Make a Sound
by BelleMagician

Summary

Life hasn’t always been easy for Juliette Morrison, but she feels like now her luck might finally be turning around. Having booked a screen test for what could quite possibly be her first big picture film ever, she couldn’t be more ecstatic… until she falls face first into the audition room, right in front of Henry Cavill’s feet.

Notes

English is not my native language, and though I’m reasonably fluent, mistakes are always a possibility. So if you encounter any, please let me know so I can correct them and learn from them. Also, I know next to nothing about Hollywood, nor do I claim to, so most of the stuff concerning all that business has been made up or altered to move the story along. That said, happy reading!
Saturday, March 5, 2016.

I nervously rubbed my sweaty palms over my jeans, my best friend definitely not helping my nerves any.

“Are you nervous?” Hanna asked. “I mean, of course you are. This could be your big break. Oh my god, what if this movie is a box office hit? You could be raking in big money. And probably so many other movies. Can you just imagine? My best friend being a big Hollywood actress. Oh my—”

“How much is the budget?”

“Hanna, please stop rambling,” I near-begged. “And yes, I’m nervous.” Actually, I was on the verge of having an anxiety attack, but decided it best not to tell her.

My best friend at least had the decency to look embarrassed. “I’m sorry.” She twirled a lock of her long wavy blonde hair around her finger. “I’m just really nervous for you.”

I gave her a half smile. “It’s okay. Just don’t get too far ahead of yourself. I don’t even have the part yet.”

“I know. It’s all just so exciting, you know? You’ve never gotten so far in the auditioning process with such a big budget movie like this. How many girls are still left?”

“Other than me? Four.”

“Holy shit, Jules. You’re so close!”

I allowed myself one brief moment to smile—to hope. “I know. I have to test with my potential costar today, and I think it all kind of hinges on that. So I just hope we have good chemistry.”

“Who is it?” Hanna asked, leaning forward with an excited glint in her eyes. “Is he hot?”

“I don’t know if he is. They actually haven’t told me who he is, but I guess I’ll find out soon enough.”

Hanna’s eyes widened as they fell on the clock behind me. “Or never if you don’t leave now. You can’t be late, or they might not even let you in.”

I turned my head to look at the clock myself and cursed. “Shit. You’re right. Wish me luck?” I asked, standing up and snatching my bag off the table.

“Good luck,” she said, pulling me in so tight a hug it nearly hurt. “You’ll knock ‘em dead, I just
know it.”

I nodded, though I didn’t really share her faith in me. I gave her one last shaky smile and hurried out the door. I was so nervous and on edge that a car door slamming a few feet away from me nearly set me off. I got into my car, putting my hands on the steering wheel as I took a deep breath. *I am stronger than my anxiety. I can do this.* I slowly nodded to myself and put my key into the ignition, turning it.

The drive from Venice Beach to Hollywood was about forty minutes, but traffic could push that well past an hour, and I did not want to be late. I was not yet an established name in Hollywood, and I didn’t want to start my career by being known for being tardy.

After cursing nearly my entire way through traffic, I finally reached the studio where the auditions were being held. I hastily grabbed my script, locked the car, doubled back for my purse, locked my car again, and rushed my way inside, three minutes to spare. I walked up to the bored looking receptionist and gave her a polite smile. “Hi, I’m—”

“State your name and business please,” she interrupted me, and I noticed she was stereotypically chewing bright pink bubblegum.

“Uh, I’m Juliette Morrison. I’m here for my screen test for *If You Love Someone.*”

She typed a few things into her computer and nodded. “One floor up.” That was all she was willing to share before she grabbed her phone and started checking Facebook right in front of me.

“Oo-kay…” I muttered under my breath. “How professional.”

I walked up the stairs and thanked the stars when I found signs pointing to the room the screen test was being held in. I followed them, ending up at a waiting room-like space filled with four other women. They all looked similar to each other, and similar to me, too, I realized. All were reasonably tan and had brown hair like mine, though some had curls, and only one had straight hair, like me. Three of them I remembered seeing in either a movie or a TV show before, leaving only one of them unfamiliar to me. I gave them a tentative smile and took place in one of the chairs. They gave me unimpressed looks in return, making my heart sink.

If they were unimpressed with me, what would the producers think? The director?

I tried to shake it off and instead focused on my script, the part I would be doing in just a couple of minutes.

The silence in the room was broken when a door opened and a middle-aged woman poked her head out. “Gina Adams?” she inquired.

The girl I hadn’t recognized stood up, straightened her skirt, and walked into the room with her head held high. She was in for about ten minutes before she came out again, looking absolutely stunned.

“Is something wrong?” one of the other girls asked her.

Gina looked at her with wide eyes. Once the question seemed to have registered, she shook her head. “No,” she squeaked, and she hurried away, leaving us wondering just what the hell had happened inside that room.

“Elisabeth Grant?”

One of the more haughty looking girls stood up and strode inside the room, seemingly determined to
not be deterred by Gina’s reaction. It seemed to have worked, because when she returned, she looked a lot less shocked than Gina. But as soon as the door closed behind her, she grabbed her phone, muttered, “Oh my God,” and started texting like crazy.

The two others were called before me, having similar reactions, and as I was the only one left in the waiting room, I grabbed my compact mirror from my purse and hurriedly checked my reflection.

Bright green eyes looked back at me, and I hated that I could see nervousness there. My face was completely free of makeup, just as they’d requested, and I thanked my lucky stars for not having any pimples today. I checked if there was anything in my teeth (which there wasn’t—thank God) and found nothing else wrong with my appearance, so I put the mirror back where it had come from.

Just in time, too, because just then the door opened and Michelle Kelley came out. She gave me a knowing smile, said, “Good luck,” and left.

What was that supposed to mean? Did that mean she was sure she had this down? Or did she think I wouldn’t be able to handle myself in there?

I didn’t have time to contemplate the meaning behind her words any longer, because the door opened again and that same woman who’d called the others said, “Juliette Morrison?”

I stood up, took a deep breath, and walked into the room with my shoulders pushed back and my head held high. Inside the room were one cameraman, the casting director, two producers, the director, and the guy I would be playing opposite of.

He was gorgeous. He had dark brown, curly hair, striking blue eyes, a jaw that could cut glass covered with a light stubble and beautifully shaped lips. He was none other than Henry Cavill.

I would be playing opposite freaking Superman? Now I was beginning to understand the other girls’ reactions.

And then, because it was me and I had apparently used up all my luck for the day, I tripped over my own two feet and lay sprawled on the floor, right in front of him. “Fuck!” I cursed under my breath, and then, realizing that word wasn’t all too polite, I hoped no one had heard me. As I lay there on the floor, I couldn’t help but replay Hanna’s words in my head. *Good luck. You’ll knock ‘em dead, I just know it.* More like knock myself out with my own clumsiness. Ignoring the helpful hand in front of me, I stood up on my own, certain my whole head was beet red.

“What are you okay?” Henry asked, his eyes wide.

“Oh, yeah, I’m fine, thanks.” Fuck my life. I tried to wipe the embarrassment off my face and gave everyone a confident smile, hearing my mom’s voice in my head. *No matter what situation you’re in, appear confident and people will think you are.* “Hi, I’m Juliette Morrison,” I said, shaking the hands of everyone I hadn’t met yet.

I shook Henry’s hand last. His shake was firm, but his skin surprisingly soft. “It’s nice to meet you. I’m Henry,” he said, his words coming out in an amazing British accent.

As if I didn’t know that. I hadn’t exactly been living in a cave the past few years. But I smiled politely at him like it was all new information, trying hard not to blush or think about how attractive he was.

“Well, let’s start,” one of the producers said. “I assume you’ve prepared the scene?”

“Yes, of course.”
“Go right ahead.”

I took a deep breath and faced Henry. And suddenly I wasn’t Juliette Morrison anymore. I was Amelia Brenner and I was pissed at Noah Rogers. “If you didn’t want me to go out with Ambrose, why didn’t you do something about it? I am so sick of you acting so jealous all the time, when really, you missed your chance and you know it!”

Henry glared right back at me. “I’m not jealous, and you even trying to suggest that is way over the line, Amelia. What’s really the problem is that Ambrose is an asshole, and you’re refusing to see it.”

“Why do you even care about me dating an asshole? You seem to have no problem whatsoever dating women that are less than nice to me. Somehow you always conveniently turn a blind eye to that.”

He scoffed. “All the girls I dated since I met you were always nice to you.”

“When you were around, maybe. But as soon as you were out the room, the threats would start. Especially that Melanie girl was bad. Did you know she threatened to shave my eyebrows off if I didn’t stop hanging out with you?”

He stared at me for a moment before busting out a laugh. “She didn’t.”

“She did! See what I mean? You’re about as attentive as a freaking teaspoon.”

He sighed, rubbing a hand over his face. “You’re right. But you know I’m right about Ambrose. He’s an asshole and a known cheater. Probably a meninist, too,” he said, disgust dripping from his voice. “Why did you even agree to go out with him?”

I stared at him, refusing to admit it was to make him jealous. “I just… I don’t know.”

He shook his head. “You know what? Never mind. If you want to make a huge mistake by going out with him, then go right ahead. I don’t even care anymore.”

And just like that, we were Henry and Juliette again. I blushed a little once I realized how close we’d gotten and took a step back. He was smiling, but the other people in the room were absolutely unreadable. The director gave me a short nod. “Thank you. We’ll get back to you in a week.”

I stared. That was it? “Thank you.” I gave Henry a small smile, saying, “It was nice to have met you,” and walked out of the room.

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The drive back home passed by in a blur. I could’ve hit a person and not noticed. My mind was still in that room with Henry and the crew. I was going over my performance, wondering—praying—I hadn’t done anything stupid other than that horrid fall that still had my cheeks blazing. I could hardly remember any of it.

Hanna was basically bouncing from the walls when I got home. She fired questions at me so fast I barely had time to answer them. The only time she was rendered speechless was when I told her that, if I got the part, my costar would be Henry Cavill. In true Hanna McLynn fashion, though, she recovered quickly, asking me questions like if he was nice, if he was as muscular as in Man of Steel, and questions like if he smelled nice or not (to which I replied that yes, he smelled very nice).

Sadly, I couldn’t stay around all day to answer her endless array of questions, because I had a job to get to. I was a waitress in a restaurant in Venice Beach, because sadly, as Hanna had reminded me
earlier, I hadn’t hit my big break just quite yet. I needed something to pay the bills, and waitressing wasn’t ideal, but at least it brought in some money. I quickly put on some makeup, put my hair up in a ponytail, changed my outfit and said goodbye to Hanna before heading out.

My shift started at four, and it was already quite crowded inside the restaurant, people coming in for late lunches or early dinners. I went in through the back and said hello to my colleagues before putting on my apron and grabbing my notepad and wallet.

As the time passed, the restaurant got more and more crowded, and before I knew it, I was racing from table to table. Strands of hair had escaped my ponytail and were really starting to annoy me because they kept getting in my eyes, but I didn’t have any time to redo it. I probably looked like a mess, but hardly had time to think about it. But then I saw him, and it was all I could think about.

None other than Henry Cavill walked into the restaurant, and—naturally—sat down right in the middle of my section. I did a one eighty and marched right back to the kitchen, feeling my face go bright red. I discarded all my stuff and grabbed my phone instead, typing up a text to Hanna.

Henry Cavill is in the restaurant. I repeat, HENRY FUCKING CAVILL IS IN THE RESTAURANT.

She was quick to reply, like always.

oh my god!! what u gonna do?

He’s in my section. I have to go up to him.

AWKS! can’t u ask someone else to cover for u?

No! Everyone’s busy. HELP!

stay calm. u can do dis.

I rolled my eyes, but put my phone back in my pocket and headed back into the main restaurant with my head held high. With a pleasant smile on my face, I walked up to his table.

Henry was sitting with a friend, talking animatedly. They didn’t even notice me at first, not until I said, “Hi, welcome to Harvey’s. Can I get you anything?”

Henry looked up first, his eyes widening when he recognized me. “Juliette?”

Ah, crap. He remembered me. I guess it had only been a few hours since our screen test, and my fall must’ve made me quite memorable. “Uh, hi, Henry.”

“You work here?” he asked with that delicious accent of his.

I blushed. “Uh, yeah… A struggling actress has got to make her money somehow, right?”

He smiled. “I suppose so.”

“So, uh…” I stammered, blushing once I realized I’d said ‘uh’ way too much already. “Can I get you guys anything to drink?”

They gave me their orders, and, feeling like the biggest idiot ever, I returned to the kitchen to get their drink orders back.
Omg.

did he recognize u?

Yes.

OMG.

Yeah.

so????? what did he say?????????????

He asked if I worked here, and I said I had to make money somehow and then he said ‘I suppose’ and now I feel really embarrassed.

OMG.

He probably thinks I’m really stupid. I probably won’t get the role anyway.

yes, u will, u’ll see.

Rolling my eyes at you right now. But I gotta go.

I shoved my phone in my pocket again and grabbed the drinks for Henry and his friend. The entire way to their table, I focused harder than usual on not tripping with the tray balanced on the palm of my hand. I breathed a sigh of relief when I arrived unscathed.

I set their drinks in front of them with a smile on my face, like my inner turmoil was nowhere to be felt. “Here you go. Have you decided what you want to eat?”

Henry smiled back at me. “Do you have any recommendations?”

“If you like steak, our rib eye is really good. And though I steer clear of all seafood in general, I’ve heard on multiple occasions that our sea bass is really good.”

There was a smile in Henry’s eyes as he said, “I’m not too big a fan of seafood, either. But I’ll take you up on that rib eye.”

I turned to Henry’s friend, who said, “I’ll take the sea bass.”

Henry snorted, and I couldn’t help a small smile as I wrote it down. “Coming right up.” I gave them another warm smile and walked to the kitchens to give their order to the chefs, my face contorting into an uncomfortable grimace once my back was turned to them.

“Oh my God, Jules! Is that Henry effing Cavill at one of your tables?”

I turned to Chelsea, one of my coworkers and a friend of mine. “Yeah, Chels, that’s Henry Cavill.”

“Why the long face?” she asked, tucking a lock of platinum blonde hair behind her ear. “Helping a star as hot as him is the ultimate goal here.”

“Because earlier today, I screen tested with him and now I’m his waitress. It’s awkward.”

Chelsea’s eyes widened, and she nearly dropped her notepad. “Holy shit, no way! You’re gonna be in a movie with him?” She fanned herself. “I might die,” she squeaked.
I pulled a face. “Don’t get your hopes up. I might not even get the part. There were four others there, three of which who definitely have more experience than me.”

“It’s not always about experience, you know,” she said wisely, sticking her notepad in the front pocket of her apron just in case I might shock her again. “You’re a great actress, and that’s what really counts.”

I gave her a small smile. “Thanks for the pep talk, Chels, but I really have to get back now.”

“Get back to making moony eyes at Henry, you mean,” Chelsea teased.

“I wasn’t making moony eyes at him,” I hissed, feeling myself grow red. I mean, had I been? I’m pretty sure I hadn’t.

She patted my shoulder. “Don’t worry, hon. He’s into you, too.”

Chelsea left the kitchen, leaving me standing there, numb. Her words were on repeat in my head, only feeding the paranoia that had started ever since I saw Henry walk into the restaurant.

I shook my head as if it could shake off the thoughts and walked back into the main restaurant, my head raised confidently. I might not feel too confident, but Chelsea hadn’t been wrong about one thing: I was a great actress, and I wasn’t about to let Henry know his presence bothered me. Or Chelsea, for that matter.

I tended to the other customers, smiling and chatting with them, all the while keeping an eye on Henry and his friend. They looked to be entangled in a deep conversation, but I kept noticing Henry looking my way. Every time our eyes met, Chelsea’s words echoed in my head. Don’t worry, hon. He’s into you, too. But how could he be? I was just a failed, broke actress trying to make ends meet by working a shitty waitressing job, and he was… Well, he was literally Superman.

When I returned to the kitchen, Henry and his friend’s food was done, so I grabbed the plates, took a shaky breath, and headed out there. When I reached their table, his friend looked at Henry with a knowing smile while Henry smiled sweetly at me, his face completely unreadable. What the hell was going on?

“A rib eye steak,” I said, setting the plate down in front of Henry, “and a sea bass. Let me know if you need anything else.”

Giving them another smile, I turned back to the kitchen, screaming on the inside. I never really fared well in uncomfortable situations, and I was proving that more and more. I didn’t even know what to say to him. I made a fool of myself during our screen test, and now I was only continuing to do the same. I didn’t dare think about what he must think of me now.

Still, though, I had a job to do. Two men had just sat down in my section, two tables away from Henry and his friend, and I approached them hesitantly, noticing they were drunk. “Good evening and welcome to Harvey’s. Can I get you anything to drink?”

One of the men, a blond guy who could be cute if he hadn’t given me the creeps, wrapped his arm around my waist and pulled me closer. “You, my dear, can give me anything you like.”

“Sir, I’m gonna have to ask you to remove your hand and let me go.”

“Oh, this old hand?” he asked mischievously, and it snaked lower, until it cupped my butt.

“Sir,” I warned, squirming uncomfortably in his hold. He still wouldn’t let go, only holding on to me
even tighter.

“Hey!” a familiar voice said. “The lady doesn’t like it. Now let her go and leave.”

Now that he was distracted, I was able to squirm out of the man’s grip. He twisted around in his seat and glared at Henry. “Yeah, what are you gonna do ‘bout it?”

Henry rose to his full six foot one, incredibly muscled frame. He looked threatening even to me. “You don’t want to know.”

Recognition lit in the drunk man’s eyes. “Hey, you’re—”

“Don’t kick a scene, just get out quietly,” Henry interrupted him. “Your advances aren’t wanted here. And if I ever hear about you coming back here, there will be consequences.”

Getting threatened by Superman, of all people, would be intimidating to anyone, and it worked on the two drunk men as well. They hastily scrambled to their feet and scurried out of the restaurant. Needing to have something to do, I pushed their chairs back under the table.

I jumped at the touch of a gentle hand on my arm. “Hey, are you okay?” Henry asked softly. “He didn’t hurt you, did he?”

I gave him a tentative smile, surprised at the electricity I felt from his touch. “No, he didn’t. You can be quite scary, by the way.”

He smiled sheepishly. “I wasn’t actually going to do anything to him. Plus side of being an actor, I suppose.”

“Well, thank you. I appreciate you standing up for me.”

“Hey, any time. And are you sure you’re okay?”

I smiled at him a little more confidently. “Yeah, I’m sure. Believe it or not, but that’s not the first time it happened. Probably won’t be the last either.”

“Oh, I believe it.”

“So little faith in your own gender, huh?” I joked.

He gave me a wry smile. “Men can be arseholes sometimes.”

“Yes, they can. But really, I’m fine. You should probably get back to your steak. Wouldn’t want it to get cold.”

*I wouldn’t want your steak to get cold? Really, Juliette?*

He shook his head a little disbelievingly. “If you’re sure…” After another smile and a nod from me, he said, “Okay. If there’s another drunk guy I need to take care of for you, just let me know.” He was smiling, but he sounded deadly serious, too.

A little flustered, I watched him walk back to his own table.

My shift passed by quite uneventfully after that, apart from Chelsea sending rapid fire questions at me about what had happened with Henry and ‘molester dude.’ I was as vague as I could be and went back out to the restaurant to avoid any more questions.
I was sad to see Henry leave once he was done eating, but what really shocked me was the check he’d left behind. He’d given me a five hundred dollar tip like it was nothing (which, for him, it probably was) and written on the receipt, “Thanks for the suggestion. The rib eye was delicious.” His script was elegant and a little tilted.

All through the rest of my shift, I couldn’t wait to go home and tell Hanna all about what had happened. When I got there, she was bouncing off the walls again, remarkably similar to when I’d gotten back from my screen test. She freaked out when I told her about him defending my honor, and even more when I showed her the receipt.

“Oh my God, Jules, this is… This is just holy shit, that’s what it fucking is.”

“Believe me, I know. But why the huge tip? Like, does he feel sorry for me because he knows I won’t get the part? Or does he feel sorry for me because I told him I’m a struggling actress? Or does he just always do things like this?”

“You know what? Don’t over analyze this too much,” Hanna said wisely. “Just wait until next week. You’ll get the call that you got the part, and then you can question him about the tip all you want.”

I gave her a wavering smile. “I wish I shared your faith in me.”

Chapter End Notes

If you're still here, thank you so much for reading! I have every chapter mapped out, so I'll be posting a new chapter every Friday. So... hope to see you next week!

The lyrics at the start of the chapter are Great Big World by Ron Pope.
Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

As promised, another chapter! Again, thank you so much for sticking around. Happy reading!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

You’re out of your mind

To think that I

To think that I can keep you

Out of mind

Friday, March 11, 2016.

“Oh my God, this is really cute!” Hanna exclaimed, holding a pale blue skater dress out to me.

I shook my head. “We’re here to look for a present for Colin, not shop for ourselves, remember?”

She pouted. “But it’s cute…”

I examined the dress. It had short sleeves, a flowing skirt that would fall just above her knees and a white collar. “It really is, yeah. Are you gonna wear it tonight?” I asked. Colin’s birthday party was tonight, and we’d admittedly been a little late in finding a present for him. Which was also why I tried to hurry us along as quickly as possible, even though it was still only eleven a.m. and it would start around nine p.m. But still, a girl needed some time to look cute.

“I might. But hey, if I’m gonna get something new for tonight, so should you. And you should make it extra fancy, to celebrate that you’ll get the part tomorrow.”

I groaned, feeling myself get nauseous all over again. “Don’t remind me that tomorrow’s the day. I don’t get why you’re so confident in me. There’s a pretty big chance I won’t get the part.”

“I’m so confident in you because I actually see you as you are. Really, hon, I love you, but you can get really insecure sometimes.”

“Yeah, well, you didn’t see me stumble into the room like a complete moron.”

She chuckled. “That may be true, but I’m sure the fact that your acting is brilliant counts higher than your clumsiness.”

“You know what?” I said uncomfortably. “Let’s not talk about it anymore. Let’s just find me a dress and go find Colin a present.”

She sighed. “Fine. But I’m so gonna say ‘I told you so’ tomorrow.”
I shook my head, fully intent on ignoring that last statement, and moved to another rack of dresses. But the more I searched, the more I couldn’t find anything I liked. There were enough cute dresses to be found, sure, but not really anything that I just needed to have. So eventually, after browsing through the racks for about fifteen minutes, I said, “I’ll just try another store. Do you want to try that on for size?”

As Hanna went into the fitting room, I waited for her outside, taking out my phone to check my messages. Most of my messages were from my friends regarding the party tonight, and a text from Keegan asking me if I would bring the whiskey tonight reminded me that I still needed to stop by the liquor store as well.

When Hanna reemerged from the fitting room, she was wearing the pale blue dress. She smiled as she twirled around for me. “What do you think?”

“It looks gorgeous on you,” I told her. “The length is perfect as well.”

She pulled a face. “It really sucks that I can’t wear long dresses. Sometimes I really envy you for that, you know.”

I laughed. “It’s not my fault your super short and I’m not.”

“Hey!” she said, laughing as she swat her hand at me. “You’re mean.”

I just stuck my tongue out at her as she got her five foot two frame back into the fitting room to change back into her own clothes. When she returned, she paid for the dress and we went back outside.

We walked past the other shops in the mall aimlessly, looking in the windows for potential cute outfits. Nothing really spoke to either of us—until we passed a store that sold all kinds of vintage outfits, and I dragged my best friend inside with me. I’d always been fascinated with ’50s fashion, and yet I hardly had any clothes like that. If Hanna wanted me to treat myself, then I was going to buy myself a ’50s-style dress.

“This is kinda cute,” she said, holding up a flowing skirt covered in polka dots. “You’d have to wear a petticoat under it of course, but you could pull it off.”

“It is cute,” I said. “But I want a dress.” I smiled as something caught my eye. “Something like that.” I pointed at a mannequin wearing a black pencil skirt dress. It had a deep V-neck and sleeves a little past the elbows. It was love at first sight.

“That thing is gonna do great things to your boobs,” Hanna commented, probably already picturing me in the dress.

I blushed. I hadn’t even thought about that. “You think so?”

“Oh honey, I know so.” She grinned. “You should wear it on your first day on set. Wanna bet Henry’s eyes are gonna bug out of his skull?”

I fought another blush as I rolled my eyes. “No, he will not. Because he’s not into me and I might not even get the part so he’s probably never gonna see me in the dress anyway.”

“He may not be into you now,” Hanna said, choosing to ignore my comment about not getting the part, “but he’s still a man. And last I heard, he’s straight. Any straight man that sees you in that dress will have a spontaneous heart attack, and any woman that sees you will have an existential crisis.”
I laughed. “It won’t make me look that good.” But still, I went up to the rack that held the dress and sought for my size. I found it quickly and Hanna nearly pushed me into the empty fitting room to try it on. It almost surprised me that she didn’t go in with me.

I hung the dress on a peg on the door and took off my white skinny jeans and denim blouse. Leaving my heels on, I stepped into the dress and pulled it on, tugging the zipper on the back all the way up and securing the hook. It fit perfectly, and, just like Hanna had predicted, it did great things for my boobs. Our earlier conversation made me wonder what Henry would think about it, which was absolutely ridiculous. I’d only met him twice; there was no reason for him to be on the forefront of my mind so much. And yet, he was.

I stepped out of the fitting room to show the dress off to Hanna. She was speechless for a second as she took me in, gesturing for me to turn around with her finger. “Oh my God, babe. That dress does even better things for your boobs than I imagined. And your butt… Holy crap.”

I smoothed the skirt down, even though it was perfectly smooth already. “Isn’t it a little too much for Colin’s party, though? I mean, you know his birthdays are always super laid back.”

“Who cares if it’s too fancy for his birthday? You’ll have even him drooling, and he’s gay as hell.”

I snorted. “So you think I should buy it?”

“If you don’t, I’ll buy it behind your back and sneak it into your closet. Jules, you were born to wear that dress.”

“All right, all right, I’ll take it,” I said, laughing as I returned to the fitting room to change back into my jeans and blouse.

When I returned, the dress slung over my arm, Hanna said, “You know what that dress needs? A new pair of heels.”

“But I already have enough—”

“Nope,” she interrupted me. “You’re getting new shoes.”

I just shook my head helplessly as she guided me to the shoe section, but quickly forgot any protests I might have had once I saw all the different kinds of heels. I was a shoe addict, and I knew it.

“I hate you,” I told her before eagerly stepping toward the first shoe that caught my attention.

After trying on way too many pairs, I finally found a black pair of heels with a platform and a T-strap. They were simple and elegant, matching my dress perfectly.

Putting the shoes back in the box, I gathered my stuff and paid for everything at the register, leaving the store with a bigger shopping bag than initially intended.

“What’s next?” Hanna asked as we started wandering around the mall again.

“We could go to a bookstore, see if they have any art stuff.”

“We could get him one of those coloring books for adults as a joke,” she suggested, a humorous glint in her eyes. “He’d like it, too.”

I smiled. “He probably would, yeah.”

Hanna hooked her arm through mine and we walked over to Barnes & Noble together, but we
quickly got split up once we were inside. We both were avid readers, and we were in our own worlds the moment we crossed the threshold of any bookstore. I let my fingers glide over the spines, waiting until a title would jump out to me. My fingers itched to buy more books, even though I already needed to invest in another bookcase. I really had to cross that off my to-do list before I bought even more books, but it was really hard to refrain myself. Before I knew it, I held multiple titles in my arms and I was already reading the back of another book.

Deciding that the book didn’t interest me enough and that I really should keep myself in check when it came to buying more books, I put it back where I’d found it and stepped away from the shelf, bumping into someone standing behind me.

“Oh my God, I’m sorry!” I exclaimed, trying desperately and failing to keep a hold on my books. They all fell to the floor, scattering everywhere. I crouched on the floor to pick them up, the person I’d bumped into bending down to help me. “Oh my God,” I squeaked once I saw his face.

“My, Juliette, are you stalking me?” Henry asked, a smile in his astonishingly blue eyes as he handed me my books.

Flustered, I accepted the books and stood up again. “You were the one who showed up at my work, so I should be asking you that question.”

He laughed. “I suppose so. So you like to read, huh?” he asked, gesturing at the six books I was holding.

“What gave it away?” I joked, trying helplessly not to blush.

“Hey, Jules, I found the—oh.” I turned around to find a very surprised Hanna. Very much unlike her, she blushed. “I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to interrupt.”

“It’s okay,” Henry said, a polite smile shaping his lips. “I’m Henry.” He shook her hand, which was quite a feat, considering that Hanna was also holding a pile of books in her arms.

“Yeah, I know,” she said bluntly, and then blushed again. “I’m Hanna, Juliette’s roommate and best friend.”

“It’s nice to meet you.”

“Yeah, you too. Anyway, so sorry to interrupt, but I found those coloring books for adults.”

“Ah, looking for some art therapy?” Henry asked me.

“Uh, no. It’s for Colin. It’s his birthday today and I haven’t found a gift yet.”

“I see. Is he your boyfriend?”

Hanna snorted. “I’m afraid he’s just a tad too gay to be her boyfriend. You’re much more of his type.”

After that blunt (but totally true) statement, I couldn’t help but blush. Hanna could be so straightforward sometimes, and I was the exact opposite. Sometimes I really envied her for that trait, but mostly, I was just embarrassed on her behalf. “Besides, if he had been my boyfriend, I’d find a better gift than a coloring book,” I said. “Which really sounds like a stupid gift now that I think of it.”

“No, it’s not,” Hanna said, nudging me with her elbow. I remembered belatedly that she’d come up with it. “Besides, it’s just as a joke. We still need to come up with an actual gift for him.”
I groaned. “Coming up for gifts for guys is so hard,” I mumbled. “No offense or anything,” I added quickly once I saw Henry’s amused face.

“None taken. But maybe I can help. What is he like?”

“Uh, he’s really quiet. He’s an artist, so he’s constantly drawing something. He really likes to game. Um, he watches a lot of anime. He loves wolves. Oh, and puns. He loves puns,” I said, and Hanna snorted in affirmation.

“Hm… He’s an artist and he loves anime?” Henry asked, and I nodded. “There’s a small store not too far from here that sells original prints from all different kinds of artists. Maybe there’s something in there for him?”

“Yeah, that’s actually a really good idea. How’d you know about that shop?” I asked as we slowly wandered toward the section that held the coloring books for adults.

“My nephew’s really into manga and drawing, too. A couple of months ago I needed to find a birthday gift for him, did a quick Google search, and came up with that place. It’s low-key, but they have some really beautiful art there.”

“Could you show us where it’s at?” Hanna asked. “If you’re not too busy, I mean.”

“Yeah, no, of course,” Henry said with a smile. “Today’s actually one of the days where I’m not constantly busy, so you’re in luck.”

“Yes, we are,” Hanna whispered, so only I could hear. I elbowed her, hoping Henry wouldn’t notice.

“So which book should we take?” I asked innocently, perusing all the different kinds. There were more out there than I’d expected, including a very explicit one, which I stonily tried to ignore.

Of course, Hanna being Hanna, she went right for it. “This one,” she said, picking it up and leafing through it. “Hey, it even has gay couples!” She turned the book around to show it to Henry and me.

“Yeah, let’s not,” I said, taking the book from her hands and placing it back on the shelf. “This one’s kind of cool, though.” I picked up a coloring book with gold lettering on the front. Inside were multiple beautifully intricate drawings of animals, ranging from butterflies to bunnies to fish to bears. “I think he’ll really like this one, don’t you?” I asked Hanna.

“Hell yeah he would. Not gonna lie, I kind of want one for myself.”

I laughed. “Then you get one for yourself, but I’m getting this one for Col.”

Hanna eventually decided against getting a coloring book for herself, and we paid for all of our stuff. Henry proved himself to be a true gentleman and carried both of our heavy bags filled with books. He took us to a small shop called ‘Pete’s Art’ near the food court. I’d walked by it so many times, and yet it had never caught my attention.

“Wow, I never even knew this was here,” I said as we stepped inside, my eyes wide once I saw all the art displayed in the small store. I’d thought it would only be anime related art, but there were many different kinds, from realistic art to expressionism to photography. Some of the pieces on display were truly beautiful. “Wow…”

“Amazing, isn’t it?” Henry asked, smiling at me. He pointed to the back. “There’s the anime.”
We walked to the back where there were dozens of prints covered with anime and manga digital art. If Colin ever visited this place, he’d be in heaven, I knew. Hanna and I perused through all of the art, trying to find something that would be truly special to him.

Suddenly my eye fell on a familiar Japanese name. “Hey, that’s his favorite artist! I’m not even gonna try to pronounce the name because even after hundreds of fruitless attempts from Colin to teach me how to say it I still fail miserably, but I’m sure that’s him.”

It was a picture of a girl in battle armor standing in a barren wasteland, colorful splotches lighting the sky. It was beautiful.

“It’s gorgeous,” Hanna said, her eyes wide as she studied it. “He’s gonna die when he sees this.”

“He probably will, yeah,” I said, a smile taking over my face. He’d love it.

I bought the anime print, and Hanna bought a printed picture of a wolf in the snow. After that, we went to the nearest liquor store, where I bought a bottle of whiskey, and Hanna, who was in charge of the vodka this time, bought a bottle of Grey Goose.

“This is looking like a pretty good party,” Henry said, eyeing the bottles.

Hanna grinned. “Yeah, we usually play stupid drinking games when we celebrate each other’s birthdays. It’s kind of become a tradition. You’re probably more than welcome to join.”

Henry laughed. “Though I would really love to, I’m sadly booked for the evening.”

“That’s too bad,” Hanna said with a small pout.

When we left the shop, we remained standing in front of it, unsure of what to do now.

“Shall we grab some lunch before we go home?” Hanna suggested. Turning to Henry, she said, “You’re totally invited, too, if you want to join.”

He looked at his watch. “Uh, sure. I’d love to join you.”

More than a little surprised, I suggested a small lunchroom on the food court. We chose a table in the back and sat down. I felt a little flustered once realization hit that I was about to lunch with Henry Cavill, but I tried not to let it get to me. Nevertheless, I shot a panicked look at Hanna, who just grinned back at me, wiggling her eyebrows.

“So, do you think she’s got the part?” Hanna asked after our drinks had arrived. I nearly choked on my Coke.

“Hanna,” I hissed.

“Hey, inquiring minds want to know,” she said, shrugging nonchalantly.

Henry laughed. “I actually don’t know. The director is a friend of mine, but he doesn’t share much about who he’s casting. I did tell him I really liked your performance, though.”

I blushed. “Oh. Thank you.” I took another sip of my Coke in an attempt to hide my embarrassment. When I set it down again, I tried to change the subject. “So, Ryan Zachary is a friend of yours? Is that why you’re doing a romantic comedy? I mean, it’s not really up your alley, right?”

He smiled. “No, you’re right, it’s not my usual stuff. But he asked me and I just thought, ‘Why the hell not?’ I like a change every now and then. It’ll also be a nice contrast to The Justice League,
which I’ll be shooting next.”

“I gotta say,” I started, smiling, “I’m really excited for that movie.”

“You are?” he asked, his eyebrows raised with surprise.

“Yeah, I love the whole Superman universe. I grew up watching Smallville, and my favorite episodes were always when Clark worked together with other heroes. Well, those and the ones where Clark and Lois stood central. I love them as a couple, how they strengthen each other… It’s amazing.”

“I agree,” he said, taking a sip from his water. “So, whose Superman do you like better, mine or Tom Welling’s?”

I laughed. “That’s a very unfair question, mostly because you’re sitting right in front of me, and because your movie focused more on Clark becoming Superman and Smallville went way more in-depth, focusing on Clark growing up. But if I would have to choose, I’d still choose Tom. Sorry,” I apologized awkwardly. “But, like, he was the first Superman I ever saw, you know? And I got to see ten whole seasons of his Clark and only one movie’s worth of yours. So he’ll probably always be my favorite. But you’re the more attractive one.”

I abruptly turned bright red, not quite believing myself that I had actually said that.

Henry laughed good-naturedly, though. “Well, I appreciate that.”

I wanted to crawl under the table from embarrassment, but lucky for me, distraction was provided by our food arriving. I focused on my pizza slice like it was the most interesting thing I’d seen in a while.

Luckily, Hanna steered the conversation back to safe waters. “I really loved your performance in Immortals, by the way. You played Theseus well, and it was a really interesting take on the myth.”

Henry smiled. “Thank you. I really liked the take, too, which was part of why I auditioned. And speaking of liking people’s performances… After your audition I got curious, so I watched The Bone House.”

“Oh, God…” I muttered. The Bone House was an Indie I’d played the lead in, and it was probably the biggest role I’d landed so far. “What did you think?”

“I actually really liked it. You carried the movie really well. I’d like to see you star in more movies.”

“Let’s just hope that the next movie she stars in will be with you,” Hanna said, grinning.

I grimaced uncomfortably. “Hanna is utterly convinced I’ll get the part.”

“And you’re not?” Henry inquired, raising an eyebrow.

“After making such a fool of myself during our screen test? I don’t think so.”

I could see he was fighting a smile by the shaking of his lips, but his will finally won out. “So you tripped. Big deal. What matters is your performance, which was great. I can’t tell you for sure whether you got the part or not, but I can tell you that I think you’ve got a pretty good chance.”

I smiled. “Thanks. It means a lot.”

We made small talk throughout the rest of our lunch, and neither Hanna nor Henry brought up any
more embarrassing subjects. After all the food was gone, Henry insisted on paying the bill.

“You really don’t have to do that,” I protested, trying to grab for my own wallet.

“I insist,” he said, giving me a reassuring smile. “Besides, it’s the gentlemanly thing to do.”

I nearly said that was a little sexist, but refrained. I had a feeling I’d lose this battle anyway, no matter how hard I’d fight. So I just sighed and nodded.

Henry threw a wad of cash on the table, covering the check and a generous tip (though not nearly as generous as the one he’d given me), and we stood up.

We couldn’t do more than that before a girl of about sixteen years old approached us nervously, her cheeks pink. “Um, I’m really sorry to interrupt, but could I maybe… uh, get a picture with you?”

“Yeah, no, of course,” he said, moving to stand closer to her as she clutched her phone.

“Need me to take the picture?” I asked.

“If it’s not too much trouble,” the girl said, her eyes wide. She was extremely nervous, and it was adorable. It made me want to give her a hug and tell her everything would be fine.

She gave me the iPhone, the camera function already started up. They posed together, Henry’s arm wrapped around her shoulders and smiles on their faces. I got the feeling that Henry was smiling more at me than at the camera, though, so I tried my best to focus on taking the picture in attempt to not get flustered all over again. Maybe it would be better if I didn’t get the part, because this man clearly succeeded in turning me into a blubbering fool.

I took the picture and handed the girl her phone back. She gave me a quick thank you and beamed at Henry. “Thank you so much.”

“No problem,” he said, smiling politely back at her.

The girl left again, gushing to an older woman, who I guessed was her mother.

I turned to Henry, grinning. “That was adorable.”

This time, he was the one who blushed. “It never stops being weird. Anyway, I do have to go now. I have a meeting with my agent.”

“We understand,” Hanna said. “We have to get ready for Colin’s party anyway. It was really nice meeting you, though.”

“It was nice meeting you, too. I hope to see more of you two soon.”

“Yeah, same,” I told him.

“Well, have a great time at the party tonight, and tell your friend happy birthday from me, all right?”

He gave each of us a hug and left, leaving me standing there still feeling the sensation of his arms around my waist.

Chapter End Notes
See you next week for another chapter! :) 

The song at the beginning of the chapter is Out of Mind by Tove Lo.
Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

I didn't really have the time to proof-read this chapter one last time before posting it, and though I have edited it multiple times, there could still be some small mistakes or typos in there. If so, I'm really sorry, but I'm pretty sure it's fine. Anyway, happy reading!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

So raise your hands and celebrate with me
And raise your voice and sing along, oh please
And raise your glass
‘Cause we all could use a drink sometimes
Celebrate ‘cause life is fine

~*~*~*~*~*~

Friday, March 11, 2016.

“Holy shit!” Hanna squealed on our ride back home. “He’s even hotter in person. And oh my God, he likes you. And you like him! Ugh, just imagine if you really do get the part and how much time you’ll spend together then. Imagine doing a kissing scene with him.” She gasped excitedly. “What if there’s a sex scene in the movie?”

“You do realize that both kissing scenes and sex scenes are highly choreographed, right? It’s not exactly romantic to have multiple old guys standing around you while you pretend to do it and have a director yelling instructions at you.”

She pulled a face. “Way to rain on my parade,” she whined. “But you’ll still be kissing Henry Cavill. That’s gotta count for something, right?”

It did. Especially because I was growing to like him more and more. Curse me and my habit of always falling way too fast. I refused to acknowledge that to Hanna, though. I parked on the driveway and told her, “I don’t really wanna hear about Henry or the movie anymore, okay? I’m already nervous enough as it is.”

She sobered up quickly. “You’re right. I’m sorry. I’ll shut up about it for now.” A sly grin covered her face. “As long as I get to shower first.”

I chuckled. “Sure. Just as long as you don’t finish up all of the hot water. I know how long you tend to shower.”

She pouted. “Fine…”

We dumped all of our stuff in the living room and she went upstairs to shower while I stayed downstairs. I turned the TV on and grabbed my phone, realizing I’d received a message from
Cynthia, a really good friend of mine who’d also be at the party tonight, while I’d been driving.

**OH MY GOD, JULIETTE. YOU HAVE SOME ‘SPLAINING TO DO.**

There was a link attached to the text, and I opened it curiously. The link led to a Perez Hilton article, and to my surprise and utter shock I saw my own face on the webpage. The title read ‘Henry Cavill lunches with mysterious babes.’ Underneath, it said a little something about how we’d been sighted together at a lunchroom and they wondered just who the hell we were, but what mattered to me most were the pictures attached.

There were at least a dozen pictures of us talking and laughing while eating our lunch, and sadly, my clear embarrassment could be seen in a couple of pictures as well. I hadn’t even realized there was a photographer. Had I really been so tuned in to Henry that I hadn’t paid any further attention to my surroundings? I usually was pretty good at spotting paparazzi, even though I was never really the one they were going after. But still, this was Los Angeles after all, and paparazzi were everywhere. It was honestly a wonder (and a very lucky thing) no paparazzi had witnessed and recorded the whole situation with Henry defending me from that drunk guy last week.

I’ll explain everything tonight.

I turned my phone off after that, not interested in any more messages that would undoubtedly come in. These things had a way of spreading fast, and if Cynthia already knew, it wouldn’t be long until Chelsea knew, too, and she would ask enough questions to drive a teacher crazy. My parents would probably encounter the article, too, with how many times they checked all the gossip sites. I didn’t even want to imagine the torrent of messages I’d get from them, or how quickly they would spread the news of me being on a gossip site to the rest of the family.

I groaned, burying my face in my hands as I wondered if Henry would be mad about the pictures. I knew some actors and other celebrities could get really mad about their pictures being taken unwittingly. Henry seemed like a pretty laid back guy, though, so I hoped he wouldn’t mind. Just as long as he didn’t think we had tipped the paps off.

I couldn’t mull the whole situation over forever, though. Hanna was out of the shower sooner than I’d expected, and I went upstairs to take a shower of my own. Before I closed the bathroom door behind me, though, I told her, “Check Perez Hilton.”

She looked confused, but still reached for her phone. That was the last I saw before I locked the door behind me and turned the shower on. Waiting for the water to get hot, I reluctantly got out of my clothes. I could still smell Henry’s cologne on my shirt, and it was a delicious scent. A little wistfully, I threw the blouse in the laundry basket and took my bra off.

Once I was fully undressed and the water had turned hot, I stepped under the soothing stream. I decided to forget about the pictures as the water cascaded down my back. It probably wasn’t a big deal anyway—just me and my annoying habit of always thinking too much into literally everything. But as I forced myself to forget about the pictures, the memories of everything that had happened from the moment I’d accidentally bumped into Henry at Barnes & Noble forced themselves to the forefront of my mind.

Henry had always seemed very serious to me, but he could be really funny, too, I knew. He was really sweet and humble, and the more I thought about it, the more I realized just how much my type he was. I found myself smiling as I squirted shampoo onto my hand, thinking about how blue his eyes were apart from that small patch of brown in his right eye, and how his deep laugh stirred something in my stomach. I was screwed.
After my shower I changed in a clean pair of pajamas to try and keep the dress wrinkle free for as long as possible. I wrapped my hair in a towel and applied a face mask before going downstairs.

Hanna was waiting for me there, staring at me wide-eyed. “I’m on the internet.”

“You have Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Of course you’re on the internet.”

“I don’t mean that, and you know it. I’m on Perez Hilton.”

I sighed. “I know. Cynthia sent me the link while you were in the shower. I just hope Henry’s not mad.”

She furrowed her brow. “Why would he be mad?”

I shrugged, sitting down next to her on the couch. “I don’t know. What if he thinks we tipped the paparazzi off or anything?”

Hanna shook her head. “He won’t. He was around us the whole time, and we didn’t grab our phones once.” She grinned deviously. “That only shows how hot you think he is. You didn’t look away from him for a single second.”

I blushed, but thanks to my mask, Hanna couldn’t see that. “Ugh, shut up. Do I think he’s hot? Well, yeah. He’s Henry Cavill. Who doesn’t think he’s hot? But you’re making it seem like I’m head over heels for him.”

“How about I tell him for you?”

“How about you don’t,” I countered. “Him not knowing I like him works fine for me. Besides, I might never see him again, so I don’t want to think about him too much or get my hopes up. For now, I’m just gonna wash my mask off and do my nails.”

Hanna sighed. “You’re so stubborn sometimes. No, forget sometimes. You’re stubborn all the time.”

I smiled sheepishly at her—or at least, I tried. The mask had hardened already. “Sorry. It’s a trait I inherited from my parents.”

“I know. Now go wash your mask off before you can’t move your face anymore.”

I tried to laugh without moving my face too much, making Hanna crack up. Before I knew it, the pictures and my potential feelings for Henry were forgotten as I burst into giggles, triggering even more laughter from Hanna. “Stop making me laugh,” I hiccuped. “I can feel it cracking.”

That only made her laugh harder and she shooed me up the stairs, unable to speak because of her laughter. She was still giggling when I came back, completely fresh-faced.

With the TV on in the background, Hanna and I did each other’s nails, as was our tradition before a
party. Once they were finally done and dried, hours had already passed. We cooked a quick pasta
dish and whipped up an easy salad for dinner and then went upstairs to get dressed. I kept my
makeup simple, but played my green eyes up with a bit of gold eye shadow and black eyeliner. My
hair was in a fishtail braid—which took a really long time to do, considering the length of my hair;
the straight, golden brown locks fell even below my waist.

We took a taxi to Colin’s place, seeing as it probably wouldn’t be too safe to drive ourselves home
after most likely consuming copious amounts of alcohol. When we got to his house by the beach,
some of our friends were already there. I made my rounds, saying hi to Cynthia, Keegan and
Klarissa, and wished the birthday boy himself a happy birthday.

I smiled and gave him a tight hug, rocking him from side to side. “Happy birthday, babe!” I said, my
smile widening as I watched him turn flustered.

“Thanks,” he said, and before he could say anything else, Hanna engulfed him in an equally tight
hug.

As she wished him a happy birthday, I sat down next to Keegan, who wrapped his arm around me
and pulled me close, still holding his girlfriend’s hand with his remaining free hand. “Hey, sis. What
do I hear about a ménage a trois with a certain super hunk?”

I grimaced. Keegan had always been like a brother to me, and like an actual brother would, he had a
serious lack of filter around me (seriously, I’ve heard things about him and Klarissa I can’t ever un-
hear). “It was hardly a ménage,” I protested. “It was just lunch.”

“Speaking of,” Hanna said, nudging Colin in his side, “Henry Cavill wishes you a happy birthday.”

He scoffed. “He did not.”

“He did, actually,” I said, knowing he was more likely to believe it if it came from me—Hanna had a
tendency to tell tall tales. “He even helped us with your birthday present.”

“Superman picked out my present?” Colin asked, his voice drenched in disbelief.

“Well, no, but he did show us the store,” Hanna said, grabbing the wrapped print she’d propped up
against the wall before she hugged him. She gave it to him to unwrap and sat down next to me.

Colin carefully pulled off the tape instead of just tearing the paper off. After he was done, he folded
the paper and set it aside before turning the print around, revealing the picture of the wolf in the
snow. His eyes widened slightly. “It’s gorgeous. Thank you, Han.”

“No problem,” she said with a carefree grin.

Colin gently set the print aside and I handed him the wrapped coloring book first. He unwrapped it
just as carefully as he had Hanna’s gift, folding the bright blue wrapping paper and putting it atop the
other wrapping paper. He took one look at the book and smiled. He turned a few pages. “These are
gorgeous. Thank you, Jules.”

I shrugged. “That one is just a joke, really. This one is your real gift,” I said, and handed him the
print.

He unwrapped it curiously, a little more eagerly now that he’d seen Hanna’s gift. When he saw it,
though, his reaction was entirely different. He stared at it, slack-jawed, his hands starting to shake a
little. “Oh my God,” he whispered nearly inaudibly. He looked up at me, and I noticed with surprise
that his eyes were watery. “Oh my God,” he said again, louder this time.
I smiled. “You’re welcome. I couldn’t believe it when I saw it standing there, but I knew I just had to get it for you.”

Colin set the print down with great care and then turned to me to give me a tight hug. I laughed, awkwardly patting him on the back as he stood in front of me, me still sitting down. “Thank you so much.”

“You’re welcome, Colly.”

When he sat back down, Cynthia said, “Okay, now I really want to know what’s up with you two and your lunch with Henry Cav—”

She was interrupted by the doorbell ringing. Colin stood up, even though he looked like he kind of wanted to hear an answer too, and went to open the door. When he returned, the last four guests followed him into the living room. I said hello to Ryley, Braeden, Alfie, and Shaye, thankful for the distraction they provided.

When they’d each given Colin his presents and wished him a happy birthday, Braeden said, “All right, let’s get these drinking games started.” His blue eyes sparkled excitedly.

“Wait, hold up,” Cynthia said. “Juliette isn’t going to get away with this so easily. I want answers.”

Ryley furrowed his brow in confusion. “Answers to what?”

“Answers to why the hell she and Hanna were having lunch with Henry Cavill.”

“Henry Cavill played Superman and that dude in Immortals, right?” Klarissa asked.

I nodded, trying not to grimace as everyone stared. Hanna seemed far less affected, probably because she didn’t actually like him the way I did. “Uh, yeah, he did. He also stars in the movie I auditioned for. I screen tested with him last week, and today we bumped into each other. He helped Hanna and me to find a present for Colin, and then we had lunch. That’s all.”

Hanna scoffed and shook her head. “‘That’s all,’ she says. You forgot to tell them about what happened at Harvey’s.”

“Harvey’s? He came to your work?” Alfie asked, his eyebrows raised.

“Yeah, but he didn’t know I worked there. He was really nice about it all, though.”

“Yeah, if ‘really nice’ means giving you a five hundred dollar tip and totally protecting your honor when a drunk guy harassed you.”

“Oh my God, he did that?” Shaye asked. Her brown eyes were so wide I was afraid they were gonna pop out. “Holy shit. Talk about living the fucking dream.”

Braeden raised his eyebrow at her. “What’s that supposed to mean?”

“It means that Henry Cavill is fucking hot and he seems to be into her, from what I hear,” she said, not caring at all that she’d just told her boyfriend that she thought someone else is ‘fucking hot.’

“Not only that, he also gave you a five hundred dollar tip?” Ryley asked. “I’ll drink to that.” And he moved to sit at the table, opening up a bottle of vodka.

We joined him there as he started filling ten glasses with vodka and Coke. Keegan started shuffling a deck of cards. “Shall we start with high low again?”
Hanna groaned. “No… That game screwed me over way too hard last time.”

Klarissa laughed. “Who knows, maybe you’ll hit a streak of luck this time.”

Hanna reluctantly agreed and Keegan placed the deck in the middle of the table, the cards facing down. He grabbed the first card and turned it, laying it down next to the deck. It was a seven of clubs. “Who wants to start?”

“I think Colin should start,” Hanna said, “considering it’s his birthday.”

“Are you kidding me? That is one of the suckiest cards to start with.”

Hanna grinned. “I know.”

Colin sighed, but still agreed to go first. “Fine… Everyone gets three turns, right?” He studied the deck of cards, hesitantly reaching to grab the top card. “Um… Higher,” he guessed, and turned the card. It was a three of hearts. “Dammit.” He took a sip of his vodka soda and glared at Hanna. “I hate you.”

“You love me and you know it.”

We went clockwise, so Braeden was up next. “Higher,” he said, and got a ten of spades. “Lower.” A five of hearts. “Higher.” The last card he turned was a jack of hearts. “Yes!” He poked his tongue out at Colin, who just rolled his eyes.

Shaye was up next, who guessed wrong at her second try. Then Hanna was up, who, to her own surprise, guessed right all three times.

It was my turn then, and I studied the eight of diamonds thoughtfully. “Lower,” I said hesitantly, and turned the next card. “A nine of clubs, are you kidding me?” I called out. I pouted and took a sip of my drink. The alcohol burned my throat a little, but not in an unpleasant way.

Within an hour, all ten of us were drunk. Colin had cranked up the music, the cards already forgotten on the table. Hanna climbed up on a chair and held her hands up in the air. “Okay, guys, I can do this!”

“Do what?” I asked, a sliver of concern making its way through my drunken haze. Hanna had always been a lightweight and tended to get a little adventurous when she was drunk.

“Somersault off this chair onto the floor,” she said, showing me a bright grin.

I hastened my way over to her and wrapped my arms around her hips, throwing her over my shoulder and carefully (or as carefully as possible in my drunken state) set her down on the floor. “Oh, no, you don’t,” I told her sternly. “And you never will because I don’t want you to get hurt, okay?”

“Okay, Mom,” she told me, and burst out in giggles, making me laugh, too.

Then Alfie grabbed me by the hips, handed me a glass of scotch, and promptly started dancing with me. “That dress looks absolutely amazing on you,” he said into my ear. “Like, wow.” I laughed, downed the scotch in one go, wrapped my arms around his neck and started dancing along with him.

By the time the party finally started breaking up, it was four a.m., the alcohol was nearly all gone, and everyone was as drunk as they could be without puking their guts out. All in all, it was a pretty great party.
Hanna and I took a cab back home, crashing almost immediately. I’d had the mind to remove my makeup and hang my dress up as neatly as possible, though, before I crawled into my bed in my underwear and heels still on.

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**Saturday, March 12, 2016.**

‘Cause everything, everything makes me think of you / And everything, everything that I wanna do / I know you can’t say no when you look at me / I want you, so tell me—

“Hello?” I asked groggily, my eyes too sensitive to look at the caller ID.

“Juliette? This is Ryan Zachary.”

I shot up in bed, one of my heels falling onto the floor. The sound resonated painfully in my head, but at the moment I couldn’t really care. This was the director of *If You Love Someone.* Within minutes, maybe even seconds, I would know if I had the part of Amelia Brenner or not. “Oh, hello, Ryan,” I said, trying to sound as calm and collected as possible, as if my future wasn’t possibly about to change in a few short moments.

“So you must know I’m calling about whether or not you got the part,” he said, and I nodded as I held my breath, even though he couldn’t see me. “Your performance during the screen test with Henry was truly great, but there were other girls who gave a good performance, too.”

I pressed my lips together and shut my eyes tightly, trying not to cry. I wouldn’t be getting the part, just like I was trying to tell everyone who wanted to convince me otherwise. I just wasn’t good enough to play in the big movies.

“However,” Ryan said, “good isn’t great. So that, and the fact that Henry thought you were definitely the best in his opinion, made us choose you for the part of Amelia Brenner.”

I couldn’t respond. I’d been so ready to be told no that I hadn’t at all prepared for the possibility of hearing a yes. It was like all my systems had shut down, leaving me looking like an idiot as I pressed the phone tightly to my ear, my mouth hanging open. I actually had the part? I, Juliette Morrison, would play in a big budget movie?

“Juliette? Are you still there?”

“Uh, yeah, I am. Sorry, I just… Oh my God. I hadn’t expected this.”

Ryan laughed. “Henry already told me to expect a reaction like this. It’s okay. I just want you to know that you really are the right girl for the part. In every single audition, you delivered your lines perfectly. You have great comedic timing but you can do the emotionally challenging scenes as well. And not only that, you have great chemistry with Henry, which is what we were looking for.”

“Uh, wow, thank you. So much, really. I… I don’t really know what to say.”

With another laugh, Ryan said, “You don’t have to say anything. Just enjoy it for now, and when the time comes to film, just make me glad I chose you, okay?”

“Okay.”

“Good. Filming starts in Miami in a month, and we’ll arrange the transfer, so you won’t have to worry about that. I’ll call your agent about the contract negotiations, and she’ll get back to you on
that.”

“Okay, thank you. I’ll… I’ll see you in a month, I suppose.”

“Yes, you will. Enjoy your free time while you still can. I have a feeling you’ll be very busy starting next month.”

Ryan hung up, and I sat there for several moments before it even occurred to me to put the phone down instead of keeping it pressed to my ear. I stood up to race over to Hanna’s room so I could tell her, but the sharp stab of pain in my head and black spots dancing in front of my eyes convinced me to grab some Advil first. Very slowly.

“I hate hangovers,” I muttered to myself as I filled a glass with water. The journey down the stairs had been torture. I swallowed the Advil with a sip of water and took a few minutes to finish the whole glass, drinking slowly. Once it was finally empty, I put it in the sink and slowly made my way up the stairs again.

I knocked on Hanna’s half opened door and entered her room. She was sprawled horizontally on her bed, her dress still on. Her hair was in a bun so high that it hung over her forehead. She looked exactly like you’d imagine a girl who just had a really good night would look. The sight of her made me giggle. The sound made her shift in her sleep, but she didn’t wake up. I hesitantly approached her, knowing I’d be risking her wrath if I woke her up, but I hoped the news I had would soften the blow.

I sat down on the edge of her bed and gently shook her shoulder. “Go away,” she croaked.

“But I have something to tell you.”

“Tell it to the crazy party I have going on in my head right now.” She grabbed a pillow and tugged it over her head.

“But it’s really important.”

“No.”

I couldn’t help but laugh. “It’s about the movie.”

She stiffened at that before she removed the pillow and slowly sat up, blanching at the glaring sunlight. “What about the movie?” she asked slowly, almost suspiciously.

I grinned. “I got the part.”

“You’re not just messing with me because I teased you about getting it for sure, right?”

I shook my head, then flinched a little at the movement. “No. I really got it. I’m going to play in a big budget movie.”

“Oh my God!” Hanna yelled, and threw her arms around me. “Ow…”

I chuckled softly, gently pulling away from her. “Are you as hung-over as I am?”

“Quite possibly even more,” she said, squeezing her eyes shut and massaging her forehead with her fingers.

“Need me to get you some Advil?”
“Get me two,” she said. She looked up at me again and grinned. “And then we’re gonna celebrate for real.”

I laughed. “Deal.”

Chapter End Notes

I’m sorry Henry wasn’t really in this chapter :( I promise that I’ll make up for the lack of him in the next chapter, where Henry and Juliette finally get some one-on-one time.

Lyrics at the start of the chapter are Sometimes by Ron Pope.
Chapter 4

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

We’re chasing the stars to lose our shadow
Peter Pan and Wendy turned out fine
So won’t you fly with me?

~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~

Sunday, April 3, 2016.

“I’m gonna miss you so fucking much, okay?” Hanna said, sniffling a little.

I smiled, close to tears myself. “I know. I’m gonna miss you, too.”

“On the upside, though, you’ll be a huge star and then you’ll be able to get me into the biggest clubs. We’ll all be your entourage.”

I laughed. “Don’t get too ahead of yourself.”

“Hey, even if this whole movie doesn’t work out—which it will, because, hey, you’re great and Henry Cavill—we’ll still be your entourage,” Keegan said, stepping forward to give me a hug so tight I was afraid I might wake up with bruises tomorrow. “I’m gonna miss you, little sis.”

I wrapped my arms around his neck, the tears really threatening to spill over now. I’d met Keegan when I moved to L.A. a few years ago, and we’d become really close since then. He’d joked once that he’d way rather have me as his sister than his actual sister, and ever since then we had kind of become like substitute siblings to each other—and he always tended to show his love by raiding my whole house for food. “I’m gonna miss you, too, Keegs. A lot.”

He kissed my cheek and stepped away, letting his girlfriend say goodbye to me. “You’re gonna be amazing, I just know it,” Klarissa said, pulling me into a hug. “You’re gonna be so amazing that you’ll have lots of fan boys trying to find out where you live, and we’ll all totally protect you when that happens.”

I laughed. “Thanks. I really appreciate that.”

Next up was Cynthia. “I am gonna miss my fangirl buddy,” she said, “but just know that I’m totally gonna fangirl over you once the movie comes out.”

Laughing, I hugged her. “I’d expect nothing less from you.”

“I’m gonna miss you, babe,” Colin said, hugging me and kissing me on the cheek. “Take lots of pictures of Henry Cavill for me, okay?”

“I will,” I promised him, smirking. “And I’ll miss you, too.”

“What Colin said,” Shaye told me with a grin. “Make sure there are some shots of his butt in there, too.” She winked and pulled me into a hug.
“What if I get caught?” I asked, laughing.

She thought for a moment. “Tell him I’m doing a study on butts and that I asked you to send me a picture of his.”

“A study on butts?” I asked, raising my eyebrows.

“Hey, it’s a thing. I think.”

“And if it isn’t, it totally should be,” Braeden said, stepping forward to give me a hug. “Good luck in Miami, hon. And on the subject of taking pictures of butts, if you ever go to the beach...” He laughed as Shaye punched him in his arm.

“Yeah, sorry. I won’t be furthering your perverted mind by taking pictures of girls’ butts for you. Besides, you live in Venice Beach. There are lots of girls in bikinis there, too.”

“Well, hey, it was worth a shot.”

Ryley picked me up and swung me around. “You’ll be great!” he yelled, his voice echoing over the entire outside zone of the Tom Bradley International Terminal. A businessman talking on his phone glared at us. Ryley set me back down and saluted the man, making me laugh. “But really, though,” he said, turning to me again. “You are gonna be great.”

I smiled. “Thanks. I’ll miss you, Ry-Ry.”

The only one I hadn’t said goodbye to yet was Alfie, and he stepped toward me with his arms outstretched. I smiled as I gave him a hug, ruffling his sandy brown hair that always tended to fall into his eyes. “I’ll miss you, Alfredo.”

“I’ll miss you, too, Jules. I’ll even miss your annoying habit of calling me Alfredo.”

I laughed. “Sorry. It’s just one habit I’m unwilling to quit.”

He smiled. “Go kick some ass in Miami. Good luck.”

“Thank you.”

I sighed, looking over all of my friends’ faces. I would be gone for two and a half months, but it felt like it would be much longer. I would miss them all so much, most of all Hanna. It would be the longest time we’d be away from each other. When I decided to move from New Jersey to L.A., she didn’t think twice and moved right along with me. She was the one I relied on most for advice and support. Hell, I even relied on her to pick out my outfit for important events—or well, events that were important to me. She was one of the only ones who really knew how to deal with my anxiety attacks. And just thinking about leaving her made me feel an attack starting.

She seemed to sense how much I would miss her, and said, “Oh, hell.” She ran up to me and pulled me into another tight hug. “I’m gonna miss you so much, you fuck.” The statement made me laugh through my tears.

Before I knew it, our other friends joined us in a huge group hug.

“If you ever need us, just call,” Keegan said. “We’ll have one giant Skype call or something.”

“Thank you,” I said, as everyone started to pull back again. “But seriously, though. You guys are the best friends a girl like me could even think to wish for. I love y’all.”
“We love you, too, babe,” Shaye said, smiling as she tucked a piece of her blood red hair behind her ear. “Now go and chase your dreams, you beautiful bitch.”

I laughed, and my friends nearly shooed me into the terminal. I turned around to wave at them one last time, trying to remember their faces as they were now. My heart swelled at the pride in their eyes. Then I took a deep breath and walked into the terminal, dragging my suitcase after me as I left Los Angeles for more than two months.

I checked in and walked further into the airport. I ducked into a few shops, but found that shopping wasn’t half as fun without Hanna. I did buy a bottle of perfume, though—Bonbon by Viktor & Rolf. I’d been lustful after it for a while, but had always convinced myself to be careful with my money. Now that my bank account held quite a few more zeroes because of my *If You Love Someone* salary, I could easily afford it. And hey, duty free shopping, so why not, right? I also bought a new moisturizer because mine was already almost gone, and then sat down at a small bistro to grab a bite to eat.

Once I’d eaten, I headed to my gate, even though it wasn’t time to board yet. I sat in the waiting area, completely content to just read my book for a while. When it was time to board, I put a bookmark in my book and dug my boarding pass out of my handbag. Upon seeing the first class ticket, the lady checking it raised an eyebrow at my outfit (which was a simple pair of jeans and a graphic T-shirt—I knew there wasn’t much wrong with it, but apparently it didn’t scream ‘designer’), but let me go through anyway.

I’d never flown first class before. The few times that I did fly had always been economy class, so seeing the seats in first class was almost like a culture shock. I wasn’t used to so much luxury—let alone so much legroom. I was five foot eight, which wasn’t extremely tall, but I was always worried about bumping my knees against the seat in front of me and annoying the person that was sitting in it. Now I wouldn’t have to worry about that at all. I could stretch and kick my legs all I wanted, but I wouldn’t come near reaching the seat in front of me.

Seeing my seat-mate however, was a bigger shock. (And it also made me regret not putting on anything nicer.) Sitting in the aisle seat was none other than Henry Cavill. He smiled up at me. “I was wondering when you’d show up. I saw you sitting in the waiting area, but you looked so engrossed in your book that I didn’t want to disturb you.”

“Don’t I have the aisle seat?” was all I thought to say.

He laughed. “You do, yes. But I figured you’d rather sit by the window, so I switched seats. But if you’d rather sit here, that’s completely fine too.”

“Oh, no, this is fine.” I placed my bag in the overhead compartment and sat down in the window seat, tugging my shirt back down. I really was starting to regret wearing this shirt, and not only because I would be sitting next to Henry for the next five hours—I’d completely forgotten that this shirt tends to crawl up with each movement. “Anyway, thank you. You didn’t have to do that.”

Shrugging, he said, “I already fly so much; I’ve had a lot of opportunities to sit by the window. I figured you don’t fly as often.”

“I don’t, no,” I confirmed. “Especially not in first class. Ryan really wants his actors to be happy, huh?”

Henry’s eyes sparkled. “I guess so, yes. Anyway, what are you reading?” he asked, gesturing at my book.
I blushed, remembering that the book I was currently reading was a book about a succubus, which was rather awkward to admit. “Uh… The Georgina Kincaid series,” I answered, hoping he wouldn’t ask the next obvious question. Which, of course, he did.

“What is it about?”

“Um…” I said, stalling for time as I thought about what I was willing to share about my peculiar choice of books. “It’s about Georgina, who works for Hell, and then she falls in love with this really innocent human—a writer. It’s about her trying to make the relationship work while also trying to keep the boss downstairs happy. It’s a pretty good story, even though it probably doesn’t sound like it with the way I’m describing it,” I said, laughing nervously.

“Hey, to each their own, right? And it actually does sound kind of good.”

“It is. Richelle Mead, the writer, has a really good writing style. She’s one of my favorite writers, actually.”

“Any other favorite authors? I already know you love to read.”

I laughed, remembering the pile of books I’d been holding when I bumped into him at Barnes & Noble a little over a month ago. “What gave you that idea?” I joked. “I really need to invest in a new bookcase and I already have three of them standing in my bedroom. Now that I think of it, investing in a personal library might a better idea.”

He laughed. “Is it really that bad?”

I tried not to look guilty but apparently failed, making him laugh again. “Yeah…” I admitted sheepishly. “And it’s not also just the stories, you know? Even though that obviously plays a big part, too, but some of the covers are just so pretty. I know it’s a total cliché, but I love the Harry Potter books, and I have the whole set three times, each set a different edition. It’s embarrassing, really, my obsession with buying books.”

“Hey, a lot of people collect things. Collecting books is probably the most common collection out there.”

“Huh. I hadn’t thought of it like that.”

“So, Harry Potter and a book about a creature of Hell… Is it safe to assume that fantasy is your favorite genre?”

“I guess it is, yeah. But I like the classics, too. I really love Jane Austen, for example. I like romance novels. Young adult fiction…”

He smiled. “Is there anything you don’t like?”

I thought for a moment. “I guess science fiction isn’t really my thing. Nor do I like science fiction movies and TV shows. I don’t really know why.”

“Isn’t Smallville science fiction?” Henry asked, an amused glint in his eyes.

“I mean, I guess, but I’ve always thought that stories about superheroes always kind of had their own genre, you know?”

“I suppose that’s true enough.”
The pilot’s voice over the intercom told us that the plane was gearing up for takeoff, and I felt the usual bubble of nerves I always got just before flying. As the prerecorded safety plan sounded through the intercom, a male steward stood in front of the seats to point out the exits and show us how the breathing mask worked and all that stuff. I was always too distracted to pay too much attention to it, and now that Henry was sitting next to me, I couldn’t think about safety at all.

He smiled at me, his blue eyes sparkling. I found myself fascinated by the little brown fleck in his right eye. “On to the next adventure.”


The plane started gaining speed, and I looked out the window, momentarily too distracted by the fact that we would be in the air soon to pay any further attention to my seat-mate. We didn’t speak until we hit cruising altitude, and I tried to ignore the pressure in my ears. It wasn’t so bad now, but I knew it was usually worse for me while descending. I stared in awe at the beauty that was Los Angeles, and eventually the rest of southern California.

When I was pretty sure we’d crossed into Arizona, I turned to Henry again, smiling sheepishly. “Sorry,” I said. “It’s just really pretty outside.”

“It is,” he said with a smile, and somehow, I had a feeling he wasn’t talking about the sights outside.

I fought a blush and attempted to change the subject. “So you said you’ve flown a lot. Where have you been?”

I listened breathlessly as he recounted stories from his travels, from doing promotional work in Shanghai to filming his first movie in Rome. I drank up every word he said. I’d always wanted to travel the world myself, but never had the means. Listening to someone who had was like taking a drug—I just couldn’t hear enough. But even when we’d exhausted that topic, we kept talking the entire flight. My book was entirely forgotten.

“So where are you from?” Henry asked me after he’d narrated stories of his time growing up on the island of Jersey, not far from the French coast. “California?”

“Uh, no, actually. I was born in Jersey. Or New Jersey, I guess I should say. I’m so used to calling it Jersey, sorry.”

“It’s okay. I’ve long since made peace with the fact that when people say ‘Jersey,’ they usually mean New Jersey,” he joked.

I smiled. “Well, anyway, I moved to L.A. about three and a half years ago, when I realized the only thing I wanted to be was an actress. I always worried that that spontaneous move would come bite me in the ass at some point, most likely by way of me broke, begging my parents to let me move back in with them. But they were always very supportive of my decision, and I guess they were right after all. But if you told me three years ago that I would now be sitting in a plane on my way to Miami to film a giant budget project, I never would’ve believed you.”

“Something tells me you aren’t a very self-confident person.”

I smiled sheepishly. “It’s that obvious, huh?”

“Why?” he asked, toying with the tab on his soda can.

I shrugged, deciding that looking at his hands was better than looking into his eyes. “I don’t know… I guess I’ve always been insecure. And, like, I know that I need to be sure of myself and my abilities
to make it in this business—to even stay sane—but I kind of can’t help it, you know?”

“Well, whoever made you feel that about yourself, they were wrong,” he said, his voice sounding as determined as I’d ever heard it. It made me look up sharply, and I saw the sincerity in his eyes. “So far, I have found out that you’re beautiful, gentle, funny, kind, and kind of an amazing person. And if our screen test was any indication, you’re a great actress, too. And someday, you’re going to believe in yourself as much as I already do, and then you’ll be even more amazing.”

