.

She loved the way Hope allowed her to snuggle into her while they watched movies or television and didn't wake her up when she fell asleep on her. And the way she always let Kelley explain herself when she found her a mess in the kitchen or tangled up in the dogs' leashes. She loved the way Hope allowed her to change the radio station a hundred times while they drove because she couldn't decide on a song. She loved the way Hope said her name, especially the way “Kell” sounded rolling off of her tongue. The softness of her voice and the grace of her hands that carried out her surgeries and played with Kelley's hair.

It was all of the little things that equated to an enormous spot in Kelley's heart for her friend. But Kelley had never labeled those feelings for Hope. She never put a name to what she was feeling for her older friend, never thinking twice about how happy she was when she was with Hope until NYE and their fighting had happened.

Kelley loves Hope and she wasn't so sure it was in strictly platonic way anymore.

Kelley felt her heart rate increase and out of habit she quickly grabbed her wrist to measure how fast her heart was beating. She felt her palms grow sweaty and her nerves run cold.

"Kell, are you okay?" She barely heard the voice of the woman who she just realized she loved over the pounding in her ears.

Kelley loves Hope.

The images of random times they shared flashed through Kelley's mind; falling asleep together on the couch in front of the fireplace while watching movies countless times, the two of them working out and pushing each other over while attempting yoga and falling on the floor laughing, the way Hope looked in just underwear and a bra, Hope laying on top of her tickling her in the attendings' lounge with their faces inches apart, the appreciative and watery smile Hope had when she opened her stethoscope on Christmas, when Hope rushed to her side when she scared the crap out of her on Christmas Eve and she fell off the stool, all of the meals they shared at the table stealing food from each other’s plates, more so Kelley, swapping personal anecdotes from their childhoods and college days and laughing at old pictures of one another, the pull between the two of them at Revere's and the way Hope's body felt pressed to her own, the burning sensation building in her stomach at the feeling of their tongues and lips sliding against each other, the way Hope shook her head at Kelley belting out the lyrics to Drunk in Love on their way to the Halloween party, the laugh that erupted from Hope when Kelley tried to ride on Onyx’s back.

It all came rushing through her mind and it overwhelmed her to say the least.

She felt her breathing pick up with the realization that she loved Hope. That she was in love with Hope.

"Kell?" She felt a warm hand touch her arm and she flinched, jolting back and knocking herself out of her thought-induced trance.

Her chest was heaving and her pulse quickened with every second. She finally looked up from her beer that she had been staring into while she came to realize what she was feeling.

She flicked her eyes around five sets of eyes looking back at her with concern and apprehension.
“Kelley?” Hope tried getting her attention for what seemed like the 18th time.

Kelley willed herself to make eye contact with the woman plaguing her mind.

"Whatever it is, you'll be okay. Take some deep breaths. You're okay," Hope held eye contact while speaking but Kelley noticed she didn't try to touch her this time.

She held Hope's gaze but felt it increase her heart rate so she slammed her eyes shut in effort to calm herself down per Hope's directions.

"There you go, deep breathing." Hope coached her, the warmth radiating off of her body calming Kelley down.

When her breathing and heart rate normalized to about its normal level, she slowly opened her eyes to see herself remove her hand from her wrist.

"Welcome back" Hope softly said, touching Kelley's hand once before moving it back into her own personal space.

"I think I just had a panic attack.” Kelley said roughly from not speaking for a bit and the emotions that were about to spill out. She cleared her throat to reassure her friends that she was okay.

They all looked scared, not seeing her like that before. In their defense, Kelley had never had a panic attack before. Sure, she got extremely anxious borderline panic attack, but had never had a full-fledged one.

“I’m okay, guys. I’m sorry.” Kelley apologized for scaring them and making them see that.

The four of her friends were still speechless not knowing what to say to their friend, especially Ashlyn who had an idea what it was caused by.

“Do you need some fresh air?” Hope asked, understanding filling her eyes while she took in Kelley’s appearance to make sure she was okay and safe.

“Y-yeah,” she cleared her throat, “I’m going to step outside, I’ll be right back.” She quickly pushed back from the table and grabbed her jacket slipping it on while she headed towards the exit.

Hope visibly deflated in relief that Kelley was fine and willing to catch some fresh air. She chugged 3/4 of her fresh beer before rolling her neck to release any tension in her muscles.

She herself got worked up when she realized Kelley was panicking because for one, she had never experienced that with her before, and two, she was upset that Kelley was dealing with something that made her mind and body react like that.

“None of us have really seen her like that before.” Tobin piped up, hating the awkward silence that had fallen among the table.

“Yeah, you did a really great job calming her down.” Ali said.

“I’ve honestly never experienced that with her before, but I kept calm so she wouldn’t feed off of any bad energy. I wanted to help her ground herself and take back control of her breathing.” Hope explained, running her fingers through her hair and drinking the rest of her beer. What a god damn day.

“I’m going to go check on her. I’ll be right back.” Ashlyn quickly said, not allowing time for any of
the women to respond or object.

Tobin, Alex, Ali and Hope all looked at each other not knowing how to exactly move on from Kelley’s moment.

Ashlyn’s heart broke at the sight of a sobbing Kelley standing in the space between the bar’s building and the neighboring building next to it.

“Kelley,” Ashlyn started, moving to step in front of her to apologize for her bold questions but Kelley had leaned forward into her arms and cried against her shoulder, gripping her winter jacket as support. Ashlyn instantly wrapped one arm around her shoulders and the other around her lower back to basically hold her up.

“Kells, I am so sorry if I fucked up by asking those questions. I thought you and Hope had be-“

“I’m in love with her, Ash.” Kelley sobbed out, a fresh round of tears burning her eyes and throat, ripping from the back of her throat.

Ashlyn’s heart broke even more at the realization that Kelley had just figured it out and didn’t know what to do with the information or her feelings.

Honestly, Ashlyn thought that Kelley and Hope had something going between them based on how they acted around each other and the show they exhibited on New Year’s Eve. Now she felt like the world’s biggest douchebag because of the questions she asked Kelley who, minutes prior, had no idea about the feelings she harbored for Hope.

“It’s okay, Kells.” Ashlyn tightened her grip around Kelley’s trembling body and rocked them lightly back and forth in attempt to soothe her.

“I love her, I’m in love with my best friend.” Ashlyn barely understood her friend whose voice was muffled by her jacket and choked up from crying.

“Okay, it’s okay. You love her, you can’t help that.”

Kelley pulled back with a mix of confusion and hurt written across her red face.

“Ashlyn, I’m fucking in love with my straight best friend. How the hell is that okay?!” She choked out.

Ashlyn opened and closed her mouth a few times at a loss for what to say to her friend not wanting to upset her again.

“What am I supposed to do?” Kelley allowed Ashlyn to hold her as she let a few more silent tears slip out while she caught her breath.

“I can’t tell you what to do, Kells. It’s one of those listen to your heart type of things.” Ashlyn rested her head on top of Kelley’s still swaying them back and forth to comfort Kelley.

“I can’t tell her, she’ll freak the fuck out and push me away. I know her, I know how she’ll react, what she’ll think.” Kelley felt her throat tighten again at the thought of losing Hope.

“Maybe you don’t know exactly what she’s thinking or feeling, maybe she has feelings for you too.” Ashlyn suggested, wincing at Kelley pulling back from the embrace again knowing she said the wrong thing. This has happened many times before with Ali being in Kelley’s position, she know she was about to get an earful.
“Ashlyn Michelle Harris, what the FUCK are you talking about?! Stop bleaching your god damn hair because the fumes are affecting your thought processes. Jesus Christ, who would even say that?! My very straight best friend who is guarded and serious 95% of the time would confess the same feelings I have for her, the small lesbian friend who spazzes at cute animals and fights over stickers with her pediatric patients! Yeah, Ash, she’s in love with me too… Good one!” Kelley completely released her grip from Ashlyn and started pacing back and forth in the alleyway between the two buildings, hand on her forehead, other one resting on her hip.

Ashlyn had to suppress a laugh from the beginning of the rant all the way to the end. She was glad her good friend wasn’t sobbing anymore and transitioned into pacing and analyzing her relationship with Hope. Unless she started panicking again, then mission aborted.

“What am I going to do?!” Kelley exclaimed, throwing both hands up in the air at a loss of how to proceed with this new information.

“I have no idea, Kell… You’re going to have to face her at some point. Are you going to manage speaking with her without spilling your love and emotions out since you want to keep them to yourself? Are you going to be able to work together and still maintain the friendship you two have now without overthinking every movement and word spoken?” Ashlyn asked, knowing how this sort of thing worked out when she and Ali started their relationship.

Kelley stopped in her tracks once she heard Ashlyn say “you’re going to have to face her at some point” and listened to what her good friend was trying to get through to her.

“I know how that worked out for you and Ali and how crazy it drove you, Ash. I can’t handle that, you saw what happened back there when I had a nice little revelation! How am I supposed to pretend I don’t have these feelings for her now? Oh my god, I am fucked.” Kelley started pacing again thinking about all of the different ways she would manage to screw up and ruin their friendship.

“You know the only way Ali and I got together was because one night she called me on my weird, awkward shit and I told her everything. That’s the only way we got through it, dude. Talking and bickering at how long it took me and blah blah blah. I think you’re going to have to take that leap if you want a shot at any sort of normalcy.”

“Once I tell her it’s going to completely change our relationship, you know that. I like how things are now, I like having her in my life without the awkwardness that will come if she knows I love her more than a friend.”

Ashlyn leaned against the brick wall, crossing her arms over her chest to try and warm herself up.

“But are you going to be able to look at her without wanting to kiss her all the time? To hold her hand or spoon her without feeling guilty like you’re being weird and taking advantage in your mind? Do you really want to live with the constant reminder that you are in love with her when she smiles or laughs at something you do or say and you have to catch your tongue before “I love you” spills out?” Ashlyn posed questions of real life situations she knows would happen if Kelley kept her feelings to herself.

Kelley let out a deep sigh, leaning her head against the opposite wall from Ashlyn and bringing her hands to rub the conflict and exhaustion out of her face.

Kelley timidly looks over at Ashlyn, “What do I do, Ash?” she asks in the smallest and quietest voice Ashlyn has ever heard come from her mouth, which made her heart break for the third time in the span of 15 minutes that they’ve been outside.
“I think you know what you need to do, Kells. But it’s up to you to do so. The sooner the better or else it’ll get even messier and more confusing.” Ashlyn moved to stand in front of her friend, wrapping an arm around her shoulder, pulling her closer to her.

“Now, do you think you can go back in there and pretend like you didn’t just confess your love for Dr. Hottie?” Ashlyn teased smirking down at her friend.

“Dr. Hottie? Are you kidding me?! Let’s go, I don’t think I can handle you on my own anymore.” Kelley secretly thought the nickname was funny but didn’t want to tell Ashlyn that tidbit of information. She stopped their movement and looked up at her tattooed friend, “Thank you, Ash. You’re such a great friend even though you say the worst shit at the worst moments.” Kelley gave her a tight squeeze of a side hug and received a ruffle on the head in response.

“Anytime, KO. Let’s do this.”

They approached the table met with a mix of reactions on their friends’ faces. Ali looked like she understood what had happened, but masked it pretty well with empathy. Tobin looked calm but concerned at the same time, while Alex looked like she had no idea how to act or look at her two friends’ reappearance. And Hope? Hope looked like she was going to jump out of her skin at the drop of a hat. She spoke up first.

“Are you okay? Did fresh air help?” She chewed on her thumb nail before realizing it gave away her nerves and turned to completely face Kelley who had taken her place next to her again.

“I’ll be okay and yeah, it helped. As did Ash.” Kelley smiled over at Ashlyn who had Ali pulled against her.

“Good, I’m glad. I was starting to think you ran away.” Hope half smiled at her attempt at a joke, trying to cover up the fact that she was worrying about Kelley.

”Ash and I just had a good conversation out there, nothing to worry about.” Kelley forced a tight lipped smile and went to reach for her beer.

“Oh shit, I let this get warm while I was out there, huh? I’ll be right back. Again.” Nervously chuckled while she made her way to the bar to order another drink.

“Hey there, what can I get for you?” The bartender looked at her and a smile grew across her face.

“Kelley, right?” The woman asked.

She was tall, tan and had long brown hair almost looking familiar but not quite ringing a bell.

“I’m the woman from New Year’s Eve at Revere’s.” She paused drying a glass, cocking her head to the side reading Kelley’s face to see if she remembered her or not.

“Ohhhh! Oh yeah! Hi, how are you…?” Kelley didn’t remember her name that night and she sure as hell didn’t remember it now.

“Kate.”

“Kate, right. I’m sorry, I was a little too tipsy that night. It’s nice to soberly meet you, Kate.” Kelley held her hand out for the stunning brunette to shake, which she did.

“You as well. What can I grab for you?” Kate asked, turning sideways to grab whatever Kelley ordered.
“Just a Sam Adams’, thanks,” She smiled appreciatively before reaching into her pocket to pull out money.

“Don’t worry about it, this one’s on me.” Kate smiled showing off her perfect teeth.

“Why thank you! Lord knows I need this…” Kelley mumbled before tipping her glass back and taking generous gulps from it.

“Trouble with the girlfriend?” Kate asked, jealousy and judgment voided from the question.
Kelley did a spit take before wincing at the alcohol sprayed all over the bar stool next to her.
Kate giggled and handed her a napkin to wipe her face off and the seat.
“I’m so sorry about that, I was just caught off guard.” She coughed a couple of times, not believing that question was posed.
“I-I don’t have a girlfriend… So I’m a little lost.” Kelley wiped the bottom of her chin with the back of her hand.
“Oh, I just assumed the woman who swooped in and stole you away from me at Revere’s was your girlfriend, I’m sorry!”
Kelley bellowed with laughter. Straight from her belly out of her mouth laughing that filled all of the space in the bar.
Kate looked at her half-amused and half-concerned at the laughter coming from the smaller woman not knowing exactly what to say. She dried another glass before placing it down on the rack, Kelley still laughing.
Meanwhile back at the table, the five women had heard Kelley’s laughter loud and clear from across the room and looked at her doubled over clutching the counter with one hand and the other holding her stomach. The bartender was laughing along as well, her pearly whites shining all the way over there.
“Get it, Kells” Alex said, earning a laugh from Ali and Tobin, but not Ashlyn or Hope.
“Ash, where’s the comment? Usually you’re whooping or making some provocative comment about Kelley and the ladies she scores.” Tobin asked, too confused for her own good at this point.
“I don’t know, man. Not feeling obnoxious anymore for today?” Ashlyn shrugged, sipping her beer. She glanced at Hope, gauging her reaction to seeing Kelley and the beautiful bartender.
She saw Hope’s jaw clench and eyes slightly squinted fixated on every move they made. Her knuckles were turning white around the glass she was holding, threatening to crush it in her hand. Her chest was moving with every deep breath she took and saw her swallow hard a couple of times.
Ashlyn knew Hope was jealous at the sight in front of them playing out and couldn’t be happier about it. She decided to make a comment after all.
“Damn, Kelley really has her cheesing hard. But from what it looks like, that bartender has her rollin’ at some joke she told.” Ashlyn saw Hope’s back completely straighten, her posture rigid. She knew her comments were working her up even more, the result she wanted.
“Five bucks Kelley comes back with her number and a free drink.” Ashlyn commented, noticing the
jaw muscles flex on Hope.

“Totally, no way she isn’t.” Alex added.

“Girlfriend. I’m sorry, that’s so funny. She’s my straight best friend and I just confessed my love for her to my best friend not even 10 minutes ago outside. I literally realized that I was in love with her while sitting around at the table with her and my four best friends and had a fucking panic attack about it. And then you go and say she’s my girlfriend.” Kelley got the last of her laughter out, “Wow, that is good.” She wiped at her eyes and sniffled a couple of times.

“Damn, girl! The way she eyed you when she walked towards us at the bar that night and the way you two were heating up on the dance floor, I thought for sure you ladies were a thing.” Kate was genuinely surprised, but not shocked at Kelley’s explanation for her wild laughter.

“Oh god! Everyone seemed to witness that whole clusterfuck, huh?” Kelley asked bashfully.

“It was hard not to! But for what it’s worth, she seemed really into you. Looked like you have been together and doing that for years.” Kate dried another glass, winking and smiling at her comments.

Kelley smiled shyly at Kate’s words, not knowing how to deal with everyone thinking the two of them were a thing without either of them realizing they acted like that. Oh shit. What did Carli, Karev and Johnson think? She couldn’t even think about that right now and focused on Kate.

“Do you want to be with her?” Kate asked.

“I do, but I don’t want to scare her off if I confess my feelings for her. What if she doesn’t feel the same way and she pushes me away resulting in us not even being able to be friends anymore?”

“The way she looked on New Year’s and the way she’s glaring at me right now tells me that that won’t be an issue. Here,” Kate grabbed a cocktail napkin and a pen, “this is my number. Go over there and brag to all of your friends that you got a hot chick’s number who was really into you and make sure your woman sees the napkin.” Kate scribbled her name and number down on the napkin, sliding it over to Kelley.

“But-” Kelley tried protesting.

“But do it. Either way you’ll get a reaction from her that will tell you whether or not she feels the same way that you do for her. Trust me, I’ve experienced and witnessed this hundreds of times and I’m not scared to play my role.”

Kelley stared down at the napkin taking Kate’s plan into consideration. Maybe there was a chance that Hope could possibly be into her? But then again there’s a huge chance that she isn’t, probably the latter. It was worth a shot though, right? Plus she got a pretty girl’s number.

“It’ll work out one way or another, I promise. And if you need someone to vent to, actually shoot me a text or a call, I’ll listen and help.” Kate smiled again, gladly taking the position of jealousy and love guru.

“You’re pretty damn awesome. Thank you, I appreciate it. Really,” Kelley smiled back at her, picking the napkin up.

“Show them the napkin and let them know that your beer was on me, they’ll eat that shit up. One last thing, come here,” Kate said, leaning over the bar to peck Kelley’s cheek.

“I’m pretty sure that they all saw that so this just makes it that much more believable. Good luck,
Kelley! Go get ‘em, champ,” she winked and smiled for good measure turning around to busy herself with liquor bottles behind the counter.

Kelley was a little shocked at the peck on the cheek, but took it in stride and made her way back over to the table with the napkin and beer in hand.

“What was happening over there, Miss Thang?” Ali asked, her teasing and sassy side coming out.

“Oh you know, a free drink and a lady’s number I scored.” Kelley smirked, raising her eyebrows up and down, setting the napkin down in the middle of the table and taking her seat next to Hope again.

Tobin and Alex grabbed the napkin first reading the name and number written on it.

“Kate, that’s a hot name, hm?” Tobin jeered, winking at Kelley who in return playfully rolled her eyes and slightly blushed.

“She was funny and gave me a free drink, what can I say? And did you see that smile? Swooning big time.” Kelley laid it on thick, going big or going home.

She chanced it and looked over to Hope to see her eyes screwed shut, her jaw clenched shut and her hand gripped the edge of the table. Maybe it actually did work?

Ashlyn saw Kelley look at the obviously jealous Hope and knew that Hope was going to snap at any moment.

“You going to call her, lay that KO magic on her?” Ashlyn asked with a kissy face making lame kissing sounds toward her.

Kelley laughed before grabbing the napkin in both hands, “Stopp, I don’t know. Hope, what do you think?” Kelley asked seemingly innocently.

“I think you should meet me at my place when you’re finished here. I’m going to go, ladies, but thank you for a fun afternoon of soccer and beer. I’m sure I’ll see you all soon.” Hope managed the best smile she could at the moment, sliding her jacket on and pocketing her wallet before quickly exiting the bar and jumping in her car.

Why the fuck was she so fired up?

Kelley arrived at Hope’s house 20 minutes later and was nervous to see her. She all but stormed out of the bar and asked her to meet her here? Maybe she took the plan too far and really pissed Hope off for some reason, spoiling her “experiment” and maybe their friendship in the process.

She sighed, cutting the engine and removing the keys from the ignition and making her way to the front door. Should she knock? Should she just let herself in? As far she knew they were okay so she unlocked the door with her spare key and slipped her shoes and jacket off.

“Hope?” She called out in the empty foyer.

With no response she made her way into the kitchen to see if she was in there for some reason.

And she was. Perched on a stool at the kitchen counter, sliding a glass of water between her hands looking deep in thought.

“Hey, what’s going on?” Kelley approached her, placing a tentative hand on the back of her
shoulder.

Before she even knew what was happening, Hope had stood up and turned around so she had Kelley pinned between her body and the counter top.

Hope’s hand cradled the back of her neck, the other wrapped around her waist and gripping her shirt at the small of her back. She saw a flash of something in Hope’s eyes before Hope quickly leaned down and took her bottom lip between her own.

Kelley’s hands flew to her hair and tangled themselves within the dark locks, pulling her even closer to herself.

Hope swiped her tongue along Kelley’s lips asking for permission to taste her even more, permission that was quickly granted and met with the same eagerness. Kelley moaned into the feeling of Hope’s tongue massaging hers and the warmth that was increasingly building between the two.

Kelley went to pull back to catch her breath but Hope had caught her bottom lip between her teeth, lightly tugging on it and sucking it between her lips. Kelley moaned even louder at this, arching her back to press her body flush against Hope’s even more and wrapping her arms tightly around her neck, trying to impossibly bring her even closer.

As quickly as it started, it ended.

Hope pulled away, chest heaving, pupils dilated. Kelley was in the same shape, catching her breath and licking her lips to taste Hope again.

“Kell.” Hope extracted her hands from Kelley and took a step back, sucking a breath in at what had just happened.

“Hope…” Kelley saw her lick her own lips before wiping them with her hand like she had just kissed a frog.

“What the hell am I doing? I can’t do this…” Hope made a beeline for the front door.

Kelley stood there frozen in shock. Hope had just came onto her and then stopped when things were building up. Then she said she couldn’t do this and wiped her mouth as if it came in contact with poison? She needed answers.

“Hope. Hope!” Kelley scrambled to follow her to the foyer.

“I’m sorry, Kelley. I’m so sorry.” Hope slipped her boots on and grabbed her jacket.

“Please don’t go. Can we talk about this?” Kelley asked, grabbing her hand that was resting on the door handle.

Hope looked into Kelley’s eyes and saw a blend of confusion, arousal and hurt swirling around in those hazel irises she loved. But the mixture of those emotions felt like they were suffocating Hope and she couldn’t bear to deal with it at the moment. Not after what she just did.

“I’m sorry, Kell.” Hope opened the door and ran to her car, already feeling the familiar rush of tears spring to her eyes.

“HOPE!” Kelley screamed, hoping she would turn around and come back in to discuss what the hell just happened.
Hope heard her loud and clear and it ripped through her. She couldn’t do this. Not now.

She didn’t turn around and slipped into her car not wanting to look at Kelley. She didn’t want to see the disappointment or disgust in her eyes or in her body language.

But as she pulled out of the driveway, through her watery eyes she saw Kelley standing in the doorway of her home, arms wrapped around herself, crying.

Hope had fucked up and did the best thing she could think of doing to salvage Kelley.

She left.

Chapter End Notes

Come on, Hope! Don't leave our girl KO hanging like that!
What do you guys think? Let me know.
Chapter 17

Chapter Summary

"Maybe it's time for you to stop running from her and run to her."

Chapter Notes

A little shorter than recent chapters, but I wanted to get this one out before I start on the next which will be much longer! Your comments boost my confidence, for sure. Sorry it's been a week, I feel like that may be the trend since college and work consume every single day of my life. Like always, shoot me a line with some feedback! Love you homies

"Come on, come on pick up the damn phone…!" Hope mumbled under her breath, still a crying mess 20 minutes since she left Kelley in her home.

She couldn't stop crying even when she felt like she cried all of the tears she could, they just kept coming.

The phone ringing on Bluetooth mixed with her audible sobs filled her car and sometimes a car horn here and there. It felt like she was driving on autopilot and thank whatever higher power that she was a good driver and drove this route daily or else she would've been screwed.

"Hey it's Dr. Carli Lloyd, leave me a message and I'll get back to you ASAP!" Beep.

"Carliii, god damn you!" The message was a strangled cry before Hope jabbed her finger into the end call button on her steering wheel.

She glanced at her phone really quickly and scrolled to the next name on her Favorites list.

More tears came running down her face as she made a right not letting an old woman cross the road because she was so hysterical and wrapped up in her emotion. She usually would let the pedestrian go, but she had a destination in place and didn't want to stop for any means.

The ringing finally stopped when he answered, "Sup Solo?"

"Karev... I need you" She managed to speak while trying to swallow back the tears at the same time.

"What's wrong? Are you home?" The concern was evident in his voice.

"I fucked up, I can't believe myself..." She whined.

"Hope, where are you? I'll come to you."

"I'm on my way to the hospital"
"Are you hurt?! Is Kelley driving you there? What happened?!" He rushed out, tone more urgent.

The mention of Kelley made her cry even harder and she slightly swerved into the the next lane because she couldn't see through her watery eyes. The blaring horn startled her enough that she steered back into her own lane, not even caring that the Bostonian called her an asshole through his open window.

"I'm at the hospital now, I'll come down to the lobby to get you."

Hope just kept crying and nodded her head even though he couldn't see her.

"Just stay on the phone with me until you're here so I know you're safe, okay?"

Hope took in a sharp breath trying to catch her breath from crying so hard. Her face twisted in pain and sadness and tensed her facial muscles to prevent more tears from coming. But that obviously failed.

Another sob came from the back of her throat as she pulled into the staff parking lot at the hospital. She shakily put the car in park and picked her phone up to take with her, pulling the keys out of the ignition.

She clumsily exited the car and walked to the main sliding door still crying into the phone.

She saw Karev sitting on one of the couches with the phone pressed to the side of his face and decided to hang up on him. He looked up confused at the absence of Hope's crying in his ear and spotted her.

"Shit, Solo," He stood up and walked over to her, "do you want me to touch you or give you space, or what?" He and the others always double checked because Hope got jumpy and even more upset if you touched her while she was this emotional without asking her first.

She wrapped her arms around him and sobbed into his neck. He was taken aback by how clingy she was being and immediately hugged her and rubbed her back in soothing circles to calm her down.

To any onlookers, it looked like a doctor was calming down a highly emotional loved one of a patient. To any staff and colleagues of theirs, it looked like Dr. Solo was having an emotional breakdown wrapped up in Dr. Karev's embrace.

"Hey I got you, you're okay. Let's go to your office for privacy, okay?" He felt her nod against him but didn't pull away, too scared to release him just yet.

"Solo, how am I going to get us up there if you don't detach yourself?"

She just hugged him even tighter, her body still shaking from crying.

He glanced around at the onlookers glancing at him and Hope, giving them an awkward smile in return, even a small wave in their direction. He knew Hope was going to feel shitty if they stayed down here for everyone to see this, so he made the decision to hoist her up.

"Wrap your legs around me so you don't slip down and break my neck in the process," He instructed her. Hope hopped up as well as an uncontrollable sobbing mess could, burying her face in Karev's neck even more. He had to basically lift her up since she was too weak from crying to do it on her own.

She said something incoherent so Karev craned his neck to the side while walking them to the
"What was that?"

"You could've shaved..."

Karev had the funniest look on his face as he entered the elevator, fellow doctors, nurses and family members of patients staring at him and a crying Hope in his arms.

"Distraught mother. Kid just died an hour ago, won't let go" He explained to the group, all of them just nodding unconvinced but doing their best to avert their eyes.

"Will someone hit 5 for me? Thanks."

He stared up at the floor numbers above the door until he saw the 5 light up. He nodded and gave a closed lip smile at the other elevator takers and stepped out onto the cardiac wing to make his journey to Hope's office.

He walked as quickly as he could before any of her fellow cardio coworkers noticed it was her. He fast walked down the hall that led to Hope's office and stopped right in front.

"We don't have your ID badge." He pointed out, his arms growing tired.

"In my wallet" She sniffed out, tears not coming as quickly or as hard.

"Your wallet? Where the hell is your wallet?"

"Back pocket."

He rolled his eyes before shifting her weight onto the right half of his body before tugging her wallet out of her back pocket. He brought it up to his mouth and used his teeth to hold it to grab the spare key card for the door. He successfully swiped it and switched the light switch on to see that she added a small couch in her room. He walked them over to it and pried Hope out of his neck and arms.

"Here, sit and get comfy. I'm going to grab a water bottle and some tissues for you, because I'm sure you don't have any in here. Stay here" He ordered doing to the pointing into eyes before pointing towards hers as if to say "I'm watching you."

Hope ran her fingers through her hair to remove it from her face and brought her knees up to her chest to replace the feeling of being held closely by Karev. She wrapped her arms around herself and cried against her knees.

She hasn't cried like this since two years ago when Jason attacked her. She hated feeling this helpless and lost.

"I'm back," Karev called out while slipping through the door. He placed the water bottle and box of tissues on her desk before taking a handful and handing them to her as he sat on the couch.

"When did you get a couch in here?" He questioned, holding them out for her to take.