I blushed, and tried not to cry. I didn’t hear stuff like this often, especially not from someone like Henry, so this was kind of overwhelming, to say the least. “Thank you,” I said, trying my damnedest not to let my voice crack.

“Anyway, to not so subtly change the subject, cats or dogs?”

I smiled at him gratefully, and then, before I knew it, a laugh bubbled up from my throat. “Definitely dogs. I find they’re cuddlier and more playful.”

“I agree with you on that. Do you have a dog?”

“I had one, but she, uh… she died shortly before I left for L.A.”

“Oh, I’m sorry. Guess that wasn’t as good a change of subject as I thought it was.”

I laughed. “It’s okay. And what about you? Do you have a dog?”

“I do, yeah. Actually, he’s being flown over to Miami now, I think.”

“Oh my God, really? I’d love to meet Henry Cavill’s dog. Then I’ll know I’ve really made it,” I joked, and he laughed. “What’s his name?”

“His name’s Kal.”

I stared at him for a moment before giggling. “Oh my God, that’s amazing! You should’ve called him Krypto, though; Superman’s dog’s actual name.”

“I actually thought about that, but decided to go with Kal because I liked it better. People always think his name is Kal-El, but it’s actually really just Kal.”

“What kind of dog is he? Like what breed?”

“He’s an Akita,” Henry said, a fond smile shaping his lips.

“A friend of mine has an Akita, too. But Lana’s a girl. Which, funnily enough, is also a name from the Superman universe. But I can’t wait to meet him. You seem to love him a lot.”

His smile widened. “I do. I don’t get to spend as much time with him as I would like, so I try to take him with me while filming projects as often as I can.”

The pilot told us over the intercom that the plane would be landing soon, and we refastened our seatbelts as the flight attendants got ready for descent. Henry upended his soda and threw the can in the cart one of the attendants drove by. I threw my own empty can in it, too, having to lean past him. My arm accidentally brushed his chest (though I wasn’t entirely sure it was an accident on my part), and a jolt of electricity made me sit up straighter in my seat. He gave me a questioning look, but I just smiled and went to stare out the window, watching Miami steadily drawing nigh.

Once we’d landed, everything kind of went by in a rush. We retrieved our luggage and were rushed
out to the car that would bring us to the location where we’d be shooting If You Love Someone—but we weren’t rushed out fast enough. A few photographers stood outside, and when they saw Henry coming out, they went nuts. The flashes on their cameras nearly blinded me, the shutters going off sounded extremely annoying, and they yelled out questions for him.

“Henry, who’s the girl?” one asked. “She your new girlfriend?”

Henry just smiled politely for the cameras and put his hand on the small of my back, gently pushing me to walk a little faster.

Once we were in the car, sitting comfortably on the roomy backseat, I took a deep breath. “Wow. That was… intense,” I said, for lack of a better word.

“You’d better get used to it,” Henry said, a small smile shaping lips. “Before you know it, they’ll be coming for you.”

“That sounds really ominous, you know that, right?” I asked, laughing a little.

He laughed, too. “I hadn’t meant to make it sound that way. But I suppose it kind of is. It’s not really a change you’d want in your life, I think; creepy old men taking your picture and asking you questions. Sometimes they can be really offensive, too.”

“Offensive?” I asked, my voice small as I remembered one of them asking if I was his new girlfriend. Did he find that question offensive?

“You just gotta keep your head held high and not let them get to you.” He turned to the driver and asked, “How long until we reach the location?”

“About half an hour, sir,” he answered politely.

“Okay, thanks. Well,” he said, turning back to me, “sounds like we’ve got some more time to kill. Why don’t you tell me three random facts about you?”

“Uh… All right, let me think.” I studied his necklace as I thought. It was a simple coin on a chain. It sparkled beautifully when the light hit it just right. “I curse like sailor,” I said, and he raised his eyebrows in disbelief. I smiled. “You just haven’t noticed much of that because I’ve been keeping myself in. But really, ask any of my friends, and they’ll confirm that I do. It’s not very ladylike, I know, but I’ve grown to not really give a f—crap about that. See? I was holding myself in. I nearly dropped an F-bomb there.”

He laughed. “You can say the word ‘fuck’ in front of me. I’m actually glad to know this fun fact. Now I can unleash my not-so-polite vocabulary, too. Anyway, second fact?”

“My parents were both born in the Netherlands, and they moved here in their twenties. They raised me bilingually, so I speak Dutch fluently.”

“Really? That’s amazing. You have to teach me a couple phrases sometime.”

I smiled. “I will. And the third fact… My favorite cuss word is ‘godverdomme.’ It’s Dutch for goddammit. But goddammit just doesn’t convey the same amount of anger and aggression. It’s the difference on how you pronounce the G, I think. The Dutch pronunciation of the G is a lot more vulgar; as if you’re gathering up saliva to spit it out.”

“Say it like you’re really pissed off?”
I smiled. “All right… Godverdomme!” I said, putting extra emphasis on the god part.

He laughed, throwing his head back. “Amazing. And yeah, I can tell why you prefer that one to the English word. Goddammit just isn’t as… intense as the Dutch version.”

I shrugged, smiling. “Told you. So, tell me three facts about you.”

“Uh, okay. Well, I was raised bilingually, too. Because Jersey is so close to France, a lot of people speak French, so we had to take French in school, you know? And a lot of people in Jersey speak it fluently, so…”

“So it makes sense for you to be able to speak French.”

“Exactly. Uh, I also know how to order a beer in Czech.”

I laughed. “Very, very important. Though I prefer a vodka soda over a beer any day. Know how to order that in Czech?”

He smiled. “I can always learn. So long as you teach me how to order a beer in Dutch.”

“It’s a deal. And for the third fact?”

“Um… I love history. Especially Greek history and Egyptology and stuff like that.”

I felt my eyes widen. The more I got to know Henry, the more perfect he seemed to me. “That—is—so—cool. Me too. I especially love mythology. Like the Greek gods, Egyptian gods, how that influenced the cultures… It’s all so fascinating. Every time there’s a special on it on TV, like when they discover something new on a pharaoh they found, I can just watch it and forget all my surroundings. Sadly, though, there aren’t enough of those specials. I always want to know more.”

Henry was looking at me like he was seeing me in an entirely new light. “Exactly. Exactly what you just said.”

I smiled. “Guess we have some things to talk about in-between takes.”

“Yeah,” he breathed, still looking at me with slightly wide eyes. He didn’t stop staring at me like that until, almost a minute later, the car rolled to a stop.

“We’re here,” the driver said, and I was thankful for the interruption, not exactly sure how to act under Henry’s scrutiny.

We got out of the car and were led to our individual trailers, which were right next to each other. We were told that, in about an hour, a P.A. would pick us up to take us to dinner with the rest of the cast so we could all get acquainted with each other. I said a quick goodbye to Henry and entered my trailer, not even paying attention to its interior as I found the nearest chair and let myself fall down in it. The better I got to know Henry, the more I realized he was the perfect guy for me, and I wasn’t entirely sure how to respond to that realization.

Damn you, Henry Cavill.
So, how are you guys liking it so far? From this point on, there will be a lot more interaction between Juliette and Henry, and I'm really excited for you to read it. Also, good news: The chapters will start to get a little longer after this, so I hope you're pleased to hear that. Again, thank you so much for reading! It means the world to me.

Lyrics at the start of the chapter are Fly With Me by the Jonas Brothers.
Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

I’ve never felt so alone

I’ve never felt so alive

I’ve never been so sure I could learn to fly

~*~*~*~*~*~

Sunday, April 3, 2016.

It actually turned out that my trailer was worth paying attention to. It was definitely a lot more luxurious than the trailer I’d had while filming that indie movie. And with a lot, I mean a lot. It had a decently big bed, a sofa, a kitchenette, and a small dining table. Everything in it, from the bed to the kitchen appliances, seemed brand new and state of the art. The walls were covered with a warm wood paneling and the floor was covered in a soft cream carpet. I opened the only other door in the trailer and found a bathroom. Even that was more luxurious, if smaller, than the one back in my own home.

Deciding I might as well after my long flight, I took a quick shower, washing all evidence I’d been traveling off me. When I got out and was all dried off, I decided to dress in something cuter, too, remembering my earlier embarrassment at my comfortable, but not so glamorous, traveling outfit.

But deciding what kind of cute to go with was an entirely different matter. I didn’t know what all the other actors would be wearing. Would they go dressy? Casual? Seemed like it was already time to get out the helpline.

Still wearing my towel, I sat down on the bed (which was really comfortable). I grabbed my phone and dialed Hanna’s number. She picked up almost immediately.

“Oh my God, I already miss you so much!” she gushed by way of answering.

“I miss you, too,” I told her. And despite not really having had the time to miss her all that much yet, I realized that it was true. I did miss her. We’d practically been inseparable since kindergarten.

“Tell me everything,” she demanded. “Are you in Miami yet? How’s your trailer? Have you even seen it yet? And have you already met the other actors? More importantly, have you seen Henry yet?”

Knowing I was short on time, I told her everything as quickly as I could, from telling her about sitting next to Henry the entire flight, to describing my trailer for her, to confessing to her that I was only liking Henry more and more. She went into full on fangirl-mode by the end of it.

“Oh my God!” she screeched, and I had to hold the phone a few inches away from me to save myself from severe ear damage. “You two are perfect for each other. And he was so sweet, telling you about how amazing you are after the insecurity thing—and right, by the way. Isn’t that just what every girl dreams of? If you two aren’t dating by the end of this movie, I’ll eat every left shoe I own. And you know more than anyone that I own a lot of pairs of shoes.”
I snorted. “Yeah, I know. I’m always tripping over them because you leave them all around the house. I swear, one day I’m going to break my fucking neck or something. And even though half of those shoes missing would definitely help me a lot, don’t swear that just yet. Henry might not even be into me.”

This time, she was the one who snorted. “You’re kidding me, right?”

I sighed. “Never mind that. I called you for a reason.”

“You telling me about all the deliciousness that is Henry Cavill and the way you two are totally mushy gushy isn’t reason enough?”

I ignored her. “In about…” I looked at the clock hanging from the wall, “fifteen minutes, I’m going to dinner with the other actors and probably the director and maybe some producers, and I have no idea what to wear. Do I go casual or dressy?”

“Drasual,” she said matter-of-factly. “Not quite dressy, not quite casual, just something in-between. Please hold as I try to visualize everything you’ve packed.”

I tried not to laugh as I said, “I’ll hold.”

After a few moments, she said, “Okay, I’ve got it. Simple white V-neck. You know, the one with the deep V? Gotta make it sexy for Henry, right? Royal blue pleated skirt. And then your matching royal blue Mary Janes. Done. Well, some jewelry, of course, and then you’ll be done.”

I smiled. “Hanna, you’re a lifesaver.”

I could tell she was smiling too on the other end of the line as she said, “I know.”

“Hey, look, I’m sorry, but I really have to go now. The P.A. can be here any minute, and I’m still sitting here in a towel. I’ll probably call you after dinner, though, all right?”

“All right. I love you, babe, and don’t forget to have fun.”

“I won’t. And I love you, too.”

“Not as much as you love Henry Cavill,” she sang teasingly, hanging up before I could deny it.

I glared at the phone and then shook my head as a laugh bubbled up in my throat. I set the iPhone aside and quickly assembled the outfit Hanna had described. Just five minutes later, I was wearing the high-waisted, pleated skirt, my white V-neck tucked into it, and my feet were clad in royal blue high heels. I put on some makeup and sprayed on some of the Bonbon perfume I’d bought at LAX. Then I found some last minute matching jewelry.

Just as I was sliding a pair of dark blue tassel earrings into my pierced ears, there was a knock on my door. I quickly clasped a necklace with a royal blue puzzle piece pendant around my neck and opened the door. A female P.A. about my age stood there, looking a little nervous. I gave her an encouraging smile.

“Uh, hey, I’m Natascha. I’m supposed to take you to the dinner.”

“Right, yeah, of course.” I stepped out of my trailer, careful not to trip in my five inch heels.

As she started leading me to wherever the dinner was held, Natascha asked nervously, “So… You’re pretty new to this whole being an actress thing, huh?”
“Yeah. I’ve only ever been in one movie before, and that was a low budget indie, so this is all really strange for me. But who knows, maybe I’ll get used to it someday. And what about you? I get the feeling you’re pretty new to being a P.A.”

“Is it that obvious?” she asked, her gray eyes wide.

“No, you just seem nervous, that’s all. I recognize a fellow nervous person when I see one.”

Her eyes seemed even wider as she asked, “You’re nervous? Why?”

“Hell yeah, I’m nervous. I’m basically a nobody who’s just landed her first big part and I’m afraid all those other actors will think I’m a joke; that I’m out of my league. But at least I’ll know Henry, so I’m pretty sure everything will be fine. So will everything with you, by the way. No need for you to be nervous.”

I might as well have said nothing after I mentioned Henry, because she didn’t seem to hear it anyway. “You know Henry?” she asked breathlessly.

“Not well,” I said quickly. “We just bumped into each other a few times before. And he’s been really nice to me, so… But he’s just a really nice guy, so, you know.”

“And hot,” she said, then clasped her hand over her mouth as if realizing she should not have said that.

I just smiled. “And hot,” I agreed.

We reached a building that looked entirely industrial on the outside, but was a lot cozier on the inside. Natascha led me to a room that was already buzzing with multiple people, some of whom I’d seen previously in movies or on TV, some of whom I didn’t recognize at all. Each of them were all dressed half casually, half dressy, like me, so that made me feel a lot better already. There was a round table in the middle of the room and a buffet by the wall, all the food still covered up.

Natascha gave me a small smile. “Well, there you go. I—I’ll be leaving now.”

I smiled back at her. “All right. And thank you for bringing me here, Natascha.”

She nodded, gave me one more nervous smile, and scurried off. That poor girl. She was a nervous wreck, but the worst thing was that I knew I wasn’t much different.

There was a bar set up in the corner of the room, and Henry was standing by it. I took a deep breath and headed there, realizing there wasn’t really anywhere else to go; he was the only person in this room I knew.

He was just ordering a beer when I tapped him on the shoulder. He turned around and smiled when he saw me. “Wow, Juliette, you look amazing. You make even a simple T-shirt look elegant.” He turned to the bartender and said, “A vodka soda for the lady, please.”

“Oh, I’m not sure—”

“You deserve it after traveling all day,” Henry interrupted me with a smile. Then he leaned toward me and whispered in my ear, “Besides, I always feel a little alcohol helps heaps in situations like this.”

I smiled, trying to ignore the butterflies in my stomach at his proximity and how his hot breath on my cheek made my insides turn to mush. I accepted the vodka soda the bartender had whipped up for me
and said, “All right then. But if I trip in these heels and break something, or worse, make a total fool
of myself, I’m blaming you.”

“And I’ll accept the blame graciously. And don’t worry; if you fall, I’ll catch you.” He winked and
rested his hand on the small of my back, guiding me to a small group of people standing a few feet
away from us. “Juliette, I’m sure you remember Ryan, my friend and the director of this movie.”

“Of course,” I said, smiling at Ryan. “Again, thank you so much for giving me the part.”

Ryan smiled back at me. “I stand by what I told you on the phone. Anyway, this is my beautiful
wife, Fiona.”

I smiled at her and shook her hand. “It’s nice to meet you, Fiona. I’m Juliette.”

“It’s nice to meet you, too,” Fiona said, smiling warmly. “Ever since your screen test, Henry hasn’t
been able to shut up about how good your performance was. It’s nice to finally put a face to the
legend.”

I couldn’t help but blush. “Oh, God… Has he really done that?”

Henry shrugged shamelessly. “Hey, what can I say? You really were good. And you’ll be the one
that will make this movie perfect, I’m sure of it. But on another note, let me be polite and introduce
you to Scott Tayler. He’ll be playing Ambrose.”

I smiled and shook Scott’s hand, trying not to think about how I would be kissing him, too,
somewhere in the next two and a half months. He was handsome, I supposed, with his messy blond
hair and dark blue eyes, but he wasn’t my type. I tended to fall for guys with hair a little darker. I also
knew that I’d seen Scott in something, a TV show or a movie or something, but I couldn’t exactly
recall what. “It’s nice to meet you, Scott.”

“And it’s an absolute honor to meet you, Juliette. They were not lying about your beauty.”

I refrained myself from asking who they were, and just smiled. “Thank you.”

I kept staring at Scott, though, certain I’d seen him somewhere, but frustrated with myself for not
being able to place him.

“So, Henry made me watch that indie you starred in,” Ryan said, his eyes sparkling.

“Oh, gosh… He shouldn’t have.”

“Yes, he should, because you were amazing in it,” Henry said.

“How about yourself in the third person, Henry,” Fiona said, laughing. “But he is right, though.
You really carried that movie well. And even in parts of the movie where you didn’t have a lot of
dialogue, you portrayed the role so well. And that’s a skill not many actors possess.”

“Oh my, thank you. That really means a lot.”

“She’s right,” Ryan said. “So far, you haven’t given me any reason to doubt you, and I’m glad
Henry told me to go for you. So far,” he said again, just to put the emphasis on it. “But we’ll see how
you do with the big dogs tomorrow.”

Henry elbowed his friend. “She’s gonna do great, you’ll see.”

“We’ll see indeed. But, for now, it’s time for dinner first.”
He sat down at the table. There were place cards on the plates, and Henry sat on Ryan’s left while Fiona sat on his right. I apparently sat next to Henry, and I sat down in my assigned seat.

He leaned over to whisper something in my ear. “Scott was actually supposed to sit next to me, but I switched your place cards.”

I looked at him in surprise. “You did? Why?”

Henry shrugged. “Figured you’re better company than Scott.”

“Do you even know him?”

“No,” he said, and I laughed. “But you seem to recognize him, though.”

I glanced at Scott. He was sitting almost opposite us, talking to the girl next to him. “I do recognize him from somewhere, but I can’t exactly put my finger on it.” I turned back to Henry and explained, “I have this thing where I recognize an actor in a TV show or a movie and I just know that I saw them play in something else, and then I can’t let it go until I know what exactly I’d seen them in before.”

“So, in other words, you’re going to be distracted until you know where you’ve seen him before?”

I gave him an apologetic smile. “Basically, yeah. It drives Hanna nuts, so she usually just—” I gasped and clasped my hand over Henry’s forearm. Amused, he raised a questioning eyebrow at me. “I know! He was in *Supernatural*.”

Henry’s eyebrows nearly disappeared into his hairline in surprise. “You watch that show?”

“Yeah. I started watching it when they were in their fourth season, I believe. I caught up with all the episodes in record time—which really sucks because after you’ve caught up with them you have to wait a week every time for a new episode, you know?—and I’ve been hooked ever since. It’s been a while and the show’s still going strong, so…”

“So I’ve heard. I actually envy you for being able to keep up with a show that long. God knows I probably have about a hundred episodes to catch up with in total, even with the few shows I do watch. Sometimes, when I have time off, I’ll binge a new show, though.”

“Well, if you ever feel like binge watching a show that I like too, I’m totally game to help you through it.”

He smiled. “I’ll try to keep that in mind.”

Ryan stood up, and the room gradually fell quiet. Once he was sure he had everyone’s attention, he smiled. “I’m so glad to welcome all of you to this project. Together, I think we can make *If You Love Someone* a great movie. It might not get the recognition it deserves in the end, like most romantic comedies don’t, but I at least hope we ourselves feel some gratification by the end of this entire process. But enough chit chat now. I know that most of you have traveled long and far to be here, so let’s all just grab something to eat.”

I stayed seated with Henry while the others gradually went and got their food. I thought a buffet was perhaps a little unusual, but then again, what did I know, right? Once it was a lot less crowded, Henry and I went to get some food. The food looked surprisingly good for a buffet, and I found plenty of things I actually liked. I still stayed far away from the seafood, though.

“You really don’t like it, huh?” Henry asked. “The fish and all that, I mean.”
“It’s that obvious?”

“You do this cute thing where you pull up your nose every time you even glance in the general direction of the fish. It’s kind of obvious, yes. To me, at least.”

“Oh,” I muttered.

“But don’t worry. Like I said, it’s cute.” He smiled and moved to sit back down.

I stood there for a moment, not entirely sure what to make of his words. Deciding to just leave it for now so I could overanalyze everything with Hanna later, I scooped some mashed potatoes onto my plate and sat down next to Henry again.

As we ate, Ryan encouraged us all to make conversation with each other. A few seats over, I recognized someone from my screen test. “Hey, you’re Michelle, right? We sort of met at the screen test.”

She smiled at me, but instead of polite, it just seemed forced. “Yes, we did. Didn’t get the part, though. Obviously. You did.”

“Oh. Right. I’m sorry.” Was she mad at me for stealing the part away from her? “But Ryan gave you a different part, right? Otherwise you wouldn’t be here.”

“Just a small one. I’m only in a scene where Amelia and Noah meet. I’m playing your friend.” The way she said that made me suspect she was not happy with that. The way she abruptly turned away to talk to someone else only proved that suspicion further.

“Great,” I muttered, looking down at my plate and starting to push the mash around.

“What’s wrong?” Henry asked, turning to me. He’d been engrossed in a conversation with Ryan.

I shook my head, attempting a smile. “Nothing. I just have a feeling I made my first enemy in Hollywood. And I’m not even really in Hollywood right now.”

He furrowed his brow. “Who?”

“Just… one of the other girls that screen tested with you. She’s mad that I got the part instead of her.”

Henry shrugged. “Let her be.” He glanced over at Michelle, obviously recognizing her from his screen test with her. “She was too cocky for my tastes. Was probably sure she was going to get the part. But you were better.”

“If you say so.”

He gave me one more smile and turned back to Ryan.

After that, the dinner went by pretty much uneventfully. Lucky for me, the other actors were much nicer than Michelle. And if I still couldn’t make any other friends, I’d always have Natascha, the P.A. At least she was nice.

Once the dinner was over, I returned to my trailer, saying a quick goodbye to Henry, Ryan, Fiona and Scott. When I got back, I called Hanna and relayed everything that had happened to her. She had quite a few choice words for Michelle (which cheered me up, like it always did), and she appeared to be in heaven once I told her about Henry calling my reaction to seeing fish ‘cute.’ Which, if you say it like that, sounded really weird, but I was too over-the-moon to care.
After Hanna basically forced me into promising I’d call her after my first day on set tomorrow, we hung up, and I made myself ready for bed.

I was more exhausted than I’d thought, and I was gone the minute my head touched the pillow.

*~*~*~*~*

Monday, April 4, 2016.

The next morning I was woken up by a knock on my trailer’s door. Groggily, I reached for my phone and checked the display for the time. My alarm would go off in about fifteen minutes. Groaning, I rolled out of bed and silently cursed whomever was on the other side of that door and had just robbed me of fifteen precious minutes of sleep. Remembering in the nick of time that I had severe bedhead, I hastily dragged a hand through my hair in attempt to tame it. There was no time to change my clothes; cotton shorts and a black tank top. I wasn’t even wearing a bra.

I opened the door and was surprised to stand face to face with a brightly smiling Henry. I blinked a little against the glare of the bright sunlight streaming into my trailer. “What are you doing up so early? The call time hasn’t changed, has it?”

“No, it hasn’t, don’t worry. I just thought you might like to meet Kal.” He pointed next to him, and only then did I notice the Akita sitting patiently by his feet. Kal had brown eyes and his coat was mostly black, but his paws were white, as was the tip of his tail.

Immediately, I felt my brain wake up. “Oh my God, yes! Hi, buddy,” I said, kneeling down to scratch his head. I looked up at Henry, now understanding his bright smile. “He’s so cute. Is it okay if I freshen up real quick? I just woke up.”

“Yeah, no, sure.”

“Okay, cool. You can wait inside.”

Henry and Kal entered my trailer and Henry sat down on the couch as Kal went to lie down by his feet. I hurriedly assembled an outfit and disappeared into my bathroom for a quick shower. When I returned twelve minutes later (honestly a record time for me), they were still where I’d left them.

I kneeled down by Kal so I could properly say hi to him. He regarded me curiously as I scratched him under his chin. “Hey, Kal,” I crooned. “You’re such a cutie! Yeah, you are.” He started wagging his tail, constantly slamming into Henry’s leg, but he just looked at his dog affectionately. “It’s nice to meet you, cutie.”

I gave him one more rub over his head and then hoisted myself up to sit next to Henry on the couch. Kal just stood up and followed my movements, demanding more attention.

Henry laughed. “He sure seems to like you.”

“I have a knack for getting along with dogs. Really, it’s my special talent. But I get the feeling Kal is usually very gentle around other people.”

“He is, yes. He’s a real sweetheart. Training him to be my guard dog would be pointless.”

“Luna was like that, too. You know, my old dog. How’s Kal around other dogs?”

“He basically just wants to play. Whether it’s with a Chihuahua or with a Great Dane, he doesn’t care, as long as he gets to play. Though he can come off a little too playful around the smaller dogs,
if you know what I mean.”

“I do,” I said, laughing. I turned to Henry again, but still kept petting Kal to keep him satisfied. “So
what do you do with him when we’re filming?”

“He usually just stays in my trailer. He’s fine with being alone for longer periods of time, but most of
the time I tend to hurry back in-between takes to check on him. Anyway, shall I whip us up some
breakfast before we have to head to the hair and makeup trailer?”

“You cook?” I asked, hoping the surprise in my voice wouldn’t come off as offensive.

“Sometimes I tend to cook one of the few dishes I actually know how to cook,” he joked, getting up
from the couch. Kal looked at him curiously, but seemed content to stay with me as I petted him.
“Besides, bacon and eggs really isn’t all that hard to make.”


“No, I’ve got it. Besides, I don’t think Kal’s letting you go any time soon.”

I looked down at the dog and laughed. His eyes were closed and his tongue hung out of his mouth as
I scratched him behind his ears. “Yeah, I don’t think so, either. You know, I might just steal him
from you.”

Henry pointed a spatula at me. “Don’t you dare,” he joked.

He cooked us up a quick breakfast and we ate it in peace—well, almost. Kal turned out to be a
beggar, but I didn’t really mind, and Henry didn’t seem to, either. After we were done eating, Henry
returned Kal to his trailer and the two of us went off to find the makeup trailer.

The two women inside were extremely kind, and they introduced themselves as Marie and Ella.
Marie went to work on Henry as Ella started binding my hair back to keep it out of the makeup’s
way.

“You have gorgeous skin,” she told me. “You can tell you moisturize properly, unlike some other
actors and actresses I’ve worked on.”

Not sure if that was really a compliment to me or a complaint about those actors she was talking
about, I said, “Uh, thanks?”

“It certainly makes my job a lot easier. You only need a little bit of makeup. What’s going to take up
most of our time is getting all that hair under a wig,” she joked laughingly.

We would be filming the scene where Amelia and Noah first meet, and so our appearance needed to
be different from what it would be throughout the rest of the movie. That meant wigs. My hair was
incredibly long—it fell just a little above my butt in straight locks—and I hadn’t really thought about
how challenging it might be to fit all of it under a wig until now.

Nevertheless, Ella went to work on me. As she worked, I couldn’t help but stare at Henry in the
mirror, just like I couldn’t help but be jealous of Marie. She got to touch Henry’s face and hair
without it being weird.

Belatedly, I realized Henry was looking at me, too. I’d been so busy analyzing his every feature that
I hadn’t noticed he was doing the same to me. Catching his eye, I quickly looked away.

When we were done in makeup and hair, we went over to the costume department. My makeup had
been done subtly but in such a way to make me appear younger, as was Henry’s. My hair was tucked away under a wig that was the same color as my own hair, but much shorter. It felt weird to have hair that only fell down to my shoulders. Henry’s hair, on the other hand, was just a tad bit longer.

In costume, I got assigned a pair of skinny jeans, a graphic T-shirt and purple Chuck Taylors. I quickly went to change and when I returned, Henry was waiting for me already, also in costume. He was wearing black skinny jeans, a simple white T-shirt and Nikes. He looked uncomfortable in the jeans, making me laugh.

“Something tells me you don’t wear skinny jeans all that often.”

“Try never,” he said, a wry smile shaping his lips. “How do people even move in these things?”

Trying not to laugh, I said, “I would think it’s not all that different from your Superman suit.”

“Denim is a lot sturdier than whatever the suit’s made of.”

“Well, I think you look good in them. You should invest in a few pairs.”

He raised an eyebrow. “You really think they look good?”

I nodded. “Yes, I do,” I answered truthfully. “I’ve always liked skinny jeans on guys. Well, not when they have really long and skinny legs, because then it tends to get a little creepy-looking sometimes. But you have really muscular legs, so you can easily rock them.”

“Huh,” he said thoughtfully.

We reached the set, and to my horror, I saw Michelle standing among all the people already gathered. She noticed me immediately when I walked in together with Henry, and her first serene face turned stormy instantly. I sighed. “Great,” I muttered under my breath. These were going to be a long few days.

Ryan smiled when he saw us. “Ah, there are my stars! Let’s get ready to film, shall we?” He quickly explained the coming scene to us—the way he wanted it to feel and look, the way he wanted us to move, where he wanted us to move. I soaked up every bit of information he gave us. “All right, take your places.”

Henry and I went to stand in position, right where Ryan wanted to have us. Michelle gave me a bright smile and said, “Break a leg.” To anyone else, the statement might’ve been completely innocent, but I knew she meant it literally rather than figuratively.

I sighed, gave her the most genuine smile I could muster, and said, “Thanks.”

“Marker, and… action!” Ryan said.

No longer was I Juliette Morrison, plagued by too many things to sum up.

I was Amelia Brenner, completely unaware that I was about to bump into the hottest guy on my campus.

Chapter End Notes
Sooo... Is it just me, or is Henry getting a little flirty there? ;) I really enjoyed writing this chapter. Writing these two together is almost easy, the way their banter just flows out. So I hope you guys are enjoying it as much as I am. How are you liking Kal, by the way? Isn't he just the cutest? He's the only real living being I used from Henry's real life. Everyone else, his brothers per example, I have renamed and completely made up, because writing about Henry is one thing, but writing about his brothers or any other people in his life is another, so I've chosen to refrain from doing that.

Also, the next chapter will definitely be worth the wait, trust me. :)

The lyrics at the start of the chapter are Great Big World by Ron Pope.
Chapter 6

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Maybe we’re friends
Maybe we’re more
Maybe it’s just my imagination
But I see you stare just a little too long
And it makes me start to wonder

~*~*~*~*~*~

Tuesday, April 12, 2016.

The days passed by quickly in Miami, even despite Michelle trying to make my life on set miserable. But Henry had almost always been there to remind me that I got the part for a reason, just as she didn’t get the part for a reason. And if he wasn’t there, Natascha was.

We’d grown much closer over the past few days—not nearly as close as I was with my friends back home, but she was nice to me, and I liked to return the favor. Plus, we could laugh together, which was especially important when Michelle made another well-placed jab at me and Henry wasn’t there to soften the blow. Besides, she never really did anything too obvious when he was around anyway. I had a feeling she was trying to win him over for herself.

But we had wrapped up the early scenes and Michelle was no longer needed on set, so she’d flown back to L.A. Good riddance, if you asked me. As soon as she was gone, the mood around set seemed to brighten almost instantly.

I had today off, and I was planning on going to the beach. I’d already went into Miami a couple of times to explore the city and do a little shopping, so I was pretty sure I could find Miami Beach on my own. But Henry had different thoughts.

I bumped into him and Kal on my way out—literally. I walked around my trailer, and BAM. Literally a face full of muscled chest. “Oh my God, I’m so sorry!” I said, automatically lifting up my hands to push myself away from whomever I’d walked into.

Henry smiled down at me and I froze, my hands still on his chest. “It’s okay. Where are you headed to in such a rush?”

I jerked my hands back and tried not to appear flustered. “Oh, um, I was just about to go to the beach.”

“The beach, huh?” Henry asked. “Mind if I go with you? I haven’t been to the beach in forever.”

I raised my eyebrows. “You would want that? Go to the beach with me, I mean?”

“Yeah, of course. Why wouldn’t I?”

“I don’t know… I’d just think you’d have something better to do than go to the beach with little old
me. Besides, wouldn’t it be too crowded for you? I mean, it’s a Tuesday, but there’s still a huge possibility of paparazzi finding you, right?”

“At Miami Beach, yes. But that’s not the only beach here. I know of a few that are much less crowded, if a little farther away. So, what do you say? Can I tag along with you?”

“Yes, no, of course. You’re more than welcome to come with me.”

He smiled, his eyes sparkling. “Cool. I just have to change real quick then. Wanna come with?”

I followed him to his trailer, and as he went into his bathroom to change from his skinny jeans (I couldn’t help but wonder if he was wearing them because I’d told him I liked them on him that first day of filming) and button down to navy board shorts and a white V-neck, I sat down on the floor to cuddle with Kal. Henry’s trailer was very similar to mine, save from a few decorative changes. I was surprised to note it was just as big as mine. I’d somehow thought his trailer would be bigger, with him being a much bigger star than me.

Henry returned, and was amused to find me on the ground. “Comfortable?”

“Hey, sometimes you just gotta sit on the floor to cuddle with a cute dog,” I said, scrambling to my feet again.

He regarded Kal with an affectionate smile. “True enough.” He bent down to kiss him on the top of his head, and Kal returned the favor by licking his cheek. “Sit tight, buddy. I’ll be back soon.”

Turning to me again, he asked, “Ready to go?”

Henry drove us to a reasonably quiet stretch of beach not far from Miami Beach. There were still quite a few people there, though, but none of them paid us much attention as we chose two beach beds and spread our towels over them.

I sat down on mine, trying not to look as awkward as I felt. The idea of going to the beach with Henry freakin’ Cavill was already weird enough, but actually being there with him? I had no idea what to do or say. So instead I just focused on unstrapping my sandals, digging my toes in the sand once they were free.

“How’d you know about this place?” I asked, just as Henry took off his shirt. The breath caught in the back of my throat, and I hoped he didn’t notice. I, on the other hand, couldn’t help but notice everything about him—the way his chest was incredibly muscled, how he had the most defined abs I’d ever seen, and how his shoulders seemed to be sculpted by Michelangelo himself. I guess those six hours of working out every week paid off.

“Ryan told me about it. I didn’t think I would go, seeing as going to the beach on your own isn’t as fun as going with someone else. And then I bumped into you.”

I forced a laugh. “Literally. Oh, sorry,” I said as I heard my phone go off in my purse. I got it out and noticed I had a text from Hanna. “It’s Hanna. Is it okay if I text her back real quick?”

“Yes, no, of course. Go right ahead.”

I gave him an apologetic smile and opened the message.

**Hey, sis. what are u up to on ur day off? i thought maybe we could skype or something. i haven’t seen ur gorgeous face in too long and i’m going thru withdrawal, tbh.**

**I’M AT THE BEACH WITH HENRY. HE’S SHIRTLESS. AND HOT. WHAT DO I**
OH MY GODDDDDD!!!! tell me ur at least wearing that bikini i packed for u.

You mean the incredibly skimpy blue bikini that you basically forced into my suitcase? Yes, I am, but I’m still wearing my dress over it.

does it have a zipper? let henry unzip it for you :P

I tried not to roll my eyes at that—though the idea did sound appealing.

You are the worst.

i’m also right, and u know it. oh, and take a selfie of the 2 of u. make sure to include his abs. i expect a full report tonite on skype. good luck.

I sighed and put my phone back in my purse. Then, taking a deep breath, I asked, “Hey, could you unzip me? It’s kind of hard to reach. I think I spent ten minutes this morning trying to get it zipped.”

“Yeah, of course.”

I stood up and turned around so Henry could unzip my baby blue skater dress. I tried not to gasp as his fingers lightly skimmed my back. “Thank you,” I said, smiling as I still kept the dress clutched to my chest. Thinking that it was too late to buy myself a new bikini, I let the dress fall to the sandy ground. I picked it up and shook it out, hoping not to get too much sand in there.

When I looked at Henry’s face again, I noticed he was staring. I could guess why. The baby blue bikini with black straps was tiny—for my standards at least. Not only that, but the top was basically a pushup bra, so my usual C-cup was now a lot bigger than I myself was used to. Let alone Henry.

“Uh, anyway…” I started awkwardly. “Hanna wants us to take a selfie because she doesn’t believe we’re actually at the beach together.” What was a little white lie among friends, right? Besides, it sure as hell beat telling him she just wanted to see his abs. “I promise she won’t send it to anyone else or anything. She’s not like that,” I rambled.

He shook his head and forcibly pulled his gaze back to my face again. “A picture?” he asked, sounding a little absentminded. “Yeah, no problem.”

I retrieved my phone from my purse again and opened the camera app, switching it to the front camera. The sea behind us, Henry wrapped an arm around my waist (which I wasn’t complaining about one bit) and I smiled for the camera, but I was surprised when Henry went to kiss my cheek. I snapped the picture and stared at it. It was the best picture I’d ever taken of myself. My hair was doing something normal for once, my skin was flawless, and my smile… It was the brightest I’d ever smiled. And Henry was just… pure perfection. I would treasure this picture forever.

“I like it,” Henry said, smiling at the photo as his arm stayed wrapped around my waist. His proximity was fogging up my brain in the best possible way. “Should we take another one where I’m actually looking into the camera?”

I laughed, albeit a little breathlessly. “Yeah, sure.” We took another picture, our heads close together and wide smiles on both our faces. “I can’t decide which one I like best,” I said once it had loaded and the both of us were examining it.

“I like the first one better,” Henry said, regrettably stepping away from me. “Your smile’s brighter.
You look gorgeous in both, though. Can you send those to me, too?”

He thought I looked gorgeous? Henry Cavill thought that I was gorgeous? The man I’d been crushing on more and more for over a month now thought that I was gorgeous?

The compliment bounced around in my head so much that it took me a while to register his question. “Send them to you? Yeah, of course.” We’d swapped phone numbers on the plane to Miami (which was a strange thing, since I’d never thought about having Superman’s phone number) and I quickly texted them to him. Then I texted them to Hanna.

**There you go. Btw: thanks.**

**OH MY GOD. OH. MY. GOD. YOU TWO LOOK SO GORGEOUS TOGETHER. YOU TWO ARE GOING TO BE HOLLYWOOD’S NEW POWER COUPLE, I JUST KNOW IT.**

I laughed, shaking my head. “She’s so shocked she’s even using proper grammar in her texts,” I told him. “She hardly ever does that. Though, I have to admit, it is in all caps.” I put my phone away again and said, “So, what do you say? Up for a swim?”

He smiled, and it nearly took my breath away. “Always.”

He offered me his hand, and I took it, trying not to think about how perfectly my hand fit in his. We ran to the sea together, the water splashing around us when we finally reached it. Henry grinned deviously and suddenly picked me up, slinging me over his shoulder. I shrieked as he ran a little deeper into the sea before letting himself fall in, dragging me with him.

“You dick!” I said when I resurfaced, gasping.

He laughed, throwing his head back. “Your face just now made it totally worth it.”

“You’re still a dick,” I said, slapping him on his chest. Anything to distract myself from watching the drops of water slowly making their way down his torso.

“A cute one, though, right?” he asked, a cheeky smile on his face that made me either want to slap him or kiss him.

I refrained myself from both and managed a grin. “Someone’s feeling cocky today. But try hot, Mr. Rock Hard Abs.”

He looked down at his torso and laughed, though I did notice a slight blush forming on his cheeks. It was about time I was making him feel flustered instead of the other way around. “You think? The training process isn’t even over yet.”

“You mean all this,”—I gestured at his abs—“is gonna get even bigger?”

“That would be the goal, yes.”

“Ho—ly—shit.”

“Is that a good or a bad holy shit?”

“It’s a wildly impressed holy shit. I’ve never even met a guy who’s as muscular as you are right now, and you’re training to get even bigger. It’s just… holy shit.”

He laughed. “Becoming Superman isn’t easy.”
“No shit.”

“Enough about my muscles now. You’re making me blush,” he joked. Then that devious grin returned, and he wrapped his arms around my waist, dragging me into the water again.

*~*~*~*~*

“Oh my God, Hanna. I don’t think I can take this anymore,” I said by way of greeting.

Hanna’s face on my computer screen had been radiant at first when she saw me, but now it turned to concern. “What can’t you take anymore? Do I need to fly over to Miami to give Michelle an ass whooping?”

I laughed, shaking my head. “No, Michelle’s already gone. I meant Henry.”

I expected her to tease me, but she stayed uncharacteristically serious. “You really like him, don’t you?”

I covered my face with my hands and nodded. “Yes…” I groaned, the sound coming out muffled because of my hands. I dragged them down until they fell in my lap. “It’s really not fun. He’s just so pretty and cute and hot and sweet and funny and kind and… Well, you get the idea.”

She visibly tried not to laugh, but failed in the end. “Oh, honey… You really are in deep.”

“That’s what I’m trying to tell you. And it’s torture, because I don’t know if he likes me back. And you know me, I’ll never be the one making the first move. So I’m just sat here hoping that he will and worrying that he won’t.”

“He will. There’s no way he can pass you up. No way. And if he hasn’t realized it yet, maybe he will after your kissing scene. When’s that, by the way?”

Feeling queasy, I said, “Please don’t remind me of that…”

“When is it?” she asked again.

“Tomorrow…”

She grinned, clapping her hands. “Oh my God, perfect timing! Today you both had a really fun day at the beach and then tomorrow you’ll have your first kiss, and there’s no way he isn’t feeling something after seeing you in that bikini. You did have fun, though, right?”

I smiled dreamily. “Yeah, we did. We laughed a lot, and he called me gorgeous. And oh my God, Han, his abs. It’s like he’s not even human.”

“That’s because he’s an alien from Krypton,” Hanna joked. “But seriously, though, it totally sounds like you two are hitting it off. He’s into you, I just know it. And then after your kissing scene tomorrow, he might realize just how much he’s into you and make the first move.”

I sighed, shaking my head. “No, you don’t get it, Han. Kissing scenes are totally choreographed. It’s literally like kissing someone while someone else is throwing directions at you head. ‘Put your hand on his chest.’ ‘Your hair is blocking the frame.’ Stuff like that.”

She pulled a face. “Meh. But hey, you’d still be kissing him, though, right? I mean, I know a lot of old, creepy men will be staring at you and you’d get unwanted directions, but you would be kissing him. You’d be kissing Henry Cavill.”
Sighing once more, I said, “Yeah, but it’d be weird. I mean, I would feel… something, but he might feel nothing. And I guess that’s what I’m scared of most.”

“It’ll be fine, babe. Don’t worry about it.”

I gave her a tentative smile and then decided to change the subject. “Anyway, enough about me. How are things back at home?”

“Boring without you, honestly. I’m still working on my script in-between shifts at the riding school. It’s almost finished.”

I grinned. “Oh my God, I’m so excited for you!”

Smiling, she said, “Thank you. Anyway, Keegan and Klarissa are still going strong.” She grimaced. “I’m sorry I didn’t believe you about all the stories Keegs tells you about their sex life, by the way. He told me all those stories instead on Friday. Also, he ate all the food.”

I laughed. Usually, Keegan comes by on Fridays while Hanna is working, and we watch TV shows and do other stupid stuff—anything to not be productive. He tends to overshare, though. That, and he eats all the food in the house. In a way, we really are kind of like brother and sister. “I told you. I hope he didn’t eat anything you planned to save for later.”

“It’s not like I was hungry anyway after all the… stories. I mean, it’s cute how he loves her so much and all, and how he goes crazy when she wears a certain something, but that doesn’t mean that I need to know about it.”

“Trust me, I know,” I said, laughing. “And the others?”

“Nothing that I can really think of… Just same old, same old. Oh, no, wait! Colly got promoted, so he’s now one of the head designers.”

“Oh my God, I can’t believe that little shit didn’t tell me!”

Hanna laughed. “It only just happened yesterday. I think he’s still too shocked to tell you.”

“I’ll congratulate Colin later. I really should go now, I have an insanely early call time tomorrow.”

“Oh, wait, one more thing!” Hanna said hurriedly. “Your family is coming out to Miami to visit you in a few weeks, right?”

“Yeah, why?” I asked, furrowing my brow in confusion.

“I was thinking of going, too, if you’re okay with that. I mean, I get that it’s been much longer since you’ve seen your family than you’ve seen me, but I really wasn’t kidding about the Juliette withdrawal.”

I grinned. “Of course I’m okay with that. Besides, talking to you about Henry in person would be so much better.”

She mirrored my grin. “And who knows, you might even be dating him by then.” She winked, and said, “Bye, now.”

She once again disconnected before I could reply, and I groaned. Sometimes my best friend could be a real pain in the ass. I grabbed my phone and curled up in my bed, turning the lights off. I sent a quick text to Colin to congratulate him on his promotion, which led to one of the cutest texting
conversations I’d ever had with him. He’s very much like me, in the sense that we both tend to be too modest, but he was really good at what he did, and he wholly deserved that promotion, and so, so much more.

I told him goodnight, too, and put my phone away. I lay on my back, staring up at the ceiling in the dark. Then, unable to stop myself, I grabbed my phone again and looked at the two last pictures saved to my camera roll. I was mesmerized as I stared at the one of Henry kissing my cheek. I looked happier than I’d ever seen myself, and Henry’s side profile was quite possibly one of the hottest things I’d seen. I trailed my finger over his jaw, wishing I could do the same in person.

Just as I shook my head and wanted to lock my phone again, a text came in, this one being from Cynthia.

ASDFGHJKL

That was all it said, along with an attached link. Confused, I clicked the link, and it led me to one of the many gossip sites out there. My heart nearly stopped when I saw what the article was about, let alone when I saw the attached pictures.

Henry Cavill broke up with his model girlfriend Alyssa Jeanes just three months ago, but he seems to be completely over her already. He was seen gallivanting near Miami Beach today with an unidentified brunette. Henry is filming his next movie If You Love Someone, a romantic comedy, in Miami, and it’s looking like he’s doing quite well for himself on the romance and comedy fronts. He and his mystery brunette were seen laughing and hugging in the ocean, and we honestly can’t say who we’re more jealous of: the brunette for being able to side up to Henry, or Henry for having such a smoking hot new girlfriend. The world may never know, but we do know that they make a gorgeous couple. More pictures down below.

I stared at the pictures speechlessly. I could get how whoever had written this had gotten the idea Henry and I were an item. In these pictures, we actually did look like a couple. And there were a lot of pictures. Pictures of us laughing in the sea. Pictures of Henry’s arms around my waist before he pulled me under water. Pictures of me slung over his shoulder, laughing and shrieking. Pictures of us tanning side by side, either both engrossed in our books or talking to each other with big smiles on our faces.

The pictures made me feel an ache in my chest. I wanted the article to be true so badly, but it wasn’t. I put my phone away, not even bothering to respond to Cynthia. I’d do so tomorrow. Right now I didn’t feel like saying that I wasn’t actually with Henry.

Speaking of Henry, I hoped he wouldn’t be mad about the article, or the pictures. He didn’t seem like the kind of guy who would be upset about it, but my anxiety-filled mind could never be sure.

I put the phone away, connecting it to the charger, and closed my eyes in an attempt to fall asleep. It took hours before I finally did.

*~*~*~*~*

Wednesday, April 13, 2016.

The next morning was both too early and way too nerve wracking. I was alone in the makeup trailer, having to do a scene without Henry first. I’d be filming a fight between Amelia and Ambrose, my and Scott’s characters. They were finally gonna break up (thank God, because Ambrose was a terrible boyfriend to Amelia), but I found I couldn’t focus on that scene because I was too worried about the kissing scene we’d be filming this afternoon. As Ella did my hair, I tried to focus on the
Actually filming the scene wasn’t much better. I kept messing up; missing my mark or saying my lines wrong. Ryan was about ready to give up on me until Natascha came to save the day. We took five, and we had a cup of tea together as she told me funny stories from her past to distract me. It worked remarkably well, and I found I could concentrate much better after that.

When Ryan was finally satisfied about my scene with Scott, I went back to the makeup trailer, where Ella changed my makeup a little and redid my hair so it was in a messy bun.

Halfway through, Henry walked in, looking chipper. He sat down in the chair next to mine and Marie went to work on him.

“Good afternoon, Juliette,” Henry said, smiling at me in the mirror. “Did you sleep well?”

“Not really.” I answered truthfully. “Ridiculously early call times are no fun for night owls. I only had a few hours of sleep.”

“And I could tell by the bags under your eyes,” Ella chastised me.

I grimaced. “Sorry, Ella.”

“It’s okay, dearie. Makeup can work wonders if you know how to use it, and I’d like to think I can use it pretty well.”

“You can. You’re the best makeup artist I know.”

Ella smiled and tapped me on the head with her comb. “Sweet talker.”

When we were finished in makeup and hair, Henry and I made our way to the set. As we walked, I asked tentatively, “So… Did you see that article that was posted last night? The one about us at the beach?”

“Yeah, I did. No big deal, right?” Henry said, shrugging the matter off.

“Really?” I raised my eyebrows in disbelief. “I thought you’d be… I don’t know, mad or something.”

He laughed. “Why would I be mad? It’s not exactly an insult to be thought of as your boyfriend. Unless, of course, you see it as an insult to have the world think you’re my girlfriend?”

“No, of course not,” I said quickly. “It’d feel a lot better if I could actually say I’m your girlfriend and mean it, though, I thought. “I just thought you might not like a private outing being photographed.”

“I’ve learned not to mind it as much anymore. Besides, I actually like the pictures. They serve as a good reminder of a really fun day.”

I honestly hadn’t thought he would think of it that way, but I’m glad he did. This meant at least one of the things I’d been concerned about fell away, but that left the most pressing one: the kissing scene.

We reached the set, and everyone was already there, waiting for us. I guess our conversation had slowed us down.

“All right, so here’s the deal,” Ryan said by way of greeting. “Juliette, Amelia’s just broken up with Scott, and it was intense. You’re sitting on the couch, staring blankly ahead, and then Noah comes
in. Henry, you’re concerned for Amelia and when she tells you what happened, you realize that now’s your chance, okay? Juliette, when you say, ‘Noah, I just can’t do this right now,’ you get up from the couch, and Henry, you follow after her. You two kiss, and after you’ve said all your lines, Amelia storms out of the house, not knowing what to do anymore. Henry, you stay behind, worried you just made a huge mistake. Got it?”

Henry nodded. “Got it. What do you want the kiss to be like?”

Ryan shrugged. “Just kiss. Do whatever you think would come naturally to your characters. I’ll let you two choreograph it.”

“What if it comes naturally to kiss for a second or five minutes?” I asked. “You sure you don’t want to give us any more directions?”

“I’m sure. Just remember that the characters you play have wanted to kiss each other for a while, so the passion should be there. That shouldn’t be too hard for the two for you to play, right?”

Wondering just what the hell that was supposed to mean, I nodded.

“Good. So, get in position and let’s get these cameras rolling.”

I sat down on the couch with my legs curled under me just as the lighting adjusted. I ignored all the cameras and all the people standing around me and stared blankly ahead. I had enough that was worrying me, so that part wasn’t all too hard for me to act.

“Action!” Ryan yelled.

I continued to stare into space, even when I heard the door opening.

“Amelia?” Henry called out.

Everything within me screamed for me to turn around, to see his face. I guess I had an internal instinct to turn to the sound of his voice. But I stayed exactly as I was, staring blankly at that same spot on the wall.

Henry kneeled in front of me, his hands on my knees to balance himself, and looked up at me with concern-filled eyes. “Amy, are you okay?”

I stayed silent for a few more seconds before finally meeting his eyes. “I broke up with Ambrose.”

Almost involuntarily, the corners of Henry’s mouth twitched, but he managed to fight the smile, and all that was left was pure concern. “You… You broke up? Are you okay? Do you need me to get the ice cream? Vodka?”

I couldn’t help but laugh, shaking my head. “No, I’m good. It’s just… He said some things to me, you know? And they hit me pretty hard.” I sighed, looking down at my hands to avoid his gaze.

“You were right all along, Noah. I should’ve listened to you, but I didn’t. I’m just so stupid.”

“Hey, no, you’re not,” Henry said quickly, cupping my face in his hands. I was Amelia at the moment, but the butterflies in my stomach were entirely Juliette’s. “You’re one of the smartest people I know.” He smiled, saying, “A little stubborn at times, maybe, but smart nonetheless. And you’re beautiful. And kind. And passionate. Anything he said to you that makes you believe otherwise, it’s pure lies, you get that?” Turning almost angrier than I’d seen him in Harvey’s, when he’d protected me from that drunk guy, he said, “I swear to God, if I’d been there, I would’ve—”
“Noah, don’t,” I interrupted him. “I can’t do this right now.” I stood up from the couch and moved to walk away, but he was after me before I could get too far.

He grabbed me by my waist and pulled me close. His thumb gently traced a line under my eye. “Amelia…” he whispered.

I stared at him, taking all of him in. His dark curls that I loved so very much, his beautiful blue eyes with that cute little brown fleck, his almost-straight nose, his jawline, the stubble that drove me crazy, and finally his lips. They were parted slightly as his breathing quickened. There was a small birthmark on his bottom lip that captivated my attention. He was so beautiful it gave me an actual physical ache in my chest, as if someone was squeezing my heart in their hand.

And then he bent his head down and we were kissing. All my worries, everything that had been weighing me down for God knows how long, it all disappeared. All that was left was the feeling of Henry’s lips on mine, his arm wrapped around my waist to keep me pressed tightly against him, his hand cupping my face so gently like he was afraid I might break. On their own accord, my arms snaked up to wrap around his shoulders, my fingers tangling themselves in the soft curls at the base of his neck.

The pressure of his mouth on mine hardened, and he forced my lips apart with his own, his tongue coming to meet mine. My heart pounded in my chest, and there was no way he couldn’t feel it with how closely pressed together we were.

Turned out Henry was a more than decent kisser, and I only wanted more, more, more…

But he broke the kiss and rested his forehead against mine. We were both breathing hard. My hand slid down his chest to come to a rest over his heart, and I was surprised to find out it was beating as fast as mine was. Was there a chance he might like me too after all? His thumb was stroking my cheek, and it was clouding up my thoughts. It was like clear, coherent thought had temporarily left my skill set.

“Amy, I love you,” Henry breathed, staring into my eyes. His blue eyes were sincere and as hypnotizing as ever. “I have loved you ever since we bumped into each other that first day at college and your books sprawled everywhere. Remember that? You were so pissed because you spent all morning printing out your manuscript and it was all over the place and I just couldn’t help but think, ‘Look at this beautiful goddess.’ I was in love with you even then, and it never went away.”

I stared up at him, desperately wanting to kiss him again. Instead, I remembered I had lines to say. “I… I’m sorry, I can’t do this, Noah. I can’t.” I managed to break out of his hold and stormed out of the door, breathing hard.

“Aaaaaand cut!” Ryan yelled. “Good job, everyone. I told you you’d get the kiss right. Let’s take a small break and try that again. I loved the energy you two had going on, so try to hold on to that, okay?”

I nodded and went to grab a bottle of water, and Natascha stood there to stare at me. “Oh my God!” she hissed. “That kiss was… Holy—” She stopped herself, because at that moment, Henry walked up.

He grabbed a water bottle for himself, twisted the cap off, and took a sip. “You did great out there,” he told me with a smile. “You portrayed Amelia’s emotions really well just then.”

Refusing to admit I wasn’t sure how much of that scene was really acted, I smiled at him. “Thanks. You were great, too. You made even me believe every word you said.”
He just smiled and walked off to talk to Ryan.

Ryan made us film the scene fourteen more times. I kissed Henry a total of fifteen times, and each kiss seemed better than the one before that. I couldn’t get enough. I didn’t know if there was something wrong with me or if I really was that attracted to Henry. I also didn’t know if there was something wrong with Ryan, because it was the most he’d ever made us do a scene over. By the end of it, I felt like I knew Henry’s kisses better than I knew myself. Not that I was complaining. If he’d wanted us to do the scene for a sixteenth time, I’d happily have done so.

After a quick late dinner, I returned to my trailer. It was already one a.m. in Miami, but it was much earlier in Los Angeles and I knew Hanna would still be awake. Still feeling Henry on my lips and my head still floating in the clouds, I dialed her number to relay everything that happened. She’d probably go full-on fangirl on me.

I was right.

She did, and I joined her in her squealing unabashedly.

Chapter End Notes

So, was it worth the wait? ;)

Anyway, real talk for a minute. Have you guys seen BvS yet? I went to the midnight premiere on Wednesday with Keegs (I based the character in this story off of him, and though my friend’s name isn't Keegs, I have started accidentally calling him that and it kind of stuck), and OH MY GOD! The movie was so good! So worth seeing. And if, by a very small chance, you’ve still not been persuaded to go see it, just let me tell you this: There's a scene in which Clark is cooking, wearing only sweatpants and no shirt. I mean, if that alone isn't reason enough to go see it, I don’t know what is.

Anyway, I hope you guys enjoyed reading this chapter as much as I enjoyed writing it, and then I’ll see you next week for another chapter, in which Hanna is flying over to Miami and Henry meets Juliette's family :)

Lyrics at the start of the chapter are from Next To You by Jordin Sparks
The days passed by quickly in Miami, and Henry and I grew closer and closer together—but we never talked about those kisses. Not that it was really something we had to talk about, seeing as it was only a scene we’d done together, but I found it was the one constant thing on my mind. I kept wanting to kiss him again, and sometimes I found myself staring at his lips. But if he caught me staring, he never said anything about it. I had also looked at the picture we’d taken at the beach—the one where he’s kissing my cheek—so often that I could now visualize it perfectly. It was getting out of hand, really.

Which was why it was a good thing that today my family and best friend would come to visit. I hadn’t seen my family in literally months, and I missed them terribly. I hadn’t seen Hanna in four weeks, but I missed her just as much. She would be coming sooner, seeing as her flight from Los Angeles landed earlier than my family’s flight from Newark, New Jersey.

I had just wrapped up an (extremely) early morning scene and was getting ready for having a few hours off when I heard her.

“JULIE!” Hanna yelled, and she ran at me, her arms already outstretched for a hug, leaving an amused-looking Natascha behind.

I was just in time to open my arms too before she slammed into me, nearly knocking me over. “Oh my God, Hanna, I missed you so much!”

“I missed you, too!” she squealed, rocking me from side to side so violently that I nearly fell over again. “Oh my gosh, we have so much catching up to do, it’s not even funny. Like, for real.”

“Hey, Hanna,” a deep voice said from behind me. “Long time no see.”

Hanna managed to pull away from me and smiled at Henry. “Hey, Henry. Long time no see indeed. I just figured it was time to steal my bestie back for a bit. You can’t keep hogging her all the time, you know.” She actually had the audacity to wink at him.

Henry laughed. “Aww, that’s too bad. I’m not really a sharing kind of person.”

“Don’t you have like a trillion brothers?” she asked. “Must’ve been fun growing up if you don’t like sharing.”

Henry just shook his head, smiling. “It’s nice to see you again, Hanna.” Turning to me, he said,
“You did really good out there today, Juliette. As always.”

I smiled, trying my damnedest to fight a blush. “Thanks, Henry. So did you, by the way.”

“I’ll let you two catch up. I’ll be in my trailer if you need anything, okay?”

He left, and as soon as he was out of earshot, Hanna turned to me, squealing. “Oh my God! You guys are even worse than you were at the mall when we were getting Colly’s birthday presents. Could you two stare at each other any more obviously?”

My eyes widened. “I stare at him in an obvious way?”

“Well, for me it’s obvious, but I’ve known you for more than twenty years. But now I’m even surer: He’s into you. Big time.”

As we headed to my trailer, I shook my head. “Wouldn’t he have made a move already if he really was into me? I mean, we kissed more than a dozen times for that scene, and he never even mentioned it once. Am I really that bad a kisser?”

“I’m sure it’s not your kissing skills slowing him down, babe,” Hanna said, and she sounded so certain I nearly believed her. “Maybe he’s just waiting until you’ve finished filming. Maybe he thinks that’s the professional way to go about it. Or maybe he’s just shy and scared to make the first move himself.”

I sighed. “Why is falling for someone and not knowing if they feel the same way so goddamn hard?”

“I don’t know, baby,” Hanna said, wrapping an arm around my waist and pulling me closer. “But it’ll all work itself out, you’ll see.”

“See what? Because right now all I’m seeing is two gorgeous ladies coming my way.”

I laughed, shaking my head. “Hey, Scott. This is Hanna, my best friend. Han, this is Scott Tayler, who plays Ambrose.”

“Ah, so you play the asshole boyfriend, huh?” Hanna asked with a smirk.

Scott copied her smirk. “I’m not an asshole boyfriend in real life, I promise. Wanna find that out for yourself?”

Hanna laughed. “Smooth. But I’m good, thanks. Maybe later, when I’m not busy catching up with my bestie.”

“I’ll hold you to that,” Scott said, winking. “So I’ll leave you two alone now to catch up. I’ll be in my trailer when you’re done.” With another wink and devil-may-care grin, he walked off.

Once he was gone, I shook my head in disbelief. “I can’t believe you flirt so incredibly easily, and my way of flirting is literally bumping into someone completely on accident and dropping my shit everywhere.”

“You mean back at Barnes & Noble two months ago? Who said that was accidental? Maybe Henry saw you and decided to bump into you on purpose but just made it look like an accident. Either way, why didn’t you tell me there was another hottie working on this film?”

I shrugged. “He’s not really my type, so I figured it wouldn’t be worth sharing.”

“Yeah, but he’s my type. I mean, help a sister out!”
I laughed and gave her a shake of my head. “You’re right, I’m sorry. Want me to set the two of you up?”

She thought about it for a moment. “Hm… No. I really wasn’t kidding about wanting to catch up with you first.” We stepped into my trailer, and she let herself fall down on the couch. “I need to know everything that happened between you and Henry. And I do mean everything, even the things you’ve already told me. I want to hear it in person.”

Who was I refuse my best friend, right? So I told her everything, from how good a kisser he was to how he made me feel every time he as much as looked at me. When I told her about the time he caught me when I fell, she fanned herself with her hands. “Swoon! And you never thought your clumsiness could ever work in your favor,” she teased.

“I admit, it was nice to have fallen at exactly that moment, but if he hadn’t been so quick, I’d have had a face full of metal stairs.”

Hanna winced. “Ouch. It’s a good thing he was there then. He did graze your boob, though, right?”

“Hanna!” I chastised, laughing. “No, he didn’t. He’s a gentleman, remember? He grabbed me around my waist.”

Sighing, she said, “Too bad… Oh well, the boob grazing will commence soon enough. When’s your sex scene?”

I could feel myself turn bright red. “Don’t you dare even remind me of that. It’s next week, and I’d rather not think about it until I actually have to.”

“But how can you not think about it, though? You’ll be nearly naked with Henry, closely pressed together, making out, pretending you’re having sex… I mean, come on!”

“Exactly! Which is why I don’t want to think about it. It’ll drive me nuts otherwise. I don’t really wanna talk about me and Henry anymore anyway. How are things on the home front?”

Hanna grimaced. “I’d really rather not have to tell you this, but… Harvey’s in the hospital. He had a heart attack.”

I gasped, my eyes widening. Harvey was my boss up until a month ago, when I was still working that waitressing job at his restaurant. He was somewhere in his sixties, always very kind and always up for a joke. He treated his employees well, and that restaurant was his life. It must be killing him (really bad choice of words, Juliette) to not be able to work now that he was in the hospital. “Oh my God, will he be okay?”

“The doctors say he will be, just as long as he takes it easy and keeps taking his meds. But you know Harvey. He wanted to go back to work as soon as it happened.”

“I shook my head. “Dammit, Harvey… I’ll call him later. It’s still too early in Los Angeles. He might be a hard worker, but you know how much he loves to sleep in.”

Hanna laughed. “True enough. He nearly bit my head off once when I called him at nine in the morning.”

“Speaking of time related stuff, we should probably get going. I think my family’s plane just touched down. If everything went according to plan, at least.”

“Your aunt’s on that plane, right? Is it bad that I’m kind of wishing it went down?”
“Yes!” I chastised her, frowning. “There are four other people on that plane that I care about very much, you know. Not to mention all those other innocent people.”

She sighed. “I know. But she’s just so—”

“I know what she’s like, Han,” I snapped. I hadn’t meant to, but my aunt always managed to bring out the worst in me, even when she wasn’t even here yet. “I grew up with her around, remember?”

“I’m sorry,” Hanna said sincerely, putting a comforting hand on my knee. “I shouldn’t have joked about it. It’s just… I can’t get how a… serpent like her could give birth to such a cute girl like Caitlin. Or marry someone as kind as Quentin. And I certainly don’t get how she can be so judgmental over you. And judgmental is an understatement.”

I shook my head, getting up. “I just wanna get through these three days without breaking down, Hanna. And besides, she might not even be so… her around people she doesn’t know.” She gave me a skeptical look and I laughed humorlessly. “Oh, who am I kidding? Of course she will. But I’m gonna try and ignore it as best as I can. I don’t want to lose focus too much, because I still have a scene to film today.”

She nodded. “I understand. I promise I’ll do my best to not interfere every time she’s being… well, you know what I mean.”

I smiled, giving her a hug. I’d missed hugging her. “Thank you, babe.” I pulled away again when I felt my phone vibrate in my pocket. I pulled it out and saw I had a text from my mother.

“Our driver says we’ll be pulling up in about five minutes. See you soon, love.”

“They’re almost here,” I said, shoving the phone into my pocket again after sending my mom a quick text back. “We’d better head to the parking lot so we can wait for them there.”

Hanna and I headed out, and I felt the familiar beginnings of an anxiety attack in my chest. Which was really frustrating, because I was actually really excited to see my family again. I’d really missed Mom, Dad, Quentin and Caitlin. The only one who was already ruining it for me was Lorene.

We got to the parking lot just in time, because only a few seconds later a car rolled up, parking among all the other cars, trucks and unused trailers. The car doors opened and my mom, dad, uncle, aunt and cousin got out, and before I knew it, a seven year old girl was flinging herself around my waist.

All my concerns temporarily fell away as I hugged my cousin back, laughing. “Caitlin, hey!” I ruffled her blonde hair. “How are you doing?”

“I’m good!” she said, grinning excitedly. “I really missed you, though, but the plane ride was cool, and I get to see you again, which is even cooler, and what’s even coolerer is that I can see you act in a movie!” she rambled on, making me smile.

“I missed you, too, Caitie. And look at you, you’ve grown so much! I obviously have to see you more often because I can’t have you growing up without me witnessing it. You’re getting so big already.”

She blushed and gave me a shy smile. I gave her another hug and then turned to my parents. They grinned and engulfed me in a tight group hug. “Oh, baby girl, you’ve gotten even more beautiful,” Dad said, kissing the top of my head.
I blushed. “Oh, shut up, Daddy. I missed you.”

“I missed you, too, baby girl.”

“And I missed you, Mom.”

She smiled at me, stroking my cheek. “I missed you, too. How’ve you been?”

“I’ve been really good,” I said with as honest a smile I could muster.

She gave me a look, and I knew she didn’t quite believe me and we would be having a talk later once we were alone.

Then it was my uncle’s turn and he picked me up, swinging me around so my legs were flying in the air. I was laughing by the time he set me down again. “Hey, Quentin. Long time no see.”

“Too long, if you ask me. Pop back into Jersey more often, okay?”

I laughed. “I’ll do my best.”

Then I stepped up to Lorene, faking another smile. “Hey, Lorene.” I gave her a hug, but pulled away again quickly.

“Oh, I like your tan. It’s better than when you were so pale all the time when you lived in New Jersey.”


“Anyway,” Hanna said pointedly, “should we get some lunch or something? I mean, it’ll be breakfast for me, but it’s noon, so…”

“I could go for some lunch,” Dad said. He sounded chipper, but I could tell he was annoyed by Lorene as well. She could annoy the hell out of him just by being in the same room.

“We could go to the cafeteria here. I don’t really feel like heading into Miami because I have a scene later today and I don’t want to go too far.”

“That sounds good, love,” Mom said with a smile.

Caitlin clutched my hand as we started walking, and just for the hell of it, Hanna held my other hand. As we walked passed trailers and sets, I explained to everyone what everything was and what it was used for. When we walked passed my trailer, Henry was just getting out of his together with Kal. As soon as Kal saw me, he rushed over to me, pulling Henry along.

“Kal, no!” Henry chastised, but I was already kneeling to greet him, letting go of Caitlin and Hanna.

“Hey, Kal,” I crooned, scratching him behind his ears. I quickly kissed the top of his head and rose back up again. “You know by now that I’m okay with Kal attacking me any day.”

“Yes, I know, but your family hasn’t met him yet and I’d like them to think he behaves all the time even though he doesn’t.”

I laughed. “Aw, poor Kal. Don’t listen to him. He’s just being a big meanie. Anyway, everyone, this is Henry Cavill, my costar. Henry, this is my mom, Anna; my dad, Jack; my uncle, Quentin; my aunt, Lorene; and the cutest cousin in the world, Caitlin,” I said, ruffling her hair and making her blush. “And obviously you’ve already met Hanna.”
Henry shook the hands of the adults, giving each of them a smile. “It’s nice to meet all of you.” He crouched down in front of Caitlin and offered her his hand. She shook it shyly. “And it’s especially nice to meet you. I can definitely see you’re related to Juliette, because you’re just as beautiful as her.”

As everyone was smiling down at the two of them, Hanna gave me a meaningful look, wiggling her eyebrows. I was too busy trying not to squeal at how cute Henry was being with Caitlin to get annoyed with her.

Caitlin turned even redder. “Thank you. You’re beautiful, too,” she said, returning the compliment just like she’d been taught. Besides, it was entirely true.

He laughed, straightening up again. “Well, thank you, Caitlin.” Turning to me, he asked, “So what are you guys going to do?”

“We were just going to grab some lunch. You’re welcome to join us if you want.”

“I was just going to walk Kal, but I’ll join you if it’s okay Kal comes along too. I’d feel kind of bad putting him back in the trailer now.”

“Yeah, no, of course he can come,” Hanna said. She petted Kal, who excitedly tried to lick her hand. “Right, guys?”

Caitlin, who’d been looking at Kal almost as if she were hypnotized, nodded eagerly.

And so the nine of us walked off to the cafeteria. Our cafeteria was pretty much a small restaurant, with waiters and menus and all. We shoved two tables together so we could all sit together. There were a few other people in the cafeteria, but they didn’t pay us much attention as we sat down.

“What are you having, Julie?” Hanna asked as she looked over the menu.

“I don’t know yet… I might have a hamburger. That’s sounding pretty good right now.”

“Are you sure you should be eating something that has so much fat in it?” Lorene asked. “I mean, you are filming a movie right now.”

I could feel my face fall. “Yeah, maybe you’re right…”

“Are you kidding me?” Hanna asked, her eyebrows raised. “You’re not fat at all, and one burger isn’t going to turn you magically fat overnight. Just get whatever you want.”

“I know,” I said, giving her a smile, but went for a turkey wrap anyway.

Hanna gave me a sharp look, and I knew she was upset with me for not taking the burger anyway and sticking it to Lorene.

When our food arrived, Henry said, “So we have tomorrow off. Do you have anything planned to do with your family?”

“I actually haven’t thought of anything. Sorry, guys, I’ve just been so busy memorizing my script and filming my scenes.”

“You could go to Disney World,” Henry suggested. “Or to that Harry Potter amusement park, because I know you love Harry Potter.”

“Traveling to Orlando would take too long, though. That would leave only a few hours to check out
Disney World. And I say Disney because that would be more fun for everyone, though I have been dying to go to the Wizarding World of Harry Potter ever since I knew it was gonna be there. But we can’t just go from Miami to Orlando.”

“Sure you can. There are multiple flights going from Miami to Orlando a day. You should all go. I mean, you can’t fly your cousin out to Florida without going to Disney World. My treat.”

“My God, Henry, no,” I said quickly. “I can’t ask that of you.”

“Then it’s a good thing you’re not asking. I’m offering. And I insist.”

I started to glare at him, but when I saw Caitlin’s hopeful face, I sighed. “Fine. But you can’t pay for us and not come along yourself. So you’ve gotta come with us.”