"K-Kelley told me to buy one!" She started crying hard all over again, wiping the stream of tears off of her cheeks. She blew her nose amidst her cry and sniffled a few times before crying again, coughing because her throat was all raw. The scene honestly looked like a breakup scene in a rom-com.
"Christ, Solo... What happened?" Karev asked, growing more and more concerned as she kept crying.

"I kissed her, Karev."

"Who did you kiss?" He already knew the answer but wanted Hope to open up, causing him to pry and drag it out of her.

"Kelley. I-I kissed Kelley..." Her crying was subsiding, hiccuping for air as she caught her breath.

"When did you kiss her?" Karev wasn't so sure she was talking about NYE or not.

"Today at my house. We played a pick-up game of soccer with her friends after my surgery today and went to a bar afterwards for beers. She was talking to the bartender who was at Revere's on New Year's and she came back all giddy and with that fucking smirk she always has on her face and I felt myself getting all fired up. I told her to meet me at my house when she was finished with her friends and stormed out,"

Hope took a few calming breaths before continuing, "I got myself a glass of water to drink and calm my ass down. I kept pacing and working myself up even more so I decided to sit down at the counter. Then I got lost in my thoughts and didn't even hear her come in. The dogs are at my neighbor's so they didn't greet her at the door or anything. Then she came into the kitchen and the next thing I know I'm pinning her against the counter kissing the shit out of her." Hope played with the unused tissue between her fingers, staring down at it not feeling courageous enough to look at Karev's face while she told him the story.

"And what happened after that?" His voice was calm, no trace of emotion. Neutral; a good word to describe Karev.

She glanced at the door, her desk, her framed degrees.

"Then I freaked out. I rushed to the door, pulled my shoes on, grabbed my keys and ran to my car. She tried stopping me, she kept saying please. Karev, she sounded like I was breaking her heart and I couldn't fucking stand it... So I kept running so I wouldn't damage her. Wouldn't ruin her by being even in the same proximity as me."

Hope's tears started up again and she harshly wiped the tears from under her eyes with her thumb.

"I fuck everything up. I fuck up everyone's lives around me! I can't do that to her, I won't allow myself to mess with her like that and ruin her."

Karev sat there like he had just heard the sun had exploded, not knowing what to make of the information he was just told.

Hope sat there in silent tears, replaying the image of Kelley crying in her doorway over and over again, hating herself more and more.

“Please say something before I lose my shit again.” Hope whispered into the heavy silence, feeling like the heaviness of the situation was going to crush her even more.

“I think you need to tell Kelley this, Solo. You can’t run away from her every time something happens between you two, and yes I’m referring to New Year's as well.” He gave her a pointed look.

She felt herself shrink an inch and felt her bottom lip quiver. He was right, her friends were always
right when it came to situations in her personal life.

“Why do I feel like this? I don’t understand what I’m doing, why I’m doing it…” She whispered, thinking out loud.

“Hope.” Karev firmly said to get her to meet his eyes with her own. She sniffled and looked into his eyes, hoping to understand what he was trying to convey through his gaze.

His eyes were filled with concern, sympathy and answers. Those light brown eyes had always held answers for her when he couldn’t voice what he was thinking.

With a bat of his eyelashes, it took that amount of time for it to hit Hope.

Hope loves Kelley.

Her eyes squinted and shut anticipating the oncoming tears that she felt escaping her tears ducts. Her bottom lip quivered a few more times and her throat tightened before she closed and opened her mouth before a mixture of a sob, whine and groan came out of her mouth.

“I love herrrrr!” She cried into the heels of her hands, shifting her knees even closer to her chest.

Karev looked on in sympathy knowing how emotional Hope was once you broke her walls down. Johnson and Carli have seen her like this before, of course, after the whole Jason situation, but this was a different side of her emotions that they haven’t experienced and Karev was the lucky one to deal with it.

He could literally feel the relief and pain simultaneously emanating from Hope’s shaking body and didn’t know how to go about this.

“Hey, Solo, it’s okay. O’Hara is a pretty cool chick, right?”

Hope sniffed a long breath in through her nose with tears dripping from her eyelashes and onto her knees where her hands were gripping them for dear life.

“A pretty cool chick? That’s how you’d describe her, you idiot?” She asked in disbelief, but it came out a little funny because of the whininess in her voice.

“I mean, she’s hot, she’s funny, she’s smart…” Karev tried finding other nice things to say about his fellow doctor secretly glad Hope had picked a good person to get involved with this time around. He means, if they were getting involved… Maybe, maybe not.

He bounced his nervous eyes around the room before looking into Hope’s. If looks could not necessarily kill, but severely injure him to make him suffer, Hope’s glare would land him in the ER downstairs right now.

“She’s more than just hot and funny, Karev.” Her tone was less whiny but a little stuffy from all of the snot that had gathered in her sinus cavity.

“What? I said smart, too!” He threw his hands up in defense of his prior words.

“Kelley is… Kelley is free. Kelley is a free spirit who finds the beauty and positivity in anything and everything. Kelley could walk down the street and see a piece of trash and still find a way to explain its nice traits. Kelley can connect with any kid in your department, make them feel like pediatric wing’s royalty and make them laugh and find hope and joy back in their lives. Kelley can run around a park and pick up on all of the wonderful things she sees along her way, like the shapes of the
leaves or the pattern of the rocks along the creek’s stream. Kelley laughs without restriction and allows herself to really feel what she’s feeling. Kelley turns a bad day into a decent one even if there wasn’t any hope left that you could turn your day around. Kelley loves the outdoors and really has this connection to nature that frees her and grounds her to the earth at the same time. Kelley is free when thinks, when she feels, when she acts. Kelley is beautiful, she is the definition of beautiful.” Hope rambled on, sounding like a poet reciting their work to an eager and receptive audience.

Karev sat there in awe of his friend’s words and how quickly the description escalated. He could tell that his friend genuinely loved Kelley and was rendered speechless at how thoughtful the explanation was.

“So yeah, Karev, she may be hot and funny and smart, but there’s so much more to Kelley than those three simple adjectives. There’s a whole universe within Kelley that no one has even seen, myself included. But the way she thinks and feels out loud around me… It grants me the privilege to get a taste of who she is.” Hope was passionate about this subject, never voicing her thoughts, never putting her feelings into words. But she found herself unable to stop her ode to Kelley.

“She always puts water on her cereal for some reason, not caring about what I or others think. The way she almost gallops while running through an open field especially while running with the dogs shows how giddy she is. When we go to the grocery store for my house and she picks out stuff she wants to eat for when she comes over and I allow her to do so because I don’t want to see her pout. She jumps on my back while we’re outside on walks and I’m lost in my thoughts and unintentionally ignoring her because she knows it’ll bring me back to reality, and that I’ll turn in circles really fast because it’s one of her favorite things and I love the way she laughs out of raw and pure joy. I love the way my facial expressions cause her to break out into fits of laughter after I find her and my dogs covered in mud when she volunteers to walk them while I shower or get dinner started. Her eyes, Karev,” Hope releases a deep sigh from the last of her tears and the release she feels when thinking about how much lighter she felt while she made eye contact with Kelley.

“Her god damn eyes had me hooked and lost in them the night I met her in the ER after the car accident she was involved in. They drew me in and ever since, I find myself connecting with her through them. It sounds so stupid, but it’s the truth. They hold all of her emotions within them, they hold her past, her aspirations, her failures. They’re two hazel windows into her soul, I swear to god. They hold no judgment or negativity while I open up and recount some unfortunate times in my life, they only show her compassion and warmth. When she wants me to do something, she knows that if she gives me the big, sad puppy dog eyes that it’s impossible for me to deny her of what she wants. The fact that she allows me to feel like I can open up and tell her everything scares the fuck out of me. I find myself stopping thoughts from tumbling out of my mouth when she reminds me of something from my past or from my deep, dark soul. Kelley makes me want to be a better person for her and the fact that I want to better myself for her and not for myself at this point freaks me out. I have so many intense feelings for this woman that I can’t sort them out or deal with them, so I run. I’ve ran countless times from her, whether she realizes half of those times or not. The obvious instances being New Year’s and earlier today, but times before that in which I couldn’t bear to look at her or feel her energy anymore… If the explanation of her favorite surfing spot and prime time to hit the waves, paired with her passion for it became too much, I would escape from reality and enter my own. When she would do the crossword puzzle in the daily newspaper in the morning at my kitchen counter and poked her tongue out in concentration, grunting out syllables when she thought of a possibility for a word to fit in those spaces, I would turn around and busy myself at the stove with breakfast or clean my Keurig, thinking about procedures or surgeries I had that day and not the overwhelming feeling of adoration for a tiny woman I had. It’s the small departures and times I dissociate myself with the current situation that makes me feel like my normal, closed off self. Being
around Kelley overwhelms my lack of feelings and emotional capacities that haven’t been active in years; it forces me to open up and feel lighter and free of my dark side. And that’s why I run.” Hope picks at the fabric of her soccer pants that she still hadn’t changed out of since earlier that afternoon.

She hasn’t taken her eyes off of her legs since she started her spiel on why Kelley was the best thing to walk this earth knowing she would grow out of touch with her emotions if she didn’t focus on what she was feeling. But with Kelley, it seemed effortless compared to the other times she was forced to speak about her emotions.

Karev had a half smile on his face while looking at his friend with pride and love.

“Is there anything else you’d like to add to your little proclamation, Solo?” He smirked, but out of pride and joy that his friend was letting herself feel and come to terms with this.

She rolled her eyes with a small smile appearing but opened her mouth to indeed continue.

“She’s beautiful, inside and out. Her heart and soul is beautiful, and it only enhances her physical beauty. Dear Jesus, that woman is insanely gorgeous…” Hope paused, catching Karev’s waggling eyebrows before smacking him with the back of her hand.

“Her hazel eyes, green with flecks of golden in them make them so entrancing and inviting. Her eyes are my favorite feature of her physicality. But her smile? Her smile could cure cancer, end world wars, possibly melt my stone cold heart, who knows. I mean the teeth themselves are perfect, but the happiness and bliss that exudes from her smile is contagious whether I like it or not. I find myself smiling more so around her than I have my whole life. The freckles that cover her body and face unraveled my new appreciation and interest in pigment cells. The way her eyes squint in laughter and when she smiles makes me do the same in return. Her body. Her body is absolutely breathtaking. Her muscles are so toned and lean, yet her small frame and movements make her so gentle. I don’t understand how a human being can encompass that much beauty in their skin, muscles and bones. She’s so beautiful.” Hope caught herself smiling and slightly blushing at the times she had seen more of Kelley’s skin than she was probably intended to. Her cheeks became tenser with every centimeter her lips turned up, not helping her reaction at the thought of Kelley’s head thrown back in laughter and involuntary movements on her body that followed. She thought she was so stunning, even when she saw her on a gurney with a neck brace on and a few contusions covering her arm and face.

“What do I do, Karev? I have these feelings that I’m beginning to sort out and come to terms with, but I don’t know what to do.” Hope’s smile fell as she realized that she still had a ways to go to figure out what the fuck was going on with her.

“I think you need to talk to Kelley and tell her everything you just told me, for real. Or sum it up, I don’t know, just talk to her. If she’s as understanding and nonjudgmental as you say she is, she’ll listen to you without dismay or disgust like I know you’re afraid that she’ll feel.”

Hope mulled over Karev’s suggestion, bopping her head from side to side before ceasing her neck movements and shooting an intense gaze his way.

“I’m in love with Kelley.” She said with shock and finality.

“Yes you are, Dr. Solo. You’re in love.” Karev nodded in confirmation, figuring this out a while ago but keeping his mouth shut so his friend could reach this moment.

“Dr. Kelley Maureen O’Hara, leader of the squirrels, lover of all things warm and fuzzy… The woman who tries to ride my dogs like horses and won’t allow me to kill a spider? The woman who
forces me to take a bath to help myself unwind even though I want to take a quick shower so I can focus my attention on something else? The woman who is this Georgia peach turned Cali surfer girl who attended Stanford? The woman who thinks it’s funny when I say the words moose, bungalow or booger? The woman who throws a tantrum when I won’t watch another episode of Glee or give her more Goldfish to snack on when she’s already eaten half of the pack? I’m in love with her? A woman nonetheless, but my best friend who is a real child and dork?” Hope questioned this out loud, not believing it once she stated it outside of her head and internal thoughts, but out in the open for her own ears to hear when the soundwaves left her mouth.

“You sure are, dude. How does it feel?” Karev continued to smirk, loving this side of his friend.

Hope jolted up and ran to the trash can next to her desk and puked up beer, pretzels, water and stomach acid into the plastic lined can. Karev grimaced before heading over across the room to hold his friend’s hair back. He had to do this with girls he was romantically into, and Carli and Hope a couple of times.

“Yeeep, let it out,” Hope threw up again, “Mhm, there ya go.” He commented, looking away at the sight of vomit, seeing enough coming from his pediatric patients on the daily.

She dry heaved a few times before she sat back on her heels, closing her eyes and taking a few deep breaths before making her way over back to the couch to grab her bottle of water.

She swished the water in her mouth before opening the window in her office to spit outside. She repeated it a few times before grabbing a tissue to wipe any remnants around her mouth.

“Nice.” Karev grimaced again, pulling his head back slightly at the sight of her spitting pukey water out of her window.

She shrugged before pacing back and forth in front of the couch where Karev was leaning into. It’s amazing how quickly the atmosphere and body language changed once Hope reeled her emotions back in and Karev wasn’t scared shitless anymore.

“Let me get this straight,” She paused knowing Karev would give her that dumb look whenever she said something that could be taken out of context or as a pun. She rolled her eyes when that look was written across his face.

“The dark and twisty, big and bad Dr. Hope Solo is in love with a woman. A woman who is secretly a squirrel who is incredibly intelligent and became a pediatric surgeon, all the while weaseling her way into my heart and life in the span of not even 5 months. In love. With a woman. Who acts like a five year-old. And makes me feel and think things that I haven’t before. Also, the woman who I broke at my house and is probably at her apartment sobbing or eating raw cookie dough to mend her heartbreak that I caused. I hurt her, Karev. I can’t just tell her I’m in love with her after I hurt her like that. I up and left! No explanation, nothing! She asked me to stay, pleaded even, and I ran away. I don’t want her to be mixed up in my negativity and dark hole of despair. She’s too good for me, for the reality I’ve built myself.”

“Solo, listen. You can still be straight but have an exception when it comes to being attracted and in love with Kelley, it’s totally cool, dude. As to speaking with her after leaving, maybe it’s time to stop running from her and run to her.” Karev stood so he could stand face to face with Hope, lightly tossing her keys up repeatedly.

Hope took in his words and the action of him playing with her car keys and knew what she had to do.
“Give me ‘em.” She held her hand out for Karev to place her keys into her outstretched hand. He smiled in satisfaction while handing them over, hands still gripping them but resting it in her palm.

“Open yourself up to her and tell her how you feel and what you think. Don’t run anymore, Solo.”

She nodded while holding eye contact. She felt the keys being released from his grip and threw her arms around his neck for a quick but meaningful hug before she darted out of the room and sprinted down the hall.

Karev shook his head at his always interesting and complex friend. He knew that this breakthrough would lead to both of his friends’ happiness and he couldn’t be any happier at the thought.

Hope threw her car into reverse and sped her way back to her house hoping that Kelley would still be there an hour and a half after she left her without an explanation or courage to stay and talk to her.

10 minutes after speeding through Boston’s thruway and streets, she whipped her car into its assigned parking spot before rushing out of her car, barely remembering to remove the keys from the ignition and close her door.

She sprinted towards the door and tried the handle, noting that it was unlocked.

Here goes nothing.

“Kelley?! Kell, are you here?” Hope yelled into the foyer, not bothering to take her boots off in haste to find Kelley.

She looked in the dining room first to cover her bases, not too shocked when she didn’t find her there. The kitchen was the next stop and she wasn’t at the counter or at the table either. She slowly began to lose hope.

“Kell?!” She tried again, looking in the living room. She didn’t see her on the chairs or floor and turned to the left to see if she was lying on the couch. She looked down and didn’t see the small woman snuggling into it.

Hope felt tears prick her eyes again, the unsettling feeling that Kelley had left after she departed. “Obviously she would leave, why wouldn’t she?” Hope thought to herself, feeling onset defeat and disappointment that she had lost her chance at explaining her behavior and professing her love for her best friend.

She made her way upstairs to shower and just lay in bed after her emotionally exhausting day. She had work in the morning and didn’t need to be extra cranky due to her emotional epiphany and moody because she just wanted to talk to Kelley and get all of this off of her chest.

Her bedroom door was partially opened, which was odd because she usually left it closed. She slid her hand between the door and doormframe slowly and quietly pushing it open hoping that a serial killer or burglar wasn’t going to be stunned at the noise and attack her or something. No, the sight she was met with was completely different from what she thought she was going to be faced with.

Kelley was curled up in a ball on her bed with each dog flanking her, like the sphinx and the empress in Egypt. She was asleep but her eyebrows were knitted together in worry, the rest of her features twisting up in pain. The dogs eyed Hope like she was the “bad girl” now and didn’t make a move to leave Kelley’s sides. She wasn’t sure if she should be offended that they didn’t greet her or proud that they protected Kelley, sensing she was upset. But Hope caused her to be upset and she had a
feeling the dogs picked up on that somehow.

The sight made her heart swell even more, partially in love, partially in guilt and regret. She always loved seeing her girls with Kelley, but the feelings Kelley was experiencing was caused by Hope and her bullshit.

She had to make it right, Kelley stayed even though Hope ran and if that was any indicator that she was here to listen to Hope and was able to forgive her, Hope knew what she had to do.

She pet both Sasha and Onyx on the head before sitting on the edge of her bed to reach over and smooth out the fly away hairs from Kelley’s face. Her face was still red and tear stained, wet spots on the pillow from her tears spilling there, signs that she had recently fell asleep and stopped crying. It broke Hope’s heart even more.

Kelley stirred when Hope ran her finger down Kelley’s forehead to the middle of her nose to relax the tense muscles. She snuggled her head further into her pillow and shifted her legs closer to her body, circling in on herself.

Hope took in her freckles and slight wrinkles at the corners of her eyes, and the rise and fall of her chest as she slept her pain away.

Hope ran her hand down from her hair to her shoulder, giving her the gentlest nudge.

“Kell,” She started in a soft whisper wanting to wake the woman up but not to startle her.

“Kelley,” She said a little louder to hopefully get through to her sleeping brain that she was there.

She shook her shoulder back and forth a couple of times to gently wake her up, but more pressure than the initial nudge.

“Kell.” She ran the back of her hand along Kelley’s cheek which seemed to do the trick because Kelley wiggled slightly and rubbed her face against her favorite pillow of Hope’s before slowly opening her eyes.

She sighed in contentment and leaned against the warm and soft touch against her cheek but froze when she realized who it was. She shot up into a sitting position and rubbed her eyes like a half-asleep kid trying to rid of the disbelief in them.

“H-Hope?” Her voice was hoarse, most likely due to the crying she had done in the past hour and a half. She was met with a warm gaze from her favorite pair of blue eyes and a light hand on her calf that was stretched under the blanket.

“Hi, Kell.”
Chapter 18

Chapter Summary

Swearing, vegetarianism, meditation, more swearing, plans.

Chapter Notes

Two chapters almost back to back? I deserve a cookie or something. Although, my cookie may be revoked before the end of this chapter... Happy reading!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Hi, Kell.”

Hope watched Kelley visibly flinch at the sound of her nickname rolling off of her tongue realizing how much she had fucked up in just that moment alone.

“Don’t. Just don’t.” Kelley set her jaw and looked to the window where the sun was beginning to set.

“I am s-“ Kelley had never cut her off that quickly before, but then again, when she had in the past it was because she was excited about what she had to offer to the conversation and not the fact that she was about to shut Hope down.

“So sorry?” Kelley scoffed while shaking her head bitterly, playing with Onyx’s ear still not taking her eyes off of the Boston sunset.

Hope opened her mouth to speak again but Kelley had beaten her to it.

“You don’t get to be sorry, Hope. You freaked out at the bar, stormed out after telling me to come over to your house when I finished up with the girls, and when I get there you proceed to slam me against the counter and kiss me. You kissed me, Hope! And when we pulled apart, you froze like a god damn statue and then ran.” Kelley already had a couple of tears racing their way down her cheek, raising her hand to briskly wipe them away before making eye contact with a teary eyed Hope.

“You ran after I had asked you, begged you, to stay so we could talk about it. These past couple of weeks have been us walking on eggshells because you aren’t ready to talk about New Year’s Eve and now look at us, Hope.”

Hope had allowed tears of her own to spill out, not bothering to wipe them away like she usually would, a first step towards the direction of letting Kelley see her vulnerability.

“I screamed your name so that you’d come back inside so we could just talk and you continued to walk and then drive away. I just want to fucking talk about what has transpired between us and why the hell we can’t seem to figure out what’s going on between us! And you don’t even care enough to
have a discussion about it!” Kelley’s anger had gotten the best of her and she was definitely not holding back.

She flung the covers off of her, some landing on top of Hope before she walked towards the door.

This sobered Hope up who cleared her throat and sniffled, “Where are you going?”

“I’m going downstairs because I can’t bear to be in this close of proximity with you while we do this.” With that, Kelley turned to make her way downstairs, whistling for the dogs to follow her.

Hope wasn’t going to let the chance slip through her fingers again, but wanted to give Kelley a minute or two to collect her own thoughts so that they could hash this out like adults.

She changed her clothes in record time, changing into athletic shorts and a baggy Nike crewneck, wanting to be comfortable for when she opens herself up, but wear articles of clothing that allowed her to hide under. She pulled her hair into a messy bun and decided against wearing socks for no particular reason.

She looked at herself in the bathroom mirror quickly before making her way downstairs to see Kelley at the kitchen counter.

“I was starting to think that you ran away again.” Kelley’s voice was harsh, but still held pain.

“I want to talk; I’m not going to run this time.” Hope cautiously approached the counter, pulling a stool out for her to sit on, leaving a good amount of distance between the two of them.

“I sent the girls to Leah’s house because I didn’t want them to pick up on the negative energy from us fighting and get upset.” Kelley supplied, not looking over at Hope just yet.

“That was a smart idea.” Hope commented, not knowing where to begin on the topic of them.

“Why did you run away again?” Kelley beat her to it once again, not sugar coating anything, just diving right in.

“I was terrified of what I had just done, Kell. I got all heated at the bar, invited you over here and impulsively kissed you. I wasn’t thinking clearly and just acted on my sudden feelings, not thinking of consequences or considering your take on things.” Hope stood, keeping her eyes trained on Kelley who was drawing random patterns on the marble countertop, not looking up at the older woman while she spoke. Hope grabbed two bottles of water for them and located a stack of napkins in case things got a little ugly.

She placed the newly acquired supplies on the counter in front of them before clearing her throat to speak again.

“I was jealous of… Kate.” Hope gritted through her teeth, clearly still not over the hot bartender.

“Yeah, that was the point…” Kelley laughed bitterly, amused at the fact that this is how the scenario played out.

“What did you just say?” Hope needed clarification, because if she had heard her correctly, it was the plan all along.

“I wanted to make you jealous, Hope! To drag some sort of reaction out of you! I still have no idea what you’re making New Year’s out to be, how you felt during the kiss or your feelings leading up to it! Yeah, she was the same woman from Revere’s, and do you know what she asked me when I
“She thought you were my girlfriend based on how you acted that night and witnessing us kissing. I had to explain to her that I had no idea why my best friend and I were kissing like that, but we definitely were not dating. So this little plan was hatched to get you to react in some sort of way if you stalking over to the two of us on New Year’s was any indication that you would do it again.” Kelley left out the part about how she had realized her newfound love for Hope minutes prior to speaking with Kate, but decided to leave that tidbit out for now.

“Why were you jealous of her, Hope?”

Hope stared right back into Kelley’s eyes when the question was presented. Now was her chance to say those few choice words, to let Kelley in on her not so little secret.

“I don’t know.” She closed herself off again, not being brave enough to say them yet.

Kelley shook her head and forcefully pushed her hair back out of frustration.

“You don’t know why you were jealous? Do you know how you feel about anything?! I swear to God, you’re so infuriating!” Kelley growled out, clenching her fists, gritting her teeth. She took a deep breath in to keep somewhat calm before continuing on.

“You’ve opened up before, Hope… You told me about your shitty childhood and what Jason did to you, and past encounters with people that fucked you up in some way or another, but yet you can’t just talk to me about us? What’s happening between us, Hope?”

Hope cringed at the mention of Jason, but felt herself getting worked up at the tone Kelley was using and the fact that all of the blame was being put on her.

“I am trying! You may think that I’m not, but I am! Every day I try to piece what I’m thinking and feeling together! Sunday through Saturday, piece by piece. You’re accusing me of running away? Fine. I am aware that I tend to flee when I feel threatened, pressured or overwhelmed. It’s in my nature, it always has been! Running is all I’ve ever known, Kelley! When I was younger and things became too hard or scary, I ran. Little Hope didn’t have any resources to help her cope or make sense of what was happening in her life, so she fled the scene, the situation at hand. I clearly haven’t grown out of that and I don’t know if I will.”

“What about med school, being top of your class? Your whole internship, residency and fellowship at one of the best hospitals on the East Coast in the second hardest specialty? You don’t run away from tough cases or staying awake for 40 hours straight when you’re stacked with surgeries!”

“That’s a completely different stressor, Kelley! I trained myself to be the best in my academics and field of work. My personal life, my emotional side, my life outside of medicine is what I run from! I don’t know how to handle things when it comes to dealing with my feelings or people I care about! It’s fucking terrifying because it’s territory I haven’t touched since my father died and my mother basically disappeared within herself! The only other time is after I was raped and attacked by Jason, when I had to pick the pieces of myself back up and glue them back together!”

Hope was riled up, not knowing what path this was going in, but she couldn’t stop. And Kelley didn’t know if she should stop her or not.

“I don’t play the “Oh poor, broken Hope” card like you’re making it out to be! You don’t have to remind me that I’m a 33 year-old woman who is fucked up beyond repair because of her shitty
childhood, even worse adolescence and lack of any sort of emotional life throughout college. I get it. I get that I’m viewed as this cold-hearted bitch who doesn’t consider anyone’s feelings when I speak or act. I get that people are afraid to approach me because I’m this closed off, impersonal monster that ironically repairs hearts to work again when everyone thinks I lack one. I have struggled with emotions my whole life since they’ve been steered in the wrong direction every which way due to family members and friends’ actions, and I don’t know how to cognitively process or express my emotions the majority of the time. It takes me a while, and by the time I figured something out, it’s too late.”

Kelley was silently crying beside Hope, who wasn’t doing much better. Her voice was clear and sharp with every word, but the tears that trailed their way down her cheeks suggested differently.

“So yes, I do run when things get hard or tricky or too touchy feely because I have no idea how to handle them in that moment, hence my anxiety disorder. When I overthink or become overwhelmed with emotions, I panic. I have full blown panic attacks that make me cry and sweat, shake and rock, convincing myself that I’m having a heart attack every time because my heart won’t stabilize and I can’t control my breathing. I feel out of control of my own body and that’s the worst to me. I need control over something in my life, and when an emotional discussion or any situation that warrants me losing control over my thoughts or feelings, I’m out of there. I’ve been out of control over so many different parts of my life that I cling to it whenever I can exercise power and do what I want to do.”

Hope uncapped her water bottle to take a sip of the cool water to soothe her tightening throat as she dug deeper and deeper into her psyche.

Kelley picked her bottle up and chucked it at the wall furthest from her spot at the counter, which happened to be closest to Hope.

Hope reflexively ducked, her eyes widening in alarm at the angry action from her usually calm friend.

“GOD DAMN IT!” Kelley strained out, chest heaving at the amount of information she had just registered. The stool she was sitting on a second ago screeched back as she shoved it with her foot.

“I don’t know if I can do this, Hope.” Kelley’s breathing was still heavy, tears keeping a constant stream down her face. She walked around the counter, holding herself up with her hands planted about shoulders width apart, palms planted on the cool, smooth counter top.

Hope felt like she had been slapped across the face hearing that Kelley “didn’t know if she could do this.”

“What the fuck does that mean?!” It was Hope’s turn to abandon her seat and stand up, pressing her front against the edge of the counter directly in front of Kelley who occupied the other side.

“It means that I don’t think I can handle your lack of emotion and constant running right now! We are completely different people, Hope. On completely different wavelengths.”

“Are you fucking kidding me?! No way, O’Hara. There’s noo fucking way you’re leaving this conversation!”

“Why not?! You always leave, so why can’t I?!” Kelley met Hope’s fierce glare with her own, both sets of eyes shooting daggers at each other.

“You asked me to stay, to talk! And now I’m here, trying to explain to you as to why I always run
from my problems, tapping into the deep emotional side of my being and you’re second guessing if you want to hear me out or not!” Hope exclaimed, not able to keep her voice at bay while she got worked up all over again.

“What are you feeling, Hope?! I’m sick of dancing around you and you giving me this bullshit of “I don’t know what I was thinking!” or “I still need time to figure this out, just give me space.” Just tell me what you’re feeling, what you’re thinking!” Kelley was screaming, matching Hope’s volume and turning it up even more.

“I can’t! I can’t tell you what I’m feeling or thinking because I don’t want to lose you, Kelley!” Hope yelled, leaning over the counter top towards Kelley.

Kelley shuffled her feet, not even blinking at what Hope had just said.

“Why would you lose me?”

“I initiated the times we’ve kissed. Both times we have kissed I have been the one to lean in and kiss you. It was out of impulse, I acted on what I wanted and what I felt was right during the moment. I didn’t think of the consequences when my lips were connected to yours, Kell. And when you moaned into the kiss earlier, it snapped me back to reality. The reality in which I seemed to forget existed when I got lost in you and your embrace. I realized that I had fucked up as soon as there was air between our mouths and our bodies, that I had screwed up again. I didn’t know how you’d react or perceive the kiss and whether or not it would change our relationship or not. I was terrified that I had ruined our friendship that has grown so strongly these past few months.”

“You should’ve stayed so we could talk about it, Hope. How were you supposed to know what I was feeling or thinking if you didn’t stick around to hear my side of things? Did I push you away or not talk to you afterwards? No, I didn’t. Both times you were the one to push me away and run.” Kelley wasn’t as angry as she was before, but now the hurt she has been feeling came to the surface.

“I know, I understand now that I’ve made things worse. But kissing you, let a alone a woman, freaked me out. I didn’t even second guess it when I went in for the kiss, it just felt…right? Natural? And when we broke apart the instant panic of kissing my best friend who is also a woman flared up. Something I’m sure you can sort of relate to, I hope?” Hope was toying with the basket of fruit on the counter, spinning it around and watching the colors of the variety of fruit from the corner of her eye, her main focus on Kelley standing in front of her.

“I have known that I’m gay for 12 years now. I’ve had a total of two relationships in the past and too many flings and hookups to count. But when I was 15 years old, I remember exactly how you felt when you realized you felt the same way kissing me as you do when kissing men. But isn’t that something that should’ve been helpful for you? You knew that I’m a lesbian and you could’ve talked to me, hell even Carli, what you were feeling. You didn’t have to try and figure it out on your own silently by yourself.”

“It’s different when the friend you usually share stuff with is also the person involved in your dilemma. I never questioned my sexuality before. I kissed a few girls in college at parties while playing stupid drinking games or Truth or Dare, but never thought about pursuing them romantically. I only fucked guys and dated one before I met Jason. I was terrified that what I was feeling was much more than just a stupid, random kiss at a kegger.”

Here it goes, Hope thought, this was it.

“What did you feel Hope?” Kelley asked, bracing herself on the counter by her elbows now.
“I felt like I was home.” She said, looking for any reaction in Kelley’s eyes.

Kelley felt her heart soar and her blood pumping through her veins. What did she just say?

“You fe-felt like you were home?” She found herself getting choked up for the hundredth time that day.

Hope gulped and flexed her hands a couple of times to find the courage to express what she had realized earlier in her office. Karev’s words rang through her head, “Open yourself up to her and tell her how you feel and what you think.”

“When I got the page that I was needed in the ER that night in September, I had no idea that that one page was going to change my life.” Hope cleared her throat at the emotions welling up in her throat.

“When I had finished up with the woman who had hit your car, I was redirected to the incoming of the other victims involved in the accident. That’s when I first saw you, as you know.” Hope nodded her head once, swallowing back tears. Kelley was already crying, the tears falling from her eyes and splashing onto the countertop. If Hope wanted to get this all out there, though, she couldn’t touch or interact with Kelley yet.

She continued on.

“When I looked into your eyes, Kell… I knew something was different and unique with you. Before you opened your mouth and asked about your friends and their wellbeing, and continued to harass me and persuade me to break the rules,” Hope smirked through her tears, “I knew that you were someone different that I had never experienced in my life.”

Hope tugged at the bottom of her sleeve and wiped away the tears, a pause for her to gather herself as well as she could.

“But with you, it seemed effortless, it seemed okay. And the feeling that I’ve known you for longer than almost 5 months scares the shit out of me because no one ever develops any sort of friendship or relationship in that amount of time. But with you, Kell, it feels like you’ve been a part of my life for years.”

“I would have never tried yoga or fro-yo if I hadn’t met you, or stopped to appreciate the beauty of nature or the stars like you do. When I wake up and see you beside me, snuggled into my body with that look of contentment on your face, I try my very best not to move so that you can stay that way. The way you scrunch your nose up, whether it be in disgust or in delight, it’s totally endearing. Or the positivity and light you emanate when you just walk down the street or down the hallway at work. You make me want to be a better person, to be half the human being that you are.”

Hope found herself smiling at the disclosure of Kelley’s personality and existence.

“Somewhere between stealing my clothes, picking out which type of apples to buy at the store, forgetting to put the top of the blender on while you make a smoothie in my kitchen, taking pictures of the dogs wearing over-sized onesies and sunglasses, making me stick the straw of your juice box
in the whole because you claim to always screw it up, burping your ABCs after we’ve had a couple of beers, never judging me when I tell you something personal, meeting me for lunch or coffee during our breaks at work, ganging up on me with our friends when an embarrassing story comes to light and making me feel whole while you just look at me, I fell in love with you.”

Hope heard Kelley audibly take a breath in and watched as the initial shock of her confession fade into more tears rolling down her face, hand clutching her chest.

“You’re a woman, or squirrel, verdict’s not out yet. A person who has taught me that it’s okay to laugh at myself and realize when I need to take a step back and take it all in. You have broken down some but not all barriers that others haven’t even come close to doing so before. For some reason, you entered my life and changed it for the better. Sure, it’s been messy and a roller coaster of emotions that I couldn’t place up until today, but I trust you, Kell. I trust myself to open up to you and allow myself to be vulnerable now, now that I’ve seen that you won’t run away from my baggage and bullshit. And I’m sorry,” Hope’s voice cracked, “I’m so sorry that I’ve been stringing you along with me as I tried to figure this out. I had to learn that you were, are, so important to me and that pushing you away was not only hurting me, but you in the process. I thought pushing you away and closing you off would be what’s best for you and for me. For us. I didn’t want to drag you down into my dark hole of being fucked up to only taint your beautiful soul and not have you recover. I don’t want you to end up like me, lost and scared. That’s why I ran. But I think I’m tired of running away from you, Kell. I don’t think I want to anymore.” Hope was full on crying, wrapping her arms around herself to provide some sort of comfort.

Kelley was sobbing on the other side of the counter, not knowing that Hope was feeling any of this. The woman whom she had realized she was in love with, her hard-headed, guarded best friend was in love with her too and had practically ripped her heart out and handed it over to Kelley with every word she spoke.

Kelley found her feet taking her over to stand in front of Hope looking into the brighter blue shade of her eyes, shining from the tears of love and relief that had escaped. Kelley reached out and tugged at Hope’s arms so that they would fall to her sides. She surged forward and wrapped her arms around Hope’s midriff, clinging to her like a koala on a tree. Hope quickly wrapped her arm around Kelley’s shoulder, the opposite hand clutching the back of her head to hold close to her.

They cried into each other, Hope kissing the top of Kelley’s head as Kelley burrowed her face into Hope’s neck. Hope could feel the fresh round of hot tears run down her neck and she was concerned that she had physically broken Kelley.

With Kelley in her arms after she had confessed her love for her, Hope felt like all was bright in her usually dark world. That Kelley wrapped up in her embrace protected the both of them.

She craned her neck to look down at the smaller woman clinging to her, still producing tears that were now soaking her sweater.

“Kell, are you okay? Will you say something?” Hope hushed out, still wrapped up in her emotions as well.

She heard Kelley mumble something into her neck but couldn’t quite understand what she had said. This situation was humorously similar to her and Karev in the hospital earlier.

Kelley pulled back, hands still clasped together behind Hope’s back, to look into Hope’s eyes.

“I love you, Hope.” Kelley said so softly yet so surely that it made Hope want to melt right there.
“I love you too, Kell.” Hope saw Kelley eye her lips as she licked them, reading the uncertainty she had about kissing Hope in that moment.

To put her out of her misery, Hope moved her hand from the back of Kelley’s head and placed it on her flushed cheek, rubbing the bone there with her thumb. She slid her other arm down Kelley’s back, resting her hand at the small of it, and nudged her closer to her own body.

“Kiss me.” Hope husked out at the proximity of their bodies and the feeling of Kelley’s face beneath her palm.

Kelley stared into her eyes, loving the raw emotion that she found in them and grabbed Hope’s face with both of her hands, pulling her slightly down to her level to connect their lips.

The electricity that they had felt whenever they would accidentally graze each other’s hands or the tingling they felt after the New Year’s kiss was put to shame by the bolt of energized currents running from their lips down through their nerves to their toes.

The faintly chapped lips from hours of crying mixed with the salt from the tears were overshadowed by the raw, fervent kiss that they shared. They couldn’t get enough of the feeling of each other, lips pulling and sliding against each other, tongues peeking through the confines of their mouths, wanting to taste and dance with the other. When they both needed to pause for air, Hope leaned down and rested her forehead against Kelley’s, their oxygen being each other’s exhales of warm, moist air.

The smile that graced Hope’s face was probably the most beautiful expression of hers that Kelley had ever seen.

“I love you, Yolo.” She kissed her nose first, then her lips and placed a lasting kiss to her forehead letting her lips rest there.

“I love you too, Squirrel.” She pulled away slightly and dipped her head back down to capture Kelley’s lips again, getting lost in the feeling of connecting with Kelley on a whole different level.

“YOLO?! I come bearing gifts!” Kelley entered Hope’s house yelling into the empty hall, clumsily kicking her boots off and shaking the snow off of her coat and hat. The second week of February came with heavy snowfall that January had lacked, making it a very white city in Beantown.

She placed her backpack down that held two bottles of wine and two takeout boxes of food she had picked up from the local Wholefoods near Hope’s neighborhood. It was amazing what she could fit into her adventurer’s backpack and always took advantage of it.

As soon as she leaned over to pick her backpack up after hanging up her coat, Sasha and Onyx came barreling down the stairs.

“Puppies! Hello, my loves! I missed you too!” She knelt on the ground and opened her arms up to invite both of the large dogs into her embrace. She peppered kisses all around their faces, scratching behind their ears, setting off into a fit of giggles when they gave her kisses in return.

“What about me? Where’s my “hello, my love I missed you”?” Hope appeared down the stairs, reaching the second one as she spoke.

Kelley continued to pet and kiss the dogs, “Mommy’s jealous that I may or may not love you two
more, hm? Yes she is, yes she iiis!” She spoke to them in a baby voice, sending a wink Hope’s way over the top of their heads.

Hope mocked annoyance, leaning against the banister’s railing with her arms crossed pretending to check her nails out.

“Whatever, I’m sure they give you better kisses than I do…” Hope said dismissively, switching her fake focus on her other hand’s nails.

Kelley got up giving the dogs each a last pet and kiss before taking the three or four steps towards the staircase towards Hope.

“No one gives better kisses than you do, Hopey. C’mere, come heeeere!” Kelley reached out and grabbed both of Hope’s arms, shaking them up and down for her to uncross them before smirking at her and leaning in to give her a kiss.

Hope moved her head at the last second, landing a peck on her cheek from Kelley.

Kelley’s mouth was agape and eyes slightly widened in mock hurt, “Did you just reject a kiss from me?!” She still held onto Hope’s forearms lightly pushing her back and forth.

“You used the name.” Hope squinted her eyes in a glare, still allowing Kelley to shift her back and forth on her heels.

“I don’t see you for two days because of stupid work, use a cute wittle nickname and then you reject a kiss from me?! Fine! No kisses for you the rest of the night!” Kelley turned around but didn’t even make it half way before Hope’s gentle hand on her wrist turned her around, catching her back and planting a long, firm kiss on her lips.

“Mmm, see? You could’ve saved us the time if you just allowed me to kiss you like that in the first place,” Kelley pointed out with her mouth an inch away from Hope’s, “Hopey.” She quickly pecked Hope’s lips before she could deny her again and leaped over to her backpack on the floor.

“Now, like I announced when I entered your humble abode, I come bearing gifts! Would you like to see them?” Kelley asked holding her backpack in one hand, the other gesturing around it like she was the woman from Wheel of Fortune.

“Yeah, yeah, Squirrel, let’s park it in the living room.” Hope rolled her eyes at the nickname she was called before Kelley grabbed her backpack, and rolled her eyes again when she was showcasing the damn backpack she always had on.

“Come on, babies!” Kelley called to the dogs, one-strapping the bag on her shoulder the other snapping her fingers in the air like a diva.

Once again, Hope rolled her eyes but smiled at the goofy woman and her dogs being stuck under the O’Hara charm like she was.

Kelley propped her bag on her lap and called out to Hope, “We need two forks and two wine glasses, s’il te plait!”

Hope did as she was instructed, grabbing the stuff and a few napkins while she was at it. A few nights ago when Kelley ate dinner at her house, she didn’t have a napkin and decided the next best idea was to lean over and use Hope’s sleeve.

“What do we have tonight, Chef?” Hope asked, placing the wine glasses, forks and napkins down
“Well, Dr. Solo, tonight’s menu consists of a nice bottle of white wine that I was gifted a couple of years ago, tempeh picatta, kale salad and some fancy risotto. All vegetarian friendly for yours truly, but I was told that it would taste delicious to a carnivore such as yourself! Hey, don’t give me that face!” Kelley warned, hand on her hip sassily.

Hope’s face grew more and more disgusted as she was told what was on the menu.

“I eat healthy, I enjoy risotto and kale, but what the hell is tempeh?” Hope went to open her takeout box but was swatted on the hand by Kelley.

“It’s a soy product and it’s amazing! You’re going to try it and I’m sure you’re going to like it! You’re my support with this, I want to really try and change my lifestyle by eliminating meat and most dairy products.” Kelley placed the bottle of wine in front of Hope, and looked back into her backpack to pull out the bag that contained her box.

“Okay, okay I’ll try it! I’m not promising I’ll eat it, but I’ll at least try it. I’m sure I’ll like the other stuff and definitely the wine at least.” Hope went to retrieve a bottle opener that Kelley forgot to request and started on unscrewing the cork while Kelley opened both of their boxes to revel the food.

“It smells amazing! You’re going to love this, I know it,” Kelley held her wine glass out for Hope to pour half of a glass worth into it, pouring the same for herself before taking a seat next to Kelley on the couch.

“Well, here it goes,” Hope picked her fork up stabbing a little piece of the tempeh to bring to her mouth as Kelley carefully watched her.

“Are you going to try it too or is this just observe Hope time?” Hope raised an eyebrow, holding the food up to her mouth, yet to take a bite.

Kelley rolled her eyes but grabbed a little piece of hers as well to pop into her mouth. She chewed carefully trying to pick up on all of the tastes that the sauce and spices provided.

Hope examined her face but wasn’t picking up on anything so she ate her bite too.

It wasn’t bad, wasn’t bad at all. It was actually delicious much to her surprise.

“This is good, Kell. You’re right, I do like it. How about you?” Hope ate another bite, turning her head to look at Kelley still chewing.

Hope rolled her eyes. “Are you kidding me?” Kelley stopped midchew and looked at Hope like she was in pain.

“You don’t like it, do you?” Hope asking a question she already knew the answer to, being met with a slow shake of the head.

“Swallow it, Squirrel.” Hope placed her fork down, turning all of her attention to the smaller woman who held the food between her gums and cheek.

Kelley shook her head again, quicker this time like a petulant child who refused to listen to their parents.

“Kelley. Swallow that bite,” She poked Kelley’s cheek, trying to get this over with.
Kelley leaned her head back so Hope wasn’t in arms reach to touch her and shook her head again, muttering a “nuh uh” with a look of disdain on her face.

“Swallow it! Just swallow and then you don’t have to eat the rest of it.” Hope tried reasoning with her, feeling like a parent bargaining with their picky child.

Kelley looked like she was considering it before quickly grabbing a napkin and spitting her food out into it.

Hope’s eyebrows furrowed in confusion, mouth opened at the disbelief she felt towards the action.

“How didn’t you just swallow it?” She asked, watching Kelley take a large drink of her wine.

“It was so gross!” Kelley supplied, picking her fork up and stabbing a few pieces of kale to shove into her mouth to mask the taste of the tempeh. She smiled as she chewed her greens, more satisfied with the taste of that than the soy dish. She leaned over when she felt a small drop of vinaigrette at the corner of her mouth, taking the end of Hope’s hoodie sleeve and wiping the corner of her mouth.

“You are unbelievable…” Hope shook her head but smiled at the younger woman who cuddled up next to her, takeout box in her hand with the fork in the other enjoying her dinner.

The things she would do for this squirrel.

“Hooooope!” Kelley dragged out her whine, trying to get the woman’s attention.

“Shhhh,” Hope shushed her, trying to find her inner Zen to successfully meditate.

“I’m bored, why do I have to do this?” Kelley grabbed her ankles, sitting in the butterfly position, rocking back and forth.

“You don’t, you volunteered to join me. Now shh!” Hope’s eyes remained shut, legs criss crossed as she sat on her meditation pillow in the home office where she had set up a meditation corner.

Kelley huffed out a sigh and continued to rock and spin herself around on her butt, entertaining herself as quietly as she could manage. But Hope was having a hard time concentrating on focusing on her breathing and inner mantra when she could feel the overwhelming energy coming from Kelley.

“Do you think Sasha and Onyx remember their birth parents?” Kelley questioned, trying to move her foot behind her head.

Hope remained silent, hoping that maybe Kelley would get the hint to stop talking so she could focus.

“Do you think that they see you as just their mom and forgot about their doggy parents altogether?” Kelley questioned again.

“One more peep out of you and you’re out” Hope opened one eye to look over at Kelley in the weirdest shape before shook her shoulders out to readjust and let out a long breath through her mouth.

Kelley was quiet for 15 more seconds before she opened her mouth again, “Do you thi-“
“OUT!” Hope pointed towards the door with her eyes closed, keeping her arm up until she heard a grumbled, “fiiine” and knew Kelley had fully left the room.

She inhaled through her nose before slowly exhaling out of her mouth, straightening her back and refocused herself.

She was just about to enter her inner peace ten minutes after Kelley left until Kelley poked her head through the door.

“Hoooorpe!”

Hope’s shoulders slumped forward and she pinched the bridge of her nose with her index finger and thumb before shaking her head.

She was never going to meditate with Kelley and her crazy energy around.

It was two days before Valentine’s Day and both Hope and Kelley were working that Friday, each carrying out their respective surgeries and duties.

Things had been amazing between the two of them, but it’s not like much had changed since they practically behaved like they were dating?


They hadn’t discussed any labels yet but they both figured that they were together since they admitted their love for one another.

But Hope had wanted to make it official and what better and sappier way than to ask on Valentine’s Day? She didn’t have anything planned yet, but she knew it had to be amazing to really woo Kelley.

She felt guilty for how she made Kelley feel the day of their big fight a few weeks ago and wanted to set something really special up for her. Flowers, candy, candlelight, the whole nine yards.

Maybe they’d even seal the deal of their new relationship with time between the sheets if Kelley wanted to. They haven’t passed the point of making out like crazy, hormonal teenagers yet and Hope wasn’t sure if it was due to her hesitance or Kelley’s.

She wasn’t in a hurry to have sex with Kelley, she respected her enough to follow her lead and take it slow. Ever since Jason, Hope hadn’t been intimate with anyone, only making out with a few guys here and there. But the trauma was still prevalent in her mind when a guy would get a little too handsy, scaring her and pushing them away in return.

But she thinks that she’d be ready if Kelley furthered their make out sessions. She trusted her and loved her, but there was still that fear present from the monster that scarred her those couple of years ago.

First step was to plan a date and ask her to be her girlfriend before anything else, though. She needed help and knew exactly who to ask.

“Hey, I need your expertise on something.” Hope approached Johnson at the coffee cart down in the lobby who was sipping his hot coffee.
“Did I hear that correctly?” Johnson looked around to pretend to seek out a third party who may have heard those words come out of Hope’s mouth before flashing his smile at her.

“I ask you for your opinion all of the time, don’t act like I don’t, asshole.” Hope rolled her eyes but a smirk played at the corner of her lips.

“You want my input but call me an asshole? So rude!” He placed the coffee down on the little ledge of the cart to grab another packet of sugar to pour into the caffeinated drink.

“Yeah, yeah just listen. I want to do something special for Kelley on Sunday night and I plan on asking her to be mine officially.” Hope wringed her hands together, a little nervous at the thought of messing something up once again.

“Yeah?! That’s awesome, Solo! A huge step for you, hm?” He stirred his coffee, slipping a few bills in the cart attendant’s tip jar before putting the lid back on the cup. He nodded his head towards one of the couches in the lobby so that they could discuss planning.

“I know, but I love her and I know she loves me, so I’m ready.” She nodded to herself in confirmation at her own words.

“It’s true, we’ve noticed it for a while. You two are good for each other, have been since you first introduced her to us. We’re all on board and ecstatic that you found yourself a good woman, champ!” He pushed her shoulder, smiling at the smile that grew across her face as he basically reiterated his, Carli’s and Karev’s approval of the relationship.

Hope had told the three of them the day after the fight so that they would be in the loop and give input on how shitty she was on New Year’s and weeks leading up to it. She knew that they would give her clear examples and explain to her how her behavior could’ve been interpreted differently by Kelley than she intended to.

“Thank you, but now what should I do to make her happy and even more in love with me to say yes when I ask her to be my girlfriend?” Hope chewed on her thumbnail, the telltale sign of her nerves.

“Kelley is pretty easy to please, girl. You could take her to Chuck E. Cheese and I’m sure she’d have a blast!” Johnson barked out laughter at the image of Kelley in the ball pit surrounded by a dozen children and Hope standing off to the side with the parents shaking her head at the immaturity.

“Funny. Come on, give me ideas!” She punched him in the arm.

“Ow! Why do I always get the brunt of abuse out of all of us? I’m the cute, nice one!” He rubbed his shoulder, glowering at her.

“Romantic dinner and something else? She loves the beach, but that’s obviously out of the question because it’s snowing like fuck out there. What about a dinner at some fancy restaurant and then… I have no idea.” Hope rambled off, voicing her ideas out loud.

“Relax, what did I say? Kelley will love anything you do for her. Although her ADD may be hard to keep her focused over a candlelit dinner.” Johnson mused, sipping his coffee thinking of different ideas.

“What am I going to do, have us run around the block and then build a fort in my living room afterwards?” Hope scoffed, not taking Kelley’s disorder into consideration before, forgetting that some plans may seem too slow or boring for her.

“Oh! Perfect plan! Here we go!” Johnson shifted in his seat, crossing his legs and placing the coffee
cup onto the side table next to the couch holding his hand out to count on his fingers.

“You better be taking mental notes because I am not repeating this,” He sassily said, giving a pointed look to Hope.

“Will you just go on? I’m ready.” She gestured for him to move on with his idea, growing impatient.

He rolled his eyes but continued, “So you make a reservation to the fancy vegetarian restaurant she’s been yapping about, Merge, I believe it’s called. She’ll automatically be into it, excited to eat her lettuce and what not, and impressed that you scored a table for you two. Which means you’re going to have to pull the doctor card and make sure you actually get a table. Then, you’re going to call her friend Ali and have her pull strings at the wealthy ass high school she works at to let you use their indoor training facility. Make sure you pack a bag of clothes to change into so you can run around and sweat in. I’m sure she won’t want to play in her dress and heels I’m guessing she’ll wear. This way you can play a little game of soccer together, an activity I know you both are obsessed with, especially when playing against each other. Competitive asses…” He trailed off, shaking his head but continuing on his plan.

“Then you’re going to already have her favorite dessert at your house in which you’ll present to her before you enter the pillow and blanket fort that Carli and I will set up while you two are out at dinner. Yes, Carli and I are spending our Valentine’s Day together because we’re both single, as you know, and have nothing else to do. We’d invite you but you have Kelley and Karev is working because we all know how much he hates the holiday. Much like you did when you were single, but times have changed. Anyways! You’re going to eat the dessert, whatever it may be, and then you’re going to let her into the fort because we both know she’s going to be bouncing up and down and all around until she’s allowed to go in. Then you’re going to have a baby whiteboard in there that will read, “Will you be my squirrelfriend?” because how fucking punny is that?! And then she’ll say yes and you’re going to do whatever it is you want to do in the fort. How’s it sounding?” He finished, hands clapped together in excitement at the whole night he planned out for his best friends.

“Wow. Wow… That’s absolutely perfect, Johnson. Are you sure you haven’t been thinking about this for a while now or something?” She was in awe at how appealing that sounded to her and how much better it’s going to entertain and woo Kelley.

“Nope, I’m just that good! Smart thinking coming to me, the romance guru! Yet I don’t have a man or woman for myself to love up on for Valentine’s Day? I don’t know how that works, but whatever!” He picked his coffee up again taking a longer sip from the cup now that it’s had time to cool.

“Well I better go make some phone calls, huu? Thanks again, doofus!” She was already rushing towards the elevator, throwing a goodbye over her shoulder.

“I should be charged for this type of shit…” He muttered to himself, drinking his coffee again.

Kelley had been working all day, visiting every kid in the full wing, performing two surgeries and prepping for her next one.

She was smiling while sterilizing her hands and arms, scrubbing the germs off of them. Karev was next to her doing the same and noticed her smile when he glanced over at her.

“Thinking about ice cream or poodles or something?” He questioned, glancing between washing his hands and Kelley’s face.
“Ooo, I love ice cream and poodles! But, no sir, I am thinking of Dr. Solo.” She smiled even wider at the mention of her name.

“Oh good, how is it goin’?” He was genuinely happy for his two friends, especially since Hope had a small emotional breakdown not too long ago.

“It’s great! I’m very happy with her, I mean, nothing has really changed since we admitted our feelings for each other but there’s obviously this new energy and connection between us. It’s amazing, she’s amazing.” She turned the water on to rinse the soap off, Karev following suit.

“Are you two official yet?” He wondered, never hearing the two women using the word girlfriend yet.

Kelley let out a small sigh, holding her hands up to let the air dry her hands.

“Not yet. And sometimes I think she’s going to ask me, but then she asks something completely different. I don’t know, I’m not too worried about it, but it’d be nice to have a label.”

Karev shook his hands off to get rid of any excess water dripping down his hands and onto his arms, standing in the same position as Kelley with his hands raised in front of him.

“Give her time, she’ll ask. I’m sure she has something planned for Valentine’s Day or something knowing her.” He backed his way through the door that separated the prep room and OR ready to perform a pectus excavatum repair.

“I hope she does because I kept forgetting to make any… But I did buy her some thoughtful presents!” They were gowned, masked and gloved by the OR nurses ready to kick ass as the pediatric surgery duo once again.

Their patient was a toddler who was already anesthetized a few minutes prior to the surgeons entering the room.

“Ready for this?” Karev asked Kelley who cracked her knuckles and neck.

“Always. 10 blade,” She asked her favorite OR nurse Rachel, hand outstretched to receive the blade.

Kelley made two small incisions on either side of the boy’s chest, making them as minimally invasive as possible.

“Prep the thoracoscope.” Karev said, swabbing up the small amount of blood at the site of the incisions.

Kelley was handed the thoracoscope as Karev continued to prep the right side for the small camera to enter into his chest cavity to continue to procedure. Her neck and left arm were in sudden pain, causing her to drop the long tool.

“You okay, O’Hara?” Karev looked up at the clear discomfort written across Kelley’s face, confused as to why she dropped it.

“Yeah, yeah I’m okay. Ready for entrance?” She ignored the pain on the left side of her body and gripped the thoracoscope in her right hand ready to insert it into the patient’s incision.

A sudden tight pain engulfed the middle of her chest and she felt a cold sweat break out all over her body underneath her scrubs and gown.
“O’Hara?” Karev questioned, taking the instrument from her now shaking hands and paused, not knowing what was happening.

Kelley gripped the side of the operating table with her right hand, gritting her teeth through the pain. She couldn’t control her breathing, having shortness of breath.

“Ka…Karev...” She struggled to look into Karev’s eyes, her body in too much pain.

“Someone page Dr. Murphy 911 from the ER now!” Rachel hurried to the phone and quickly paged Dr. Murphy to come to OR 2 where Kelley and Karev were performing surgery.

“O’Hara, what the hell is going on?!” He questioned, handing the instrument back to another nurse, splitting his attention between tending to the incisions and watching Kelley hunch over the side, trying to catch her breath.

Kelley felt her arm go numb and the pain increase in her chest, her breath becoming more and more difficult to regulate.

She knew exactly what was happening.

She was having a heart attack.

“Call Hope,” was the last two words she breathed before she fell unconscious onto the floor of the OR.