“Hell yes, you should,” Hanna agreed immediately.

“Oh, no,” Henry said. “I wouldn’t want to impose.”

“You wouldn’t be imposing,” Mom said. “And I’d like to get to know my daughter’s costar better.” The way she said it almost made it seem like the word ‘costar’ could be easily replaced with the word ‘boyfriend.’

“Yeah, you should join us,” Quentin said. “It’ll be fun.”

“You should come,” Dad said. “But really, I can’t accept you paying for all of us.”

“Really Mr. Morrison, I do insist. When you’re Superman, money tends to not be a problem,” he joked.

Dad sighed. “I already see you’re as stubborn as my daughter. And if you insist, I insist on you calling me Jack.”

“Jack it is,” Henry said with a smile, and then gently elbowed me. “So you’re stubborn, huh?”

Hanna laughed. “Juliette is the most stubborn girl you will ever meet. If you ever get in a fight with her, just give up as soon as you can. You’ll lose anyway, but the aftermath will be way less bad.”

Mom giggled. “That’s actually quite true.”

“Guys!” I complained, feeling myself blush. “That’s not true.”

“She also knows how to hold grudges for forever,” Dad said. “She’s the queen of grudges.”

“Dad, not you too! You’re all making me look really bad in front of Henry. I’m not that bad at all, I promise.”

Henry laughed, wrapping an arm around my waist and squeezing it gently. He kept his arm there, though, making my heartbeat speed up, and I hoped he couldn’t feel it. “Aw, don’t worry, Juliette. I’ve made up my mind about you a long time ago, and it’s all good. Nothing these guys can say will change that.”

I covered my face with my hands in attempt to cover up that I was blushing. “Can we please talk about something else?” I asked, the sound coming out muffled.

They all laughed, but Hanna showed off her amazing best friend skills by changing the topic, bless her heart. For the rest of the meal we mostly just talked about the movie (Lorene managed to squeeze
in two more backhanded compliments, though), and after we finished up lunch, Henry, Hanna, Caitlin and I were off to walk Kal as the rest stayed behind in the cafeteria with their coffee. Caitlin was holding Kal’s leash, and he was being surprisingly obedient.

“I should hire you to walk my dog from now on,” Henry joked. “He actually listens when you’re holding him.”

“He’s a really sweet dog,” Caitlin said by way of answer, smiling as she gently stroked Kal’s head.

“He is when he really wants to be. And being with you apparently makes him want to be really nice.”

Caitlin’s smile widened and her chest expanded with pride.

As Henry said something else to Caitlin, Hanna whispered in my ear, “He’s too cute with her.”

I bit my lip to try and contain my smile and nodded. He really, truly was. He’d be a great father at some point in his life, I just knew it.

“Hey, we’re filming that scene in the park later, right?” Henry asked, and I nodded in verification. “I was just thinking that Hanna and Caitlin could be extras. Maybe playing in the park in the background or something. I mean, if they want to and if Caitlin’s parents allow it, of course.”

Caitlin’s eyes widened. “I could be in a movie?” she asked, her voice sounding breathless.

I smiled at her excitement. “You could if you want to, yes. But first you’ll have to ask Mommy and Daddy if they’ll let you.”

My heart broke as her face fell. “I don’t think Mommy will let me.” She was so used to hearing no from her mother that it was just sad.

But I actually thought there was a pretty good chance Lorene would say yes. She would probably show the scene she was in to all her friends and say how much Caitlin’s performance outshines mine, because Caitlin was always, in every way, better than me. And of course I loved that little girl, and she deserved as much praise as she could possibly get, but it still hurt every time that praise was at the cost of me. Nothing I did was ever good enough, but once Caitlin did the same thing, she was the perfect little angel. I’d never really liked parents like that, but actually going through it myself was much worse.

“Hey, you never know,” I told Caitlin, trying to sound upbeat while I felt anything but. “She might say yes.”

Caitlin’s face brightened a little. “Do you really think so?”

“I think there’s a chance, yes,” I told her, and she grinned at me.

A door suddenly slammed really loudly a few feet away from us. I jumped, and felt tears sting behind my eyes from the scare. I’d been feeling anxious all day, but now it was all really setting in. I tried to take deep, calming breaths, but it wasn’t really working. Instead I just felt the panic and anxiety rising in my chest. The worst part about my attacks was that there was no real logic behind them. Of course I knew the reason—it was being around Lorene and her biting comments—but the weirdest things could bring the attacks about, like a door slamming. Loud sounds were the worst when I was feeling anxious, screaming being the worst of all. I felt panicky and I just wanted to get away. I wanted to be curled up in bed at home, hiding away under the blankets. But I was miles and miles away from home, only feeding the anxiety.
No one really seemed to notice my inner turmoil except for Caitlin, who frowned as she saw me. “Juliette?” she asked softly. “Are you having another anxiety attack?”

I smiled, remembering just how wise and smart beyond her years she was, but it was like her question had broken the final barrier. Tears fell from my eyes, and I felt embarrassed for crying in front of them. For showing Henry just how weak I was. I just wanted to get away.

Henry took one look at me, his face filled with concern, and then looked at Hanna and Caitlin. “Hey, why don’t you two continue walking Kal? He loves extra-long walks, and he especially seems to love you, Caitlin. And while you two walk Kal, I’ll bring Juliette here to her trailer, okay?”

Hanna nodded and sent me a sad smile. “I love you, Julie,” she said simply.

Caitlin nodded avidly. “I love you, too, Julie,” she said, echoing Hanna’s nickname for me.

I managed a smile for them as I tried to wipe my tears away, but it was useless. They just kept coming as Henry led me away, and I kept wishing they would stop. Kept wishing that this wasn’t happening right now, while I was with Henry. Kept wishing that I didn’t have anxiety at all.

We reached my trailer and Henry took me inside. He held my hand as we stood in the small kitchenette, his thumb rubbing soothing circles over the webbed area between my thumb and forefinger as he sought my eyes. “Do you want to talk about it?” he asked gently, and I shook my head. “Do you want some water?” I shook my head again. “Can I get you anything else?” When I shook my head once more, he said, “Okay, there’s only one cure for this, then.”

I stared at him, not understanding what he was talking about as tears still fell from my eyes. He led me to the bed, and my heartbeat automatically sped up, a sob escaping my throat. Lying down, he pulled me along as well to lie beside him. He wrapped his arms around me and pulled me close so I was partially on top of his chest, and he stroked my hair soothingly as I cried, occasionally kissing the top of my head.

Henry just held me for a while. I appreciated that he just let me cry. He didn’t say anything, didn’t try to make it better. He just held me and let me be, which was what I really needed. Even when my tears gradually stopped falling, he stayed quiet, giving me the time I needed to recover.

When I stopped crying, I closed my eyes, burying my face deeper in Henry’s chest. He smelled amazing, a mix between leathery and fruity, and his scent wrapped itself all around me. What was even better were his arms wrapped around me, holding me as if they wanted to shield me from the world. But what I loved most of all was his hand stroking my hair. I wished he could just play with my hair forever, but I knew that, realistically, this had to end sometime soon. So I said, my voice hoarse, “Thank you.” I stayed completely still, not quite ready to give up the peace Henry’s embrace offered me.

“Anytime,” he said, still keeping his arms wrapped tightly around me, his hand still stroking my hair. “If you ever need a shoulder to cry on, just call and I’ll be in your trailer in no-time. Same thing if you just want to talk.”

“I appreciate that.”

“So do you want to talk about it now that you’ve calmed down a little?” he asked, his voice as gentle as I’d ever heard it. “You don’t have to. Only if you want to.”

I shrugged. “It was just an anxiety attack. A little more extreme than usual, but you know… I was feeling anxious all morning, and then that door slamming was just kind of the last straw.”
“Do loud noises make your anxiety worse?”

I nodded. “Yes. When I’m already anxious, it’s basically a surefire way to give me an attack. When I’m not feeling anxious at all loud noises are completely fine, but…” I trailed off.

“What made you feel anxious today? Or was it building up from previous days? It’s okay if you don’t want to tell me.”

I decided I might as well, so I said, “I got some bad news about a friend today, and then there’s my aunt. We don’t really have the best… relationship.”

Henry took a deep breath, and I rose up and down along with his chest. “I apologize if I’m totally out of line here—which I kind of am—but I already noticed your aunt isn’t exactly the nicest person in the world. That comment about the burger? Completely uncalled for and entirely unnecessary. You’re beautiful the way you are, and you will still be beautiful if you eat a goddamn hamburger.”

He was getting worked up, and so was I. His words made me tear up again, but I managed to fight the waterworks this time. “Yeah, well…”

“No, don’t just shrug it off like that. What she said was not okay, nor were those backhanded compliments she seems to just love giving you, and I need you to know that. Do you get that?”

I nodded.

“Does she make comments like that more often?”

“Always,” I whispered. “For as long as I can remember, I wasn’t good enough. But ever since Caitlin was born, she was the perfect little angel. If she did something that I had done that wasn’t okay in Lorene’s eyes, Caitlin doing it was suddenly completely okay. Don’t get me wrong, I love Caitlin, I love her to death, but it’s just really frustrating for me.”

“Now I finally get where your insecurity stems from. It’s from both your aunt and your anxiety, isn’t it?”

I nodded, not exactly sure how to feel about him figuring me out so soon. This information was usually something I kept closely guarded, but he had uncovered my secrets by just observing me. “Basically, yeah.”

“Well, if you ever need me, even after we’ve stopped filming this movie, just call me. I might not answer right away, but I promise I’ll try to be there for you as best I can.”

“You’re making me cry again,” I mumbled.

He laughed, making his chest rumble. “I’m sorry. But I do mean it, though.”

“Thank you. I really appreciate it. But I should freshen up now. I probably look like an utter mess, and the others are most likely wondering where we are.”

“Right.” Henry pressed one more kiss to the top of my head—making my stomach feel like I’d just missed a step on the stairs—before he let me get up. I tried to not show him my face and just walk to the bathroom as quickly as I could, but he wasn’t having any of that. He stood up too and caught my wrist. His face was pained as he looked at me, and for a split second I thought it was because I really did look horrible, but then he said, “I really hate that you have to go through this.” He lifted up his hands and wiped the remaining tears away with his thumbs.
“I look horrible, don’t I?”

He shook his head, smiling. “No. You look as beautiful as ever, mascara smudges and all.”

“Oh, fuck,” I mumbled under my breath, but Henry was close enough that he could hear it, and he smiled. “I got it on your shirt too,” I said, pointing to the wet spots and black smudges on his once neat gray T-shirt.

He looked down at it and shrugged. “It’s no big deal. I can just change.” He grabbed his collar and yanked the shirt over his head. He smiled at me, full shirtless glory and all. “See? No problem.”

I nodded, trying my best not to stare at his chest and abdomen. “Well, I’ll just go wash my face then.”

“Okay. Can I use your computer in the meantime?”

“Yeah, sure. It’s right on the table over there. But why, if I may ask?”

“I was going to order the tickets to Disney World and arrange the flights.” When he seemed to realize something, he quickly added, “If you still want to go, I mean. I don’t know how long your anxiety attacks last, and maybe an amusement park like Disney would trigger them more.”

I smiled at how thoughtful he was being. “My attacks can last up to a few days, but I think I’ll be fine. And if I’m not…” I shrugged. “We’ll just see. What matters most is that I don’t want to let Caitlin down.”

“If you need anything tomorrow or any other time, anything at all, just let me know, okay? I’ll try and get you out of the crowd.”

Before I could cry again, I smiled in thanks and disappeared into my bathroom to wash my face. I refused to look into the mirror, fearing for the worst. I didn’t want to see just how terrible I looked—how terrible Henry had seen me look. I washed my face as quickly as possible, but when I finally looked in the mirror once I was done, my complexion was still pale, red splotches everywhere. And so I quickly applied some foundation. I applied some lipstick, too, to cover up the redness of my lips. I didn’t bother with mascara, knowing there was a chance I might cry again and I just didn’t want to risk it.

But at least now I knew I had another shoulder to cry on if things did go downhill again.

When I reemerged from the bathroom, Henry was just finishing up a phone call, still not wearing a shirt. His back was turned to me, and I took the opportunity to study his beautifully sculpted shoulders. I wanted to run my fingers over his skin, but refrained myself. Instead, I sat down on the edge of my bed and asked, “Were there still flights available?”

He turned around and smiled at me. “Yeah, it was no problem. It’s going to be a long day, though. With an early start, too, which I know you won’t be happy about.”

I groaned, making him laugh. “How late will I have to get up?”

“Realistically speaking, you’ll probably have to get up at about six a.m.”

I shook my head at him. “I’m not quite sure yet if I’m grateful for you doing this or not.”

He grinned. “I’ll give you until the end of tomorrow to make up your mind. For now, I’m gonna look up Ryan and see if he’s okay with having Hanna and Caitlin in the background. Are you good
to go see if Caitlin’s parents will allow it? Or do you want me to go with you?”

I shook my head. “No, I’ll be fine. And if I start feeling anxious again, I’ll have Hanna there.”

“If you’re sure. Well, I’d better go and put on a shirt before I go see Ry.”

I laughed. “That’s probably a good idea, yeah.”

We left my trailer and paused in front of Henry’s. He pressed his fingers lightly to my cheek, searching for my eyes. “Remember, I’m here if you need me, okay?”

I smiled, my hand automatically rising up to hold his wrist. “I know. Thank you.”

He pulled me into a hug and kissed my forehead before entering his trailer. I stood there for a moment, smiling. Anxiety attacks always sucked, but maybe they didn’t always have to be all bad, either.

Chapter End Notes

So, that was your first real look into Juliette’s anxiety... I suffer from it as well, and I don’t know why, but I felt like it was important to write it in. Anxiety attacks really suck and can be brought on by the strangest things, and everyone suffers from them differently, which makes them even more annoying. If you suffer from anxiety yourself, you can always talk to me :) <3

Anyway, I loved writing Henry in this chapter. He was just too sweet! And how are you guys liking Caitlin? She definitely seems to bring out the sweet, caring side in Henry ;)

Lyrics at the beginning of the chapter are Anxiety by the Black Eyed Peas.
Thursday, May 12, 2016.

I went back to the cafeteria, hoping my parents and aunt and uncle were still there, and hoping they weren’t mad at me for leaving them there for so long. Just when I wanted to go inside, Hanna and Caitlin walked up with Kal.

“Hey, guys,” I said. “I thought you’d be back already by now.”

Caitlin shrugged. “Henry said Kal likes long walks, so we went on an extra-long walk.”

Hanna pulled me into a tight hug. “And I wanted to give you some time to recover. Are you all right, babe?”

I smiled. “I’m fine. Henry proved himself to be surprisingly good at handling my attack.”

“Tell me everything later,” Hanna mouthed. Then out loud she said, “Well, let’s ask your parents’ permission to turn you into a movie star.”

We went inside and found my family still sitting at the two tables we’d shoved together. Mom smiled as she saw us approach. “Hello. That was quite a long walk you guys went on.”

“Yeah, sorry, Anna,” Hanna said. “We were just having too much fun with Kal.”

“Where’s Henry?” Dad asked.

“He went to talk to Ryan, the director,” I explained as I sat down. “Speaking of, I have a question for you, Quentin and Lorene.” They raised their eyebrows questioningly at me, and I felt Caitlin tense up nervously beside me. “Henry thought it might be fun to have Caitlin and Hanna in the background of the scene we’ll be filming this afternoon. You know, as extras? But seeing as Caitlin is still underage, we’d need parental permission.”

“I really want to be in Juliette’s movie,” Caitlin said, giving her parents her best puppy dog eyes.

Just like I’d expected, Lorene nearly swelled up with pride. “Oh, I think that’d be magnificent, having our daughter play in a movie. Don’t you think so, Quentin?”

Also just like I’d expected, Caitlin’s father was a lot harder to convince. “I don’t know, Lorene…”

“It’d be fine,” Hanna said. “I’ll be right with her, and she won’t really have lines anyway, so the
focus won’t be on her. The focus will be on Henry and Juliette."

Lorene’s face fell at that realization, but Hanna’s words seemed exactly the thing that convinced Quentin. “All right then. If she really wants to, she can be a movie star for a day.”

“Are you sure you can’t give her just one line?” Lorene asked. “I’m sure she’ll be a great little actress.”

Trying my hardest not to grit my teeth in irritation, I said, “Honestly, it’d be entirely up to Ryan. We don’t even really know if he’s allowing them in the background yet. I mean, I think he’ll say yes to them being in the shot, but them having actual lines? I’m not sure.”

“We don’t need lines, do we, Caitie?” Hanna asked. “All we really want is a front seat to watching Juliette and Henry do their job, right?”

Caitlin nodded. “Yeah, that’s right. I don’t need to say anything, Mommy.”

Lorene sighed. “Fine. But I do think you’d make an amazing actress.”

“She’d be an amazing anything, but what matters most is what she wants,” I said sharply, and Lorene quickly shut her mouth.

“Good job,” Hanna mouthed at me, making me smile.

Henry walked in (wearing a black T-shirt this time), and Kal, who’d been lying by my feet, jumped up and ran to greet his owner. Henry bent down to pet him with a smile and looked at me. “Have you asked them yet?”

I nodded. “Yeah, I have. They said yes. What did Ryan say?”

“He’s gonna have Hanna and Caitlin play with Kal on the grass field in front of us while we sit on the bench. He thinks it will add to the ‘cuteness’ of the scene,” Henry said, throwing up air quotations.

I laughed. “I suppose it kind of will, though.”

“Anyway, we should probably head into makeup. Shooting starts in an hour.”

I nodded. “Yeah, all right. Do you guys wanna come? I mean, it’ll be a tight fit in that trailer, but I think it’ll be fine and I’m sure Ella and Marie won’t mind.”

The eight of us headed to the makeup trailer, after Henry had made a little detour to drop Kal off at his trailer. As expected, Ella and Marie didn’t mind the extra company at all. I made the proper introductions, and as my family watched, Ella and Marie started working their magic on Henry and me.

Halfway through, Ryan showed up to meet my family, and I made the proper introductions with him, too. “Juliette, do you only have gorgeous family and friends or something?” Ryan joked, bumping me with his elbow. Ella hit him on his arm with her makeup brush for nearly making her mess up, and Ryan laughed. “Sorry, Ella. But to be serious again, they’ll be perfect for the scene. Ella, Marie, would you be okay with putting some light makeup on these two as well?”

“No problem,” Marie said just as she was nearly done finishing up Henry’s hair.

“Good,” Ryan said, turning to leave the makeup trailer again. Just before he stepped outside, he
paused and turned back to us. “Meet me at wardrobe once you’re all done here, yes? We’ll search for something good to wear for these two.”

“Ryan…” Henry started. “I think we’d better leave the outfit picking up to the professionals. You hardly know how to dress yourself, let alone a seven year old girl.”

“You’d better watch yourself before I choose one of your worst scenes for the final cut, Cavill.”

“Go right ahead. I have no bad scenes,” Henry joked back.

Ryan grinned mischievously. “You’d be surprised, Cavill. I guess you’ll just see your worst scenes in the bloopers.”

“You’ll be adding bloopers then?” Hanna asked hopefully. “’Cause I’d actually pay to see those.”

“I’m not sure yet, but I am thinking about it,” Ryan told her honestly. “Anyway, I’ll leave you to it, and I’ll see you guys later.”

He left for real this time, and Ella and Marie went back to work. Once Ella was done with my makeup and hair, I excused myself and retrieved my phone from my pocket. I dialed a familiar number and waited for him to pick up, hoping he would awake by now.

“Ah, look who it is,” he said, and I couldn’t help but smile at the sound of his jovial voice. “My favorite ex-employee.”

“Hey, Harvey.”

“How you been, Juliette?”

“I was just about to ask you the same thing, Harv. Hanna told me what happened.”

Harvey sighed. “That damn girl can never keep her trap shut, can she? Don’t worry, Juliette, I’m fine. I’ll be good to go back to work in no time. Actually, I’m good to go now, but the doctors are forcing me to stay in the hospital for a couple more days.”

“Harvey, please promise me you’ll take it easy? I know how important that restaurant is to you and how much you love it, but your health should always be number one, okay? A heart attack isn’t just something you can shrug off.”

“You worry too much, my child. Really, I’m fine.”

“I swear, Harvey, I’m sicking Keegan on you to make sure you’re gonna take it easy. And if I hear from him that you aren’t, I’ll sic all the others on you, too.”

He laughed loudly. “All right, all right. You know your threats, young lady. I’ll try to take it easy, but I make no promises.”

“No, Harvey, I want you to promise me. And I’ll be calling in, too, to make sure you’re keeping that promise. You know how I am when it comes to broken promises.”

Sighing, he said, “Fine. For you, I’ll be willing to make that promise. I promise to take it easy until the doctors say I’m good to go again. Are you satisfied with that?”

“As long as you keep your promise, yes, I am. And I promise you that when I get back, you and I are gonna do something fun together, okay? I’m missing my old boss.”
“And I’m missing my old employee. But I know that you’re about to make a name for yourself in Hollywood, and I really couldn’t be prouder of you. Kick those haters’ asses for me, will you?”

I smiled. “I will.”

“Good. Now go back to making out with that hot boyfriend actor of yours again.”

I felt myself turn bright red under all the makeup Ella had just applied. “Harvey, not you too! He’s not my boyfriend.”

“The pictures on the Internet sure say otherwise, sweetheart. Remember, just do what makes you happy, okay?”

“What pictures?”

“You know, the pictures. Anyway, the nurse is coming in now, and she’s hot, so I gotta go. Love you, sweetheart.”

I shook my head. “I love you, too, you womanizer.”

He was laughing as he hung up, making me smile. But as soon as the line went dead, I frowned, wondering what pictures he was talking about. Were there new pictures, or was he talking about those pictures of Henry and me at the beach? I quickly Googled Henry’s name, knowing that’d be the quickest way of finding new pictures if there were any to be found. Sure enough, a new article about Henry Cavill and his “mystery girlfriend” had been posted about an hour ago, but at least now they knew my name and that I was starring in the movie Henry was filming right now (I probably had Steph, my agent and publicist, to thank for that).

The pictures were of Henry and me standing outside of our trailers this afternoon, after my anxiety attack. He wasn’t wearing his shirt, and the pictures showed him caressing my cheek, us hugging and him kissing my forehead. The pictures did look kind of romantic, I had to admit. And because Henry was shirtless in the photographs, the article was suggesting we might’ve had sex.

Great. Just motherfucking great.

I turned even redder once I realized Harvey had seen this article. Thinking about Harvey thinking about my sex life was a million kinds of wrong, and I tried to push it out of mind as quickly as possible.

Shoving my phone in my pocket again, I walked back into the makeup trailer.

“How’s Harvey?” Hanna asked, her eyebrows raised inquiringly.

“Pretty much just like you said he was. Eager to go back to work and even more eager to shrug off the fact he just had a heart attack.”

“Who had a heart attack?” Henry asked. “That friend you mentioned that you heard some bad news about?”

I nodded. “Yeah. My old boss, Harvey, had a heart attack. He’s convinced he’s good to go back to work, though, which is mostly just very frustrating because I want him to be as healthy as he possibly can be. But I made him promise me he’ll listen to whatever the doctors say, otherwise I’m sending Keegan after him.”

“You always were the best at convincing people to do things your way,” Mom said, a laugh in her
voice.

“When you say it like that, you make me sound bad.”

“It can be bad. But you only use your amazing convincing skills for good, so it’s okay.”

I shook my head. “Thanks, Mom.”

Things fell quiet again, and I looked at Ella and Marie working on Hanna and Caitlin. Both already pretty much had flawless faces, so they only used a bit of light makeup to enhance their features. I could see that Caitlin was loving it. She wasn’t used to being pampered so much, and it was fun to watch her in awe at the whole process. Whenever I visited Jersey those few rare occasions a year, she always asked me to do her makeup and paint her nails. Now that a professional was doing it for her, she seemed to be in heaven.

Once we were done in makeup, we thanked Ella and Marie and walked to wardrobe, a couple yards farther away. Henry and I were given the same outfits we were wearing during our kissing scene, because chronologically, this scene would come right after Amelia ran away.

Hanna and Caitlin, on the other hand, needed something entirely new, and the stylists we had on hand were more than happy to help. Ryan had been waiting there and was giving directions on what type of outfit it had to be, but Hanna and Caitlin ultimately had the deciding hand. Both of them seemed in heaven with all those clothes and shoes. Eventually Hanna decided on a pair of short jean shorts and a lilac blouse, and Caitlin chose a soft pink sundress with a flowing skirt.

“You both look amazing. I feel so simple in this,” I said, pointing to my ripped skinny jeans and loose crop top.

“You do look kind of simple,” Lorene said, and I gritted my teeth.

“She doesn’t look simple,” Henry said, and I could tell he was trying his best not to glare at my aunt. “She looks beautiful.” He smiled at me. “She always does, whether she’s wearing sweatpants or a dress.”

I felt my face heat up at the compliments, but at least it shut Lorene up, which was definitely a bonus.

A P.A. went to fetch Kal, and we all walked to set together. “This is really exciting,” Mom said, smiling from ear to ear. “I finally get to see you do your thing.” She wrapped an arm around my waist and pulled me closer so she could whisper in my ear. “And please, pay no mind to Lorene. She already gave you an anxiety attack today—oh, don’t give me that look, I know the signs and I know my daughter—so don’t let her afflict any more damage. Not gonna lie, I kind of feel like punching her for all her comments myself.” We’d gotten behind the others a bit, and she looked around to make sure no one else could listen in before she said, “But it seems like you’ve found someone else to protect you. Henry is really sweet and he seems to care about you a lot. Not even mentioning how handsome he is, or that amazing accent of his.”

I groaned softly. “Mom, I’m really getting sick of having to say this. Henry and I aren’t together.”

“That might be so, but you like him. Maybe even more than that. Again, don’t give me that look, I know you. I also know you’re probably stressing about your feelings for him and his feelings for you, but please don’t, love. Don’t worry about it. If it’s meant to be, it will happen. And if it’s not meant to be, you’ll find someone even better, I promise you.”

I smiled. “I love you, Mom.”
We reached the set, and Ryan gave us some last minute instructions. Hanna and Caitlin took Kal a few feet away, sitting down in the grass to play with him. I sat down on the bench that faced them, staring gloomily ahead as I tried to get in Amelia’s mindset—which, these days, I was finding easier and easier to do because our emotions were so similar.

Then the cameras were rolling and Ryan yelled, “Action!”

Henry walked onto the grass field, passing Caitlin, Hanna and Kal. Kal raised his head curiously at his owner, but he obediently stayed with Hanna and Caitlin. I tensed a little as I watched him approach nearer and nearer.

“Can I sit down?” he asked, his beautiful voice soft. It reminded me of the voice he’d used when I was having my anxiety attack, and I nodded as I tried to fight the tears. Apparently I was more anxious than I thought. He sat down next to me, leaving a considerable amount of distance between us. We sat there in silence for a bit, both of us staring at the threesome playing in front of us. “I’m sorry,” he said suddenly. “I shouldn’t have dumped all that on you right after you broke up with Ambrose, and I definitely shouldn’t have kissed you. So for that I’m sorry. But what I’m not sorry for is the way I feel about you, because every word of what I told you was true.”

I turned to him. “I’m not sorry about that, either,” I said softly. It was quiet for a few moments more before I spoke again. “How did you find me here?”

Henry shrugged. “I know you,” he said by way of explanation, the ghost of a smile playing around his lips.

I studied him. “You do. You’re the only one who does. I’m sorry about running out on you.”

He shook his head. “Don’t be. I understand.”

“I’m not sure you do, though. All my life, I’ve been terrified. I’ve been terrified of being close to someone, terrified of giving my heart to someone, terrified they might break it beyond repair. So I always dated guys whom I knew I could never love. But then you came around, and that fear returned, and for good reason. Because you wouldn’t just be able to break my heart beyond repair. You have the power to turn it into dust.”

Henry scooted closer, holding my hand in his. His thumb stroked soothing circles on my skin, but I don’t think he even really noticed he was doing so. “You have that power over my heart, too, you know. But I’m completely willing to take a leap of faith if you are.”

I looked in front of me again, looking at Hanna. She wasn’t looking at me, but I could feel how much support she was sending me right now. Looking at Henry again, I whispered, “I love you, Noah. I’m sorry it took me this long.”

He cupped my face with his free hand, and to my utter surprise, he kissed me, going off script. The kiss was sweet and lingering, and exactly what I needed. It seemed to soothe my anxiety as much as it did Amelia’s. “I don’t care it took you this long,” he said after he broke the kiss. He rested his forehead against mine, maintaining eye contact. “All I care about is that everything is out in the open now. I love you.” He smiled. “I love you. I love you. I love—”

Finding the courage to go off script as well, I kissed him to make him shut up. I was supposed to just press my fingers to his lips, but I couldn’t stop myself. This kiss was a little more intense than the previous one, making my heart pound even faster than it already was. I laughed elatedly when I
pulled away. “I love you, too, Noah.”

“I’m sorry,” he said, a sheepish smile shaping his lips. “But now that I can finally say it, I can’t seem to stop.”

“You don’t have to. You don’t ever have to.” My smile falling, I turned utterly vulnerable again. “Please don’t ever stop.”

He squeezed my hand. “Never.” He pulled me close, wrapping his arms around me, and together we looked at Hanna and Caitlin playing with Kal as the camera panned out.

After a few more moments, Ryan said, “And cut! Excellent, guys! Really, just perfect. I love that you went off script and added those kisses. They’re perfect for the scene. Absolutely perfect. Let’s do a couple more takes, and I want you to keep the kisses in, okay? Hanna, Caitlin, you two were awesome, too!”

Caitlin swelled with pride (I didn’t even have to look at Lorene to know she was doing the same thing), but Hanna was just giving me meaningful looks. When we were taking a small break, she took me apart from the others. “Impromptu kissing, huh?” she asked, grinning. She tapped the side of her head. “Smart.” Her grin widening even more, she said, “Oh my God, though, is it bad if I tell you that I ship you and Henry so Goddamn fucking much? I just—gah!”

I laughed. “Is that really all you can think about? What about my acting?”

“Magnificent, of course. But I knew that already. Really all I can focus on right now is your incredible chemistry with Henry. That sex scene is going to be the bomb. I can hardly wait to see it, and it’s not even filmed yet.”

I raised my eyebrows at her. “You’re excited to watch your best friend pretend to have sex?”

She grimaced. “Ooh, that does sound kind of weird, doesn’t it?” she asked, but then shrugged. “Oh well, I don’t care. You guys are now my new OTP.”

I laughed. “You’re weird.” I grabbed a bottle of water and joined the others.

“You were truly amazing, love,” Mom said, smiling like the proud mother she was.

“You really were,” Quentin agreed. “I mean, I sometimes forgot to watch my own little girl, that’s how good you were. You’re gonna make it big, hon,” he said, giving me one of his side hugs.

I smiled at him. “Thanks, Quentin.”

“Really?” Lorene asked. “Because I really couldn’t take my eyes off my little Caitie. You did so great, sweetheart! You stole the scene.”

I rolled my eyes and turned away, snorting at my dad. He was glaring holes in the back of Lorene’s head. “It’s okay, Dad,” I said quietly, so only he could hear.

He turned to me and whispered, “Someday she’s gonna go missing and no one will ever find her body.”

I laughed, shaking my head. At normal volume, I said, “So what did you think, Daddy?”

“You were amazing, sweetheart,” Dad said, pulling me into a tight hug. “You were amazing, too, Henry. I gotta say, though, you have such good chemistry with my daughter that I had to physically
restrain myself from walking out there and having a stern talk with you.”

Henry laughed, but I did see his cheeks turn slightly pinker. “I’m not sure whether to take that as a compliment or as a threat.”

Before Dad could answer, Ryan called us back into position. I put my hardly touched water bottle on the table and sat back down on the bench, already feeling the excited butterflies in my stomach, knowing I was about to kiss Henry again in just a couple of minutes.

Turns out it took a little longer than a couple of minutes, though, because just as Henry leaned in, his hand on my cheek, Kal chose that exact moment to stop being obedient. He charged at us with a happy bark, and Henry pulled away just as our lips grazed. Kal jumped on his lap with his front paws and licked Henry’s nose. Henry laughed, gently pushing Kal away. “You jealous little git,” he said affectionately.

“I’m so sorry,” Hanna said as she ran up to us. “I tried to make him stay put, but you have quite the stubborn dog.”

“Don’t worry, I know.”

“Blooper!” Caitlin yelled, making all of us laugh.

Still with a laugh in his voice, Henry said, “I’m sorry about Kal, Ry. Do you need us to go from the beginning again?”

Ryan thought for a moment. “No, start from the part where Juliette says, ‘I love you Noah. I’m sorry it took me this long.’ We’ll just leave Kal and the girls out, because we have enough footage of them anyway. Just finish the scene, and then we’ll be done for today.” Henry nodded in understanding, and Hanna and Caitlin joined the others, taking Kal with them. “Okay, the cameras are still rolling, so just start whenever you’re ready.”

I stared at the spot Hanna, Caitlin and Kal had been in just a few moments ago as Henry took my hand in his again. I turned to him and whispered, “I love you, Noah. I’m sorry it took me this long.”

He gently caressed my cheek with his free hand again and leaned in to kiss me. My eyes automatically fluttered shut as his lips captured mine, my heart going crazy just like it always did when he kissed me. When he broke away again, he rested his forehead against mine and said, “I don’t care it took you this long. All I care about is that everything is out in the open now. I love you.” He smiled. “I love you. I love you. I love—”

I cut him off by kissing him again. Knowing it was the last time I’d be kissing him in a while, I put more force in the kiss than I had the previous times. I just couldn’t get enough of kissing him. But I knew this wasn’t about what I wanted, so I pulled away and laughed. “I love you, too, Noah.”

We finished the scene without a hitch after that, and my family and Hanna clapped once Ryan cut the scene. I couldn’t help but smile at them, feeling my cheeks heat up.

“Excellent work, everyone,” Ryan said, a smile on his face. “You’re all free to go now. I suggest you go out and celebrate how well this scene went. I sadly won’t be joining you, because I have plans with my beautiful wife.” He winked and walked off after gathering all of his stuff.

“We should go out,” Dad said. “We haven’t properly celebrated that you got the part, so now would be the perfect time. We’ll all go to a nice restaurant together. Miami should have enough of those. Henry, you should join us, too.”
“Are you sure? I would hate to impose.”

Hanna laughed. “Would you quit it already, dude? You’re not imposing. In fact, I’m pretty sure you’ll just offend them if you choose not to go with us.”

“Yeah, you should come,” Caitlin said, giving him a smile that made her look like an absolute angel. It was a smile I always found very hard to say no to, and Henry wasn’t much different.

“All right then, I’ll tag along.”

“Good,” Dad said, his smile widening. “My treat.” I saw that Henry wanted to protest, but Dad threw him a look that shut him up before he’d even uttered a word. “None of that, boy. I’m buying, whether you like it or not.”

Henry shook his head and gave me an exasperated look. “I see now where you’ve got your stubbornness from.”

I grinned. “It actually runs strong in both of them, which is why I’ve got double the dose.”

“Oh, just blame it on your parents, why don’t you?” Mom said, laughing.

I just stuck my tongue out at her.

“Anyway,” Dad said pointedly, trying to fight an amused smile, “we’ll head back to the hotel to get ready, and I’ll try and make a reservation somewhere in the meantime.”

I said goodbye to my family after we’d changed back into our own clothes, heading to my trailer with Henry and Hanna once they were gone. We parted ways with Henry when we reached the trailers, and Hanna and I stepped into mine. Hanna would be staying with me for the next coming days, and she’d already put her bag in my trailer. When she went to sit down on the couch, she lifted something off of it.

She raised her eyebrows as she held it up for me to see. “Is this the shirt that Henry was wearing earlier today? Did you two do anything naughty that you conveniently forgot to tell me about?”

I felt myself turn bright red. “Oh my God, no, we did not! I got it wet from crying, and he was the one to just take it off right in front of me. Here, see?” I grabbed the shirt from her and showed her the stains. It had dried now, but the mascara smudges were still clearly visible. “Somehow some paps did manage to take pictures outside of his trailer, though, and they definitely seemed to think we’d just had sex. At least they’ve started calling me by my name now instead of ‘Henry Cavill’s mystery girlfriend.’”

“There are new pictures out?” Hanna asked, her eyes wide. “Oh my God, let me see.”

“Just Google his name, and then the article will pop up. It was posted just a few hours ago.”

As Hanna whipped out her phone, I moved over to my closet, still holding Henry’s shirt. It still smelled like him, and the fabric was incredibly soft. I wanted to keep it forever, but knew I couldn’t. So I grabbed my own phone and typed up a quick text to him:

**You left your shirt here.**

His response came quickly:

**Just keep it. I’ve got enough T-shirts anyway. ;)**
“Oh my gosh, these pictures are so cute! I especially love the ones where he’s kissing your forehead. I wish you two would just have babies together already.”

“Oh my God, Hanna, you’re getting out of hand,” I protested, feeling myself turn red for about the millionth time that day. “We’re not gonna have babies together.”

“Hey, you never know. I mean, he was really cute with Caitlin earlier, so you know he’d be a great dad.” She grinned cheekily. “A great dad to your babies.”

“You are impossible. Absolutely impossible. But I do need your help. I have no idea what to wear tonight.”

She quickly made her way over to me. She’d always loved the challenge of picking an outfit for me. “Well, you should obviously go for a dress, and it should be sexy for Henry’s sake. I mean, he’s already way into you, but he still needs to be persuaded into actually making a move.” She let her hands slide over all the dresses in my closet. “Ooh, this one!” she said, pulling out the black pencil skirt dress I’d bought on Colin’s birthday. Her excitement fell as she reconsidered. “Wait, maybe not. You should keep this until the wrap party and use it as your ultimate power play.” I just shook my head as she looked at the selection of dresses I’d brought with me to Miami again. She brightened up as her hand slid over a white dress, and she pulled it out. It was a short-sleeved skater dress with a low round neckline and skinny black belt. The back was as low as the front, stopping just above where my bra would be. “This one. This one all the way. Henry is going to lose his shit.”

“It’s kind of simple, don’t you think?” I asked uncertainly.

She glared at me. “Don’t you dare go buying into that crap your aunt was telling you about the other outfit. This is not simple. This is elegant, yet casual enough for a dinner with family and friends, but also sexy enough to drive Henry crazy. You should wear a good pushup bra with it. Oh, and a short necklace to put more focus on your cleavage. Trust me.”

“Are you sure? I mean, I get that you’re trying to make me look ‘hot’ for Henry, but don’t forget that my family is going to be there. Won’t it be inappropriate?”

“Just try it on, and then we’ll see. If it’s inappropriate, we’ll try to find something else for you to wear.”

And so I changed into the dress, even wearing a nude pushup bra as she’d instructed. She gave me a floral collar necklace and I put it on. I studied myself in the mirror, nervously smoothing my dress down. “What do you think?” I asked.

“I’m thinking that you look so good I might have to turn gay for you. Damn, girl. And if you don’t want to wear this, too bad, because I’m forcing you.”

“Fine. But if I end up being ridiculously overdressed, I’m gonna tell everyone it’s your fault.”

I pulled on some crème colored Jeffrey Campbell Litas as Hanna changed into the pale blue collared skater dress she’d bought the same day I’d bought my black pencil skirt dress. For makeup I kept it quite simple: nude lipstick and bronze eye shadow matched with a cat eye. Hanna Dutch braided my hair back for me, putting the rest of my hair in a messy bun low in my neck. When I put on my jewelry, I smiled as I slid the earrings into my ears. They were studs shaped to look like the Superman logo, and I secretly hoped Henry would like them.

Hanna and I finished getting ready around the same time I received a text from my mother saying they were about to roll up to the parking lot. And so I sent a text to Henry asking if he wanted to
meet us outside our trailers, and Hanna and I quickly checked our appearances one more time before stepping outside.

Henry was already waiting out there for us, casually leaning against his trailer. He was looking way too good for his own good (and better than I could handle) in his dark washed jeans and white button down. The shirt was tucked into his jeans, accentuating his small waist and broad chest. It was unfair, really, how good he looked.

Luckily for me, though, he had a similar reaction to me. He stiffened as his gaze swept over me, staring at all the features Hanna had wanted to highlight with this outfit. “Wow, you look amazing,” he said, almost in awe. Quickly recovering himself, he said, “You both do.”

I felt myself blush. “Thank you. You cleaned up nicely, too.”

He just smiled at me. “Shall we go?”

He offered us both an arm and the three of us walked off to the parking lot. We passed Scott on the way, and, seeing Hanna, he whistled. She just winked back at him in response, not saying anything as we continued to walk.

“Is he giving you trouble?” Henry asked as soon as we were out of earshot. “Because I could talk to him if you’d like.”

Hanna smiled at him. “It’s nothing I can’t handle. Besides, I don’t mind.”

I laughed. “Why do I have the feeling you’ll be leaving Miami with his phone number and the promise you’ll go out someday?”

“Probably because it’s true,” Hanna admitted, grinning cheekily.

We reached the parking lot just in time to see my family’s rental car driving up. They got out, all dressed up (or as dressed up as my family ever got) and greeted us with smiles.

“Well, don’t you all look gorgeous,” Mom gushed.

“I wanna have a dress like yours, Juliette,” Caitlin said with an adorably wide smile.

“You’re never gonna wear a dress like that, young lady,” Quentin said, making me both laugh and blush.

“But I like it,” Caitlin pouted.

“Anyway,” Hanna said pointedly, fighting a smile, “shall we go?”

“Yes, of course,” Mom said. “I’m sure you have your own car around here? I’m afraid we won’t all fit in the Range Rover.”

“It’s no problem,” Henry said. “We can take my car.”

Caitlin’s eyes widened. “Can I ride with you guys?”

“Sure you can, if your parents are okay with it.”

Caitlin gave her parents her perfected puppy dog eyes and they consented, not really having any other choice. And so they, along with my parents, got back into their car while Henry, Hanna, Caitlin and I walked up to Henry’s car.
“Here, Juliette, you go sit in the front seat, I’ll entertain your cousin in the backseat.”

I almost rolled my eyes at my best friend but realized just in time that both Caitlin and Henry were looking at me. So I smiled and nodded. “Sure, that’s okay.”

Dad drove in front of us, leading us to the restaurant he’d chosen for tonight. It was a classy place for my family’s standards, but I was sure Henry had frequented much classier and more expensive restaurants. But he didn’t seem to mind one bit and sat in-between me and Caitlin after she had demanded she sit next to him. Caitlin was usually quite shy, but Henry had charmed her to a point beyond return, which wasn’t too much of a surprise.

As she was telling him something and he was distracted by her, Hanna took her chance and whispered in my ear, “I’m sure you’ve already noticed just how amazing Henry’s butt looks in those jeans.”

I couldn’t help but giggle and nod. “I have, yeah,” I said.

“And he definitely checked out your boobies.”

“Hanna!” I protested with a laugh, slapping her arm gently, even though I’d seen him do it myself.

She just wiggled her eyebrows at me.

“What’s up?” Henry asked, raising an eyebrow.

“Nothing,” Hanna and I said in complete unison, both of us holding back giggles.

Henry gave us both a suspicious look, but then shrugged it off and returned to the conversation he was having with Caitlin.

This would be quite the dinner.

Chapter End Notes

As always, thank you so much for reading, guys! You have no idea how much it all means to me. <3

Lyrics at the start of the chapter are Your Glasses by Maria Mena.
Chapter 9

Chapter Notes

Hey, guys! I'm so glad to see that you seem to enjoy the story so far. All the love I'm receiving, the bookmarks, the kudos, and especially the comments, are making my heart soar. So thank you so very, very much! As promised, here's another chapter. Happy reading, folks!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Would it make you feel better
To watch me while I bleed?
All my windows still are broken
But I'm standing on my feet

Friday, May 13, 2016.

I genuinely felt like throwing my phone across my trailer. I normally didn’t have urges like that because my phone was generally a very precious thing to me, but not this morning. This morning, I hated it with everything I had. It was a quarter to six in the morning and my alarm was beeping so loudly I thought it would kill my brain. I wanted the sound to stop, and yet I had zero energy to make my arm move to grab my phone.

“Shut. It. Off,” Hanna grumbled from underneath her pillow.

I groaned and forced myself to move, pressing the snooze button. I buried my head under my pillow, too, pretending I didn’t have to rush my butt into action because I’d be late otherwise.

“Fuck Disney,” I mumbled. “I’m gonna keep sleeping.”

“But it’s Disney.” Hanna mumbled back, sounding just as tired as I felt.

I let out a loud, long groan and rolled until I was sliding out of bed and sitting on the floor. “Fine. Dibs on the shower.”

“I’m too tired to argue with you right now, so fine.”

I got ready as quickly as possible (nearly cutting myself in both my haste and exhaustion as I shaved my legs) and got dressed in a pair of Daisy Dukes with a studded back pocket and a white T-shirt with a vampire Mickey Mouse printed on it. I paired the outfit with comfortable Nikes and Disney themed jewelry. As Hanna took her turn in the shower, I blow dried my hair and put it up in a messy ponytail. Just when I was perfecting my winged eyeliner, Hanna came back, dressed in faded, ripped short jean shorts, a green T-shirt with an angry-looking Thumper from Bambi on it, and green Chucks. Her wavy blonde hair was still damp, but she didn’t seem to care as she put a black New York Yankees snapback on her head.
She finished doing her makeup just when there was a knock on my trailer’s door, and I rushed to open it. I was met with a cheery-looking Henry, dressed amazingly in a form-fitting black T-shirt and blue faded skinny jeans, paired with black boots. “Good morning,” he nearly sang.

I couldn’t help but smile. “Good morning to you, too. I like your jeans.”

He looked down at his pants with a slight blush. “You think so?” He shoved his hands into his pockets. “I mean, they require a bit of getting used to, but you said you liked them, so…”

“I do like them. But you should only wear skinny jeans if you want to.”

“Oh my God, you guys, just stop flirting so we can go already,” Hanna said, pushing past us as she shouldered a canvas backpack, a pair of Ray-Ban aviator sunglasses covering her eyes. The glasses were tinted green, matching her outfit.

I felt myself turn bright red at Hanna’s comment and quickly turned around to hide my face. I grabbed my own stuff, making sure to grab my blue Ray-Ban wayfarers.

The three of us walked to the parking lot and got into Henry’s car. He drove us to my family’s hotel, where we met up with them. Caitlin was already bouncing up and down with excitement, Minnie Mouse ears complete with pink bow already perched on top of her small head. Her blonde hair was done in two cute braided pigtails. She gave all three of us a hug, and I was a little surprised at how tightly she clamped on to Henry. He really had charmed her a lot.

We drove to the airport in two cars, and I was surprised when Henry didn’t drive us to the main parking lot, but to a private hangar. I shot him a both curious and suspicious look. “I thought you’d booked us a regular flight?”

Henry smiled, his blue eyes sparkling. “I couldn’t let you guys have a fun day out and make you fly coach, now could I?”

“What did you do?” I asked slowly, my eyes narrowing.

He shrugged, parking his car. “I have a friend who owns a jet and I asked him if I could borrow it just for today. I had to pay for the chartering costs and everything, but that’s not a problem.”

I shook my head. “I just can’t believe how this is all so… normal for you. ‘Oh, yeah, let me just call up my friend who owns a private jet and pay thousands of dollars for a day out with my costar and her friend and family I don’t even know so well.’ It’s just mind-boggling, really.”

He smiled. “I’d like to think you’re more than just my costar. And I actually like your family—well, with one obvious exception. And one day, if your talent is any indication of your future, this will all be normal for you, too.”

We got out of the car, meeting up with my family again. We went inside and found a luxurious-looking private jet waiting for us, the pilot awaiting us in front of the stairs leading up to the plane entrance. As I looked at it all, it felt incredibly surreal, which made Henry’s words seem even harder to believe than they already were.

“Young man,” Dad said, stepping up to Henry with a stern look on his face. I already had a feeling of what was coming, and I had to force a giggle back as I watched Henry’s smile fall and mild fear settle into his eyes. He might’ve been twice as muscular, but there was nothing quite as scary as an angry father. “I cannot accept you paying for a freaking private jet. I was already unsure about you paying for a regular flight and the admission tickets to Disney, but I can’t accept this.”
Henry stared at my father for a moment. “You… can’t?” Then he shook his head. “But I really do insist. Besides, this is a onetime thing and really not a big deal for me. And I have a feeling your daughter will get me back for splurging at some point.”

“You got that right,” I said, mostly just to set my father at ease.

Dad sighed. “Fine. But only because it’s a onetime thing.” He pointed his finger threateningly at Henry, who took a step back.

I shook my head, trying not to laugh. This whole thing was just so ridiculous.

We met the pilot, who was an average-looking man in his late thirties or early forties. Then we boarded the plane and I nearly entered culture shock. Nothing on the outside of the jet could have prepared me for what was on the inside. The interior had a theme of white and wood going on. There was a table fastened to the plane’s right wall, surrounded by four extremely comfortable-looking white seats. There was a wide white couch by the left wall, and two more seats in the back. The whole jet had a very luxurious feel to it, and to a girl whose family never really had that much money, this whole plane was insane. I didn’t even want to think about how much this jet must’ve cost.

“You have some rich friends, Cavill…” I mumbled.

He just smiled. “Everyone, sit, please. I’ll be right back. Juliette, you can have the window seat.” He winked at me and disappeared into the cockpit.

I sat down at the table by the window, Caitlin and Hanna sitting across from me. The seats were as comfortable as I’d imagined them to be—actually, even more so. The seats were soft and the leather incredibly smooth. I could die in these seats and be perfectly happy.

When Henry came back, he was carrying two platters. “I got some breakfast, seeing as I figured no one really had any yet because it’s so early.” He set the platters on the table. One held assorted bagels, and the other held all different kinds of donuts.

I glared at him as I grabbed a maple glazed donut. “I hate you,” I grumbled. He knew those were my favorite and he also knew I had to eat at least one if I saw them, no matter how bad they were for me.

“Well, I love him,” Hanna said dreamily as she grabbed a strawberry one. She bit into the donut and nearly moaned. “Not as much as I love this donut, though.”

Henry laughed as he sat down next to me. “I’m glad you like them. Just grab whatever you want.” He grabbed a bagel himself.

We ate in silence for a bit as the pilot geared up for takeoff. Before I knew it, the jet was taxiing out of the hangar and we were speeding along the runway, accelerating more and more until we were airborne. I stared out of the window just like the last time I flew, completely captivated by the view, the last piece of my donut forgotten in my hand.

When we were cruising along and no longer still climbing into the air, Henry asked, “Does anyone want anything to drink? There’s a fridge over there with plenty of beverages. You can grab whatever you want.” But as the perfect host, he stood up himself and passed drinks to everyone. He brought me a bottle of Coca-Cola Life and sat down again with his own after providing everyone with what they wanted.

I took a drink to wash away the sweetness in my mouth left from that donut and grabbed a bagel with ham, cheese, lettuce and tomato, even though there was another maple glazed donut still on the
other platter. When I finished eating it, though, my exhaustion set back in again. I could hardly keep
my eyes open and my head was bobbing up and down. I rested my head on Henry’s shoulder. “Your
shoulder’s a good pillow,” I murmured.

He smiled, wrapping an arm around my waist and pulling me a little closer. “Are you tired?” he
asked softly.

I nodded. “Yeah.”

“Then sleep. There’s enough time for you to get a quick nap in before we land.”

I was too tired to argue with that idea and closed my eyes, falling asleep before I full and well knew
it.

~*~*~*~*~*~

I awoke again a little less than an hour later by a gentle hand softly shaking my shoulder. I opened
my eyes groggily, my gaze falling first on black fabric covering big muscles. Henry’s intoxicating
scent was everywhere, and I had this sense of feeling like I was home. Then I realized I was far from
home—I wasn’t even on solid ground. I lifted my head, my eyes slowly traveling up from Henry’s
shoulder, to his throat, to his face.

He smiled down at me. “Hey, little sleepy head. We’re about to land, so I thought I’d wake you up.”

I smiled back at him, my still sleepy mind making it hard to keep my eyes open. I rested my head on
his shoulder again. “Mmkay,” I mumbled.

He laughed, tightening his arm around my waist and pressing a kiss to the top of my head.

“Touchdown is in five minutes,” was all he said.

I tried to wake myself up and make myself happy about the fact that we’d be walking around in
Disney World soon, but all I could focus on was how good he smelled and how soothing it felt to
gently move up and down along with his steady breathing. At this point, I’d take sleeping on
Henry’s shoulder over going to Disney any day.

As the pressure in my ears increased, though, I found it a little easier to wake myself up. It was
always more painful when the plane was descending, and in my tired state, it was even worse. I
leaned away from Henry to look out of the window and saw the ground rapidly nearing. When we
landed, we didn’t have to go through baggage claim or anything else that was usually annoying
about flying, and we took two cabs straight to Disney World.

Caitlin, who was in the cab with us, nearly fainted with excitement when we drove through the arch
leading to the park. Henry smiled at her. “Do you have any princesses that you want to meet?”

“I really want to meet Mulan. She kicks butt!” she said, making all of us laugh. Even the taxi driver
cracked a smile.

“She does kick butt, doesn’t she?” I said with smile. “Personally, I wanna take a picture with Belle.”

Hanna shook her head. “You and your Belle…”

“Hey!” I defended myself. “Have you seen the library Beast gives her? I want a library like that.”

“Understandable,” Henry said. “And I don’t doubt you’ll find a way to fill it up completely.”
Hanna snorted. “Please. She’ll end up not even having enough space for her books in that ginormous library. It’s not a collection anymore. It’s an obsession.”

We reached the Magical Kingdom, meeting up together to walk over Main Street. Before I knew it, Lorene was forcing her daughter to take a picture with literally every Disney character there was to find on Main Street.

I pulled Henry aside. “I’ve never been to Disney World before, but something tells me it usually doesn’t go like this. What are all the Disney characters doing here?”

Henry just smiled and gave me a wink as Caitlin posed for a picture with Mulan.

But she wasn’t the only one who was taking pictures with people.

A group of girls hesitantly approached Henry. “Hi, um, I’m sorry, I don’t mean to bother you, but…” She cleared her throat awkwardly. “Could we maybe take a picture with you?”

He smiled politely at the group of three girls. “Yeah, sure,” he said. “All together or individually?”

“Um, would it be okay if we take individual pictures? I mean, we really don’t want to bother you.”

“Oh, no, it’s no bother at all. Juliette, dear, would you take the pictures? We’ll do a group one, too.”

I smiled, trying not to shake my head at him. He was too sweet for his own good sometimes. I definitely tried to ignore the fact he’d called me ‘dear.’ “Yeah, no problem.” I took the girl’s phone, which was already opened to the camera function. The four of them posed for me, bright smiles on their faces. Henry wasn’t looking at the camera, though. He was looking at me. I felt flustered as I snapped the pics, but his eyes never wavered from me unless he was speaking to the girls.

“Thank you so much. We love your movies,” one of the girls gushed. I had the feeling they loved his pretty face more than his acting, but I couldn’t really blame them.

“Aw, thank you so much,” Henry said.

The girls left again and I tried not to laugh. “Do you ever get used to that? Girls fawning all over you and asking to take a picture with you?”

He shook his head. “No, I haven’t gotten used to that, and I don’t think I ever will. But they weren’t fawning over me.”

Hanna scoffed. “Yeah, they were. You were just too busy looking elsewhere to notice.”

Before Henry could ask what that was supposed to mean, Caitlin came storming at us. “Juliette! Juliette! Juliette, oh my God, that’s Belle!”

I looked up to see where she was pointing. Sure enough, a few feet away, Belle was standing there surrounded by two kids and Gaston. Gaston was busy flexing his (rather impressive) muscles. I wondered if those were his actual muscles or if it was just the suit. “That is indeed Belle,” I said with a smile. Her dress was beautiful.

Caitlin grabbed my hand and dragged me over to her. “Belle! Belle, excuse me, but my cousin wants to take a picture with you.” She pointed up at me with a big grin and a sparkle in her eye.

Gaston laughed, his deep voice carrying all over Main Street, I was pretty sure. “Oh, no, you must be mistaken, little girl,” he said. “I’m pretty sure she wants to take a picture with me.”
“Wait your turn, Gaston,” I told him. “Belle’s much more important than you.”

Belle laughed. “Why, did you hear that, Gaston? She thinks I’m more important than you.”

Gaston scoffed. “Women.”

Hanna patted him on his arm compassionately. “Upset you can’t get any? Understandable.”

Belle covered her mouth with her hand, trying to keep in her giggles.

“Right,” Caitlin said sternly, her hands on her hips. “Now let the girls talk and take a picture. Your turn will come eventually, but only if you’re nice.”

I high-fived her. Then I gave my phone to Henry and wrapped my arm around Belle’s waist for the picture. Belle surprised me when she kissed my cheek. Gaston huffed at the gesture, crossing his arms in front of his chest, and as his biceps bulged through his sleeves, I decided his muscles had to be real.

“You both look gorgeous,” Henry said, handing me my phone back. The picture had turned out great.

Belle winked. “Well, I see you’ve already met your Prince Charming.”

“Oh, well, we’re not actually—”

Before I could finish, Gaston interrupted me. He pointed at Henry. “I challenge you to a pushup contest. Right here, right now. Winner gets the girl. Think you can handle the heat?”

I almost snorted. I’d watched Henry do a hundred pushups without breaking a sweat in-between takes just because he was bored. He could handle this guy, no matter how big his muscles were.

“All right, fine. I accept your challenge,” Henry said, shaking Gaston’s hand.

As the two of them got down to the ground, I retrieved my phone from my pocket. I had the feeling this could take a while, but I still had to film all of it.

The two of them started their contest, both keeping perfect form as they went all the way down and then all the way up again, the muscles in their arms straining. They both seemed to be keeping up with each other.

“Hm, you’re strong,” Gaston noted, as if it actually came as a surprise to him. “Let’s see if you can do it one-handed.” He gracefully put one arm behind his back, still going up and down while using his other arm.

Henry followed suit, putting his left arm behind his back. I couldn’t help but stare at the muscles in his arms and shoulders. The tight black fabric around them seemed about ready to tear.

After a while Henry was still doing great, but Gaston was starting to lose his form. His arm was shaking a little, and after a bit of that, he’d had enough. With dramatic flair, he let himself fall to the ground. “Fine!” he wailed. “Fine! You win! You get the girl.”

Henry got to his feet, dusting off his hands. “You hear that?” he asked with a grin. “I get the girl.” He walked over to me, grabbed me by my waist and dipped me low. I stared at him, wondering if he was going to kiss me, but he never did. Instead, he lifted me up again and kissed my hand.

“Oh my God, I’m so glad I got that,” Hanna said. I turned to her with a start and saw she was
holding her phone as well.

I was still holding mine, but it was pointed to the ground now. I pressed the stop button, pretending to be busy with my phone to hide my disappointment at him not kissing me.

Gaston shook Henry’s hand. “Well won, my friend.”

Henry took a small bow. “Thank you.”

We spent the rest of the morning exploring the park, taking pictures of sights we enjoyed and going on any ride we wanted. Henry had arranged for us to always be able to cut the line, because, as he’d rightfully noted, waiting in line could potentially be hazardous for him. I did feel guilty every time we did it, though, no matter how necessary it might have been.

Eventually Henry mentioned that he’d made reservations somewhere for lunch, and that we’d better hurry or else we’d be late. So he took us back toward Main Street, to a beautiful restaurant. It was called The Crystal Palace and kind of made to look like a greenhouse, filled with beautiful greenery and wroughtiron decorations. Inside, the tables and chairs all looked quaint and lovely. It was the kind of place you’d want to keep taking pictures of.

We were seated at a table that fit all eight of us, where an employee explained that we could walk to the buffet and take anything we wanted. After getting our food, we sat back down again.

“It was really sweet of you to arrange this, Henry,” I told him quietly, so only he could hear.

He smiled knowingly. “I still have some more surprises in store,” he said. “Just wait until you see where we’re eating dinner.”

“I think I can already guess, so thank you. It’ll be really special for Caitlin.”

“I hope so,” he said, his smile widening. “I just hope it’s special for you, too.”

“I thought all actresses were supposed to eat healthy stuff like salads,” Lorene said, eyeing the bread roll I was buttering.

“Not this again,” Hanna muttered.

“What? I’m just saying that as she’s on camera so much, she might want to watch her figure, especially since it adds five pounds. What’s wrong with that?”

“Okay, no,” Henry said, and I saw genuine anger burn in his eyes. It took me aback a little, to the point where I felt my heartbeat speed up. “I thought you’d have the decency to make this a good day, not only for your daughter, but also for Juliette, because she’s just trying to make you guys have a good time. But you just can’t stop criticizing her every move, can you? And I really wish you’d stop commenting on her weight before you start giving her ideas she shouldn’t have. She has a perfectly healthy body, and she shouldn’t be ‘watching her figure.’ If anything, you should be watching what comes out of your mouth.”

Everyone was speechless for a moment, shock on their faces. Anger was mixed with Lorene’s shock, though, and I feared an outburst worthy of Mount Vesuvius.

Hanna recovered first, though. “That… was a speech worthy of me. I applaud you, Henry, and I applaud your guts to say what actually needed to be said.” She actually started clapping for him.

“I’ll be right back,” Lorene said, her voice shaking with anger. She headed for the bathroom, and I
feared she’d kick the whole place into shambles. I don’t think anyone but Hanna had ever pointed
her out on her bullshit, and even she hadn’t done it so… I didn’t even know how to describe it.
Directly? Honestly?

“I’m sorry,” Henry told me. “I shouldn’t have… I shouldn’t have exploded the way I did, I just
couldn’t handle hearing her utter another bad word about you.”

“Well, inappropriate timing or not,” Dad said, “we still appreciate you saying what we’ve always
wanted to say but never did.”

“I really am sorry. I must apologize to you, too, Quentin. I never meant to go off on your wife like
that.”

Quentin waved his apology away. “It’s okay. I’ve been telling her for years to ease up on Juliette,
but she never listens. Maybe she’ll listen to you.”

I couldn’t really focus on my lunch after that. Especially when Lorene returned from the bathroom,
still looking angry, I just picked at my food and didn’t dare face her. The only time I was able to
smile was when Winnie the Pooh and Eeyore came to entertain us (it was mostly meant for Caitlin,
but Hanna was the one who freaked out most) and to hand out autographs and take pictures. But
once they were gone, I again began mulling everything over in my head. Lorene’s comments,
Henry’s angry speech, my own confusing feelings… It was all a little overwhelming, especially with
the panicky feeling still left over from yesterday’s anxiety attack.

I managed to push through lunch, though, and once everyone had finished eating (we had to wait for
Hanna, who was still obsessively staring at Eeyore), we started walking through the park again.

“Oh my gosh,” Hanna exclaimed. “Splash Mountain. We need to go on that.”

“Fine with me. But I’m not sitting in the front,” I said.

Hanna rolled her eyes. “You’re such a wuss. Fine then, I’ll sit in the front. Who’s with me?”

“I’ll sit with you,” Caitlin said bravely. “I’m not afraid to get a little wet.”

Oh, poor, poor unknowing Caitlin. Sitting in the front in Splash Mountain wasn’t likely to get you a
little wet. It would likely get you soaking wet. I’d kind of hoped Henry would offer to sit in front
instead—you know, so I could admire him in a drenched T-shirt? But alas, Caitlin beat him to it
before he could even think to offer.

And so we again cut in line, this time at Splash Mountain. I felt especially guilty when I saw a girl
about Caitlin’s age look at us with anger in her eyes. I knew it was incredibly unfair, but there was
nothing I could do. I supposed this was just one of the necessary evils you had to endure when going
on an outing with someone as famous as Henry.

I saw multiple girls and women waiting in line that didn’t seem to mind we were cutting in front of
them at all, though. They all stared at Henry like he was a piece of meat (which kind of made me
jealous but also made me wonder if I looked at him like that), and they took pictures of him
shamelessly.

When we got on the ride, Henry and me sitting behind Hanna and Caitlin, the anxiety I’d felt earlier
seemed to multiply tenfold. It was like the thrill of the ride and the pent-up feelings I had weren’t
reacting all too well together. I kind of just wanted to get the hell out of there, wanted to yell at the
people in control to make them stop the boat from moving, but I kept my mouth shut. I generally
wasn’t afraid of roller coasters and the like, but paired with the anxious feelings I’d been feeling
since yesterday, it all became a little too much. When the drop finally came, I wanted to scream, but no sound came out. The freezing water that splashed all over me made me want to cry.

Henry noticed almost straight away that something was wrong once we got off. “Anxiety?” was all he asked, and he nodded at the same time I did, probably already knowing the answer before he’d even asked the question. “Hanna, we’ll be right back.” She took one look at me and nodded, waving us away. Henry led me to an alley that led to a maintenance room of some sorts. “Are you okay?” he asked softly, making sure to catch my eye.

I nodded, taking deep, slow breaths. “Yeah, I think so. I just needed to get out of the crowd for a bit.”

“Are you sure? It’s not about my outburst against Lorene earlier?”

“I don’t know. Maybe. It’s all a little confusing right now. I think it’s just a mix of everything together. My anxiety attack yesterday, the busy crowd constantly taking pictures of us, Lorene… Just everything. I don’t blame you at all, though, I want you to know that.”

“But still, I am sorry,” he said, pulling me into a comforting hug. His shirt was wet from Splash Mountain, but so was mine, so I didn’t really care. “I shouldn’t have exploded at your aunt like that. At least not so publicly, in the middle of a crowded restaurant with her daughter right there. There are probably smarter ways I could’ve handled… Really now? Don’t you have any shred of decency?”

I looked up with a start at his sudden angry tone, only to realize he wasn’t talking to me. Right there in the only exit stood two guys with expensive cameras. Paparazzi.

Henry tried to shield me with his body. “Get out of here!”

“Henry, are you and Juliette dating?” one of the guys asked as his shutter kept going off. It was lucky it was bright daylight, otherwise the flashes would have definitely blinded me.

“I told you to get lost!” Then, turning to me again, he asked gently, “Are you okay, Juliette?”

Admittedly, the camera’s shutter wasn’t all too good for my anxiety, nor was knowing that there’d be even more pictures out now and that this would probably also turn into a blown-out-of-proportion scandal, but I still attempted to be brave and nodded. “Yeah, I’ll be fine.” I tried to ignore the shaking of my voice, and hoped he would do the same. “Let’s just get out of here, okay?”

Henry didn’t need to be told twice, and again tried to shield me with his body as we pushed past the two photographers. When we were back in the crowd, which somehow felt safer than being in that alley, he asked, “Are you sure you’re okay?”

I smiled at him, hoping it didn’t waver. “Yes, I’m sure. Now stop asking me before I’m not okay.”

“Sorry,” he said sheepishly, making me laugh.

Mom gave me a hug as soon as we reunited with my family. “Are you okay, love?”

I smiled at her. “I’m fine, Mom. It’s nothing I can’t handle, so don’t worry about me. Now, where do you guys want to go next?”

We wandered through the rest of the park for the remainder of the afternoon, and I found myself refusing to go on any rides unless they were sure to not give me any more unnecessary and above all unwanted anxiety. On the one side that kind of sucked, because I actually quite liked roller coasters.
But I knew what was best for me right now, and I wasn’t foolish enough to be stubborn at the moment.

It did seem to work on easing my anxiety a little, though, but I kept worrying that I was somehow letting the others down. All I’d wanted was to show my family and best friend a good time, and here I was, abstaining from all the fun. I also felt bad for Henry. He’d gone to great lengths to arrange all this for me, and I didn’t want him to think I was taking it for granted, or—God forbid—didn’t appreciate it. Because I was eternally grateful for what he’d done, and it wasn’t his fault—nor was it Disney World’s—that I suffered from anxiety.

Still, I should have seen it coming. All of it. The anxiety, Henry going completely over the top, my aunt being—well, a bitch. I should’ve just said I wasn’t feeling up to it and that just exploring Miami might be a better idea.

But then I looked at the pure joy on Caitlin’s face and realized I’d done the right thing by saying yes. Especially the look on her face when we entered the Beast’s castle made everything—the good and the bad—worth it. I knew that after Mulan, Beauty and the Beast was her favorite Disney movie, and she drank in all the sights with a look of wonder on her face.

I knew, though, that this had mostly been for me, and I felt my heart swell. Even if he didn’t like me back (which I still wasn’t sure about—I kept having doubts about the way he felt), I didn’t deserve this kind of attention. He was looking at me with an expectant smile, but I was too choked up to tell him how much I loved all of this. In the short time that we’d known each other, he already knew me so well, and him going out of his way to make me happy was just… too much for my weak heart to handle.

When we were seated, I gave him an awkward half-hug that I hoped conveyed my genuine gratitude for him. “Thank you so much,” I whispered into his ear.

He squeezed me tight for a second and said, “You’re welcome. It’s no bother at all.” When he pulled back, he gave me a smile that was warm enough to melt my heart into a useless puddle.

Halfway through dessert (I had a delicious triple chocolate cupcake that was lifting my spirits even more), that same Belle from this morning stopped by our table. Beast stood behind her. “Oh my, so sorry to disturb,” she said, “but I once again wanted to apologize for Gaston’s behavior this morning. He was out of line,” she told Henry, who laughed.

“Gaston is right, Belle,” Beast said. “Gaston is—”

Belle laughed. “Now, now, Beast. Be nice. Either way, I’ll leave you lovely people to your dinner now. Have a magical night!”

We wished her the same, and she and Beast traipsed off, on to the next table. Disney World truly was a magical place.

The flight back to Miami was completely different from the flight to Orlando. For one thing, I stayed awake for the entirety of it. I found myself replaying the whole day, and more than once found myself staring at Henry. I’d already liked him a lot before this day (and of course he’d always been nice to look at), but now when I looked at him, I saw something more. I saw his kindness for
someone he’d barely met, I saw his passion, I saw his resolve to make sure that my family (with the obvious exception) was happy, but mostly his resolve to make sure I was happy. I kept discovering more and more how beautiful of a person he was, inside and out, and I kept sinking deeper and deeper. I loved the way he tried to make me laugh, I loved the way he’d so naturally walked through Disney World with Caitlin on his shoulders, loved how he was never annoyed with a fan for stopping him and asking him for a picture and/or an autograph—instead he welcomed it and tried to make everyone feel special. And that was what made him so special, and perhaps what was making me fall so hard for him.

When we landed in Miami again, we dropped my family off at their hotel. I made sure to kiss an extremely sleepy Caitlin goodnight (I was both surprised and unsurprised at her requesting a goodnight kiss from Henry as well), and Hanna, Henry and I drove back to set.

Once we got there and stood in front of our trailers, Hanna yawned, though I suspected it was faked. “Oh my God, I’m exhausted. Good night to one and all, I’m out,” she said, and with a nod to Henry, she walked into my trailer, shutting the door behind her.

I chuckled. “Well, apparently I’m not welcome in my own trailer anymore,” I joked.

“You’re always welcome in mine,” Henry said.

That made me blush, and I was thankful that it was already dark outside, with very little light coming from the surrounding trailers. “I wanted to thank you again for today,” I said. “You really didn’t have to do all of this, and yet you exceeded all expectations. You really made it a special day for Caitlin, and I appreciate that beyond measure. You also made it a special day for me too, so… Thank you.”

“Like I said, it was my pleasure. I actually had a lot of fun, too. I don’t have days like these often anymore, so I suppose I should be thanking you for letting me tag along with you and your family.”

I smiled. “It really was a good day, wasn’t it? I mean, it wasn’t perfect, but I think a really good day shouldn’t be perfect. That kind of makes it feel unreal.”

“I know what you mean, and I agree.”

I stepped up to him and hugged him, snaking my arms around his neck. “Thank you, Henry.” I kissed his cheek and wanted to pull away again, but was surprised when he tightened his hold on me so he could kiss my cheek too. He released me then, and I had to think for a moment before I remembered what I was about to say next. “I’d, uh… I’d better head inside and try to get some sleep. We both have an early call time tomorrow.”

He smiled. “I’ll try and do the same. Sweet dreams, Juliette.”

“Sweet dreams, Henry.”

Chapter End Notes

So that was their eventful trip to Disney World. I hope you liked it. I don't know about you guys, but I think Henry would totally be the kind of guy that throws presents and gifts at the girl he likes, but maybe that's just me. Next chapter will be a very interesting one, and hopefully a highly anticipated one: The sex scene. :)
The lyrics at the start of the chapter are Skyscraper by Demi Lovato.
Chapter 10

Chapter Notes
See the end of the chapter for notes

Can you see me now?
Can you hear me shout?
When I’m dancing through the fear

~*~*~*~*~*~


I couldn’t sleep. I kept tossing and turning, and no matter how much I tried, I failed miserably at falling asleep. All I could think of was tomorrow.

Tomorrow. The day we’d be filming the sex scene. The sex scene I’d actually be topless for. In other words, my naked boobs would be pressed to Henry’s naked chest within the coming twenty four hours. I both dreaded and looked forward to it with a strange excitement. Right now, though, trapped in the dark of my trailer with only my thoughts for company, dread was the foremost emotion I felt. My boobs wouldn’t exactly be on display for the whole world to see as they would only see my back, but Henry would (hell, he’d even touch them). But even if I went full frontal, he’d be the only one I cared about. (Also maybe my grandparents—it’s kind of weird and uncomfortable knowing your grandfather will see your boobs, right?)

I kept thinking about what Henry would think of my appearance. I’d always been very insecure about my body, and so it usually takes a while for me to be comfortable to take my clothes off for the first time in front of someone I’m dating. And though I did have strong feelings for Henry, we weren’t even really dating. I trusted him, of course, but it wasn’t about whether I trusted him or not. It was about my own deeply rooted insecurity. My own deeply rooted fear for being rejected.

Eventually I decided I couldn’t take it anymore. I grabbed my laptop, opening iTunes, and started one of the playlists that was always sure to lift my spirits, setting it to shuffle. I may have turned it on a little too loud considering the late hour (it was nearly two in the morning), but at the moment I couldn’t really care. I was desperate for some relief from my thoughts and fears. I grabbed a bottle of Heineken from my fridge, using the counter as an instrument to open it, and took a long gulp.

By the time the third song started, I was starting to feel myself relax a little bit more. I was also already halfway through my beer. If half a bottle of beer in about seven minutes was fast, I didn’t know, but I also didn’t care. So I simply took another sip. Just when I was about to belt along to the chorus of an Ellie Goulding song, however, there was a knock on my door.

Startled, I looked at the time on my laptop. 2:04 a.m. I turned my music down a little and set my beer on the table before opening the door.

And stood face to face with Henry.

Nothing much had changed between us since our trip to Disney World a week ago. As in, neither of us had made a move yet, and I was still as head over heels as ever. Well, not really. I may have surpassed even my own expectations and fallen even more for him.
“Hey,” he said with an apologetic smile. “I didn’t mean to disturb you. It’s just… I couldn’t sleep so I went to walk Kal, and I heard the music when I came back. I don’t really know why I knocked. I could leave if you want to go to sleep,” he rambled. “I mean, it’s late, after all.”

Only after Henry had mentioned him, did I see Kal sitting patiently next to his owner. I also realized I’d been gaping at Henry, and quickly moved to the side. “No! No, of course not. Come right in. I couldn’t sleep either anyway.”

Henry came in, unclipping Kal’s leash from his collar and sitting down on the couch. He noticed the bottle of beer standing next to my laptop and raised an eyebrow, amused. “I thought you didn’t like beer. Your choice of liquor is vodka soda, am I right?”

I smiled. “Preferring vodka soda doesn’t mean I don’t like beer. And sometimes it’s just a beer night. Want one?”

He seemed to think for a moment and then shrugged. “Sure. Why not.”

I grabbed another bottle from the fridge and uncapped it, using the counter again. “There you go,” I told him as I handed it over.

“Impressive,” he said, gesturing to the counter with his beer.

I smiled and sat down next to him on the couch. “Just a trick Quentin taught me. He wanted to teach me how to do it with my phone as well, but I politely declined. Decided not to risk it.”

Henry laughed and took a sip of his beer. “I can understand why. So, why couldn’t you sleep?”

I felt myself blush, and hoped I could pass it off as the alcohol taking effect if he asked about it. “I don’t know,” I said, deciding it to be wise to not mention my fear for tomorrow’s scene.

“So it’s not anxiety?” he asked, and I could see the concern in his eyes.

I smiled. It had everything to do with anxiety. Again, he knew me better than I might want him to. “Don’t worry. I’m not about to have another attack.” I didn’t think so, at least.

“Oh, that’s good.”

“And why couldn’t you sleep?”

He smiled. “I guess I don’t really know, either. All I know is that I feel wide awake for some reason. So I went on a jog with Kal, and now we’re here.”

“And now we’re here,” I agreed.

It was quiet for a while as we drank our beer. I listened to the music, unaware for the most part that my head was bobbing along. Like I said, this music made me happy, and always in a mood to dance.

“Who’s this?” Henry asked when a song called Sometimes came on. “I like his voice.”

“Ron Pope. A vastly under-appreciated singer/songwriter. Then again, he’s an independent artist, so that explains why he’s so unknown. But he still has quite a few fans that love him to death, myself included. I’ve seen him live a few times. Mostly pretty intimate shows, which is awesome.”

“Is he good live?”

“Oh my God, are you ready for this conversation?” I asked once I’d upended my beer. “Because I
could go on and on about how his vocals are as smooth as molten chocolate and how he’s so much better live than on his albums, and then, before you know it, I’m dragging you to one of his shows.”

Henry laughed. “Not gonna lie, I’m actually kind of interested in seeing him live now, after seeing you so passionate about him.”

“You just made yourself a deal that you can’t get out of, my friend. We’re going to one of his shows at some point.”

“You know what? Deal.” He shook my hand.

“This should be celebrated with another beer,” I said, already standing up to walk over to the fridge. “Do you want another one, too?”

He downed the rest of his beer and put the empty bottle next to mine. “Now I do,” he said, flashing a grin.

I grinned back and got two more beers out of the fridge. At this rate, we’d run out of beer soon. Oh well, there was plenty of vodka for when that happened.

Which happened to be pretty soon. I was also getting pretty drunk already, which also explained why I did what I did next. When Wicked World by Laura Jansen came on, I jumped up. It was one of those songs I always—no matter what—had to sing along to, not even mentioning the need to dance. “Oh my gosh, I love this song!” I exclaimed, and grabbed for Henry’s hands. “Come on, let’s dance.”

He laughed, and, apparently as intoxicated as I was or just not giving a single fuck tonight, stood up and danced with me as I belted out the lyrics.

“And don’t be afraid of the Big Bad Wolf / He’s just a sheep underneath those teeth / And don’t be afraid of the Wicked Witch / She ain’t so bad, she ain’t no bitch!”

I transitioned into the chorus, laughing as Henry and I danced along to the song. He was half-shaking his head at me and half-laughing at our silliness. I bet he’d never expected to be doing this with me at three in the morning, but he didn’t really seem to mind the twist of events.

“Oh! Oh, this is my favorite part,” I said, and started in on the last verse along with Laura Jansen. “Oh, oh Rapunzel, Rapunzel, let down your golden hair / Giddy up, giddy up on your big white horse / Even if your prince ain’t there / Oh, I long for ever after like every princess should / But there’s always another chapter and the apple sure tastes good!”

When the song finally ended, I laughed elatedly and let myself fall against Henry’s chest. He laughed along with me, wrapping his arms around my waist, and asked, “Are you okay there?”

“Oh, I’m fine,” I said cheerily, wrapping my arms around his neck. “That was fun!”

He shook his head. “I can’t believe you’re not throwing up yet. You took those last few drinks pretty fast.”

I shot him a look. “I took all my drinks tonight pretty fast. But don’t worry. I inherited my grandfather’s iron stomach. When it comes to drinking, at least. He always takes at least two shots of jenever every night. You know, Dutch Gin?”

“How strong is that?”
“It depends. Old Dutch Gin is stronger than young Dutch Gin, and I have no idea which one he drinks. But about the same as vodka, I guess?”

He nodded thoughtfully, and then smiled. “Teach me some Dutch.”

“What do you wanna know?”

“Well, seeing as we’re hugging right now, what’s hug in Dutch?”

“Knuffel,” I answered. “Which also translates to stuffed animal. It’s weird, I know.”

“What about… Dance with me?”

“Are you asking me to translate or to actually dance with you?” I verified, my brain too drunk to be sure.

Henry smiled. “Both,” he said, and he twirled me around, making me giggle.


“And how would I order a beer in Dutch? It’s very vital I know this,” he joked.

I giggled again. “Very vital information, indeed. Um… I’m just gonna give you the informal one that every Dutchie uses. Een biertje, graag.”

“And that means?”

“A beer, please.” I shrugged. “Very casual.”

“Well, now that I know that vital piece of information, how do you call someone beautiful in Dutch?”

I pointed at him, still keeping my other arm wrapped around his shoulders. “Now here’s where it gets tricky, because I never think it sounds as well in Dutch as it does in English—it kind of sounds tacky or something, I don’t know how to explain it—but just like with English, there are different ways to say it. ‘Je bent mooi’ translates to ‘you’re pretty’ and ‘je bent prachtig’ is more like ‘you’re gorgeous’ or ‘you’re beautiful.’”

With another beautiful smile, he twirled me around. “Well, Juliette Morrison, je bent prachtig,” he said, the pronunciation far from perfect, but both the effort and the gesture behind the words made me feel flustered, even through the drunken haze in my brain.

Instead of showing it, however, I smirked. “En jij bent een lekkerding.”

A cute frown appeared between his brows. “What does that mean?”

I pressed a finger to my lips, winking. “Shh…”

~*~*~*~*~*~


When I woke up, light was streaming into my trailer. My head throbbed with every small movement I made, so I stayed as still as I could—which actually wasn’t so difficult considering I was still exhausted and I was pretty comfortable where I lay. My pillow was a lot harder and warmer than I was used to, and yet… I liked it. I wished I could wake up like this every day.
Suddenly, however, my pillow moved, tightening his arms around me. My eyes flew open, which I regretted immediately—a sharp jab of pain nearly seemed to split my forehead open. Along with the pain came the sudden realization that I wasn’t lying on a pillow at all. I was lying on Henry’s chest.

I was afraid to move. Afraid to even think about where I was and how I’d gotten there. I couldn’t remember falling asleep. Everything was a blur after I’d finished my fifth vodka soda and started singing along to an old Jonas Brothers song with zero shame. I nearly groaned as I remembered that part of the night.

But I had bigger problems than being embarrassed about singing along to my favorite band in high school and college. I couldn’t recall what had happened between Henry and me that could’ve landed us in this position. Had we kissed? Had we… well, you know, done it—last night? I was still completely dressed, though, so at least that seemed unlikely, which helped ease my nerves a little—but only very slightly.

I’d never had a drunken blackout before. Then again, I couldn’t remember ever knocking drinks back as fast as I did last night either. I also usually wasn’t one for hangovers, with a few exceptions, and I could only hope the headache I felt now was temporary. I didn’t really want to deal with a hangover while I was filming my sex scene with Henry.

The sex scene.

I felt my heart beat wildly in my throat as I thought about the sex scene. We’d be shooting it in a matter of hours, though I didn’t know how many. Shooting would start as soon as it was dark out, and the sunlight streaming in through my window told me that was still at least a little while away. But I’d been up until really quite late last night, so for all I knew, it could already be six p.m. I had personal experience with sleeping in that late, so it wasn’t that far-fetched a theory.

I was at war with myself. I didn’t know what to do. I wanted to check my phone (if it was even nearby or turned on, for that matter) to check the time, but I didn’t want to wake Henry up if it was still early. I wanted to stay wrapped up in his arms like this forever, and yet I was too embarrassed to stay there for fear of what his reaction might be once he woke up to find me on his chest. Then again, he was already in my trailer anyway, which would be hard to explain if he was experiencing the same blackouts I was. But what if he remembered last night perfectly? What if we’d had a moment yesterday where we’d shared our feelings for each other and I was the only one of us who wouldn’t be able to remember it? Simply put, I didn’t know what to do, so instead I decided to do nothing.

I stayed wrapped up in Henry’s arms, my head rising and falling slightly in time with his breathing. My ear was pressed right over his heart, and his slow and steady heartbeat proved to be very calming. I even managed to close my eyes again, pretending for a moment that every morning was like this. Protected by as beautiful and loving a person as Henry, feeling safe and—well, loved.

My fast heartbeat returned quickly, though, once Henry woke up. He mumbled something incoherent and tightened his arms around me even more. And then he stiffened, his heart skipping a beat.

“Juliette?” he asked softly, his voice gruff from sleeping.

What do I do? Do I say ‘hi’? Do I do nothing? Do I own up to the incredibly weird moment and say something flirty? What do I do???

I eventually chose my second option, knowing too much time had already passed for the other options in my hesitation. So I stayed as still as possible, praying to any god that could hear me that he
wouldn’t be able to feel my fast heartbeat.

After a moment’s hesitation, Henry shook my shoulder gently. “Juliette?” he whispered. “Wake up.”

I moaned softly, pretending to only just be waking up. “I don’t wanna wake up,” I mumbled, burying my face deeper into his chest. “My head hurts.”

That made him laugh, but most of all relax. “I’m honestly not surprised, at the rate you were going last night. I’m a little hungover too, I must admit. I thought my drunken blackouts were behind me, but apparently not.”

Drunken blackouts? So he couldn’t remember parts of last night either? There was only one way to find out.

“I can’t even remember falling asleep,” I said, slowly sitting up and rubbing my eyes. I was sad to no longer feel his arms around me, but that was probably for the best.

“Honestly, neither can I,” Henry admitted. “Remind me to make sure we ration ourselves next time we drink together.”

I felt butterflies in my stomach at the suggestion we’d be doing it again someday. Or maybe that was just my hangover. Either way, I smiled. “I will.”

“How late is it anyway?” Henry asked, digging in his jeans’ pockets and retrieving his phone. He pressed the Home button on the iPhone, and his eyes widened as his display lit up. “Shit, it’s already almost three p.m. How the hell did we manage that?”

I couldn’t help myself—I snorted. “Trust me, I’ve had worse. We apparently just partied until really quite late.”

“I’ve also only got four percent of battery life left. Damned smartphones,” he cursed to himself. “I’d better get back to my trailer and charge this thing. Taking a shower and maybe some aspirin might be nice too.”

I chuckled, shaking my head. “Those two things sound very good right now. I guess I’ll see you in the makeup trailer soon.”

He smiled. “You will.” He pressed a soft kiss to my cheek and left my trailer, leaving me sitting on the bed, stumped.

A big part of me still couldn’t even believe we’d been drinking together last night, let alone me waking up on Henry’s chest or us being so nonchalant about it. Well, no, nonchalant wasn’t really the right word. It was more like we were ignoring the whole matter altogether. Worked for me.

Once I was in the shower, however, all I could think about was the scene we’d be filming soon. I’d surely make a fool of myself later, and though nothing had happened yet, I already felt like crawling into a hole where no one would find me. The prospect of doing this scene kind of made me wish I’d never auditioned for this movie in the first place. I’d be missing out on a few great things, sure, but I’d also be saving myself a lot of embarrassments.

Would I really wish all this time with Henry away, though? Or even with Natascha? I’d formed a pretty good friendship with my P.A. over the past few weeks I’d known her. Would I really be willing to wish all of that away just because I felt a little (okay, a lot) uncomfortable now? I needed to man the fuck up and get over myself.
And so I finished rinsing my body and turned the water off, stepping out of the small cabin. I towel dried my hair but otherwise let it dry naturally, knowing I’d get it wet later anyway. Besides, one of the benefits of having super straight hair is that it never dries up frizzy or otherwise out of control. I got dressed in comfortable short denim shorts and a white button down blouse, pairing the outfit off with high top sneakers and sunglasses—hangovers really were a bitch.

I disconnected my phone from its charger, happy to see it was fully charged, and stepped out into the bright and sunny day, heading for the cafeteria. I ordered myself a quick breakfast and joined Natascha where she was eating a late lunch.

“Hey,” she greeted me with a bright smile. “I haven’t seen you all day.”

I grimaced. “That’s because I only just woke up. Probably just as well seeing as we’ll be filming all night.”

She regarded me with a dumbfounded look on her face for a few moments before busting out a laugh. “Oh gosh, really? You didn’t strike me as the type to party all night.”

“I’m usually not. But I apparently was last night. I couldn’t sleep and then Henry came by, and we had a few beers. And then a few beers turned into quite a few vodka sodas. Trust me, I’m regretting those drinks now.” I gestured to my sunglasses.

She leaned forward eagerly, a grin on her face. “You had drinks with Henry? Girl, are you sure you regret that? Because honestly, if it were me…” She trailed off meaningfully.

I laughed. “Well, nothing happened. At least, not that I can remember. I woke up with him an hour ago, but I can’t even remember falling asleep.”

Her eyes widened. “You woke up with him? Oh, honey!”

I felt myself grow red. “We were both still fully clothed, so I’m pretty sure nothing happened,” I said quickly, feeling the need to defend myself. “We probably just passed out drunk.”

Natascha shook her head wistfully. “Juliette, you get yourself into the weirdest situations.”

I bust out a laugh. “Don’t I know it.”

“So,” she said, wiggling her eyebrows conspiratorially, “what did you two do?”

“Besides getting drunk off our asses? I taught him some Dutch—though I don’t know how much of that actually stuck—and made an absolute fool of myself by dancing and singing along to my music. I’m surprised I didn’t wake anyone up.”

She sighed dreamily. “Isn’t that just the dream? Getting drunk with…” Her eyes widened and she suddenly straightened in her chair. Way to be obvious. “Oh.”

I looked behind me, following Natascha’s gaze, and already knew what I would see. Henry came walking into the cafeteria, Ryan by his side. Henry was smiling, but the black wayfarers resting on his nose hinted at the hangover he was also still suffering from. I used my own sunglasses to shield my eyes as I studied his features. His brown hair was messy and void of any product, as I always liked it best. I loved seeing his curls in their natural state. His jaw looked sharp in the bright sunlight, and his lips… Well, it’s no secret how I felt about his lips. His black sunglasses added an air of mystery to him that made him even more attractive than usual.

Henry and Ryan grabbed their food and joined us. Natascha looked flustered at having Henry and
the movie’s director at her table. “Hey,” Henry said with a grin. “I see I’m not the only one who had the brilliant idea to wear sunglasses this morning.”

Ryan fake-coughed. “I think you mean afternoon, Cavill.”

Had Henry told Ryan what I’d told Natascha? Or had he actually remembered more than what I had and told Ryan that too?

I grinned back at Henry. “Hey, we’re in Miami. It’s not that strange to wear sunglasses.”

“You’re inside,” Natascha said, and then, realizing she’d said anything at all, pressed her lips together.

Ryan snorted. “I like your bluntness,” he said. “Who are you again?”

Natascha turned red. “I’m Natascha, one of the P.A.s, Mr. Zachary.”

“Oh, please, call me Ryan. So you’re Juliette’s personal P.A., huh?”

“Uh… Sort of. Not officially, but I do a lot of things for her.”

I laughed. “You’re making me sound like I’m high maintenance.”

Henry quirked an eyebrow. “Well, aren’t you? I had a hard time keeping up with you last night. Seems pretty high maintenance to me,” he teased.

“Hey!” I said defensively, poking him in his side with my elbow. “I told you, I inherited my grandfather’s drinking skills.”

“I’d like to meet this grandfather of yours once. Challenge the both of you to a drinking contest and see who of us wins.” He seemed to reconsider. “Wait, how old is he?”

I laughed. “He’s sixty eight. He had my mother young.”

Henry turned to Ryan. “That’s young enough for a drinking contest, right?”

“Hey, my own grandpa is in his nineties and sure seems to think so, so I wouldn’t be too worried about hers.”

“It’s settled then,” Henry said with another grin.

“I’ll pass your challenge on to him. He lives in the Netherlands, though, so that might be slightly problematic.”

“I’ll make sure you two have some promotional work to do in Amsterdam,” Ryan said. “Then you can visit him at his retirement home.”

Henry laughed. “I was just joking. But promo stuff in Amsterdam actually sounds pretty good.”

I nodded in agreement. It had been a while since I’d last been in my parents’ home country and I was aching to go back. Maybe I could show Henry some of my favorite sights while we were there. And maybe I really would visit my grandparents. It had been too long since I’d seen them, and I was actually really missing my grandmother’s pot roast.

We finished our food and Henry and I were basically shoved off to the makeup trailer by Ryan. Elle and Marie already stood ready to make us look like we hardly had any makeup on. Aside from the
usual foundation, highlighter, bronzer and blusher, Elle applied the tiniest bit of mascara on my lashes. We talked for a bit, but now that our scene was getting closer and closer, I found myself talk on autopilot. My head wasn’t in it. My head was inside that studio where we’d be filming the sex scene. Henry was quieter than usual as well, and I couldn’t help but wonder why.

Was he nervous, like me? Or was he dreading it? Or did he just pick up on my nervous mood and decided not to try and engage me in any conversation-making I wouldn’t be able to concentrate on anyway?

Once we were done in makeup, we were directed to the costume department, where I was given my outfit. It contained a pair of black skinny jeans and a navy blouse. But what was perhaps most disconcerting about it was the underwear she supplied me with. A black lacy pair of panties and a matching bra. I tried not to blush and headed into the dressing room to change.

The outfit looked great on me, if I ignored what was hiding underneath the jeans and blouse. Nevertheless, I still stepped out of my dressing room confidently, pretending nothing was wrong. I was supposed to be a great actress after all, right? I should be able to hide my discomfort, even from Henry, who ended up knowing me pretty well already.

To match up the outfit, the stylist gave me a pair of shiny black pumps, and I put a hand on Henry’s shoulder to balance myself as I stepped into them. Once I had them on, I was only one or two inches shorter than Henry.

We were then taken to an outdoor set. It looked like a regular street, apart from the fact that the houses only had fronts. They’d done it pretty realistically, though, so it felt like I was walking through an actual street. It was already rapidly getting dark, and they’d even thought to add street lights. Above the houses, they’d set up a few way-oversized shower heads to make it seem like it was raining. They were still turned off now, but it would be pouring as soon as we’d start filming.

Once everyone was assembled, Ryan clapped his hands together. “Okay, I want this stuff in the rain done as perfectly as possible on the first take. You can fuck up your lines in the car as much as you like, but I want to shoot the parts out of it as little as possible. It takes up a huge chunk of time to get you guys dry again and again. You guys understand?” Henry, the crew involved in filming this scene, and I nodded. “Good. Okay, Henry, Juliette, get in the car and we’ll start shooting.”

Henry and I got in the car, me settling in the passenger seat after he’d gallantly opened the door for me. He sat down behind the steering wheel and turned the wipers on already. There were cameras inside the car that could be controlled remotely so the scene could look as real as possible.

Outside of the car, Ryan gave a sign to one of the crew members, and suddenly the shower heads turned on. Fake rain hammered down on the car, streaming down the windows. We’d be soaked in mere seconds had we stood outside. It made me understand even more why Ryan didn’t want to get us dry after a take and then do it all over again. It’d be immensely time consuming. Ryan settled in his director’s chair so he could properly see his screens and gave us our cue. We were rolling.

“I had a lot of fun tonight,” Henry said, turning in his seat to look at me.

I laughed. “Are you sure? Because that movie was the most horrible thing I’ve ever seen.”

He laughed, reaching for my hand. His thumb gently stroked circles onto my skin. “It was, yeah. But I don’t care. I got to spend two hours with you. I’ll gladly watch a terrible movie if it means I get to spend time with you.”

I looked down at our intertwined hands. “You’re such a dork, Noah.”
“I know,” he said, and we both laughed softly, letting the sound of the rain falling on the roof of the car fill the space around us for a while. “Do you want me to walk you to your door?”

I peered out at the pouring rain. “You’ll end up getting soaked.”

“I don’t care. It’s the chivalrous thing to do, right?”

I shook my head. “You and your British chivalry. But fine, if you insist.”

“Cut!” Ryan called. “Okay, great job. Let’s try that a couple more times, and then we’ll actually head out into the rain.”

And so we did the scene inside the car a few more times, until Ryan was satisfied that everything was perfect. I was growing more and more nervous on the inside, but I prided myself with the fact that no one would be able to tell on the outside.

“Start with the ‘Do you want me to walk you to your door’ and then continue on,” Ryan instructed. “Then once you’ve said your lines, get out into the rain and play your part. Remember, I want perfection on the first try!”

I took a deep breath and the cameras started rolling again. We settled back into that comfortable silence, listening to the fake rain fall on the roof of the car until Henry said, “Do you want me to walk you to your door?”

I looked outside at the pouring rain. “You’ll end up getting soaked.”

“I don’t care. It’s the chivalrous thing to do, right?”

I shook my head. “You and your British politeness. But fine, if you insist.”

Henry gave me a bright smile that nearly made my heart stop. He got out of the car and hurried over to my side to open the door for me. I got out, and we were soaked in seconds. He held my hand as we ran up to Amelia’s front door, laughing.

“Wait!” I called out when we were about halfway.

Henry as Noah looked at me with a confused look on his face, but at the moment, I couldn’t really think about acting anymore. I remembered my lines, but I wasn’t saying them as Amelia. I was Juliette and he was Henry, and this was the guy that I was in love with. There really was no denying it anymore. I loved him. He was the person who, in such a short time, had come to understand me completely. He understood my anxiety, understood what I needed when I had an attack, and he let me be myself no matter my moods. And I was just hopelessly in love with him.

I pulled him into me as the rain poured onto our heads. His eyes darkened just before they closed and our lips connected. His hand cupped my neck, tilting my head up so he had better access to my mouth. The rain was cold, but I didn’t even feel it anymore. All I felt was the heat of our kiss. It warmed me up all the way to my toes, and all I really wanted was to be even closer to him than I already was. There were too many layers separating us and I just wanted him. I wanted him so much that it was almost a shame that the sex scene we’d be filming was fake.

Slowly, we made our way to the front door, kissing feverishly. My heart was beating wildly in my throat, especially once I realized he was kissing me with as much want as I was him. Still kissing him, one hand tangled in his wet hair, I used my other hand to clumsily fish a set of keys out of my pocket. I broke from the kiss reluctantly, staring at him before I struggled to open the front door, breathing heavily. Once the door was finally open, our lips connected again and we stumbled over.
“Cut!” Ryan yelled. “Great job, you two! It all seems perfect—if we need reshoots, we’ll find out eventually. Now let’s go on to the other location and keep shooting.”

And so we all packed up, Henry and me still soaking wet, and moved to the studio, where Amelia’s house was set up. As Ryan gave us some last minute instructions, I felt my inner turmoil return. Now that the moment was gone, now that Henry and I weren’t kissing anymore and my mind wasn’t filled with only the feel of him, there was room for my worries again. Kissing him was one thing, but getting naked with him (apart from my panties and his boxers) was something entirely different. But whether I liked it or not, this was my job.

So when Ryan told us to take our positions, I did so without hesitation. “Remember, guys, I wanna try to do this in one take as well, so we can make it flow as naturally as possible. And now… Action!”

Henry and I stumbled over the threshold, kissing feverishly as if there’d never been a break. And just like that, all my worries were gone. All there was left in my mind was Henry. He tugged my wet shirt out of my pants and his hands slipped under it, trailing his fingers over the skin on my back. A fire ignited everywhere he touched me. His mouth was soft but unyielding on mine, like steel covered in satin. I wanted to kiss him forever, almost as much as I wanted to wrap myself up in him and never let go. It really was like I was drowning in him, but I liked the burning ache in my lungs. It made me feel alive.

Henry slowly unbuttoned my shirt, letting his hands explore my body bit by bit. Goosebumps arose everywhere his fingers touched my wet skin. I wanted him to touch me everywhere. Finally the shirt was unbuttoned and he let it drop to the floor. I responded by briefly breaking the kiss to pull his shirt over his head. My heart was beating wildly in my throat as my hands explored his chest, stomach and back, and I was sure he’d notice, but at this point I didn’t even care anymore. I didn’t care that he would find out how I felt about him—I wanted him to find out. Maybe, after this, he would come clean about his own feelings for me and we could finally be together.

Henry pulled away just as my fingers slid down his waist to the waistband of his jeans, and I remembered there were lines to be said before we could actually go that far. His breathing was heavy and his eyes were darker than usual, hypnotizing me. He cupped my neck with his hand and just stared into my eyes awhile before he asked, “Are you sure about this, Amy?”

I nodded, and a slow smile spread over his face. He pushed me back until I hit the wall and our lips connected again, kissing more hungrily and feverishly than before. Slowly, we made our way farther into the apartment. At some point, I stepped out of my heels, making me a full head shorter than Henry, but he solved the problem by lifting me up and carrying me over to the bedroom, still kissing me.

Once there, instead of laying me down on the bed, he pushed me up to a wall again, unbuttoning my jeans. The wet denim stuck to my skin, and we laughed as he tried to get them off. He kicked his shoes off and I relieved him of his equally wet jeans. He stepped closer to me, trapping me flush between him and the wall, and he dipped his head down to kiss my neck. Without even trying, he’d found the part that was most sensitive, and I tried to withhold a moan, but failed. He was a very skilled kisser, as it turned out, and I tried to downplay the reaction I was having from his lips and tongue on my skin, but it felt too good. Now more than ever, there was just Henry and me. There were no cameramen, no other crew, and no Ryan. Just the two of us and the way he made me feel.

He carried me over to the bed then, and he sat down in the middle of it with me on his lap. I straddled him, our lips connecting again in a fiery explosion. My hands were tangled in his damp
curls as his fingers traced over my back. My heartbeat was off the charts and it would be a miracle if he didn’t notice it now. Slowly, his fingers trailed higher and higher on my back, until eventually, he reached my bra. He undid the hook and the straps fell down my arms as the bra fell away, revealing my breasts. He didn’t even look down as he tossed the bra away, though. He just kept kissing me feverishly, his tongue playing with mine, as he pulled me closer to him. A soft gasp escaped my throat as our chests were pressed flush together.

We’d hugged tighter than this, but never with so very few layers between us. It was the most right thing I’d felt in a long while. Our skin was still wet, but warm to the touch with our blood boiling underneath the surface. I wished now more than ever that we were doing this for real, somewhere private. The knowledge that we weren’t almost made me sad.

And then, half hidden under the covers, we were making love. Or, well, pretending to, anyway. Our hips were moving in perfect harmony with each other, Henry pretending to thrust in and out of me. I felt he was actually hard under me, and knowing that I turned him on made the blood rise to my cheeks. I kissed him even harder than before as he clasped our hands together and intertwined our fingers. He flipped us over so he was on top, skillfully blocking my boobs from view with his own chest, and he continued to pretend to make love to me.

All through filming the rest of the scene, I kept finding myself wishing that this was real. That we were in private right now, and he was actually filling me up, slowly driving me to pure ecstasy. For a bit longer, I could pretend that what we had was real. Not just my hopes, or him being an exceptional actor by pretending to fall in love with me, but just two people that cared deeply for each other and simply succumbed to their desire for one another. But fantasies couldn’t last forever, and I, of all people, had to have known that.

“Cut!” Ryan yelled. “All right, that was perfect, you guys. You really sold it. Really, you should get yourselves a drink to celebrate, because your work tonight was absolutely stellar.”

His praise was genuine, but I couldn’t help but feel it was unjustified. I hadn’t really been Amelia. I really had been in love, and I really had wanted to make love to the man on top of me. But the aforementioned man rolled off of me and handed me a robe. I quickly pulled it on and sat on the edge of the bed.

“You really were great, Juliette,” Henry complimented me, none of his earlier lust visible on his face, and I felt a sinking feeling in my stomach.

“Yeah… Thanks. So were you, by the way. You convinced even me you were in love with me for a second there.”

Henry just smiled and walked off to talk to Ryan, leaving me confused and wanting on the bed.

Chapter End Notes

Henry is hard to get a good read on, huh? ;) Anyway, I hope you guys enjoyed the chapter and that you weren’t too disappointed by its ending. As always, thank you so much for reading! I love y’all. <3

Lyrics at the start of the chapter are Notice by Diana Vickers.
Chapter 11

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

We used to have it all, but now’s our curtain call

So hold for the applause, oh

And wave out to the crowd, and take our final bow

Oh, it’s our time to go, but at least we stole the show

~*~*~*~*~*~

Friday, June 17, 2016.

When I woke up that last morning, I felt a sad and hollow feeling in my chest. Today would be the last day of shooting, which was certainly exciting, but what was scary was that I was unsure of what came next. Just because I’d booked one major budget role didn’t mean I was set for life. I’d have to start auditioning again, and my name wasn’t that known yet. Really, all I was known for now was being Henry’s ‘girlfriend.’ I’d have to wait until the movie actually came out. And who knew if anyone wanted to hire me again until then, or even after that. Acting was a very fickle job, and I knew it.

But that wasn’t the only thing weighing down on me. After today, I might not see Henry for a really long time. I mean, I’d obviously see him during all the promo stuff and the premieres, but outside of that? I really had no idea. It would be up to him, because I sure as hell didn’t have the guts to ask him out myself. But maybe that dress Hanna’s forcing me to wear tonight could speed things along.

Before I could even think about the wrap party, though, I actually had a movie to wrap up. So I jumped into the shower and got dressed in comfortable clothes before making my way over to the makeup trailer. Ella was there waiting for me, a sad smile on her face.

“Juliette, dearie,” she said before pulling me into a tight hug.

“Hey, Ella,” I said, hugging her back just as tightly. “I’m going to miss you.”

“Oh, dearie, I’m going to miss you, too. You were definitely the most beautiful face I ever got to work with.” She sniffled a little and then put on a brave face. “It’s a good thing today won’t be the last day I get to work with you then.”

That caught my attention. “It’s not?”

Ella smiled. “Of course not, dearie. I’ll be traveling with you when you do promotional stuff for the movie. I don’t just do makeup for movies, you know.”

“I didn’t know, actually,” I said as I sat down in my usual chair. Henry wouldn’t be coming in until at least another hour or so because I had to do a quick scene first. It was weird not having him next to me, especially on the last day of me being in the makeup trailer, but I tried to shrug it off. I’d just try to enjoy today. “If I’d known that, I’d have asked you to be my personal stylist ages ago. I meant it when I said you’re the best makeup artist I’ve ever worked with.”
Ella smiled at me in the mirror. “And I meant it when I said you’re the most beautiful face I ever got to work with. So kind as well. Hard to come by these days.” She combed through my hair for a few moments before brightening. “Hey, what if I do your makeup and hair for the wrap party tonight?”

I brightened up at that, too. Ella had kind of become my second mother on set, and her doing my hair and makeup tonight would be a great honor. “You’d want to do that?”

“Of course, dearie. And do you have a pretty dress for tonight? If you don’t, we could just go by the costume department. You need to wear something that’ll rock the world of that costar of yours. Maybe then he’ll finally make a move.”

I swallowed hard. “You… You mean Henry?”

Ella smiled. “Of course I mean Henry. You two have been ogling each other for eight weeks now. Honestly, if that boy was any slower with you, he’d be going backwards.”

I couldn’t help but snort out a laugh. “Can’t disagree with you there.”

“So, do you have a dress or not?”

“I do, actually. My best friend is forcing me to wear it.”

“Ah, so she knows about you two, too, huh?”

I blushed. “Yeah, she does. She did before I did, actually.”

Ella laughed. “Yes, that’s usually a trait many a good best friend has. And I’ll just trust her judgment in picking it out for you. What kind of dress is it? I need to know if I want to come up with a good look for you tonight.”

“Uh… It’s black, and kind of ’50s style. It’s really tight—like, really tight—and has a pencil skirt.”

A slow smile spread over Ella’s face. “I think I can work with that.”

She didn’t elaborate on what exactly she had in mind and just went back to doing my hair and makeup for the coming scene. When she was done, she sent me off to the costume department, where they dressed me in simple jeans, a black tank top that hugged my hips comfortably, and the sneakers Amelia usually wore. They gave me a simple pendant necklace and silver earrings to go with the outfit, and then I was good to go.

I went over to the set that held many memories for me. I’d had my first kiss with Henry in Amelia’s apartment. I’d done my sex scene with Henry in the very same apartment, but I studiously tried not to think about that before anyone had the chance to ask why I was blushing. Thankfully, though, I was quickly provided with distraction.

Natascha handed me a bottle of Coca-Cola Life, a somewhat bittersweet smile on her face. “Here’s your last morning shot of caffeine.”

I accepted the bottle with an equally bittersweet smile. “Thanks, Nat. I’ll miss the luxury of you handing me one of these almost as much as I’ll miss you.”

She gently nudged my shoulder. “Stop it, before I start crying. I hate goodbyes.”

I laughed. “Then it’s a good thing it’s not goodbye yet. And even when we do say goodbye later today, it still won’t be goodbye forever. We’ll definitely hang out once this is all over, at some
“You pinky promise?” she asked, already sticking her smallest finger out for me to hook mine through.

I hooked my pinky firmly around hers and shook our hands. “I pinky promise. Hanna’s been asking about you, too, so we’ll have to hang out.” The two of them had, as expected, gotten along perfectly in the short time Hanna had been visiting the If You Love Someone set.

“It’s a deal then.” Her fleeting happiness melted away as she sighed wistfully, leaning against the doorpost. “I wish I could come to the wrap party tonight, but I’m leaving for Louisiana this evening.”

That was actually news to me, and it saddened me to hear. “Really? Oh, that sucks. Which is an understatement.”

“Yeah, well… I’m sure you’ll have fun without me,” Natascha said, and she wiggled her eyebrows at me meaningfully. “Besides, I’m looking forward to seeing my family again, so it’s not all bad. You’d better text me a few pictures of tonight, though.”

I smiled at her. “I will.”

Ryan called me to set then, and I quickly took a drink from my soda before settling on Amelia’s couch as Ryan handed me a cellphone and gave me instructions on the scene we’d be filming.

It was a really short scene, and the time flew by as we filmed several takes. When we were done, I was directed back to the costume department, where Ella was waiting for me to do a few quick touch-ups on my hair and makeup. Once I was dressed in a blue halter swing dress and brown wedged sandals, Henry and Scott came in, talking animatedly.

Once he saw me, however, Henry smiled. “That dress looks good on you,” he complimented, Scott momentarily forgotten.

Trying to cover up the fact that I was blushing, I smoothed the blue fabric covered in purple flowers down. “Thanks. I like it a lot, too. I’m kind of obsessed with ’50s fashion.”

“You can keep it if you want,” Jennifer, one of the stylists, said. “It does look rather great on you.”

“Understatement,” Henry said with a grin. He grabbed my hand and twirled me around, making my skirt flare up as I spun. “Beautiful.”

“It’s too bad we broke up,” Scott joked, bumping my shoulder with his.

I looked up at him in surprise, remembering suddenly that Henry and I weren’t the only ones in the room. I quickly recovered by grinning back at him. “I’m pretty sure Amelia is very relieved that she and Ambrose broke up.”

“Screw the writers for making me an asshole boyfriend.”

I laughed. “Just as long as you’re not an asshole in real life, it’s all good. Anyway, Jennifer, are you sure I can keep the dress?”

Jennifer shrugged. “Eh, why not. It’s the last day. You deserve a little gift.”

I grinned again and gave her a tight hug. “Thanks, Jen. You’re an angel.”
She smiled back at me. “It’s no problem. But for now this angel has a job to do. Tayler, with me,” she said, beckoning Scott with her finger.

Once Jennifer and Scott had disappeared in the many rows of clothing, Henry turned to me. “Speaking of it being the last day of filming, how are you feeling?”

I sighed as I sat down on a chaise lounge by the wall. As Henry joined me, I said, “Honestly? I don’t know. It’s kind of weird. Last days always are, whether it’s the last day of high school or the last day of filming a movie. But I do know that I’m gonna miss it a lot. I’m gonna miss waking up every day, knowing that I’ll be doing what I love most. I’m gonna miss working with you every day, too. You’re really easy to work with.”

He smiled, bumping my shoulder with his. “You’re not at all difficult to work with, either, Juliette. Quite the contrary, actually.”

I just smiled at him, my heart thumping painfully in my chest. It felt like an actual ache, not being able to just lean forward and press my lips to his, especially as I watched him smile back at me. All I could do was hope that, tonight, we’d finally make some progress in our so far non-existent romantic relationship.

“So, hey,” he said after a few moments of silence, “do you have any plans for lunch?”

“No, I don’t think I do. Why?”

“Well,” he started slowly, “I thought, considering this is our last day, we could picnic somewhere or something?”

A slow smile plastered itself on my face. “I would love that.”

He smiled back at me, his eyes twinkling, and I was pretty sure I was gonna die in the most positive way ever.

When Jennifer was done dressing Scott, it was Henry’s turn, and then we were driven off to set, where Ryan and other crew members were already waiting for us. We’d be filming a scene at the beach, and a massive stretch of it was cordoned off so we could film. Dozens of extras milled about as we walked up to Ryan.

He smiled and gave each of us a hug, which was a little uncharacteristic of him. His wife, Fiona, stood next to him. “Hey, guys,” Ryan greeted us. “Last scene. How are you feeling?”

“Like I’m gonna kick this scene’s butt,” Scott said, one of his many grins plastered on his face.

“More like you’re going to get your butt kicked,” Henry joked.

“Ha, ha, very funny. Ry, seriously, man, why does the last scene we film have to be one where I’m not exactly painted in a good light?”

“Is your character ever painted in a good light?” I countered.

He pointed at me. “Touché.”

“Anyway,” Ryan stated loudly, clearly wanting to get back to business but unable to fight off a smile, “let’s get into position. And for all the extras, remember that it’s a party! Don’t pay any attention to the cameras and just have fun. For you three, remember the history your characters have. That’s the most important note I have for you. Now let’s get this shit rolling one last time!”
Henry offered me his arm. “One last time?” he asked me.

I smiled at him as I hooked my arm through his. “One last time,” I responded.

“Action!” Ryan yelled, and we were rolling.

Henry and I, as Noah and Amelia, stood on the edge of the ongoing five year reunion party of their college. I nervously smoothed the fabric of my dress down and remembered that Amelia took comfort from Noah’s proximity. That wasn’t hard to fake, though, considering the fact I felt pretty much the same when it came to Henry and me.

“Are you nervous?” he asked. We still weren’t joining the party yet.

I smiled sheepishly at him. “A little. I don’t even know why. Everything is so different from five years ago. I hardly recognize the girl I was back then.”

Henry grabbed my hand, entwining our fingers together. “Everything will be fine, Amy.”

I looked down at our entwined hands. “That is different, too.”

He looked down at our hands as well, a slow smile shaping his lips. “A good different.”

I smiled back at him. “Yeah. A very good different.” My smile faltered as I got serious again. “The teasing will be merciless. Remember how everyone always thought we would end up together?”

He chuckled softly. “They were furious when we still weren’t together by the time we graduated. I guess we just needed a little more time.”

I shook my head. “We were stubborn. I was stubborn.”

He pulled me a little closer, so our sides were touching. “You were scared. And that’s okay. We’re together now. And it kind of sucks that we’ll have to prove all these fuckers right, but we won’t let it affect us. Because we are us, and we’re good. Okay?”

“Okay.”

Henry cupped my cheek with his free hand and pressed a soft, lingering kiss to my forehead. When he pulled back, his eyes were soft and—if I wasn’t mistaken—filled with affection. It made my heart swell, and I desperately wished this was real life instead of a film set. “Ready?” he asked, and I nodded.

Henry and I mingled around, saying hi to multiple people as we made our rounds. After a bit of that, Henry was given his cue and he perked up. “This is our song,” he said, pulling me close. “That’s it. We’re gonna dance. Screw saying hello to people we don’t care about anymore anyway.”

I giggled. “You’re such a sentimental person, Noah.”

He half-shrugged as we slowly rocked to the beat that would be edited in later. “I don’t much care about all these people here. But this song, however… We used to scream the lyrics at the top of our lungs, remember?”

I smiled, snaking my arms around his neck. “I think we kept quite a few people up back in the day.”

He smiled cheekily. “Like I said, I don’t care about them anyway. I only care about you.”

Again, my heartbeat sped up at his words, and I had to remind myself that it wasn’t Henry saying
them, but Noah. So I just smiled and let out a contented sigh as I rested my head on his shoulder. One of his hands rested on my hip and the other trailed gentle patterns on the small of my back. I shut my eyes tightly, pretending for the few moments we had that this was real, that this was genuine. I allowed myself to feel all of him. I allowed myself to feel safe. I allowed myself to be happy that his scent was all around me. I allowed myself to feel comfortable in his embrace.

The moment was shattered when someone bumped into Henry’s shoulder and the both of us staggered.

“Whoops, sorry!” Scott said, sounding everything but apologetic.

Henry turned to him and made a visible effort to stay calm. “Hello, Ambrose. And it’s okay.”

He moved to turn towards me again, but Ambrose’s next words made him halt. “I guess I should’ve known you two would end up together. Word of advice, brother: She’s a great lay, but that’s about it.”

“Noah,” I whispered. He was about ready to punch Ambrose; it was evident in the way his muscles strained and the way his eyes were burning with an angry fire.

Things could’ve died down if it hadn’t been for what Ambrose said next.

“She’s even lousy at making sandwiches, and that’s about all women are good for. Fucking and cooking, am I right?”

Henry seemed so angered by the statement that he nearly hit Scott for real. He barely had enough time to throw his head sideways and stagger back. It was one of the best movie punches I’d had the privilege of watching up close. Henry stepped toward Scott as the less muscular actor cupped his jaw. “Never—ever—say something so blatantly sexist in front of me again. And don’t ever disrespect Amelia again, or I’ll hurt you for real.” His voice was soft, but so filled with vehemence that it actually gave me goosebumps. I flashed back to that first day we’d met, where he’d stood up for me in the restaurant I’d waitressed at back then, and I had to wonder how much of this tirade was acted. I couldn’t help but think that, if ever faced with a similar situation in real life, Henry would act exactly the same.

“I’m not afraid of you,” Scott spat.

Henry gave him a glare so intense that the blood drained from Scott’s cheeks. He actually paled, even knowing that Henry was acting. That’s just how good Henry was—or how caught up in his role he was.

“Noah, let’s go,” I urged, tugging on his arm. “Let’s just blow this party and go home. It’s not worth it.”

He didn’t respond. He just kept glaring at Scott, his breathing hard and his muscles still strained as if he was ready to punch him again.

I tightened my grip on his arm. “We wouldn’t let it affect us because we are us and we are good, remember?” I pleaded with him.

He blinked slowly, seemingly coming back to his senses. He took a deep breath and nodded. “You’re right, Amy. You’re right.” He grabbed my hand, entwining our fingers again, and I was surprised at how incredibly gentle he was being with me. After his earlier display of aggression, I hadn’t expected the gentleness, but I guess I should’ve. He’s Henry after all, and he’s always been gentle with me. “Let’s go,” he said, his voice soft again, none of his earlier anger detectable.
We made our way through all the partying extras and when we finally reached the edge of the party, we halted. Henry cast a pained look back at the party, and I rested my hand on his cheek, trying to distract his mind. “Are you okay, Noah?”

Slowly, he came back to me, but it was clear he still had his altercation with Ambrose on his mind. “I’m so sorry, Amy. I hadn’t meant to…”

“Hey,” I interrupted him, smiling. “It’s okay. Sometimes we all need to lash out. I get that more than anyone. And we’re still us, and we’re still good.”

A big smile conquered his face, brightening all of his features. “Yes, we are. Let’s go home.”

I squealed as he scooped me up in his arms bridal style and carried me off.

“Cut!” Ryan yelled from his director’s chair. There was a huge grin on his face. “That was great, guys! Henry, your performance was impeccable. You really sold it. Think you can do that again?”

Ryan made us film the scene a few times more before he finally thought it was time for a break, and Henry and I collected everything you could possibly need for a picnic. We took our stuff to a grassy field somewhere behind the trailers. Kal joined us, and he was happy to just run around for a bit as Henry and I spread a blanket on the grass and sat down on it.

Henry had actually managed to find a wicker basket somewhere, though where I didn’t know, and I didn’t ask. He reached into the basket and handed me a sandwich. I couldn’t help but smile when he also handed me a bottle of Coca-Cola Life; after two and a half months, he already knew what my addictions were.

He took a drink from his bottle of water and rubbed a hand over his face once the bottle was capped again. “This scene is kind of exhausting to film.”

I eyed him, debating whether or not to ask the question I knew I wanted to ask. Eventually I decided to just screw it and go for it. “How much of that was actually acted? The anger, I mean?”

Henry stared at me for a moment before busting out a laugh. “I keep forgetting how good you are at reading me.”

I half-shrugged. “It just really reminded me of that night at Harvey’s. You know, with the drunk guy? Your anger… it was very similar to what you displayed in that scene. It’s nearly impossible for you to have faked that. Of course, you are an amazing actor, so what do I know.”

He smiled. “No, you’re right. My anger was partially real. Is it bad that it scares me that I don’t know how big that real part is?”

I fought not to catch my breath at his admission. It was usually me who was the weaker one, the one who discussed what she was feeling. Not him. “No, of course not. I have the same thing. Sometimes my emotions are so similar to Amelia that I don’t know if I’m still acting or not.” I hoped I wasn’t blushing, and if I was, I hoped he wouldn’t figure out the reason behind the blush. That he wouldn’t figure out that my emotions were so similar to Amelia’s because I was as much in love with Henry as she was with Noah.

He chuckled. “It’s a weird job we have, isn’t it?”

I echoed his laugh. “It sure is. I wouldn’t have it any other way, though. I love acting. I can’t see myself doing anything else.”
“And you shouldn’t. You’re a natural at it.”

I grimaced. “Yeah, but that’s just it. Because I can relate to Amelia so much, I don’t know if the praise is deserved.”

He bumped his shoulder with mine, and I wondered if he’d meant to scoot closer to me. I hoped so. “Every bit of it is deserved. Trust me. You’re a great actress. Of course it helps that you can identify yourself with Amelia, but I think that’s only natural. Every character you play is a part of you. You give a piece of yourself to every character, just as the character gives a piece of itself to you.”

“I hadn’t thought of it like that,” I said as I tore a piece from my sandwich.

“You should. And you should also believe in your own skills. You’re a great actress, and you’re going to make it big. I can feel it in my bones. I may be biased, though.”

I tried to ignore the fluttering of my heart as he smiled down at me, something more in his eyes that he was usually better at hiding. I wondered if he had walls up, just like me. Was that why he hadn’t made a move yet?

Knowing it was probably better not to entertain the thoughts in my head any further, I popped the piece of sandwich I’d torn off earlier into my mouth, letting comfortable silence fall over us as we ate. It was hard to concentrate, though, with our legs pressed together. Thoughts of him pressing me down onto the checkered blanket and kissing me kept entering the forefront of my mind, and they were getting harder and harder to fight off.

A welcome distraction provided itself by way of an overly excited dog. He barreled over to us, tongue hanging out of his mouth, and came to a skidding halt right in front of us. He happily pushed his nose into my ear, making me scoot closer to Henry as I squealed. “Kal!” I protested, laughing. Kal just pushed his nose into my ear again before licking my cheek. I put the last quarter of my sandwich back into the basket so I had my hands free for Kal, and I wrapped my arms around his neck. He happily allowed it. “I’m gonna miss you, Kal,” I said, hit with the sudden realization that Henry wouldn’t be the only one I wouldn’t be seeing for at least a long time.

“I have a feeling it’s entirely mutual. You made quite the impression on that mutt of mine.”

I smiled at him as I continued cuddling Kal, my fingers combing through his soft fur. “He’s such a sweetheart. God, I love dogs,” I muttered, pressing a kiss to Kal’s muzzle. “You know, I still miss my dog every day.”

“What was her name?”

I smiled as I thought back to my dog. “Luna. Like the goddess of the moon. She was a mix between a Labrador and a Golden Retriever, and the sweetest little thing ever.”

He smiled back at me. “So you’re a Retriever kinda gal, huh?”

I laughed. “I suppose so, yes. If I’m ever to get a dog again, I think it’ll be another Retriever. Doesn’t really matter which kind, as long as he or she is as kind and gentle a soul as Luna was. It’s a high standard, though.”

“What was she like?”

I grinned. “Stubborn as hell, just like me. Every time I would call her, she’d pretend not to hear me, except when I had food. But I wouldn’t really have to call her if I had food, because she’d already be sitting right in front of me, not-so-patiently waiting for me to accidentally drop something. I swear to
God, that dog acted like she never got anything to eat. And she liked to cuddle, but only on her terms. Her farts were the worst thing _ever_. Like, for real. Not even kidding. And she was just so sweet. She wouldn’t hurt a fly—literally.” I gave him a sad smile. “I really do miss her.”

Henry wrapped an arm around my shoulders, pulling me even closer as he attempted to comfort me. I wasn’t about to burst out into tears, but the gesture was appreciated. I rested my head in the crook of his neck, and I was almost dizzy from his intoxicating scent. “She seems like she was a great dog.”

“She was. She helped me through a lot of rough times.”

“Dogs are good for that.”

I smiled, even though he couldn’t see my face. “Yeah. They are.”

“If you ever need to cuddle with Kal, just call me,” he said, making me laugh.

“I’ll try to keep that in mind.”

We finished up lunch soon after that, needing to get back to set. We regrettably had to leave Kal in Henry’s trailer before we left, and I was sure to give him lots of kisses because I felt guilty for leaving him there.

The mood was even weirder on set now than it was before. It was like everyone realized that this was really it. There were no more breaks. This was the last stretch of filming, and then it would be over. We’d still have to do ADR, the movie still had to be edited, the soundtrack still had to be made, but it was the last time we were all filming together like this. It was kind of an indescribable feeling. It was like there was a hollowness in my chest, and yet it was filled with pride for all that we’d accomplished. And as we filmed, everyone gave their best of the best. And everything went flawlessly, even with my heart beating loudly in my throat. When Ryan announced that we’d be filming the last take, I nearly felt like crying. Just a few more minutes, and it would be over. Part of me was grateful (that part being my feet—which didn’t really like walking around on the sand in high-heeled wedges) and part of me was sad. But nevertheless, I managed to put all of my feelings aside, and played Amelia one last time.

“Cut!” Ryan yelled. “Amazing job, everyone. Really.” He took a deep, shaky breath as everyone looked at him, mixed emotions in the crowd. “There’s so much I want to say to all of you, but right now I’m coming up blank. I’m just so incredibly grateful for the work you’ve done, and even more grateful for the way you made my job so easy.” A laugh went through the crowd, making him smile. “Anyway… I’ll bet I’ll be a little more coherent during the wrap party tonight, so expect a speech from me then. For now… Thank you. I’ll see y’all tonight!”

We cheered, and he bowed. Then he made me, Henry, and Scott come forward and bow too. I curtsied for the crowd with heated cheeks, but couldn’t stop the bubbly laughter as the crowd of extras and film crew cheered.

Henry gave me a hug. “Great job, Juliette.” He looked at something behind me and smiled. “I’ll see you tonight. For now, I think someone wants to say goodbye to you, so I’ll leave you two to it.”

I whirled around and saw Natascha standing there with a sad smile on her face. Henry hadn’t moved two steps away from me before she was already flinging herself around my neck. “I’m gonna miss you so much, Jules!” she nearly screeched. “I _so_ wish I could be there tonight. You’d better keep your promise of taking pictures tonight. _Loads_ of pictures.”
I smiled, hugging her back tightly. “I will. And I’ll miss you, too, Nat. So much. Next time we’re both free, we’re totally hanging out. I don’t care if I have to fly you out to wherever I am.”

Natascha laughed, wiping a single tear away. “Okay. And keep me updated on your life in the meanwhile, okay? I don’t want to hear stuff about you from the media. I want to hear it from you.”

“I promise. Maybe we can Skype sometime.”

“That sounds good.” She looked at her watch and sighed. “It’s time for me to go. But before I do, promise me one thing, okay?”

“Anything.”

“Forget your inhibitions tonight. Just have fun. Don’t be scared of what you’re feeling. And above all, blow that idiot’s mind by looking as stunning as possible.”

Smiling at her, I said, “I’ll try my best.”

“That’s as good as it’s gonna get, I suppose.” She sighed again. “Well… Goodbye.”

“Goodbye, Nat,” I gave her one last tight hug, and then she really left.

As I watched her walk away, the realization hit me. This really was over.

Chapter End Notes

That was already the last day of filming :( Let me tell you, these two are so much fun to write; their dialogue just flows right out of me. And just to let you all know really quick: Next Thursday is Henry’s 33rd birthday, so I’ll be posting another chapter in honor of that. After that, everything will change... but in what way? ;)

The lyrics at the start of the chapter are Stole The Show ft. Parson James by Kygo.
Chapter 12

Chapter Notes

Happy birthday, Henry! I hope you all are celebrating in some way :) Here's my gift to you: a brand new chapter.

A quick little side note: Literally the week before Henry joined social media, I came up with the idea for this chapter. I thought about just leaving the bit out (you'll recognize it when you see it), but I liked it too much to just cut it out entirely. So anyway, happy reading!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

You’re setting off

It’s time to go, the engine is running

My mind is lost

We always knew this day was coming

And now it’s more frightening than it’s ever gonna be

~*~*~*~*~*~

Friday, June 17, 2016.

It’s not that I didn’t trust Ella to do a good job with my hair and makeup. Quite the contrary, actually. I knew Ella was basically a wizard when it came to making people look their best. I just wasn’t sure my best was good enough. My self-confidence was so low that I didn’t know what it would take to ever get it back up again. If I was being honest, it had never been all that high to begin with, and I had to wonder if it was even possible for me to love myself the way I deserved.

“What shall we do with your hair, dearie?” Ella asked as she combed her fingers through my freshly washed hair. “Do you want it down or up? Curly or straight?”

Feeling kind of overwhelmed with all the options, I said, “Oh, gosh, I really don’t know. What do you think I should do?”

“Have I ever seen you with curls? Because I don’t think I have.”

I shook my head. “No. It’s always been straight. It’s kind of a hassle to curl hair this long.” It fell way below my waist, and by the time I would finally be done curling my hair, two hours would have passed, so I usually just kept it straight unless I really felt like putting in the effort.

Ella smiled at me in my mirror. The makeup trailer had already been emptied out, so she was doing my hair and makeup in my trailer. “Not too big a hassle for me, dearie. Now, where did I leave those hair clips?”

As Ella started on curling my hair, I played a game on my phone, unsure of what else to do. When
Ella was nearly done, the iPhone chimed with a text from Hanna.

**come skype w/ me bitch.**

I snorted and gave Ella a quick apology as I moved to grab my laptop. I sat back down so Ella could go back to finishing curling my hair, and I opened my laptop. I started up Skype and immediately got an incoming call from Hanna. I answered and was met with the faces of my two best friends, Hanna and Keegan.

I grinned at them. “Hey, guys. Keegs, why am I not surprised you’re forcing yourself into this call?”

He gave me one of his carefree grins in return as he shrugged. “It’s Friday. I’m always at your place on Fridays.”

“Oh, right. Sorry, I’ve kind of lost track of the days here. How are you guys?”

“Wishing I was being pampered like you right now,” Hanna joked. “Hey, Ella. Long time no see.”

Ella smiled and waved at the screen with her curling iron still in her hand. “Hello, Hanna. It’s nice to see you again.”

“Ella, this is Keegan, a really good friend of mine. Keegs, this is Ella. She’s done my hair and makeup throughout the movie.”

“Ah, so you’re the one who makes my girl shine, huh?” Keegan asked. “It’s nice to meet you.”

“But seriously for a minute, though. How are you guys? I have literally no idea what’s going on at the home front.”

“We’re doing great,” Hanna said, smiling but her voice serious. “We mostly just miss you a lot. We’re glad you’re coming home soon. But how are you feeling about leaving Miami?”

“Honestly, I don’t know. It’s weird. Part of me really wants to stay, and another part of me wants nothing more than to go home. I miss you guys.”

“We’ll throw an old-fashioned party when you get back,” Keegan said. “Booze, horror movies, the works. But onto something much more important… How are things with you and your hunky Superman?”

I groaned, covering my face with my hands, glad I wasn’t wearing makeup yet. I would hate to smudge anything. “I really wish people would stop asking me that, because I really don’t know. Nothing’s changed. He’s so hard to read. We did picnic together for lunch today, though.”

Hanna eagerly scooted closer to the screen. “And?”

I blushed. “And nothing. We just talked.”

“About?” I could tell she was getting frustrated at how very little I was giving her.

“Are you sure you want to know the truth? It’ll be incredibly anticlimactic.”

“Just tell us, Jules,” Keegan said, obviously sharing in Hanna’s frustration.

“Dogs. We talked about dogs.” I laughed at their blank faces. “See? I told you the answer would be anticlimactic.”
“You… You talked about dogs?”

I shrugged. “Yeah. Kal was with us, and we kind of stumbled onto the subject of our shared love for dogs. And then we talked about Luna. I told him I still miss her, and he was really sweet in comforting me.”

Hanna grinned. “See? Now that’s not so anticlimactic. Did he hug you?”

I felt myself grow red again, wondering if she really had to know so much. “He just kind of pulled me into his side and we sat like that for a while. It was nice.”

“Girl, if he doesn’t make a move tonight, I’m gonna hunt him down myself and punch his teeth out,” Hanna threatened, making me laugh.

“And then it’s my turn,” Keegan said hotly. “I’ll just borrow one of my brother’s swords.”

“Guys! Oh my God, you two are the worst. If he’s not into me, I’ll be fine. Eventually. It’ll hurt, but… y’know. I’ll be fine.”

“Oh, but dearie, he is into you,” Ella said, startling me a little. I’d almost forgotten she was still here. “I could see it in the way he looked at you, especially when he thought you weren’t looking back at him. And even if he doesn’t make a move tonight, that doesn’t necessarily mean that that’s it. You’ll see each other again. Tonight isn’t the end.”

I shot her a smile. “Thanks, Ella.”

“Ella?” Hanna asked. “Adopt me?”

Ella laughed. “Oh, sweetheart.”

“I’m being serious. You’re so much better at giving advice than my mother. Actually, I can’t even remember the last time she even gave me advice at all.”

“Anyway,” I said, before things could get awkward, “I’ll be back tomorrow, no matter how things go tonight. My flight leaves at the most ungodly hour ever, so I’ll be back in L.A. by tomorrow morning.”

“We’ll be waiting by the gate with shots of vodka, whether you need it to drown your sorrows or to celebrate your return,” Keegan said.

I smiled at him in thanks and Ella finished with my hair at exactly the same time. As she worked on my makeup, I mostly listened to Hanna and Keegan as they recounted everything that had happened back in Los Angeles while I was in Miami. When Ella was finally done with my hair and makeup, it was time for me to put the dress on. I kept Skype on as I disappeared into the bathroom so I could take my robe off and step into the form-fitting black ’50s pencil skirt, knowing Hanna and Keegan would want to see the final look. I managed to zip the dress up myself and stepped into the platform heels, fastening the straps before I walked back out of the bathroom.

“Holy motherfucking shit, Julie Bear,” Keegan uttered as soon as he saw me.

“Holy motherfucking shit is right,” Hanna agreed.

“You look gorgeous, dearie,” Ella said, giving me a careful hug, as if afraid to ruin my look. “You will, without a doubt, be the belle of the party.”
I smiled shyly. “You really think so?”

“Honey, we know so,” Keegan told me. “Speaking as a—mostly—straight guy, Henry won’t be able to handle himself.”

“Mostly straight, huh?” Hanna teased, elbowing him in his arm.

Keegan shrugged. “Eh, I’ve been known to have man crushes every now and then.”

Hanna shook her head, smiling, and said, “You really do look gorgeous, Julie. I’m so glad I forced you to buy that dress four months ago.”

I grinned. “If I remember correctly, you threatened to buy the dress behind my back and sneak it into my closet.”

She grinned back at me. “Purely out of love for you, my dear. Now go put on your jewelry and make yourself smell magnificent before Henry shows up. He is picking you up, right?” she verified.

“Yeah, he is.” I quickly gathered some gold jewelry and put it on, spraying some of my favorite perfume on my wrists and behind my ears afterwards. The scent of Bonbon by Viktor & Rolf surrounded me, almost magically making me feel more empowered already. Just in time, too, because there was a knock on the trailer’s door. I sent a panicked look at my computer screen. “Help!” I squeaked.

“You’ll be fine,” Hanna, Keegan and Ella all reminded me at the same time.

Ella gave me a hug. “I’ll open the door for you. Goodbye, sweetheart, and have fun tonight. And remember that no matter what happens, tonight is not the end.” After giving me another careful hug, she opened the door, leaving me standing in front of my laptop, the faces of my two best friends still filling the screen. “Ella, hi,” Henry said with a surprised smile. “I hadn’t expected to see you here.”

“I was just doing Juliette’s hair and makeup, but I’ll be leaving now. Have fun tonight, Henry.”

“Thank you, Ella.” He stepped aside so she could leave my trailer and then walked in.

I’d hoped that the way I looked would have him speechless, but it was more the other way around. He was dressed in black jeans and a white button down, a black vest over it, hugging his form snuggly. The sleeves of his shirt were pushed up past his elbows. There was no product in his hair, leaving it curly—just the way I liked it. He’d trimmed his stubble a little, and I wanted to rake my hands through it, wondering how it would feel. It was only a moment later that I realized I did have the desired effect on him.

His mouth was hanging open a little as he took me in, his eyes trailing over my hips, chest and face a little longer than would’ve been necessary had he not been into me. “Wow. You look—wow. Just… Gorgeous. And that’s a gross understatement.” He shook his head, his eyes raking all over my body once more. “Wow.”


“Ahem,” Hanna said not-so-subtly from behind me as she pretended to clear her throat.

I whirled around. “Oh, right.”
“Oh. Hi, Hanna,” Henry said with a small wave as he stepped closer to the computer, therefore also stepping closer to me. My heart beat wildly in my throat at his proximity. He smelled amazing.

Hanna smirked. “Hey, Henry. We’ll just be going now. You two lovebirds have fun.” She actually had the audacity to wink.

“Babe,” Keegan started, pointing at me through the screen, “remember what I said about my brother’s swords. I meant w—”

“Bye, guys,” I said quickly, feeling my cheeks heat up. I slammed the laptop shut, effectively saving myself from even more embarrassment from my friends.

“So…” Henry said slowly, filling the awkward silence that had followed. “Did I just sort of meet your boyfriend?”

I frowned at him in my confusion. “My boyfriend?”

He pointed at the now safely shut laptop. “That guy you were Skyping with. He called you babe.”

“Oh, that. No, Keegan is just a friend. He’s actually more like a brother—one who eats all my food on Fridays and has a very lovely girlfriend who definitely isn’t me.”

“Oh,” Henry said, his face unreadable. Was he relieved? Indifferent? “Well, shall we go?”

“Yes. I just have to grab my phone.” I grabbed a purse and my phone, which displayed an incoming text from Keegan.

I felt like I was watching a fucking porno with the way you two were eye-fucking each other.

I blushed furiously, not even thinking about dignifying that with a response, and stuffed the iPhone deep into my black clutch.

As we walked over to Henry’s car, he said, “So I saw you’ve packed already. That’s about the cleanest I’ve ever seen your trailer.”

I laughed, poking him with my elbow as payback for the jab. “Yeah, I figured that might be the smartest decision. My flight leaves at four in the morning, so…”

He winced. “Ouch. That’s a very unfortunate departure time.”

I shrugged. “Eh, well. I am a night owl, after all. Four a.m. is like my midnight.”

Laughing, he said, “True enough.” We reached his car and he opened the door to the passenger seat for me. I slid in and he walked over to the driver’s side.

Once we were on the highway, heading for the restaurant they’d rented out for the wrap party, I asked, “And what about you?” I waited with bated breath as I hoped for him to say he’d be flying to Los Angeles tomorrow.

“I leave tomorrow morning. I’m going back to Jersey to spend some time with my family before I start on my next project.”

“Oh,” I said, praying to any god that could hear me that my disappointment wasn’t audible in my voice. “You must miss your family a lot.”

He gave me a quick smile before focusing on the road again. “I do. That’s the downside of being an
actor and being away for months on end. You don’t get to spend as much time with your loved ones as you would like.”

Didn’t I know it. I had experienced the same thing first hand over the past two and a half months. “But it’s worth it, though, right?”

Henry smiled at me, taking his eyes off the road for as long as he dared. “Definitely.”

We arrived at the restaurant, and Henry found a parking spot among all the other cars. It seemed as though a lot of people had already arrived, and we might be one of the last ones. Henry offered me an arm and I hooked mine around it as we made our way inside. The room was already buzzing with dozens of people.

The tables were set beautifully, with purple candles as center pieces to battle the room’s dim lighting. It was actually a very romantic setting, once again making me wish we were here under different circumstances. Sadly, that wasn’t the case, and Henry and I had our rounds to make. We said hello to everyone, and I soon realized there were a lot more people invited than I’d originally assumed. Even people that had only contributed a small part to the movie were present too—sadly including Michelle, the girl who’d been convinced I’d stolen her part. It was also my first time meeting some of the producers, who were clearly more comfortable in the background. I stayed to chat a little longer with Jennifer, the woman who’d given me that halter dress earlier today, and Marie, who usually did Henry’s hair and makeup, but soon it was time for dinner, meaning I had to get seated at the main table.

I was pleased to see I was sitting with Henry, Ryan, Fiona and Scott. Other than Natascha and Ella, they were the ones I’d interacted with most over the course of filming, and I really had grown to like them. They were my friends.

Once everyone was seated, Ryan stood up and tapped the side of his wine glass with his knife to get everyone’s attention. “When we wrapped, I promised you a speech. Working on this film with me, you know I always fulfill my promises. However, before this party started, I tried and tried to come up with the right words to say, and came up blank every time. But a promise is a promise, so I’m just gonna wing it, and I apologize in advance if this is incoherent as fuck.”

A laugh went through the crowd at his choice of words.

“I had great expectations of this movie. I knew it was a great script. There’s a lot more depth to it than most romantic comedies. That having said, a great script doesn’t make a movie. All of you do,” he said, smiling at everyone in the room. “No matter how small your contribution, I swear to you it was vital. So I want to thank all of you for giving your best every day, even when the call time was four a.m. and you kind of just wanted to punch everyone in sight. I know I sure did.”

Another laugh rippled through the crowd, a little louder this time.

“A want to thank the producers for believing in me and this project. Your money was well-appreciated, and in my opinion well-spent. I want to thank the crew for delivering us such hard work that so often—too often—goes unnoticed. I want to tell you that I noticed, and I could not be more grateful. I want to thank my gorgeous wife for being by my side throughout the entire process, supporting me whenever I needed it. I want to thank my amazing cast, that delivered stellar work time and time again. And last but most definitely not least, I want to thank my two amazing leads. Henry, Juliette, you two were sensational. You brought Noah and Amelia to life in a way I hadn’t even imagined possible myself. Your chemistry lit up the room—it still does. You two should think about making a whole box set of movies together,” he joked, making everyone in the room laugh but me blush. If only. “All in all, I’m just really fucking grateful.” He cleared his throat. “Now, let’s just
eat before I babble on and piss everyone off with more profanity I’m bound to use if this goes on.”

He sat down, and the crowd burst out in thunderous applause. I joined in, grinning at Ryan. He’d been a brilliant director, one I definitely wouldn’t hate to work with again. He was extremely laid back but had strong work ethics, and he kept everyone on their toes. He liked improvisation—actually, he encouraged it—and was extremely good to his cast and crew. He deserved every bit of applause he was getting.

When it had died down and everyone had gone back to their own business, Henry leaned over to me. “So, a box set of movies together, huh? Would you be able to handle that or would you grow sick of me?”

I shook my head. If the way I was feeling now was any indication, I would never grow sick of him. “No. I would love to work with you again. You’re amazing to work with. Easy, too. And you’re so good at acting that you inadvertently push me to be better, too. So, no, I definitely wouldn’t mind making a whole box set of movies with you.”