Chapter End Notes

I'll accept death threats in the comment box now. Let me know how you reacted, a lot happened in this chapter!
Chapter 19

Chapter Summary

"Fuck your coffee!"

Chapter Notes

You're all amazing for those comments, threats of violence and all! I hope this chapter is up to O'Solo trash standards. I wrote different parts of it on my phone, on my laptop, in my notebook during class... Oops? Enjoy though! Love to all, xx

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Call Hope.

"Hey Ali, it's Dr. Hope Solo." Hope spoke into her cell phone, fiddling with her notepad on her desk in her office.

"Hey Hope! You don't have to refer to yourself as Dr. Solo, I know who you are." Ali giggled into the phone during her lunch break at work.

"Right, right I'm sorry. So used to the formalities and such..." Hope nervously tapped the pen she had picked up, suddenly feeling shy to ask Ali the favor Johnson suggested.

There was a few moments of awkward silence while Ali waited for Hope to say something seeing as she was the one who called her.

"So... what's up?" Ali asked, prompting Hope on the other end of the call.

She cleared her throat realizing how weird she just made this.

"Um.. I... I was..." She huffed out of nerves, stumbling over her words.

"I'm in love with Kelley and I'm asking her to be my official girlfriend on Valentine's Day." She managed to quickly get out, not knowing how to go about asking for the favor she wanted.

"WHAT?!" Ali screeched, causing Hope to pull her phone away from her ear.

"Yeah, I'm surprised she hasn't told you and the others yet. But then again, it's sort of new to us so..." Hope honestly thought that Kelley would've told the "gals" already, but tried to think of nothing of it.

"OH MY GOD! I'm so happy for you two! I can't believe you two actually got together, I mean, it's about time!" Ali's slight slur of her words at the end paired with her squealing made Hope smile.

"Thank you, it means a lot that you're happy for us. I actually had a favor to ask, if that's okay?"
Hope chewed on her bottom lip.

"Sure, what can I do for you?"

"Well I know you work at like the richest private high school in Massachusetts and also coach the girls’ soccer team there..." Hope hated asking people for favors.

"Mhmmmm, I do." She could hear Ali eat something on the other end, probably catching her on her lunch break.

"I was wondering if I could maybe, possibly, somehow get access to your training facility on Valentine's Day evening? I have this whole plan set up for Kelley and since it's like the damn tundra outside we can't really play football on a field or at a park. And I think she would love to run around and play against me to use up some of that never ending energy she has." Hope chuckled at her last thought thinking about how much energy the younger woman really had.

"That sounds sooo adorbs! Absolutely, no problem!" Ali's tone was chipper and kind.

"Oh wow, awesome! Thank you!" She was relieved and in shock at how easy it was for Ali to let her use their indoor field.

"You're welcome! I have a lot of pull at this school, kind of like you do at the hospital, I'm guessing! I actually have to run now because my students will be in class in like,” she shuffled around to check the time, “5 minutes, so I need to run back to my classroom. But I will text you details later, okay?! It was nice to hear from you Hope, and even better to hear about you and Kelley! Have her call us, we need to hear the details! Okay byeeee!" Ali quickly hung up, not giving Hope a chance to even reply.

Hope slowly pulled the phone away from her ear and laughed at how easy that went. Now she just had to call Merge to make a reservation and then the florist to order a bouquet of flowers for Kelley. She most likely had to use her doctor privilege for the flower order as well seeing as it was only two days before the holiday.

She really was slacking.

She sighed and crossed off "Call Ali" on her to do list.

She opened up Google on her phone to find the number of the restaurant until she heard her pager beep. She closed out of the app and placed her phone down on the desk before removing the chiming black box out of her lab coat pocket.

She looked down at it and saw it was a 911 from Karev.

"911 OR 2 now"

Hope scrunched her eyebrows together in confusion while she stood up to make her way out of the office.

Another couple of beeps came from the device.

"Kelley 911" but the page came from Karev and not Kelley's number.

Hope's heart dropped as she abandoned her office where her phone and pager were dropped on the desk.
This wasn't good.

She dismissed the elevator altogether knowing it would take much longer than she would like it to.

She basically flew down the stairs to get down to the second floor as fast as she could.

You hear about it in books and get a visual of it in movies, but never think you'd experience it in real life. Hope really felt her surroundings and time move in slow motion as she ran down the bright white hallways of the hospital.

Flashes of different colors of scrubs and objects were vibrant contrasting with the sterile white of the walls as she ran, trying to dodge them the best that she could.

She felt heavy as she made her way to the operating wing, her feet thumping against the tile with much more weight than usual.

She turned and saw the sign "OR 2" and already felt something bad in the air.

She sucked a deep breath in to ready herself before pushing the door open and looking through the window from the scrub room.

She saw a little boy on the operating table with Dr. Murphy operating on him and scrub nurses and the anesthesiologist near the table. She scrubbed her hands and arms confused as to why Karev paged her down here and not Murphy. She finished cleaning her hands and arms, holding them up to air dry when she backed into the door and into the operating room.

"Murphy, do you need me?" She asked being gowned and handed a scrub cap from Rachel the scrub nurse.

"Hope!" She heard Karev call for her and took a step further into the room where Karev was hunched over a body that was lying on the floor.

She ripped away from the gown that Rachel was trying to tie behind her back and felt the heaviness set into her again.

No, this couldn't be happening.

It wasn't her. It was someone else. It couldn't be Kelley.

But it was.

It was Kelley knocked unconscious on the floor with Karev doing chest compressions on her.

"Hope," He grunted out as he compressed down onto Kelley's chest.

Hope stood there looking down at Kelley.

Her mouth was slightly open, eyes closed, hair back under her scrub cap.

It almost looked like she was sleeping except for the fact that her nose wasn't scrunched up like it usually was. Like it always was.

But she wasn't sleeping, she was lying there on the floor lifeless. The only source of her blood flowing coming from Karev who was manually pumping her heart and breathing life into her mouth.
It was like her worst nightmare came to life and became a reality.

Kelley was quickly turning pale her body heaving with every push from Karev's palms.

She heard her name being shouted in the distance as she felt her heart speed up and breathing becoming shallower and shallower with every passing second.

She couldn't breathe. Kelley couldn't breathe.

The air was heavy and stifling disabling her to normalize her breathing to pull it together and come back down to current time.

Kelley needed her help and she couldn't calm herself down to give her the help that she desperately needed.

"HOPE!" She kept hearing Karev scream for her and the constant beeping of the machines the little boy was hooked up to mixed with the puffs of air leaving her mouth in a static pattern.

Kelley needed her and she was panicking like she always was.

"Get it together, Solo! You need to get over here and do something!" She heard Karev loud and clear as she took a shaky breath in, keeping her eyes closed as she clenched her jaw making herself focus on her breathing.

You can do this.

Kelley is unresponsive.

Kelley needs you.

It was like she was underwater. She couldn't breathe, everything she heard around her was muffled. But when she looked at Kelley's face and the constant movement the chest compressions caused, it was like she came up for air. Coming back up to the surface to face her fears and breathe life back into Kelley.

"What happened?" She questioned crouching down whipping her stethoscope off and listening to Kelley's heart.

"Pulse is there but weak and thready." She noted, not taking her eyes off of Kelley's face. She needed to see those eyes, to make sure she was okay.

Karev spoke up, "We were about to insert the thoracoscope into our patient and she was in sudden pain. She dropped it and told me to call you before she dropped to the floor." He kept doing compressions, waiting for Johnson to get here with more scrub nurses to transfer her into OR 3.

"How long has she been down?" Hope asked, still not looking away from Kelley's face.

"About 6 minutes, I paged Johnson too so he can operate.

"What do you mean so he can operate…? Move." Hope pushed Karev's arms out of the way to take over.

"Kell, I need you to pull through for me, okay? I know you're hanging on by a thread right now, but I need you to stay alive... For me." Hope felt a tear escape her eye and saw it fall onto Kelley's scrub gown next to where her hands were pushing into her chest repeatedly.
"Solo, let Johnson take care of it. You're too emotional right now." Karev tried, seeing a nurse walk over to them.

"Dr. Johnson is waiting in OR 3, Rick and I are here to assist in the transfer."

"Solo, we have to get her on the gurney." He told her knowing she wasn't going to stop compressions to keep her heart going.

She let a couple more tears escape when Karev grabbed her bicep.

"Hope."

She sniffed a long breath in to rid of the dripping tears and kept compressing and paused to open her mouth to force oxygen into her body. It didn’t feel right. Putting her mouth on Kelley’s without the spark present. Now it was signifying that Kelley was closer and closer to leaving Hope and Hope couldn’t hear the thought of never kissing Kelley again. Never feeling that spark again.

"On my count, 1,2,3." Karev ordered the two other nurses to help him. They transferred Kelley onto the gurney with Hope's hands still placed on her chest.

"Let's move!" He barked out, pushing the bed out of OR 2 and into the adjacent room.

Hope ran next to the bed with one hand on Kelley's chest and the other gripping the side rail. She kept her hand on top of her heart to stay grounded in the moment and not get lost in her head again and allow the panic to take over. She needed to feel Kelley’s weak but still barely beating heart.

"Hang in there, Kell. We're going to fix you… I’m going to fix you." She shakily said through tears, knowing she had to cease them if she wanted to perform surgery in a few seconds.

They rushed her into the OR, Johnson already set up and scrubbed in.

Karev helped the nurses and Johnson with the other transfer to the operating table while Hope hurriedly scrubbed in.

"Hope, maybe it's best if you didn't scr-"

"Fuck you, Johnson! You and I both know I'm what she needs right now.” She tugged her scrub cap on as the nurse tied the gown around her and slid her gloves on.

"What's the course of action, Dr. Solo?" A nurse asked, hooking Kelley up to the hundreds of machines they had. She barely heard Kelley's heartbeat on the monitor and it made her heart break inside. She was sure in that moment she was going to throw up if Johnson didn't snap her out of it.

"You wanna do this?! Then get with the fucking program, Solo, or we're going to lose her."

*Lose her.*

Hope just got Kelley, she wasn't about to lose her now.

"Prep for a MI Direct Bypass," Hope ordered, "10 blade." she stuck her hand out.

She glanced at Kelley's face where the ventilating tube was shoved down her throat as the anesthesia was administered through tubes in her nose.

"Come on, Kell. You have to pull through this…” She was about to make an incision until the heart rate monitor started beeping and signaling like crazy. She dropped the blade in haste.
"She's in v-fib! Get the paddles, charge to 200!" Johnson announced. Hope grabbed the defibrillator out of the nurse’s hands as Johnson started compressions again. He stopped momentarily as a nurse squeezed conducting gel onto Kelley's bare chest where the surgical gown and scrubs were cut open.

"Clear!" Hope made sure all hands were off of her body before she triggered the paddles watching Kelley's back lean up and drop back down onto the table when the joules of electricity shocked her heart to restart.

She held her breath to listen for the heartbeat again but the constant beep never peaked.

"Charge to 300! Clear!" She shocked her body again, her back arching off of the table and back down. The feeling of Kelley’s body underneath the metal paddles would always be engraved into Hope’s memory.

"Come on, Kell... come back to me. I need you to come back." Hope quietly said, holding her breath again to wait for a change in arrhythmia.

The sound of multiple beeps within a few seconds caused Hope and Johnson to sigh in relief.

"200 mgs of acebutolol intravenous."

Hope picked up the 10 blade again and made a 4 inch incision on the left side of Kelley's chest between her 4th and 5th rib.

The blood coming from the incision reminded her that Kelley was alive, but this surgery was needed to save her life.

"Johnson, I need you to retract the walls and reposition the heart so I can get in there." Hope instructed, cutting three more incisions into Kelley's chest cavity on the sides of her left rib so the retractors and metal wands could reposition the heart.

Johnson quickly retracted the chest walls to reveal Kelley's beating heart.

Hope stared at the red, beating muscle mesmerized by the constant movement coming from it. The same muscle that was just shocked back to life.

The same muscle that Kelley uses to love her with.

"Retracted, bypass can be completed now, Solo" She heard Johnson tell her, causing her to reach for the tools needed to remove an artery in Kelley's heart to attach to the coronary artery.

After what seemed like hours and hours, Hope had attached the two vessels within the beating heart. She sutured the two together and gave the okay for Johnson to remove the retractor and stitch her chest back together.

He looked up at her through his glasses as she flung hers off and nodded. The nod held relief, praise and sympathy that he couldn't verbalize at that point.

He must've seen the terror mixed with pain and relief in her features when he said, "Go. She's okay, she's stable. I'll take care of her and do the paperwork, go to the ICU to wait for her." He nodded again, knowing she needed a small push.

She looked down at Kelley's blood on her hands and gown. Then trained her eyes on Kelley's assisted breathing through the tube and her open chest underneath the harsh fluorescent light.
The sounds of the ventilator and heart rate machine were music to Hope's ears, the two machines indicating that Kelley was in face alive.

She nodded back at Johnson before walking over to the scrub room.

The images of the past 3 hours flashed through Hope's mind.

The page she received in her office. The white walls and heavy steps she took. The feeling of dread as she stood in front of the operating room. Seeing Kelley lying there unconscious and not breathing. The feeling that her world had stopped and she couldn't breathe with the air settling on top of her. Kelley's heart stopping before she could even make an incision. Performing the bypass surgery on her still beating heart. The looks Karev gave her when she first saw Kelley. The look Johnson gave her when she last saw her.

She felt her heart rate pick up again and felt dizzy. She ran to the garbage and emptied the contents of her stomach into the plastic bin. She gripped the sides of it and hunched over dry heaving until the second round came up.

Catching her breath, Hope stood there thinking about how she had almost fucked up by not snapping out of it quickly enough to spring into action.

She almost lost Kelley due to her own fear.

She was still hunched over when she saw the bloody gloves on either side of the garbage. She felt like she was going to vomit again and quickly shredded them into the garbage as well as the gown she snatched off of her body.

She slowly stepped back from the waste bin containing the bile she vomited and her blood stained garments.

Hope turned around to scrub the feeling of Kelley's blood off of her skin. She kept scrubbing aggressively not getting rid of the feeling fast enough. She choked back a sob that was threatening to leave her body as she pictured Kelley lying on the ground over and over again. Her body arching off of the operating table as she was shocked back to life. She was so close to losing her, the most important person in her life almost left her.

The hot tears made trails down her face as the soap got sudsiier from the fast friction of her hands rubbing together. Her chest was heaving as she balled her eyes out, scratching her skin to get the feeling off of her.

The pain was welcomed but stopped when she felt a hand on top of hers.

"She's okay. You're okay, Hope... It's going to be alright. It's over." Johnson softly told her, stripped of his gown and gloves.

"I almost lost her and it's my fault!" She choked out, her throat constricting with emotion.

"And I can't get her fucking blood off of my hands! I keep trying but I still feel it, Levi! I still fucking feel it!" Her voice rose with emotion, and Johnson knew how serious and lost in her emotion she was when she used his first name.

"Here," he moved her hands under the running water to remove all of the soap but only to reveal bright red hands and forearms with some scratches covering them.

"Look, Hope. There's no more blood. It's all gone." he pushed her arm up closer to her face to see.
"It's all gone and Kelley is all cleaned up. You won't see any more of her blood, it's okay."

"I almost lost her..." She whispered out as she fell into Johnson's body, clinging to his scrub top.

"Shhh, but you didn't. You're here with me and Kelley will be here when you go to see her in the ICU. You saved her, Hope. You kicked ass during surgery and brought her back to you." He whispered near her ear, rubbing her back to calm her down as he looked out of the window and into the OR to see the nurses rolling Kelley to the ICU.

"Let's go get you changed to make you feel more comfortable and then we'll go up to see her, okay?" He suggested feeling Hope weakly nod against him.

Johnson helped Hope into the locker room to change out her scrubs and back into her street clothes. The cool thing about being a surgeon was that you had the option of wearing scrub or your regular clothes to work as long as you wore your lab coat.

Hope felt like she was having an out of body experience seeing herself work on Kelley’s heart and every movement she made with a scalpel or retractor. She couldn’t get the moments out of her mind, scrutinizing every breath she took that Kelley didn’t.

She took her scrub top off, letting the stale, cool air hit every inch of her upper body. She bunched her sweater up, sliding it over her neck and tugging it down her body and sliding her arms through the sleeves. With the swift movement, a fleeting scent of Kelley’s perfume ran through the air allowing Hope to breathe in the familiar scent.

“Kelley must’ve worn my sweater,” Hope thought to herself. She picked the fabric off of her chest and raised it to her nose to let the smell consume and comfort her. It calmed her down enough to take a deep breath and let her muscles relax. She quickly changed her pants, deciding to continue to wear her Nikes.

She packed her stuff back into the locker and stopped to stand in front of the mirror hanging in the locker door.

"Jesus I look like shit," she murmured to herself, rubbing her palms against her eyes in attempt to massage the stress of the last few hours out of them. She decided to look into her own eyes to try and see what Kelley saw in her.

The only things she found in her eyes were traces of fear, anger and pain, not picking up on anything positive. She took a few more moments to reflect.

When her feet brought her to Karev hovering over Kelley’s close-to-lifeless body and she couldn’t make herself move to help her, it caused her to panic. She was panicking over the fact that she wasn’t moving to save Kelley, and the apparent reason of panicking being that Kelley needed to be saved. And it was up to Hope.

Hope slammed her locker shut, slipping her lab coat and stethoscope on to go find Johnson who was just a few rows over giving her space and privacy.

“Are you ready to go see the little fighter?” He asked, sympathetically looking at his best friend.

“I’m ready.”

Johnson walked side by side with Hope to the elevator, stood next to her on the ride down and
decided to fix his pace to walk slowly behind her as they approached Kelley’s room.

She was glad the nurses knew better to place her in her own room and not in the common wing with other patients around. She wanted the best for Kelley and was going to make sure she was head of her treatment and had round the clock care from the ICU nurses.

She looked at the slot where Kelley’s chart was located in, raising a shaky hand to grab it to read notes on the surgery and post-op vitals.

“How’s it looking?” Johnson softly asked, not wanting to push Hope.

“Vitals are stable, surgery seems to be successful, and nurse’s notes are all good… She’s coming around.” She kept her eyes trained on Johnson’s and a nurse’s handwriting scratched across the chart while responding to Johnson.

“Another big save by Dr. Solo, hm?” Johnson slightly nudged her shoulder trying to lighten her mood.

“Don’t. She has yet to wake up, don’t say I saved her yet.” Her tone was cold, but it was laced with pain.

“Did they contact her,” She cleared her throat, “Her family?” She asked, turning around to look Johnson in the eye.

“The nurses did notify her emergency contact which is her mother. I’ll go find the nurse and ask about their status.” He made sure Hope didn’t try and stop him before slowly backing away, then hurrying off to find the charge nurse of the wing.

Hope clutched the folder containing Kelley’s information in it, willing herself to look through the small window built into the door.

She took a deep reassuring breath with her eyes shut and slowly opened them as she calmly exhaled. Through the window she saw Kelley lying in the big hospital bed with wires attached to her chest, an IV in her arm and oxygen tubes inserted in her nostrils.

She looked so pale from this distance, her usual radiance and glow absent from her body.

Hope felt the emotions course through her veins again threatening to spill out as she grabbed the door handle with one hand and the other still gripping the folder. She couldn’t bring herself to rid of the distance between her and Kelley, she wasn’t ready after all.

“Hope.” Johnson spoke, trying to gain her attention.

She turned around and saw that he looked a little uneasy. Great, just what she needed.

“What is it? What’s wrong?” She quickly asked, wanting to hear the news regardless if it was good or bad. The longer it was put off, the more she grew nervous by the second.

“Kelley’s family was contacted and uh,” Johnson trailed off not knowing how to break the news.

“What?”

“They were in Boston to surprise her and visit her sometime this weekend I guess and they’re on their way here as we speak…” He scratched at the scruff on his face, not knowing how Hope was going to react.
Hope felt her nerves stand on end at the mention of Kelley’s parents coming here to see their daughter post-heart attack. Post-operation that she had performed.

“What the fuck?! How am I supposed to act around them?” She whispered yelled through her gritted teeth.

Johnson sighed, not knowing how to act in this situation, one he has never found himself in before. Then again how many patients of his or Hope’s have they operated on that was their significant other, never meeting their parents prior to surgery, only to meet them after a cardiac episode?

“Has she mentioned that she told them yet?”

“She didn’t say anything and I can’t exactly ask her now!” She exclaimed, anxiety settling in again.

“Okay, okay… So I say you just act like her doctor. Think about it, they’re going to view you as their daughter’s hero for saving her life,” Hope stopped him with a hard glare at his choice of words.

“I need to see her before they get here… But I can’t bring myself to go in there and face her.” She mumbled, glancing back through the small window.

“Hope, she’s going to be knocked out still, you know that. Just go in there, hold her hand, kiss her cheek, talk to her until her parents get here… I’ll make sure that they’re directed to me first so that I can intercept them and give you a few minutes, okay?”

Hope looked at Johnson’s soft eyes before looking at Kelley lying in the hospital bed. It was now or never.

“Okay. Thank you, Johnson.” Hope couldn’t smile but she knew her voice was sincere enough for him to understand.

“Of course. Tell the leprechaun I said hi and that she better wake up soon.” He chuckled, nodding one last time before heading down the hall to make sure the nurses knew to direct O’Hara’s parents to him.

Hope pushed the door open to finally see Kelley face to face. She sucked in a huge breath to calm her quickly beating heart and made sure the door latched behind her.

Her legs felt like lead as she walked over to Kelley’s bedside. She took a look at all of the damn machines she was hooked up to, checking her heartrate and other vitals. She marked them down under the 1o’clock time slot and initialed them. She made sure the morphine was being administered correctly and checked her IV bag. Everything was looking positive but that didn’t quell any of Hope’s worries.

She marked the last of her notes on the chart before placing it on the foot of the bed and taking her stethoscope off to listen to her heart. She wanted to listen to make sure it was beating regularly and because she needed to hear the muscle pumping blood herself.

She pulled down the gown slightly as she placed the diaphragm over her heart. She didn’t have it in her to check the bandages placed over her left breast. When she heard the lub dub of Kelley’s heart pumping out blood, she could’ve sworn that she would drop to her knees at the constant sound. But she had limited time with her before her parents came to check on her and she would have to go into doctor mode.

“Hey, Kell.” Hope started, lightly tugging the gown over her incision site to make it a little easier to speak to her.
She let out a deep sigh. “You scared the absolute shit out of me, you know that right?”

She sat on the edge of the bed, careful not to touch her yet.

She took in the sight of Kelley’s dormant body just lying in the bed. She kept her gaze on the rise and fall of her chest thankful that the oxygen was returning to her lungs and blood. Her arms lay limp at her side, an IV inserted into the crook of her elbow making sure she wasn’t feeling any pain. The wires attached to her chest and the finger clamp taking her heart rate was not easy to process even as a doctor.

“I wish you’d open up those beautiful eyes of yours so I could really see you, Squirrel… I miss hearing your constant chatter and random thoughts. I know I always roll my eyes at your weird questions or comments, but I’d really, really like to hear your voice now.”

She brought her trembling hand up to Kelley’s forehead to brush her wild hair back. The light brown locks were strewn all over the place on top of the stiff pillow underneath her head.

“I love you, Kell. Please never fucking do that again, okay? I don’t know if I could handle it again…” She stroked her cheek with the back of her hand and leaned forward to place a lasting kiss there before returning her hand to stroke the soft, freckled skin.

“Look, you’re making me an emotional mess,” She sniffled and let out a slight chuckle thinking about how Kelley would wipe her tears away and make a dumb comment that would cheer her right up.

“Kell, your parents are on their way here and I don’t know if y-“ She was interrupted by a knock on the door, knowing it was Johnson and Kelley’s parents.

She ran her thumb down Kelley’s cheek one last time before springing to her feet, wiping her eyes incase the trace of tears were there and straightening her lab coat out. She grabbed the chart before throwing a “come in” over her shoulder, jotting something down on Kelley’s chart.

Out of the corner of her eye she saw a man and woman fly through the door, Johnson taking his time to enter the room behind them.

“Oh my god, Kelley!” Her mom was at her bedside in 2 seconds flat, gripping her hand and leaning over to run her hand down just like Hope was moments prior.

The man was a bit hesitant to grab her other hand or touch her unlike his wife. He stood at her bedside and looked down at his youngest daughter.

Johnson walked up to Hope and placed a hand on her shoulder as to snap her out of it and address them.

She set her jaw and closed the chart, already memorizing everything about Kelley’s case.

“Mr. and Mrs. O’Hara,” She said loud enough for them to turn their attention to her but not too loud as to startle them.

“Are you Dr. Solo? Are you the one who saved my baby?!” Mrs. O’Hara questioned, her eyes wide and full of unshed tears.

“I am, Dr. Hope Solo, I’m the attending of cardiovascular surgery at the hospital. I would like to explain to you what happened to Kelley and the course of treatment I chose to perform. Is that okay?” She didn’t want to force them to listen to what she had to say just yet if they wanted to just
have a moment alone with their daughter.

“Ye-yes. I would like to know.” Mr. O’Hara spoke up, still not making any contact with his daughter.

“Dr. O’Hara was about to perform surgery on her own patient when our colleague, Dr. Karev who was assisting with the surgery, saw her pass out unconscious. Kel- Dr. O’Hara had a myocardial infarction or commonly known as a heart attack.” Hope let them soak in the information so far, noticing Mr. O’Hara clench his jaw just like Hope did when she was upset. Mrs. O’Hara let a tear escape, not even bothering to wipe it away.

“You can call her Kelley. Please call her Kelley, actually. And I’m Karen, this is Dan.” Karen told Hope, most likely hating the formalities.

“Of course, Karen. I was then paged down to the operating room that Kelley and Dr. Karev were operating in where Dr. Karev was performing CPR. From there, my fellow cardio surgeon Dr. Johnson here,” Hope motioned to him next to her with her hand, “assisted me in a procedure called a Minimally Invasive Direct Coronary Bypass Surgery. I made a small incision on her chest, three smaller incisions on the left side of her ribs and I performed on her beating heart, we did not put her on a bypass machine. I attached two arteries together, rerouting the blood flow from the blocked artery which allowed her heart to beat on its own again. Dr. Johnson finished by suturing her incisions and she is now breathing on her own, and her heart is now beating on its own.” She heard both Karen and Dan sigh in relief at the news, happy that their daughter was okay.

“She is obviously unconscious now but will most likely wake up within the next hour. She isn’t in any pain due to the morphine drip we have flowing through her IV. Do you have any further questions for me?” Hope asked, mentally patting herself on the back for getting through that spiel without showing her emotions.

“She’s going to be okay?” Dan spoke up, looking extremely timid and scared.

“Kelley will be just fine.” She said to reassure them, but mostly herself. She even managed a tight smile.

Karen wrapped her up in a constricting hug, making it a bit hard for Hope to breathe, but she knew how emotional she must be after getting a call saying her daughter was a patient in the hospital and not the doctor she was every other day.

“Thank you, Dr. Solo, thank you so much for saving our little girl!” Karen squeezed her again, pulling away to manage a watery, appreciative smile.

“You can call me Hope if you’d like. It seems that you’re not a huge fan of formalities.” Hope nervously chuckled, rubbing the back of her neck with the hand that wasn’t gripping Kelley’s file.

“You’re absolutely right, Hope.” She emphasized her name, smiling again before making her way back to Kelley’s side. Dan had finally grabbed her other hand, beginning to shake with tears.

“I will leave you two alone with her to have some privacy. I charted her last check up about 20 minutes ago so a nurse will be by in 40 minutes to check her vitals and status again. I ordered an hourly check up on Kelley to make sure she receives the best care. If she wakes up before a nurse comes around, just hit the page button and the nurse will be right in who will then contact me to come down and check on her. Okay?” Hope finished, already turning to leave with Johnson near the door.
“Thank you again, Hope. Thank you for keeping our daughter alive.” Dan managed through his crying, furiously wiping at his tears.

“Of course.” Hope smiled softly and with one last nod, turned to leave the room.

Once the door was shut, Hope broke down into tears.

“That was so fucking hard, Johnson.” She covered her face with her hand.

“Hey, you presented the case amazingly in there, okay? They are so grateful for you, Hope. You kept your cool and even got a little softer than you usually do with patients’ families.” He laughed.

“Because it’s my soon to be girlfriend’s parents!”

“Okay, okay! Let’s go to your office or something before you accidentally tell them you two are dating before Kelley gets the chance to.” He placed his hands on her shoulders and led them to the coffee cart to grab a decaffeinated coffee, because Lord knows Hope didn’t need the extra kick in her bloodstream.

They sat on the same couch that they did earlier that day when Johnson described the date Hope was going to take Kelley on.

Her leg bounced up and down nervously as she bit on her thumbnail, anxious to hear any news on Kelley.

“Oh shit! My pager and phone are in my office!” Hope realized starting to work herself up.

“Hey, hey! It’s okay, I told Linda to page me too. Here, hold it so you can be the first to know.” He handed over his pager into Hope’s clammy hands.