He smiled. It was a small smile, but it reached his eyes like no other smile had managed before. It made my heart pound, and I couldn’t help but smile back at him. “Good. I’m glad.”

“I think the more important question is if you would get sick of me if we made more movies together.”

Henry leaned a little closer and my breath caught in my throat. “Don’t you know by now, Juliette? I don’t think I could ever get sick of you.”

He shouldn’t be saying things like this. It only pushed me farther over the edge, and I was already so far over. I was so close to free falling, and words like this only pushed me closer to the inevitable. But maybe the inevitable had already happened. I was already over. Already falling. And it had my heart doing funny things, things it hadn’t done when it came to anyone else.

The moment was broken when the waiter gave us our menus. I didn’t know whether to be grateful or annoyed. It wasn’t like I wanted us to finally act on our feelings when I knew so many pairs of eyes were glued on us—specifically Ryan’s, Fiona’s and Scott’s—but at least something would’ve happened.

I slowly forced myself to join the conversation that was going on around the table. At least for the time being, I had to get my mind off of my feelings for Henry. Maybe once we were alone I would finally be brave enough to say something to him, but now wasn’t the time.

“So, what’s in store for you next, Juliette?” Fiona asked kindly. “Do you already have a new project lined up?”

“No, I don’t, actually. I have no idea what the future holds. I guess I’ll have to go back to auditioning.”

“Always a scary process, auditioning,” Scott said, in a rare show of solemnity. “But I’m sure you’ll have a new role in no-time. You’re a really talented actress, and once If You Love Someone is out, the whole world will know it, too.”

Henry grinned at him. “For once I actually agree with you, Tayler,” he joked.

“I must say I agree as well,” Fiona said. “You’re talented, professional, gorgeous… What more could a film studio need?”
“Star status,” Ryan said bluntly, but then he grinned. “But I have a feeling you’ve developed quite a bit of that with all your outings with our favorite Brit.”

“You think so?” I asked, feeling myself grow a little uncomfortable. I didn’t want Henry to think that was all I used him for; to get ‘star status.’ Besides, if I wanted people to know my name at all, it would be for being a great actress—not being someone’s girlfriend. “I didn’t really keep up with the media throughout filming. I’ve seen a few articles here and there, but they focused more on Henry. It took a while for them to even know my name.”

“But they know it now,” Ryan pressed. “And you probably hate hearing this, but the rumors circling around the two of you is great publicity for this movie.”

“It’s strange how people can be so obsessed with people’s love lives,” Henry said, and I nearly choked on my red wine at the words ‘love lives.’ “Then again, I already find it weird how someone could be interested in my personal life at all.”

Ryan grinned. “I don’t get how people could be interested in your personal life, either. You’re boring as fuck, Cavill,” he joked, and Henry barked out a laugh. “But Juliette over here? She’s mysterious and intriguing. And rumors of two gorgeous people being together? Even more so.”

At this point in the conversation, I was really wishing someone would change the topic. Sadly, no one did.

Henry smiled. “True enough. I guess I just dislike the idea of ‘dating’ for publicity. If I’m gonna be with someone, I’m actually gonna be with them.”

I coughed. “I don’t want to imply anything, but, um… you and Kaley Cuoco?”

Was it just me, or did Henry’s cheeks turn just a tad redder? “Touché. But that was the only time I did it, and also the last. Why do you think the whole thing lasted so short? I broke the deal off as soon as I realized just how wrong the whole thing was.”

I smiled. “That’s very commendable.”

I thanked my lucky stars when Fiona changed the subject after that. “Speaking of publicity, do you guys have any social media platforms? That you actually use? Because I know you hardly use your Twitter, Scott. And Henry, I don’t believe you have Twitter or Facebook at all, right? And what about you, Juliette?”

“Uh, I have Twitter, but the only identification is my first name. No one but people I actually know in real life follows me on there.”

“Building a bigger fan base on Twitter might help with publicity for you and the movie,” Fiona said. “It’s totally up to you, of course, but maybe you could post a little more and actually add your last name so people know it’s you.”

“Yeah, no, I get it. And I will.”

“And Scott, why do you hardly ever tweet?”

“Honestly,” Scott started a little sheepishly, “I usually forget to. I could try and put a little more effort into my account, though.”

Fiona smiled. “It would be greatly appreciated. And Henry?”
Henry sighed, a small smile playing around his lips. “There’s really no escaping this social media thing, is there?”

“Nope,” I said, and expectantly held my hand out to him. When he regarded me with a puzzled look on his face, I said, “Give me your phone. I’m gonna help you create a Twitter account.”

“Oh, Christ…” Henry muttered, but handed me his phone anyway.

I grinned at him and downloaded the Twitter app to his phone. I made the beginnings of his account for him, letting him fill in his personal information, but we hit a bit of a roadblock when it came to choosing a profile picture.

“Which picture should I use?” he asked me. I liked that he was relying solely on me for the answer. “I kind of like this one.”

I blushed when I saw which one he meant. It was the one of us on the beach, when Hanna had forced me to take a selfie of us and he’d suddenly surprised me by kissing my cheek. “I like that picture a lot, too, but it might not be the wisest choice for a profile picture.”

“Why not?” He asked the question as if he was genuinely confused, but I think he knew as well as I did why he shouldn’t use it.

“You can hardly even see your face. If anything, that picture would fit my profile better, because you can see much more of my face. Maybe you can use the other picture we made and just crop me out.”

“Why would you want me to crop you out?”

“Because it’s your Twitter, not ours.” And because, to the world, it would seem like confirmation of us being together if he used a picture of us as his profile picture, while I knew we weren’t. It would be weird, and I had a feeling he knew it. What I didn’t get was why he was being so stubborn about it.

He sighed. “Fine.” He opened the other picture we’d made, but we soon realized that that one wouldn’t do, either. Our faces were pressed together much too closely and if he cropped me out, it would be much too obvious.

“Well, then I guess there’s no other option. It’s selfie time, Mr. Cavill,” I teased.

“Oh, God… I’ve never really been one for selfies.”

“Ugh, come here,” I said, plucking his phone out of his hands. I opened up Google Images and searched for his name. Before he full and well realized what I was doing, pictures of him filled his iPhone’s display. “Let’s see what we’ve got to work with.”

As I started scrolling through the pictures, his eyes widened slightly. “What? No. What are you doing?”

“What does it look like I’m doing? I’m looking for a good Twitter profile pic for you. You want to help or not?”

He leaned a little closer to me so we could both look at the screen. I had a hard time not clicking on all of the pictures to examine them better. He just looked so incredibly good in all of them, and it was hard to choose just one. “Oh, I like this one,” I said, but when I clicked on it, I realized it was horrible quality. “Okay, never mind.” I went back to scrolling through the pictures.
“What about this one?” Henry asked as he tapped on a picture. He looked really good in it, I had to admit, apart from one teensy tiny problem. It looked like he had more product in his hair than I ever even used in one week, and not in a good way. (Was there even a good way?)

I gave him a pointed look. “Slick Rick,” was all I said before I went back to scrolling. “Oh, hey, speak of the devil,” I said, and tapped to enlarge a picture of him buying groceries with Kaley Cuoco. I quickly went back to scrolling, though, feeling the sting of seeing him with someone else, even though I knew the relationship had solely been for publicity reasons. It still hurt to see someone else clinging tightly to his arm. It was soon forgotten, however, when I came across a complete and utter gem. “Oh my God!” I squealed. “You were so cute!”

Henry’s eyes widened to the size of saucers as he looked at the picture of him at about thirteen years old. “How did they even find that? Oh, Christ, no, there’s another one.”

I fought the urge to cackle with laughter as I saw the second picture. “You were so adorable. What happened?” I joked.

“I grew into myself.”

I glanced over at him. He was a far cry from his ‘Fat Cavill’ days now, with his tall and incredibly muscled frame. “That you did,” I said, and I hoped to God my tone didn’t sound too appreciative. Before it could get weird, I quickly concentrated again on finding him a profile picture. It didn’t take much longer for me to come across the perfect one. “This one. You should use this one.”

“Why?”

I set his phone down on the table and started ticking off the reasons on my fingers. “Leather jacket. Your hair looks great all natural and curly. You’re smiling. The scruff. And you can see that cute little brown fleck in your eye.”

“You think it’s cute?” Henry asked, before I could even realize myself what I had said.

I tried not to blush, but knew I was probably failing miserably. “Well, yeah. Who doesn’t. Heterochromia is pretty rare. At least, when it’s as noticeable as it is with you.”

A slow smile played around his lips, and I once again felt as if we were the only ones in the room. “We’ll just use this picture then.”

“Good.” I set the picture for him, and his account was done. Henry Cavill officially had a Twitter now. “There you go. Next up, Instagram.”

He groaned. “Juliette, no… Do I really have to?”

“Yes, you have to. I need you to like my selfies,” I joked.

“Fine. Let’s do it.”

I let Henry set up his own Instagram account as I made a few changes to my own accounts. I included my last name in both my Twitter and Instagram, and before I knew it, I’d already gotten two new followers. Were people actually actively looking for me on social media? The idea was mind-boggling.

“Okay, I’m done. Now what?”

“Now we introduce you to the world and your follower count will magically go up. You might want
to turn off your notifications for Twitter and Instagram, because otherwise your phone will probably blow up.”

“And how do we introduce me to the world?”

“Via a picture. You don’t mind if I upload that picture of us on the beach, do you?”

He shook his head, smiling. “No, of course not. There are already plenty of pictures of us on that day out there anyway.”

I uploaded the pictures of us both smiling at the camera to Instagram, making sure to apply a filter that made me look more tan than I actually was and that brought out the blue in Henry’s eyes.

@JulesMorrison: #throwback When in Miami… you go to the beach. And welcome to Twitter and Instagram, @HenryCavill. It’s about damn time.

I made Instagram post the picture to Twitter, too, and naturally, Hanna was the first to retweet it, only seconds after. She’d turned on notifications for my tweets ages ago, though I never really knew why. My tweets weren’t all that exciting. Though, being the first to mention Henry on Twitter and Instagram was quite an accomplishment. Keegan retweeted it soon after—probably having heard about the tweet from Hanna—and mentioned me.

@KeegsBear: @JulesMorrison @HenryCavill CUTIE PIESSSS!! Btw, did you change your Twitter?

@JulesMorrison: @KeegsBear Yup, I did.

Hanna was the next to tweet me, but hers was just a slur of emojis. I sent the emoji with the sunglasses on back to her and then put my phone down, unable to fight a smile.

“I’m not even following you yet,” Henry said suddenly. “How rude of me.”

“You probably have loads of people to follow. Good luck trying to find everyone,” I joked.

“I’m gonna follow you first, though,” he said absentmindedly, making my heart swell. And before I knew it, my phone chimed with two new notifications: A new follower on Twitter and one on Instagram.

I grinned at him. “Now go follow all your other friends, before I sell you on Snapchat.”

He frowned. “What the hell is Snapchat?”

I laughed. “Just get to following people, Cavill.”

“But wait, first it’s time to post my first selfie.”

I raised a skeptical eyebrow at him. “I thought you’ve ‘never really been one for selfies’?”

“Well, I basically just want to try this whole Instagram thing out, so why not do it with a selfie? Besides, I gotta prove it’s actually me, right?”

“I suppose that’s as good a reasoning as any.”

“Good. Now scoot closer so we’re both in the frame.”

“Wait. You want to take a selfie with me?”
“Yeah. You posted a picture of the two of us, so I’d say it’s only right I do the same.”

I shook my head, but couldn’t fight my smile. “Fine.”

Henry opened the front camera on his phone, and we leaned our heads closely together, both smiling. He snapped the picture, and I examined it before giving him the okay to post it. Part of me was happy about him posting the picture. But another part of me—the anxiety part of me—worried about the backlash I’d surely get from overzealous fans. But it was already too late, because he’d posted the picture already.

@HenryCavill: Dinner time with @JulesMorrison, who all but forced me to make this account. But we’re good. ;)

Shortly thereafter, he posted his very first tweet.

@HenryCavill: Wrap party for If You Love Someone with @JulesMorrison, @RyanZachary, @FionaZach and @ScottTayler. It’s been a fun ride.

I smiled and gave him a high five. “Well done, Henry. I’m proud of you.”

He laughed. “You must not have very high standards if all it took to make you proud of me was to simply join social media.”

“Hey, how many years now have you been avoiding to join social media?” I asked pointedly. “And I managed to convince you to make an account in five minutes.”

“Good point. But I do feel like I need to point out that I had very little choice in the matter.”

I grinned. “Deal with it. You’ll thank me later.”

Throughout the rest of the dinner, we watched in amusement as our follower counts rose rapidly. But what amused me most were the mentions Henry was getting. He obviously hadn’t been ready for fangirling teens. “Why do so many people keep calling me ‘dad’? I’m not that old, am I?”

I nearly choked on my vegetables as I burst out in uncontrollable laughter. “You’re not the only celeb who’s gotten confused about that. It means that you give them life. Your father gave you life, didn’t he? You give them life, so you’re their dad. It’s a really weird trend, I know.”

“I… don’t even know how to respond to that.”

We managed to—mostly—put our phones to the side and finish dinner. Slowly, others finished eating as well, and someone turned on the music. A big space had been cleared to pose as a makeshift dance floor, and soon, people trickled onto it.

“Juliette, I think you owe me a dance,” Scott said with a grin.

I lifted an eyebrow, grinning back at him. “I do?”

“Because your friend was so busy catching up with you, I never got the chance to ask her for her number. So you at least owe me a dance.”

I shook my head, but wasn’t able to fight a smile. “How about I make it up to you by dancing with you, and giving you Hanna’s phone number?”

“It’s a deal.”
I quickly added Hanna’s number to Scott’s contacts, knowing she wouldn’t mind, seeing as she’d already asked me for his. I’d given it to her a while ago, but apparently she hadn’t done anything with it yet. Once that was done, Scott and I made our way to the dance floor, talking and laughing as we danced to the bass-heavy song. We were congratulated on a job well done a few times by numerous people, though, making dancing too long difficult. And then, when the song was almost over, someone bumped into me so hard that I toppled forward, needing to brace my hands against Scott’s chest in order to not fall over completely.

“Oh, I’m sorry, Juliette,” Michelle sneered, and I gritted my teeth. I’d already wondered when she would acknowledge my presence. After that insincere apology, she gave Scott a sickly sweet smile. “Hey, Scott. Well done on the movie. I’ve heard from multiple people that you did a really great job.”

Scott gave her a tight smile. “Thanks. And you are…?”

I pressed my lips together in a weak attempt not to laugh. That was probably the biggest insult Scott could’ve given her.

“I’m Michelle. Remember me? I played in the first few scenes they filmed.”

“Oh. Right. Well, thanks, Michelle,” he said, and he turned back to me. Once she was gone again, he pretended to gag. “Who invited that terrible human being?”

I laughed. “So you do remember her?”

“Of course I do. Hard to forget someone who’s such a stone cold bitch like her. I especially remember her giving you a hard time. It doesn’t seem like things have changed all too much.”

I shrugged. “We both screen tested with Henry for the role of Amelia, and that’s where we met. I remember her radiating confidence, as if she was sure she was going to get the role. Part of me agreed, because I didn’t have her confidence. But then I eventually got the part, and she never quite forgave me for it.”

“Ugh,” was all Scott said, and I nodded in agreement. Ugh, indeed.

When the song was over, I felt a light tap on my shoulder. I turned around to find a smiling Henry. “Ms. Morrison, will you dance with me?”

I smiled. “I would love to, Mr. Cavill.”

He placed his hands on my hips as I wrapped my arms loosely around his neck. His curls tickled the backs of my hands, and I had to seriously fight the urge to tangle my fingers in them—but it was so incredibly difficult. The song was fast and we moved our hips to the beat. He was a better dancer than I’d expected, and I had to admit I was putting more effort into the movement of my hips than usual myself. As we danced, getting closer and closer without even realizing it ourselves, I couldn’t tear my gaze away from Henry’s eyes. The room was dim, but there was still enough light for me to see the brown flecks in the pool of blue. I loved his eyes. I would drown in them if I could.

Henry and I danced together for most of the night, with small breaks of dancing with someone else. I danced with Ryan, Fiona and even Marie, and so many other people. I danced with people I’d hardly even interacted with during filming, and it made me sad that I only just got to know them at the very end of the road. But no matter how many people I danced with, I kept coming back to Henry.

We’d reached the end of the night, and I knew I had to leave soon if I still wanted to make my flight. That knowledge weighed down heavily on me, hugely because still nothing had happened between
us. He hadn’t told me he liked me (if he even did), and I had kept my mouth firmly shut on the matter as well. But the night was coming to a close, and I knew it was now or never.

We were dancing to a slow song. It was a song by James Bay, an artist I loved a lot. Normally, I would’ve sung along—just like I’d done with previous songs I liked. Henry had always joined in with me if he knew the song as well, and it was the most fun I’d had since the night we’d gotten drunk together in my trailer. But something about the song, whether it was the melody or the lyrics, kept me quiet. All I could do was stare at Henry as we slowly swayed to the beat. His beautiful eyes, his beautiful cheekbones, his jaw, his nose, his perfectly shaped lips… I couldn’t look away.

When the lights are faded to black / And only stars are guiding me back / I’ll keep running, oh / To the place where I belong

My fingers tangled themselves in the curls at the nape of his neck. Henry’s lips parted as he inched closer to me, and I felt my heart thump wildly in my throat as I felt my own lips part in anticipation. Was this finally it? Was this the moment where everything would fall into place?

“Oh, Henry, there you are!” a familiar voice called, and the spell was broken. Henry and I shot apart as Michelle approached us with a knowing smirk on her face. She knew she’d just interrupted a moment between the two of us, and she was pleased with herself for it. I hadn’t hated her as much as I did at this moment. I wanted to punch her, but instead clenched my fists at my side. “I’m so sorry to interrupt, but Ryan was looking for you, Henry.”

“Oh, is he?” Henry shot an apologetic glance at me. “I’m so sorry. Please don’t go anywhere. I’ll be right back, okay? I promise.”

I nodded, smiling bravely, but felt the tears sting behind my eyes. “Okay. I’ll wait.”

He smiled and kissed my cheek. “I’ll be right back.”

But he never came back, and during my flight home, I kept replaying him being led away by Michelle, her hands curled tightly around his bicep.

Chapter End Notes

Don't hate me? :( If you want to hate anyone, go and hate on Michelle ;) But don't get discouraged and don't despair, lovelies! As Ella said, this is not the end. We still have 15 chapters left, and anything could still happen! Also, I'll be back tomorrow with a new chapter, as regularly scheduled.

The lyrics at the start of the chapter are Scars by James Bay. The lyrics near the end of the chapter are Running, also by James Bay.
Chapter 13

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

I’m sorry your name doesn’t touch his lips

I know it kills you to find out like this

And I think you’re crazy

For letting him slip through your hands

I heard you’re waiting around

But you don’t stand a chance

_~*~*~*~*~*~*

Tuesday, September 16, 2016.

“Dammit, Juliette! Can’t you just fucking concentrate for once?”

I winced as Vince, my director, yelled at me. I actually thought I’d been doing a pretty decent job at the scene we were currently filming, but apparently not. “I’m sorry, Vince. I’ll try harder.”

“Please do, before I start thinking about hiring another actress. At this point, I’m beginning to think even the fucking P.A.s can act better.”

I felt the tears sting behind my eyes as I tried to ignore the incredibly hurtful jab. My anxiety and generally low self-esteem made it hard to, though. Actually, it was pretty much the only thing I could think of.

He’s right, a voice in my head whispered. It had become a lot more vocal over the past few months. You’re worthless as an actress. Actually, you’re pretty much worthless as a human being in general. No wonder you never hear from Henry anymore.

I shook my head, trying to think happy thoughts. Instead of focusing on the negative, I tried to recall Hanna’s voice. You’re my best friend, and you can do anything you set your mind to. You’re the bestest, most kickass girl I know.

I smiled. She’d said it to me last week, but somehow her voice rang clear in my head as if she was saying it to me in person right next to me. It must be that best friend telepathy we so often joked about.

I wrestled my way through the scene as best I could. I tried to assume the identity of my character, but Vince’s comments kept swimming around in my head. This wasn’t the only time he’d said something hurtful. Actually, he’d said so many hurtful things—not only to me, but also to the rest of the cast and crew—that you’d think I’d be used to it by now. But every comment hurt more than the last.

When he finally granted us a break, I released a relieved breath and retreated to a silent corner, grabbing a bottle of Coca-Cola Life on the way. I grabbed my phone and opened up my photos. I scrolled up, my eyes automatically searching for the pictures of Henry and me at the beach.
We hadn’t seen each other in months. The last time I’d seen him was at the wrap party for *If You Love Someone*. We’d sort of remained in touch through texts and calls, but Henry was busy reprising his role as Superman, and our calls became less frequent quickly. Our last text was from a few weeks ago.

And yet, somehow, those strong feelings I’d had for him by the end of filming *If You Love Someone* were still very much there. I missed him every day. But I just couldn’t bring myself to text him. Part of me felt like he’d gotten sick of me and didn’t message me anymore because he simply didn’t want to. So I didn’t know why I kept torturing myself by looking at the pictures so often. It hurt to look at them, but it also made me feel a little safer, a little closer to him. And so, every time I needed a break from my real life, which had somehow gotten even worse after auditioning for this role, I looked at the pictures. If they had been physical copies, they’d be faded from being looked at so much by now.

I was just about to zoom in on Henry’s smiling face when my phone buzzed with a text, saving me from more unnecessary pain. It was from Hanna, making me think that maybe best friend telepathy was actually a thing.

**how r u babe?**

*Worthless, apparently.*

**what? no ur not!!!! did that fucking punk say something again?**

**Yeah. Same old, same old. Nothing I haven’t heard before.**

**need me 2 come 2 u and punch him 4 u?**

**As much as I would like you to, I need to get back to filming. I’ll text you when I’m coming home, okay?**

**i’ll be waiting w/ a huge pepperoni pizza and cookie dough ice cream. love u.**

I smiled and tried not to cry as I felt my heart swell. I loved my best friend so incredibly much, and it was times like these where I realized that I would never be able to live without her. We’d been joined at the hip since we were four years old. That was twenty three years ago now. I couldn’t remember my life without her and hoped I never would. I stood up from where I’d been sitting, wiping away a single tear, and made my way back to set.

I took a deep breath before turning the last corner, attempting to brace myself for the onslaught of painful jabs I was sure to get thrown my way.

“There she fucking is!” Vince yelled, throwing up his hands in frustration. “Really, Juliette, it’s time you show a bit of professionalism. You don’t want to be known for being a tardy diva, do you?”

“Look who’s talking,” I grumbled under my breath.

~*~*~*~*~*~

“Hanna? Please tell me you’ve already ordered that pizza,” I said, throwing my keys on the side table in the hallway. I kicked my shoes off and traipsed into the living room.

Hanna was sitting on the couch, her legs curled under her and her blonde hair in its usual messy bun atop her head. She turned the volume of the TV down as I entered the room. “No, I haven’t. I didn’t want to risk it getting cold before you got here, seeing as that asshole director of yours has a
tendency to make his actors stay late. But I’ll tell you what. Why don’t you go upstairs and change into something more comfortable, maybe take a shower if you want to, and then the pizzas will be here when you get back downstairs.”

I smiled at her, hoping my gratitude for her showed on my face. “That sounds like a great idea. See you in a bit, babe.”

She gave me a comforting smile and grabbed her laptop to order the pizzas online.

I slowly moved up the stairs, too tired from the day I’d had to go any faster. I’d been up since five a.m. and listening to Vince’s well-placed jabs since seven a.m. Today had also been quite a physical day on set, having to stand and walk a lot, and with how few breaks Vince gave us, that tended to wear down a person, even if they didn’t have anxiety like me.

I turned the shower on and stepped under the stream, trying to forget all about today, but of course, my mind couldn’t leave it alone. It replayed everything Vince had told me today.

Oh my fucking God, how can you fuck up walking into a room?

Don’t we have some Spanx for that stomach of hers or something? Come on, people, there’s gotta be a way that makes her look less fat.

Juliette, just do your fucking job for once. We have better things to do than watch you fuck up all day.

Really? Again? Dammit, Juliette, ‘death by asphyxiation’ isn’t that hard to say.

I sank to the shower floor, letting the water beat down on my head as silent tears streamed down my face. I clutched my knees to my chest as violent sobs made it hard to breathe, but I forced myself to stay quiet. I didn’t want Hanna to know I was crying. I wished I’d never auditioned for this role. But Vince Grieve was a big name in the industry, and my agent had told me that it would be great for my career if I were to get the part. Great for my career, maybe, but definitely not for my mental health.

It was all kind of too much. My general anxiety. My uncertainties about Henry and not having heard from him in forever. How I was still hopelessly head over heels for him. The verbal abuse I went through every damn day on set. I wanted to stay in this shower forever, curled up on the floor as I cried. It was the only place where I still felt safe to let my emotions out. I hardly ever shared them with my friends anymore—not even Hanna. I felt like I would only bother them, and that was the last thing I wanted to do.

But eventually I knew it was time to get up and get back to the real world. My skin had become all wrinkly, and besides, I had a pizza waiting for me. I pulled on a pair of comfy sweatpants and hesitated only for a moment before I pulled on one of my own T-shirts instead of the one Henry had given me. My fingers trailed over the soft gray fabric. It had lost his scent a long time ago, but there were still some very small black smears from when I’d cried on it that refused to wash out. It reminded me of him and how he’d been there for me. I shook my head and dug a pair of socks out of my closet. Just as I was pulling them on, I heard the doorbell downstairs and knew the pizzas were here. I wound my still wet hair up in a messy bun and walked downstairs.

“We match,” Hanna said with a grin, pointing down to my socks. I hadn’t really been paying attention and only now realized they were two different ones, one being red and the other purple. Hanna’s were mismatched as well, but hers were a dazzling mix of rainbows and warning signs. The one with the warning signs said ‘I’m too sexy for my socks.’ It made me laugh even despite my dark mood.
“Socks always go missing in this house, so it’d be a much bigger miracle if we both actually wore matching socks.”

She snorted. “True enough. Anyway, here’s your pizza.”

I smiled, gratefully accepting the steaming box from her and plopping down on the couch. “Thank you.”

“What do you want to watch?”

“I don’t know. I don’t care, just as long as it isn’t directed by Vince Grieve. Maybe there’s something good on Netflix.”

We eventually settled on watching *The Mummy* as we ate our pizza. About halfway through, our pizzas were gone and Hanna made me pause the movie as she ran to the kitchen to grab the cookie dough ice cream and two spoons. “Nothing like a little therapy from our good friends Ben and Jerry,” she said as she sat close to me so we could share.

“True that,” I said, digging my spoon into my favorite form of dairy.

Before long, the movie was over and the tub of ice cream had been completely devoured. “Do you want to see the second one too?” Hanna asked.

I shook my head before resting it on her shoulder. “Nah. I’m too tired. I might fall asleep through half of it. Why don’t we just surf the channels and see if anything interesting is on?”

“Sure.” Hanna rested her head on top of mine and started flicking through the channels. She eventually perked up once she came across E! Entertainment. “Oh, hey! *The Royals*. Have you seen this before? It’s a show with William Moseley—you know, that guy who played Peter in *Narnia*?—and he is fine.”

“No, I haven’t seen it. Is it any good?”

“Well, it gets a little dramatic at times, but otherwise it’s a pretty good show. Though I do have to admit that the main reason I watch it is William.”

I laughed, shaking my head. “You’re so predictable.”

“Hey, don’t tell me you’ve never watched something absolutely terrible just because you thought the guy that played in it was cute.”

Grinning, I said, “Guilty as charged.”

We watched the show together in silence, and after only a few minutes of it, I realized I did quite like it. I could identify myself with Ophelia in certain scenes, especially when she felt inferior to Prince Liam. She was an American girl who wasn’t used to living the luxurious life, where everything was documented and put it in the tabloids—and Liam was literally the future king of England. They were leagues apart, and I’d kind of felt that way with Henry too.

When the episode ended, *E! News* came on, and I groaned. I hated that show, mostly because the stories were always grossly exaggerated and the people hosting it always had an opinion at the ready—often one that wasn’t all too positive about the celeb they were discussing. I always found myself wondering why they couldn’t just leave those people alone, and yet I had to watch it whenever it was on. It made me feel like a terrible person and a huge hypocrite.
My heart nearly jumped into my throat, however, when none other than Henry popped up on the screen. “Oh my God,” I squeaked.

“So, I hear we have some news on our favorite superhero, huh?” one of the hosts asked. “What’s up with Henry Cavill these days?”

“Well, it seems like the British stud is off the market, again. A few months ago, Henry broke it off with his long term girlfriend and model, Alyssa Jeanes. Everyone thought they would be together forever—they were so cute together,” the other host gushed. “Then he had a brief fling with Juliette Morrison, his costar on *If You Love Someone*, but it’s starting to seem like that was just a quick rebound, because today, Henry was spotted out with Alyssa again.” To my horror, pictures of them walking down the street filled the TV screen. She had her arm hooked around his as they laughed at something. He looked happy, but it was like I’d been punched in my gut and all the air had been knocked out of me. “They sure look like they’re having a good time, huh?”

“They sure do,” the first host agreed. “And let’s be honest, if you could choose between a relatively unknown actress and a gorgeous Victoria’s Secret model, who would you choose, am I right? So, sorry ladies, but Clark Kent definitely seems to be off the market. In other news, Chris Evans was out visiting…”

I drowned out the rest of her words. The sight of Henry and his ex-girlfriend (or current girlfriend?) wrapped around his arm was burned into my retina.

*And let’s be honest, if you could choose between a relatively unknown actress and a gorgeous Victoria’s Secret model, who would you choose, am I right?* I felt sick. I couldn’t breathe.

“Juliette?” Hanna asked carefully. “Are you okay?”

I stood up. “I’m sorry,” I managed, my voice thick. “I think I need to be alone right now.”

I made my way upstairs, closing the door behind me when I’d reached my room, and let myself fall down on my bed. I tried to breathe, but I couldn’t remember how my lungs worked. I stood up again, pacing around my room as I desperately tried to get the air flowing in and out of my lungs. I opened the window, hoping it might help, but it didn’t.

I didn’t know how long I paced around my room until the door finally opened again. I whirled around, seeing Keegan standing in the doorway, a pained expression on his face. “Oh, baby,” he breathed, and he marched over to me, wrapping me in his arms.

I took my first real breath, and as the oxygen finally made its way to my brain, the dam broke. The tears flowed freely and violent sobs made my entire body shake. Keegan held onto me tight—so tight I thought I might actually bruise—and I was so grateful for him being there.

“Keegs,” I gasped, but before I could get anything else out, he interrupted me.

“Shh… I know, baby. I know. I’m so sorry.” He kissed the top of my head before tucking it under his chin. I clutched at his shirt, needing my friend to offer all the comfort he could—and he did. He was so incredibly sweet as he held me. Keegan was often brash and sometimes even rude, always a quip at the ready (more often than not a sexual one), so it was easy to forget he was actually a very sweet person. He really was like a brother to me, teasing me whenever he could but always coming through for me whenever I needed him to.

He guided us to my bed, laying us down on it. He pulled me on top of his chest, his arms wrapped tightly around me, and let me cry for as long as I wanted. He didn’t say anything, giving me the time I needed to cry it out. Neither of us had really ever been all that vocal about our emotions, and he
knew better than to ask me how I was—mostly because the answer was obvious.

Eventually, very slowly, I felt myself calm down. My eyelids were heavy with sleep, making me wonder how late it was. “So,” I started, my voice soft and croaky from crying, “what are you doing here? Did Hanna call you?”

“No,” he said. “Riss was watching E! News at home, and I saw the thing about… well, you probably know. I just needed to make sure you were okay. Good thing I did.”

“Oh, I feel bad now,” I muttered. “I didn’t want to interrupt your time with Klarissa.”

“Don’t feel bad, little sis. She understands. Actually, she wanted to know if you’re okay, too. She nearly got in the car with me.”

I laughed softly. “I have the best friends ever.”

“Just as long as you don’t forget that when you’re a super famous actress,” he joked.

“I’ll never forget what you guys have done for me. Without you guys, I probably wouldn’t…” I didn’t dare to say the words aloud, feeling too ashamed of myself. I probably wouldn’t be here right now.

He kissed the top of my head, pressing his lips to my hair so long and so hard I had the feeling he was trying to recollect himself. “But you do have us. And you’re never getting rid of us. We’re like your nine-headed ball and chain.”

I smiled. “I’m pretty sure balls and chains don’t have heads.”

Keegan poked me in the side, making me squirm in his arms. “You know what I mean, Julie Bear. And look, I know you’re not programmed that way—hell, neither am I—but if you ever need us, all you have to do is call. Even if all nine of us need to fly to the other side of the world to be there for you, we’ll all do it in a heartbeat. And you know how much I hate flying.”

I didn’t know how to respond to that. I knew he was right, and maybe that was what was so hard to fathom; that someone could care so incredibly much about me. “I love you, Keegs.”

“I love you, too, Julie. Now try and get some sleep. You’re tired. I’ll set your alarm for you.”

~*~*~*~*~*~

Wednesday, September 17, 2016.

I was still feeling anxious, and I tried to brace myself as best I could as I sat in the makeup trailer. My eyes were still puffy from crying so much last night and the girl doing my makeup was doing her best to cover it up. I didn’t know if any of it worked, but I hoped it did, otherwise Vince would surely notice and make a comment about it. And I just didn’t know what I could take today. I knew anything could set me off when I was feeling like this, and even though I felt like I cried my entire body weight in tears last night, there was still plenty left where that came from.

Keegan had stayed over last night and Hanna had made waffles for breakfast for us all to try and cheer me up. They both tried so hard to get my mood up and to make me forget all about Henry getting back together with Alyssa, and it had worked for a little while, but as soon as I was out the door, everything came crashing down again. I sat in my car for five minutes before pulling out of my parking spot, just trying to pull myself together. Then when I’d reached set I’d needed another five minutes to force the panic down.
And now I was sitting here, still feeling panicky and queasy. I was beginning to regret eating those waffles, no matter how good they’d tasted. I felt like I could throw up at any given time, and I had a feeling that wouldn’t really make my life on set any easier. If anything, it would give Vince more material to belittle me with.

My world froze when I was checking my Instagram feed. Henry had posted a picture of him and Alyssa smiling happily into the camera. Her arms were wrapped around his neck, her chin resting on his shoulder, and his free hand rested on one of them, his other hand holding the camera.

@HenryCavill: Breakfast with @AlyssaDJeanes.

The pressure under my jaw increased, and I had to swallow quite a few times to force the bile back down. They were having breakfast together? That must mean that she’d spent the night. They really were back together. Henry had never had any real feelings for me. I really had just been a rebound, if at all.

I hate my life.

I’m so sorry, honey. I love you.

I smiled a little at Hanna’s correct spelling and use of capitals—but only a little. She only used correct spelling in texts when the situation was utterly dire (which is how I always knew if something was wrong). And I guess my dark mood was dire enough for her.

Once my makeup was done, I had no other choice but to go to set and face Vince and his nasty, biting comments. But when I was almost there, my phone buzzed with a tweet from Hanna. I paused in the hallway to read it.

@hannamclynn: We love you, @JulesMorrison. CC: @KeegsBear @GingerRiss @ColinDraws @CynthiaTriggs @RyleysAfro @bullshaye @braedengoddard @AlfieAteABerry

There was a picture attached, and I couldn’t help but smile when I opened it. It was a collage of selfies, one from each of my friends. Hanna, Keegan, Klarissa, Colin, Cynthia, Ryley, Shaye, Braeden and Alfie were all pulling silly faces at me, and my heart filled with love as I retweeted and favorited the tweet. They all loved and cared for me so much, and the feeling was entirely mutual.

Thinking I might actually get myself through this day—through this entire movie—I walked to set.

“You look like shit, Juliette,” Vince said by way of greeting. “No wonder Henry Cavill chose that model over you. Think she can act? Then maybe I can choose her over you, too.”

Or maybe not.

Chapter End Notes

So... sorry the chapter was so depressing, guys. What do you guys think about Henry getting back together with his ex? And what's your opinion on Vince? It was hard for me to write a character so vile. Anyway, I'll see you guys next week with another chapter, where Henry and Juliette embark on their promotional tour.
Lyrics at the start of the chapter are More Like Me by The Veronicas.
There are many things that I would like to say to you
But I don’t have the words in my head
Days are passing by and the leaves are changing too
But time won’t change the things unsaid

Friday, November 11, 2016.

@JulesMorrison: Press day for If You Love Someone today with @HenryCavill and @ScottTayler, and then premiere tonight. I’m so excited for y’all to see it!!!

It was a very cheery tweet. I was not feeling very cheery. In fact, I was scared as hell, for multiple reasons. I’d be seeing Henry again for the first time since the wrap party and since… well, since he’d gotten back together with Alyssa. We hadn’t spoken at all—no calls, no texts, not even tweets—so I had no idea what to expect from him. Would he be annoyed at having to spend time with me again? I just didn’t know, and that killed me.

And then there was the matter of all the other stuff. What if people didn’t like the movie? What if people just dismissed it, like so many other romantic comedies were? What if people did like the movie, but hated me? I knew it was irrational to think that way, but my own anxiety and recently Vince’s verbal abuse made it really difficult for me to change that mindset. While I was still filming If you Love Someone, Henry had actually come a pretty long way in lightening up my anxiety, but then we wrapped and I fell back into old patterns. And what if I messed up one or more of my interviews? In this digital age, it would haunt me forever.

“I don’t think I can do this, Han…” I muttered as I paced around the dressing room for a morning show I’d be on together with Henry and Scott.

“What part exactly are you referring to?”

“All of it. Everything. Seeing Henry again, being on TV—for millions to see—being asked questions I might not want to give the answers to… I’m not cut out for this.”

“Of course you are. All those little voices in your head that are trying to tell you that you can’t right now? That’s just your anxiety talking. And you might not feel like it—especially lately, where everything’s been more difficult than usual—but you are stronger than it. I’ll keep telling you this until you actually believe it yourself: You can do anything you set your mind to. You are Juliette fucking Morrison and you are strong, you are beautiful, you are smart, you are kind, and you’re the best human being I know. When Henry shows up, you’re gonna make him fucking sorry for getting back together with Alyssa instead of manning up and asking you out on a fucking date. And then you’re gonna go out there and make America fall in love with you, because they won’t have another choice once they get to know you.”

I gave her a tight hug. “I hope to someday have as much faith in myself as you do in me.”
Hanna gave me a sad smile. “I hope so too.”

There was a knock on the door, and once I’d given permission to enter, Ella walked in. “Oh, you gorgeous ladies, I missed you two. Come give me some love.”

“Ella!” I grinned and ran over to her, hugging her. I’d missed her more than I could’ve imagined. I missed her wisdom, her jokes, her motherly instinct, and her makeup skills. The makeup artists at the movie I was currently working on with Vince simply weren’t as good as her. “I’ve missed you.”

“Oh, I’ve missed you, too, dearie.” I smiled at the use of her old nickname for me. I’d missed hearing that, too. “And Hanna, still as gorgeous as ever as well, I see.”

“It’s nice to see you again, Ella,” Hanna said warmly, stepping up to her to give her a hug.

“So, dearie, tell me, how are you?”

If it had been any other person asking, I would’ve just said ‘fine,’ but I had a feeling Ella would’ve seen straight through the lie. “Not that good. Things have been… different since we finished If You Love Someone.”

“Different how?” she asked, her brow furrowing in concern. “Have you not been able to book a new movie?’

“No, no, I have, it’s just… The director is kind of an asshole.”

Hanna scoffed. “Asshole is an understatement. He’s a fucking abusive piece of trash—I’m sorry for my language, Ella, but that guy warrants it. He said, and I quote, ‘You look like shit, Juliette. No wonder Henry Cavill chose that model over you. Think she can act? Then maybe I can choose her over you, too.’”

Ella nearly swelled up with rage. “He did not.”

I sighed, the memory of him saying it still fresh in my mind, even though it was already almost a month ago. “He did. He’s not really the nicest guy in the world.”

“No shit,” Hanna spat. “When she told me he’d said that, I nearly went to Keegan’s brother to ask for one of his swords myself and chop his fucking head off. Only Juliette stopped me—or my impulse control, as I often call her. Had I been drunk, I actually might’ve gone through with it.”

I snorted. It was probably true. Hanna always had the craziest ideas when she was drunk, and would always be convinced they were the best ideas ever, no matter how potentially lethal.

“So your friend wasn’t lying about the swords?” Ella asked, a little timidly. “His brother actually owns swords?”

I nodded. “Yeah. He has multiple swords from different eras hanging from his wall. He’s kind of a history buff.”

“Wow. That’s… wow. But if he says something extremely disgusting like that again, I might just ask to borrow one of them as well.” She shook her head, obviously fuming. “Fucking asshole.”

My eyes widened at her use of profanity. I’d never heard her cuss before, let alone drop an F-bomb. “Ella, it’s okay. I prom—”

“No, it’s not okay,” Ella interrupted me hotly. “For as long as I’ve known you, you’ve struggled to
love yourself for who you are, and you were getting better and better at it throughout filming *If You Love Someone*. And now he comes and screws it up. If I ever meet him, I’m gonna give him a piece of my mind, even if the two of you aren’t in contact anymore by the time I do. What he’s doing to you is not okay, and it never will be. Now, let’s get on to doing your makeup and hair, before I develop a spontaneous ulcer.”

I nodded and sat down in front of the mirror, afraid to say anything else on the matter for fear of setting her off on another tirade. Ella worked as fast and efficiently as she could, her anger apparently giving her even more motivation to make me look my best. I watched in the mirror as she transformed me from looking like a tired, over-worked, stressed soccer mom to a beautiful young actress who was about to go on her first big talk show. My hair hung to my waist in straight, silky strands, the rising sun making the brown look like dark gold. My makeup was simple and made me look much more awake than I felt. She’d used some bronze tints in my eye shadow that made my eyes seem even greener.

I stood up and gave her a hug. “Thanks, Ella. You’re a miracle worker, as always.”

“Also as always, you don’t give yourself enough credit. Great makeup hinges on how great my canvas is.”

There was another knock on the door, and Hanna yelled, “Come in! Unless you’re a psychopath, then please don’t.”

I shot her a smile, grateful once again that she was here to help me through it all.

The door opened and Henry and Scott walked in, and my nerves hit me like a freight train. I wasn’t ready to see him again. How was he so beautiful? How could he still speed up my heartbeat when I knew he wasn’t into me? I wanted to get out of here. I couldn’t do this.

“I can assure you,” Henry started, “that I’m not a psychopath. I’m not so sure about Scott, however.”

Hanna crossed her arms in front of her chest, her eyes narrowing. “Seems like something a psychopath would say.” Only I noticed that at least part of the hostility and distrust in her voice hadn’t been faked.

Henry, however, just laughed. “It’s nice to see you again, Hanna.”

He turned to me then, and it was like the world stopped. There was only the blue and brown of his eyes as we stared at each other. The ache in my chest was nearly dizzying, and yet… And yet I was so unbelievably happy. I guess part of me really had thought I’d never see him again. I’d been nervous about this moment, sure, but it hadn’t been real until he was standing right here in front of me. And, oh, he was so gorgeous. He made my heart hurt. He was wearing skinny jeans, a white button down with the sleeves rolled up past his elbows, and his curly hair was untouched—just how I liked it, and he knew it. In fact, he also knew I liked skinny jeans on him, and I believed I’d mentioned I like button downs with the sleeves rolled up on guys too at some point. Had he remembered that and purposely styled himself that way, or was it all just a big coincidence? The whole thing was making my head hurt.

“Juliette,” he finally breathed, making the world start to turn again. “It’s nice to see you again.”

I cleared my throat. “Uh, yeah. It’s nice to see you again, too, Henry. You too, Scott.”

Scott smiled, tearing his eyes away from Hanna, and stepped toward me to give me a hug. “It’s definitely nice to see you again, too.”
Henry, probably realizing it would be weird now if we wouldn’t hug as well, wrapped his arms around me, and if I thought the ache in my heart was bad before, the pain I felt now was crippling. I wrapped my arms around his waist in an automatic response, but I wanted to run as far away from him as I could. But at the same time, I wanted to cling to him and never ever let him go. I wanted to tell him how painful the past few months had been. I wanted to tell him how much I loved him.

I eventually found the strength to step back and turned to Hanna, but found her tangled up in an animated conversation with Scott. I belatedly realized she’d been texting Scott a lot. He’d sent her a text right after I’d given him her number, and they had—unlike Henry and myself—stayed in touch. She’d been excited to see him again, but I’d been so caught up in seeing the man I couldn’t get out of my head again after months of radio silence that I’d completely forgotten about her and Scott. I didn’t have much to worry about, though, because they seemed to get along just fine, big smiles on their faces.

“Well, seeing as our lover boy’s currently occupied, let me do you first, Henry,” Ella said, saving us both from a very awkward silence.

Henry’s head snapped up in surprise. He’d been staring at me, and I think Ella’s words didn’t quite register until at least a moment later. “Yes, of course.”

He sat down in the makeup chair as I sat down on the couch, grabbing my phone to scroll through my Twitter feed for lack of something better to do, but I kept feeling Henry’s eyes on me through the mirror. I didn’t know if I was just imagining it and kept fighting the urge to check. But eventually the urge was just too strong and it won out. I glanced up and when my eyes connected with Henry’s, I felt a familiar electric current run through my blood. It had always been there whenever we looked at each other, but now it seemed stronger. I didn’t know whether that was because it had been so long ago, or because it really had intensified. Either way, it kept our gazes locked for a solid minute, before a buzz from my phone finally made me look away:

*I love you so much, babe, and remember that you’re stronger than you think. Even if you don’t think so, you CAN do this.*

The text from Keegan made me smile. His out-of-the-blue declarations of support always did. They always made me feel a little more confident, and he always seemed to send them at times where I really needed them. My phone buzzed again with a tweet from him:

*KeeksBear: Sitting on the couch with @GingerRiss, @ColinDraws and @CynthiaTriggs, ready to watch our beautiful girl @JulesMorrison on TV in an hour.*

I retweeted and favorited it with a smile, and laughed when Braeden responded to Keegan’s tweet:

*Braedengoddard: @KeegsBear Fuck, that was today? JK, waiting for it with @bullshaye, @RyleysAfro and @AlfieAteABerry now. Go kick some ass, @JulesMorrison!*  

I retweeted and favorited that one too before placing my own tweet:

*JulesMorrison: I have the best friends in the whole world. Love y’all so much!!*

The only good thing about Henry getting back together with Alyssa had been that my follower count had skyrocketed. People were probably hoping for me to have an online breakdown about it, but I wasn’t about to give them that satisfaction. But even though I wasn’t exactly giving them what they wanted, activity on my account had doubled. I had more retweets, favorites and mentions than before, and I always tried to respond to as many people as possible. I filled the rest of the time by responding to people wishing me luck, just so I could avoid Henry’s strong, piercing gaze.
“What are you doing? Oh, I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to scare you,” Henry said when he noticed me jump. I hadn’t even realized he was done in makeup and had come to sit next to me.

“It’s okay. It’s not your fault; I’ve been feeling kind of anxious today. First major TV appearance and all. But I’m just replying to people on Twitter. A lot of them are really sweet and wishing me good luck.”

“Oh, that’s nice. Any odd ones in there? I know I get plenty of those.”

I couldn’t help but laugh, even despite Henry having thrown my emotions in a blender in the past few months. “There have been a few, yeah. What I’m getting most right now, though, is a request for a selfie with you.”

“Well, let’s give them what they want.”

I raised an eyebrow at him. “Really?”

“Yeah, sure. Seeing you again after much too long has put me in a good mood.”

My body didn’t quite know how to react to that statement. There were butterflies, heart palpitations and sweaty hands—the works. He shouldn’t be saying things like that, not when I’m trying to get over him. “Well, okay then.” I opened my front camera and Henry wrapped an arm around my waist to pull me closer, even though that wasn’t necessary because we were already sitting quite closely together on the couch. The close contact was sending the butterflies in my stomach in an even bigger frenzy. I tried to force the panic down as Henry and I both smiled for the camera. I snapped the picture and scooted away from him a little, thinking some distance might be best.

But Henry just scooted closer again to examine the picture we’d taken. “We look cute together,” he said jokingly, nudging my shoulder with his.

I nearly wanted to cry. I wanted to shout at him to stop saying stuff like that. Instead, I smiled at him. “Yeah,” I managed. I was proud of myself for not letting my voice shake. “We do.” And I had to be honest: We actually really did. We both had big smiles on our faces (his smile was painfully beautiful), and our eyes were shining. I managed to tear my eyes away and opened Instagram to post the picture:

@JulesMorrison: Getting excited for our first interview with @HenryCavill. As usual, @ScottTayler is still trying to get pretty.

Henry laughed when he read that last bit. “Is it okay if I repost the picture from you?”

I blinked. “Uh, yeah. Sure.”

@HenryCavill: Backstage with the gorgeous @JulesMorrison. Go follow her and give her some love for me.

I blushed when I saw what he’d written. His mixed signals were driving me insane. I knew he was back with Alyssa, but would he really be doing things like this if he wasn’t into me? I needed answers, but was, as always, too afraid to ask the questions. I looked up at him and saw he was smiling brightly at me. It made my stomach do that thing you feel when you’re in a roller coaster, or when you just missed the bottom step of the stairs.

“So, um, how are things with…” I hesitated. I wanted to ask him about him and Alyssa, but chickened out at the last minute. I just couldn’t do it. I had to save myself from as much pain as I
could. I wasn’t sure if I could handle hearing him talk about how happy he was with her. “How are things with Kal? I miss my buddy.”

“So do I,” Henry confessed. “Kal is in Jersey right now, with my parents. I sadly can’t bring him on the press tour, so I had no other choice. But he was doing great the last time I saw him.”

“You know, I was thinking about getting a dog myself, and that is the only thing I’m really worried about. Of course, Hanna will be able to take care of him or her when I’m not there, but it still seems difficult. Having to leave your dog for longer periods of time.”

“It is hard, yes, but it gets easier when you know your dog is with someone you trust to take care of them well. And it’s completely worth it, even if you don’t have them all of the time.”

I gave him a small smile. “I’ll think about it.”

“And let me guess,” Henry started. “If you were to get one, it would be a Retriever of some sorts?”

I smiled, my heart racing in my chest. “You remembered…”

“Of course I did,” he said, smiling back at me. “And a Retriever would fit you. Anyway, what are you up to now? Got a new project?”

“Oh, I did actually. I’m filming a thriller, directed by Vince Grieve.”

Henry grimaced. “I’ve heard he can be a bit of an asshole.”

I let out a harsh, humorless laugh. “You have no idea.”

There was a short knock on the door and a P.A. entered the room. “They’re ready for you.”

Everything was kind of a blur after that. We were led into the studio, where we met the hosts of the show, Stacy Floyd and Jack Carney. They were nice enough, but their interest was more aimed at Henry, as was expected. And then the show began in earnest.

After Stacy and Jack had introduced us to everyone watching, the cameras turned on us. Stacy smiled. “Now, you guys, I’ve got to tell you: I cannot wait to see this movie. Let’s take a look at the trailer, shall we?”

We turned to a small screen in front of us, and the trailer started playing. I had seen it only once; I loved acting, but I never liked seeing myself act much. It probably had something to do with my low self-esteem. What made it even worse were the two kisses they’d included in the trailer—one with Scott and one with Henry. The one with Scott was weird mostly because I knew Hanna was interested in him, and it must be weird for her to see her best friend kiss the guy she liked. But the one with Henry… It was one thing to actually kiss him, to feel his lips on mine and to feel my heartbeat speed up at his proximity, to have him make my head spin—but to actually see the two of us wrapped in each other’s arms, kissing like it was our last day on earth… I didn’t want to sound cocky or anything, but we actually looked like we… belonged. We looked good together.

When the trailer finished playing, Jack turned to us with a smile. “So, it looks pretty intense, huh?”

“Yeah,” Scott said. “It’s a pretty wild ride. I think what makes this movie special, though, is that it’s equal parts of everything. You know, there’s the romance, the drama, the comedy… But what I love most about it is that it sticks so closely to Amelia, Juliette’s character, and her trying to figure out who she is and what she wants out of life.”
“Really? Tell us a little more about what that was like, Juliette,” Stacy said.

“It was interesting. You know, this was my first big production movie, and I wasn’t really used to doing so many takes for one scene, and then there were days where I was just crying nonstop for a scene, and that’s hard, because while you’re filming, you’re kind of drowning in that mindset. But at the end of the day, even despite the dehydration and headache from crying so much,” I joked, “it really was quite satisfactory.”

“So, Henry, tell me how that was, working with Juliette,” Jack said. “Because, as she said, she is quite new to the whole acting thing, and you already have quite a few years on your résumé. Did that… interfere with how you did your job?”

“Not in that way, no,” Henry said. “Juliette is…” He looked at me as he searched for words, and I waited with bated breath, trying not to drown in the blue of his eyes. “She is such an amazing actress. Quite possibly one of the best I’ve ever worked with. There were times where I would just look at her as she was saying her lines and forget that I was supposed to be saying mine, too. I was just too busy looking at her.”

I was fairly certain my whole head was bright red. That was one of the biggest compliments he’d ever given me, and probably also the one that held the most weight with me. Especially now, when I was so used to hearing time and time again that I was a terrible actress. I nearly wanted to cry.

Scott nodded. “I agree. She’s phenomenal. She really carried this movie, in my personal opinion.”

“She really did,” Henry agreed.

“Guys…” I complained, covering my eyes with my hand. “You’re making me blush.”

Henry laughed, wrapping an arm around my shoulders. He pulled me a little closer as he said, “What? You know it’s true, Jules.” He gave me a look that made me realize that he knew that I didn’t know it, however, and that he hated it.

When he’d unwrapped his arm from me again, Stacy turned to me. “So, I saw some pretty steamy kisses in that trailer, Juliette.”

I blushed, already having a feeling where this was going. “I suppose so, yes.”

“Who’s the better kisser of the two?”

I blushed again as I tried to laugh good-naturedly. “You can’t possibly ask me that question; they’re both sitting right next to me!” I looked at both of them, and though I knew my answer, I also knew I couldn’t possibly say it aloud. “There is no answer to that question that won’t get me in trouble.”

Henry raised an eyebrow at me, smirking. “So you do think one of us is better than the other?”

I pointed my finger at him. “Don’t you go putting words in my mouth, Mr. Cavill.”

Scott wiggled his eyebrows at Henry, making the two men bust out in laughter.

I sank down in my seat. “Oh, God…”

Stacy saved the day. “So, have any of you seen the movie already?”

We all nodded. When I’d gotten it, I hadn’t wanted to watch it at first. I was curious, sure, but I could never concentrate on whatever I was watching if I was in it. I was too busy critiquing my own
performance, coming up with ways I could’ve been better in my head. But Hanna had figured out I’d
gotten the movie from Ryan and rounded up all of my friends, forcing me to watch it with them.
They’d all loved it and said I’d been great in it, but the experience had been uncomfortable for me—
to say the least.

“How does that work?” Jack asked. “Like, how do you get the movie?”

“Actually, that’s a pretty funny story,” I said. “Apparently Ryan—the director—is very secretive
about it all, so he mailed it in an unmarked parcel. It had no return address, just my own, and I
remember just looking at it and asking my best friend—who lives with me—if she’d ordered
anything. She hadn’t, so I was really starting to get suspicious, you know? Eventually my friend was
getting sick of my hesitation and just ripped the package open, and out fell a flash drive. Just a flash
drive, no explanation or anything. At that point I was just, ‘What do I do? Do I put it in my
computer? What if it’s a virus or something?’ And again, my friend had enough of me and just stuck
the flash drive into her computer, and all that was on it was an unmarked video file. Then after
another five minutes of me freaking out, she finally clicked play and it turned out to be the movie.”

Stacy laughed. “Does it always work like that? It seems pretty stressful to me.”

Henry shook his head. “No, it doesn’t. That’s actually just Ryan and his paranoid ways,” he joked.
“He was actually supposed to call her to say that it was coming, but I guess he forgot.”

“Actually,” I said, “he did call me, but we were so busy catching up that he must’ve forgotten to tell
me.”

Scott chuckled. “Typical Ryan.”

~*~*~*~*~*~

“Dude, I don’t know what the fuck is up with him, but I kind of really want to punch him.”

I turned to my best friend in surprise at her sudden declaration. I was sitting in the back of an SUV
on the way to a photo shoot together with Hanna and Ella, and it had been pretty quiet so far. “Who,
Scott?”

Hanna shook her head. “No, not Scott. Henry. He’s been giving you lovey-dovey puppy dog eyes as
if nothing’s changed; as if he didn’t get back together with Alyssa. And quite frankly, it’s pissing me
the fuck off. He has no right to give you mixed signals like that.”

“So you noticed it too? I thought I was just imagining things.”

“Oh, you weren’t, dearie,” Ella said. “I noticed it as well. And I honestly think everyone who saw
the show this morning noticed it too.”

I groaned. “Oh, no… You don’t suppose I have to worry about an angry, jealous Alyssa too now,
huh? Guys, I can’t handle another Michelle.”

“She’ll have to go through me first,” Hanna said fiercely. “And besides, there’s no reason the two of
you should ever meet, so you have nothing to worry about.”

“But what if she’s at the premiere tonight?” I asked with wide eyes. “It would make sense for him to
invite his girlfriend to the premiere of his movie.”

“She’s doing a show in Milan,” Hanna reassured me. “I checked.”
I gave her a weird look at that, but then shook my head. “I don’t really want to talk about it anymore. It’s already making my head hurt enough as it is. Let’s talk about you and Scott instead.”

The smile that took over her face made me smile as well. She was usually quite a happy, positive person, but seeing her truly happy lifted up my spirits, too. It was about time she met a guy that made her happy. “It was really, really nice to see him again. There was that spark, back in Miami, you know? But then we started texting a lot and I really got to know him, and then when I saw him today… that spark was like a fire.”

I smiled. “I’m so happy for you, Han.”

A shy smile pulled up the corners of her mouth, taking me by surprise. She was hardly ever shy. “So am I. He promised me we’d go on a date as soon as the American press tour is over. He’ll have time for me then because he won’t be coming with you to Europe.”

“Oh my gosh!” I squealed, grinning. “Ugh, I hate that I won’t be able to be there for it.”

And I hated that I couldn’t be as happy for her as I wanted to be. Not with my own messy love life dragging my every mood down.

“All right, Henry, just wrap your arms around her waist prom-style.”

I hated how my heartbeat automatically sped up as his arms slid around my waist and pulled me close to his chest, his hands resting on my stomach. His scent was intoxicating and the feeling of his arms around me was magical. I didn’t even realize what I was doing until my head was already resting on his shoulder. He smiled down at me and tightened his hold on me.

“All right, now turn to each other and Henry, you put your hand on her cheek, and Juliette, you put your hands on his chest.”

We did as we were told. I felt that familiar spark as Henry’s hand came to a rest on my cheek, his fingers dipping into my hairline. I studied his eyes as he stared back at me. I’d forgotten how extremely blue they were, and how much I loved the brown flecks in his iris. His eyelashes were impossibly long and thick.

Our lips were so incredibly close. All I’d have to do was stand up on my tiptoes and I’d be kissing him. And, oh, I wanted to. It was like I’d been out in the desert all these months we’d been apart, and he was the only bit of water in sight. But he was just out of reach.

“All right, thank you, very good! Now let’s get Scott in there and do a couple more group shots, and then we’ll be done here.”

When we finished up the shoot, we all grabbed our stuff and prepared to leave. Henry and I were the last ones, and before I could walk out the door, he stopped me. “So I’ll see you at the premiere tonight?”

I smiled up at him, feeling my heartbeat speed up for the millionth time that day. This was the first time we’d been alone together in a really long time. “Yes, of course.”

He smiled back at me. “Good.” He leaned down and pressed a kiss to my cheek, his soft lips lingering there for a long moment. I forgot how to breathe until he pulled back again. With another smile, he gestured for me to go through the door first, and I climbed into the SUV, where Ella and Hanna were already waiting for me.
My cheek tingled the entire way home.

When we got to my house, it was time for a quick takeout dinner and to get ready for tonight’s premiere. While we were, my friends slowly started trickling in one by one. I’d invited them all to come to the premiere with me and taken them out shopping for dresses and suits a while ago. It was chaos as everyone got ready all throughout the house I shared with Hanna, but at the same time it was incredibly comforting to have them here with me. It made having to deal with gearing up for my first ever big premiere much easier. It also temporarily made me forget about Henry and all that had happened between us today and before.

Shaye gasped when she saw me. “Oh my God, Juliette, you look gorgeous! Is that a Marchesa?”

I looked down at my dress. It was a tulle gown with a deep V-neckline and was embellished with golden embroidery over the chest, stomach and back. I loved it. “Yeah, it is.”

“Matched with golden Christian Louboutins,” she said appreciatively, shaking her head. “Girl, you are moving up in the world! And let me guess, all that golden jewelry you got going on is from Tiffany’s?” she joked.

“Actually… yeah, it is.” I trailed my fingers over the cuff adorned with leaves on my wrist. This was the most expensive outfit I’d ever worn, and I wasn’t entirely comfortable wearing it. I never once in my life had imagined I ever would.

“You really do look gorgeous, little sis,” Keegan said as he stepped forward and took my hands in his. “You look like some Greek warrior princess.”

“And your hair,” Klarissa murmured, her eyes wide. Ella had braided a headband out of my own hair, and curled the loose strands. “It looks amazing.”

“I could do your hair, too,” Ella said, smiling as she looked at Klarissa’s wavy ginger hair. It fell a little past her shoulders but was much thicker than mine. “We still have time.”

“Would you really do that?”

“Yeah, of course!” Ella said cheerfully, gesturing for Klarissa to sit down in the chair I’d been sitting in before. “Any friend of Juliette’s is a friend of mine, and I always make sure my friends go to premieres looking their absolute best.”

As Ella started combing her fingers through Klarissa’s hair, my other friends fawned over me, making sure to tell me how good they thought I looked.

Braeden whistled as he gave me a once-over. “Damn, Jules. I might have to leave Shaye for you.”

“If you do that, I’ll beat you into the afterlife myself,” Shaye threatened.

“I’ll help,” I grinned.

“You really do look amazing, Juliette,” Alfie said, his eyes wide. He smiled. “You fit into this life, more than I ever could have imagined. Expensive looks good on you,” he joked. “But for real, though, I’m really happy you made it this far. I’m proud of you.”

“Yeah, same, Jules,” Ryley said, in a very rare moment of inhibition. He had a very chaotic and all-over-the-place personality, so this was unusual for him. “I’m proud of where you are now, and you’re gonna get so much further, I just know it.”
“You deserve every bit of success, Julie,” Colin added.

I smiled. “Thanks, guys. That really means a lot.”

Once everyone was ready and looking glamorous (our motley group had never looked so good), we piled into the luxury cars Ryan had arranged to come pick us up. As soon as we were driving and nearing the ArcLight theater, I felt the nerves come back. I was sharing a car with Hanna, Keegan and Klarissa, which might not have been a smart choice. Klarissa was usually pretty quiet and Hanna and Keegan knew me too well, so they were being quiet too. I really could’ve done with some of Ryley and Braeden’s chaos.

“Are you ready for your big night?” Hanna asked.

“No,” I squeaked.

She squeezed my arm. “It’s going to be okay. Look, I know anxiety is a fucking bitch, and it’s been kicking your ass especially hard lately. And that red carpet is going to be chaotic, paparazzi shouting at you to look their way or to answer their questions, flashes going off in your face the entire time. That’s not exactly the best possible situation for someone with anxiety. But I have always firmly believed that you are stronger than your anxiety. You are so incredibly strong, and it beats me up that you don’t realize it yourself. But I also firmly believe that one day you will.”

I smiled at her, trying my hardest not to cry for fear of ruining the makeup Ella had worked so hard on. “I love you. I don’t tell you this enough, but I love you.”


I laughed. “All right, all right, I get it.”

“Good. Because we’re here.”

We got out of the car, and it was chaos immediately. There were fans and paparazzi everywhere, and as my friends hung back a little, I did my mandatory interviews and even signed a few autographs for the people on the other side of the fences—something I never thought I would do. Then once I was done with that, I joined my friends again. “What about a few group pictures, huh?”

“Oh, God,” Cynthia muttered. “Does that mean my face’ll be on gossip sites and stuff?”

I laughed. “Possibly. Then I can finally text you a link and completely freak out,” I teased.

“Say we do it,” Ryley said, grinning as he wrapped an arm around Hanna and Cynthia each.

We laughed as the ten of us posed for the cameras, our arms wrapped around each other. It was the most fun we’d ever had outside one of our usual parties. Even those of us who were usually shy and quiet loosened up, acting sillier than usual. Colin jokingly kissed my cheek and I kissed his right back.

Suddenly the screaming intensified, and I looked around in surprise. I didn’t have to look long. It was like my eyes were attracted to him like a magnet, and they landed on him within seconds. Henry was climbing out of an SUV, looking amazing in a black suit, black dress shirt and black tie. Even from afar, he looked drool-worthy.

The paparazzi were screaming at me to pose solo again, so I shook myself out of my trance and apologized to my friends. They assured me it was fine and everyone broke apart. Hanna gave me a
reassuring squeeze of my arm and a kiss on my cheek before she left me.

I posed for pictures awhile, making sure to keep smiling, knowing all they needed was one frame to make me look ridiculous, but I kept feeling him come closer and closer to me. Eventually I couldn’t take it anymore, so I turned to my left, and stood face to face with Henry. He looked… amazing. He literally took my breath away; I’d forgotten how to breathe. And there was an enraptured look in his eyes as he stared at me that made it even harder to breathe. Everything about the look on his face screamed that he was into me, but when I remembered that he was with Alyssa, nothing made sense anymore.

“Wow, Juliette, you look…” Henry’s voice was hoarse, and he shook his head. “You look like a goddess. I feel like…” He trailed off, his hand reaching out to take hold of the tulle of my dress.

“Like what?” I mumbled breathlessly.

“Like I should be worshipping you.”

“Don’t…” I wanted to tell him not to say stuff like that to me, but my words were drowned out by the paparazzi.

“Henry! Juliette! Smile for the camera please!”

Henry wrapped his arm around my waist. “Ready to do this?”


He tightened his hold on me, pulling me a little closer. “But I am. You can do this. I believe in you.”

And oddly, as Henry smiled down at me, that did make me feel a little bit better.

Chapter End Notes

What is up with Henry and those mixed signals, right? It would drive any girl crazy. On another note, I’m really excited for you to read the next chapter, where Juliette and Henry do press in Juliette’s parents’ home country (which also happens to be mine, haha!). I’m having a lot of fun writing that chapter, so I hope you guys’ll love it just as much.

The lyrics at the start of the chapter are Rewind by Diane Birch.
**Chapter 15**

Chapter Notes

Hey guys! Before you start reading, a quick note: In this chapter, Juliette talks a lot about the architecture in her parents’ home town, so I’ve provided some links so you can see it all as well. I found the buildings too beautiful to not share with you guys! :)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

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**I took your hand**

*Back through lands and streets I knew*

*Everything led back to you*

*So can you see the stars?*

*Over Amsterdam*

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**Monday, November 28, 2016.**

The American press tour wasn’t as bad as expected, mostly because Scott was with us. The European one however… It was just the two of us most of the time, and even though Ella was with me, she couldn’t always be there. But to be honest… I didn’t really mind. It was like we’d never been apart, and when we were together it was easy to forget he was with Alyssa. Things were exactly the same between us, and he was incredibly easy to talk to. And yet there was still that weird tension between us, and I still caught him looking at me weird sometimes.

Okay, all of the time.

It was really strange. I knew he wasn’t into me. He was with Alyssa. But everything about his body language and the looks on his face told me otherwise, and the mixed signals were driving me insane. I tried not to let any of that show, though, and tried to always stay as professional as possible. After all, I had nothing to prove to Henry, but everything to prove to the world. Everything I showed them now, I would probably be known for for a long time.

But now we were at the last stop, and things were a bit different, the last stop being my parents’ home country. As soon as we’d touched down at Schiphol Airport in Amsterdam, all my reserves went out the window. I’d gone to high school here for a year, and I’d actually loved it. The people were more down to earth, their grading system was a hell of a lot better, and it was like getting to know part of my heritage. Plus, I got to spend a lot more time with my grandparents than usual. (I was actually planning to take the train to where they lived and visit them after we were done in the hotel.) But it had been the longest time I’d ever spent without Hanna, which had been the only downside, and also the reason why I’d begged my parents to move back to New Jersey once the year was over.

As soon as we’d collected our baggage, a car picked us up to drive us to the Hilton in Amsterdam.
“So…” Henry started. “Are you excited to be in your parents’ country?”

I smiled at him. I’d been staring out the window, looking at all the trees whizz by, together with tons of cows, sheep and horses, but his question pulled me out of it. “Yeah, I am. I actually went to school here for a year, did you know?”

“What, in Amsterdam?”

“No, in a much smaller town kind of in-between The Hague and Rotterdam. It’s where my parents grew up and where my grandparents still live. I was actually planning to go there today, after we’re done with the press in the hotel, seeing as we have quite a few hours before that late night talk show we need to be on tonight.”

Henry nodded. “True.” He bit his lip, obviously debating whether or not to say something. He opened his mouth and then closed it again.

“What?” I asked.

He hesitated for a moment more before finally taking the leap. “Would you… Would you be okay with me tagging along? I mean, I really don’t want to impose, so if you don’t want me to, I get it. I’d just like to—I don’t know—get a better understanding of you, I guess.”

The question took me aback a little. I hadn’t expected him to be interested in seeing the town I’d spent a year of my life in. “Uh… No, I don’t mind. As long as you don’t mind having dinner at my grandparents’ place.”

Henry grinned. “Would that be the same grandfather I joked about having a drinking contest with?”

I snorted, remembering the morning after (well, the afternoon after) we’d gotten drunk together and he’d jokingly challenged me and my grandfather to a drinking contest. “Yeah, that would be him. Just… don’t bring up the drinking contest, because he’ll actually take you up on it, and remember that we still have a talk show to be on.”

He laughed. “It could be funny, doing an interview while drunk.”

I shook my head. “You do realize we’ll have to sit at a table for an hour, listening to the host talk to other people when he’s not talking to us, and look coherent all the time, right?”

He grimaced. “Right. Who are the other guests? I never really asked about it.”

“Some political person—apparently there’s another political crisis in the Netherlands. Then there’s a comedian, I think, and this music guy. I don’t know who.”

He chuckled. “That still doesn’t clarify a whole lot, but I guess we’ll see tonight. First we have to get through the press at the hotel.”

I groaned. “Ugh, don’t remind me.”

As soon as we got to the hotel (Henry and I had adjoining rooms with a connecting door, which made me feel both anxious and giddy), we got settled in and started getting ready for our interviews. Ella did my makeup first and then Henry’s, and then it was time to go to the separate hotel room we’d be having our interviews in. Some of them—the ones I did without Henry—I did in Dutch, and the others I did in English. I think this was the only country where they’d actually been more interested in me. I guess it doesn’t happen often when someone with a Dutch heritage scores a big movie role, apart from maybe Carice van Houten and Michiel Huisman, who’d both scored parts in
When I was done doing my interviews, I finally had the chance to make a couple of calls, seeing as Henry was still caught up in his last one. First I called my grandparents to let them know they’d be having another dinner guest tonight (they were beyond excited to get to meet Henry, not because he was a famous movie star, but because my mom had apparently told them about him and our ‘crush’ on each other), and then I called Hanna.

“McLynn,” she answered.

I laughed. “Hey, Han. What’s up with you? You never answer your phone like that.”

“I know, but I’ve been watching Grimm, and Nick always answers his phone by saying his last name. It sounds kind of awesome when he does it, so I decided to give it a try.”

I snorted. “God, I miss you.”

It was almost like I could feel her change in mood, even over the phone. “I miss you, too, babe. What’s up?”

“Well, I’m in Amsterdam right now…”

“Right! That was today. Which means that you’ll be coming home tomorrow.”

I tried to focus more on how that meant I would see my friends again and not how it meant that I would have to go back to filming with Vince. But the anxiety in me wouldn’t let it go, nearly giving me a panic attack right then and there. But I forced it back down, instead trying to think about my grandparents, about how much I missed them and how great it would be to see them again. Which brought me back to the original reason I’d called Hanna. “Yeah, I am. But I kind of have a problem right now. Or, well, I guess it isn’t really a problem, it’s just kind of weird.”

“Spit it out, hon.”

“I was going to see my grandparents tonight, right?”

“No, I’m still going to see them. It’s just that Henry asked if he could come with me.”

I heard some loud thumps from the other end of the line, which led me to believe Hanna had dropped her phone. My suspicions were confirmed when she said, “Sorry, dropped my phone. And what?! He wants to meet your grandparents? What’s up with that?”

“I honestly don’t know. He said he just wants to ‘get a better understanding of me.’”

“Uh… weird. I mean, I’d get it if he were single and totally ready to mingle with just you, but he’s with Alyssa. What the hell does he think he’s doing? I mean, you are totally the better girl to be with, and maybe he’s just realizing that now, but… I don’t know, it’s just weird. Part of me is excited for you that he’s interested in you so much that he would want to meet your grandparents, but the other part of me just can’t help but wonder what the hell kind of game he’s playing here. I wish I was there so I could grill him on it.”

I sighed. “So do I. I also wish I had the guts to do it myself. Anyway, what do I do?”

“Honestly? I don’t know. All I can think of is that you just show him some sights and have a nice
dinner with your grand folks. Don’t try to read too much into it, because that’s where it goes wrong, okay?”

I groaned and let myself fall down on the bed. “I’ve been trying not to read too much into it this whole fucking tour, but he keeps giving me these looks that can only be interpreted one way. It’s driving me nuts.”

“I know, honey. Now, I don’t know if this’ll be any comfort at all, but after today, everything will be better. You’ll never have to see him again if you don’t want to. Let him go fuck himself and realize much too late that he isn’t happy with Alyssa. But for now, just try to have fun with him in your parents’ home country as if he was any other friend, okay?”

I nodded, even though she couldn’t see it. “Yeah, okay. Oh, sorry, there’s someone knocking on my door, I’ve got to go.”

“Okay. Love you, babe.”

“Love you, too.” I hung up the phone, sliding it into my back pocket before opening the connecting door between my room and Henry’s.

“Hey,” he said, smiling as he stepped into my room. “I didn’t want to intrude, so I thought I’d knock.”

I smiled at him. “That was very considerate of you, but you don’t have to, next time.” I’d just have to make sure to only walk around naked in the bathroom. Not that I usually walk around naked, but I have a tendency to sit in my towel for ages after I shower.

“So, shall we go? We’d better make the most of our time.”

“Yeah, I just have to grab my coat and my bag, and then I’ll be ready to go.”

“Do you need me to call us a cab, or…?”

“Oh. Um…” I actually hadn’t thought of that. I myself had actually been planning to just use public transit, but I didn’t know if that was the smartest choice for Henry, even though Dutch people were pretty down to earth when it came to the famous. “I was actually planning to take the tram to Amsterdam central station, but I don’t know if…”

“Sounds good,” Henry said. “I’d like to get to know the Dutch culture, and what better way than to travel like them?”

“Um, okay, if you’re sure. The tram stop is just a little walk away. We need to grab line 16.”

“16. Got it.”

We left the hotel and made the three minute walk to the tram stop. We had the fortunate luck of the tram just pulling up, and I paid the fee for both of us, being more familiar with euros than Henry was. We sat down next to each other, our thighs pressed together on the narrow bench.

“So, I’ll have to warn you,” I said, after the tram had passed a few stops already. “As soon as we get out, it’s gonna stink like pot everywhere.”

Henry snorted. “So the rumors about Amsterdam are true, huh?”

“Only in certain places. But I remember being hit with the smell of weed like a freight train every
time I walked out of the station. I assume it hasn’t changed much over the years.”

“Well, thanks for the heads up.”

The tram reached its last stop and we got out, and sure enough, that sickly sweet smell was everywhere. I shot him a grin when I noticed he was grimacing. “Told you.”

“You weren’t kidding.”

I laughed. “The station is just over there. Let’s just buy ourselves a train ticket and maybe something to drink, seeing as we’ll be in the train for about an hour. There’s a Starbucks, or an Albert Heijn to-go.”

“Albert what?” Henry asked, raising an eyebrow.

“Albert Heijn. It’s a Dutch supermarket chain. So, hot beverage or cold?”

Henry chose cold, so we went into the small supermarket. He got a bottle of water while I got myself a bottle of Coca-Cola Life, and we both got a croissant. We’d been so busy with our interviews that we hadn’t had the time for breakfast. Once we’d gotten our tickets, we made our way to platform 14A and sat down on a bench, having to wait six minutes for our train to arrive.

“So, where are we going?”

“Delft,” I told him. “It’s not really all that interesting of a town, apart from having a crooked church that’s not nearly as popular as the Leaning Tower of Pisa, and William of Orange, the first of the Dutch royal family, having been assassinated there in 1584. Actually, he was buried there, and so has every Dutch royal that died after him. And the house where he was assassinated is now a museum, and the bullet holes can still be seen in the wall.”

“Really?” Henry asked, his eyes wide. “This might sound a little morbid, but that’s actually kind of cool.”

“Wait until you hear what they did with his killer.”

“What did they do?”

“Well, he was tortured before they even killed him. They burned off his right hand with a red-hot iron, plucked his skin off with pincers, he was quartered, then they ripped out his heart and—believe it or not—they threw it in his face, and then finally they cut off his head.”

“Wow. Remind me to never piss off the Dutch,” he told me as we boarded the train and found ourselves a quiet seat. We sat opposite of each other, both by the window.

I set my stuff down on the table between us as I said, “You probably shouldn’t. In the seventeenth century, these two brothers, Johan and Cornelis de Witt, were accused of attempting to kill William the third, right? So they were basically lynched by this huge crowd, beaten to death, and then hung upside down in the town square where they were gutted and, well… castrated. Also, their lips, tongues, ears, fingers, toes—basically anything that sticks out—were cut off. Some of it was fed to dogs, but some people were actually bidding on it so they could own a piece of the De Witt brothers. Their hearts were cut out and put on display as some kind of sick trophy. Nowadays, all that’s left is a tongue and a finger, put on display in a museum in The Hague.”

“Oh my God. That is disgusting.”
“I know. I’ll never forget flipping through my history book and seeing pictures of that tongue and
finger. You wouldn’t think so, but especially the finger looked disgusting. It was all slimy and
everything.” I shuddered at the mental image.

“Wow. Just wow.”

“Yeah… So, still want to get to know the Dutch culture?” I joked.

“Yes, I do,” Henry said honestly. “I assume it isn’t all gruesome public executions.”

“No, it’s not. This country has a pretty dark past, as do basically all western countries, but it’s
changed a lot. Did you know the Netherlands was the first country to legalize gay marriage?”

“No, I didn’t, actually. So it’s pretty liberal, huh?”

“You could say that, yeah. Of course, not everyone is, but you have rotten eggs everywhere. Don’t
even get me started on that asshole Geert Wilders. Dutchies often compare him to Draco Malfoy
because of his hair, but he might as well be Voldemort. Or Umbridge.”

“Is he that bad?”

“Yeah. He likes spreading fear. The ignorant asshole likes to convince everyone that the Islam is a
bad thing and they’re all terrorists. He’s a fucking joke. You could compare him to Donald Trump, I
suppose. He even kind of looks like him. Anyway, enough about nasty politics. What else do you
want to know?”

Henry thought for a moment. “What’s the most Dutch thing you can think of?”

“Uh… The food, I guess? It’s all mostly unhealthy as fuck, though, so I doubt you’ll want to try it,
especially considering you’ll have to go back to playing Superman soon.”

He shrugged. “I haven’t had my cheat day yet, so I might be able to try a few things.”

I grinned. “All right. We’ll raid the local supermarket and snack bar.”

As the train stopped in Leiden and more people got off and on the train, Henry asked, “So, what’s
the plan? Did you want to go to your grandparents’ immediately or did you also want to go
somewhere else?”

“I could show you some of the town. I can’t promise it’ll be all that interesting, though. The most
interesting will be the history and the scenery; the houses and canals and everything. Also, it’s almost
December, so the lights will probably be up now. Not that it adds anything now that it’s still light
outside. But otherwise, there’s not much to do in Delft.”

Henry smiled, covering my hand with his. I caught my breath at the strong electric current running
through my veins at his touch. “Don’t worry, Juliette. I’m sure I’ll like it.”

I nodded. I expected him to let go of my hand then, but he didn’t. Instead, he took better hold of it
and started playing with the many rings on my fingers. His fingers felt soft on my skin, and I wanted
him to never stop whatever he was doing. At the same time, I wanted him to stop leading me on
while he was with someone else.

Needless to say, I was both happy and sad when the train finally rolled into Delft station. Except, it
wasn’t entirely as I’d expected it.
“Oh. Um. Okay. This is different.”

Henry curiously raised an eyebrow at me. “What’s different?”

“The station. It used to be above ground, in this really old building.” I looked around at the underground tunnel we were in. It was modern, and the complete opposite of what I was used to. I hoped it hadn’t changed location, otherwise I might not be able to find my way to the old city center. I didn’t mention that to Henry, though, and instead pointed to the escalator going up. “There. Let’s go.”

We went up the escalator and getting our first view of the beautiful vaulted ceiling, depicting an old map of Delft in the traditional Delft Blue color. We encountered more shops, just like there were in Amsterdam. There were fewer of them, though, but I spotted another Starbucks and Albert Heijn to-go. Located near it was a candy shop, and I grinned once I saw what they were sampling.

“I know that grin,” Henry said, his voice suspicious. “What do you see?”

“They’re sampling *salmiak* over there. You said you wanted to try Dutch food, right?”

“What’s *salmiak*?”

“You’ll see. You’re in for a real treat.”

“Oh, God… I don’t like how you’re saying that.”

I just grinned and marched over to the saleslady, greeting her in Dutch and taking a piece of *salmiak* to give to Henry. It was a small, black piece of candy. It was basically black licorice, but with ammonium chloride, making it incredibly salty, almost tongue-numbingly so. He took it from me, but didn’t put it in his mouth. Instead he led us towards the station’s exit, smiling a goodbye to the saleslady. When we were out of hearing range, he said, “I don’t want to insult anyone if I don’t like it.”

“That’s oddly very considerate of you. Well, procrastination time is over. Try it.”

He took a deep breath and bravely put the black candy in his mouth. He chewed for a moment, and soon enough, his features contorted with disgust. “Oh my God, what is that?” He spat it out and threw it in a nearby trash can. “That was disgusting.”

I laughed, throwing my head back. “I know. It’s kind of an acquired taste. They say you need to learn to learn how to eat it, just like you need to learn to drink beer, and they also say the Dutch are some of the very few who actually like the stuff.”

“Then why did you give it to me when you knew I would find it disgusting?”

*As punishment for leading me on all this time.* “Because you said you wanted to get to know the Dutch culture, and *salmiak* is a pretty big part of it. Besides, I thought it would be funny.”

Henry wrapped his arm around my waist, pulling me closer as he said, “You are such a little prick.”

I laughed, trying not to show how affected I was by his proximity. “I know.” We walked out of the station, and I was relieved to find out it was built only a few yards away from the old station. “All right, so, do you want to take the bus or do you want to walk into the city center?”

“Is it a far walk?”
I shook my head. “No, we basically only have to cross this street and then we’re in the center. Well, the edge of the center, but it’s really not that far.”

“Then we’ll walk. Take the scenic route.”

Arm in arm, we walked to the stoplight and waited for the light to turn green. “Watch out for cyclists,” I warned him. “They can get a little crazy here and tend to drive through red lights. Oh, and they drive all over the sidewalks, too, so don’t ever assume you’re safe,” I joked.

“Right. Understood. Oh, hey, my first canal sighting.” He pointed to the murky water, which had multiple ducks swimming around in it.

“There’s lots more of those,” I told him. “Actually, if you live here for a while, you kind of go crazy because you have to go over so many bridges when you’re cycling.”

He laughed. “So you did a lot of cycling when you lived here, huh?”

“You could say that. I cycled to school every day. I also went through the last remaining original city gate, which is kind of awesome. I could show you that as well, if you want.”

We walked through more streets, passing old houses built around the seventeenth century, walking over bridges, and passing in and out of shops. The scenery was unlike any other place in the world. The canals and the architecture were just so purely Dutch, and it was beautiful. The familiar sights made me feel at home, and more at ease than I had in a long time.

“Delft really is a beautiful city,” Henry told me after we’d walked awhile. “I even recognize some sights from paintings I’ve seen before. It looks like not much has changed.”

“It hasn’t. Kind of makes you wonder why my parents moved to New Jersey, huh?” I joked.

“Kind of, yes. But I do get the appeal of the United States, I guess.”

We walked onto the market square, surrounded by shops, City Hall and the New Church. An imposing statue of Hugo Grotius, the man largely responsible for creating international law, stood next to the church.

Henry eyed the building on his left. “What’s this?”

“It’s City Hall,” I told him.

“It’s beautiful.”

I looked at the gray bricked Renaissance style building, with its low tower, lots of windows and red window shutters. “It is, yeah… See that tower?” Henry nodded. “It’s called the Stone, and it was built around 1300. The rest of the building burned down somewhere in the seventeenth century, and the guy who was working on the New Church over there,” I pointed to the church across the square, “was commissioned to build a new City Hall around the tower. In the top room of the addition is a torture chamber, and remember when I told you about how that guy was tortured and brutally murdered for assassinating William of Orange? There’s a chamber underneath City Hall, and he was kept there before his sentencing.”

Henry’s eyes widened. “Wait. So he was actually killed right here? On this square?”

I shrugged. “Probably.”
I laughed and took him to the other side of the square, to the church. “This is the New Church, called so because the other church you can see over there, the one that’s a bit crooked, was already there. They unimaginatively named that one the Old Church. Anyway, before they built the New Church here, it used to be a field of gallows. Story goes that a beggar was kneeling there by the side of it and this guy gave him something to eat, and then they looked up and saw a church standing there. Soon after he saw the vision, the beggar died, but the guy who had given him something to eat kept seeing that church standing there that same January day for thirty years, and so eventually he asked to have it built. He got permission, and it took exactly a hundred years to build. It’s the second highest church in the country. The only one higher than this one is the Dom Tower in Utrecht, built by the same guy.”

“Wow. That’s… quite something.”

I laughed. “I don’t know if that story about the beggar is true, but it was what I’ve been told.”

“Why is the church three different colors?”

I looked at the gothic style building. The bottom was made of brown stone, the middle was white, and the top was sort of blackish. “That’s because it burned down a few times and had to be rebuilt. It was hit by lightning, like, two times, and then of course there’s the explosion of 1654.”

“Explosion?” Henry inquired.

“Yeah, this underground storage exploded. It was filled with about ninety thousand pounds of gunpowder.”

“Holy crap.”

“Yup. It was heard a hundred miles away. Most of the people were gone, visiting a festival in The Hague or something, but they guess at least a hundred people died, and thousands more were wounded. And a huge chunk of Delft was completely obliterated.”

“And you thought I’d be bored,” Henry joked, poking me with his elbow. “You know quite a lot about this town.”

“I suppose I do, yeah. I wanted to know where my parents came from, and I guess I went a little overboard with looking at its history. But history has always interested me, so…”

“Me too,” Henry said, giving me a smile.

“So, are you feeling fit?”

He furrowed his brow at me. “Feeling… fit? As in, attractive?”

“No, as in, physically fit. As in, are you feeling like walking up a few steps?”

“Yes… Why?”

“We can climb the tower if you want. You know, if you feel like climbing a hundred and eight meters up.”

“Wait, we can actually do that?”

I laughed. “I’m assuming that means you want to go up there?”
"Hell yes."

He grabbed my hand and dragged me into the church. We walked all the way upstairs, and we (well, I) were more than slightly out of breath once we’d finally made it to the top, but the view made everything worth it. Delft stretched out beneath us, with its quaint, orange-roofed houses. It was a clear day, and our view stretched out for miles. The view took my breath away, even though I’d seen it before. It was still as gorgeous as the first time I’d seen it. I took out my phone, taking a panorama picture before posting it to Twitter.

@JulesMorrison: Climbed the New Church in Delft together with @HenryCavill and gave him a few history lessons. Muahaha!

Henry’s phone buzzed with my tweet, and he smiled as he read it, before typing up a reply.

@HenryCavill: Never piss of the Dutch, guys. @JulesMorrison

I laughed and retweeted it. “And never forget it.”

“I’ll try not to.” Henry reached out his hand to me. “Come on, selfie time. This is the perfect backdrop.”

I smiled, shaking my head. “Who knew me forcing you into social media would change you so much.”

He raised his eyebrows. “I’ve changed?”

“Well, not in, say, a big way. But when I met you, I never would’ve pegged you as a guy who would ever voluntarily take selfies, and look at you now.”

Henry nudged me with his elbow. “Maybe it’s the person I’m taking a selfie with.”

Despite the cold up at the top of the church, I felt the heat rise to my cheeks. “Oh, shut up. Anyway, let’s take that selfie already.”

Amused, he opened the front camera on his phone, and we posed with our backs to the scenery. He glanced at me before kissing my cheek, and he snapped the picture. His lips were like fire on my cold skin, and it took everything in me to not fall over the edge and down about three hundred feet. Damn him.

He pretended like nothing was wrong, though, and immediately went to upload the picture to Instagram. “I don’t think this picture needs a filter, do you? It’s perfect as it is.”

“Uh… Yeah,” was all I was able to say.

@HenryCavill: Managed to pull my eyes away from this gorgeous lady long enough (but obviously not that long) to enjoy the view. Delft is beautiful. Thanks for showing me around, @JulesMorrison.

I blushed even more furiously as I read the description. I had no idea what to think anymore. So I instead sought out the last way I knew how to distract my mind. “Oh, God… I look ridiculous in this picture. Look at my hair.” It was incredibly windswept, and made me wish I’d worn it in a ponytail instead of down.

“What? No, you look gorgeous. And there’s nothing wrong with your hair.” He smiled as he stepped closer and tucked a piece of it behind my ear. I leaned into his touch as if of my own accord. “It’s
perfect.”

We stood locked in silence like that for a while, just studying each other’s features. Henry was a bit paler now than he had been in Miami, which was understandable. His curls were windswept as well, but I found I kind of liked it like that. His lips were pale and his nose was red from the cold, and that stubble… God, that stubble drove me crazy.

We jumped apart when the door suddenly opened and a group of teenagers stumbled out, all of them panting. Henry and I eyed each other, and we came to a silent agreement to leave before any of them could recognize Henry. We walked down the steps again, and the entire way down, I tried to forget about the moment we’d just shared.

We had lunch at a small place, where I introduced him to some more Dutch food—food he actually liked. After that, I showed him around the city center some more. I showed him my favorite unique shops and the library, where I’d spent quite a lot of my time when I’d lived here for a year. But soon it was getting late and we really had to go to my grandparents’ house. I took him on the scenic route, though, so I could show him the last remaining city gate I’d told him about.

“This is the Eastern Gate,” I told him. “It’s the last one still standing. The others were destroyed in the nineteenth century, though I have no idea why.”

“I love the drawbridge,” Henry said as we sauntered over it. “It kind of makes it feel even more medieval, I guess.”

“I guess it does, yeah. Anyway, everything outside of this gate was built later, so a lot of what you’ll see next is newer than what you’ve seen before.”

“I can see that, yeah. These buildings are a lot more modern already.”

“It’s just gonna get more modern the farther you go. And yet I kind of love the contrast. Like the city knows its heritage but also wants to keep building on that foundation. Kind of like me.”

Henry just smiled at me and we kept walking. After a fifteen minute walk, we reached my grandparents’ street. “Anything I need to know about your grandparents?”

“Um… My grandmother loves stuffing everyone’s faces with food, so beware,” I said, making him laugh. “My grandfather loves watching the news, so it’s always on, even during dinner, but it’s made him a little paranoid. He’s also a little opinionated at times, and I don’t always agree with his opinions, but… oh, well. Otherwise he’s really nice. He’s very kind and always makes sure everyone is cared for. They’re both like that. They’ll love you, I’m sure of it.”

“I hope so.” Was it just me, or did I detect a hint of nervousness in his voice?

I gave him a reassuring smile and rang the doorbell. I heard soft bickering coming from inside, and then the door swung open, the excited faces of my grandparents greeting us. “Hoi, Oma. Hoi, Opa,” I said, stepping inside and giving each of them a tight hug. “I’ve missed you.”

“Oh, we’ve missed you too, dear,” Oma said, pinching my cheek.

“Yes, we have,” Opa agreed. “You should visit more often, and tell your mother that it’s been too long since she’s come by.”

I smiled. “I will. Anyway, Oma, Opa, this is Henry Cavill, my costar on If You Love Someone. Henry, these are my grandparents, Wilhelmina and Frans van den Berg.”
Henry shook their hands. “It’s really nice to meet you. I’m so sorry about forcing myself onto the
guest list so late. I really don’t mean to impose.”

“Oh, nonsense, boy,” Opa barked. He clapped Henry on his back. “It’s no problem at all. Trust me,
you’re just making Will really happy by giving her another mouth to feed. You’ll leave shaped like a
bowling ball, trust me.”

“Frans!” Oma protested, and I had a feeling that if she’d had a wooden spoon in her hand, she
would’ve hit him over the head with it. “Please, sit down and make yourselves comfortable. Can I
get you anything to drink?”

“Told you,” Opa muttered, making Henry and me laugh.

When Oma had provided everyone with beverages, she finally sat down with us. “So, dear, tell me.
How are you?”

“I’m doing pretty well. I’m kind of overwhelmed with everything that’s going on, but other than
that…”

Opa leaned forward, and he looked ready to beat anyone giving me trouble senseless. “What’s going
on?”

I smiled at him. “Nothing for you to get worried about, Opa. It’s just that doing press can be a little
much sometimes if you’re not used to dealing with it. Henry’s been really helpful, though, and I stay
in touch with Hanna a lot, so that helps as well.”

“Oh, I’m so glad the two of you are still friends,” Oma gushed. “Hanna is such a sweet girl. And
what about that guy you always hang out with? Keegan? Are the two of you dating yet?”

“Oh! I protested, feeling myself turn bright red. The question was made even more embarrassing
by Henry sitting right next to me, looking at me with a little too much interest. “No, we aren’t, and
we never will. He’s like a brother to me, and I probably wouldn’t last a week, being his girlfriend.
Besides, he’s very happy with Klarissa. Has been for almost four years.”

“Oma!” I protested, feeling myself turn bright red. The question was made even more embarrassing
by Henry sitting right next to me, looking at me with a little too much interest. “No, we aren’t, and
we never will. He’s like a brother to me, and I probably wouldn’t last a week, being his girlfriend.
Besides, he’s very happy with Klarissa. Has been for almost four years.”

“On. Well, I’m sure there’s someone better out there for you.”

I glanced over at Henry. He was listening intently to the conversation, but his expression was
unreadable. “Yeah…”

Oma perked up. “Hey, how about that Colin guy? I only met him once on your birthday, but he was
nice.”

I laughed. “He’s gay, Oma. But yeah, Colin is extremely sweet, and if he were into girls, who
knows. But no.”

“Oh, that’s a shame… Well, I’d better go check on dinner.” I sighed in relief as she walked back to
the kitchen.

“So, you’re an actor, just like Juliette, huh?” Opa asked Henry before taking a sip of his Heineken.

“Yes, I am,” Henry confirmed, straightening a little in his seat now that he was being directly
addressed.

“Anything I would’ve seen you in?”
“*Man of Steel* is a pretty big one he’s starred in,” I said. “You know, that movie about Superman?”

“Oh, yeah. I think I’ve seen that one.”

“And he played in *The Count of Monte Cristo*. Now I know you’ve seen that one, because I remember Mom forcing us to watch it while we were here for Christmas a few years back.”

“Huh. I always liked the original one better. But that came out quite a while ago.”

Henry nodded. “Yes, it did. It was one of the very first movies I did, actually. I was incredibly lucky to land a part in such a big production so early on in my career. Even luckier still to keep getting roles. It’s a very fickle business.”

“I know. Juliette told me as much,” Opa said. “But look at her, starring in her third movie already.”

Henry smiled at me. “Yeah. I’m really proud of her. Then again, she wholly deserves it. She’s a marvelous actress. Her performance took my breath away.”

I felt a blush take over my cheeks as Oma came back and sat down next to her husband. “It’s about time someone else sees your potential, honey. We’ve been seeing it in you all this time, and soon, the whole world will as well.”

Henry wrapped an arm around my shoulders and pulled me a little closer. “And soon, she’ll realize it herself, too.”

I looked up at him through my eyelashes, trying to figure out what was going on in his head right now. I wish I had the guts to just ask, but I didn’t. When I looked back at my grandparents, I realized we weren’t alone and scooted a few inches away from him. Oma was looking at us with a knowing smile on her face, but Opa regarded us a little more carefully, as if he was more cautious of whatever it was he saw between Henry and me.

I cleared my throat awkwardly, and Henry removed his arm from my shoulders. “So, anyway, how have you two been doing?”

Even despite the unavoidable awkward moments, the evening passed too soon. I had more fun with my grandparents and Henry than I’d expected. They got along incredibly well once the initial awkwardness had transcended, and they had all had a good time teasing me, especially when my grandmother pulled out old pictures of me in the middle of dinner. But eventually it really was time to leave, and Opa dropped us off at the train station to save us some time.

Once we were sitting in the train and were well underway, Henry said, “Your grandparents are really nice people. It seems to run in your family. And your grandmother is a really good cook.”

I smiled. “Yeah, she is. I’ve missed her cooking. I try the same recipes at home, but somehow it never tastes as good.”

“Did you know that might be because you’re making it? And that’s not at all meant to insult your cooking, but it’s scientifically proven that other people’s cooking tastes better, because while you’re making your own food, the smells desensitize you for the taste.”

“Huh. Never knew that. But that would explain it, I guess.”

Henry grinned. “I’m glad I’ve been able to teach you at least something today. You’ve taught me so much that it was starting to make me feel dumb.”
I bumped his arm with my elbow. The train was a lot fuller at this time of the day, so we’d had to sit next to each other in the back of the train compartment. “Hey, you’re smart. You know lots of things that I don’t.”

“Like?”

“That question is impossible for me to answer, and you know it. I don’t know what I don’t know that you do know. If you know what I mean.”

“That’s a lot of ‘know’ in one breath,” Henry teased.

I laughed. “Oh, shut up. Anyway, did you have fun today?”

“I really did, yes. If it weren’t for you, I never would’ve explored the wonderful city of Delft. I might get some nightmares from all the colorful history you’ve told me, but that’s beside the point. I really enjoyed myself today, and I have you to thank for that. Though, I have to say, my favorite part of the day was when your grandmother showed me that picture of you with the pigtails on the top of your head and the 101 Dalmatian trousers.”

I groaned as I sank down in my seat. “Oh, God… I swear, if I didn’t love her to pieces, I would’ve killed her for showing you that.”

Laughing, Henry said, “Please tell me there’s more where that came from.”

“If I say yes, you’ll want to see them. If I say no, you won’t believe me. Either way, you won’t be seeing any more pictures of me when I was younger.”

“Aw, but you were so cute as a child.”

“I swear to God, if you don’t shut up right now, I’ll make you.”

Henry grinned. “Fine, I’ll shut up. You know I’ll get to see all of your baby pictures one day anyway.”

I groaned, because I felt like one way or another, he was right.

“That salmiak was so payback for this moment.”

“Don’t you mean pay forward?”

“Shut up before I force you to eat an entire bag of salmiak.”

Chapter End Notes

This chapter was so much fun for me to write. During my research, I found out stuff about this town that I never even knew, and I’ve lived there. It’s easy to take it all for granted when you walk/cycle through it nearly every day, but writing this chapter made me appreciate Delft’s beauty again. Well worth a visit if you ever think about coming to the Netherlands!

Anyway, enough shameless home country promotion. What did you guys think of the chapter? Other than writing about Delft, I really enjoyed writing Juliette and Henry and how they interact now. I would feel confused too if someone who’s clearly unavailable
kept giving me intense looks and kissing my cheek! Poor Juliette. I'd love to hear your thoughts! Reading your comments always makes me feel like dancing through the room :)

Song at the start of the chapter is Amsterdam by Ed Sheeran.
Chapter 16

Monday, November 28, 2016.

“There you guys are!” my agent said, obvious relief flowing through her as she saw us walking into the hotel. “Have you guys eaten yet? Too bad if you haven’t, because you need to get your butts over to the studio right now. You can’t be late for that talk show. Do you have any idea how incredibly unprofessional that is? Ella is already there, and hopefully she can fix that coup de wind the both of you have going on. Where did you even go?”

“I’m… I’m sorry, Steph,” I said, trying not to laugh at her tirade. “We were visiting my grandparents, and on the way back, the train hit a bit of a delay.” Seriously, you can never trust the trains to arrive on time in the Netherlands.

“Do your grandparents have a wind machine at their place or something?” Steph asked, raking her hands through my still messy hair as she guided us to the car. “Christ.”

Henry and I shared an amused glance before getting in the car. I did realize how stressful it might’ve been for Steph, my poor agent, but I was still too happy. Today had virtually been the perfect day so far. I got to visit one of my favorite cities in the world, got to see my grandparents again, and actually had fun with Henry, against all odds. The day wasn’t over yet, though, and anything could still happen. And I had a feeling anything would.

“Oh, dearie,” Ella chastised me kindly as soon as she saw me. “Come here so I can start untangling that beautiful hair of yours. Have you two been standing in front of a wind machine?”

“That’s what I asked them too,” Steph said.

“No, we didn’t,” I said, and I couldn’t stop a small smile shaping my lips. “We might’ve climbed a three hundred and fifty foot high church, though.”

“Well, I hope you at least had fun.” Ella gave me a look that only I could understand. She was the only one in the room who knew of my feelings for Henry, and she was silently asking if I was okay. I nodded, smiling, answering both of her questions. “Yeah, we had fun.”

As I sat down in a chair and Ella gently started unknotting my hair, Henry said, “It was indeed fun, but I think I’ll have nightmares for a long time to come.”

“Nightmares?” Ella questioned. “Why would you have nightmares?”

“Because Juliette told me lots of colorful stories about decapitation, public castration, dismembering, throwing hearts into—”
“Okay, okay, okay,” Ella said quickly, interrupting Henry’s enumeration of what I’d told him today. “I’ve heard quite enough. Don’t want to give me nightmares as well, do you?” Delicately starting to untangle the next knot, Ella asked me, “Why were you telling him stories like that anyway?”

“I was just telling him my parents’ hometown’s history. And I was also trying to teach him not to mess with the Dutch, which inadvertently means me.”

Henry laughed, actually throwing his head back. “Oh, that’s why you were telling me all that, huh?”

“And why I fed you the salmiak,” I teased, grinning.

“You are a cruel woman, Morrison,” Henry said, smiling as he sank down on the couch standing against the room’s biggest wall. “In more ways than one.”

“In more ways than one, huh? I’m intrigued now. In which ways?”

He just smiled, shook his head, and took out his phone. My smile quickly dropped once I realized he was probably texting Alyssa, so I tried to distract myself by taking out my own phone. It would be around noon in Los Angeles now, so I had no qualms about sending a text to Hanna.

Hey.

hey babe. how r u?

I don’t know. One moment I was good, and the next…

anxiety?

Maybe. Just feeling kind of low about myself.

don’t. ur beautiful & amazing & smart & funny & AWESOME. don’t let nobody getchu down.

I’ll try not to.

i’ll send u some best friend telepathy moral support.

I smiled at that and put my phone back in my pocket. Maybe I was just overreacting. I’d known Henry was back with Alyssa long before he took out his cellphone, so there was no reason for me to be upset about it. I’d just be happy that we’d had this day together, and I wouldn’t have to see him anymore afterwards. That knowledge didn’t exactly make me happy, but it at least made me feel relieved that I wouldn’t have to feel so conflicted anymore. And after a while of not seeing him, surely my feelings for him would slowly die out.

“Who were you talking to?” Henry asked, and that conflicted feeling in me instantly came back when I heard the almost jealous note in his voice.

“Hanna,” I said, giving no further information. “And you?”

He smiled as he looked down at his phone, and I held my breath, fearing for the worst. “My mother,” he said, which came as a surprise. I released the breath I’d been holding in relief, then got mad at myself for feeling relieved, because the statement meant nothing. He was still with Alyssa, and him texting his mother instead of her didn’t change that. “I wanted an update on Kal.”

“Oh. And how is he doing?”
“He’s good. He made a friend at the park today. I seem to miss him more than he does me.”

I grinned. “That’s perfectly understandable,” I teased. “He’s much more adorable than you, so it kind of figures.”

Henry raised an eyebrow in amusement, grinning back at me. “I’m not adorable?”

I eyed him, pretending to think about it for a moment. “Hm, you have your moments, I suppose.” Belatedly, I realized we were pretty much right out flirting, so I attempted to reel it in. “But you’ll see him soon.”

Henry smiled, but there was hint of sadness to it that immediately made me wonder why it was there. “I will, yes.”

Steph had grossly overestimated our lateness, and Ella managed to turn my straight hair into loose waves—a feat I was jealous of because I knew I would never be able to recreate it myself—before she started in on my makeup.

When she grabbed a tube of bright red lipstick, my eyes widened. “Whoa, Ella, are you sure about that?”

“What? The red lipstick? Yes, I am. This color would fit your complexion perfectly.”

“I guess I’m just not really a red lipstick kinda girl. I always worry about getting it all over my face and teeth.”

Ella laughed. “Don’t worry, dearie. This won’t rub off. It won’t even leave a mark on a glass when you drink something. It’s a pain to remove, though, so you’ll probably wake up with it still on tomorrow, but that won’t be a problem, will it?”

I shook my head. “No, it won’t. Go ahead, I guess.”

Ella applied the red lipstick, and I found it did fit my complexion perfectly. It also made me look kind of badass, which was an added bonus.

“Your outfit is over there,” Ella said, pointing to a pile of clothes on the armrest of the couch Henry was sitting on. A pair of Jeffrey Campbells stood under it. “You can change in that room over there. I picked the outfit out for you myself, so I think everything should fit you just fine.”

I nodded in thanks and grabbed the pile of clothes and ankle boots before disappearing through the door. It was a small changing room with just a bench to sit on, but it sufficed for a quick outfit change. I sat down on the bench and surveyed the outfit Ella had picked out for me, discovering that she’d been bolder in her choices than I would’ve been. The outfit consisted of a white blouse and black faux leather pants. The blouse’s material was a little sheer, which meant you would be able to see my bra through it. That realization made me blush, especially once I realized I’d had the (maybe not so) unfortunate luck to have put on a black push-up bra covered in lace this morning. At least it wasn’t the white cotton bra covered in soft pink polka dots I’d also put in my suitcase. The leather pants were also a choice I wouldn’t have made myself. The shoes were more up my alley, but that was probably because I’d been lusting after them for a while, and owned several other pairs of Jeffrey Campbells already. These Litas were black and the heels were covered in spikes and studs. They were bolder than the pairs I owned already, but I loved them nonetheless.

Basically, it was an outfit I would’ve chosen myself if I’d been a lot ballsier than I actually was. I loved it, but I just didn’t have the confidence for it. But I knew it was my only option and had no other choice but to change into the clothes—I couldn’t very well be on television while wearing a
sweater with a gravy stain on the front. Once everything was on, I studied my reflection in the mirror on the door. I looked different. More badass, but still enough of myself to not totally freak out. And if I was being honest instead of constantly hating on myself, I actually looked kind of good. I was right in my assessment of the blouse’s sheer fabric, though. My bra was visible through it, but the lace actually made the outfit look even bolder, in a really good way.

I took a deep breath and went back into the main green room. At first, no one really paid me any attention. Steph was busy on her phone and Henry had his back to me as Ella worked on his hair and makeup. But even though he was the only one to have his back turned to me, Henry was actually the first to notice me. His gaze fell on me through the mirror, and he seemed to stiffen up. “Whoa.”

“Whoa what?” Steph asked distractedly, never taking her eyes off her phone as she typed busily.

“Whoa Juliette,” Henry clarified, turning around in his chair even though Ella held a makeup brush in her hand and was just about to touch it to his face.

She was about to chastise him for moving when she looked at me. A slow grin took over her face. “I was hoping you were wearing a good bra.”

At her words, two extra pairs of eyes swiveled down to my chest, and I fought the urge to cover myself up. “Yeah, well, what if I was wearing a hot pink bra? One of those girly ones that’s only worn by tweens?”

Steph raised an eyebrow. “You own one of those?”

I found myself grow red and regretted saying that. “Well, no. But I do have some bras that would not look good underneath this shirt, and would make me look like a fool while my grandparents are watching.”

Shit. My grandparents would be watching this. That realization nearly made me turn right round and change back into the gravy stained sweater, but Henry’s next words stopped me. “You look amazing, Jules,” he said, sounding awestruck. He looked it, too, and I wondered how many times he’d called me Jules. Not often, if I remembered correctly.

“You think so?” I asked, nervously smoothing down my blouse. Pulling down the fabric only made the bra more visible, making me immediately regret the nervous action.

Henry swallowed before answering. “Yeah. I do.”

“Well, enough ogling,” Ella said, trying to get him to turn back around with her hands. “We don’t have all night, and you’re almost done anyway.”

I blushed at Ella’s usage of the word ‘ogling,’ but tried to distract myself by sitting down on the couch and grabbing my phone to send another text to Hanna.

I’m pretty sure Henry just checked me out.

well duh. u always look gorge.

I don’t know, man. This outfit is pretty ballsy.

ok, now i’m curious. is there a live stream to this thing?

I don’t know, maybe.
what channel?

RTL4, I think?

i’m searching now. good luck babe! <3

I sent a heart back to her, and actually felt a bit better now that I knew she would be watching. It would be as close as I could get to actually having her here with me, and I was grateful that she’d still watch even if she wouldn’t be able to understand half of it, just to support me.

Once Henry was done and had changed his sweater for a slightly more fashionable one, we walked into the studio, where we met the show’s host and other guests. The host was a very jovial man called Jack, dressed in a sharp, stylish suit. He shook our hands firmly, quick to offer us anything we wanted. “Can I get you anything to drink? There’s beer, wine, soda…”

Henry’s face brightened. “There’s beer? I can actually drink beer during the show?”

Jack laughed. “Yes, you can, if you want. We only have Heineken, though.”

“Heineken’s more than good enough for me.”

I chose red wine, and once all that was arranged, Jack introduced us to the other guests. One was a Dutch comedian named Koen, who seemed to suffer from a severe case of ADHD. He was bouncing on the balls of his feet, and his words came out in an excited rush. He was nice enough, though, and certainly funny, cracking a few jokes here and there. There was a politician named Sarah, who was a lot more reserved, serving as a stark contrast to Koen. Then there was Niels, a music producer and a judge on The Voice of Holland, and Jamie, a singer whom he’d made a record with. It was a pretty versatile bunch, but I gathered that was usually the case on this show, so they would attract a bigger audience.

Speaking of audiences, there was one within the studio as well. A few dozen people sat around the table in the center of the studio, curiously regarding us all. It made me feel even more nervous, but I tried to ignore both their stares and muttered conversations. If I started to pay attention to it, I knew my anxiety would rear its ugly head, and that was something that I did not want happening.

Before the show started, Henry was given an earpiece so someone could translate everything that was said in Dutch for him. They wanted to give one to me as well, but I assured them that wouldn’t be necessary. Then we sat down around the table, and as someone started counting down from five, the show started in earnest.

Jack introduced his show and told the viewers who the guests of tonight were before settling on talking to Sarah first. Though I had a feeling that Jack would save us for last, I was pleasantly surprised to see that the other guests were pulled into the political conversation as well. It was basically one big discussion, except Henry and I didn’t know much about Dutch politics, so we didn’t have much to add.

Things got a bit more interesting for Henry and me when Jack shifted to Koen, the comedian. Even as he was telling us about his struggle with cancer, he was cracking jokes and getting us to laugh. He’d beaten it, and was about to tour through the country again in a couple weeks.

“My wife’ll like that,” Koen joked. “I think she’s gotten sick of me and the talking I do. Not even to her, just to the voices in my head.”

“You talk to yourself a lot?” Jack asked, amused.
“Oh, hell yeah,” Koen replied. “I think talking to yourself is healthy. Everyone does it. This is the part where my wife would tell me I’ve surpassed healthy, though,” he said, cracking a grin. He pointed to his head. “I actually heard her say it just now in there.”

As he talked more, I found myself envying the ease with which he spoke, and the ease with which he ridiculed himself. He obviously didn’t really care what anyone thought of him, and didn’t seem to know what embarrassment even was. I wished I was anything like that. But he was also extremely funny, and I made a mental note of his name so I could look him up later.

Then Jack switched to Niels and Jamie, confirming my suspicions that he was saving Henry and me for last. They talked a bit about the song they’d recorded together, and I learned that Niels had been Jamie’s mentor on a previous season of *The Voice of Holland*, and he liked his sound so much that he was determined to work with him for real someday. That day had finally come, and now they performed an acoustic version of the song, Niels on the piano and Jamie strumming an acoustic guitar as he sang.

I understood why Niels so desperately wanted to work with Jamie. His voice was like molten caramel, and the song fit him perfectly. I found myself bobbing my head along to it, listening intently. It was a catchy song, but not one of those empty ones you so often heard on the radio. I loved it, and knew I would be downloading it on iTunes as soon as I had the chance.

“So, Henry,” Jack started, “do you like musical competitions?”

“As much as the next guy, I guess,” Henry answered. “The only problem is that I don’t really have the time to watch them, so I can’t get into it as much as I would like. I’ll be watching the auditions, and the next thing I know, filming has gotten in the way of me watching and they’re announcing the winner already.”

“What about you, Juliette?”

I set my wine glass down after taking a sip, trying not to choke at the surprise of being addressed. “Honestly, competitions of any kind sort of make me feel uncomfortable. There’s always so much talent, and I always want everyone to win. I hate seeing someone sent home. At the same time, I’m also highly competitive, so I especially can’t handle seeing the one I was rooting for sent home. So I usually choose not to watch at all,” I joked.

Henry elbowed me and teased, “You should enter a singing competition, Juliette. You’re definitely good enough.”

At that, Jack raised an eyebrow, clearly interested. “You can sing?”

I laughed good-naturedly, trying not to glare daggers at Henry for putting me on the spot like that. “Honestly, competitions of any kind sort of make me feel uncomfortable. There’s always so much talent, and I always want everyone to win. I hate seeing someone sent home. At the same time, I’m also highly competitive, so I especially can’t handle seeing the one I was rooting for sent home. So I usually choose not to watch at all,” I joked.

“I’ll be the judge of that,” Niels said, grinning at his bad pun. “Can you sing something for me?”

I felt myself grow red. “Oh, God…”

“No, no, it’s okay. I’ll sing something. I apologize in advance if I break any glasses.”

Henry gave me a reassuring smile as I took a deep breath, and I realized he actually did like my
singing (though, to be honest, the only time he had clearly heard me sing was while we’d both been drunk), and that made me feel a little more confident—but only a little.

“It’s just a drop in the ocean / A change in the weather / I was praying that you and me might end up together / It’s like wishing for rain as I stand in the desert / But I’m holding you closer than most / ‘Cause you are my heaven.”

When I finished, the whole studio was silent for a moment, making me wish I’d never sang for them. I wanted the ground to break open and swallow me whole. I wanted to cry and run out of the studio. But then people started applauding.


I blushed, figuring he was just saying that to be polite, to make me feel like less of a fool. “Thank you.”

Jamie leaned forward, resting his elbows on the table. “That was an amazing song. Did you write it?”

Shaking my head, I said, “No, it’s called A Drop in the Ocean, and it’s by Ron Pope, an amazing independent artist.”

“But seriously, though,” Niels said. “Are you sure you don’t want a career in music?”

“I’m sure.”

“Speaking of your career,” Jack said, deftly steering the conversation away from getting more awkward than it already was—for me, at least. “You’re still a pretty unknown actress, but I have a feeling we’ll be hearing more from you soon.”

I smiled. “I would hope so.”

“Now, were you born in the Netherlands? Because I heard you have Dutch blood streaming through your veins.”

“You heard right,” I said, with a much more genuine smile, “but I wasn’t born here. I was born in Newark, New Jersey, but my parents were born in Delft, here in the Netherlands. They moved to the States before I was born, but they raised me bilingually, so I do speak Dutch fluently.”

“We saw some tweets today about history and not pissing off the Dutch. What were those all about?” Jack asked, amusement and intrigue clear on his face.

Henry laughed. “Juliette taught me some stuff about Delft’s history, and what they did to William of Orange’s killer. That was pretty brutal.”

I just grinned.

“Hence the ‘don’t piss off the Dutch’ tweet.”

“Hence that tweet,” Henry confirmed.

“So, you two seem to be getting along quite well. Was it always like that?”

“It was, yeah,” Henry said, and then he grinned. “Juliette literally fell for me the moment she first saw me.”
“Oh, God,” I grumbled, covering my face in embarrassment. I resisted the urge to kick him under the table.

Jack obviously couldn’t let a scoop like that go, so he said, “Explain, please?”

I uncovered my face again, deciding to take the lead before Henry could embarrass me again. “It was when we were doing a screen test together. I hadn’t gotten the role yet—it was actually between me and four other girls, I think—and I was really nervous. I didn’t even know Henry would be my costar and hadn’t met him yet either. So, naturally, I walk into the room and the first thing I do is trip, sprawling all over the floor. That was literally Henry’s first impression of me.”

Henry laughed. “Don’t worry, you looked totally adorable as you fell. And as far as first impressions go, I’ve seen much worse, especially when we started doing the scene. This girl completely blew me away, and I knew she should be the one playing Amelia. I told Ryan, the director, as much. Then, a few hours later, I ended up at the restaurant she worked at back then, and a week later I—quite literally—ran into her in a bookstore. I guess it was kind of meant to be that we would be playing opposite each other.”

Hearing him sum it up like that, it actually sounded like we were meant for more than that. Which made the sting of him being with Alyssa even worse.

“That story alone sounds like a movie,” Jamie said.

Henry laughed. “I guess it does, yes. I was captivated by her from the start, and soon, the whole world will be. Her acting is just so…” He paused as he searched for the word. “Sublime. I can’t really describe it any other way. She’s just so good. It’s like she becomes the character, and it’s so easy to get sucked into her performance. So easy, in fact, that I often forgot that I wasn’t a spectator but actually had lines to say. She made me mess up more than I would’ve liked.”

I blushed. “I did not,” I protested. “You were great. You made playing Amelia easy, because you were so good at being Noah.”

“Oh, God,” Koen said, grinning. “This is starting to sound like an ‘I love you more’ argument. Do you have any popcorn, Jack?”

“Sadly, I don’t. We have pretzels, though,” Jack joked back.

“We’ll stop,” Henry said with a smile. “But seriously, though, I need everyone to know how good she is, because she wholly deserves every bit of praise in this world.”

“Stop it. You’ll make me cry,” I protested. I’d said it jokingly, but the statement was no joke at all. I already felt the tears sting behind my eyes. My anxiety had played up more than I had realized, and his words amped up my emotions even more. I hoped the talk show was almost over, because I knew I wouldn’t be able to keep my emotions in check for much longer.

“All right, all right,” Henry said, a soft smile shaping his lips. “But seriously, though, everyone should watch this movie, even if it’s just to see her brilliance, because I was not kidding about that. She’ll go incredibly far in this world.”

I actually kicked him under the table this time, and he just laughed. “You’re such a…” I searched for the words, but I couldn’t find any. All I could think of were curse words, and I wasn’t sure if I was allowed to cuss or not.

“All right, I’ll stop praising you before you start force feeding me that salmiak stuff.”
“You two clearly are pretty close,” Jack noted.

I nearly said that we used to be, but swallowed the words just in time. Instead, I said, “I guess you’re kind of bound to, after spending so much time together for nearly three months straight.”

Henry nodded. “I’ve formed a few tight bonds throughout my career, and I’m convinced Juliette is one of them. I guess I kind of knew the moment she literally stumbled into my life.”

~*~*~*~*~*~

“Great interview, guys,” Steph said once it was all over. “I loved the banter the two of you had going on, and I’m sure the audience ate it all up too. And Juliette, seriously, are you sure you don’t want a singing career? I could totally manage to get you a record deal with those pipes of yours.”

I grimaced uncomfortably. “I’m sure, Steph. Acting is more up my alley.”

“If you say so,” Steph shrugged. “Anyway, you both did great, and Juliette, congratulations on finishing your first real press tour. You did fantastic and exceeded expectations everywhere. People all over the world have fallen in love with you, which was exactly the plan. Have you even seen your follower count on Twitter recently?”

“No. Why?”

“Just check.”

“Okay…” Curious now, I managed to wriggle my phone out of the front pocket of my faux leather pants and unlocked it. I opened the Twitter app and went to my own profile.

**Juliette Morrison**

@JulesMorrison


**216 FOLLOWING      332K FOLLOWERS**

My eyes widened as I looked at the number staring back at me. After a moment or so, I finally managed to pull my eyes away from my screen, looking at Steph with disbelief. “Are you serious? Well over three hundred thousand people are reading my tweets? God, I’ll have to be more careful with what I tweet.”

“Nonsense,” Henry said. “I always love your tweets.”

All the more reason to be more careful if he reads them too.

“Wait. These aren’t bought followers, are they?” I verified. “I always hate when people do that.”

Steph laughed. “No, they’re not. Every single one of them chose to follow you of their own free will. So instead of being more careful with your tweets, I suggest you actually tweet more. Make following you worth their while.”

I nodded slowly. “Okay, I will.”

“Anyway,” Steph said, clapping her hands together, “you’re free to do whatever you want. Go celebrate, or finally get some much needed sleep. It’s all up to you. I, for one, am gonna choose the
second option. You guys need a ride back to the hotel?”

“Uh, yeah, I do. Just let me change back real quick,” I said, grabbing the clothes I’d been wearing before.

“You don’t have to change back,” Ella said. “They’re your clothes. You can keep them.”

“Really, Ella? Oh, thank you.”

Ella grinned. “Don’t thank me. They were bought with your money.”

I just shook my head with amusement before gathering my stuff and following the others to the SUV waiting for us out back. Once we were headed to our hotel, I fished my phone out of my pocket again, finally getting the chance to check the text message from Hanna I’d noticed earlier.

u were great!!! i forgot how much i actually miss ur pretty face. u looked gorgeous, and that SHIRT. holy crap gurl.

It wasn’t too much?

  1. u looked perf. and u gotta sing more often.

You know I won’t. Anyway, I love you, and I’ll see you tomorrow.

YAY! love u 2.

I wrestled my phone back into my pocket just as we pulled up at the Hilton. Noticing my high heels, Henry lent me a hand to help me out of the car, and I shot him a grateful smile.

When we were in the elevator and quickly going up, Steph and Ella hugged us goodbye, seeing as they would have to get off one floor below us.

“I’m so proud of all you’ve done, honey,” Ella whispered into my ear as she hugged me tightly.

“You did it. Stay in touch, okay, dearie?”

I nodded. “I will. Thank you for everything you’ve done for me, Ella. It means more than you could ever know.”

I couldn’t see it, but I knew she was smiling. “It was my pleasure. You really have become a daughter to me.”

I blinked away my tears and hugged her even tighter. “I love you, Ella.”

She pulled back, giving me a warm smile. “I love you, too, dearie. Now, go make your dreams come true. I believe in you, and if you ever need me, I’m just a phone call away.”


Ella winked. “See you soon, Juliette.” She stroked my cheek as the elevator doors slid open, and with one last smile, she was gone.

Once we were alone in the elevator, Henry said, “You two really have grown close, haven’t you?”

I nodded, still trying to blink my tears away. “Yeah, we have. She’s like a mother to me, really.” The elevator doors slid open again once it reached our floor, and we walked up to my door, where we
halted. “Well…” I said slowly, not sure where to start. Part of me wanted to invite him in, and part of me figured that would be totally awkward and, above all, inappropriate. “I had a lot of fun with you on this tour. More than I thought I would.”

Henry grinned. “What are you talking about? It’s always a fun time with me.”

He was right. I did always have fun with him. But he also brought me a shit ton of unwanted anxiety. So I just smiled and rolled my eyes. “That wasn’t what I was talking about, Cavill. I meant that stuff like this is pretty hard for someone as anxious as I am. But I managed, and I guess you did help in some ways. It was nice to have someone around who knew what he was doing.”

He smiled. “I’m glad I could help.”

“Yeah… So, anyway, good night.”

His smile turned wistful. “Good night, Juliette.” He hesitated for a moment before giving me a hug and kissing my cheek.

The skin his lips had touched still tingled after I’d closed my door and sat down on my bed. That damned, gorgeous man. I sighed and started taking off my shoes, smiling a little as I trailed my fingers over the spikes and studs on the heel. I’d forgotten to thank Ella for these. I let myself fall back on the bed, my arms stretched above my head. I felt incredibly tired after this long and stressful press tour, but I somehow knew I wouldn’t be able to fall asleep any time soon. Pretty much right when we’d arrived at the studio the talk show was held in, the anxiety had started creeping back, and it refused to let go.

This was it. I’d most likely never see Henry again, unless, if by some happenstance, we’d run into each other again, but it seemed unlikely we’d bump into each other again in a Barnes & Noble, and I wasn’t working at Harvey’s anymore either. And as the cold hard truth dawned on me, my anxiety came back full blast. I’d never see Henry again and I would have to return to my own life, a life that involved filming a movie with an abusive director.

An ice cold hand squeezed my heart at the thought of going back to Vince. I didn’t want to go back to working for him. I wanted to quit. I wanted to hide in the Netherlands forever. I wanted to go home. I wanted my parents. I wanted Hanna.

I wanted Henry.

I groaned and got up from the bed again, pacing around my room. It was all I could do not to rip my hair out. Needing something to do, I walked to my bathroom to take my makeup off, but my reflection made me halt. A scared girl dressed like a badass stared back at me. The red lipstick, wavy hair and sheer blouse with the sexy lacy bra underneath made me look fierce, but the look in my eyes told an entirely different story. I felt like a fraud in my own skin.

God, I needed a drink.

I promptly turned back around and opened the connecting door between my room and Henry’s.

“Let’s get drunk.”

Henry was sitting on the edge of his bed, his phone in his hand. He looked up at me in surprise, his eyes wide in the most adorable way ever. “Let’s… get… drunk?” he asked, as if confused by the statement’s meaning.

“Yes. Let’s get drunk. Let’s celebrate finishing this tour. I need to get my mind off… off everything, really,” I said, refusing to admit that I was scared of what the future held for me. “I kind of just want
to get obliviously and blissfully drunk with you and forget the world at least for one night.”

His brow furrowed in concern. “This is really unlike you, Juliette. Do you want to talk about whatever it is that’s bothering you?”

“No,” I said, shaking my head. “That’s the whole point of getting drunk. I don’t want to talk, I want to forget. So, do you want to get drunk with me or not?”

Henry clearly wasn’t satisfied with that answer and wanted to ask more, but eventually decided against it. He shook it off and smiled. “Sure. I never say no to alcohol. You can start in on the mini bar, and I’ll order more up to the room, because I’m guessing just that won’t be enough for what you have in mind.”

I eyed the mini bar, seeing only a small bottle of vodka and an even smaller bottle of whiskey. “No. It definitely isn’t.” Nevertheless, I grabbed the bottle of vodka, uncapped it, and took a sip. Well, okay, it was much more than a sip. I winced as the clear liquid burned my throat on its way down. It also didn’t taste that good, but it was too late now. I’d already made up my mind.

“Whoa, easy there, eager beaver,” Henry said, his eyes wide. “Obliviously and blissfully drunk does not mean alcohol poisoning, okay?”

I nodded, deciding he was right, and took a much smaller sip after that.

About an hour later, I’d almost reached that obliviously and blissfully drunk state I was so desperately craving. I’d grabbed my laptop from my room and turned on my music. It was on pretty loud, but we hadn’t had any noise complaints so far, so the walls were probably soundproofed, or the room next to Henry’s was vacant. I didn’t really care either way and tried to lose myself in the music and the alcohol.

I laughed as I grabbed Henry’s hands and we spun around in a circle as a bass-heavy song played on my laptop. “Now, isn’t this much better?”

Henry smiled, clearly intoxicated himself. He hadn’t downed his drinks as fast as I had, but he’d still consumed quite a few of them. “Much. I like seeing you happy.” He frowned. “I don’t like seeing you not happy.”

“Really?” I asked, raising an eyebrow skeptically. Because lately, most of my unhappiness was caused by him.

He nodded, resting his hands on my hips and pulling me closer. “Really. I care about you, Juliette Morrison.”

I smiled, wrapping my arms around his neck and tangling my fingers in the curls at the back of his head. “I care about you too, Henry Cavill.”

He smiled back at me, and its brilliance nearly blinded me. He was so beautiful. He cared about me. It was like my heart was soaring into the sky, and I forgot every negative emotion I’d felt when it came to him. Stupidly, in my highly intoxicated state, I even forgot that he was with Alyssa. I guess that was my first mistake. My next mistake was pulling him even closer, our hips grinding together as we danced. The next mistake made wasn’t mine, but Henry’s.

“You’re so beautiful,” he whispered, his voice hardly audible over the music. I probably wouldn’t even have heard it if I hadn’t been so close to him. “You’re so beautiful it actually hurts me sometimes.”
I stared into his eyes. Those beautiful blue eyes with that brown fleck that I loved so incredibly much. “Yeah?” I asked, my voice cracking.

Henry nodded and rested his forehead against mine. He had to bend over quite a bit now that I was barefoot. “Yeah. And this outfit…” He played with the hem of my shirt and shook his head. “You’re so beautiful.”

I couldn’t look away from those goddamn eyes. They were hypnotizing, and matched with his words and the alcohol buzzing through my veins, they basically made me a goner. I still had a very small sliver of common sense left, though. “Henry…” I protested, wanting to tell him to stop saying stuff like that to me. Because if he didn’t stop, I didn’t know what I would do.

But I never got the chance to say what I wanted to say. Henry shook his head and gently pressed a finger to my lips. “No, Juliette. I am so incredibly tired of this. I’m so tired of holding back.”

And he pulled his finger away, only to replace it with his lips. There was only Henry and the feeling of him pressed against me.

I was on fire everywhere he touched me. I ached to be touched even more, to be kissed even harder. I kissed him back almost feverishly, all of my pent up frustration pouring out of me. We were a clash of lips, tongues and teeth, mixed with an almost animalistic need.

His hands on my hips, he pushed me back until I hit a wall. He had me trapped there, but I couldn’t care less. He could lock me up in a tower like Rapunzel if it meant he’d keep kissing me this way. We’d kissed so often as Amelia and Noah on the set of *If You Love Someone* that I was sure I knew his kisses inside and out, but I was mistaken. Kissing Henry was entirely different when we were ourselves and completely alone. There was no crew around us, watching our every move, and no Ryan to give us any directions. There was only us and our need for each other. And, oh God, he was such a great kisser. I could kiss him forever and never get sick of it.

His hands slowly moved upward, pushing the fabric of my shirt up until his hands were splayed out on my waist. They were warm and softer than expected, even as his fingers dug into my skin, pulling my hips even closer to his. My own hands traveled to his face, relishing in the contrast of his soft skin and rough scruff. I scraped my nails over the stubble covering his jaw, and he released a soft moan. The sound made me weak in the knees, and if Henry hadn’t been pressing me so closely to the wall, they probably would’ve buckled. The deep sound was so goddamn sexy, and I was determined to hear it again. Keeping one hand on my waist, his other moved up to my face, cupping my cheek before slowly trailing down to my throat, where he skillfully undid the top few buttons of my shirt.

Henry pulled away from my lips and just stared at me for a while. “You drive me crazy,” he mumbled. His eyes were dark and his accent seemed thicker than usual, which I was not complaining about in the least. “You’ve been driving me crazy for so goddamn long.”

“Yeah?” I breathed. It was all I could manage.

Henry just nodded before he dipped his head down and started kissing my neck. I moaned as he sucked on a particularly sensitive spot, and I threw my head back to grant him more access. As he sucked on my skin, most likely creating a hickey, he continued to unbutton the rest of my shirt. When the last button popped, he slid the fabric off my shoulders, letting it flutter to the ground. Deciding that was highly unfair, I pushed up his sweater and he helped me take it off. I threw the garment away and it landed on my laptop, making it fall shut, abruptly cutting off the music. It wasn’t like I cared. I hadn’t taken notice of the music anymore since the moment he’d started kissing
me. My hands didn’t know what part of his newly bared skin to touch first. His arms, his shoulders, his chest, his abs… There was so much soft skin, so much hard muscle, all for me to explore. He was perfect, as if his body was sculpted by the gods themselves.

Pretty soon, both our pants followed, landing in a messy heap on the floor. Henry lifted me up with remarkable ease and I wrapped my legs around him so I wouldn’t fall as he carried me over to his bed. He gently lay me down on my back and hovered over me.

“So beautiful,” he murmured as he trailed a hand from my throat all the way down to my thigh. I ignited everywhere he touched me, but the real heat came from his mouth as he pressed soft kisses to my jaw, slowly trailing down to my throat, my chest, and finally my breasts. “This bra has been driving me fucking crazy from the moment I first saw it,” he grumbled.

I couldn’t help but smile. “Want me to keep it on, then?”

“Hell no,” he growled. He slid a hand under my back and deftly undid the hook before tearing the bra away from my body and throwing it across the room. He smirked at the sight before him, as if he was definitely liking what he saw. And for once in my life, even as I lay half naked underneath him, I actually felt beautiful.

He cupped one breast in his hand as his mouth closed over the nipple on the other one. The sensation felt so good that I actually saw stars dance in front of my eyes, and I moaned, gripping at the curls on top of Henry’s head. I felt him smile, turning me on even more. Once he felt he’d given my left nipple enough attention, he moved to the other one, distracting me so much that I didn’t realize where his hand was going until it was too late.

I gasped as his hand dipped under my underwear and his middle finger slipped into me. The feeling of his hand down there and his mouth on my nipple almost proved too much and I arched my back, only giving him even more access to my core. He was talented with his mouth, but almost even more so with his hand. He had me shaking and quivering within minutes.

He tugged the black hipster down to my knees, and I kicked them off the rest of the way before ridding him of his boxers. I wrapped my hand around him, discovering he was already hard and bigger than I’d expected.


“I’m all yours,” I whispered back, pressing a long, sensual kiss to the base of his throat.

He rolled over, obviously looking for something, and when he came back, he was holding a condom in his hand. My heart beat wildly in my throat at the realization that we were really doing this. As if there was any other possibility. As if there was any other outcome from the moment he’d started kissing me.

When he finally slid into me, it was like the last puzzle piece falling into place. We fit perfectly together. I’d wanted this for so long, and apparently he had too. How could this moment be anything other than perfect? As he slowly moved in and out of me, we never broke eye contact. I couldn’t look away from him. He was so incredibly perfect that it nearly ached, and the only thing that would soothe the pain would be to be even closer to him. He kept whispering my name as if he was in awe of me, and my intense love for him solidified. The bond that had started growing between us from the moment we’d first met blossomed even more now. It sounded cliché, but in this moment, I really did feel like we were meant for each other.
This moment was perfect.

We were perfect.

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Tuesday, November 29, 2016.

When I woke up the next morning, everything felt perfect. I was the happiest I’d been in a very, very long time. I was naked in the arms of the man I loved, just like I was supposed to be. He was warm and soft and his arms were wrapped loosely around me as he slept. My head was resting on his chest and I could hear his slow, even heartbeat. It was like I was in a cocoon of happiness.

But that cocoon was more like a fragile bubble, and it burst too soon.

As soon as I realized what I’d done last night, my eyes flew open in alarm. I was naked in bed with Henry. I’d slept with Henry last night. I’d helped Henry cheat on his girlfriend. This was wrong on so many accounts, and I didn’t know what to do. One things was for sure, though: I couldn’t stay in his arms and pretend to be asleep, hoping that would magically fix everything. Things like this couldn’t be fixed.

Carefully, praying to my last remaining lucky stars that I wouldn’t wake him, I slipped out of his arms and out of his bed. Gathering my clothes took a lot longer than I would’ve liked because they were strewn all over the room, but I managed to do it quietly. Taking my laptop, I escaped into my own room. Once I was there, I was able to breathe a little easier, but not much. I packed all my stuff in a hurry, but halted when I reached the bathroom and saw my reflection in the mirror on the wall.

I had way obvious sex hair. Actually, I had way obvious sex everything. My makeup was smeared, but just like Ella had warned me, the red lipstick was still perfectly in place. To my horror, there was a hickey where my neck met my shoulder. I hurriedly brushed my hair and put it up in a careless bun before attempting to remove my makeup. Everything else came off easily, but the lipstick remained obstinate.

I sighed, angrily throwing the wipes into the small trash can beside the toilet. Makeup should be the last thing on my mind right now.

Gathering the rest of my stuff, I stashed it all away in my suitcase. Doing one last sweep of the room to make sure I had everything, I left my hotel room. I checked out at the reception desk in the lobby, and once everything was taken care of, I hurried out of the hotel, flagging a taxi to take me to the airport…

…and left Henry’s life forever.

Chapter End Notes

Well then……

The song at the beginning of the chapter is Take Me On The Floor by The Veronicas.
Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

You have faded my reality like leaves that turn to dust
Fell asleep inside a fantasy and woke up feeling lost
Now I’m terrified and restless but I just cannot escape
I wish you had words to cool this fever that is killing me

Wednesday, December 14, 2016.

I was a terrible human being.

If I’d thought badly of myself before, I’d hit a new low now. I’d knowingly slept with a guy who I knew was already taken. Granted, I’d been drunk off my ass and also high on him, but that was no excuse. It didn’t matter how much I’d drank, it didn’t matter how intoxicating he’d been, and it definitely didn’t matter how madly in love with him I was.

Henry was with Alyssa. That was what that mattered. What mattered was that I’d sunk to a level I’d sworn I’d never sink down to. I used to be the kind of girl who would never ever cheat on someone—and technically I’ve still never done that, but knowingly helping someone cheat was just as bad. No matter how in love with him I was, I never should’ve crossed that line.

It had been weeks since that goddamn night, and Henry and I hadn’t spoken since. I couldn’t bear to seek contact with him for obvious reasons, and he hadn’t sent me as much as a text either. And really, what would that text even say? ‘Thanks for the sex but I can’t ever see you again’? Exactly.

I hadn’t told anyone about that night. The secret was honestly eating me up from the inside out. I was pretty sure Hanna knew that something bad had gone down in Amsterdam, but I didn’t have the guts to tell her. I already thought lowly enough of myself, and I didn’t need her to join me.

And then there was Vince… He was perfect at reading my moods, and not in a good way. He seemed to know when I was feeling down, and did everything in his power to make me feel worse. If he noticed something he said got a reaction from me, he was sure to say it again at a time he knew I was already vulnerable. And honestly, after what I’d done, I actually felt like I deserved it. Filming this movie with him was like a worse version of prison. The good news was, though, that there were only a couple more weeks left of my sentence. Just two more weeks and I’d be free from constant abuse, apart from my own.

“Do you think I could just skip work today?” I asked as I clutched a giant cup of tea at the breakfast bar. “I don’t feel like going to set today.”

“Honestly, you probably should skip work. You don’t look so well.”

“I don’t feel so well.” I sighed. “But if I don’t go, it’ll only give Vince even more ammunition and I don’t want that, either.”
Hanna leaned over the bar and pressed her hand to my forehead. “Honey, you are burning up.”

“No, I’m not,” I protested. “It just seems that way because your hands are cold.”

Hanna gave me a pointed look. “I was just holding a cup of coffee, Jules. My hands are not cold. You are, however, having a fever, and if you aren’t gonna call Vince and tell him that you can’t come in today, I will.”

“Hanna, no, you can’t do that. You don’t understand; there are filming schedules to uphold. Even if this movie was directed by someone I do like, I wouldn’t just be able to call in sick.”

Hanna sighed and rubbed a hand over her jaw, letting me know she was getting frustrated with me. “At least let me take your temperature.”

“Fine,” I grumbled.

Several minutes later, Hanna exclaimed, “A hundred and four degrees? Dude, how did you even get out of bed? You are not going to work, even if I have to barricade every damn door and window in this house. Give me your phone, now.”

Reluctantly, I slid my phone out of my pocket and handed it over to her. There was no use in resisting, I knew. She would just wrestle me for it, and in my state, it wouldn’t last long before I’d have to surrender it over anyway. “Just… Go easy, okay?”

She gave me another pointed look before unlocking my phone and searching in my contacts for Vince’s phone number. She dialed it and pressed the phone to her ear. Within seconds, her face contorted with disgust. “Is that really how you greet the star of your movie? My God, you are…” Seeing my face, she halted her words and took a deep breath. “All right, never mind. Either way, I’m calling to say that she won’t be able to come to work today, due to a fever of a hundred and four degrees.” As Vince responded, her disgust turned to pure anger. “Excuse me? Quite frankly, I don’t give a damn about what you think. What matters is that Juliette is sick and she won’t be able to work today, unless you want the rest of your cast and crew to get sick as well.” Vince said something else and Hanna laughed harshly. “I already knew you were a piece of… work, but this just confirms it. Either way, no matter how much of a—okay, I really can’t hold back this time—how much of an asshole you are, Juliette won’t be coming in today. I’m sure you’ll be able to figure something out seeing as you’re so damn smart. Have a good day now.” She angrily ended the call and slammed the phone down on the breakfast bar.

“Oh, God…” I groaned.

Hanna turned to me, a mixture of anger and disbelief on her face. “Is this really how he talks to you?”

“I didn’t hear his half of the conversation, but probably, yeah.”

“Oh my God, if I ever meet him in person, I’m gonna fucking kick him in the nuts, I swear to God.”

“I know, but for now, you probably just made things worse for me. I know you meant well, but you kind of just cussed out my boss on my behalf. That does not bode well for me.”

Realization dawned on her and she slumped over the breakfast bar, her head in her hands. “Oh my God,” she groaned. “I’m so sorry. I shouldn’t have done that.”

“No, you shouldn’t have. But we all do things we shouldn’t do, and I’m too sick right now to be mad at you.” Honestly, I was wasting all my energy on being mad at myself.
“Right. I’m still really sorry, though. Anyway, get your ass over to the couch and I’ll make you some soup.”

I nodded and took both my phone and cup of tea to the living room, cuddling up with a throw blanket that had been left there from the night before. Feeling shaky, I set my tea down on the coffee table and unlocked my phone. I hadn’t checked social media yet today, so now was probably as good a time as any. After scrolling through Twitter, I posted a tweet saying that I wasn’t feeling too well, and then went on to check Snapchat and Instagram. After scrolling through it for a while, I saw a picture that made my heart stop.

It was a picture Henry had posted of him and Alyssa. She had her arms wrapped around his neck, her lips pressed to his cheek. He was smiling as big as ever, and it was like I literally felt my heart break.

I hadn’t seen much of him since… well, since that night, and I definitely hadn’t seen any evidence of him still being together with Alyssa. I guess some vain part of me had hoped that he would break up with her after our night together, but I’d known that was wishful thinking. Part of me wondered if he’d even told her about us. If so, had she been mad? Or had she easily forgiven him for it? Had he told her it had meant nothing? That it was just a drunken mistake? Or hadn’t he told her at all and was guilt now eating him alive, just as it did me?

“Honey, what’s going on?”

I looked up and saw Hanna standing in the door opening with a bowl of soup in her hands and a look of concern on her face. I cleared my throat and belatedly realized I’d been crying. I hurriedly tried to wipe my tears away but knew it was too late anyway. She’d already seen them. “Nothing.”