“Think about how happy she’ll be to see you once she wakes up.” He smiled, playfully pushing Hope’s shoulder.

“She’s going to be doped up on morphine and the first people she’ll see are her parents.”

“I mean once you go up there and check on her, she’s going to be so thrilled to see you. You’re the person she told Karev to call, Solo.” Johnson reminded her, taking a sip of his coffee.

The pager beeped twice signaling a message from someone. Hope turned it over in her hands and read, “O’Hara awake”

“Let’s go!” She suddenly jumped up, knocking the coffee out of Johnson’s hands.

“You’re so lucky that was away from my body and not towards me! This tie is expensive!” He exclaimed, sad at the absence of his coffee.

“Fuck your coffee! Kelley’s awake!” She practically ran to the elevator, jabbing the up button as many times as she could within the span of 20 seconds.

She didn’t care if she seemed impatient or frenzied.

Kelley was awake.
She's awake! How are we feelin', homies?
Chapter 20

Chapter Summary

Hopey likes cherry popsicles.

Chapter Notes

20 chapters already? Damn, it sneaks up on you! General apology for taking 6 days to get this update out. Haven't been feeling emotionally well recently, my loves. But channeled some of that negative energy into writing power and produced this. Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Thanks, Maria. I’ll take it from here.” Hope saw Maria, the charge nurse of the ICU, about to slip Kelley’s chart back into the plastic slot holder attached to the door and decided to take it to check on Kelley’s vitals she marked down before entering the room and seeing how she was doing for herself, prolonging the process of facing Kelley.

“You’re welcome, Dr. Solo. Dr. O’Hara is doing very well, but her parents are very touchy and love hugging, so beware…” Maria chuckled at the last part, knowing very well that Hope didn’t like physical contact with patients’ families, or really anyone for that matter.

“Thank for the heads up. And thank you for making sure Kelley is being treated with the very best care. I know you’re the best at your job, that’s why I wanted to ensure that you’d be on her case and closely supervise the other nurses… It really means a lot.” Hope smiled warmly at Maria, noticing the initial shock from her nice comments transform into appreciativeness and a touch of confidence.

“Of course, Dr. Solo. Thank you.” She smiled and made her way down the hall. Hope realized how much of an impact her words and actions really had on the nurses, making it a mental note to tell Kelley she was right without exactly coming right out and saying so.

She glanced between the file and towards the window to see how Kelley was, wanting to familiarize herself with her current stats but itching to see that the woman she loves was actually alive and responding.

“Will you go in there already? We didn’t waste my coffee for nothin’, Solo!” Johnson commented from behind her, loving the interaction between her and Maria but starting to grow impatient at his friend’s hesitance.

“What?!! I want to make sure her stats are good and everything!”

Johnson snatched the chart from her hands, closed the folder and slotted it in the holder on the door. He gave Hope a look as to say, “Try me” and pointed at the door.

“What if I fucked something up during surgery and I broke her?” She chewed the inside of her cheek, furrowing her brow, slightly bouncing on her feet.
“Shut up and get in there.” He opened the door and gave her a slight nudge so she would be off balance and have no choice but to move one foot over the threshold.

She snapped her neck around and glared at him as he blew her a kiss and turned on his heels to leave her alone with Kelley and her parents.

“I’m gonna kill him… But here goes nothing.” She thought to herself, straightening her shoulders and striding confidently into the room.

“Hopey?!” Kelley caught a glimpse of her favorite human being calling out to her with a childish whine, pathetically holding her arms up to reach out to her.

Hope stiffened at the nickname, her eyes bulging out of her head, but as soon as she felt the O’Hara’s eyes on her she quickly recovered, forming a tight line with her lips to muster up a smile.

Even though she wasn’t a fan of the nickname Hopey at all, Hope was so relieved to hear the nickname leave Kelley’s lips.

“Kelley, how are you feeling?” Hope asked, avoiding eye contact with her parents for the time being, situating her stethoscope to listen to Kelley’s heart.

“You kinda have big ear lobes, Hopey…” Kelley sounded like she was deep in thought, her tone almost conspicuous.

Hope bit back a laugh, especially when Karen reprimanded her doped up daughter with a “Kelley Maureen, that’s not how you talk to a doctor!”

“She’s very out of it right now, Mrs. O’Hara, it’s okay.” Hope smiled, checking out all of her stats for herself before looking down at a half pouting, half smiling Kelley who was upset she was in trouble but still smiling because she was high.

“Karen, honey, you can call me Karen, remember?” She asked, holding Kelley’s hand, allowing her daughter to play with the wedding band around her finger.

“Yes, of course, I apologize. I’m just going to ask Kelley a few questions, if that’s okay” Hope felt the need to ask for permission with Kelley’s parents around. Since this was technically their first encounter/meeting with each other, she wanted to make a good impression.

“Whatever you need to do to help our little girl out” Karen smiled appreciatively up at Hope, pulling her hand away from Kelley who was trying to remove her ring.

“Hey, Kelley” Hope tried getting her attention, knowing it was going to be incredibly hard with morphine running through her blood and her preexisting attention issues.

“Kelley, can you focus on me for a second?” Hope attempted again, shifting her position from Kelley’s bedside to standing in front of it to try and meet Kelley’s gaze.

Much to no avail, Kelley was completely transfixed now on her father’s watch not wanting to look away from the shiny silver.

“Kell, the puppies are here!” Hope excitedly said, hoping it would jog Kelley’s love for them enough to grab her attention.

“MY BABIES!” She tried sitting up too quickly, straining her chest as she did.
“Ooookay, hold on, I don’t need you ripping out your stitches just yet! Lie back down,” Hope instructed, jumping when Kelley attempted to shoot right up in the hospital bed. Hope herself almost had a heart attack at Kelley’s sudden movement.

“Hopey, my heart hurtts!” Kelley cried out, too lethargic to bring her arm up to even try and touch her bandaged chest to soothe it even though the majority of the pain was internal.

“I know, let me ask you some questions before I administer more pain meds, okay? Can you answer some stuff for me before I make you feel better?” Hope asked, thankful Kelley was calm enough to not jump out of the bed and run down the hall in search of Sasha and Onyx, the two already forgotten about on Kelley’s wandering mind.

“Only if you hold my hand and tell me I’m better at soc-socc…” Kelley had trouble remembering the last part of the word, her head cocked lazily to the side in confusion.

“Soccer?” Hope thought Kelley was so cute at the moment, laughing internally at what her parents were probably thinking.

“Yeah! Soc-ahhh! Like I’m Mia Hamm, bitch!” Kelley exclaimed as loudly and enthusiastically as she could while growing more and more lethargic from the morphine.

Hope couldn’t hold back the laugh that came out, especially at Karen’s eyes widening and Dan’s head shaking at his daughter.

“You’re much better than I am at soccer, Kelley. Here,” She grabbed Kelley’s hand so she could get the questionnaire done.

“Can you tell me your full name?”

“Kelley Maureen O’Hara, I was born on August 4th, I am a Leo and a lesbian, thank you very much!”

“I love it when you hold my hand, Hopey! Can we hold hands forever?” Kelley limply attempted to shake Hope’s hand, smiling at her with hooded eyes but her same beautiful smile graced her face.

She tried ignoring the “Jesus H Christ” mumbled under Karen O’Hara’s breath but couldn’t help but let a puff of air out of her nostrils as she restrained her laughter.

“Yes we can. What year is it?” Hope asked, hoping she would accurately respond to ensure that the lack of oxygen she had for several minutes didn’t cause any serious brain damage.

“2016, duhhh! Remember New Year’s? When you ki-“

“OKAY, GOOD! Do you know who our current president is?” Hope cut Kelley off so quickly not wanting to reveal their relationship to her mom and dad like that.

“Obizzle! My main man Barack O’Llama! Hopefully Bernie next, am I right folks, am I right?” Kelley asked the other 3 in her hospital room trying to waggle her eyebrows.

“Do you know where you are?” Hope felt Kelley rub the top of her hand with her thumb and looked to see Kelley looking around the room before she answered.

“The hospital, where I usually am! Fixing those tiny little humans and eating my peanut butter and jelly sandwiches with youuu during lunch time!”

Hope wanted to face palm at Kelley’s answers, knowing her memory and cognition was intact now,
but nervous to hear her answers that may out them to her parents.

“Seems like your brain didn’t suffer any damage while you were unconscious, which is very good. I’m going to speak with your parents outside after I give you another dose of morphine, okay? After trying to sit up, you’re going to be in a lot of pain soon. Do you have any questions for me, Kelley?” Hope asked, finger hovering over the pain medication administering button connected to the IV drip.

“Do you love me, Hopey?” Kelley asked, looking up at her with hopeful, vulnerable eyes that made Hope’s heart melt and pound at the same time.

She glanced at Karen and Dan who looked embarrassed at their daughter, Karen about to say something before Hope beat her to it and looked at Kelley and said, “Yes, I do.” She hit the button to release the next amount of morphine, knowing it was going to cause her to fall asleep quickly.

“I’ll be right back” Hope said, watching Kelley’s eyelids droop and her head tilt further into the pillow.

“Mmmkay, love you, night night” And she nodded off, the medication kicking in.

“Karen, Dan” Hope addressed them, gesturing to follow her outside in the hall to discuss Kelley. She left the door slightly ajar so that they could look into the room to watch Kelley while they talked.

“I’m so sorry about her, I know it’s the drugs but still…” Dan spoke up, shifting uncomfortably.

“It’s honestly okay, most of my patients are out of it while post-op due to the meds. I’m used to it by now.”

“So what happens now?” Karen asked, a little nervously at the next step.

“Well, Kelley will wake up sometime tonight once the morphine wears off and we’ll administer a different pain medication that isn’t as strong but will still keep the pain at bay. Morphine is usually only administered directly after the surgery because of all of the stress and wear & tear on her body. She will be aware and fully conscious, not like she was in there. So I could come back to speak with her, doctor to doctor, so she completely understands what I’m saying. Or I could let you two tell her what happened, whichever you prefer.”

Karen and Dan made eye contact, having a silent conversation with each other on deciding which route they wanted to take.

Hope took the moment to study Kelley’s parents physical features realizing how much the younger woman looked like a mix of her parents.

She was going to look extremely similar to her mother in 20 years or so, and Hope wasn’t one to complain. Karen was gorgeous and passed her genes down to Kelley, the only feature coming from her father were her eyes. Hope started to think about what her siblings looked like…

“Hope?”

“I’m sorry, I was lost in my head for a minute. Was there a question you had?”

“We agreed to let you talk to Kelley one-on-one when she wakes up. We’d like to be there for when she initially wakes up, but after she sees us would it be okay if you swooped in to explain to her what happened?” Dan asked, his hand resting at the small of his wife’ back as they stood waiting for Hope to respond.
“That sounds good to me. She’ll be out for another 4 or 5 hours if you want to go grab a cup of coffee or something to eat in our cafeteria downstairs. Or I could have something delivered for you here if you aren’t in the mood for cafeteria food.” Hope made a little grimace mixed with a slight smile to show that she was joking around, “It isn’t that bad, but I’m sure it isn’t exactly comforting.”

“That’s so sweet of you, Hope. We’ll be okay, but thank you so much for the offer.” Karen hugged Hope. She really was a hugger, and a tight one at that… Must be where Kelley gets it from.

“Of course. Just like before, page the nurse when she’s awake and I’ll be paged again to come down and let her know what happened. If you need anything yourselves or have any questions for me personally, have Maria page me and I’ll be down between check-ups and a couple of procedures I have, okay?”

They both nodded. “Thank you again, Dr. Solo.” Dan said, a man who seemed to not show his emotions very often but appeared to extremely grateful in that moment.

Hope slightly bowed her head and turned to leave them alone with Kelley for the next few hours. She needed to distract herself and she needed to do it quickly.

“Will you stop pacing? You’re distracting me!” Carli scolded from behind her surgical mask.

Hope paused, throwing her hands up in defense, clad in another surgical gown and mask of her own.

“I don’t know what to do with myself, Car! I am going to lose my shit if I let myself be alone with my thoughts… My girlfriend, or Kelley, the love of my life, I don’t know, had a heart attack and I had to repair her fucking heart! I freaked out almost leading me to not getting to her in time, making me freak out even more! And now I’m freaking out that she’s going to resent me or hate me that I took so long to make the cut! And now her parents are here and her mom hugs me and has the same damn smile, and her dad is like me in the emotions department! I am on the verge of an emotional breakdown! Please let me fuckin pace the room!” Hope was out of breath, not inhaling once while she went off.

Carli just blinked at her, returning to perform brain surgery. No big deal.

“You’re lucky this isn’t some huge surgery, Solo or I would’ve killed this guy by now.” Carli spoke up, injecting dye into the tissue to reveal the blood vessels she needed to access.

“Well I almost killed Kelley earlier, so!” Hope paced the length of the OR, the nurses trying not to divert their attention from the patient and follow Hope back and forth with their eyes.

“Okay stop pacing or your ass is going to the operating theater. My assistants can’t be distracted by your constant movement. Now, come here and talk to me.” Carli directed, already snipping and cutting something in the brain.

Hope huffed out a sigh and came to stand behind Carli.

“Solo.”

“Yeah?”

“Mind taking a couple of steps back?”

“Oh. Sorry.”
Hope took a couple of steps back, not realizing she was hovering. She was actually interested in neuro, but it didn’t connect with her like cardio did. She enjoyed her neuro rotation during her residency, but never felt the spark like Carli instantly did.

“Have you considered going back to Dr. Merritt?” Carli questioned, continuing her procedure.

She heard groan like an angsty teen behind her and smiled behind her mask, not wanting to roll her eyes to fuck up her surgery.

“Well?” Carli urged.

“I don’t wannaaa!” Hope whined, actually sounding like a 4 year-old.

“What are you, 6 years-old? Stop whining and act like a big girl. Now, have you considered going back to therapy?”

Hope folded her arms in petulance, pouting and glaring as she did not happy with Carli’s question.

“I can feel your glare like a laser through the back of my scrub cap. Why don’t you want to go see her?”

“I don’t like therapy. I worked out my issues with her last year, now I have my meds and I’m fine.”

“I think with a traumatic experience like today mixed with newly evolved romantic feelings for a woman whom you’ve only known for only 5 months and are headed into a committed relationship with constitutes me suggesting therapy, Solo.”

Hope rolled her eyes at how Carli was always right. Well, at least when it came to shit like this, not so much pop culture trivia when the four doctors used to play Trivial Pursuit, then she was wrong 99% of the time.

“Think about it. I think it’ll benefit you, seriously. A lot of change has occurred since your last session and a couple of major anxiety episodes too. Prevention from spiraling out of control and having a breakdown like you said you felt like you were about to have is important and attainable when you learn coping skills from Dr. Merritt.” Carli calmly and reasonably explained her rationale.

“Why the fuck aren’t you a shrink?” Hope mused, knowing her friend was right that it was time for her to pay a visit to the psychiatrist.

Carli snorted, slightly shaking her head as to not lose sight of the artery she was in the process of repairing. “Suction.” She told a nurse, using tiny clamps to hold the vessel in front of her.

“How long have I been here?” Hope asked, not realizing what time it was.

“You came barging in around 2:30 and it’s now…” Carli trailed off leaving a nurse or Hope to state the time so they could do the math.

“4. How have I been in here for an hour and a half already?! Time flies when you’re freaking out, huh?”

Carli made a sound in agreement, “irrigate the area” she instructed, moving onto another part of her procedure.

“Maybe I have patients to check up on or paperwork to do. I need a change of scenery, I think… Yeah, that sounds good! Catch ya later, Car!” Hope made her way out, shedding her gown in the process.
Carli laughed, and suppressed the urge again to roll her eyes at her complicated best friend, muttering to herself, “Fucking, Solo…”

“How’s she doin’?” Karev asked, writing a comment down on a chart while standing at the counter of the nurses’ station.

Hope was spinning in one of their rolling chairs, grabbing the desk every time she spun around to face it to launch herself even harder to make it go faster.

“Listen, I’m gonna barf if you keep that up. If you’re a good girl I’ll ask Grace to bring you a popsicle, any flavor you want.” He teased, actually getting dizzy from her spinning around in the chair like that.

Hope relented, sitting crisscrossed on the chair using her hand to stop the motion she created.

“Cherry, please.” She grinned up at her friend who she was looking down at earlier when he was on the floor with Kelley.

Her stomach twisted when she thought of that moment and her lack of reaction.

“Grace, will you please get Dr. 2nd Grader here a cherry popsicle?” He shook his head at his friend, not even surprised she disregarded his sarcastic offer of the frozen treat in exchange of her stopping the spinning.

Grace smiled handing Hope the popsicle. “Thank you” She replied, peeling the wrapper off of it and popping it in her mouth.

“Now that you have your special treat, are you going to tell me how our squirrel is?” He asked, not looking up at his unusually childlike friend.

“Vitals are strong, memory intact, handling morphine well. Incision site was said to be clear of any infection so far per the nurse’s comment and she called me Hopey like 5 times in front of her parents, so she’s good so far.”

Karev let out a snorted laugh, “She called you Hopey? Oh shit, I forgot about her parents. How are they?”

“Typical loving parents, basically the opposite of ours. Karen is a hugger, scolded Kelley for saying I have big ear lobes. Dan is pretty quiet, doesn’t really show emotion except for when I saw him begin to cry in relief when I told them Kelley was fine. They’re with her right now, waiting for her to wake up.”

“And how are you?” He placed his pen down, leaning forward against the counter to speak with Hope about her emotional well-being.

She licked her popsicle a couple of times contemplating on how to respond to Karev, the one who witnessed Kelley actually falling unconscious and had to make the decision to have Dr. Murphy finish his procedure while he started CPR on one of his good friends.

”Karev. How are you?” She pointed her popsicle in his direction, cocking her head to the side.

He looked at her with worry written all over his face, stress ingrained in the wrinkles next to his eyes.
“I was fucking terrified when she collapsed. I was even more terrified when she was unresponsive and I had to start CPR and wait for you to come. And then I was terrified you were going to kick my ass when I yelled at you to do something because I know not to scream at you, especially in an ER, but I—”

“Stop. I was panicking and freaking out, Karev. The woman I love had a heart attack like 8 hours ago and she’s alive because you pulled my head out of my ass. I was trapped in my emotions and my horrible thoughts and you yelling at me to get a move on did the trick. Please don’t feel bad for that at all. I’ll always be grateful for you that you were there with her when it happened and abided by her wishes to have a nurse page me from your pager. If it was Johnson who did the surgery and I was notified during the procedure, I would’ve lost my shit. But I had the opportunity to save Kelley because of you. So when I get credit for saving her, you are the majority of that, okay?” She felt her popsicle drip on her hand, breaking eye contact with Karev to lick the sugar off and continue to eat it.

“Okay. I was so scared… I thought we were going to lose her, you know? It was almost as scary as when you and Carli were using those face mask things that one night when Johnson and I walked in with the pizza and I jumped into his arms when I saw you two.” He laughed, using humor to cope with his emotions.

Hope rolled her eyes, laughing along at the memory that was one of her favorite reactions she’s ever seen come from anyone. She knew Karev was using humor to deal with it and left it alone knowing he was doing much better than Hope was.

“Carli suggested I go back to Dr. Merritt again. What do you think?” She posed the question, accidentally breaking the top of the popsicle off into her mouth.

“I think she wants to fuck her, but I think we all know that already.” Karev smirked, giving Hope a questionable look at her mouth partially open moving around to melt and mash the popsicle inside of her mouth.

She momentarily closed her mouth in a smile but that was a bad idea because of how cold it really was. She had no choice but to chew it, grimacing at the temperature against her teeth, but finally swallowing.

“Cold?”

“Just like my heart!” She raised her eyebrow, smiling at him while eating the rest of it off of the stick.

“You don’t give yourself enough credit, Solo. What’s the next step with Kelley?”

She swallowed the last of the popsicle, turning the stick over to read the joke that was printed on it.

“When she wakes up, she’ll be lucid and fully alert meaning I have to tell her what happened. And the first people she’ll see next to her are her parents.”

“And not you.”

“And not me. I have to be the bad guy, to deliver the news that she’ll be bedridden and then out of work.” Hope read the joke and chuckled at how lame it was, but sticking it in her pocket to share with Kelley later because she always appreciated animal puns.

“You want to be the first one she sees.”

“So fucking badly. I want to hug her and kiss her and look into her eyes and hear her damn voice
and then kill her for almost dying on me”

“Don’t you think that would defeat the purpose? You know what, never mind.” He shook his head, “Why don’t you go up there and wait with her parents until she wakes up so you’re at least there for when it happens even if you’re third?”

“What am I supposed to tell her parents? Karen, Dan, I know you want to see your daughter, ya know, your middle child who you love more than this world, but I called dibs? They don’t know there’s something between us yet, plus I’m trying to make the best first unofficial impression ever.”

“That’s when you know it’s real, huh? She’s going to be so happy to see you, dude. That chick looks at you like you hung the moon for her.” He scribbled something down on a different chart from his pile, glancing up at Hope with a knowing look before going back to writing.

Hope let his words soak in and felt her heart constrict in response to hearing a third party’s comment on how Kelley looked at Hope, knowing that he wouldn’t lie about it either.

Loving Kelley seemed to be a rollercoaster of emotions so far and Hope was riding in the very front seat, taking in every second of it. And now she knows to never take any moments with Kelley for granted. Every syllable, every breath, every bat of an eyelash that came from Kelley would be appreciated and cherished.

Her pager beeped, making her heart skip a beat. The 3 times it had pages earlier signified that there was something happening with Kelley, good or bad. Karev ceased the movement of his pen, hovering it over the page as he quirked an eyebrow up at the sound.

Hope swallowed and looked up.

“She’s awake.”

“Mom? Dad?” Kelley croaked out, her voice hoarse from sleep and the breathing tube from earlier, feeling its effects now that she was fully conscious.

“Oh my baby girl” Karen surged forward, grabbing her hand to pepper kisses on it as she used her other to brush back the hair from her forehead. Dan patted her leg feeling a little misty eyed.

There was a different feeling in the air this time around when Kelley woke up. Dan leaned over and pressed the call button for the nurse to come in.

“What happened? Why am I admitted?” She said, swallowing barely any saliva, her mouth like the Sahara.

Karen and Dan nervously looked at each other, hoping that Hope would be there very soon to talk to Kelley.

“Guys? I know that look, what happened?” She looked between them, trying to sit up but winced in pain when her upper body leaned forward.

“No no, lay back down, Monkey. I don’t want you to hurt yourself. Just wait until the doctor comes, sweetheart.” Her mom pressed her shoulder down lightly to keep her lying down and not strain herself.

“Who’s my doctor?” She inquired, curious as to who it was so she could match the name with
specialty to figure out why the hell she was in a hospital bed.

“Dr. Solo, good, she’s awake” Dan spoke up, relieved to see the cardio surgeon.

“H-Hope?” Kelley asked, looking up into Hope’s eyes that were looking down at her with love and emotion. She watched her visibly swallow and knew that she was trying to keep herself from crying. What the hell happened?

“Hi, Kelley” She cleared her throat, not allowing her emotions to come out now that her parents were waiting for her to explain to their daughter about her medical situation.

“What happened? Did I pass out earlier or something? Where’s Karev and our patient?” Kelley fired questions off at Hope, confused as to what happened.

She looked and saw the apprehension and fear in Hope’s body language but love and relief in her eyes. She knew something happened and didn’t want Hope to hold back or get emotional in front of her parents because she knew Hope would feel incredibly embarrassed if she ended up crying. Plus, her parents didn’t know about them yet and she didn’t want to fuck up telling them when they weren’t even technically official yet.

”Mom, Dad, will you give us some privacy?” Kelley asked, trying to convey how much she wanted them to leave through her pleading eyes.

Dan and Karen had a silent conversation once again, slight facial expression changes and exhales of forced air and hums of questioning included.

“Please?” She tried again, knowing they just needed a push.

“Okay, we’ll go grab a coffee and leave you two to speak. I’ll call Erin and Jerry to update them, okay? If you need us, we’ll be right downstairs, okay?” Karen stroked her cheek, looking at her with her warm eyes.

“I promise I’ll have them come find you if I need my mom and dad, which I always do by the way. I’m not kicking you out to be mean, just need some privacy for a second. I’m glad you two are here for me. I love you guys”

“We love you too, Monkey. We’ll be back” Dan squeezed her leg, smiling down at his daughter.

The O’Hara’s looked at Hope with appreciation, Karen going in for the hug again. Hope felt the comfort Karen emitted from her body, reveling in the warm feeling before pulling away and shuffling to the side to allow them to take a last glance at Kelley before leaving the room to go down to the lobby.

Hope waited until they shut the door and turned to look at Kelley laying in the hospital bed confused and waiting for Hope to start explaining.

“Kell…” Hope started, feeling all of the emotions she pushed down these past few hours come bubbling back up.

She burst into tears, holding her wrist to her nose to stop the tears from falling onto her coat and onto her skin instead.

“Oh, Hope… Come here, baby” Kelley raised her non-IV arm up to motion for Hope to come to her, the pet name easily rolling off of her tongue.
Hope felt herself cry even harder at the name Kelley used for her, knowing couples use pet names like that for each other. She loved Kelley so goddamn much.

She made her way over to Kelley’s bed side, removing her stethoscope and placing it on the side of the hospital bed so it wouldn’t hit Kelley in the face. Kelley wrapped her right arm around Hope’s shoulders, placing her chin in the valley where her shoulder and neck met, feeling herself getting emotional at the sight of a crying Hope.

“It’s okay, shhh. We’re both fine, we’re okay.” Hope’s hands were covering her face as she bent over the side, letting Kelley hug her awkwardly with one arm. The back of her hands pressed into the right side of Kelley’s chest. The words that Kelley spoke made her cry a little harder, full out blubbering like a baby at this point.

“Hey, let me see that pretty face. Come on, let me see those eyes I love.” Kelley unwrapped her arm from Hope, Hope still burrowed into her shoulder/chest area but not weighing her down. She tucked a strand of the dark hair behind Hope’s ear, sliding her hand down Hope’s shoulder and grabbing her bicep, nudging her up.

Hope brushed the hair out of her face, the tears that fell being rubbed off with it. She took a sniffling breath in through her nose, shaking her shoulders a little to compose herself but felt her bottom lip faintly tremble.

“Hope, what happened? Talk to me… I hate seeing you so upset.” Kelley tried again, needing to know what situation she was dealing with here.

“I was so fucking scared…” She husked out.

“About what? What happened to me?” Kelley was growing impatient but tried to calmly ask the same question for the 80th time.

“You collapsed during surgery today, Kell.” Hope started, feeling herself starting to pace again to work through the emotions just like she did in Carli’s OR earlier.

“Come and sit next to me, please?”

Hope knew it was going to be harder to get through the story if she was stationed to the chair but would do anything Kelley asked her to do at this point.

“I collapsed. I want to hear all of it, okay? Don’t stop unless you feel like you have to, but not for me. I want to hear the whole story. Can you do that for me?” Kelley asked, grabbing Hope’s hand to comfort her.

Hope nodded, feeling the support from Kelley’s hand in hers. She needed to get her shit together to be strong for Kelley as she told her this. Kelley needed her again, and Hope wasn’t going to fuck up this time around.

“I got a page when I was in my office that said “OR 2 911” from Karev’s number. As I was beginning to leave my office to rush down to you guys, I received another page that said, “Kelley 911” and it was from Karev’s number again and not yours.” Hope took a deep breath, shifting on the chair, feeling a squeeze coming from Kelley’s hand urging her to continue.

“I sprinted to the OR as everything happened in slow motion. When I was scrubbing in I saw Murphy performing surgery and was confused as to why I was paged 911, until Karev called my name and I saw him doing CPR on you.” She swallowed, having to relive her most hated moment again.
“Kell, I am so sorry.” She felt the tears prick her eyes and threaten to spill again.

“Why are you sorry, Yolo?” She ran her thumb across Hope’s knuckles keeping her emotions in check so far, even though it was killing her inside.

“I just stood there and you were unresponsive, and Karev kept yelling my name but I was panicking and lost myself in my mind thinking about how you were unconscious and not breathing. I freaked out at the thought that you weren’t breathing on your own and Karev was barely keeping you alive with compressions. He kept yelling at me to do something and I froze. I fucking froze, Kell. And I am so so sorry. I should’ve helped you sooner, but me being my stupid self, let minutes pass before I finally snapped out of it to help you. I kept begging you to stay with me and alive long enough to fix you. I knew I had to fix you.” Hope had tears streaming down her face, giving up on wiping them away since there was no use.

Kelley teared up and felt one overflow from her eye and slide down her cheek at Hope’s words. She couldn’t have imagined how Hope felt in that moment or how she would react if she was in a similar position.

“You had a heart attack, Kell. You were in sudden pain right before you inserted a thoracoscope into your patient and told Karev to call me before you collapsed. After being paged, freezing up, taking over CPR and scrubbing in, Johnson was in the OR already ready to perform surgery.”