Hanna set the bowl down on the coffee table and placed her hands on her hips. “Okay, no. None of that shit. You’ve been acting weird ever since you came back from that press tour. I understand if you don’t want to talk to me about what happened, but don’t try to pretend that nothing’s wrong. You know I know you better than that.”

I nodded. “I know,” I said, my voice small.

“Then please tell me what’s wrong,” Hanna pleaded gently, sitting down next to me on the couch.

I sighed. “It’s just… It’s just really embarrassing.”

“Your kind of embarrassing or my kind of embarrassing?”

“Both. And it’s not really embarrassing as much as just plain bad. Hanna, I made a huge mistake.”

Hanna frowned and scooted a little closer, squeezing my knee with her hand. “No matter what it is you’ve done, I’m sure it’s not as bad as you think it is.”

I bit my lip, covering my face with my hands. I was still crying. “I just don’t want you to think any less of me.”

She grabbed hold of my wrists and pulled my hands away from my face, forcing me to look at her. “No matter what, I will never think less of you. I will never stop loving you as much as I do. And I will never, ever stop being your best friend. So you can tell me. This is a judgment-free friendship, remember? It always has been, always will be.”

I knew that. But it wasn’t really about not wanting her to know as much as me not wanting to say the words aloud. I was too ashamed. Also, my first instinct was always to run away instead of just
dealing with things. “I remember.”

Hanna actually looked pained. “Honey… I love you so much, and I just want you to be okay. I don’t know what the problem is, but I do know you. Every time something’s bothering you, you keep it in and let it eat you up inside. Please don’t do that this time. I’m begging you.”

I took a deep breath, but it ended up being too deep and I coughed. All my bones and all my muscles hurt, but Hanna was right. I didn’t want to carry the burden of this heavy secret all on my own anymore. “That last night, after the talk show in Amsterdam, Henry and I got drunk. Like, really drunk. And…” I felt the tears fall from my eyes even faster, and there was a big lump in my throat, making it hard for me to speak. “And I slept with Henry.”

If I wasn’t so worried (and sick), I might’ve laughed at her reaction. I literally saw her jaw go slack, and her eyes widened to the size of saucers. “You… slept with…” She shook her head. “Okay. Wow. Yeah. No, I can’t say I saw this one coming.”

“Me neither,” I admitted.

“So… What happened?”

“I, um… I suggested we get drunk. I was feeling really anxious about going back to L.A. and probably never seeing Henry again, so I guess I was feeling a little reckless. And then an hour later we were both super drunk and, I don’t know, it was just as if we were being pulled closer and closer together. And then he told me he cared about me, and then he told me I was beautiful, and the next thing I knew, he was kissing me. And then everything just kind of… Well, you know.”

“Sounds like this was more on him than on you.”

“Maybe, but I still kissed him back. I could’ve pulled away at any given time and told him what we were doing wasn’t okay, but I never did. Instead I had sex with him. I helped him cheat on another woman. What does that say about me?”

“It means that you had a temporary lapse in judgment. It means that the temptation of him—of the man you love—was too big to resist, and that’s okay. You’re human. Humans make mistakes. I mean, look around you. Much worse mistakes than sleeping with someone who’s already taken are made every day, and many of the people who make those mistakes feel a lot less guilt over it. And don’t even pretend otherwise, because I know the guilt is eating you alive. It’s okay to ease up on yourself, you know.”

I sighed, and then coughed again. “Maybe so, but that won’t stop making me feel miserable. I still love him, Hanna. I still love him so incredibly much.”

“Even after he cheated on Alyssa with you?”

I made a whining noise, the sound made even worse by the fact that I was sick and my voice was growing hoarser by the minute. “I know it makes no sense whatsoever. The fact that he’s a cheater should be the biggest deterrent ever. You know I hate cheaters. But knowing what it’s like to be with him—like that… It’s only made things worse, made everything even more confusing and fucked up.”

“It makes more sense to me than you’d think. I know how you felt about him before, and something like this… Well, it usually solidifies the bond that’s already there. It honestly wouldn’t surprise me if he’s thinking about you nonstop too now.”

“If that’s true, how come he hasn’t called or texted me at all?” Feeling the tears sting behind my eyes
and my throat close up, I asked, “How come he’s still with Alyssa?”

Her eyes widened slightly. “He’s still with… Oh. Well, that complicates things.”

I laughed wryly. “Yeah. Well. I can’t believe I actually thought he’d break up with her for me. I mean, it’s not like I asked, but… I don’t know.”

“I get it. Part of me really wants to pay him a visit right now and ask him what the hell is going on in that head of his, but I won’t do that because I know you don’t want me to. Besides, it’s harder to get to a celebrity than you might think, especially when you come across as a little… homicidal.”

I couldn’t help but laugh at that. “It’s the thought that counts, so thank you.”

“Now, dish. Because I know you feel miserable, but I also know that you have been dying to tell me all about that night. So tell me.”

I felt the heat rise up to my cheeks and I knew I was blushing a bright crimson. “You really wanna know?”

“Well, yeah. You’ve already told me how good of a kisser he is, so now I’m kind of curious about how well Superman fares in the sack.”

Choosing to ignore the way she’d phrased it, I sank deeper into the couch’s cushions and sighed. “So good…” I muttered. “Like, I don’t even know how to describe it. Just the way he made me feel, everything he said… And all that while he was drunk off his ass. Imagine what it would be like when he’s sober.” It must be the flu talking, otherwise I never would’ve said that out loud, not even to Hanna.

“Did you orgasm?” Hanna asked bluntly, a grin forming on her lips.

Feeling my face grow even warmer, I admitted, “Twice.”

“Girl!” Hanna said, her grin widening. “At least there’s that.”

“It’s just about the only positive thing, if you ignore the fact that I feel totally guilty about it all. But anyway, now you get it.”

“Now I get it,” Hanna agreed morosely. “So, want to tell me what happened that made you cry? I’m assuming this didn’t come out of nowhere.”

I sighed and handed her my phone. “Henry posted a picture of him and Alyssa to his Instagram. It was the first evidence I’ve seen of them still being together, so… I don’t know, I guess I was just really hoping he’d break up with her right after… that night, but I guess he didn’t. And it’s not just the sting of them still being together, I guess it’s more me being disappointed in his character. If they’re still together, he probably hasn’t told her about us. Shouldn’t he have told her about us?”

Hanna shrugged. “Who knows, maybe he did. Maybe he told her and she doesn’t care. Maybe she’s willing to stay with a cheater. Or maybe he hasn’t told her and feels just as guilty as you do.”

“Or maybe he hasn’t told her because he thought it meant nothing. Maybe he hasn’t told her because he was so drunk he can’t even remember any of it.”

Sympathy on her face, Hanna asked, “And how would you feel if that were the case?”

“Pretty fucking shitty,” I admitted honestly. “I don’t know,” I said with a groan that made me cough
again. “I just got so many mixed signals from him. Everything pointed towards him feeling the same for me—and you know how I normally don’t even see stuff like that—and the only evidence pointing against it is him being with Alyssa. That’s what makes this whole thing so fucking confusing.”

“Maybe…” Hanna started slowly, perking up slightly. “Maybe he isn’t with Alyssa at all.”

I gave her a pointed look.

“No, seriously, think about it. Everyone saw that he was into you. And if even you noticed it, then he must be giving you some serious lovey-dovey eyes. What if him ‘being with Alyssa’”—she actually threw up air quotes—"is just a tactic to make you jealous?”

“Then why didn’t he just tell me so the minute he kissed me? Or if it slipped his mind in the heat of the moment,” I said quickly, knowing that would be her next argument, “why didn’t he just call me afterward?”

Hanna slumped back into the couch’s cushions with a sigh. “I don’t know. Maybe he chickened out or something? But what I do know is that your soup got cold. Do you want me to reheat it?”

I gave her a sheepish smile. “Please?”

She returned to the kitchen just as the doorbell rang, and she hastily set the bowl down, urging me to stay put while she moved to open the door. For a moment, I worried it might be Vince, coming to see if I really was sick—I wouldn’t put it past him. But I had nothing to worry about, because when she came back, she was followed by Harvey and the smell of more soup. “There’s my favorite ex-employee!”

I couldn’t help but smile at him. He’d been doing much better since his heart attack, and I’d been surprised to find out that he was actually taking my advice. He listened to his doctors, took his meds faithfully and lessened his hours at the restaurant. Apparently the threat of Keegan forcing him to do all those things had been enough to scare him into obedience. “You’ll never let that go, will you, Harvey?”

“Can you blame me? You were the best employee I ever had,” he responded, giving me an easy grin. “But you left me for much bigger and better things, and I couldn’t be prouder. Now, I heard you were sick. You look it, too.”

I pulled a face. “Thanks, Harv,” I said, sarcasm dripping from my raspy voice. I didn’t even bother asking how he knew I was sick. The most likely explanation was Chelsea seeing my tweet and telling Harvey about it (she never could keep her mouth shut).

He waved the comment away. “I didn’t mean it in a bad way. You can make even the flu look good.”

Hanna snorted. “He has a point, you know.”

“I brought you some soup.” He looked down at the coffee table, where Hanna had hastily put the bowl of soup before opening the door. “But I see now you already have soup.”

Hanna shrugged. “It’s probably best you brought some over. This is now cold and came out of a can, so it wouldn’t taste as good as yours anyway. Your cooking is, like, phenomenal.”

“Oh, shush,” Harvey told her, but it was clear her compliments were making him happy. “But you’d better eat it soon, while it’s still hot.”
He handed me the bag, and I found the takeout bowl complete with spoon inside. Harvey’s didn’t deliver, but every time I would be doing inventory back when I still worked for him, he’d always make me order some takeout stuff. He liked to practice his cooking at home and then take his creations to work for us to taste. I missed those days. Everything he made was always heavenly. So I tore the lid off excitedly, and put the first spoonful of soup in my mouth. And though my taste buds weren’t working quite properly now that I was sick, the soup was still bursting with flavor on my tongue, so much so that I nearly moaned. “This is amazing, Harvey,” I told him earnestly, even though my sore throat made swallowing the hot liquid difficult.

“I’m glad you like it, kid,” he grinned. He sat down next to me on the couch, and Hanna took the spot on my other side. “Now, what are we watching?”

I looked at him. I’d expected him to drop off the soup and leave again, but apparently he was here to stay. The realization made my heart swell up with love.

If Ella was my surrogate mother, Harvey was my surrogate father. Actually, now that I think of it, they’d fit together pretty well. And as my head spun with ideas to set them up, Hanna settled on Mean Girls.

“Is this that movie with the girl from Africa who’s not actually from Africa? And that bitch that gets hit by a bus?” Harvey inquired. “I love that one.”

I smiled. Maybe today wouldn’t be so bad after all.

~*~*~*~*~*~

Thursday, December 15, 2016.

The next day, however, was an entirely different story. Even though I was far from being completely healthy again, I did feel a little bit better (my fever had dropped to a hundred and one degrees), and had no other choice but to return to work. The panic I felt before leaving nearly made me run to the toilet and throw up all the meager things I’d managed to eat yesterday.

Harvey had stayed the whole day, not leaving until it was around nine or ten. He’d made sure I’d drunk plenty of fluids and ate something here and there. He kept me warm underneath my blanket and tried to cool me down when my fever spiked. He was taking care of me like not many others would, and the love and appreciation I felt for him made my heart swell. Like I said, he really was like a father to me.

Harvey staying with me also gave Hanna the chance to go to work without having to worry about leaving me on my own. She worked at a riding school (she was obsessed with horses and always smelled at least vaguely of them), and though I knew they were always short on staff in the winter months, she was completely willing to call in sick. I could tell she was relieved to not have to.

Now, the next morning, she was staring at me intently, obviously trying to determine whether I was ready to go to work or not. It was also obvious she’d barricade all windows and doors—like she’d threatened to do yesterday—if she deemed me not ready.

After squinting at me for almost a full minute, Hanna finally blinked. “Do you want me to drive you to work today? I could also pick you up, if you want. Or have Keegan do it. He has today off, right?”

I slowly released a breath, simultaneously relieved and disappointed that she wouldn’t fight to keep me in the house. I didn’t want to go to set, but I knew that if I stayed home another day, Vince would
make my return that much more horrible. “No, I think I can manage getting myself to and from work. Thanks for the offer, though,” I told her, genuinely grateful. Part of me did want her to come with me, though, thinking that, maybe, Vince would go a little easier on me with her there. Her conversation with him on the phone yesterday made me think otherwise, though.

“If you’re sure,” Hanna said, not sounding sure at all. “Just… If you need me—even if it’s for the most trivial thing in the world—just call. Okay?”

I nodded, giving her a weak smile. It was the best I could manage. In front of her, at least. It didn’t matter how great of an actress I was, Hanna would always be able to see through my every lie. That was the downside to being best friends for over two decades. “Okay.”

I gave her as tight a hug as my weak muscles and joints could manage, and grabbed my stuff before leaving and getting into my car. It was still incredibly early, but that was my own doing. I’d decided to go to work early, knowing that the makeup artists needed all the time they could get to cover up my sick face.

And yet it still wasn’t enough.

“Jesus fucking Christ. You look even shittier than usual. Let’s hope the special FX guys can do something about…” Vince waved his hand at my face. “That.” He looked at me with disgust all over his features, and I found myself wishing once again that I just could’ve stayed home. Wishing I’d never auditioned for this movie in the first place. “We’re still setting up now, so in the meanwhile, stay as far away from me as possible. I don’t want you to get me sick. Actually, stay as far away from anyone as possible.”

His words nearly made me cry. He was making me out to be some kind of pariah, and I hated that. I didn’t want to be around people right now, but I still liked having the option to change my mind. Now I was forced onto my own island, and it sucked.

I sank down in my chair and slid my phone out of my pocket. Unable to stop myself, I opened Instagram and went to Henry’s account, looking up the picture he’d taken of us on top of the New Church in Delft. It was taken on the day everything had gone so terribly awry. We both looked happy in the picture, unaware of what would happen just a few hours later.

If I’d known, what would I have done? Would I have said no when he asked me to accompany me to my parents’ hometown? Or would I have been unable to resist even then? Would I still have suggested to get drunk together?

It didn’t matter anyway. I couldn’t change the past, no matter how hard I wished for a time machine, no matter how much I wondered if there were any other outcome. It was about time I accepted that I had fucked up. I was never meant to be with Henry; everything that had led up to this point proved that.

And the hardest part of loving you is that you were never mine.

The lyric played on a loop in my mind. It came out of nowhere, but it struck me with how true it was. Because Henry and I were never really a thing, it was hard to find closure. But I at least had to try, because life doesn’t stop for anyone.

“Morrison, get your gross ass over here!” Vince boomed. “We’re starting the scene!”

I winced at his words, and tried to reel in my emotions. I got up from my chair and slowly made my way to my mark.
“Just two more weeks,” I murmured under my breath. “You just have to hold on for two more weeks.”

Chapter End Notes

I'm sorry this chapter was so short compared to the previous few ones, guys, but with how depressing this was, I'm sure you guys don't really mind :P So, what did you think of Harvey? Personally, I loved writing him, and it was nice that he could provide some comfort for Juliette. And what did you think of Hanna standing up to Vince?

Lyrics at the start of the chapter are One Grain Of Sand by Ron Pope.
Chapter 18

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Too far away to feel you
But I can’t forget your skin
Wonder what you’re up to
What state of mind you’re in
Are you thinking about the last time?
Your lips all over me
‘Cause I play it and I rewind

~*~*~*~*~*~

Friday, January 27, 2017.

“You’ve got the part.”

I stared blankly at my bookcase, Steph’s words not quite registering in my mind. “I… What?”

Steph laughed on the other end of the line. “You have the part. You know, that movie you auditioned for a couple of weeks ago? The spy movie? You’ll be playing the CIA operative, Lily Davis. Filming starts in a month but prep starts next week, so you’d better be used to the idea by then.”

“I actually have it? I was so sure I wouldn’t. You should’ve seen the way the casting director looked at me…”

“Well, apparently you did something right after all. And I promise you, this director will be so much better than that asshole whose name we shall no longer say out loud.”

I bit my lip. It had been a month since I’d finished filming that thriller with Vince, but the memory of his hurtful words was still fresh in my mind. When you already get as stuck in negativity as I do, it’s a lot harder to realize that other people’s negative comments about you aren’t true. It was also why I’d taken a break for myself for a while. I hadn’t started auditioning again until two weeks ago. I hadn’t been in the right mindset to. And don’t get me wrong, I was nowhere near the Juliette Morrison I’d been during the filming of If You Love Someone, but I was getting there. Very slowly, but I was getting there.

“That’s… good. So, whom will I be playing opposite of?”

“That’s actually a good question,” Steph answered sheepishly. “I just heard that you got the part and didn’t bother to ask further than your interests. Do you need me to call them back and ask them for you?”

“No… No, that’s okay. I’ll just keep an eye on The Hollywood Reporter. They’re usually pretty fast in posting those things.”
Steph snorted. “They are. I wouldn’t be surprised if they’ve already announced that you’ve got the part. Anyway, enjoy it. Go celebrate while you still can, because from what I hear, prep will be… intense.”

I nearly groaned. Because this would be such an action-heavy movie, there was a rigorous training program beforehand. I had to be in shape so I could do some of my stunts myself, and so I would look the part. But I’d known that before I’d even auditioned, so I tried not to complain about it too much. I could handle doing a bit of exercise.

Steph hung up, leaving me to mull over this amazing opportunity. *If You Love Someone* had been pretty big, but this movie had the potential to be even bigger, simply because action movies generated much bigger audiences than romantic comedies. The movie I’d done with Vince was also sure to rake in big numbers, though I wasn’t too proud of my performances in that one. Because I was never fully at ease on set, I could never give my best, which was a damned shame. I should’ve tried harder.

Nevertheless, I couldn’t help but wonder how I’d gotten this lucky. Miserable as though I might be, my career was sky-rocketing. I couldn’t quite believe that within the course of a year, I’d managed to land three major Hollywood productions. After only three years of hearing no or only getting small parts, I seemed to have really made it. Maybe, in a few more years, I’d be a household name.

I shook my head. I didn’t want to get my hopes up too much. Of course, it was my dream to become a household name, to be so wanted as an actress that I didn’t even have to audition anymore, to just get roles offered to me because they wanted me specifically, but I was afraid to jinx it. It wasn’t like I was overly superstitious, but it was best to be safe.

But then, slowly, a smile made the corners of my mouth tilt up. I’d be playing a super badass CIA operative. How cool is that? I’d get to play with guns, kick bad people’s asses and save the world. Even if my career ended after this movie, I still would’ve been able to do all that, and that made it all worth it.

The biggest smile I’d smiled in a long time covering my face, I made my way downstairs. Hanna had just come back from work, black riding pants and boots still on, the smell of horses around her stronger than usual. She was rocking out to a song on her iPod, mouthing along the words as she dug around in the kitchen’s cabinets in search of something to eat, so it took her a while to spot me. When she did, she jumped a little and yanked the earbuds out of her ears. “Yeesh, you scared me.”

I grinned. “Not my fault. I’m not the one blasting—what is it? Jesse McCartney circa 2006?—into my ears.”

She shrugged, turning her iPod off. “True enough. And hey, don’t hate on my Jesse McCartney.”

I held up my hands in defense. “Hey, I’m not. Just So You Know is still one of my favorite songs ever.”

“Good.” She finally settled on a pack of chocolate chip cookies and sat down by the breakfast bar, opening the pack and taking out a cookie. She bit into it and rested her elbows on the counter, leaning forward as she studied me. “Why are you smiling?” she asked, her eyes narrowing in suspicion. “Is there something on my face?”

I shook my head, my smile widening. “No, your face is flawless, as always. I just got a call from Steph and she told me that I got the part of Lily Davis. You know, that spy movie I auditioned for?”

Hanna grinned, jumping up to give me a hug, her cookie temporarily forgotten. “Oh my God, I’m so
proud of you!” she squealed, her arms so tight around me that I could hardly breathe. “You really are going to make it big. You’re already doing it.”


She wrinkled up her nose, pulling back. “Sorry. I don’t even smell it anymore.”

“That’s why you’ve got me; to tell you that you stink.”

She laughed. “Hey, there’s a limit,” she warned jokingly, pointing at me. “Anyway, I’ll go shower real quick. And then we’re gonna call all of our friends and tell them that we’re going out tonight to celebrate. I mean, how long has it been since we’ve all been out together? And this is the perfect occasion.”

“All right. But only because I know I won’t be able to change your mind once it’s made. You should invite Scott, too.” Over the months, they’d grown closer and closer together. They were actually so cute together that it was gross, and I often found myself retreating to my room whenever he was over. It wasn’t like I wasn’t happy for them—because I really, really was—but I couldn’t really handle happy couples because I was still so hung up over… well, you know.

“You sure?” Hanna verified, her eyebrows shooting up in surprise. “I mean, it’s your party.”

“I know, but Scott makes you happy, and you being happy makes me happy. Besides, it’s not like I’m getting rid of Scott any time soon,” I joked.

A dopey smile took over her features. “Scott and I really are doing well, aren’t we?”

I smiled. I really hadn’t been kidding about her happiness bringing me happiness. “Yeah, you are. I’m really happy for you. You deserve a nice guy that treats you the way you deserve. I’ll still kick him in the balls repeatedly if he hurts you, though. So make sure he’s warned.”

Hanna laughed, picking up her cookie again. “I’ll tell him. Anyway, I’m gonna shower now. In the meanwhile, you inform all the others in the group text that we’re going out tonight. Make it clear that saying no or rescheduling isn’t an option. We’re all going out tonight, period.”

I smiled. “I’ll be sure to invite them very sternly,” I joked. “Now, on to a completely different topic: Takeout for dinner tonight?”

“Sure. Pizza, though. You know how I feel about Chinese.” She pulled a face, shuddered, and took another bite of her cookie before traipsing up the stairs.

I smiled, shaking my head. My best friend could be a handful sometimes, but I loved her to pieces. I sat down on the barstool she’d abandoned and retrieved my phone to send a text to the group chat all ten of us were in.

**Hey, guys! To celebrate that I landed a new role (omfg), wanna go out tonight? (Hanna wants you to know it’s not really a question, more of a demand.)**

I smiled as I sent the text, smiling even bigger when Hanna sent out a text soon thereafter.

**FOR REALZ. EVERYBODYS COMING ALONG TONITE.**

RSVPs came in quickly after that, along with congratulations. Once everyone had said they’d be there tonight, I allowed myself to really get excited about a night out with my friends. Hanna hadn’t been lying; it really had been too long since we’d all gone out. We always preferred to stay in and
watch horror movies and play drinking games all night, but sometimes clubbing was the preferred way of celebrating.

I ordered some Domino’s on my phone, making sure they would deliver it one hour and a half from now, and went upstairs to dig around in my closet to try and find an outfit for tonight. Eventually I settled on a purple cocktail dress and laid it out on my bed before going back downstairs.

“So, you’ll be playing a spy, huh?” Hanna asked, plopping down next to me on the couch, her wet hair wrapped in a towel on the top of her head. I looked up with a start. I’d mindlessly been playing a game on my phone and hadn’t heard her come down. “I gotta say, I’m mildly jealous of that.”

I smiled, putting my phone away. “I’m jealous of myself,” I told her. “It’s gonna be so cool to play Lily. What’ll be less cool, though, is the training I’ll have to do for this role.”

Hanna wrinkled up her nose. “Yeah… Less jealous of you for that. But still. My best friend will be a spy. How many people can say that?”

“Not many, I’d guess. I’ll be a fake spy, though.”

“Yeah, but even then, there still aren’t many people who can say their best friend is a fake spy.”

I snorted. “True enough. Anyway, I ordered pizza, so that should come in about half an hour.”

“Good. We’ll start getting ready after we’ve eaten. Oh, by the way, I texted Steph, and she managed to get us VIP in Cielo, so that’s definitely happening.”

I felt my eyes widen. Cielo was a big club in Hollywood, and getting in was hard enough, let alone getting into VIP. “Steph must’ve pulled some serious strings.”

“I know, right? Steph knew you’ve been feeling kinda… blue, these days, so she wanted to do something special for you. Besides, you’re a big name in Hollywood now. You would’ve gotten in no problem anyway. It’s the rest of us that would have more trouble. Well, maybe not Scott, but he’s the exception.”

“Maybe. But either way, the others will probably enjoy VIP. Especially Cynthia.”

Hanna grinned. “Oh, she’ll die.”

We continued to talk about everything and nothing, just like we always used to, and before we knew it, the pizzas had come and gone. We retreated to our respective rooms to get ready for tonight.

I did my makeup before putting on the dress, way too afraid I’d ruin it otherwise. The dress was a deep purple, its skirt flaring out and ending a few inches above my knees, and the top was covered in white lace. The heels I was wearing were covered in rhinestones, and they matched my dress perfectly, color-wise. I’d done my hair up in a high, messy ponytail, not wanting to have it down. Once I was ready, I went back downstairs to wait for Hanna, who always—no matter what—took longer to get ready than me.

When she finally did walk down those stairs, though, my eyes nearly bulged out of their sockets. She looked gorgeous. She was wearing a deep red, collared skater dress with mesh sleeves covered in lace appliqué. Her blonde hair was pinned to the back of her head, the long wavy strands tumbling over her shoulders and back. Her lips were painted the same red as her dress.

“Holy crap, Han. You should wear red more often.”
She smiled, a slight blush covering her cheeks. “Are you sure? It’s not too much?”

I shook my head. “No. Well, Scott will probably die when he sees you, but it’s not too much.”

I knew she wanted to protest, but just then, the doorbell rang. When I opened the door, I stood face to face with Shaye, Brayden, Alfie and Ryley. I greeted them all with a hug and a bright smile. We’d agreed to gather up here before taking taxis to Cielo together, figuring that would be easiest.

“Your dress matches my hair!” Shaye said with a grin. She’d dyed it purple a few weeks ago (“New year, new me!” she’d explained. “Well, new hair anyway.”), and I guessed it indeed was exactly the same shade.

“Huh. I hadn’t even realized that. And Hanna’s wearing a dress that matched your old hair.”

Eyes wide, Ryley asked, “McLynn’s wearing red? This I gotta see.” He marched past me through to the living room, and the four of us followed after him, amused. “Damn, mama! You look hot.”

“Hello to you, too, Ryley,” Hanna said, sounding equally as amused as we felt.

“But really, though,” Alfie said, taking her in. “You should wear red more often.”

“That’s what I said,” I said, giving her a pointed look. “See? It’s not too much.”

“If I’m getting a reaction like this, it’s too much.” Hanna was usually a pretty self-confident person, but somehow she always had a hard time accepting compliments. Sometimes I forgot how alike we really were. “But too late to change now,” she said as the doorbell rang again.

Shaye opened the door and came back with Scott trailing behind her. “Beware of your girlfriend, my friend,” she warned him, despite only having met him once or twice. “She looks smoking. And I would know, raging bisexual that I am.”

Scott shook his head, amused. “Good to kn—” He stopped in his tracks as he saw Hanna, his eyes widening and his jaw dropping ever so slightly. “Wow. Okay. You weren’t kidding.”

“I never kid when it comes to hot people,” Shaye said matter-of-factly. It was true enough, I supposed. She really didn’t, nor was she ever afraid to point out that someone was ‘hot as hell.’

“You look beautiful, babe,” Scott said, stepping up to his girlfriend to give her a kiss hello. And when she smiled into the kiss, gently resting her fingertips on his cheek, I couldn’t help but feel a sinking feeling in my stomach. It was disgusting, but it was true: I was jealous of my best friend.

I should’ve been happy alongside her, with my own boyfriend to kiss me hello and tell me I’m beautiful. It wasn’t like I was jealous of her kissing Scott (I’d kissed Scott myself for If You Love Someone, and though he was not a bad kisser, I just didn’t have feelings for him), I was jealous of her happiness. And though, of course, I was happy that she was happy because she well and truly deserved it, but I couldn’t help but crave that happiness she was feeling, if that made any sense.

Truth was, I was still madly in love with Henry, and though I tried to suppress it and succeeded most of the time, I still couldn’t help but feel the sting of him being with someone else every time I saw a happy couple. I hoped that didn’t make me a terrible person, but I couldn’t help the way I felt. I wish I could, then I would finally be able to stop being this miserable all the time.

By the time Hanna and Scott pulled away from each other, the doorbell rang again, and this time I hurried to open it, needing a distraction.
Of course, when I opened the door, I stood face to face with yet another happy couple. But nevertheless, I plastered a big smile on my face. “Hey, Keegs, Riss,” I greeted them, giving both of them a tight hug.

Soon after Keegan and Klarissa, Colin and Cynthia arrived, and we were complete.

As we were waiting for our taxis to arrive, Keegan said, “So, congrats on your new role, sis. What will you be playing this time?”

I smiled. “It’s kind of awesome, really. I’ll be playing Lily Davis, a no-nonsense, super badass CIA operative. So that’s definitely awesome.”

Braeden grinned. “Will you be kicking the asses of guys twice your size? ‘Cause I’ll actually pay to see that.”

“Maybe. I guess you’ll just have to wait until the movie comes out to see.”

“Aww, no! That’s unfair,” Ryley whined. “Can’t you share a tiny bit of the script?”

“Nope. These lips are sealed,” I teased with a grin.

“It’s Juliette. Of course she’ll be kicking ass,” Colin said, mirroring my grin.

“There’s no doubt in my mind about that,” Scott said. “I’ve seen her acting in person and it’s amazing.”

“Not everyone will agree with you on that,” I told him.

Hanna heaved an annoyed sigh. “You need to forget about that sick old fuck.” Everyone in this room knew about Vince to a certain extent, but she knew most. And even her I hadn’t told everything. Some comments were just too hurtful to repeat. “He’s an abusive asshole that no longer has any power over you. You’re stronger than he is.”

Knowing that was easier said than done, I smiled anyway. This was a night of celebration. I didn’t want to get hung up on all the negativity that had been plaguing me for too long already. “You’re right.”

“Besides, everything that asshole said is all bullshit anyway,” Scott said. “I’ve seen you act firsthand, and you’re amazing at it.”

“Yeah, what was that even like?” Ryley asked, randomly changing the subject. “Like, isn’t it weird to have kissed your girlfriend’s best friend? And Jules, isn’t it weird for you to have kissed your best friend’s boyfriend?”

I felt my cheeks grow hot and I found myself avoiding Hanna’s gaze. “No, not really. Well, I mean, maybe? But it was work, zero feelings involved whatsoever, so in that sense it’s not really all that weird. It’s only weird to see it again, I guess.”

“That was weird for me too,” Hanna confessed. “Actually seeing it. But there’re no hard feelings. I didn’t even know Scott when they were doing their kissing scenes.”

“I think it would’ve been weirder to film if the two of you had been together already,” I admitted. “Then the situation would’ve been totally different.”

“I agree,” Scott said.
We were luckily spared from more awkward topics by our taxis arriving.

The closer we got to Cielo, the more of my negativity I felt slipping away. I was ready to make this a good night with my friends, with no further mention or thought of either Vince or Henry. I had scored a new big role in a big movie, and I had all my best friends with me. There was no reason this shouldn’t be a great night.

And we were off to a great start once we’d entered the VIP area and gathered around a table. Hanna had ordered a round of vodka shots first thing, and was now proposing a toast. “To Juliette, my amazing best friend, who has shown time and time again that she’s capable of anything she sets her mind to. To Juliette, who will start playing a super kick-ass spy next month. To Juliette, who’s conquering the fucking world!”

“Hear, hear!” my friends shouted, and, feeling a bubbly feeling in my chest that very well might’ve been happiness, I knocked my shot back just as everyone else did the same. The vodka burned in my throat, especially seeing as I hadn’t drank anything else yet, but I couldn’t be bothered to care.

I ordered a strawberry daiquiri next, and happily let Keegan drag me onto the dance floor as soon as I had my drink in my hand. He pulled me close so he could shout into my ear. “I am so fucking proud of you, sis!”

I grinned at him. “Thank you!” I shouted back over the loud, bass-heavy music. I knocked my drink back as fast as I could without giving myself brain freeze so I could put my glass to the side and fully focus on dancing with Keegan.

I was rotated around my friends a lot, every single one of them wanting to dance with me, and I even danced with a few strangers in-between. It was the most fun I’d had in a while. It had been too long since I could just be myself and act crazy, even around my friends. For too long, my feelings for Henry and Vince’s hurtful words had been dragging me down, but no more. I finally felt like I could get past all that. I was stronger than Vince’s abuse, and Henry was just a guy. I could get over him. And if I tried hard enough, I could also get over the fact that I’d helped him cheat on his girlfriend. It was time I left my past behind and started focusing on my future, which, I realized, was starting to look brighter and brighter.

After a few dances and quite a few more drinks, I was finally dancing with Hanna again. We were both grinning like idiots as we swayed our hips to Avicii’s latest remix. “Are you happy we went out?” she shouted over the music.

I nodded. “So happy! Best night ever! That could also be the alcohol talking, though.”

Hanna laughed, wrapping her arms around my neck and pulling me into a hug as we kept dancing. I loved this girl so much, and I owed her so much. She truly was the best BFF I could ever wish for. “I love you, Julie!”

“I love you, too, Han. So fucking much,” I told her, tightening my arms around her.

There was a sudden tap on my shoulder, and I turned around to see a handsome guy around my age smiling down at me. He had a clean-shaven face with a sharp jawline and smoldering brown eyes. His hair seemed to be the color of caramel (it was hard to tell underneath the club’s strobe lights), and was done in an undercut, the strands on top of his head flopping down cutely. There was no denying that he was hot. “Wanna dance?” he asked me.

I shot one look at Hanna, who was trying to encourage me without it being too obvious, and I turned back to the man, nodding. “Sure!” I shouted back, and I wrapped my arms around his neck as he
placed his hands on my hips.

“I’m Travis,” he introduced himself. “And you?”

“I’m Juliette. It’s nice to meet you.”

His smile widening, Travis said, “And it’s definitely nice to meet you.” He pulled me a little closer so our hips were grinding against each other.

The alcohol humming pleasantly in my veins, I kept dancing with Travis. I didn’t know how long we danced, but I didn’t really care, either. I was having fun, and besides, there were worse dance partners out there than Travis. He was a good dancer, and definitely not bad to look at, either. Without really noticing it, we got closer and closer, until there was hardly any space between us. Then, before I knew it, he grinned at me and dipped his head low, capturing my lips with his.

The kiss was surprisingly… anticlimactic. I didn’t know what I’d been expecting, but it wasn’t this. This just felt exactly like it was: Lips on lips. It was a simple kiss without any of the fun side effects—the quickened heartbeat, the butterflies in my stomach, the feeling of sparks flying everywhere… The kiss was empty and hollow, and it just didn’t feel right. It wasn’t at all like kissing Henry had been. I’d felt all those things with him, and so much more.

I quickly broke the kiss, before it could transgress any more than it already had. I doubted Travis had any other motives besides getting lucky tonight, but it still wasn’t fair to him. “I… I’m sorry,” I told him. “But I have to get back to my friends now. It was nice to have met you!” And I quickly made my way through the crowd, back to the table my friends were at. There were a few people missing, probably lost on the dance floor somewhere, but they’d be back soon.

“What happened there?” Hanna asked, nudging me with her elbow. “That guy was hot, right?”

“He kissed me,” I told her.

She leaned forward eagerly, a grin on her face. “And?”

“And nothing. I literally felt nothing. There were no sparks, no butterflies, no nothing. So I got the hell away from him. Why bother if kissing him feels like the world’s biggest anticlimax?”

“True enough, I suppose.” She brightened, nudging me again with her elbow. “You’ll find someone new to fall in love with, I promise.”

I wasn’t as convinced as her, but I still smiled and nudged her back, determined not to let one bad kiss with a stranger drag me down. When Keegan and Klarissa joined us and we were complete again, I said, “How about one more round of shots, huh?”

My friends shouted in agreement and I ordered a round of eleven shots. We raised our shot glasses in the air and Colin said, “To an amazing night!”

I downed my shot, and the alcohol burned a lot less already than the first shot I’d done, a testament to how much I’d drank already. Remembering the catastrophe that had happened the last time I drank this much, I decided that maybe it would be smart to cut myself off for at least a little while. I’d order a Coke next.

The next half hour or so I spent talking and laughing with my friends. The more movies I starred in, the less time I had to spend with them, especially in a setting where we were all together, and I genuinely missed it. Apart from Hanna, whom I’d been friends with for well over two decades, these people had been my life for the past four years. I owed them a lot and I loved them a lot. They were
there for me when I needed them most, no questions asked, and they never judged me. They understood and loved me, and for that I was so grateful. Some of my best memories were with them, memories I wouldn’t give up for the world.

Suddenly Cynthia’s phone buzzed, and I quickly scooped it up before it could clatter to the floor—there’s nothing worse than an iPhone with a cracked screen. “Oh my God, thank you so much!” she said when I handed it to her. “Oh, hey, look! I have this app that notifies me every time there’s a new article on you, and you were just mentioned on The Hollywood Reporter.”

“It’s probably just about how I got the part. Open it, maybe it says something about who I’ll be playing opposite of.”

Cynthia clicked on the article and quickly read through it, growing a little pale as she did. “Uh, Jules… Maybe you should read this for yourself.”

She handed me her phone, and I automatically felt my heart skip a beat when I saw a picture of me next to one of Henry. Figuring it couldn’t possibly mean what I feared it meant, I quickly set to reading.

“Juliette Morrison is in talks to star opposite of Henry Cavill in the untitled spy project from Universal and Regency.

Alona Baidar is directing the action comedy which is being produced by Grant King, Nick Smith, Naomi Clarence and Baidar.

The movie will see Cavill as an NSA operative and Morrison as a CIA agent. The couple will be forced to work together when a nuclear weapon that could wipe out a third of the world is brought onto the market. Their fight against spies from all over the world is made more difficult by their conflicting feelings for each other.

Jane Talbot penned the script.

The movie is expected to start shooting next month in Los Angeles.

“I… No. This can’t be right. I can’t… Oh, God.”

Seeing her phone start to slip, Cynthia quickly plucked it out of my hands. “Are you okay, honey?”

I wasn’t. I was far from okay. The alcohol had already started to make my head spin, but this article was worsening the alcohol’s effects. I felt like the walls were closing in on me, and I felt like I might puke.

After all that had happened between Henry and me and all that didn’t, I had to work on another movie with him? I had to kiss him again, most likely for multiple takes? After I’d slept with him, helping him cheat on his international model girlfriend, after not hearing anything from him since, I had to stand face to face with him again?

I really was going to be sick.

“What’s wrong?” Hanna asked from the other side of the table, concern clear in her eyes, but I was too out of it to answer, so Cynthia did it for me instead.

“Henry will be her costar in that new movie.”

Immediately, everyone around the table quieted. Only Hanna knew what had really gone down
between Henry and me, but the others all knew something bad had happened that had caused us to not speak anymore. They didn’t know the details, but they knew enough to never bring him up in conversation again.

I stood up, needing to get out of there. I needed to get away from their sympathetic gazes, away from the walls that were still closing in on me, away from the thumping bass of the music, away from the flashing strobe lights.

When I got outside, the crisp January air helped a little with my shock and nausea, but not much. I leaned against the wall, looking up at the sky. I wanted to see the stars—seeing the stars always helped me when I was having a panic attack—but catching even a glimpse of the galaxy was nearly impossible in Los Angeles. There were simply too many lights, too much smog.

A sudden hand on my shoulder made me jump. “Sorry, I didn’t mean to scare you,” Hanna said, her voice gentle.

“It’s okay.”

“How are you holding up?”

I gave her a sarcastic smile. “Super.”

A slight hint of annoyance in her voice, Hanna said, “You don’t have to do that with me, Jules. You know that. Now how are you really?”

I felt the tears prickle behind my eyes, and I blinked rapidly, hoping they wouldn’t spill over. “I’m freaking out, Han. I can’t do this. I can’t face him after everything that happened between us in Amsterdam. I just can’t.”

She studied me intently for a long moment. “You still love him.” It was an observation, not a question, but I still nodded. “And you’re afraid of what he thinks of you now. Even despite everything else, you’re still wondering if he feels for you what you feel for him.”

Intoxicated Hanna was surprisingly insightful. Everything she’d just said was true. “I do. So now you see why I can’t face him. I don’t even want to see him from a distance, let alone have to kiss him again. Not after everything.”

“But what if he avoids me all the time? We really only have to say our lines and then we can go our separate ways again. People will start to notice and then we’ll create a hostile atmosphere at work, and everything will go straight to hell.”

“Again, stop focusing on the negative. That is a really big ‘what if,’ and you know it. You’ll get through this and come out of it stronger, I can feel it in my water.”

I smiled a little at that. ‘I can feel it in my water’ is the Dutch version of ‘I can feel it in my bones,’ and ever since she found out about it, she’s been using that one instead. It had become kind of an inside joke with us, along with ‘it walks in the soup.’ (Really, Dutch proverbs literally translated into English were the best.) But even our inside joke wasn’t enough to keep the negative way of thinking at bay for long. “No, Hanna, I really can’t do this. I’m gonna call Steph and tell her that I’m not
doing this movie. They’re just gonna have to cast someone else.”

Hanna sighed. “Jules, no. The announcement is already made. The contract might not be signed yet, but you can’t go back now. If you do, people will only start to gossip about you and Henry, and I’m guessing that’s not at all what you want.”

I held my head in my hands as I slowly slid down the wall, sitting on my haunches. “No,” I groaned. “No, it’s not.”

Hanna hauled me up and cupped my face in her hands, forcing me to look her in the eye. “I know it sucks. I really, really do. But I’m afraid you have no other choice but to work with Henry again. And I have full faith in you. You can do this.”

Chapter End Notes

Well then... Who saw that coming? It looks like Juliette and Henry will have no other choice but to see each other again...

Song at the start of the chapter is Thousand Miles by Tove Lo.
Chapter 19

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Stone cold, stone cold
You see me standing
But I’m dying on the floor
Stone cold, stone cold
Maybe if I don’t cry
I won’t feel anymore

~*~*~*~*~*~

Monday, February 6, 2017.

“I can’t do this. I can’t do this. I can’t do this. I can’t—”

“Juliette!” Hanna yelled, interrupting my pacing and manic mumbling. “Stop it. You’re driving me crazy. Besides, we’ve been over this a million times before. You can do this.”

“Easy for you to say,” I mumbled breathlessly, hopelessly trying to stop my hands from shaking. “You’re not about to see your ex-something after nearly three months of silence, after having had sex with him.”

Hanna winced. “That’s true, yes. But look at it this way: He might not even be there. It’s just basic training stuff, right? He’s so ripped already that he doesn’t need it, so he probably won’t even show up.”

I shot her a sideways glance as I started pacing again. “It’s Henry we’re talking about here. He isn’t just going to not show up when he’s required to. He has better manners than that. Besides, it’s also my luck we’re talking about, and you know just how sucky that is. He’ll be there and he’ll ignore me and everything will be awkward and I’ll feel even suckier than I already do and then I’ll—”

Hanna stood up and went to stand in front of me, placing her hands on my shoulders. “Juliette, please calm down,” she interrupted gently. “Maybe… Maybe you should take one of your pills. You filled your prescription, right?”

I shook my head. “I can’t. Those pills make me drowsy, and I can’t be drowsy while working out. Or driving, for that matter.”

“Okay, switching to different tactics then. Sit down, babe.” She forcibly sat me down on the couch, but was careful to be gentle with me. She sat down next to me, and, turning to me, took my hands in hers. “Close your eyes and focus on your breathing. Breathe in for seven seconds and breathe out for seven seconds. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven…”

As she counted, I breathed in. Inhaling for seven seconds was harder than one might imagine, and I had to do it incredibly slowly, my lungs nearly burning with how much air was in them. But the challenge was distracting, and that was what I needed.
“One, two, three, four, five, six, seven…”

I breathed out again, incredibly slowly. I kept doing that a few times, Hanna’s soothing voice counting with me. It helped more than I thought it would, my anxiety lessening as I did the breathing exercises. It never fully disappeared, but by the end of it, it was more like a steady hum in the background, rather than a screaming, temper tantrum-throwing child right in front of me.

“Thank you,” I breathed, opening my eyes again.

Hanna smiled at me. “Hey, what are friends for, right?” She looked at the clock on the wall and said, “I’m afraid it’s time for you to go, honey, otherwise you’ll be late. Do you need me to drive with you?”

I shook my head, already imagining myself standing on the curb, waiting for her to pick me up. It’d be best if I could just leave as quickly as possible once I was done at the gym. “No, but thanks for the offer.”

“All right. Well, good luck, then. And please, honey, remember that everything will be okay. Even if it starts to feel like it won’t, it will. Your life won’t be like this forever. You won’t feel like this forever. Just like things can’t always be good, they can’t always be bad, either.”

I cracked a smile at that. “Are you actually referencing Teen Wolf?”

She smiled back at me. “I might be. Besides, it’s damn good advice. You’d be best to remember it.”

“I’ll try.”

Hanna squeezed my hand and finally let me leave. My hands shook a little when I walked up to my car, making it a little difficult to slide the key into the ignition. But I managed, and took a few more deep breaths to calm myself before I stepped down on the gas and drove to the gym we’d be training at.

As I drove, I started thinking that maybe I was overreacting after all. Henry was a mature adult, and he’d behave accordingly. I was also a mature adult (albeit one with heavy anxiety), and I could deal with this. One-night stands weren’t that uncommon, after all, and I was sure people dealt with running into someone they’d slept with once all the time. And if they could do it, so could I.

I’d done a pretty decent job of convincing myself of this by the time I reached the gym the film studio had rented out to train us in. I grabbed the meager stuff I’d brought with me, and walked into the gym with my head held high. My heart was hammering in my chest, but I tried to ignore it, even as I grew lightheaded. I wrung my hands together, my nails digging into my skin. I could do this.

In the hall, there was only one guy waiting for me, with bulging muscles that gave Henry’s a run for his money. He had a shaved head, beautiful dark skin and brown eyes, a kind smile on his face. “You must be Juliette,” he said with a booming voice. “I’m Kevin, and I’ll be your personal trainer over the course of the next month, and while you’re filming the movie.”

I shook his hand, and his grip was so firm it nearly turned the bones in my hand to fine dust. “It’s nice to meet you, Kevin.”

“It’s nice to meet you too. Henry’s already back there with his trainer,” he said, and I nearly passed out from anxiety at the mention of his name, “but we’ll join them later. Let’s start with your fitness history. Do you go to the gym often?”

I answered all his questions on autopilot. My mind was too occupied with the knowledge that I’d see
Henry again soon. I already wasn’t sure I’d be able to handle seeing him again, let alone while working out. It was no secret that I thought he was lethally attractive, and him going at it against a punching bag might be a little too much.

I shook my head. This was a bullshit way of thinking. He wasn’t so good-looking that he could render me completely useless. That was ridiculous. I wasn’t some stupid little high school girl with a crush, going completely mental when she saw the object of her affections do something mildly attractive.

“So… you don’t want to start now?” Kevin asked hesitantly.

“Oh! I’m sorry, my mind was elsewhere. No, I’m good to start now. Sorry.”

He smiled. “No problem. Well, let’s go, and we’ll do some easy warm-up exercises.”

I nodded, and when Kevin’s back was turned to me, I took a shaky breath. I squeezed my eyes shut tight. “You can do this,” I whispered to myself, soft enough so Kevin wouldn’t be able to hear. Then I opened my eyes again and followed him into the main area of the gym.

It was just a regular gym, except that it was entirely empty apart from two people, like those twenty four hour gyms at four a.m. It was on the smaller side, which I guess made sense. We didn’t need all that much space, so why waste money on a bigger gym? Inside was a mixture of exercise equipment and punching bags.

When I saw Henry standing with his trainer, it was like my world kind of froze, or like I was in a tunnel, and instead of light at the end of it, there was just Henry. He had his back to me, but it didn’t matter. It was the first time seeing him in three and a half months. The first time after our unfortunate night together.

And as if there was some kind of mystical connection between us, he turned around as if shocked. I stared at him, petrified. It was like we were locked in a staring match, except not of our own free will. I desperately wanted to look away, wanted for him to not be here at all, for me to not be here at all. Looking at him hurt. It was almost as if all the painful things between us were crashing into me at a hundred miles an hour just at this one shared look.

It hurt that he never made a move while we were filming If You Love Someone. It hurt that he’d gradually stopped texting and calling me after we’d wrapped. It hurt that he got back together with Alyssa while I was still so madly in love with him. It hurt that he’d acted like nothing had changed between the two of us while doing promotional work for If You Love Someone. It hurt that he’d finally made a move and slept with me while he was dating Alyssa. It hurt that, even after everything that had happened, he was still with her. It hurt that he’d never called to apologize. And it hurt that I still loved him.

“So beautiful,” he murmured as he trailed a hand from my throat all the way down to my thigh.

Memories of that night were coming back to me quicker than all the hurt had, and it was making my head spin.

I ignited everywhere he touched me, but the real heat came from his mouth as he pressed soft kisses to my jaw, slowly trailing down to my throat, my chest, and finally my breasts.

I was pretty sure I was beet red, but I still couldn’t look away from him.

I gasped as his hand dipped under my underwear and his middle finger slipped into me.
Why couldn’t I look away?


I needed to—

Henry abruptly turned away, said something to his trainer, and went back to attacking his training dummy. It felt like rejection, and I felt the tears sting in my eyes. Did he hate me for sleeping with him? Or was there something wrong with my outfit? I looked down at it. I was dressed entirely in Nike—black leggings, blue sports bra, blue tank top and black and white hi-tops. I’d put great care into picking it out this morning. I rapidly blinked my eyes. I didn’t want to cry—not in front of strangers, and definitely not in front of him.

Kevin was oblivious to the whole thing going on between Henry and me, though. “Do you want to meet your costar before we begin?” he asked, a cheer in his voice that annoyed me. This was not a moment to be cheery.

I bit back any crabby remark I might’ve made, though, and instead shook my head. “No, I’ve already met him. We worked on a movie a while back. Let’s just get started now, and then I’ll say hi to him later. He seems to be busy now anyway.”

“All right, if you say so!” Kevin said, still with that annoying cheerfulness. Unfortunately, he took me to a punching bag close to Henry’s dummy. We were standing maybe thirty feet apart, and I could hear him softly talking to his trainer. “So, you said you did some taekwondo?” Kevin asked.

I nodded. “Yeah, but only for a few months when I was fifteen. I didn’t even get my white belt,” I joked. I cringed internally, realizing that Henry could probably hear every word I was saying.

Kevin didn’t exactly have the softest of voices, either. “But you still got the basics, so it helps that I don’t have to teach you those. Besides, you have the added benefit of not really having to be good. You just have to look like you are, and there are stunt people for the actual hard work.”

I couldn’t help but feel indignant at that. So much so that I actually stood up for myself. “But I want to be good, not look good. I’m not gonna half-ass it just because there are others who could do my stunts for me. I want my portrayal of Lily Davis to be as genuine as possible.”

Kevin grinned. “Exactly the response I’d been hoping for.”

I fought not to roll my eyes. Sure it was. “I’m glad.”

If the sarcasm was lost on him or if he just decided to ignore it, I didn’t know, but his voice was chipper as usual when he said, “Well, let’s get started then. Show me your fighting stance.” I planted my feet firmly on the ground, a little way’s apart, and dropped through my knees slightly as I brought my balled fists up to cover my face. Kevin nodded appreciatively. “Very good. You must have had a very good trainer to have remembered that after… how many years?”

“Twelve,” I said curtly, and immediately chastised myself for it on the inside. I knew what was going on. My anxiety had the tendency to express itself in different ways: There was the crying (which was ultimately the worst because it drew the most attention), there was me being extremely quiet and not joining in any of the conversation around me, and then there was me being irritable. I was experiencing that last one now. So to soften up the harshness of my voice, I gave him a smile.

“That’s definitely admirable then. Well, let’s get started with the art of throwing a good punch. When I’m done with you, your costar will have to be careful around you, even if he is Superman,” Kevin joked.
Feeling myself grow bright red, I risked a glance at Henry, knowing he had to have heard Kevin with his booming voice. He looked back at me, his expression unchanging. He looked almost… unimpressed. I bit my lip, certain he hated my guts, and he quickly looked away again.

I nearly groaned. This was worse than even I had imagined. He hated me, and I had to work closely with him for at least the coming five months.

“Fuck my life,” I mumbled under my breath.

~*~*~*~*~*~

“He hates me,” I told Hanna over the phone when I was finally granted a small break. I was tired and aching from the exercise, but I couldn’t be bothered to care about that right now. I had bigger problems to deal with.

“Of course he doesn’t!” Hanna was quick to say, ever quick to jump to her best friend’s defense. “What makes you say that?”

“If you could see the way he was looking at me, you would come to the same conclusion.”

“Has he said anything?”

“No. He hasn’t said a single word to me all day!” I said, as if that was all the conviction I needed.

“Well, have you said anything to him?” Hanna retaliated, and I bit my lip. She had me there.

“Well, no…” I said slowly, guilt seeping into my voice. “But—”

“But literally nothing, Jules,” Hanna interrupted me. “Please—if not for yourself, then for me—stop driving yourself crazy this way. He does not hate you. No matter what happened between the two of you, I don’t think he can ever hate you. I’ve seen the way he looks at you, and despite how much I hate to admit it because of the way he’s been treating you, he loves you. If there’s anyone he hates, it’s probably himself. Isn’t it exactly like that with you?”

I sank down on a chair. (Why was there even a chair in the women’s bathroom?) “Yes,” I admitted begrudgingly. “But then why isn’t he with me instead of Alyssa?”

“Probably for the same reason you never told him how you feel about him when you had the chance. Fear. Alyssa is familiar; she’s the safe option. Even if they break up again like they did last time, it wouldn’t hurt as much as breaking up with you. Because you’re the one he really loves.” After a pause, she said, “Seriously, I wish I could just slap some sense into that asshole. He’s hurting the both of you and he’s fucking stupid for not seeing that.”

I sighed. “Humans are complicated. I wish I was a dog.”

I couldn’t see her, but I knew she was grinning from the other end of the line. “You just want to be Kal so you can lick Henry’s face any time you want.”

I laughed. “Hanna!” I chastised.
“You know it’s at least a little true. Anyway, what are you doing now?”

“Hiding away in the bathroom. I should probably join the others for lunch, but I’m not all that hungry. I feel like if I eat something, I’m going to puke. And after lunch we’re supposed to go over some random fight choreography to get used to doing fight scenes.”

“You know what I think you should do? I think you should join them for lunch, even if you don’t eat anything. Just make casual conversation with Henry as if nothing’s wrong. Show him that you’re not bothered by him, because you’re a thousand times stronger than him. Mentally, at least. Because I’m pretty sure he lifts, bro.”

I shook my head at her bad joke. “And then?”

“Then maybe accidentally punch him while you’re practicing the choreography. Or knee him in the nuts. You know, whichever makes it look like an accident most.”

I smiled. “I’m so clumsy that he probably won’t even think twice about it.”

“Exactly! Now go out there and hurt that son of a bitch.”

“All right. Love you, Han.”

“Love you, too, Julie. Oh, and don’t forget to make good use of your finger nails!”

I laughed, shaking my head. “Bye, Han.”

“Bye!”

Clutching my phone and taking a deep breath, I finally exited the bathroom and joined the others for lunch. “Hey,” I said, my voice weaker than I’d intended it to come out.

“Hey!” Kevin said with a grin. “Took you long enough. Did you fall in or something?”

I blushed furiously and gritted my teeth. I’d always hated it when someone made that joke. “Though I’m certainly clumsy enough for that, no, I didn’t. I had to make a call.”

“Oh, okay. Nothing too important, I hope?”

“Uh… No, not really. My best friend wanted an update.”

“Ah, so that’s why it took so long,” Kevin said with a grin. “Well, you said you’d already met Henry, and this is Joe, his personal trainer.”

“It’s nice to meet you,” I said, shaking Joe’s hand. “So, Kevin and Joe, huh? Where’s Nick?” I said in a weak attempt at a joke. Kevin and Joe didn’t get it, but the corners of Henry’s mouth shook a little. He was the only one who knew I used to be a fan of the Jonas Brothers, back when they were still together. “Anyway,” I said awkwardly, sitting down opposite of Henry, the only free seat at the table.

“Can I get you anything?” Kevin asked.

I thought frantically for a second. “Uh… A water and maybe a small salad of some sorts. I’m not that hungry.”

Henry gave me a strange look at that, but didn’t say anything. What was that look supposed to mean? And why had he still not said a single word in my presence? His silence and his looks were
driving me crazy. I wished he would just yell at me. At least then I would know where we stood.

Soon, Kevin returned with a bottle of Evian and a grilled chicken salad, and I smiled at him in thanks. “So, you said you and Henry worked together before, huh?” Kevin asked me when the silence around the table persisted.

“Uh, yeah,” I said, throwing a nervous glance at Henry. He was looking back at me with a blank expression on his face. It wasn’t hostile enough to be impolite, but it didn’t clarify much about his thoughts, either. “We worked on a movie called *If You Love Someone*. It’s a romantic comedy. We were the leads in that one too.”

“A romantic comedy, eh? That’s totally different from an action movie. Have you ever done one of those before?”

“An action movie?” I clarified, and when Kevin nodded, I shook my head. “No. The closest to an action movie I’ve done is a thriller, directed by Vince Grieve, which I wrapped about a month ago.”

“Vince Grieve?” Joe asked. “That’s a pretty big name in the industry. What was he like?”

I looked down at my plate, aimlessly stabbing at the lettuce in my salad with my fork. “He was all right,” I said, unwilling to admit just how torturous it had been to work with him, especially in front of Henry.

Joe elbowed Henry in his arm. “Hey, didn’t you work with Grieve?”

Henry shook his head. “No, I didn’t,” he said, the first words he’d spoken in my presence. Hearing his voice was both the best and the worst. I’d nearly forgotten how it sounded. He had the most beautiful voice I’d ever heard, even if he couldn’t sing for shit. With a speaking voice like his, he should be recording tons of audio books. But his voice also brought back painful memories of the sweet words he’d whispered to me on our night together.

“I like seeing you happy. I don’t like seeing you not happy.”

“Really?”

“Really. I care about you, Juliette Morrison.”

I shook my head as if it could shake away the memory and looked down at my plate again.

All throughout the rest of lunch, Kevin and Joe tried to get Henry and me to talk, and though we always politely answered their questions, we never once spoke to each other. Every time he could’ve put in a ‘right, Juliette?’ but didn’t, my heart broke a little. I couldn’t help but remember all those times in interviews where he would simply refuse to stop complimenting me and I kept wishing for him to stop because I felt uncomfortable under all his praise. Now I wished I could go back to those times, because at least then he included me in the conversation. Now I might as well not even be in the same room.

I wanted to cry. But I wasn’t going to give him the satisfaction.

When we’d finished lunch, we went back into the main area of the gym, where Kevin and Joe took us onto one of the mats. “All right,” Joe started, “this choreography’s not all too hard, just to get you two started. Kevin and I will show it to you first at full speed, and then we’ll teach it to you slowly step by step.”

I nodded in understanding, not daring to glance at Henry, and Joe and Kevin took their positions.
They circled each other slowly until Kevin suddenly struck out at Joe. The fake punch was so good that it really looked like he’d hit him on his cheekbone, and Joe’s head shot back. Joe recovered quickly, however, with a direct blow to Kevin’s jaw. Joe got a left hook in before he got cocky and dropped his guard, and Kevin saw his opening. He somehow wrapped his arm around Joe’s neck, turned him around and pulled him against his chest, his arm tightening around Joe’s throat. Joe’s eyes slowly rolled back into his head and Kevin gently and silently lowered him to the floor.

I’d been watching with rapt attention as everything went down, fighting the urge to break up the fight. I knew it was all fake, but they’d succeeded in making it look so incredibly real. I nearly applauded when Joe stood up and grinned at us.

“Your turn,” he said, clapping his hands together. “Henry, you will play Kevin’s part, and Juliette, you will play my part. Juliette, you stand right here, and Henry, you stand right over there.”

Kevin and Joe directed us through the steps one by one, making us act them out slowly at first to get acquainted with them. It was all fine and actually kind of fun, up until the moment where Henry had to wrap his arm around my neck. It would be the first time he’d touch me after our night together, and I hated that it had to be such an intimate touch right away. I’d hoped to start slow, but, of course, the first time we’d touch after not having seen each other in three months and after giving each other the silent treatment all day, it had to resemble a hug. As I dropped my guard, he wrapped an arm around my neck, gently pushed against my shoulder to turn me around, and pulled me against his torso. His arm was wrapped loosely around my neck, but his muscles were tense to give the illusion of him squeezing my throat.

But none of that mattered. Because he was holding me close to his chest (maybe not entirely like I’d imagined, but still), and his presence was everywhere. It was more suffocating than his arm ever could’ve been. It had my heart beating like crazy, and my breathing was labored. He smelled better than I’d remembered and his skin was so soft. My back was pressed entirely against his chest, so tight that I could feel his heartbeat. It was just as frantic as mine, and as I realized that, I nearly wept.

He wasn’t as unaffected as he tried to appear to be. I would never ask, but if I did, he wouldn’t be able to deny it either. He still felt something for me. Did he think about that night as often as I did? Did he regret it in the same way that I did? Not the night itself but the moment it occurred? It killed me that I might never know.

“All right, excellent,” Joe said. “Now gently lower her to the ground, as if you don’t want to make a sound, which would alert your enemies that you’re close.”

I felt Henry nod, and he slowly walked backwards, lowering me down to the ground. When my back touched the mat and he was sure there was nothing left to accidentally drop, he quickly stepped away from me, as if I’d burned him. I rolled around and got up to my knees, allowing myself one second of showing the hurt on my face before I smoothed it out again.

“Very well done!” Kevin complimented. “Now let’s try that again, at the same speed, but without any interference from us. I want to see if you two remembered the steps.”

We rehearsed the same fight for the rest of the afternoon, building up speed as we progressed, until we performed it as well as Kevin and Joe had. As soon as our (okay, my) skill would evolve, we’d be working with the actual stunt coordinator and rehearse the stunts we’d actually be doing in the movie.

After Henry and I had performed the fight effortlessly at full speed for the fifth time in a row, we were free to go. I said goodbye to Kevin and Joe, but when I turned to Henry to say goodbye to him as well, he was already turning away and walking out of the gym. I pretended not to be offended or
deterred by it in front of Kevin and Joe, but as soon as I was in my car and had full privacy again, the tears spilled over. I was hurt and confused and I didn’t know how to handle this situation.

Tears were still running down my cheeks when I got home, and Hanna looked sad as she moved to hug me. I buried myself in the comfort of her arms, my sobs making it hard to breathe.

I hated myself for crying. I wished my tears didn’t spill over so goddamn easily. I was so sick of crying. I was so sick of feeling this way. I needed to figure out a way to deal with Henry in a mature (and preferably non-crying) way. I needed to figure out a way to come out of this situation a stronger person. I was done with being weak.

So I slowly pulled away from Hanna, wiping at my face, determined to stop crying. If he was going to act this way, Henry wasn’t worth my tears. I blew my nose in the paper tissue Hanna gave me, and wiped my eyes with another. “I’m sick of feeling and acting like the victim,” I said, still hiccupsing a little from crying. “I’m done.”

Hanna didn’t really seem to know how to react to that. “What… What do you mean?”

I took a deep breath. “I mean that I’m gonna try my hardest to get on with my life. I’ll go back to cognitive therapy. I’ll try to get over Henry. It won’t be easy, and I’ll probably fuck up time and time again, but I’m so sick of this bullshit. I should be stronger than some guy messing with my emotions, and I’m gonna make damn sure that one day, I am.”

Hanna smiled, the tears jumping into her eyes. “No matter what you do, I’ll support you wholeheartedly. I’m so proud of you.”

I smiled shakily back at her. “Thanks. But I’ll do all that tomorrow. Right now I could really use some comfort food, a comfort movie and my best friend.”

Hanna pulled me into a tight hug. She rocked me from side to side as she said, “Done.”

I smiled as I hugged her back. As long as I had my friends, I would be fine. If Henry wanted to act immature and unprofessional, that was his choice, and I wouldn’t care one bit when it would finally bite him in the ass. But I was one hundred percent committed to bettering my life, no matter how scary or how difficult it was going to be.

Chapter End Notes

So... who expected him to act so cold? For me, personally, it was both weird and fun to write, because it's so vastly different from what we've seen of him before. What did you guys think? 
Next week: their first day on set! :)

Song at the start of the chapter is Stone Cold by Demi Lovato.
Monday, March 6, 2017.

My first day on set started with an odd mixture of feelings, but they would only get weirder. I’d been going to cognitive therapy for about a month now, but I still felt anxious every now and then. Now was one of those times. I was both dreading and excited for this day.

Today would be the first day of working extensively with Henry. After that first day of training together, we’d mostly been kept apart, our trainers focusing on our individual needs, so we’d hardly spoken. I’d needed to learn more about fighting, and Henry had had to work on losing a bit of muscle so he looked leaner than he was when he portrayed Superman. (After all, most NSA operatives didn’t look like aliens from Krypton.) But now we actually had to work together again, just like we’d had on If You Love Someone. And I just wasn’t sure if we could pull off that same chemistry we’d had back then, not now we were so hostile with each other. Well, hostile wasn’t really the right word. Indifferent would fit better.

Other than that, though, I had very little else to worry about, and I tried not to focus on that by instead focusing on the parts I was excited for. Starting another project, for one, was pretty cool. But what was by far the best part of it all was that Ella would be my stylist again, and Natascha was a P.A. on this production. I hadn’t seen them in months, especially Natascha, and I was incredibly eager to see them again. After Henry, back when things were still good between us, they’d been the best part of filming If You Love Someone, and now I had them back. If things between Henry and me had still been good, it would almost be like a sense of déjà vu. All that was missing were Ryan, Fiona and Scott.

Hanna squeezed my hands tightly. We were standing on the porch, and I kind of felt like a child who was going to kindergarten for the first time and her mother was unwilling to let her go. “If you need me, just call me. I don’t have to work today and your set is close by, so I’ll race over there as fast as I can, okay?”

I gave her a grateful smile. “Thank you. But I think I’ll be okay. Ella and Natascha will be there, and they’ll have my back. Besides, Henry acting immature is actually making it easier for me to get over him.”

Hanna laughed, pulling me into a tight hug. “I’m glad to hear that. Now go, before I chain you to this porch. Have fun filming, honey.”

“Thanks. I will. And I’ll call you with an update later.”
She pointed at me, reminding me of a stern teacher. “You’d better.”

I laughed and gave her one last hug before I got in my car and drove off.

Knowing I wouldn’t see Henry for at least another hour or so because I’d decided to head in to work a little earlier, I allowed myself to get a teensy bit excited the closer I got to set. I parked my car in the already quite crowded lot, and, script in hand, went on a search for the makeup trailer. I passed many sets and other trailers before I finally found it, but when I did, it was completely worth it. Deciding the element of surprise might be fun, I didn’t knock and just went right in.

“JULIETTE! Oh my gosh, I missed you so!”

Apparently, though, the element of surprise was stronger on me as I suddenly found two arms wrapping themselves tightly around me. But I recovered quickly and wrapped my arms around her waist, laughing. “I missed you, too, Natascha.”

“We have so much to discuss! Ella told me all about that nasty director you had to work with. Did he really say all those disgusting things to you? And oh my God, is Henry really with that model girl? If that’s true, I am so sorry, honey. I honestly can’t believe he would pass you—”

“Natascha, dear,” Ella interrupted her. “Take a breath.”

Natascha sucked in a breath. “Right. Sorry. I’m just so excited.”

I smiled. “It’s okay.” I hugged Ella hello before I said, “And to answer your questions: Yes, Vince Grieve really did say all those things to me because he’s evil incarnate, and yes, Henry really does seem to be with Alyssa Jeanes.”

Ella shook her head, a sour look on her face. “I knew that boy was slow, but I never pegged him as stupid. But you two seemed to be doing so well together in Amsterdam. You’ve probably figured this out by now, but I chose that outfit for the late night talk show on purpose, to try and get Henry to realize how much he actually likes you—if it isn’t love. But I guess it didn’t work. Sorry, dearie. I tried.”

I sighed, slumping down in a chair. Feeling a lump forming in my throat, I said, “Oh, it worked. Just not in the way you’d intended.”

Ella’s brow furrowed in confusion. “What do you mean?”

“Yeah,” Natascha said, looking equally confused. “What do you mean?”

I took a deep breath, dreading what I had to tell them. I couldn’t very well tell them, ‘Never mind, nothing,’ now, and besides, I trusted them. “After I’d said goodbye to you in the elevator, Ella,” I started, “Henry and I went into our separate hotel rooms at first. But once I was alone, everything kind of crashed down on me and I started to get really anxious. And—I know it was incredibly stupid, but as an escape, I went into Henry’s room and asked him to get drunk with me. He looked concerned but seemed to understand that it wasn’t the time to ask questions, so he agreed. Fast forward to an hour or so later, and I was entirely wasted. Then he told me he cared about me, and I might’ve told him that I cared about him, too, and then he called me beautiful, and, well… Things kind of escalated from there.”

Both Ella and Natascha stared at me, speechless. Natascha recovered first. “You… Please tell me you didn’t sleep with him.”

I covered my face with my hands in shame. “I did,” I admitted begrudgingly, my voice coming out
muffled through my hands.

“Oh,” Ella said.

I uncovered my face. “And then the next morning I woke up in his arms, and I just freaked out. I got my stuff and got the hell out of there. I went to the airport and figured I’d never see him again, up until I got the part for this movie and read that he would be playing opposite of me. The first time I saw him again was a month ago, on the first training day.”

Her eyes wide, Natascha asked, “And?”

“It was so awkward! We didn’t say a word to each other the entire time unless we absolutely had to, and I think our trainers noticed, because that first day was the only day we trained together; they kept us apart after that. But the worst thing was when we had to practice a fight scene, and I was just completely pressed against his chest. I just couldn’t stop thinking about that goddamn night, and he was just there, and I could feel his heart going crazy, and I’m still just so confused!”

“That…” Ella started, but she couldn’t find the words. “Wow.”

“I know. I fucked up so bad.”

“You both did, though,” Natascha said. “Henry fucked up just as bad as you. Well, more actually, if you consider that he cheated on his girlfriend.”

“Yeah, but I slept with him even though I knew he was with Alyssa. I’m a freaking home wrecker.”

Ella shook her head. “You said yourself that you were really drunk, and we all know how much you care for him. You didn’t really stand a chance. I’m not gonna say that you aren’t at fault, but don’t blame yourself as much as you do, because I know you.”

I gave her a sheepish smile. “I’m trying. I’ve been going to therapy for the last month.”

“Wait,” Natascha said. “Henry actually drove you towards therapy?”

“Well, not directly. To be honest, I’ve been needing therapy for a really long time, but all this shit with Henry finally made me realize I had to go get help. So, in a way, I guess I should be thanking him for that.”

“Maybe,” Ella allowed. “But for now, let’s focus on moving forward. I’d better get started on your hair and makeup before Henry arrives. Natascha, dear, would you make us all a cup of tea while I start in on Juliette’s makeup?”

“Yeah, of course, no problem.”

As Natascha moved to boil some water, I sat down in one of two chairs by the mirror. Bit by bit, Ella morphed me into a confident CIA operative, my makeup simple and elegant and my hair done up in a French twist. Ella was quick and she was done before Henry could arrive, or before I even had the chance to finish my tea. So I stayed a few minutes more to catch up with both Ella and Natascha as I drained my cup, but then it really was time to head to the costume department. Ella stayed behind, but Natascha tagged along with me.

“So you haven’t seen Henry in a month?” she asked as a kind woman took my measurements.

I shook my head. “No, I haven’t.”
“So what do you want me to do when he shows up?”

I shrugged. “I don’t know. Nothing. Just act as you would normally. If he ignores me just like last time, that’s his choice, but I’m not gonna stoop to childish levels.”