“Oh shit, I’m sure you didn’t react very well to that, hm?” Kelley managed a watery smile, giggling at Hope’s reaction to Johnson assuming he was going to be in charge.

Hope smiled at the little ray of sunshine that was Kelley. She always made things better, even in conversations that discussed her on the brink of death.

“Him and Karev both thought it was best if Johnson did it, but I basically told him to fuck off and that I was what you wanted at the moment. He backed off and I prepped for a MIDCAB and asked for the scalpel. And then,” Hope took a long drag in, “and then you went into v-fib. I had to shock you twice before you came back to me… You scared the shit out of me for the third time and I was sure I was going to have a heart attack myself. You left me for a minute and 27 seconds. For 87 seconds you weren’t with me and I never want to go 87 seconds without you alive again.” Kelley picked Hope’s hand up and kissed it, holding her lips to it as Hope continued her story.

“I then performed on your beating heart, the most beautiful muscle I have ever seen, for two hours. I had Johnson suture your chest and side up and proceeded to vomit in the scrub room garbage can. I couldn’t bear to look at your blood anymore because of the reminder that you almost died was all over my gown and gloves.”

Kelley lifted her lips from Hope’s hand and placed another kiss on it before interlacing their fingers.

“I am so sorry you had to go through that, Hope. I am so sorry you felt all of that pressure and panic and pain. I can’t imagine how you felt when I was unresponsive and almost died on your table. But I am so proud of you for gathering up the courage and nerve to repair my heart. Not every woman can say that they repaired their love’s heart before, huh?” Kelley chuckled, loving the fact that Hope was so open and vulnerable to her right now. Under different circumstances would be nice, but it was refreshing to see the woman openly share her emotions.

“I love you, Kell. And I am so fucking thankful that you’re here right now… So thankful.” Hope choked out a sob, feeling the intense wave of emotions again.

“I love you too, Hope. And shouldn’t I be the thankful one here?! You saved *me*, remember?!”
“How can you be so cute and okay right now?” Hope asked, truly amazed that Kelley was doing so emotionally well after learning she had a heart attack.

“I think I’m still in bit of shock, but knowing you were there to save me makes it better. Everything happens for a reason, no matter how good or bad or severe, I guess?” Kelley questioned out loud, not really understanding either but knowing she’ll have to deal with the emotions as well as the physical effects as well.

“Will you come give me a kiss now? I miss you.” Kelley said, wanting nothing more to snuggle into the older woman and kiss her as much as she’d like without the restrictions of their environment and Kelley’s condition.

Hope kept their hands connected but stood to lean over the bed again, using her free hand to caress Kelley’s cheek relishing in the warm skin that was once cold as she was losing oxygen earlier.

She placed a kiss on the freckled skin before looking down into the hazel eyes she was enamored with, hovering her lips over Kelley’s.

“I love you,” Hope whispered before capturing Kelley’s top lip with her own, putting a small amount of pressure against them to express all of the love and emotion she had toward her. Kelley’s hand found its way to Hope’s cheek resting on the slope of her jaw sliding up and down the bone.

Hope slowly pulled away needing eye contact again to see the life back in Kelley’s face.

“I love you, too” Kelley whispered, smiling at the older woman in her line of vision, hand still stroking her cheek.

“Dr. Solo? Kelley?” They both heard Karen’s voice and their heads snapped towards the door seeing a very confused Karen and Dan O’Hara standing in the doorway.

Chapter End Notes

Of course it ended that way! I'm sure most of you expected it to happen! Not my best chapter, but I already have O'Solo experiencing Kelley's recovery in mind so the next updates will be interesting to write. Like always, let me know! Your comments are my fuel.
Chapter 21

O’Haras in the houuuse.

Chapter Notes

I'm back and I come bearing news... There's about two/three chapters left of this work, my loves. I've planned out the rest of the story and came to the conclusion that it's about time to wrap this story up. With that being said, this chapter is a filler and shorter than previous ones, but the last couple will be longer. Enjoy!

“Dr. Solo? Kelley?” They both heard Karen’s voice and their heads snapped towards the door seeing a very confused Karen and Dan O’Hara standing in the doorway.

Hope jumped away from Kelley’s bedside, standing straight up, tugging on her lab coat to straighten it out. Her cheeks felt like they were on fire, blazing with embarrassment that Kelley’s parents had most likely seen them kiss with a mere inch apart from each other’s faces.

Hope cleared her throat to speak as the two parents stood there, shock and confusion written all over their faces.

“Mom, Dad this is Hope. My girlfriend.” Kelley’s voice was still raspy from the breathing tube earlier, but her serious tone pierced the tension filled air within the confines of the ICU room.

Hope felt her eyes pop out of their sockets with Kelley’s forwardness and label of girlfriend. She had the plan to ask her in a huge romantic way on Valentine’s, but since those plans were out of the picture, maybe this was the right time.

But still, Kelley just told her already in shock parents that their daughter was dating her cardio surgeon who had just finished performing a coronary bypass surgery on her still beating heart after shocking her back to life.

What if they don’t approve? What if they don’t accept Kelley for being gay? They must know at this point in her life… What if they hate me when they realize how fucked up I am? What if they…

“Hope,” Kelley called her name breaking her train of thought of “what ifs” catching her attention to turn around and divert her eyes from the still shell-shocked O’Haras to herself.

“Come here, please” Kelley lifted her arm to beckon her over, wanting to hold her hand as she told her parents again.

“Mom, Daddy, I want you to meet my girlfriend Hope and not my surgeon Dr. Solo.” She interlaced her fingers with Hope’s giving her hand a tight squeeze, probably feeling the nervous energy
radiating from her body.

Hope stood there in complete silence, holding her breath awaiting any sort of reply from Kelley’s parents. She loves Kelley, she wouldn’t just leave her if her parents disapproved, but acceptance would be nice.

Karen’s mouth opened and closed a few times not being able to find words to speak to Hope and Kelley. Dan, on the other hand…

“So, wait… You’re telling me that you,” He pointed at Hope while he walked to about the middle of the room to come closer but still leave distance between the two women, “just performed open heart surgery on my daughter,” he pointed at Kelley, “demanded the best care for her, made sure my wife and I were okay and reassured us that our daughter is fine, then proceed to kiss her and say I love you after we left the room per our daughter’s request?” Dan stood there with a puzzled look on his face, hand still in the air, middle and pointer finger both directed at Kelley and Hope.

“And then Kelley, being typical Kelley, just flat out tells us you two are dating?” He poses the rhetorical question, crossing his arms over his chest with his eye squinted in uncertainty that he was following all of this correctly.

He slowly turns back to face Karen, who looks at him like a deer in headlights.

“Excuse us for a moment.” He said as he looked over his shoulder before ushering Karen outside of the room and closing the door.

Hope let out the breath she was desperately trying to hold in, her eyes widening even more if possible.

“What the fuck was that?!” She asked, whisper yelling in case Karen and Dan were right outside of the room able to hear her.

“Relax, they’re fine with it. I can tell by their body language, we’ll be fine!” Kelley said, squeezing Hope’s hand, the other one playing with a strand of hair that fell in front of her face.

“Their body language?! Kell, your father looked like he was deciding on which method to use to execute me while your mother was in the same status of shock I’m in! What are you talking about, body language?!” Hope released her hand from Kelley’s to gesture them all around herself and freak out.

“Hope, Hope! Please stop pacing before I puke... Look, I know my parents very well, and yeah they’re in shock, but they’ll love you! You saved their precious daughter, you have a nice long list of admirable and likable traits, you obviously made something of yourself and achieved your goal in life, but most importantly you love me and they’ve already sensed it. I can just tell that they’ll fall in love with you just like I have.” Hope whipped around and stilled her hands and pacing to stare at Kelley.

“In love with me?” Hope asked incredulously, her mouth going dry, eyes growing wet at the confession.

“Yeah, you idiot! I fell in love with you the day I came rolling into your ER with a broken wrist and a panicky mindset. It just took me a while to come to terms with my feelings but after seeing you freak out over my parents approving of you and our relationship, it confirmed it. Now please come here so I can kiss you. I feel like a moment like this should end with a kiss or something…” Kelley trailed off, smiling at the woman whom she was in love with.
Hope’s eyes were wide and tear-filled at the fact that Kelley not only loved Hope, but was in love with her. She looked down at the beaming woman and knew she had to tell her how much she reciprocated those feelings.

“Why do you always make me so emotional? This is like the 7th time I’ve cried over you today, O’Hara.” Hope sniffled, wiping the tears away from her eyes smiling at the fact that Kelley could make her emotional with a few sentences.

“Now, keep your ears open and concentrate on my words because I’ve never said this to anyone else, okay?” Hope sat on the edge of the bed, stroking Kelley’s leg under the sheet that covered her lower body. Kelley reached out for her hand and Hope obliged her, grabbing it and placed a soft kiss on the top while she kept steady eye contact with Kelley.

She interlaced their finger, eyes still trained on hers. “Maybe I should hurry this up before your parents come back in and we have to do the whole awkward acknowledgement thing all over again, huh?” Kelley and Hope let out a laugh, Kelley closing her mouth with a small, close-lipped smile and nodded to encourage Hope to go on with what she was trying to say.

“I love you, Kell. And maybe I didn’t fall in love at first sight like you say you did with me, but I promise you that I felt the connection the minute our eyes met. I have never felt more connected to a person or have loved another person like I love you. And today when I almost lost you twice… I realized that I’m madly in love with you too, Squirrel. And I had these plans for Valentine’s Day Sunday, but with a change of plans today, I guess I have to do this now.” Hope cleared her throat, looking away from Kelley, wiping her free hand off on her pants to rid of the sweat that was forming due to her growing nerves.

She felt Kelley swipe the top of her hand with her thumb and looked back up to meet her eyes that were filled with love and warmth, like they always were. The eye contact and hand squeeze was all Hope needed to ask her question.

“Kelley O’Hara, will you be my girlfriend? Officially, of course…” Hope bit her bottom lip, smiling at the act of asking Kelley out and the happiness she brought her.

She felt a tug on her arm and the glint in Kelley’s eyes she has seen many times over.

Hope leaned forward, mindful of Kelley’s healing scars and weak body, and leaned in to kiss her. Before she connected their lips, Kelley muttered a yes her warm breath hitting Hope’s lips. Hope’s eyelids fluttered shut as she closed the distance, feeling both Kelley and herself smile into the kiss.

She pulled back just enough to take in Kelley’s face and smiled at the sight of Kelley’s eyes still closed but a smile still in place, noticing herself trying to count the number of freckles that she always got lost in.

A knock at the door frame similar to the one minutes before made Hope jump back, but this time she kept her hand in Kelley’s and didn’t make a move to stand up.

“Can we come in?” Dan asked, Karen next to him without the shock on her face but remaining neutral.

“Of course you guys can. Hope and I were just talking medical stuff.” Kelley smiled, feeling her eyelids droop in fatigue.

Hope looked down at Kelley who was growing tired knowing this much of emotion and excitement could tire her out quickly. She couldn’t help but feel so much love for this woman and felt honored
and privileged to be loved back.

“Mr. and Mrs. O’Hara,” Hope released Kelley’s hand, slowly standing up to be at eye level with her parents.

“I am in love with your daughter. Kelley has been a part of my life for 5 months now and whether I liked it or not, she wormed her way right into my cold heart.”

“Hope that’s not t-“ Kelley tried cutting Hope off about how she was cold-hearted and how was didn’t deserve the best, blah blah blah. Kelley hated it when she spoke about herself like that.

“Hey, it’s okay. I have a point to this speech, I promise.” Hope softly smiled at the apprehensive yet falling asleep woman in the hospital bed beside her.

“I was a distant, broken person who didn’t have a family other than my three best friends and my dogs. All of the relationships I’ve had in the past, both familial, friendships, platonic and romantic haven’t worked out in the past because of one thing or another. But when your daughter, when Kelley, came into my ER after the car accident back in the fall, my life unknowingly changed.”

Hope smiled at Kelley fighting off sleep to listen to Hope’s speech, a sign for Hope to cut it short.

“Now I don’t know if I’m gay or straight or bisexual, I’ve never questioned my sexuality before, but I do know that I’m madly, deeply and unconditionally in love with Kelley. I know there’s a lot to learn about me and based on what Kelley has told me about you and your other children, I know I’m eager to learn more about your family as well. I don’t know if you’ll accept or approve of me to date your daughter because of my past, but I’m willing to fight for her and protect her with everything I have.”

Hope fiddled with her stethoscope waiting for a response from the O’Haras, afraid she was too intense in her spiel and pushed them further away from acceptance.

“Hope.” Karen said, quickly stepping forward with tears in her eyes to wrap her up in a tight hug, feeling the same warmth from her earlier embrace with her earlier.

Hope let out a deep breath, feeling the hot tears prick her eyes once again. Over Karen’s shoulder she saw Dan wipe away a single tear and steel his face to nod at Hope and then smile at her.

She felt the weight of the world fall off of her shoulders at the realization that they accepted her and hers and Kelley’s relationship.

She looked down once she and Karen stepped away from the embrace and looked down to a smiling asleep Kelley who she hoped saw her and her mom hug before drifting off to sleep.

“Erin and Jeff will be here soon to visit. How long will she be asleep for?” Dan asked, wrapping an arm around his wife’s shoulders.

“She should be out for a couple of hours. All of the love and happiness overwhelmed her, I guess.” Hope smiled, leaning down to place a kiss on her forehead before whispering a quick, “I’ll be back.”

“Once she wakes up again, she’ll be better rested and will be able to visit with Erin and Jeff for a while. Then a couple of hours after that, I’ll administer more pain medication and she’ll be asleep overnight. Once she wakes, you can page Maria again, she’ll come in before I’ll get here. I’ll give you and your family time to visit before I come back down, I understand the need for privacy and family time. If you need anything, you know how to reach me.” Hope smiled, moving towards the door to leave Kelley’s parents alone with the sleeping woman.
She paused at the door, left hand placed on the doorframe. She looked over her shoulder at Karen stroking a sleeping Kelley’s hair and Dan standing behind his wife rubbing her back.

Hope could tell how much love ran through their family’s bloodline and she felt a fleeting feeling of envy and jealousy towards her girlfriend. But she remembered that there are in fact happy families out there, unlike hers and Karev’s. She knew how much Kelley loved her parents and siblings and since her parents have come to the hospital, Hope has seen and felt nothing but love for Kelley from Karen and Dan.

She smiled at the small smile still on Kelley’s face while she fell asleep and took a last glance at her parents looking down at her. Hope knew this family was full of love and happiness, and she was thankful Kelley was born and raised with these people.

“What a fucking day.” Hope huffed out as she haphazardly plopped her tray of food down at the cafeteria table.

“Yeah, you’re telling me! I had a nice distraction in my OR today, didn’t I Hope?” Carli asked before she took a bite of her sub.

“Alriiiight I just revived and performed surgery on my girlfriend, cut me some slack here!” Hope popped a grape in her mouth, chewing the fruit and picking another one up to add into her mouth. She felt all eyes on her as she moved her hand to pick up another green sphere, flicking her eyes up to see Carli, Karev and Johnson staring at her with their mouths open and eyes wide.

“Girlfriend?” Johnson asked, beaming at the label his friend used, not surprised that they made it official but that Hope didn’t freak out at the name.

“Well no shit” Karev smirked, clapping her on the shoulder and pushing her back and forth a couple of times.

Hope couldn’t even hide the big smile that grew on her face if she tried. She was undeniably happy that she and Kelley were officially together, that she was finally content with her life, and her friends could tell.

“Congrats on pulling your head out of your ass, Solo. I’m happy my OR could calm you down long enough to get the girl.” Carli winked at her as she took another bite of her sub, surgery making her hungry after hours of standing and keeping your hands still.

“I’m happy she’s okay and I’m happy that she’s mine. Her parents know too, the little squirrel came right out and told them after they may or may not have seen us kiss in her room when we thought they were gone.” Hope winced at the awkwardness as she picked up another grape and threw it in the air to successfully catch it in her mouth.

“This has been one hell of a turnaround since this morning, huh?” Johnson asked leaning back in his chair with his hands folded supporting his head.

“It sure has…” Hope felt herself relax after the day’s events, taking a toll on her mind and body.

“How is the little leprechaun?” Johnson asked, taking a bite of his apple.

Hope swallowed the mashed up grapes in her mouth, washing them down with water.
“She’s stable, her stats are improving by the second, she’s on the new pain meds and off the morphine and she’s responding coherently and clearly. She’s great.”

“And her incision site?” Johnson asked, noticing Hope left that part out.

She diverted her eyes from him, looking at Karev and Carli who noticed the shift in mood, placing their sandwiches down to drink from their cups and listen to Hope’s response.

She chewed her lip before holding Johnson’s eye contact.

“I haven’t checked it. The nurse’s notes say they look good, free of infection, expected swelling.”

“You don’t want to see them?” Johnson carefully asked, knowing his friend would be hesitant to check them because of the reminder.

“Of course I don’t want to see them, Johnson! So I can remember what happened and flash back to being a coward and watching my girlfriend die on my table for 80 seconds?” Hope’s anger began to rise, emotions in tow.

“And what happens when you see her scars, Hope?” He knew he was pushing her buttons but wanted to let her deal with it now then later when it was just Hope and Kelley left alone with Hope’s resentment and pain.

“Enough, let it go for now, J.” Carli placed her hand on his arm to silent him knowing Hope would lash out.

“It’s okay, Car. He’s right. What am I going to do when I’m faced with them in the future? Maybe I should get it over with and fucking face my fear of seeing them.” She said with a bite, the snarkiness directed towards herself.

“Listen, Solo. Do it on your own time and don’t let us pressure you to look at them. Maria has that shit on lock up there, let her keep checking them, she’ll let you know if you should be concerned and see them for yourself. You just got Kelley back, no reason to upset yourself all over again. Just enjoy each other and your relationship now before shit gets messy while she’s out of work for a bit.” Karev piped up to prevent anything from getting too intense.

Hope nodded at his words. She knew she would have to physically see them at some point, but felt that she wasn’t emotionally ready to face them yet. She wanted to be strong for Kelley and support her through recovery, and letting her negative feelings take over wouldn’t aid in that.

“I’m going to go for a walk, thanks for everything today guys. I appreciate you.” She said as she pushed away from the table to leave the cafeteria and step outside.

The front of Kennedy Gen was always interesting to stop and look around at, people watching galore. Numerous doctors, nurses, other hospital staff, patients’ loved ones, delivery men all walked in and out of the doors to mix with the Boston crowd.

Hope took a deep breath of the winter air in, eyes closed as she leaned against a wall supporting her back. She needed a moment to just breathe and be left alone with her thoughts for a minute to process them. The walls of the hospital weren’t helping her case of not feeling suffocated or trapped even though her source of freedom and happiness was within them sleeping in a hospital bed in the
Hope rolled her head to the side, repositioning her body to face towards the left of the building and not staring in front of it. She watched as countless people walked towards her on the sidewalk, some passing and others entering the hospital. She took joy in watching others just go about their days and interact with others or keep to themselves and fast walk down the busy street. She tried looking at every face she could and picking out unique characteristics that really made that person’s face theirs. It was a weird concept but it helped Hope focus on something else other than her own life and problems.

“Excuse me? Do you work here?” Hope’s neck snapped towards a woman and man standing in front of her. The woman looked extremely familiar but with Hope’s head still jumbled with scattered thoughts she couldn’t place it.

“I do, I’m a surgeon. Can I help you? Are you hurt?” Hope looked at the man after looking over the woman for any physical injuries or signs/symptoms of pain or sickness.

“No no, my sister just had a heart attack and then surgery. My parents called and we hopped on a flight from Georgia a few hours ago, literally got off the plane not even 30 minutes ago. Do you know where the ICU is?” The woman quickly spoke, reminding Hope of Kelley.

Wait a minute.

“Are you Erin O’Hara?” Hope asked, finally figuring out why they looked so familiar. They’re Kelley’s siblings.

“Yeah…” She looked timid, pulling her head back a bit at the question.

“I’m Dr. Solo, head of cardiothoracic surgery. I performed on Kelley earlier, I’m the doctor in charge of her case. And you must be Jerry?” Hope slightly turned towards the man, sticking her hand out for him to shake in greeting.

“Jerry O’Hara, nice to meet you.” His voice was similar to Dan’s but softer. Erin stood on her tippy toes to throw her arms around Hope’s neck and squeezed the shit out of her, much like Karen did those few times earlier.

“Thank you for saving my baby sister! I knew about her heart condition but nothing has ever happened and it finally did and fuck! Thank you for keeping her alive” Erin let out a small sob, feeling Hope’s arm wrap around her torso.

“It was my honor to do so. Dr. O’Hara is a wonderful surgeon and an even better friend. I’m glad I was able to keep her around.” Hope mentally smacked herself for being so formal about Kelley and referring to her as just a friend, but wasn’t sure if she should be the first one to tell Erin and Jerry.

Erin pulled back and Jerry instantly wrapped an arm around her shoulders for her to lean into him.

“Can we go see her?” Jerry asked, feeling eager to go check on his sister.

Hope cleared her throat at the impending emotions, nodding and reaching her hand out towards them as she stepped in stride beside them leading them through the sliding doors.

The O’Haras were flanked on either side of Kelley’s bed when Hope came back in the room to make
sure they were settled. She had just brought up Erin and Jerry 15 minutes ago to see their sister and decided to give them their privacy.

Hope knocked on the doorframe, “Everything okay? Does anyone need anything?” She asked, standing in the doorway.

“We’re all fine, Hope. Come here, I think she’s waking up.” Karen directed, glancing between Hope and Kelley.

Erin looked at Jerry and mouthed, “Hope?” Jerry shrugged in return not knowing what their mom calling the doctor by her first name was about.

Kelley shifted her leg and rolled her head from her left side to her right. She visibly swallowed, Hope noticed and moved to pick up the cup filled with water and a straw to offer Kelley.

“Excuse me…” Hope said as she slid between Erin and the buttons on the side of the bed to raise the top half of Kelley’ bed up so she would be propped up without straining herself.

“Hope?” Kelley slowly blinked, readjusting her eyes to the harsh lighting again. She still felt groggy, which was expected.

“Hey you, drink this. It’ll make your throat feel better, plus you need to stay hydrated.” Hope placed the straw on her bottom lip to encourage Kelley to close her lips to suck from the straw.

“Oh that feels so much better, thanks babe.” She smiled appreciatively up at Hope who she noticed stiffened her neck muscles subtlety. She took a step back to reveal Erin and Jerry who were sitting next to each other next to her bed; Hope had blocked them from her view as she offered her water.

“Erin, Jer? How the hell are ya?” Kelley smiled, slowly blinking her eyes while taking in their relieved faces.

“You’re such a weenie!” Erin moved to hug her but stopped midway to look back at Hope. “Can I hug her?”

Hope smiled gently, “Of course, just watch her left side.”

Erin completely leaned over and wrapped her arms around her sister, careful not to put pressure on her body.

“I will kick your ass if you ever do something like that again. Scared the shit out of me!” Erin said looking down at her sister who was smirking.

“Erin, language!” Karen scolded, giving her a pointed look.

“Sorry, sorry…” She returned the look and turned her attention back down to Kelley, “I swear I will, don’t try me”.

“I’ll try my very best not to have another cardiac episode.” Kelley snorted reaching her arm out towards Jerry.

“Hey Jer Bear. Thanks for coming up.” She smiled at him knowing he hated flying, but appreciated that he did so for her.

“Anything for my monkey sister.” He met her hand to do their handshake that they’ve had since they were little kids.
“If you don’t mind me asking, why are you referred to as “monkey” Kell?” Hope spoke up, genuinely curious about the other animal nickname she wasn’t aware of.

The O’Haras all laughed at the question loving when someone who didn’t know Kelley at a young age inquired about the name.

“You wanna tell Hope, honey?” Dan asked, clearly amused at the question.

“I gueeeees,” She rolled her eyes but kept her smile regardless of her feigned annoyance.

“When I was younger, I used to climb everything, like everrrrrything. My parents and sibs would find me in the weirdest places because I would be able to climb up to get there. Trees, rocks during family hikes, playgrounds, garages, countertops, everywhere I could climb I scaled it and climbed on top. And one day I was climbing and swinging from the monkey bars in the backyard where we had our own jungle gym with Erin and Jerry and my dad came outside and saw me hanging upside down by my legs on the uppermost bar and said, “Wow, I didn’t know we had a pet monkey around!” And ever since then it stuck.”

“A squirrel and a monkey, huh? I can definitely see traits in both of those animals.” Hope grinned down at her girlfriend, loving the adventurous, curious and energized woman’s antics.

“You love it.” Kelley jested.

“I do.” Hope smiled lovingly down at her, cocking her head to the side and taking in the sight of all of the O’Haras together.

She felt the love from this family and felt a pang of hope in her heart at the prospect of becoming a member in the future.

But now she had to focus on the present and helping Kelley recover which was going to be a rough month ahead. For the both of them.

Chapter End Notes

Buckle up, kiddos. A baby time jump and recovery next chapter before the ending.
Chapter Summary

"I need all of you."

Chapter Notes

Heed the rating in this one, homies ;)
One chapter after this and then it's finished... Wow. ENJOY!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

“Babe, you need to eat. You’ve barely eaten these past couple of days.” Hope softly spoke while approaching the back of the couch in Kelley’s apartment.

“I’m not hungry.” Kelley muttered, changing the channel on the television from some stupid cartoon to Discovery Channel. A documentary on crows was airing, probably the most boring thing Kelley could find on the TV but she left the channel on.

Hope looked down at Kelley who had her head propped on the arm of the couch, blanket pulled up to her chest, hair in a messy bun with dark circles under her eyes meaning she hasn’t been sleeping very well.

“Kell, you need to eat and hydrate to keep your strength up. How about a few bites of this sandwich? I made PB&J just the way you like it, a little more peanut butter than jelly, cut in half diagonally...” Hope offered, standing in front of the couch and tilting the plate down slightly so Kelley would be able to see the sandwich for herself.

Kelley huffed and dropped the remote, turning her head to look at Hope.

“I’m not hungry, Hope.” She answered in a monotone manner, pulling the blanket up further on her body and repositioned her neck to get more comfortable on the arm of the couch. She trained her eyes back to the TV around Hope’s standing body.

Hope dejectedly placed the plate on the coffee table and took a good look at Kelley. She sat on the edge of the table, aware of her position careful not to block the TV from Kelley’s view.

She knew she was struggling with her feelings and trying to keep her spirits up. Hope knew an emotional breakdown was on the brink, she had heard of her past patients dealing with depression/depression-like symptoms post-op. She wanted to keep Kelley’s morale up and encourage her recovery and progression as much as she could.

Kelley has been home for 2 weeks now after being released from the ICU 3 days after her surgery. Since it was a less invasive surgery that Hope decided on, recovery time in the hospital isn’t as long as complete open heart surgery. Her parents decided to stay in Boston for the first week to stay with Kelley and help her out with whatever she needed. Erin stayed for four days and Jerry had to leave
two days after flying down, both leaving for work purposes.

Hope had only visited at night while Kelley’s parents were asleep and Kelley lay awake in her bed at night not being able to sleep. She didn’t want to overcrowd Kelley while her family was visiting and helping her, that’s why she only visited at night with her. Hope tried suggesting the idea of taking some vacation time to stay home and have Kelley live with her during her recovery time, but Kelley shot that idea down very quickly.

She knew Kelley was pushing her away and she had no idea how to deal with it. She tried getting Kelley to open up while doing heart checkups and small tests on her every five days, but Kelley would clam up and tell her to hurry up with the exam because she was tired or wanted to watch Netflix.

Hope had yet to see the incision sites and couldn’t bring herself to see them now that Kelley was so on edge and she was dealing with emotions herself. Every time she would take vitals and listen to Kelley’s heart, she wouldn’t ask her to lift her shirt up or pull it down, she tried avoiding the healing incisions at any cost.

Her usually bright, smiley, bubbly, happy ray of sunshine was this moping storm cloud full of grief and sadness. She was pushing Hope away left and right, rejecting food, ignoring her words of encouragement, shooting down suggestions to get up and walk around more or go visit the dogs with her. She tried countless times in this past week to get Kelley active and do something other than lay on the couch and watch TV and failed at every attempt.

She hadn’t showered, barely ate, closed herself off, and refused to move or get fresh air, visit her friends…

Hope knew Kelley was drowning in her self-pity and grief from having a heart attack, she understood the feeling of feeling so helpless and stuck. And she knew she needed a push from someone while she was in that state.

She had to save Kelley again, but this time from herself.

Hope leaned her elbows onto her knees, hunching over and lifting her head to look at the permanent scowl that was on Kelley’s face for the past week.

She was fine when her parents were here, but as soon as Hope took over as helping Kelley, it was like a switch was flipped.

“Hey, Kell…” Hope started.

“Hm?” She absentmindedly hummed, not paying attention to Hope but focusing her attention on the crow documentary. ADD or not, it would be hard for anyone to focus on the boring documentary and Hope knew she was lost in her mind and was sure it wasn’t pretty in there basing it off of her own past thought processes.

“What do you say we get cleaned up and take a walk on your favorite trail? Swing by and pick the girls up before we go. They miss you, especially Onyx…” Hope hoped Kelley would accept the plans and finally get up.

“I’m okay, thanks though.” Kelley blandly responded.

“You sure you don’t want to go? Maybe grab one of those smoothies you love right outside of the city? I know I’ve been dying to get my hands on one since it’s warming up outside. We can both get new combinations and share like we used to. Maybe we’ll see some really cool wildlife in the park
again.” Hope was really laying it on thick knowing her favorite things couldn’t possibly be turned down.

“No thanks.” Kelley still wasn’t budging and it was quickly frustrating Hope.

“How about we go t-“

“ENOUGH! Hope, I don’t want to go anywhere. Just stop.” Kelley quickly made eye contact and flicked her eyes back to the TV after raising her voice to halt Hope’s words.

“Kelley, you need to do something, anything. You’ve been moping around all week long! You’ve barely eaten, haven’t showered, and haven’t even left the damn couch other than to go to your bed. I know you’re recovering both physically and mentally, I understand th-“

“Don’t.” Kelley seethed, her jaw tightening and eyes glaring at the screen past Hope.

“Don’t what, Kelley?! Try and help you?! Sorry if I’m trying to help my girlfriend recover and recuperate post-op! I know that you’re feeling pretty shitty and low right now, I get it. But you need to start acting like you give a shit about yourself and start putting effort into making progress.” Hope’s frustration bubbled up, slightly raising her voice at her girlfriend, both hands gesturing to emphasize her words and tone.

Kelley sat there, jaw clench mirroring her girlfriend’s in prior situations, arms crossed like a petulant teenager being told the rules. But her eyes still had yet to leave the screen.

Hope had enough. She knew Kelley was being stubborn and was being controlled by her negative emotions, but Hope also knew that she needed some tough love now.

She shot to her feet and it took her all of two long strides to reach the TV to manually turn the power button off.

“Hey! I was watching that!” Kelley and Hope both knew she wasn’t really watching it but merely using it as an excuse to close herself off from any conversation that required more than grunts and hums.

“No you weren’t, you’re trying to deflect and disassociate yourself from reality, Kelley. I see right through it. Just let me help you conquer this shitty situation and help you deal with it!” Hope argued running her hand through her hair.

“You don’t know shit about what I’m going through right now, Hope. Don’t try and be the hero again, I can take care of myself.” Kelley was pissed off that Hope was attacking her and trying to empathize with her situation.

“Oh I don’t? How so?” Hope placed her hands on her hips looking down from across the room at Kelley still lying on the couch.

The alpha body language didn’t help Kelley’s temper whatsoever. She had enough pushing and nagging from Hope. She whipped the blanket off of her body and stood, walking towards Hope.

“You didn’t pass out during your high school soccer team’s championship game your senior year as captain on the pitch. You weren’t rushed to the hospital and diagnosed with a heart condition that could be fatal at any strenuous physical activity or just at random. You didn’t fucking fall unconscious in your OR before performing surgery on a patient. You didn’t lay there on the brink of death as your friend pumped your heart for you or breathed oxygen into your body to keep you alive. You didn’t die on the operating table for 80 seconds and then have minimal open heart surgery. You
didn’t get instructed to take a month and a half off from work to recover from a cardiac episode. You have no fucking idea what I’m going through, Hope. So back off!” Kelley was in Hope’s face, spitting venom with every single one of her sentences directed at Hope.

“I don’t!?” Hope gritted through her teeth, a strangled raised voice coming out, eyebrows raised in disbelief that Kelley could even say those things to her after what she went through. What they went through together.

“I got that call, Kelley! You called me don’t forget that part. I was the one who fixed your heart. I was the one who revived you on my operating table! Don’t act like I wasn’t there every step of the way with you because I was and you know it. Don’t think you’re the only one affected by what happened. I’m scarred by it too, Kelley!” Hope’s hands were on her chest emphasizing the fact that she was a part of this pain too.

“Stop fucking victimizing yourself, Hope! I get it, okay?! I understand I scared you into being a coward and not being able to step up fast enough to get me on the damn table and make the cut! But you aren’t the one it happened to! It was me. ME!” Kelley pointed her finger into her chest, eyes full of rage fixed on Hope’s.

“Screw you, Kelley! I’ve been dealing with the fact that I didn’t help sooner, I got it. I never wanted to play the hero role in this. I just wanted to save you.”

“I don’t need saving! I need to be left alone, I don’t want your help!”

“You need someone’s help because if you haven’t noticed, you’re not doing the best job.” Hope lowered her voice still dripping with frustration.

“And you have room to talk? Tell me, Hope how well did you take care of yourself after Jason?” Kelley bit out, glare piercing Hope’s eyes.

Hope felt her breath hitch in her throat and her heart sink into her stomach at the mention of the incident involving Jason and the fact that Kelley was using it against her.

“That’s not fair, it wasn’t the same situation that you’re in…” Hope felt her frustration decrease but anger and hurt rise.

“Exactly! It isn’t the same, so don’t tell me you know how I’m feeling or what I’m thinking. You aren’t me, you aren’t inside of my mind! Just let me be.” Kelley argued.

“I can’t just “let you be” because I’m not going to let you slowly kill yourself. That’s exactly what you’re doing, and I’m saying this from a doctor’s perspective. Maybe if you pulled your head out of your ass and realized what you’re doing to yourself you’d see that too. No physical activity of any kind, barely eating, not practicing proper hygiene, not attending counseling sessions? It all adds up and takes years off of your life, not to mention it slows down your progression and will prevent you from returning to work. I know how much being a surgeon means to you, Kell. You’re fucking yourself over by not letting me in to help.” Hope sounded exhausted now.

Kelley stood there considering Hope’s reasoning before thickly swallowing and turning her attention to look out the living room window.

Her hands were on her hips as she hung her head low knowing she was being a hard-headed ass especially with the comments she jabbed at Hope. She felt defeated and disgusted with herself for invalidating Hope’s feelings and using Jason against her.

Kelley was struggling this past week and didn’t think she needed help that Hope had offered her.
She still allowed her to come visit her every day before and after work or for the full day if she had off. But that didn’t mean she would listen to her suggestions to do anything to help progress her recovery.

She felt like she was a completely different person after the heart attack. She wasn’t in her usual high spirits, instead feeling lost within her own thoughts, helpless that she couldn’t go back to work or go to the gym to blow off steam. Kelley felt like a completely different person and allowed the darkness brought on by the cardiac episode to consume her and it scared the shit out of her, hence why she pushed Hope away and even pushed herself away from trying to save herself.

Hope didn’t deserve the estrangement or cold shoulder, and Kelley knew that every time she shut her down. But whenever she wanted to correct her behavior or words, there was something inside of her that stopped her from caring for a moment.

But as she turned around and saw the clear pain and defeat written all over Hope’s face and posture, it was like the self-pity veil was lifted and she came to her senses.

“I’m so sorry,” Kelley completely turned around feeling the hot tears break through after weeks of holding them in, her body beginning to lightly buzz and shake from the intensity of emotions that were rising to the surface. She actually felt something enough to allow herself to cry and release her built up pain, anguish and grief.

“Oh Kell.” Hope rushed forward to wrap Kelley up in her arms knowing this was the peak of the emotional breakdown.

“I’m so sorry, I’m so scared and I don’t know what took over but I wasn’t myself and I hurt you in the process of my own shit and I’m so fucking sorry!” She gasped out, choking on her words as she sobbed into Hope’s shoulders.

Hope felt her body limp and knew she was holding Kelley up on her own. She maneuvered to wrap one arm underneath Kelley’s legs, the other remaining the hold around Kelley’s upper back.

She swiftly picked her up bridal style and walked them toward Kelley’s bedroom.

Kelley could barely catch her breath at the intensity of her crying and new it would upset her respiratory and cardiac systems if she kept crying that hard. Her face was red at this point and it freaked Hope out a little bit.

“Hey baby, you’re okay. Shhhh, you didn’t hurt me, we’ll just be fine, I promise. I love you, that won’t change, okay?” Hope laid her on the bed so she could be comfortable and hopefully relax.

Kelley kept crying harder curling into herself. It was scaring Hope that she wasn’t calming down so easily and knew she had to resolve her tears to lessen her chance of strain on her heart.

“Kell, try to take some deep breaths. You’re putting a lot of strain on your body right now that can hurt it. Can I do anything to help?” Hope had to speak a little louder than usual due to the sound of Kelley sobbing. Hope herself began silently crying at how nervous she was becoming that she couldn’t control this situation and calm Kelley down.

She continued to cry and Hope had to think of something to shock her. She moved to the side of the bed that Kelley was closer to and scooped her up again. Kelley’s head rested on her collar bone, her hands gripping the back of Hope’s neck that her arms were wrapped around.

Hope pushed the bathroom door open with her back and held Kelley up with one arm and throwing the shower curtain and turning the shower on with her free hand.
She made sure it was on the cold setting and stepped into the tub with Kelley in her arms standing directly underneath the showerhead.

Kelley gasped and coughed from choking on her abruptly ceased sobs. The cold water shocked her enough to stop crying so hard. Hope let the cold water run down the both of them, cooling them off from their heated argument and the quick work up of emotions. She slid down the tiled wall and sat away from the shower head allowing it to splash on them but not completely let the stream hit them.

Kelley nuzzled her face into Hope’s neck seeking comfort that Hope happily obliged. She rubbed her back over the soaking wet shirt and leaned her head against Kelley’s. She slowly rocked them back and forth in efforts to soothe them both. She was just glad Kelley didn’t turn purple instead of red meaning oxygen was cut off, and straining her heart enough to reverse treatment and give Kelley another heart attack.

She sat there for several more minutes letting Kelley finish crying into her neck and calm down. She felt a shiver run through Kelley’s body and knew it was time to get out of the shower.

“Do you think you can stand up and shut the shower off so we can dry and change?” Hope asked Kelley, craning her neck to the side to see her face when she moved.

Kelley nodded and shakily stood up with support from the other shower wall to stand up and turn the water off.

Hope stood up behind Kelley and stepped out of the tub first and offered her hand for Kelley to take and help her out of it. She grabbed the couple of towels that were hanging up and nodded towards the door to leave the bathroom and dry off in the bedroom.

Kelley stepped into the room after Hope and watched as Hope tied her hair up before stripping the wet shirt off of her body. She couldn’t help but lick her lips at the sight of beads of water dripping from her girlfriend’s body.

Hope and Kelley hadn’t had sex yet in roughly the month that they’ve been together, and Kelley had been sexually frustrated for quite a while now.

The sight of Hope in a sports bra, soaking wet skinny jeans that clung to her muscular legs even more from the weight of the water and her hair tied up that left water dripping onto the rest of her wet body was hard to tear her eyes away from.

Kelley stood staring getting lost in the thought of how quickly and severely her emotions had changed within the past hour from being dark and miserable, to angry and heated, to turned on and adoring her girlfriend for going to extremes to get her to calm down.

“I’m fairly certain you have a few pictures of me that you can stare at for much longer than ogling my body right now, babe.” Hope chuckled loving the fact that she caught Kelley staring at her like she was a giant cookie she couldn’t wait to get her hands on.

Kelley licked her lips when Hope bent over to slide her jeans off of her legs, her abs and arms contracting while she bent over. She followed the beads of water running down the tanned skin from her neck down to her chest.

She wanted Hope and she wanted her now.

Kelley took two strides towards Hope as she was standing up and slammed her body into the taller woman’s, gripping her face with one hand and the other wrapped behind her neck. Hope was taken aback by how sudden the attack on her lips was but quickly responded, wrapping her arms tightly...
around Kelley’s lower back, one hand traveling south to grab her ass and the other between her shoulder blades pulling her impossibly closer.

Their kisses were a mix of fervor, passionate long kisses and quick, needy kisses. Hope nipped at Kelley’s bottom lip, Kelley letting out a breath into Hope’s open mouth deciding she needed to taste more of Hope. She slipped her tongue in Hope’s welcoming mouth, their tongues beginning to slowly slide against each other. The soft tip of Kelley’s tongue traced patterns on Hope’s causing the older woman to pull Kelley flush against pressing their bodies almost into one.

Their slow buildup of kissing turned frantic and desperate wasn’t a new concept for either of the women. With hands grabbing asses and breasts, an involuntary buck of the hips, the low and breathy moans coming from both of their mouths.

This is the point in which they stop before things heated up even more. Sure there were intense make out sessions in bed or on the couch or standing in Hope’s office, but this was different.

The air was different between them, more electric, warmer than it ordinarily was.

Kelley pulled her lips from Hope’s and began her descent from the tip of her chin, giving it a small nip and a quick kiss to soothe the little sting. She placed open mouth kisses along Hope’s sharp jawline, her hand still holding the opposite side of Hope’s face. She could feel Hope’s chest heaving with deep quick breaths as she neared her pulse point. Kelley swirled her tongue in a circle around the skin before pressing an open mouth kiss on the skin over where her vein would be. She lightly sucked the area feeling Hope’s hand grip her ass harder.

“K-Kell, if you” Hope breathed out trying to concentrate on her words than the feeling of Kelley’s soft, warm lips sucking on her sweet spot. “If you don’t-“ She let out a whimpered breath at the feeling of Kelley’s teeth grazing the area and her tongue peeking out again to soothe the skin, “If you don’t stop, I won’t be able to either” She knew if Kelley kept kissing her neck like this with this much fervor, she wasn’t going to help herself.

Kelley pulled back, her mouth still close to the muscular neck as she spoke, “I don’t want to stop, Hope. I need you.” Her hot breath hit the slightly damp spot on Hope’s neck producing a feeling that shot right down to Hope’s center.

Hope craned her neck back before Kelley could start kissing her neck again to signal Kelley to look at her face.

Hope searched for any sign of uncertainty or doubt in Kelley’s eyes but found nothing but desire and need in the darkened irises.

“Kell, are you sure? Just an hour ago you were in a different place and I just don’t want you to feel pressured into this or feeling like you have to or th-“

“Hope. I’m ready and I need you. What do you say, Doc? Am I cleared for sexual activity with my incredibly sexy girlfriend?” Kelley smirked, her voice an octave lower than her normal voice. She raised one eyebrow up at Hope’s eyes darkening after the question she posed.

Hope licked her upper lip then bit her lower one at Kelley’s admittance of needing her. Checking one last time for any trace of doubt or any indication that she didn’t want to go through with it and finding none, Hope knew they were both in this.

“I love you,” Hope breathed out, both hands running from Kelley’s ass to the back of her thighs, picking her up with a little help from a slight jump on Kelley’s part to wrap her legs around Hope’s
bare midsection. She connected their lips again the intensity increasing as they both knew what was going to happen in future moments.

Kelley was on a mission to pepper as much of Hope’s skin that she could reach from her position being hoisted up on Hope’s torso. And with every press of her lips to Hope’s skin, Hope felt her knees go weak at every single one.

Through hooded eyes and heavy breaths, she sought out Kelley’s bed and walked the long 4 feet there. She carefully lowered Kelley onto the bed not to hurt her or startle her so much that her heart skipped a beat or two. Hope was conscientious of the fact that Kelley was just cleared enough to have sex after her surgery and would think about that during their time together.

Kelley noticed the slightest shift of Hope’s mood and voiced what the other woman was concerned about.

“Hey, I know you’re scared that this is pushing it or that it’ll send me into another cardiac episode, but I know my body, baby. I can handle this. I need you… I need all of you.” Kelley almost whispered because she was in such need of having Hope fully. She’s been ready for months now, always thinking of how good Hope was in bed or how it would feel to taste and feel every inch of the older woman’s body.

The arousal Hope felt when Kelley told her that she needed all of her was enough motivation to get her ass in gear and start making the woman she loves feel good.

Hope kissed Kelley with a deep want as she hovered over her body. Kelley had inched her way up to rest her upper body against the few pillows she kept on her bed to get comfortable and earn leverage to kiss Hope with as much urgency as the cardio surgeon possessed for her. Hope had one knee on either side of Kelley’s outstretched legs, one arm holding her body up, the other slowly making its way down from Kelley’s cheek to her shoulder, then down her arm, interlacing their fingers.

Hope pulled back to look into Kelley’s eyes, “If anything feels off or bad, you need to let me know, okay? Firstly because of your heart obviously and secondly because I’ve never been intimate with a woman, as you know…” Hope’s nerves sparked up, feeling her heart thud in her chest at the thought of not knowing what to do while she was…down there. She wanted to make Kelley feel how much she loved her in a physical way but wasn’t too confident in her lesbian sex skills.

Kelley could easily pick up on Hope’s nerves and smiled sweetly at the never afraid Dr. Solo.

“Just listen to my body and feel for my reactions. If you want me to, I’ll go first if y-“

“No, this is about you right now. I just want to make you feel good and do it right.” Hope bit her bottom lip again, looking down and moving a few fly aways that already dried unlike the rest of her wet hair that had yet to dry from the shower.

“Show me, Hope. Show me how much you love me and how good you want to make me feel.” Kelley nudged Hope’s leg with her own, her hands reaching out to trace the defined lines of her girlfriend’s abs.

Hope swallowed at Kelley’s words and kissed her hard, lips pressed firmly against the awaiting mouth that she couldn’t get enough of the taste of.

She felt Kelley’s hands run up her back and her fingers play with the fabric of the sports bra she was wearing. She took the hint at the tug and pulled back to quickly shed the spandex material from her
body. Kelley’s mouth watered at Hope’s chest and sat up to kiss her way down from Hope’s collarbone down to her right breast, placing an open mouth kiss on the side of it before dragging her lips from the side to the nipple, swirling her tongue around the hardening bud. She felt Hope attach her hand to the back of her head which urged Kelley on even more. She switched from her right boob to her left, her hand dragging up from Hope’s side to her right breast beginning to lightly squeeze the flesh before giving it a light pinch which earned a moan from the older woman.

Hope took this opportunity of Kelley sitting up to play with the bottom of her tshirt, wanting the fabric separating their bodies to be removed pronto. She lifted it up as much as she could with Kelley still kissing and sucking on her chest. Kelley got the hint and pulled back to let Hope strip the cotton-blended shirt from her upper body.

She heard Hope gasp, most likely at the sight of her braless but when she went to kiss her again she caught the look in Hope’s eyes. Hope lightly pushed her shoulders back down to lay back on the bed as she half-hovered over Kelley’s body, half-sat back on her legs. She saw tears well up in Hope’s eyes and knew this was about the healing incisions.

“Hey, those are battle scars. You fixed me, Hope. You left those for me to remember how strong I was to fight through this and how strong you were to save me.” Kelley spoke softly, caressing Hope’s cheek with the back of her knuckles.

Hope couldn’t voice what she was thinking when she finally saw the marks left behind of one of the worst days of her and Kelley’s lives. She ghostly ran her finger above the straight red line, using those fingers to tilt Kelley’s body to see the three scars on the side of her ribcage. She gently traced over them as well seeing Kelley’s skin erupt in goosebumps at the soft touch.

Hope didn’t know what else to say, so she leaned forward and gently pressed a soft kiss down the 5 inch scar over her heart. Kelley’s eyes welled up with tears at the tender gesture, falling even more in love with her girlfriend who was showing her love so gently and deeply by kissing her scars. Hope pressed careful kisses on the side scars, taking her time to soak in the progress that they’ve made since they first met. Since the operation. Since almost two hours ago.

“I love you and I love your scars…” Hope rasped out, emotional about the story and emotions that were etched into the skin of Kelley’s chest.

“I love you too, more than anything.” Kelley pulled Hope down for a kiss, this one full of love, passion and trust for each other.

As the kiss picked up, so did Kelley and Hope’s need for each other again. Kelley’s hands found Hope’s zipper and button and undid them both, Hope getting the message and quickly pulling them down and kicking them off of her legs. She was only clad in her black boy shorts and the sight made Kelley hungry for her.

Kelley wanted to feel their completely bare bodies pressed against each other and went to pull her sweatpants down until Hope grabbed her hands to stop her.

“Let me.” Hope said against Kelley’s mouth, trailing kisses down her neck, to her chest, down the core of her body stopping right above the waistband of the pants. The kisses getting closer and closer to her center made her skin burn with want. Hope slowly ran her hands down from Kelley’s sides to the front of her body, her short nails barely grazing her lower abdomen. She loved watching Kelley’s body react with her every moment against the younger woman’s body, especially when her hips bucked toward Hope’s hands.

She hooked her fingers into the waistband and slowly dragged the article of clothing down Kelley’s
thighs after she lifted her ass off the bed to help in the process. Hope wasn’t that surprised when she saw that Kelley was wearing Express boxer briefs underneath her sweatpants, a fact that many people didn’t know about the pediatric surgeon; she tended to wear boxers and boy shorts over the usual feminine underwear.

Hope kissed every inch of Kelley’s abs and nipped at the toned stomach and placed openmouthed kisses on her prominent hip bones as she went further and further down her body.

One of Kelley’s sweet spots was her hipbones and the attention Hope was showing them was driving her wild, earning a little whimper to escape her lips.

Hope smiled at the sound, recalling the time Kelley told her about her hips being a spot that drives her mad if kissed, nipped, sucked, touched. Kelley’s body was radiating warmth from the slow buildup that Hope created, wanting to revel in every inch of beautiful freckled skin that made up Kelley. She showed attention to every part of Kelley and loved the breathy whimpers and contraction of different muscles.

“Hope…” Kelley breathed out as Hope ran her hand up Kelley’s leg to her inner thigh, the tracing patterns right below Kelley’s navel. “I need you.”

Hope began to slide Kelley’s underwear down, eyes growing darker at the sight of the wetness growing between her girlfriend’s legs. She could smell how ready Kelley was when she lifted her hips to allow Hope to pull them all the way down.

“Remember, if anything doesn’t feel right in your heart or the rest of your body…” Hope wanted to reiterate her concern, not wanting to take any chances.

“Hope. Please.” Kelley gritted, feeling Hope’s breath hit her right where she needed her.

Hope swallowed at the sight of Kelley’s hooded eyes and her bottom lip caught between her teeth in anticipation. She threaded a hand down into Hope’s hair nudging her mouth down to help her release pent up sexual frustration over the past months.

Hope braced her arms on either side of Kelley’s thighs dipping her head down to run her tongue along the opening of her folds. The sweet and tangy taste was a completely different taste that she had ever experienced in her life. She moaned at how Kelley tasted, the vibrations from her lips causing Kelley to grip Hope’s hair harder and sharply inhale.

Hope licked from the bottom of Kelley’s opening to her clit earning a whimpered moan when she flicked the soft nub. Hope wrapped her lips around her clit, using the tip of her tongue to circle it with a mixture of soft ministrations and firmer flicks.

Kelley bucked her hips into Hope’s mouth as her fingers pulled the hair they were threaded into upwards in the direction to press Hope even closer. Hope had to wrap her arms around Kelley’s thighs to keep her lower body anchored to the bed so that she could continue.

She licked down to the opening of Kelley’s center, sliding her lips down her folds and circling her entrance. Hope slowly entered her long tongue into her girlfriend, arousal building up between her own legs as a loud breathy moan escaped from Kelley’s mouth. She took the loud moan and heels pressing into her upper back that she was on the right track. She swirled her tongue within her entrance, writing the word “love” into the wetness over and over again loving the writhing of Kelley’s body beneath her mouth. She filled Kelley with her tongue, bobbing her head back and forth to pump her tongue in and out of Kelley.
“More, uhhhh Hope,” Kelley rasped out, breathing becoming labored with more and more pleasurable movements, “I need more” Her hips bucked at the feeling of Hope licking back up her folds and flicking her clit once before pulling away completely. A whine fell from Kelley’s lips at the loss of contact but it turned into a guttural moan at the taste of herself on Hope’s tongue and lips against hers paired with Hope entering her with one finger.

Hope continued to deeply kiss Kelley, finding a rhythm within her girlfriend. She felt puffs of hot air leave Kelley’s mouth into hers as she stopped for a second before slamming into Kelley with two fingers. Kelley moaned, arching her back up off the bed into Hope’s. Hope moved her fingers upwards inside of Kelley, hitting her gspot with every motion.

“Faster, baby” Kelley gasped out, feeling the beginning of her release as Hope fingered her.

Hope picked up her movements, moving her hand faster to pump in and out of Kelley. She placed sloppy, quick open mouthed kisses down her body while maintaining a quick pace with her fingers. She grazed her teeth down Kelley’s lower abs and kissed the rest of her way down her girlfriend’s lower body before she dragged her bottom lip over the hardened clit. Hope slightly shifted so she could fuck her girlfriend and suck and lick her clit at the same time.

Kelley’s hands flew back down to Hope’s hair as a white heat was growing underneath her eyelids.

“FUCK!” Kelley screamed at the feeling of Hope flicking her tongue over Kelley’s clit, fingers completely removed to be fully entered in one motion curving to massage the spongey spot inside of her.

Hope knew she was close as she felt her walls clamp around her fingers making it harder to pump in and out of Kelley.

“I’m almost there, baby” She whined out, feeling her lower body shake, the electricity and warmth shooting throughout her body.

Hope loved the way Kelley was coming undone and with one last flick and curve of her fingers at the same time, Kelley stiffened before a loud moan of “Hooope” came from her mouth as she released on Hope’s hand and mouth.

Hope kept her fingers slowly moving within Kelley to let her ride out the tail end of her orgasm licking up the juices, still loving the taste of Kelley.

After the spasms ceased, Hope pulled her fingers out of Kelley and kissed her lips once before placing a kiss on her four scars on her chest. She kissed a still close-eyed and heavy breathing Kelley before lying next to her on the bed, looking at the glowing woman next to her trying to gather her bearings.

“I love you, beautiful.” Hope said, smoothing the hair out of her face and running her fingers down the freckled cheek reveling in her beauty that somehow was enhanced after watching her orgasm.

“Mmm, love you too” She muttered, tilting her head up to kiss Hope, bringing the sheet up to wipe the excess wetness off of Hope’s chin.

Kelley snuggled into Hope’s side, both feeling their love grow even stronger after the intimacy of their afternoon.

It was 3 weeks later that Kelley returned to work as a fully operational surgeon and not just doing
paperwork like she had been for the past week, per Hope’s orders.

She was back in her element and couldn’t be any happier to be surrounded by her friends and colleagues as she worked to help heal and fix children in her wing. She was feeling amazing ever since her and Hope reconciled, feeling closer to her girlfriend with every passing day. And it didn’t hurt that their sex life was amazing now that Kelley was cleared and they got the first time out of the way.

They went on daily walks, spent more time with the dogs as the weather in March was getting nicer, they went out on cute dates at least once a week, even celebrated Valentine’s Day a little late minus the strenuous activity of playing 1v1 soccer against each other. There was a fine line between the right amount of exercise Kelley could handle and overdoing it which ruled out running or playing soccer like she loved doing. She was accepting her situation and its circumstances more and more as the weeks passed. She was happy and thankful that she was alive and that she and Hope were growing closer and their love growing stronger.

As Kelley was approaching Hope’s office for their lunch date, she felt a weird shift in her body that made her feel weak. She tried shaking it off but the sudden movement made her incredibly dizzy as she was about to knock on Hope’s door. The hall was spinning and her body broke out into a sweat as she squeezed her eyes shut and opened them repeatedly to try and lessen the severity of the dizziness. She managed to knock on Hope’s door twice before blackness covered her vision feeling something hold her up before she completely blacked out.

A loud beeping sound was the first thing Kelley noticed as she regained her consciousness. Her eyes were heavy much like they were when she woke up after her heart surgery a month and a half ago. She trained her mind to open her eyes and she blinked to get used to the harsh lighting.

It was like déjà vu as she looked up at the white tiled ceiling of the hospital, hearing the steady beep coming from the heart rate monitor. She felt the nasal cannula in her nostrils supplying her with oxygen and the finger clamp on her left finger to monitor her heart as well as being hooked up the main heart rate monitor. Her right hand was being weighed down and she turned her head to see Hope asleep with her head facing Kelley, her free hand underneath her right cheek.

She slowly moved her hand against Hope’s to wake her but not startle her awake. Hope slowly opened her eyes remembering where she was, lifting her head up from the side of the bed. She made eye contact with Kelley and automatically felt her heart drop at the tired hazel eyes staring back at her.

“What happened?” Kelley rasped out, swallowing at the inevitable dryness in her mouth and throat after being posted up in the hospital.

Hope clenched her jaw willing herself not to cry at the wave of recollection that hit her when Kelley voiced her concerned curiosity.

“You passed out in the doorway of my office and I caught you as you dropped.” Hope cleared her throat, hating the same feeling of watching Kelley unconscious in her arms again. She slowly rubbed Kelley’s hand with her thumb watching Kelley try to piece together what happened.

“I carried you down the hall and placed you on a gurney before Johnson and I rushed you down to the ICU. You were fine. Your heart didn’t stop and you were still breathing, but we wanted to make sure nothing would happen further than that so that’s why you’re in the ICU.” Hope explained hating the fact that they were in similar positions from almost two months ago.
Kelley nodded, appreciating the fact that she wasn’t nearly as bad as she was like last time she was a patient in her hospital.

“We took blood while you were passed about about,” Hope checked her watch, “2 hours ago so that we could get the lab results in a timely manner. I told Johnson I would go down there and bitch out Greg to run your blood and get the results first but he told me I should stay with you while you wake up instead and let him handle it, so…” Hope chuckled at her protective manner but not even regretting the fact that she would do anything or bitch anyone out for Kelley.

“You need to be nicer, Hopey.” Kelley laughed at the nickname but began to violently cough afterwards. Hope quickly poured her a glass of water to try and drink as she continued to cough and wheeze.

“Here, babe,” Hope held the back of Kelley’s head and tilted her head back to get a few drops of water into her mouth the moisten it to get it used to the liquid before taking sips of it. Kelley was finally able to get some water down until she threw it up along with stomach acid.

She grew sweaty and clammy after her coughing fits, spiking her body heat and heart rate. Hope was alarmed and helped her lay back down on the bed before paging the call button for Maria to come into the room.

“Yes, Dr. Solo?” Maria asked, rushing in at a quick pace.

“I need a cooling towel for Kelley’s head, the strong stuff to suppress her cough and for you to page Dr. Johnson now. Please do that first.” Hope rushed out in a serious tone though that Maria knew was urgent.

Maria rushed out of the room and Hope directed her attention back towards a coughing Kelley who was most likely going to throw up bile again at how hard she was straining her body.

“I know you’re feeling shitty Kell. I’m going to get you a cooling towel for your head and a cough suppressant for your throat.” She felt Kelley’s sweaty face that was burning up.

Maria hurried back into the room with a cooling towel and a bottle full of liquid that was meant for Kelley to drink to coat her throat and relax her lungs and throat. Maria laid the cool towel on Kelley’s forehead after she helped her to sit up to drink the medicine. Hope took her stethoscope off to listen to her lungs as she was breathing. Maria took note of her temperature and noticed it didn’t drop much. Hope was about to ask if Johnson replied to Maria before he came into the room.

“Hope, lab results are in.” He stated noticing the sweaty, pale Kelley lying in the hospital bed. Maria jotted something off on her chart before leaving the room so Johnson and Hope could see what was happening.

Kelley was struggling with breathing despite the cough suppressant ceasing her coughing. She watched as Hope left her side to meet Johnson in the middle of the room who held the folder with her lab results in it.

She watched as her girlfriend and good friend stood near the foot of her bed, Hope reading the paperwork as Johnson stared down at his feet, hands in his pant pockets, his face steeled, shoulders hunched.

Hope re-read the paperwork what seemed like dozens of times, eyebrows furrowing closer and closer together with every flip and re-flip of each page. It looked to Kelley that Hope wasn’t pleased with the results that made Kelley’s stomach drop at the sight.
She knew it wasn’t good and based on Hope’s reaction to Johnson touching her shoulder to get her attention, she definitely knew it was bad.

Hope cleared her throat, “Can you have Greg run it one more time and tell him if I don’t get results back in 20 minutes, I will personally beat the shit out of him.” She clenched her jaw, gripping the manila folder in her hand.

She handed it back to Johnson who snuck a quick glance at Kelley before nodding and jogging out the room to run down to the lab to put the results on express.

Kelley was growing weaker, barely able to remove the towel from her forehead that wasn’t cooling her anymore but making her uncomfortable with warm dampness on her skin, like she wasn’t feeling that all over the rest of her body or anything.

Hope took her stethoscope off again before listening to Kelley’s labored breathing and clenched her jaw even tighter with every second that ticked by on the watch she was staring at measuring her heart beat.

She roughly placed the instrument back around her neck before noting how high her heart rate was and that her body temperature was the same at 101 Fahrenheit still. She took in Kelley’s sweaty face, her hospital gown sticking to her chest as her body was clammy.

She met Kelley’s eyes and saw the tired fear written in them as her chest was heaving with each breath she took.

A cold fear ran through Hope’s blood as she slowly accepted the symptoms and signs that led to the original lab results being correct. She stiffened watching a tear escape down Kelley’s cheek, her girlfriend picking up on the symptoms herself as well as the body language and vibes radiating from Hope.

Hope leaned forward and placed a kiss on her love’s forehead, not caring about the sweat that gathered there. She ran her thumb down her cheek and whispered, “It’ll be okay. I always figure it out, right?” She placed a kiss on Kelley’s left cheek leaving her lips to rest on the skin for a few more moments, "I love you."

Kelley closed her eyes growing tired. Hope nodded letting her know it was okay for her to fall asleep. She grabbed the oxygen mask and removed the nasal cannula to place the over the nose and mouth mask on to assist in Kelley’s breathing.

Hope watched as the fogginess from Kelley’s hot exhale mixed with the fresh oxygen and disappearing with every inhale.

She allowed herself to ball her fists up, bringing them behind her head only to look up at the ceiling and trying to ignore the growing discomfort in the back of her throat and the stinging behind her eyes. She took a deep breath and when she went to exhale, a choked sob came from the back of her throat. Hope tried to stifle her sob, but it was so deep that she couldn’t help it. Kelley was passed out and wouldn’t wake up from noise at this point, but Hope didn’t want to appear to be weak or afraid in front of her.

“Hope.” Johnson called her name, softly calling from the doorway gesturing for her to step outside for a moment to read the results again.

Hope quickly wiped the tears away from her face and tried to appear stronger than she was feeling. She grabbed the folder from Johnson, noting how warm the paper was indicating that the results were printed not even 5 minutes ago.
Hope took a deep breath in and flipped the folder open to read over the results that were exactly the same as the first round.

Hope just kept rereading the same numbers and abbreviations over and over again. She watched as a tear dropped onto the chart of Kelley’s blood cell count level in the bottom section of the chart. Her hands started shaking when her blood ran cold at the last line.

“Viral pneumonia: Positive”

Hope threw the papers away from her in rage, “FUCK!!!” She screamed, her throat being strained from how hard she screamed.

“FUCK.” She screamed again, feeling the tears spilling out of her eyes and rage take over. She laced her fingers through her hair, tugging roughly on her scalp as she paced back and forth before stopping in the doorway of Kelley’s room and seeing the love of her life lying in bed knocked out.

Johnson felt his own emotions come to the surface at the realization of the situation not knowing how to get Hope’s attention long enough to even attempt to get her to calm down.

Her own breathing became labored as she felt her cold blood quickly turn into a boiling feeling, not knowing what to do with herself. Hope felt her heart constrict with every thought that ran through her mind trying to figure out what to do next. But all she could think about was the results that she read over and over again all signs leading to one thing.

Kelley’s virus in her lungs was quickly killing her.

Chapter End Notes

Drop me a line to discuss what the fuck just happened!
Chapter 23

Chapter Summary

"I'll see you soon."

Chapter Notes

This is it, homies! A huge thanks to everyone who stuck with me while I wrote my first work on here and commented their kind words of encouragement/support. I'm working on the next work and will post it whenever I complete the first chapter of it. Again, thank you x100000 for being amazing readers. Without further ado...

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It’s been 36 hours since Hope confirmed the diagnosis.

36 hours since she had barely eaten or slept. She hasn’t been home since Kelley was landed in the ICU. She had progressively gotten worse while Hope was working towards figuring out how to fix Kelley this time.

Hope spent all of Tuesday hunched over in the hospital library’s rows of books reading countless diagnosis and treatment books to try and get ideas of what course of action to take. At this point, Hope had her pager and cell phone on the loudest volume in case Maria or her best friends contacted her to notify her about a change in Kelley’s status. She only left the library that day to grab coffee and visit Kelley’s room to see for herself how she was doing.

“Hey there, Squirrel,” Hope greeted softly as she entered the room, “I’m working really hard to get you feeling better soon, that’s why I haven’t been up here all day.” Hope pulled a chair up to Kelley’s bedside, placing her cup of coffee on the side table. She realized that her coffee cup from last night was cleared from the side table noting that maintenance had come in to clean and sterilize the room while she was in the library downstairs.

Hope had spent the night in Kelley’s room until dawn when she couldn’t bear to be left alone with her thoughts anymore. She had spent the 5 or so hours staring at a sleeping Kelley with a heaviness set in her chest and a dull pain in her eyes that formed when she didn’t blink, not wanting to a miss a second of Kelley peacefully sleeping. Hope knew she’d be using Tuesday to research medicine and treatments to fix Kelley hopefully within a day or two. After Thursday, the window of treatment would be much slimmer and the likelihood of Kelley surviving would be next to nothing. Ignoring the chaos that was certain to ensue, Hope took these few hours to allow herself to bask in the serenity of Kelley not suffering while she was sleeping under a small dose of sedation as to not wake up in the middle of the night and cough violently.

Kelley weakly turned her head towards Hope managing a small smile underneath the oxygen mask covering her nose and mouth. She couldn’t speak without having a violent coughing attack, learning that the hard way when Karev came to visit once he heard about her diagnosis.
She tried responding to some questions he threw her way not quite realizing it was hard for her to speak and she started aggressively coughing causing her to choke up bile. He quickly checked her chart to make sure he could administer another dose of cough medicine and helping her relax after it kicked in.

“Damn O’Hara, if you wanted to get high all you had to do was ask for a little bit of pot from my stash, ya know that?” He playfully smirked down at her loving that she managed a smile despite feeling so shitty.

“I’m bouncing ideas off of respiratory therapists and our idiot friends, The Chief, basically any doctor I come in contact with to see if they have any input on which course of treatment to take. There are some trials that have been conducted within the past year that I’m sure I could get my hands on some of the sample treatment… They seem to be successful thus far in their research over at Hopkins…” Hope trailed off, thinking of how she could possibly combine certain medicines with surgery to find the perfect cure for Kelley.

“Hope.” A harsh, gravelly voice interrupted her thoughts of how she was going to fix Kelley this time. Hope’s eyes slowly dragged from the wall opposite of her to meet Kelley’s. She tried not to let her emotions reach her eyes as to not scare or upset her girlfriend. She leaned forward and grabbed Kelley’s hand.

“Yes, baby?” Hope responded, kissing the back of her hand holding it to her mouth afterwards to relish in the feeling of Kelley’s touch.

She watched as Kelley swallowed thickly underneath the mask she had just pulled back down to settle onto her lower face after she picked it up to utter Hope’s name.

Hope took in everything in that moment. The oxygen mask, Kelley’s pale face, the monitors continuously beeping as if they’re mocking her and her failure at finding a solution this far. The white walls, the fluorescent lighting, the smell of sterile hospital floors mixed with a faint aroma from her coffee next to her… She took in every single detail her senses allowed her to.

She held the question of why she was observing every little thing during that moment in her forebrain, but in the back of her mind she knew exactly why she was paying special attention to details. She was scared. Hope was so fucking terrified that she would forget this moment if she even batted an eyelash. She was terrified that if anything were to happen… That she would regret not being able to remember every single observation she made with one of her last days with Kelley.

She saw the slightest movement in the corner of her eye and gave her full attention to the woman shifting in her hospital bed as well as she could with the strength she had mustered up. Hope was waiting for her to do something after she had replied with a “Yes, baby?” minutes prior to her getting lost in her head.

Kelley gripped her hand and tugged her forward indicating that she wanted Hope to lean closer and meet her gaze. Hope obliged and leaned forward, bracing herself on her arm but the pain in her back from hunching over in the library caused her to wince and stretch it out a little bit. She took a different approach and just perched herself on the side of the bed and looked down at Kelley.

Kelley raised her hand to lift the oxygen mask from her mouth again, but Hope tried to remove her hand from it as to tell her to stop. Kelley shook her head and gently moved Hope’s hand away from it to pull it up slowly and took a short breath in.

“Stop…” She breathed out, powering through the pain in her chest making it hard for her to breathe.
Hope looked down at Kelley with her eyebrows knit together in concern and confusion as to why Kelley would say that. What did she do?

Kelley took a few more breaths in, gaging how much she could take before she’d need the mask again. She breathed as deeply she could, knowing her limits that would prevent her from having another round of coughing attacks. She blinked hard and clenched her jaw to keep her emotions at bay for this conversation.

While Hope had her time to find the best treatment plan, Kelley had time between her naps and visits to think about what she wanted and how she thought her case would be best handled. She was a doctor, after all.

She knew her fate; she wasn’t oblivious to the fact that once she contracted viral pneumonia while recovering from a heart attack there was nothing to be done for her. If you have a preexisting medical condition, your chances of surviving viral pneumonia were little to none because antibiotics can’t kill the virus in the lungs. Success rates of these types of cases weren’t high whatsoever and Kelley knew that. She knew what would happen in a few days and she needed to prepare herself and wanted Hope on board.

“Stop searching, Hope” She lowly said making sure her eyes were locked on her girlfriend’s to communicate what she couldn’t verbalize.

Hope froze on the spot, her arm stopping her movement from rubbing Kelley’s leg, back straightened, eyes wide. She knew exactly what Kelley was referring to and she couldn’t believe what she was hearing. Maybe she was sleeping and the words “Stop searching, Hope” were delivered in a nightmare that she was sure she was in right now.

“Kell…” Hope had a slight warning tone in her voice, tilting her head to one side and looking down at the younger woman.

Kelley swallowed thickly again feeling the uncomfortable prickling in the back of her throat. She couldn’t break her resolve now, not when she was trying to convince Hope to give up on her.

“Please…” She felt herself get choked up at the sight of tears gathering in Hope’s eyes threatening to spill with another syllable from Kelley’s mouth.

Hope shot off the bed and stood with her back turned away from Kelley not believing this was actually happening. She wasn’t sleeping, no. She was living in a nightmare, a bad dream that no one could wake her up from. Her blood ran cold much like it did when she read the test results that Johnson handed to her for the second time.

Hope knew exactly what Kelley was asking of her and she wouldn’t accept it.

“No! I just won’t sit here and watch you die!” Hope raised her voice, pointing accusingly at Kelley, feeling her cheeks grow hot and dampen from tears.

Kelley felt a single tear escape her right eye, trailing its way down her cheek and roll off of her jaw, leaving a trail of pain and anguish in its wake. Her breathing became even shallower at the reaction coming from Hope. She looked up at her girlfriend who looked like a volcano that was going to erupt at any moment. Kelley didn’t want to put Hope through this suffering anymore. She didn’t want Hope to exhaust herself from trying to find a treatment that would fix her because she knew that it didn’t exist.

“You are NOT dying, Kelley O’Hara, not on my watch, not again…” Hope felt her heart physically
tear at the memory of Kelley dying for 80 seconds on her operating table and the thought of losing her forever this time.

Hope ran both of her hands through her hair tugging it up into a pony tail roughly. She paced back and forth in front of Kelley’s hospital bed not allowing Kelley to have this mentality and give up so easily.

”Maybe with the pairing of extraction of the alveoli and virazol to prevent the spreading of the virus…” She got lost in her thoughts again trying to add up different combinations of meds and small procedures.

“No, Kelley! Do you really expect me to just sit back and allow you to die? You’re stronger than this! Jesus Christ, you just combatted a heart attack and now you’re ready to just give up?! Just like that?!” Hope was gesturing wildly at Kelley and around the room not knowing how to handle her feelings. She was livid at the fact that Kelley didn’t want to stay alive, she was in pain that her girlfriend was dying, she was full of hate directed towards herself for not finding a treatment yet, she was just heavy with emotion.

Kelley was allowing herself to freely cry at Hope’s words thrown her way feeling guilt and her own grief rise.

“Please.” Her voice cracked mid word as breathing became harder with the sobs that were threatening to overtake her body.

Hope’s anger resolved into sadness and heartbreak hearing Kelley’s voice crack as she pleaded with her. She moved to her bedside and grabbed the oxygen mask to place it back over Kelley’s mouth to help her breathe, only for Kelley to raise her arm and smack the mask out of Hope’s grip.

Hope stared down with wide eyes at Kelley and the fire in her eyes and eyebrows furrowed together in frustration.

“No, I need” She breathed heavily, “I need to say this.” Kelley clenched her jaw and swallowed preparing for this.

Hope sat on the edge of the bed grabbing Kelley’s hand to comfort herself and her girlfriend who desperately needed to say something even though it went against Hope’s want for her to wear the oxygen mask. She nodded to let Kelley know she was ready whenever she was.

“I need you to stop beating yourself up over,” she took a shaky breath in, “over what happened in the past because you saved me…” She audibly swallowed gripping Hope’s hand.

“This isn’t your case to crack or your problem to fix, baby… It’s just time for me to go.” Kelley felt more tears escape, licking her lips as a tear fell on them.

Hope was openly sobbing, her loud cries the only sound filling the room other than the monitors Kelley was hooked up to. She shook her head no, “I can’t. I can’t be the one to just let this happen. Let me fix you, Kell. I can do it for you, do it for us. Please let me fix you.” Hope choked out bringing a shaky hand up to touch Kelley’s cheek.

Kelley couldn’t stop the free flow of her tears if she tried, not knowing what to do after Hope just begged her to continue to seek for a treatment when she wanted to end both of their suffering.

She had the choice to refuse said treatment and end the prolonging of Hope’s grief and cycle she
would find herself in if she continued to torture herself by putting the case on her shoulders. Or she could grant Hope her permission to go back to researching for the fix and be open to receiving the treatment she is presented with.

Kelley knew she had approximately two days left to live. And if she didn’t get treated by the next day around late afternoon, there wouldn’t be any hope left. But the ounce of hope she had left to overcome this and stay alive matched with Hope’s determination and love for her made up her mind.

“Okay” She breathed out nodding her approval.

“Okay? You’re still going to fight this?” Hope asked through tears, grasping Kelley’s hand with both of hers in shock that Kelley agreed to let her find the treatment.

“Yes…” Kelley rasped out, attempting a small smile as Hope pressed a kiss against the back of her hand.

“I love you and I’m going to fix this, I’m going to fix you. I love you, Kell.” Hope pressed another kiss to the back of her hand before leaning down and pressing a kiss to her forehead, smoothing back her hair before placing another, lasting kiss there.

“I love you too, Hopey.” Kelley smiled weakly, a few more tear drops making their descent down the pale, freckled skin.

Hope moved to place the oxygen mask over Kelley’s mouth before giving her forehead one last kiss, standing up and pushing the call button for Maria to enter the room.

Kelley was exhausted from speaking as much as she did, straining her chest and throat from preventing cough attacks. Hope nodded down at her to let her know it was okay to drift off to sleep.

“Yes, Dr. Solo?” Maria questioned, Kelley’s chart in her hands.

“I need you to monitor Kelley every minute of every hour, got that? I will be in the research library and labs to find the best course of treatment. If anything changes, page me, okay? I don’t want her to be left unmonitored at all, so have the nurses rotate if they have other patients to attend to. I need her to hang on for me so that I can figure out how to pull this around.” Hope explained to Maria noticing the serious face she wore as she sharply nodded at the doctor.

”Thank you for everything, Maria. You’ve been nothing but amazing and careful with her, and for that I am extremely appreciative.” Hope managed a small smile, wiping the tears away with the tissue Maria handed her. She chuckled through the subsiding tears taking another look at a resting Kelley before nodding at Maria and heading out on the hunt for the answer she was looking for.

She was determined to save Kelley.

“What about oxygen therapy paired with the newest antiviral medicine? It just came out since the FDA approved. What’s it called?” Johnson snapped his fingers trying to remember, pacing the library with a cup of coffee in one hand, waving his other around in the air.

“Respiratory therapy won’t help her past tomorrow, J. And that drug is aimed for the flu, not her type of virus.” She sighed, hanging her head between her legs as she perched on a step stool left in the
“Any meds that will eradicate the virus even a third of the way? Pain meds can make her comfortable afterwards buying us time for a long-term treatment?” He leaned against a bookshelf, one leg crossed over the other sipping his coffee while pensively thinking about what would actually work.

“The fucking fact that this is viral pneumonia and not bacterial really messes with every treatment I can come up right now. Of course it had to be the hardest type that Kell had to contract.” She sighed in aggravation standing up and looking through a reference book for antiviral medications.

“If it were bacterial we could kill it with antibiotics, I know I know… There has to be something we’re missing though.” Johnson calmly said despite the emotional battle he internally held. Kelley was one of his best friends and it was hurting him that she and Hope were both suffering.

Hope slammed the book closed out of frustration. “Why the fuck can’t there be anything useful in here?!” She forcefully shoved it back onto the bookcase huffing out a sigh at their shortcomings.

“Let’s take a walk. Maybe the answer will come to you as you’re moving.” Johnson suggested, holding his arm out for Hope to lead the way out of the library.

They made their way downstairs and outside to get some much needed fresh air after being pent up in the library for hours bouncing ideas off of each other for how to approach the virus.

“Why isn’t there anything that we can do, Johnson?! I don’t understand why I can never find the answer in time.” Hope roughly rubbed her face.

“Hey, this isn’t all on you, Hope. I’m in this with you too, we’ll figure it out together.” Johnson replied, stretching his neck to meet Hope’s eyes.

Hope bit her bottom lip as she leaned her back against the cool stone of the hospital praying to any higher power to give her an answer to this impossible case to save her girlfriend.

A siren wailed as it pulled up to the hospital grabbing the attention of Hope and Johnson as it approached. The downfall to grabbing air in the back of the hospital was the constant sounds from the ambulances and the bustle of EMTs and ER doctors through the doors.

They saw Carli hop out of the ambulance with a cooler walking with another surgeon from a different hospital. She saw them standing off to the side and noticed the exhaustion and defeat written all over Hope’s face and Johnson who looked like a sad puppy.

“How’s she holding up?” Carli questioned, knowing the answer probably wouldn’t be positive.

“Same status, no progression because I can’t fucking figure out what course of treatment to use.” Hope growled out, pissed at herself for not thinking of something yet.

“Stop beating yourself up. It’s viral not bacterial, so it’s going to take some thinking outside of the box. I know you’ll find something, you always do, Hope. If I can help, let me know. But for right now I have to complete this transplant. Page me if anything happens.” Carli reached out and touched Johnson’s arm to reassure him of his capabilities and sent a nod at Hope knowing she wouldn’t want to be touched.

“She’s right, Solo,” Johnson jerked his head in the direction of Carli walking away, “you always find the solution.” He sipped his coffee wishing he could be of more help to his best friend and attending.
Hope stood there for a little bit chewing on her bottom lip as she ran through the mental list she made of all of the medications and respiratory treatments that they could come up with. With Kelley’s preexisting heart condition, it made treatment that much harder without taking into consideration that it was viral and not bacterial. The reason Kelley was so susceptible to viral pneumonia was the fact that she had a heart condition and she just finished recovery from a heart attack. Hope wanted to remove her lungs and give her new ones at this point to start fresh.

Starting fresh…

“Wait, what if we remove the infection surgically?” Hope’s eyes widen with the possibility that had just hit her.

“What, like extracting the alveoli? They don’t regrow once we take them out. I mean there are studies that show that some of the lung can regrow post-op with helium treatments and gas exchange experiments but that’s a little iffy…” Johnson contemplated the idea.

“What if we find a donor that we could remove their bronchioles and replace Kelley’s? It would decrease the risk during surgery if we did individual alveoli… We could hook up each side to a respirator as we worked on the other side.” Hope thought out loud, convincing herself more and more as she explained what would happen.

“Woah woah woah, Hope, I know this is the biggest breakthrough you’ve had, but you know how many complications there would be. Especially with her heart condition.”

Hope’s glare at Johnson would probably kill him if it could.

“We have a team of the two of us plus McCarthy and Williams in on the transplant, the respirator wouldn’t allow for her lungs to collapse and we have another monitor her heart during the whole duration of the surgery. It would take approximately 8 hours if we did it in a timely manner, not a second over. Give her a fresh start.” Hope was already sold on the idea, hoping she convinced Johnson enough to get him on board.

Johnson played with the idea in his head weighing the pros and cons of the transplant.

“And anesthesia?” He questioned, having fewer concerns as he mentally went through the process than he thought he would at the first mention of it.

“Intravenously.” Hope quickly answered pulling her pager out to page the other cardiothoracic doctors in the hospital that ranked beneath her and Johnson.

“I think we found our treatment.” Johnson couldn’t help his growing smile, eager to fix Kelley.

Hope was going to fix Kelley, she had no other choice.

“You better hang in there, dude. Who else is going to help keep these kids entertained while they’re waiting for their surgeries and transplants? I don’t play a pirate like you do, Cap’n Kelley!” Karev said the last bit in a pirate voice making his pointer finger into a makeshift hook.

Kelley chuckled underneath the oxygen mask not making the mistake of leaving it off when Karev
came to visit her. She shook her head at Karev’s horrible pirate voice noting that her impression was much better.

They both stopped laughing and just looked at each other for a second. Karev leaned over and grabbed her bicep gently.

“You’re going to be just fine, kid. Hope would never let anything happen to you on her table, okay? You got this.” The sincerity in his voice made Kelley’s eyes well up with tears. The two of them had been through so much within the past few months, their closest moment being Karev’s visitation the hour after Kelley had woken up after her bypass surgery. He cried when he saw Kelley’s eyes locked onto his, thankful that his best friend and peds buddy pulled through after manually pumping her heart and breathing life into her limp body.

She nodded and brought her hand up to do their little handshake that one of their patient’s, Jake, had come up with and made them do whenever they came to his room for rounds and it stuck ever since.

He smiled down at her, wiping away a stray tear as a voice spoke up from the doorway.

“Karev, it’s time to bring her down.” Johnson called out to him, not wanting to interrupt their moment but time was running down to get Kelley into the OR before the transplant team came to deliver the organ.

“You ready for this?” He asked the younger surgeon, holding his hand out for her.

Kelley nodded and put hers in his as he shook it and winked down at her. He took a step back and let the nurses remove the IV from the hanger and unhook the wires of the monitors to transport her downstairs easily.

Johnson stood off to the side as Karev walked towards the door to stand beside him. They watched as Kelley was rolled down the hall towards the elevator before Johnson spoke up.

“Did you contact her friends and family?” He nervously chewed on his thumb nail, grimacing when he realized his nasty nervous habit.

“Yeah, the fam is on the next flight over and Kelley’s friends will be here in a couple of hours. You okay, man?” He took in Johnson’s nervous body language.

“Yeah…” He let out a deep sigh, “I just hope this works.” He anxiously darted his eyes down at his best friend wringing his hands together.

“She’s a warrior and Solo is nothing short of a miracle worker. You’re going to kick ass.” Karev clapped his shoulder and moved to leave the room stopping when Johnson’s hand laid on top of his.

They made eye contact and smiled with fear and hope in their eyes, both knowing what the other was thinking.

The OR was prepped, the bronchioles ready to be transplanted after their current harvest from a donor’s body, the doctors and nurses as well as the anesthesiologist were scrubbed in. Everything and everyone was on hold per Hope’s directions. She was the lead of the surgery and made the decisions which left everyone else to follow her instruction. The doctors and nurses were prepped on the procedure and once word got out, there was a crowd of doctors in the observation room upstairs
watching the 8 hour surgery.

Hope looked down at Kelley who had her eyes clenched shut as she lied on the table, her breathing visible from the fog inside of the oxygen mask.

“Hey Squirrel,” Hope prompted hoping Kelley would open her eyes to look up at the older doctor. Hope ran her gloved finger down her face, one of her favorite movements against the woman’s skin. Kelley slowly opened her eyes, tears apparent.

“It’ll be okay, I have the very best on my team and have ran through the procedure at least 20 times before I called the transplant team. I’m prepared this time, Kell. I’m going to fix you without any hesitation. I’ll be here every single step making sure everyone is making every cut accurately and perfectly. I’ll take care of you, baby, okay?” Hope felt herself get emotional at her little pre-op speech to calm Kelley’s nerves down.

Kelley raised her hand to the oxygen mask and lifted it enough for Hope to hear her speak.

“I love you, Yolo.” Kelley rasped out, throat hoarse from the dry oxygen she was inhaling.

Hope’s heart constricted with those three words followed by her nickname coming from her love’s mouth. Hope chuckled at her beautiful girlfriend, wiping the two tears that managed to escape her eyes with the back of her surgical gown. She caressed Kelley’s cheek as the anesthesiologist nodded at her that it was time to insert the anesthetic via IV.

“I love you too, Squirrel. I’ll see you soon.” Hope said watching Kelley’s smile fade as she was being sedated.

Hope’s eyes traveled from the monitor that measured Kelley’s heart beat and rate to Johnson’s bright eyes from across the table. He nodded once letting know he was ready for this.

The OR nurse pulled Kelley’s gown down and Hope reached out and traced the scar above Kelley’s heart, letting the skin underneath her gloved finger flood her mind with remembrance of the strength and pain it took for the two of them to grow their love and solidify their connection that they had made almost 7 months ago.

Hope removed her finger from the beautiful scar and took a deep breath in. She held her right hand out for the OR nurse.

“10 blade.”

Chapter End Notes

I had to leave off with one last cliffhanger, right? xx Krash

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