Natascha nodded, a thoughtful look on her face. “That’s good. Smart.”

I was given my outfit, and I headed into the dressing room to change. Once I was dressed, I looked at my reflection in the big mirror on the wall. I was dressed in a pair of black slacks, a red silk blouse that was tucked into the pants, and a black fitted blazer. The high platform heels on my feet made me at least six feet tall, and I knew I would be nearly as tall as Henry. I looked very much like a successful business woman, which was an odd look for me. I was used to being in either jeans or dresses, but never something like this. But I guess that was the best part of being an actress; you get to wear things you’d normally never wear, become someone you’d normally never be. Like an amazing CIA operative, for example.

I exited the dressing room again and Lyla, the head of the costume department, gave me a necklace. It was white gold and had a pendant in the form on an ‘L’ hanging from it. There was single diamond on the ‘L.’ It was simple but elegant, and fit Lily Davis perfectly.

“Right,” Natascha said once I was done in costume. “We still have some time before you have to go to set, so do you want to go back to Ella’s?”

I shook my head. “No. Henry is there right now.”

Natascha raised an eyebrow. “I thought you said you weren’t going to ignore him.”

“Ignore, yes. But I said nothing about avoiding him.”

She snorted. “True enough. Come, I’ll take you on a small tour, then.”

But we hadn’t walked very far before a very excited dog barreled over to me, barking happily. I crouched down automatically, greeting him with a smile as I temporarily forgot who usually came with this dog. “Kal, hey, buddy!” I said, scratching him behind his ears. “I missed you! Yes, I did! Did you miss me, too, baby?” He licked my nose in response, and I laughed. “I’m gonna take that as a yes. But be careful with the makeup, okay? We don’t want to make Ella mad.”

But then realization hit and I quickly straightened up. Henry was looking at something in the distance, a troubled look on his face. I guess he was still ignoring me then. I shot a helpless look at Natascha, but she just shrugged.

I looked back at Henry, desperately searching for words. I didn’t want to say nothing, but anything I could come up with just sounded stupid. And, dammit, he just looked so gorgeous. He was wearing an outfit similar to mine; very business-like. He pulled it off really well (which was honestly no surprise—he could pull everything off well), and his curly hair shone in the sunlight. “Uh… Hi, Henry.”

His head snapped back, and he gave a tight smile, his eyes flat. “Hi. Hey, Natascha.” He was silent for a few seconds before he finally said, “I’d better get going.”

And just like that, he ordered Kal to follow him and he walked away, leaving Natascha and me standing there.

When he was gone, a look of outrage took over Natascha’s face. “What. The. Fuck. Is. His. Problem?”
“Me, obviously. If I hadn’t been here, he probably would’ve greeted you politely, like he normally always does. And I guess he wasn’t exactly rude, either, but…”

Natascha shook her head. “That man has issues. Come on, let’s get you to set.”

I didn’t really feel like going anywhere Henry was going to be, too, but I agreed anyway, knowing I didn’t have much of a choice. So I followed Natascha past dozens of trailers until we finally reached the studio. She took me inside, carefully navigating me around sets and making sure I didn’t trip over any stray lights or props.

When we got to the set, it was already bustling with various people, from the camera crew to P.A.s. The set was huge. We were in a big office with fake large windows now, but it sprawled much farther than that, with extra offices they’d built, long mysterious hallways, working hand and retina scanners on every door… They weren’t messing around on this production.

“Ah, Juliette! There you are!” Alona, the director, said. She strode towards me and gave me a quick hug. I’d met her before multiple times, of course, but her kindness and acceptance of me still surprised me every time. I guess I was so used to Vince’s hostility that I subconsciously expected it from her as well, even though I knew she was incredibly nice, and wanted this movie to be the best movie it could be. She was willing to do anything to achieve that, which included creating a nice atmosphere on set.

Too bad Henry hadn’t gotten the memo.

“Hey, Alona,” I said with a smile. “It’s nice to see you again. Is Henry here yet?”

“No. Last I heard, our other star was putting his dog in—oh, there he is! Good! Now that we’re all complete, let’s get to filming. But before we do that, I want to say a quick little thing.” With a smile, she looked at everyone in the room. “I have full faith that we can make this movie as great as I envisioned it when I first read the screenplay. And how could we not? We have two great leading actors, and we know from their previous work that they have great chemistry. We can do this, and we will do this. So let’s get started!”

So that’s why she’d hired me? Because my chemistry with Henry was so good in If You Love Someone? Then I had some bad news for her. Our chemistry might’ve been great once, but after our little… mistake in Amsterdam, it had turned downright icy.

“Okay, Juliette, your character is very hesitant of Nate Johnson. Henry, Nate, on the contrary, is very flirty, aggravating Lily even more. Make sure you two convey that.”

We nodded in understanding and took our places. I sat down behind the desk as Henry moved to the end of the hallway. My heartbeat was erratic as I waited for Alona to start rolling. I couldn’t remember ever being this nervous for a scene, other than my first kissing scene with Henry or our sex scene togeth—

_No! Don’t think about that now. Don’t think about anything sexual. For your own good._

“Action!” Alona yelled.

I typed nonsensical stuff into my computer as I nervously anticipated the knock on the door. When it finally came, I had to fight to not jump right out of my chair from the nerves. Instead, I just lifted my head with a bored expression on my face. “Come in,” I said.

The door opened and in strode Henry. There was something wrong, though. I could tell he was trying to be that flirty guy that Alona had described, but there was a stiffness to his movements, and
even though he was smiling, his jaw was set.

“Well, hello there,” he said, and it took everything in me to not stare at him in surprise. He was speaking in an American accent. I’d heard him use it in movies, but never in person. It was weird, and kind of made me appreciate his own British accent even more. “You must be the ever famous Lily Davis, the CIA’s number one operative. They did not lie about your beauty, miss.”

With a sigh, I leaned back into my chair and crossed my arms in front of my chest. “And you must be the ever infamous Nathaniel Johnson, the NSA’s number one flirt,” I said, disdain dripping from my voice.

“People usually just call me Nate,” Henry said, still that half-easy, half-forced smile on his face. He planted his hands on my desk and leaned closer to me. “But you can call me any—”

“Cut!” Alona yelled. Henry jumped back as if he was burned, the smile immediately dropping from his face. I was kind of glad about that, though; it had been incredibly unsettling. “What’s going on with you two? Henry, you are not supposed to be the hostile one. And Juliette, Lily does not get nervous when confronted with an overly-flirty man. She eats annoying men for breakfast. Now let’s try that again.”

She had us do it again from the beginning, but it wasn’t long before she cut us again.

“Seriously, what is up with the two of you? Where is that amazing chemistry that I saw between the two of you in If You Love Someone?”

“I…” I started, wanting to apologize, but I stopped myself. I didn’t even know where to begin.

Alona squeezed the bridge of her nose between her thumb and forefinger, taking a deep breath as she closed her eyes. Opening them again, she said, “You know what? We can’t make a movie like this. Let’s just take an hour, and when we get back to filming, I expect you two to have fixed your issues.”

Alona turned around to leave, but Natascha stopped her. “Ms. Baidar?” she called out quickly. “Can I talk to you for a minute? Privately?”

Sighing, Alona said, “Sure. Why not.”

Turning to me, Natascha said, “Wait here, I’ll be right back.” And then she was gone, off to talk to Alona. I tried to lip-read their conversation, but it turned out I sucked at that, so eventually I stopped trying and got out my phone to type out a quick text to Hanna.

He hates me. Even Alona noticed.

fuck him then. he’s not worth it.

Natascha returned and gave me a smile. “Why don’t you and I go somewhere where you can take a breather?”

I nodded. “Yeah. That sounds like a good idea.”

She took me to a far corner of the studio, to a moderately sized room filled with one couch and a few plastic chairs. She sat me down on the couch and asked, “So… How are you?”

I shrugged. “I don’t even know. Hurt, I guess?” Looking around the room, I asked, “What is this room even used for?”
“I don’t know, and I don’t really care. Besides, your distraction techniques aren’t working on me.”

I sighed, slumping back against the couch’s backrest. “I was genuinely curious, you know. It’s a strange-ass room.” I shook my head. “But anyway, I guess I’m hurt and mad. He’s fucking with my ability to act well, and he’s not doing a very good job, either. And that sucks, because I was really excited about this movie before I knew he was in it. It would just be so much better if he didn’t play in it or would just decide to grow the fuck up.”

Natascha sighed. “This sucks. Anyway, do you want me to get you a Coca-Cola Life? It might make you feel better.”

I shook my head. “No. I don’t drink caffeine anymore; it apparently makes me anxious, according to my therapist.”

“Wait,” Natascha said, looking incredulous, her eyes wide. “You and not drinking Coke? That… is quite possibly the weirdest development of today. And today has been pretty weird already.”

“I know,” I groaned. “The first few weeks I actually went into withdrawal, and I still want it so bad.”

“You know what?” Natascha said, perking up. “I think we have some caffeine-free Coke here. Want me to go get it for you?”

“Oh my God, yes! If you could do that for me, I will love you forever.”

She grinned. “Don’t you already love me forever?”

“I do,” I admitted, grinning back at her, “but I will love you even more if you get me some much-needed Coke.”

Laughing, she stood up. “That could totally be taken out of context if someone were to walk by and only heard that sentence. But stay here, I’ll be right back.”

I nodded and she left. Not really knowing what else to do, I grabbed my phone and scrolled through Twitter. Once I’d reached the top of my feed, I posted a tweet myself:

@JulesMorrison: First day of shooting!! #exciting

What’s a little lie among Twitter friends, right? I was quickly getting replies, most of them involving Henry in some way, and nearly all of them made me want to throw my phone across the room. Some of them were asking me for a picture of, or with, him, some of them were telling me how much they shipped me with Henry (ha! As if that was ever going to happen), and some were asking me to tell Henry how much they loved him.

When I was very much on the verge of actually throwing my phone across the room, the door opened again. “Oh, Natascha, thank God. Please tell me you’ve got—”

My words jammed in my throat, because who had just entered the room wasn’t Natascha. It was Henry. He was standing there as if petrified, staring at me with wide eyes.

“Uh…” was all I managed to get out.

But that sound was enough to bring him back down to earth. He set his jaw and turned around, grabbed the door handle and pulled, but nothing happened. He tried again, but with the same result. “Great!” he growled, just as I came to the same conclusion he’d probably already had: We were locked in. He grabbed his phone, unlocked it, and cursed under his breath. Reluctantly, he turned to
me. “I don’t have a signal. Do you?”

I grabbed my phone. “Yeah, I just posted—oh.” Where there was first a strong Wi-Fi signal, there was now nothing. “Never mind. No, I don’t.”

Henry kicked the door in aggravation and sat down on one of the plastic chairs. “Marvelous,” he grumbled.

Feeling annoyed, I said, “Would you stop being so fucking negative? Natascha will be here in a—wait.” As I mentioned Natascha’s name, everything suddenly clicked. I now understood why she’d wanted to talk to Alona, why she’d taken me to this room and had seemed to be so disinterested in its use (which should’ve been a major sign in the first place), and why she had been so eager to get me something to drink. But most of all, it explained what Henry was doing here and why we were so mysteriously locked in without any signal. I strode up to the door and banged on it with the palm of my hand. “Natascha! I know what you’re trying to do and it’s fucking stupid. Let us out!”

“No!” Natascha’s voice came from the other side of the door. “I’m not letting you two out of here until you talk out your issues. I’m gonna go now, and I’ll be back later to see if the two of you made some progress.”

Trying desperately not to panic, I made my way back to the couch. I sat down and folded my hands in my lap, determined not to show Henry how badly they were shaking. We were going to be here for a while, at least until Alona decided she’d had enough and wanted to get back to shooting. If she even wanted to get back to shooting today at all. After all, she had approved of what was undoubtedly Natascha’s plan one way or another, and maybe she didn’t want to get back to filming until Henry and I had resolved our issues.

I dared a glance at Henry. He was staring blankly ahead, worrying his bottom lip. He looked pissed, to say the least. And all this over one stupid night. He had no right to be angry with me; he was the one who’d cheated, and I hadn’t exactly seduced him either. He’d come on to me.

“Why did you leave?” he asked suddenly. There was an angry undertone in his voice that made me flinch. “That morning after in Amsterdam, why did you leave?”

I hadn’t expected that question, so it took me a while to answer. Too embarrassed to admit that I’d simply been scared, I said, “I was kind of hoping that you’d been too drunk to remember.”

“I wasn’t that drunk, you know. I still remember everything.”

“If you weren’t drunk, then why did you sleep with me?” I near-shouted, exasperated. My fight or flight instincts were starting to kick in, just like they always did with any form of confrontation, and every molecule of my being was screaming flight. “And why do you even care that I left?”

“Because I’m fucking in love with you!” Henry yelled.

I sat there in stunned silence, just staring at him. I didn’t know what to feel. I didn’t know what to think. It was like he’d shouted words from another language at me, because they would’ve made just as much sense. “You… what?”

“I’m in love with you, Juliette! I have been ever since you literally fell into my life. Do you have any idea how much it hurt to think I finally had you and then to wake up with you gone? It was like I could literally feel my heart break. And you didn’t leave a note. You never called, never texted. Do you have any idea how much that hurt?”

That was what he was so mad about? I was so confused.
“That doesn’t make any sense,” was all I thought to say.

“Why not?” he asked, exasperated. “I thought I was pretty obvious about my feelings for you. And I thought you might actually like me back, and then when I kissed you, I was over the moon because you kissed me back. And then the best night of my life happened, but you ruined it by stomping all over my heart the next morning.”

“I stomped all over your heart?” I asked, finding my anger again. “What about you, huh? I waited so long for you to make a move while we were filming If You Love Someone, but you never did. And then we were apart and gradually you stopped calling and texting, and I thought, ‘Fine, he’s probably busy.’ It hurt, but I understood. But then you get back together with your ex, and how was that supposed to make me feel, huh? Do you have any idea how much that hurt me?”

“My… My ex?”

“Yes! Alyssa. Ring any bells?”

He shook his head. “Juliette, I never got back together with Alyssa. I called her in attempt to get over you, sure, and that was incredibly stupid, but when I saw her again I just realized how much I didn’t love her. I loved you, and wanted only you. So we just hung out as friends.”

That revelation had my whole world reeling. At the same time, everything made so much more sense, and yet nothing made sense anymore. It made sense why I’d felt like Henry had been flirting with me—because he actually had been. But at the same time, I was finding out that all my anger, all my worries, had been unfounded. It took a while to recover from that.

“Did… Did you really think I would’ve acted like that if I’d been with someone else? That I would sleep with you had I already been taken?”

I covered my face with my hands in shame, and I discovered I’d been crying. “I should’ve just asked,” I mumbled.

Henry stood up from his chair and kneeled down in front of me, taking hold of my wrists to pull my hands away from my face. “So why didn’t you just ask?” he asked softly, staring into my eyes. I was surprised to find tears shimmering in his blue eyes.

I shook my head. “I was scared. I wanted to, that first day of the press tour, but I was just so scared. I knew I wouldn’t have been able to handle hearing you talk about how happy you were with someone else, because I was so convinced that you were, so I just didn’t ask. I know now that I should have—it would’ve saved me a lot of pain, insecurity and worry, but… I just couldn’t. I don’t deal with things that scare me. I run away from them, as fast as I can. That’s why I ran that morning in Amsterdam. When I woke up and realized what we’d done, when I thought I’d just helped you cheat on your girlfriend… I was terrified. I was pissed at myself because I’d told myself that I’d never be that person, and yet there I was. And I was mad at you for coming on to me while you were with someone else—at least, at the time, I thought you were. I was just so disgusted with myself and so scared, that I thought my only option was to run, to leave your life forever. But then we both booked this movie, and then all the anxiety started again.”

Henry seemed speechless for a minute. He just stared at me, his mouth slightly ajar, but then he finally seemed to recover. “I… I had no idea you thought all that. I mean, I get it now. I get why you reacted the way you did, why you ran away. And here I was, acting like a jerk the whole time. I’m so sorry.”

“I’m sorry too,” I said, my voice small.
Henry released a wry laugh. “We’re both so stupid, aren’t we?”

I gave him a small smile. “Yeah. We are.”

“Do you forgive me?” he asked.

I shook my head. “Apparently, there’s nothing to forgive. And I get why you were mad now. If the roles had been reversed, I’d be mad at you too if you’d been the one running out on me.”

“Yes, but I get why you did it now.”

“Speaking of…” I said slowly, feeling my heartbeat pick up again as nervous adrenaline rushed through my veins. “Aren’t you disgusted with me because I slept with you even though I thought you were with someone else?”

He was quiet for a moment as he thought about his answer. “I feel like I should be, but…” He took a deep breath. “Do you love me?”

This was it. The moment where really all the cards would be on the table. As I studied his eyes, stalling for some more time, I nodded slowly. “Yes, I do. I do love you. So much.”

A big smile broke out on his face. “Then none of the other things matter. They’re in the past. I want to focus on the future now. At least… if you want a future with me too.”

I smiled at him, tentatively. “I do. It’s all I’ve ever wanted, ever since I met you.”

He grinned. “So I guess you fell for me both literally and figuratively the moment you first saw me, huh?”

I laughed, wiping away my tears. “I really did, yeah.”

He helped me wipe the tears off my face, his hands lingering there even after they were long gone. “Is it okay if I kiss you now?”

I smiled. “From now on, you can kiss me any time you want.”

He smiled back at me, inching closer. “Good,” he whispered, just before his lips touched mine.

And then we were kissing. It was soft and sweet, and it made my heart swell with all the love. The moment our lips touched, I knew that I never wanted to stop. If I could live in this moment forever, I would—in a heartbeat. Kissing him like this, when we were both fully ourselves and void of any alcohol, was better than any other kiss we’d previously shared. It was like I could hear angels singing, like we were floating above the clouds.

I couldn’t quite believe that after all this time, we were finally together. I was with Henry. Henry Cavill and Juliette Morrison, officially a couple. Well, not officially quite yet, but close enough.

We pulled away, both smiling contently, our foreheads touching. This was what it was supposed to be like.

“I’m glad we can do this now,” I whispered.

“So am I.” Henry laughed suddenly. “I can’t believe it took us a whole fucking year to finally get our shit figured out.”

“Wow,” I said, startled. “It really has been a year already?” Well, I guess it had been. We’d met in
March last year, and now it was March again. Time really did fly by.

Henry finally rose up from his crouch and sat down next to me on the couch, pulling me so close so that I was basically sitting in his lap. “Do you remember when we accidentally bumped into each other that day in the bookstore?”

I smiled. “How could I forget?”

“Well…” he started sheepishly, “that wasn’t all that accidental. I saw you go in together with Hanna, and I couldn’t believe my luck. For like an entire week, all that had been on my mind was you, and there you were. But I figured it would be weird if I would just approach you, so I needed a way for you to notice me and invite me along, at least for a little while. So I kind of staged a fake bookshop accident.”

I laughed. “So shopping with us had been your plan all along?”

He shrugged. “Hey, what can I say? I was desperate for more time with you. At the time, I was pretty sure Ryan was gonna give you the part, but there was always that small chance that he wouldn’t, and, well… I don’t know, I just really wanted to spend more time with you. I really was a goner from the beginning.”

I smiled, running my fingers over his cheek. It was completely smooth, no stubble whatsoever, and I had to admit I missed it a little bit. He looked incredibly good with stubble. “So was I, you know.”

He smiled before giving me a slow, languid kiss. “I’m glad.”

“I’m glad you finally know.”

We just stared at each other for a few moments. I stared at his curls, the shape of his forehead, his beautiful eyes with the brown flecks in the one eye, the freckles on his nose, his beautifully shaped lips, the tiny birthmark in the middle of his bottom lip, his cute cleft chin, his incredibly sharp jawline… And as I stared, I realized it was all mine to stare at. All mine to kiss whenever I wanted. As I realized that, my heart swelled with such love and happiness that I genuinely thought it would burst.

“I love you,” Henry said.


He grinned cheekily as he fully pulled me onto his lap and kissed me hard. I wrapped my arms around his neck, my fingers tangling themselves in the curls at the back of his head. As our tongues explored playfully, his hands slowly rubbed up and down my thighs. Remembering the last time his hands had been close to that area, I felt my face heat up. We could have nights like that all the time now, and I wouldn’t have to worry the next morning as I woke up naked in his arms. Instead, I could snuggle closer, tell him I love him, and maybe we’d even go for another round. The possibilities were endless, and we could try them all out, because now everything was on the table.

“Oh! Wow! Oh, God! I am so sorry!”

Henry and I shot apart at the sound of Natascha’s voice. She was standing in the door opening, her eyes wide and her face bright red.

“Nat?”

“So… You guys aren’t mad at each other anymore?”
Henry shook his head, smiling at me. “No, we aren’t.”

“Oh, no problem,” Natascha said, waving my thanks away. “Anyway, Alona was asking about you guys, so I told her I would check on you. But I’d better get you two to Ella for a touch-up before I get you back to set. You both look a little... Well, let’s just say that it’s obvious the two of you made up, if you know what I’m saying.”


“No problem, really, but I really should get you to Ella, before Alona starts wondering where the hell we are.”

We followed Natascha outside, and as she walked ahead of us, Henry wrapped an arm around my shoulders, pulling me close. “Do you want to meet me at my hotel after we wrap up shooting tonight?” he whispered into my ear.

I bit my lip, looking up at him through my lashes. “I do.”

He smiled, ducking his head down to press a soft kiss to my lips. “Good.”

~*~*~*~*~*~

Okay, you completely lost me,” Hanna said.

“So he was never actually with Alyssa after all?”

I shook my head. “No, he wasn’t. Well, he obviously was before, but not while he knew me. So really, our biggest problem this whole time has simply been miscommunication. Which is an issue we really need to talk about, ironically enough. There are loads of things we still need to talk about, but I have a feeling that tonight might not involve all too much talking.”

Hanna giggled. “Get it, girl. But you really should talk about everything, though. Soon.”

I sighed. “I know. And we will.”

“Speaking of talking, I want to have a talk with Henry myself too. I want to make sure that he knows he’s not allowed to hurt you ever again, and if he does, there will be serious consequences. I’m talking about, like, cutting off his testicles with one of Keegan’s brother’s swords. And they’re all dull as hell, so that’ll be fun.”

I shook my head, smiling. “I’d ask you not to have that conversation with him, but I know you can’t be stopped anyway. And besides, I kind of don’t feel like stopping you.”

She grinned, bumping her fist to my shoulder. “That’s my girl. Just remember that I only want you to be happy. I know that you’ve loved Henry for a really long time, and you know that I’ve supported it from the beginning, but ever since the rumors about him getting back together with Alyssa started, I’ve kind of had a hard time trusting him. So he’ll have to prove himself to me, and the only way to
do that is to make you happy. Make sure he knows that.”

I smiled, giving her a tight hug. “I will. And thank you. You are the bestest best friend I could ever wish for.”

“Same. Now go get your man!”

I laughed. “All right, I will.”


I blushed. “As a matter of fact, yes, I am…”

Hanna grinned. “Atta girl. Now go reel in that super hunk of yours.”

Smiling, I gave her a hug. “See you tomorrow evening, hon.”

“Yes, you will. But I want deets before that.”

I rolled my eyes, but still couldn’t stop smiling. “All right, all right. I’ll try to call you with some details tomorrow morning.”

I gave her one last hug, and then I was out the door. As I drove to the hotel Henry was staying at, I felt the nerves slowly come back. What if he’d decided that he didn’t love me after all? Or that he didn’t want to risk our friendship by dating me? And what was I even thinking? I wasn’t the kind of girl who could go up to someone’s hotel room with sexy matching underwear and just jump them, even if he was Henry. There were still so many things that I was still insecure about, things we really needed to talk about before we did anything else. We had to make sure we were both on the same page.

So when I was standing in front of his door twenty minutes later, I hesitated, my hand already outstretched to knock. I closed my eyes and took a deep breath. “You can do this,” I mumbled under my breath. I knocked.

I heard some scuffling coming from inside the room before the door swung open, and there he was. He looked gorgeous, wearing just simple jeans and a black T-shirt. His hair was product free, and he smelled like he’d just taken a shower. My heart swelled just at the sight of him, and I felt a smile slowly take over my face.

“Hey,” he breathed, seeming almost nervous.

“Hey.”

For a moment, we both simply stood in the door opening of his hotel room, staring at each other. Then he unfroze and stepped forward, cupping my face in his hands. He placed the softest kiss on my lips before stepping back again. “Come in.”

I nodded and stepped into his room. As soon as I’d crossed the threshold, I was attacked, but not by Henry. I laughed, kneeling down to greet Kal. “Hey, boy. I missed you too, baby.” I pressed a kiss to the top of his head, and he returned the favor by licking my cheek, making me laugh again.

“Don’t worry, boy,” Henry said, scratching Kal behind his ears. “You’re gonna see a lot more of her from now on. Right?” he verified, a twinge of uncertainty in his voice.

I smiled up at him. “Right.”
“So… We should probably talk, right?” Henry asked. “I mean, before we do anything… else.”

I straightened up, releasing a breath. “I’m actually so relieved you said that.”

Henry smiled. “Good.” We sat down on the couch, and things were awkward at first. Neither of us really knew how to sit, until Henry turned to me and took one of my hands in both of his. “So… Where to start?”

I took a deep breath. “I want you to know that it isn’t going to be easy to be with me, and I’d totally get it if you don’t want to be with me anymore once you understand what it all entails.”

“Don’t say that. I’m not—”

I shook my head. “No, wait. Let me finish.” Taking another deep breath, I said, “I’m incredibly insecure. You know that. And that’s by no means your fault, but I’m still going to need constant reassurance. That’s just how I am. I get insecure about the stupidest things, but please understand that I have no control over that. I’m not trying to be whiny or jealous; it’s me genuinely being scared of losing you. I am trying to get better—I’ve been going to cognitive therapy for the past month—but it’s a long process, and I might never fully get over my insecurities. So if you can’t handle that, that’s perfectly fine, but please tell me so upfront.”

My head was spinning when I finally stopped talking. Saying that took a tremendous amount of courage, and I couldn’t quite believe I’d said it at all. But saying the words wasn’t nearly as scary as waiting for Henry’s response.

He tightened his grip on my hand. “I’m not backing away from this. From us. It’s gonna take effort on both sides, but no relationship is perfect. And I, personally, am completely willing to put in the effort.”

I released the breath I’d been holding and smiled. “I’m so glad to hear that.”

He smiled and placed a soft kiss on my forehead. When he pulled back, there was a thoughtful expression on his face. “I’m not backing away from this. From us. It’s gonna take effort on both sides, but no relationship is perfect. And I, personally, am completely willing to put in the effort.”

I smiled and kind of felt like crying. Maybe I already was. “You… are so perfect.”

“Then why are you crying?”

I laughed, wiping my tears away with my free hand. “Because you’re so sweet. Do you have any idea how much it means to me that you even asked that? No one has ever asked me that before. Just knowing that you’re willing to do that for me, is… It’s perfect.”

“So you’ll let me come along once?”

I nodded. “Yeah. If that’s what you want, then yes.”

He smiled. “Okay. So let me promise you this, all right? For as long as you’ll have me, I’ll reassure you every day. I’ll tell you that I love you, that you are the only one for me, and I promise to be honest every time I do.”

I rested my hand on his cheek and pressed my lips to his. I kissed him hard, hoping to convey all of my gratitude. “I promise to do the same. And I promise to always try to talk to you when
something’s bothering me or bringing me down.”

He finally released my hand and wrapped his arms around me, pulling me onto his lap as I giggled. “Good. Now, is there anything else we should talk about?”

My smile fell, and I looked down so I wouldn’t have to look him in the eye as I said, “Well… I know you’ve already said that you weren’t with Alyssa, but I saw the pictures. She was constantly all over you, and you looked so happy with her. I mean, can you really blame me for thinking you’d gotten back together?”

“No. I can’t. And I feel like I should explain. Alyssa… is someone who’s very comfortable in her own skin. She’s touchy-feely with everyone. So that explains the pictures. And I was smiling because, well, she really is just a friend. She makes me laugh. And I admit, I did call her with the thought of trying things with her again. I hadn’t heard from you in a while, and I guess I thought I felt like I annoyed you every time I sent you a message or called you. I thought you might not like me back after all. So I called her, but then as we got together for dinner, I realized what I was doing was all wrong. I didn’t love her. I never did. I mean, when I was with her, I genuinely thought that I did. I’d never felt anything like it. But it turned out that all I’d ever felt for her was infatuation, because when I met you… I was shaken to the core. That’s when it started dawning on me that I’d never really been in love with her, but I fully realized and understood it when I saw her again. I’d never really been in love before because I was holding out for you. So I told her that I just wanted to be friends, and she agreed.”

“But… But you had breakfast with her the next day. I figured that she must’ve stayed over.”

“Ah, well… That’s because she kind of did. We were so busy catching up that we didn’t realize the time, and she’d had a few glasses of wine, so I decided it was probably best to not let her drive home. So she stayed in the guest room and I slept in my own bed. Nothing happened.”

I nodded, then grimaced. “See what I mean? I get really insecure and think the worst, and then it turns out there is a very simple, plausible explanation. It’s so fucked up.”

He shook his head and pulled me a little closer still. “Hey, no. It’s just the way your brain works, and I get it. I know you don’t mean it personally. It’s simply your own insecurity, not necessarily a mistrust of me. And if it is, I promise that I’ll try my hardest to prove myself to you.”

“God, I love you.”

He broke out in a big smile. “Yeah?”

I nodded, smiling back at him. “Yeah.”

“Good, because I love you, too.” And he kissed me, wasting no time in getting right to business, tugging my shirt over my head. He smiled as he recognized my bra. It was the same one I’d been wearing in Amsterdam, the one he’d said drove him crazy. “Nice choice of underwear.”

I grinned. “I thought you might like it. Now it’s your turn. Take your shirt off, Superman.”

He smirked. “All right. Bossy, I like it.”

He took off his black T-shirt and threw it in a corner of the room. I took a moment to take him in. He’d slimmed down a lot since I’d last seen him shirtless, but he was still very muscular. More like a Theseus six pack than a Superman six pack, but I wasn’t complaining. He looked good. Really good. “Wow…” I breathed.
“Not quite as you remember it, huh?”

I shook my head. “No. It’s not.” I ran my fingers down his abs, all the way down to the waistband of his jeans. “But I can definitely work with it.” I unbuckled his belt and then undid the button and zipper on his jeans. “No problem.”

He smiled and gently bit my bottom lip, making me moan. “Good.”

Henry stood up suddenly, carrying me over to the bed. I giggled as he lay me down in the middle and placed kisses all over my bare stomach. “I love you,” he mumbled in-between kisses.

“I love you, too. I really do.”

Chapter End Notes

Today has kind of been a huge mess because of the disastrous Brexit situation, so I hope this chapter will bring a little bit of light in this dark day for those of you who are pissed off about the outcome of the vote (like me).

Anyway, nasty politics aside, I have been writing towards this chapter for a really long time, and it's a really weird feeling to finally send it out into the world and have you guys read it. I hope it doesn't disappoint. I feel like it kind of does because it's been all I've been able to think of and I feel like I can't live up to my own expectations, haha!

Anyway, will we finally, FINALLY, see some peace and love and quiet in Juliette and Henry's lives? ;)

Song at the start of the chapter is Need the Sun to Break by James Bay.
I will bring you the mountains

Write your name ‘cross the sky

Anything that you need I will try to find

So won’t you take my hand, take my heart

Promise to never stop dancing once we start

Friday, March 24, 2017.

I still stiffened a little every time I woke up naked in Henry’s arms—even after two full weeks of being together—flashing back to that dreadful morning four months ago. But we slowly worked through our issues together. He’d so far kept his promise of reassuring me of his love for me every day, even that one day where he was swamped with meetings all day and I was busy on set. We hadn’t seen each other at all that day, but he’d still called me every free moment he’d had (which mildly annoyed Alona from time to time). And things were getting better every day. This morning, I hardly even gave it a second thought.

On the contrary, actually. I smiled and snuggled a little closer to him. He was still asleep, but even then he still tightened his arms around me. My ear was pressed over his heart, and it beat steadily. It had become one of my favorite sounds over the past few days.

I lifted my head and pressed a soft kiss to his chest. When that didn’t wake him up, I smirked and inched a little higher, kissing just under his collarbone. When that didn’t work either, I felt myself get a little bolder and went even higher, kissing his neck. I gently bit into a spot that I knew was sensitive, and sure enough, he moaned. My smile grew as I licked sensually up to his earlobe.

“Ugh, Juliette, don’t do that,” Henry moaned, his hands taking hold of my waist, his fingers digging into my back. “You know what that does to me.”

I grinned. “Oh, I know. But I had to get you awake somehow, right?”

“You’re evil, Juliette Morrison. Have I ever told you that?” he asked with a grin, sitting up. As he did, he forced me to sit up as well, as I was basically lying on top of him. Now I was sitting on his lap, my legs circling his waist.

“As a matter of fact, yes, you have.”

“And yet I still love you.”

“It must be real then,” I said, smiling as I tangled my fingers in the curls at the back of his head.

“Speaking of it being real...” he said, his grip tightening on my waist. “We’ve kind of been living in a bubble these past two weeks—which have been amazingly great, don’t get me wrong—but I still haven’t met your friends yet. You talk about them all the time, and I’m honestly getting a little
curious.”

“I could arrange for you to meet them,” I told him, perking up. “Tonight even, if you’d want to.”

Clearly taken aback by that, his eyes widened. “Tonight? Oh. Wow, that’s fast.”

“I know. But I haven’t really seen them in a while, and I could just tell them that I’m throwing a party tonight. You know, we could watch horror movies, play drinking games… And they’ll love you, I’m sure of it.”

“Uh… If you’re really sure, then why not. Let’s throw a party tonight.”

I grinned. “Yay! And I’m sure you’ll love them too. Beware of Keegan, though.”

Henry’s brow furrowed. “Beware of Keegan… why?”

“He’s very welcoming. If you know what I mean. He gets a little… touchy. A little grabby. He might slap you on the butt, grab your man boobs… That sort of thing.”

He laughed. “My man boobs?”

I grinned. “And I can’t blame him. They’re fine man boobs,” I said, my hands sliding down to his pectorals. His chest hair ticked my palms.

His hands slid up my back, pulling me even closer to him. “You… are a piece of work, Morrison.”

Smirking, I said, “I know. So are you, Cavill.”

I brought my hands back up to his hair and, twisting my fingers in his curls, I bent my head, my lips capturing his. He smiled into the kiss, softly sucking on my bottom lip. Kissing him was still as magical as the first time, even though there had been dozens of kisses after that one. It wasn’t just because he was a skilled kisser (because, obviously, he totally was), but also because of the way he made me feel. I could be kissing the best kisser in the whole world, and I still wouldn’t feel anything. Only Henry could bring that warm, fluttery feeling about in me. I guess I really did love him.

So when I pulled away again, I did it slowly, reluctantly. “I should probably let my friends know they’re going to a party tonight.”

Henry smiled. “I guess you should.”

I leaned over to my nightstand to grab my phone. I unplugged it, knowing the charger was too short to make it. I quickly typed up a text in our group chat, letting them know I was throwing a party so they could all meet Henry. Naturally, they were all more than willing to come tonight. It wasn’t every day they met Superman (though, in L.A., you never knew when one could suddenly cross your path), and it definitely wasn’t every day they met my boyfriend for the first time. Whom, incidentally, they’d been talking about for a year now.

“Most of them have RSVP’d already,” I said when I put my phone away. “Just the late risers that I’m still waiting on.”

“All right,” Henry said, his smile widening. “And what will we do in the meantime?”

“Shower and get ready for the day. There’s lots to be done if we want to throw that party tonight. We need to get food, we need to get liquor, we need to get the house drunk-proof… Like I said, we’re gonna be busy.”
He sighed, his shoulders slumping down. “Fine.”

I smirked. “I never said we couldn’t shower together, though.”

He grinned back at me. “Now we’re talking.” He got out of bed and threw me over his shoulder, carrying me over to the bathroom as I giggled uncontrollably. Hanna had stayed over at Scott’s place and would be there for the remainder of the day, at least until the party, and part of me was glad about that. It meant that Henry and I had privacy, which was a rarity in this house—and also the main reason that this was only the second time we’d spent at my place instead of his. Hanna and I had kind of an unspoken agreement that we would stay out of each other’s hair when the other was with their boyfriend, at least until this thing with Henry started feeling a little more normal—a little bit realer still.

As he was shampooing my hair, he suddenly asked, “Hey, do you know what I’ve been craving for literally months now?”

I shook my head, keeping my eyes closed for fear of accidentally getting rose-scented shampoo in my eyes. “No. What?”

“That ice cream we ate at your grandparents’ last November.”

I laughed. When Henry and I had eaten dinner at my grandparents’ when we were visiting all those months ago, my grandmother had whipped out the ever-loved stroopwafel ice cream. “That’s pretty random, but okay. It isn’t sold anywhere in America, though. Not that I know of, at least. I’m pretty sure it’s just a Dutch thing. Maybe Belgian, too, but I can’t be sure.”

“Oh,” he said, and though I couldn’t see his face, the disappointment was clear in his voice. “I kind of already figured.”

“But,” I started slowly, turning around so I could rinse the shampoo out of my hair, “I’m pretty sure there should be a recipe somewhere online. I have an ice cream maker, so there’s that. And my grandmother sent over a recipe and a special waffle iron a few years ago because she knows how much I love stroopwafels. I never ended up using it, though, so I have no idea if it will even work out.”

“You could always try, though, right?” Henry asked, his face hopeful.

I laughed again. “You’re cute. And sure. I’ll try. Don’t get your hopes up, though. It’s entirely possible I fuck up tremendously. Cynthia is the one in the group who’s good with baking. She owns her own pastry shop, you know.”

“I didn’t know, actually. Is it doing well?”

“Incredibly well,” I said, nodding. “No surprise, with how good her cupcakes are. And oh my God, you should try her red velvet cakes. So good!” Then I laughed, remembering who we were talking about. “Be gentle with her, though. She’ll probably freak out when she meets you. She’s a typical fangirl. You should see the text she sent me when those pictures from our shopping date last year came online. She couldn’t even form words.”

Henry laughed. “Uh-oh.”

“She’s really nice, though. Obviously. She’s my friend for a reason.”

“Well, I’m excited to meet her. Or any of your other friends, for that matter.”
I grinned. “Not as much as they are to meet you.”

When we finished up in the shower, I cooked us a quick breakfast while Henry took Kal on a short walk. Once that was done, we drove up to the local supermarket to do some grocery shopping.

“Don’t look now,” Henry whispered shortly after we’d exited the car and were walking towards the supermarket’s entrance, “but there’s a paparazzo over there.”

It took everything within me not to freeze. Only the people closest to us and most people on set knew we were together. Somehow—magically—the press hadn’t figured it out yet. Personally, I was fine with letting the world know we were a couple, but I had no idea how Henry felt. “Oh,” I managed. “What do you want to do about it? I mean, I know you’re a very private person.”

“Is that what you’re worried about?”

“What are you talking about? I’m not worried.”

Henry smiled. “Honey. You’re nearly pulverizing my hand.”

I quickly let go of his hand. “Oh. Sorry.”

He took my hand in his again and tugged, making me stop short. “Stop worrying,” he said with a relaxed smile. I figured he’d be tense with paparazzi so close by, but he was perfectly at ease. “I’m completely fine with the world knowing we’re together. Actually…” His smile widened as he pulled me closer, his head dipping down so he could kiss me. He kissed me softly and only for a few seconds, but it was enough for the paparazzo to take some pictures of. I heard the shutter go off even from quite a distance away. “Actually,” he said again, “I kind of feel like screaming it from the rooftops.”

I smiled back at him. “You’re an idiot, Cavill.” To show him I didn’t really mean the insult, I pecked him on the lips. Then, finally, we went into the supermarket—we’d kind of been hogging the entrance.

“So, what do we need for the ice cream?” Henry asked.

“Well, I’ve got the basics for normal waffles at home, so let me just check for my grandmother’s recipe for the other ingredients I need for the stroopwafels and I’ll look online for recipes for the ice cream itself. In the meanwhile, we’ll just look for other stuff we need for tonight. Speaking of, what do you want for dinner tonight?”

Pushing the grocery cart he’d grabbed earlier with one hand, he wrapped his other arm around my waist, pulling me close. “You know what? Why don’t we just order in for tonight? We already have enough to do to set up for the party, and we’ll be making the ice cream. Let’s not add any more work to our plates by cooking.”

I smiled at him. “We?” I asked.

He smiled back at me. “Well, yeah. We’re a team now, aren’t we?”

“But still. I know plenty of guys who would say ‘we’re a team’ and then continue to let the woman do all the cooking and party setup. And then they’ll also expect a seven-layer dip for poker night with their buddies.”

Henry laughed. “I don’t like poker. If I’m gambling, it’s blackjack. And what the hell is seven-layer dip?”
“It’s this dip for tortilla chips, with, like, sour cream, guacamole, cheese, salsa, beans… Very Tex-Mex.”

“I see. Well, either way, I’m not like that. In a relationship with me, everyone carries their own weight. Besides, cooking together is fun.”

“Have we ever even cooked together?” I asked as I threw a couple bags of chips in our cart.

“No,” Henry said. “But making ice cream together is kind of like cooking, right? In a way?”


“Ugh, so many options. Let’s just go with pizza.”

“Good choice,” I said with a laugh. “That’s usually my and Hanna’s go-to takeout dinner as well. We basically live off of pizza.”

“So would you say it’s your favorite food?” Henry asked as he lifted a crate of beer into our cart.

“Pizza, I mean?”

I gave him a sheepish smile. “Probably, yeah. I could eat it again and again and I’ll never get sick of it. Same with maple glazed donuts. But you knew that already.”

He laughed. “I do, yes. I remember when someone would get donuts and you’d get pissed, as if they did it specifically just to piss you off, and then you’d angrily bite into one. I always thought you looked so cute whenever that happened. I may or may not have told Ryan to let the catering order in maple glazed donuts more often.”

I stopped dead in my tracks, my face indignant. “You did what now?”

Amused, he said, “I’m sorry. You just looked so incredibly cute. I had to see that adorable face again. And then again. And again. I mean, can you really blame me?”

I laughed and punched his arm—not that I could ever inflict any physical damage on him (except maybe when it came to tickling). “You’re such a dick sometimes, Cavill.”

He grinned cheekily. “I’ve never heard you complain about it before.”

I laughed loudly, throwing my head back. I probably attracted more attention than I would’ve liked, but when Henry Cavill makes a sexual joke, you’ve got to revel in it fully. “Oh my God, Henry. Let’s just go and find the maple syrup.” I shook my head, still smiling. “Christ.”

“You know you love me,” he said, his grin widening.

“Getting cocky now, huh?” I said, grinning back at him.

Fighting off laughter, he asked, “Was that an intended pun?”

“Not really, but hey, don’t look a gift horse in the mouth,” I joked. I grabbed a bottle of syrup and threw it in the cart. “Now come on, I need a shitload of butter, and an even bigger shitload of sugar to caramelize.”

“You don’t have sugar back home?”

“Well, yes, but just enough for the dough. I need quite a bit for the special syrup.”
“Can’t you just—I don’t know—put regular syrup in-between the waffles?”

I faked a shocked gasp. “Sacrilege!” I called out. “But really, though. There are many Dutchies that would’ve slapped you just for saying that.”

He laughed. “Sorry. But just out of curiosity, what does go into the syrup?”

I checked my phone again for the list of ingredients. “Caramelized sugar, cream, regular syrup, cinnamon and butter.”

“Cream in the syrup? Huh.”

“Hey, I never said Dutch food was healthy. Actually, I warned you about that when we were in the Netherlands. Everything is either deep fried or stuffed full of sugar and butter. Hardly ever both, though, I don’t think—unless it’s New Year’s—so at least there’s that.”

“And yet you’re so skinny. Just… how?”

I shrugged. “Don’t know. I’ve never really had that problem, thankfully. And besides, I have been working out a lot lately, for the movie.”

“True,” Henry said as he threw in two sticks of butter. “But you’ve thankfully gained some weight since one and a half month ago. When I saw you again after all those months… Honestly, I was terrified. You looked so skinny, and I was so scared that you’d finally started listening to your aunt.”

I looked at him in surprise. “You were afraid I had an eating disorder?”

Henry shrugged awkwardly. “Well, yes. I mean, a lot of the comments she made were about you ‘needing to watch your figure’—which has always been fucking ridiculous, if you ask me—and I know how much of a strain her judgment is on you, so yes, I feared… And then that first day of training, during lunch, you only wanted a salad, so… I know it’s probably stupid and I’m way over the line in telling you this, but yes.”

“No… No, I think it’s sweet that you would worry. And you were probably right to some extent. I had lost some weight, but that was mostly because I was in a pretty dark place and I never really felt like eating, plus the stress made me lose even more weight. So I probably did look a little malnourished.”

Henry looked deeply sad as he hesitantly asked, “Were you… Were you in a dark place because of… because of me?”

“I mean, I was definitely stressed about that, but most of it came from Vince.”

“I’ve heard some serious horror stories about him. Did he ever do anything to you? Because if he did, I swear…” He didn’t finish the sentence, but it was pretty clear where he was going with it.

I grimaced uncomfortably. “I’d rather not talk about it. Not here, at least. Maybe I’ll tell you when we’re at home.”

He nodded slowly. “Okay.”

We finished up at the grocery store and loaded everything into the car. As we did, that same paparazzo was still there, still taking pictures. I didn’t really mind it all too much, though, mostly because he stayed quiet; he didn’t shout questions out at us, like many other paparazzi would’ve.
When everything was loaded up, I turned to Henry with a grin. “And now for the best trip of the day: The liquor store.”

He chuckled. “That does indeed sound like a pretty good trip. But when we’re done there, do you think we could maybe swing by my hotel? I want to grab some clean clothes for tonight and some stuff for Kal.”

“Sure, no problem. Don’t feel like you have to pick anything fancy, though. We aren’t really like that.”

“I know. But I know you, and you’ll probably get flour or caramel all over me,” he joked with a grin.

I knew I should be offended, but the problem was that I probably would. “Yeah… Sorry.”

As I started the car and drove out of the supermarket’s parking lot, he said, “Eh, don’t worry about it. I love that you’re clumsy. It adds to your charm.”

I just smiled and shook my head, continuing to drive towards the nearest liquor store.

A little less than an hour later we had everything we needed, so we geared up to make *stroopwafels* in the kitchen. I cleared some space on the kitchen counter, cleaning it before we started. I grabbed my phone to check the recipe. “Okay, it says here that we need to mix the flour with the sugar on the counter, and then once that’s done, you make a hole in the mixture, so you kind of have a ring of flour and sugar, and then you can add the butter, eggs and just a twinge of salt and cinnamon inside that ring.”

“All right…” Henry followed the instructions perfectly, then looked at me for more instructions. “And then?”

“Um… First mix the eggs and butter and stuff, and then slowly add in the flour and sugar. Then you just mix everything together until it’s a nice, smooth mixture.”

I helped him mix it, and laughed when he held up his egg-covered fingers for me to see. “Somehow, I always love and hate this part,” Henry said. “I used to help my mother out when she baked cookies, and I always loved getting my hands dirty. But then after, it’s like you can still feel the butter everywhere.”

“I know what you mean. But it’s nothing a little warm water can’t fix, thank God.” About a minute later, we were done kneading the dough. “All right, now this needs to go in the fridge for half an hour, and in the meanwhile we’ll work on the syrup.”

I started on slowly caramelizing the sugar bit by bit, and Henry looked on in concern. “Are you sure you should be the one doing this? Maybe I should be the one dealing with such high temperatures.”

I laughed. “I’ve done this before, Henry; don’t worry. Why don’t you go heat up five tablespoons of cream and five tablespoons of maple syrup in a pan?”

“All right. But be careful, okay?”

I smiled. His concern was so cute. “Don’t worry, I will.”

Half an hour later, we’d mixed his cream and syrup with my caramel and added cinnamon and butter, and the dough was good to be taken out of the fridge. “This smells really good, Jules,” Henry said. “I gotta say, I’m so glad I mentioned it this morning.”
Laughing, I said, “I’ll bet. You sure lucked out with me.”

He wrapped an arm around my waist, pulling me close so he could kiss the top of my head. “I sure did.” Releasing me again, he said, “Okay, what now?”

“Now we divide the dough in parts of about fifteen grams each, so about… this,” I said, tearing a piece off. “Then you roll it into a ball, press it flat a little so it looks like a miniature hamburger, and then put it in the waffle maker. When you close it, apply a bit of pressure to make the waffle even thinner and then keep it in for about a minute. Once you have two waffles, put syrup on one and press the other on top of it. Press as long as you need to get syrup everywhere.” As I spoke, I performed all the actions myself until I had a complete stroopwafel. “There we go,” I said, grinning proudly as I held it up. “A stroopwafel.”

We continued making the stroopwafels and then I made the ice cream mixture on the stove. Once that was done, I put it in the fridge to cool for two hours. As that was cooling, Henry helped me clean the living room.

Halfway through, I turned to him. “Hey, why don’t you take Kal on a long walk? That poor dog has been inside all morning.”

“Getting sick of me already?” Henry asked with a grin.

“No. But I think Kal’s getting a little stir crazy inside.”

Henry looked at Kal just as he rolled onto his back and released a sound that was a sort of mix between a growl and a moan, making the both of us laugh. “Okay, yes, maybe. Are you sure you’ll be all right in here, though, baby? I mean, I don’t want to make you clean all by yourself.”

I smiled at his use of ‘baby.’ The first time he’d called me that, I’d kind of frozen. It had just been another sign that we really are a couple, and it had made me feel all warm and bubbly inside. It still did. “You aren’t. I mean, you’ve helped a lot already. Besides, vacuuming would be a lot easier with Kal out of the house.”

“True enough. Kal doesn’t really like vacuums.”

And so Henry took Kal out for a walk and I continued to clean the living room. When I was done, he still wasn’t back and the two hours were up, so I got the ice cream mixture out of the fridge and put it in the ice cream maker, turning it on. As it rotated, I got myself a glass of caffeine-free Coke. Just as I took my first sip, the doorbell rang. Thinking I should probably just get him a key, I set my glass down on the counter and opened the door, letting Henry and Kal inside.

“You sure did take a long walk.”

“I didn’t want to bother you,” Henry said, taking off Kal’s collar and leash. “Besides, Kal seemed to like the park, and I ran into a few fans.”

“Oh, now I wish I had been there. It’s always so cute when fans meet you for the first time. They get all flustered, and then you get all flustered and try to make them feel at ease… It’s adorable.”

“They did ask about you, though,” he said, choosing to ignore the ‘adorable’ part.

That caught my attention. “They what now? That’s random.”

We sat down on the couch, and Henry pulled my legs onto his lap. “Remember that paparazzo at the supermarket this morning? Apparently the pictures are out, and people are already freaking out about
“Oh, no…” I groaned. “What did they say?”

Henry grinned. “Oh my God, I’m so glad you two are together!” he quoted with a high-pitched voice, his accent changing to American. “I ship you two soooo much!” He laughed, shaking his head. “What does that even mean?”

“What, shipping?” When he nodded, I explained, “Well, it stems from relationship. When you ship two people, it means that you really want them to be together.”

“Ooooooh. See, I already thought it was something along those lines, but I didn’t want to ask and risk looking stupid. But anyway, they were really positive about you. Had nothing but good things to say about you. Said they loved you in our movie and in interviews they’ve seen you in, and that they’re really happy we’re doing another movie together. I told them about Ryan’s joke—you know, when he said we should make an entire box set of movies together?—and they all immediately said that we should do that.”

“Oh, wow. Now I definitely wish I’d been there.”

“Do you ever run into many fans?”

“Not really. I mean, I run into some sometimes, and most of the time they’re very relaxed. I mean, it’s never like it is when fans meet you. I’ve had only one girl who freaked out when she saw me, but I got the feeling she usually freaks out quite quickly. But it’s more like they recognize me and think it’s cool to meet someone remotely famous; not like they’re full-on fans.”

“Trust me, if you keep going like you are now, that’s gonna happen eventually. And I’m sure lots of guys come up to you too.”

I smiled. “A few, but it’s nothing to be jealous about.”

“I’m not jealous. I mean, even if I was, I know it’s inevitable anyway, so I’d better get used to it.”

“I guess so. Same with you.”

Henry suddenly grew a lot more serious, his grip on my legs tightening almost involuntarily; like he didn’t even notice he was doing it. “So… If you don’t want to tell me, that’s completely and entirely okay, but I want to know what happened with Vince Grieve. Every time someone mentions him, it’s kind of like you try to make yourself smaller and you get this deeply troubled look in your eye. Did he ever hurt you?”

“Physically? No. But… he was definitely abusive in a different way.”

“What way? And again, if you don’t want to tell me about it, that’s fine, so don’t feel pressured.”

I smiled, but I knew the smile wouldn’t reach my eyes. “He, um… He’d try to find out what my insecurities were, and he would always find them. And once he knew, he wouldn’t stop bringing them up. He kept telling me I was a bad actress; that even the P.A.s could do a better job than me. Kept telling the costume department to get some Spanx for me. I don’t know… He just always managed to make me feel bad about myself. And then, when you were spotted out with Alyssa and basically the whole world thought you two were back together, he said that it was no wonder that you’d chosen her over me, and ‘think she can act? Then maybe I can choose her over you too.’ He just… wasn’t a nice person.”
“Juliette… I—I’m so sorry. If I’d known…”

“It’s okay, really. Vince’s behavior isn’t your fault. Besides, I was an easy victim. I was upset about you, I have anxiety, low self-esteem… To him, that probably screamed ‘weakling I can abuse.’”

“Wait, hold up. Now you’re making it sound like it was your fault. It wasn’t, you know that, right? It was entirely on him, and he should pay for it. He will pay for it as soon as I get my hands on him.”

“Henry…”

“I know, I’m sorry,” he said, but it was clear that he was getting worked up. “I just… It pisses me off so much, you know? You are such a good person, inside and out, and you don’t deserve to be treated that way. I know it sounds cliché, but he seems to be one of those people who’ve been living in the dark for too long, and now they can’t stand to see anyone living in the light. I’m just sorry you had to be on the receiving end of his hatred. His treatment of you… is that why you’d lost so much weight?”

“I mean, maybe. But if I lost any weight, it wasn’t on purpose. Like I said, it was mostly just stress, and because I was in a bad place, I just didn’t have much of an appetite.”

“But you’re in a much better place now, right?” he asked, and I couldn’t help but notice the hopeful note in his voice.

“Yes, I am. I mean, I’ll probably always have anxiety, no matter how often I go to therapy or how much medication I take. But everything in my life is good now, so there’s no reason to worry. Things are good. Really good.”

Henry nervously smoothed down his black button down for about the tenth time since putting it on—which was saying something seeing as we got changed at the same time and I wasn’t even done yet.

“Are you sure your friends will like me? Maybe I’m meeting them too soon after all. I mean, we’ve only been together for two weeks.”

I laughed, buttoning up my red plaid shirt. “Would you stop it? They’ll love you. Besides, even though we’ve been together for such a short time, they’ve been talking about you for over a year. They’ve been wanting us to get together for just as long. So as long as you remain your usual, amazing self, you’ve got nothing to worry about. I swear.”

“If you say so…”

“I do,” I said, smiling up at him as I laced up my red Chucks. “But I really have to check on the ice cream. So… will you be okay? No longer concerned about my friends?”

“I’m just… a little nervous, that’s all. But I’m sure it’ll be fine. Now let’s go downstairs and check on that undoubtedly amazing ice cream of yours. You do realize that, if it’s as amazing as I expect it will be, I’ll have you making it all the time, right?”

I grinned. “You can just make it yourself. You now know how to make stroopwafels, and you know how to make the ice cream.”

“One little problem, though. I don’t have an ice cream maker, nor do I have one of those special waffle irons.”

“You can just use mine. Now come on, let’s go downstairs.”
“All right, hop on,” Henry said, turning his back to me as if he was offering me a piggyback ride.

“Are you… Are you serious?”

“Yes, I’m serious,” he said, crouching down a little to give me easier access. “Now hop on.”

I shook my head. “You’re insane.” But I hopped on anyway, shrieking with laughter as he bounced me up and down a couple of times, and I wrapped my arms around his chest, hoping I wouldn’t fall. He carried me all the way down the stairs, not putting me back on the ground until we’d reached the kitchen. Once there, I opened the freezer and got out the container of ice cream. Opening it, I was immediately hit with the smell of cinnamon and caramel, automatically making me smile. I prodded at it carefully. It seemed solid enough, and the crumbled up *stroopwafels* I’d put in there seemed well-distributed. “It seems solid, so it should be good. I think we should wait until the others are here, though.”

Henry groaned. “Are you kidding me? I’ve been salivating over this damn ice cream all day, and now you’re telling me I have to wait?”

I laughed. “Sorry, hon. But why don’t you try a *stroopwafel*? Have you ever even tried one of them before?”

“I actually don’t think I have. Are you sure I can try one?”

“Yeah, of course. Grab one.”

He took one of the cookies off the plate and took a bite. The syrup refused to let go for a bit, before nearly falling onto his chin. It didn’t seem to bother him as he chewed, though. “Oh my God, this is amazing,” he gushed, his mouth still full. “This is even better than the ice cream I had at your grandparents’. Not to downplay your grandmother’s cooking or anything, though,” he added quickly.

I laughed. “You didn’t, trust me. That ice cream was store-bought. But I’m glad you like them. Be careful with those things, though. They’re really heavy; they’ll make you nauseous before you full and well realize it.”

“Oh, I’ll bet. I’ve seen the amount of sugar that went in there with my own two eyes.”

Shortly after Henry had polished off his cookie and licked off his sticky fingers, the doorbell rang, and my heart nearly jumped out of my chest. I teased Henry for being nervous about meeting my friends, but I was secretly kind of nervous about it too. My friends and Henry were two huge parts of my life, probably the ones that mattered most, and though I was reasonably sure it would be fine, I just hoped bringing those two parts together wasn’t a bad idea.

But when I opened the door, it was just Hanna and Scott, the only ones whom Henry had already met. Henry and Scott hadn’t seen each other since the American press tour for *If You Love Someone* ended, but I’m sure they’d get along just like usual.

“Hey, guys,” I said, greeting them both with hugs. “Why did you ring the doorbell? Forgot your keys?”

“No,” Hanna said with a smile. “I just figured that, seeing as it’s your first time hosting together, I’d give you guys the full experience.”

“Hey, man,” Scott said, clapping Henry on his back as he grinned. “I see you finally stopped being a stupid dickwad.”
Henry grinned back. “Subtle, Tayler. But yes.” He wrapped an arm around my waist and kissed my cheek.

Scott jokingly pulled up his nose. “Oh, God… You two aren’t going to be one of those sickly sweet couples, are you?”

I stuck my tongue out at him. “As if you and Han don’t make me sick from time to time. It’s time for payback, Scotty.”

He laughed. “At least now we can all be lovery-dovey together. But not too much, though; we don’t want to suddenly find ourselves in the middle of an orgy.”

“Scott!” Hanna protested, slapping him on the chest so hard I actually heard the smack.

Scott just laughed, wiggling his eyebrows at her. “Don’t tell me you’ve never thought about it before, babe. Hey, what is that delicious smell? Aw, Morrison, did you bake for me?”

“As if you and Han don’t make me sick from time to time. It’s time for payback, Scotty.”

“Actually… I baked for Henry, seeing as he was craving stroopwafel ice cream.”

“Stroopwafels?” Hanna asked, visibly perking up. Then she narrowed her eyes at me. “Wait. I’ve been asking you to bake stroopwafels ever since your Oma gave you the recipe and that waffle iron, and he asks you one time and you just go ahead and make them?”

“Oops?” I said, shrugging.

Hanna pointed at me. “You are so—”

Just as she was about to finish her threat, the doorbell rang. “Saved by the bell!” I said, getting up to open the door. “Keegs, Riss, hey!” I said, greeting both Keegan and Klarissa with hugs.

“Hey, sis,” Keegan said, kissing my cheek. “Now, where is the man of the hour? In the living room?”

As Keegan stalked off towards the living room, Klarissa winced. “You’d better go after him. He’s been coming up with threats all day.”

“Oh, God,” I said, rushing after him into the living room. When I got there, he was just shaking Henry’s hand, and things looked friendly enough.

“Okay, Henry, listen,” Keegan said after they’d introduced themselves to each other. “Juliette is like my little sister, so if you ever hurt her, I will go to great lengths to protect her. That will include getting one of my brother’s swords and slowly cutting you into tiny pieces.”

“So, wait. Your brother actually owns swords?”

“Yeah, he does. Somehow people are always unsure about that. Wonder why.”

“It’s also a very popular threat among our friends,” I said.

“Yeah, I kind of gathered…” Henry said. “Hanna used it on me too.” At that, Hanna gave him an impish grin. “But I get it. You guys love her and don’t want her to get hurt, and I admire you guys for that. Actually, I’m so incredibly grateful that she has you guys. She deserves friends that love her and would probably kill for her if she asked you to.”

“It’s a good thing she would never ask,” Hanna joked, but it was probably true.
Henry snorted. “True. But what I’m trying to say, is that I’m with you guys. I don’t want to hurt her, and if I ever do, I’ll probably ask you to do whatever it is you want to do with those swords, and if someone else hurts her, I’ll come knocking on your door for one of those swords myself.”

Keegan grinned. “Just as long as we’re clear on that. Now bring it in, bro.” Keegan pulled Henry in for a hug, and slapped his butt. The slap reverberated through the entire room, and Henry’s eyes flew open.

“Whoa! So Juliette hadn’t been kidding about that, huh?”

“Ah, so she warned you about me?”

I grinned. “I kind of felt like I had to. But even then, no one is ever ready for you, Keegs.”

He grinned back at me. “Is it bad that I kind of pride myself on that? Either way, that beautiful ginger over there is my girlfriend Klarissa.”

“It’s nice to finally meet you, Henry,” Klarissa said, smiling as she gave him a hug.

I could tell Henry was a little taken aback by all the love he was getting, but he’d better get used to it; all my friends were huggers. “It’s nice to meet you, too, Klarissa.”

“Sorry about Keegs. He’s like the group’s guard dog, except instead of a dog, he’d like to think he’s a bear.”

“Damn straight.”

Soon after that, the others quickly started arriving, and as I watched Henry keep on introducing himself to them, I couldn’t help but smile. The more of them he met, the more relaxed he got. It really had been silly of the both of us to be nervous. My friends were the kind of people Henry would be friends with even without me, and he got along with them effortlessly. And even if they hadn’t been his kind of people, he still had enough natural charm and charisma to pretend they were.

“Okay, good. Now that everyone’s been introduced, I’m gonna continue my tirade,” Hanna said, leaning forward. “Juliette, you are so dead for making stroopwafels for Henry but not for me, even though I’ve been asking you for literally years.”

“Wait,” Ryley said with an excited grin. “Are you two finally having a fight? I have been fantasizing about this for years. You know, a little oil here and there, maybe a bit of mud wrestling, skimpy bikinis…”

“I swear to God, Ryley, one of these days, some girl you’ve pissed off is totally gonna kill you and no one will ever find your body,” I said. “And no, we’re not fighting, because I’m gonna apologize in the best way ever by baking another batch especially for her tomorrow.”

“Now that’s what I’m talking about. It had better be a big batch.”

“No. I’m making a normal batch for your own good. Those things will make you nauseous in a nanosecond.”

“I don’t care. Where are they? In the kitchen? They’re in the kitchen, aren’t they? I’m gonna get them.” She stood up from Scott’s lap and raced to the kitchen, coming back with the plate of stroopwafels, one of them already stuffed in her mouth. “Dish ish sho good,” she said, talking around the cookie.
“Let me just get the ice cream,” I said, getting up from my seat next to Henry. “Who wants ice cream? Then I’ll know how many bowls I need to grab.”

“Me!” Keegan said. “I’ll take two bowls, actually.”

I shook my head, smiling. “You and your ice cream... You’re going to get one bowl, just like everybody else.”

Everyone wanted ice cream, and getting twelve bowls was a little much for just one person to handle, so Henry came along to help me. It also gave us a chance to talk in private for the first time since Henry had met my friends.

“So?” I asked. “What do you think?”

“Your friends are great, baby,” Henry said, wrapping his arms around my waist and pulling me close. “Guess I should’ve known, though. Someone as great as you,” he said as he inched closer to me, “would have to have great friends.”

I smiled as his lips captured mine. I was sucked into the kiss like usual, the whole world falling away piece by piece. I wrapped my arms around his neck and tangled my fingers in his curls, opening my mouth for him. He pulled me even closer, pulling my hips flush against his. There was zero space between us, and yet I still wanted to be closer. Wanted more. So much more.

“Holy crap, guys. This is even better than that movie you two played in.”

My world crashing back into me, I quickly pulled away from the kiss. “Braeden! God!”

“No,” he said, and he shook his head. “Braeden Goddard. And sorry, dude,” Braeden said, holding up his hands. “Just wanted to get the booze.” He opened the fridge, grabbed a few beers, and left again.

“I... am so sorry about that,” I said awkwardly. “My friends don’t really grasp the concept of privacy.”

“I don’t blame him. We are standing in the middle of the kitchen, after all,” Henry said with a grin. He gave me one more kiss before stepping away from me fully and taking the ice cream out of the freezer. “Now, how many servings did you need?”

“Twelve,” I said, already starting to get bowls from the cupboard. Together we divided the ice cream over them, and once every last one of them were filled, I put them on two trays, which we carried back to the living room. “There you guys go.”

Keegan grabbed a bowl and a spoon and dug in. “Oh my gods, this is amazing,” he said, his mouth still full. “Is there cinnamon in there? You know how much I love cinnamon.”

I laughed. “I know. And yes, there is. Along with a shitload of caramel.”

“You’ve really outdone yourself on this one, Jules,” Colin said. “This is really good.”

“I’m glad you like it, Colly.”

“It really is amazing,” Cynthia agreed. “And you’ll have to give me the recipe for these cookies so I can sell them in my store.”

I laughed. “Sure. You’ll have to purchase a special iron, though, otherwise you won’t be able to...”
make the waffles so thin.”

“I gathered that, yeah. But the cost doesn’t matter, because I could make a fortune selling these.”

“Juliette told me about your shop,” Henry said.

“Oh?” Cynthia asked, her cheeks turning pink. She was still a little hung up on the celebrity thing, but I knew that within a few hours, that would all be over.

“Yes, she said your red velvet is amazing and that I should try it once.”

“Oh my God, you so totally should,” Shaye gushed. “It’s… to die for. It’s so incredibly good.”

“Oh, shush,” Cynthia protested, her blush deepening.

“Her rainbow cake is also really amazing,” Alfie said. “I don’t know how she does it, but everything she bakes turns to pure magic, it almost seems like.”

“Truth,” Ryley said, nodding as he shoved another spoonful of ice cream into his mouth.

“So if you ever throw a party that requires a cake,” I said, “look up Cynthia’s shop. You won’t regret it.”

“I’ll keep that in mind.”

Soon, all the ice cream was gone (and I do mean all the ice cream), and we’d graduated on to bigger and better things. Like drinking games.

We’d been playing high-low for at least an hour now, and it definitely showed. Everyone was at least tipsy, or in my case, drunk. I kept losing, even though I was absolutely positive it was higher. Or was it lower?

“Higher!” I shouted at the three of spades, confident I finally had a win coming. But when I turned the next card, it was a two of hearts. “Are you fucking kidding me?” I cried. “Oh, fuck this shit!” I took my mandatory sips of vodka soda, but then slammed the glass back on the table and stumbled away, off to turn on some music. “That’s more like it!” I grinned. “Henry, come dance with me.”

“Are you sure about that, baby?” he asked with an equally big grin. He’d been much luckier in playing the game than I had been, and he was only tipsy. Lucky bastard. “We don’t have the best track record when it comes to you getting drunk and us dancing together.”

“Yeah, but we’re together now. It doesn’t matter if anything were to happen.” I gave him a cheeky smile and pulled him close to me.

“What about all your friends?” he whispered into my ear. “They’d all be able to see.”

“Let them see,” I said, pulling him down for a kiss.

He laughed into the kiss, kissing me back for a moment but pulling back rather quickly. Too quickly. I frowned at him, but he just said, “You really are drunk, Morrison.”

“Maybe I am,” I said, laughing. “No wonder, though. I kept losing! Did you see that?”

“Yes, I did,” Henry said, fighting his laughter. As he twirled me around, he turned to my friends. “Is she always like this when she’s drunk with you guys? Because I’ve seen her drunk before, and I don’t think she was ever quite like this.”
“It’s the alcohol and the… SUGAR RUSH!” Hanna yelled, nearly flying across the room. It was Hanna, though, and she had to bump into every single piece of furniture she could possibly bump into, and then the next morning she’d see the bruises on her legs and ask me how the hell she’d gotten them. That was just typical Hanna.

“Ah, that explains it,” Henry said, still fighting a smile. He twirled me back and dipped me low, supporting my back with his hand so I wouldn’t fall.

“Oh, Scott! Scotty!” Hanna yelled. “Do that with me please?”

“What, dip you?” When she nodded so fast that it seemed she might lose her head, he said, “All right then. Come here, pretty lady.” He twirled her and dipped her so low her head nearly touched the floor, but she laughed delightedly.

“Yay!” she said, clapping her hands when he’d pulled her up again. She moved on quickly, though, running around the room one more time before jumping onto the couch. “Now I’m going to fly! Watch this!”

That sobered me up quickly, along with many of my other friends. Hanna tended to have amazing ideas when she was drunk, apart from the fact that they were only amazing in her mind. In other, slightly more sane minds, they were dangerous and sometimes even fatal (like that one time she thought she figured out how illusionists shove entire swords down their throats and wanted to try it out for herself, nearly forcing Keegs to get one of those infamous swords from his brother’s place). We ran up to her—Colin, Alfie, Klarissa and I—and dragged her off the couch.

“Oh, no, you don’t,” Alfie said. “You’re already going to wake up with bruises tomorrow, so let’s not add any more.”

She frowned. “Was that a threat, Mr. Atteberry?” She giggled. “That sounds like ‘ate a berry.’” Then, gasping, she called out, “I finally get your Twitter handle! Alfie ate a berry!”

Alfie laughed. “Yes, my Twitter handle is indeed a play on my last name. Now, I think it’s best to get you some water, Ms. McLynn.”

Clutching the bottle of whisky to his chest, Keegan suggested, “Why don’t we start watching horror movies? It’s been ages since we’ve done that together.”

“As long as you share that whisky, I am in for everything,” Braeden said, plucking the bottle out of his grasp.

“Hey!” Keegan protested, but when he noticed Braeden was pouring him some as well, he grinned. “Niiiiice, bro!”

I grabbed a bottle of water from the kitchen for Hanna, but then doubled back for a bottle for myself too. I did not want to wake up with a hangover tomorrow. We voted on which horror movie to watch first, and eventually settled on The Lazarus Effect. I sat down on Henry’s lap as the movie started. My friends were scattered all over the living room, making themselves comfortable.

I took a swig from my bottle, and, recapping it, leaned against Henry’s chest. “Are you having a good time?” I asked.

“The best. Your friends are amazing, Jules.”

“I’m glad you like them, babe. You’ll be seeing a lot more of them.”
Henry smiled, softly kissing the skin just under my ear. “I can’t wait.”

Chapter End Notes

It was both interesting and a lot of fun to write Henry and Juliette like this. Their whole dynamic has changed now that they're together, because they're so much more comfortable with each other. It was also fun to write them with her friends, which are also slowly becoming Henry's friends, because it introduces a whole new aspect into their relationship. I personally love writing all this fluffy stuff, so sweet that it'll make your teeth rot, so, if you don't mind, expect a lot more of that. However, they still have a few unresolved issues so it can't ALL be rainbows and butterflies. Like in the next chapter for example, where our favorite director EVER, Vince, makes a comeback... So I hope to see y'all next week ;)

The song at the start of the chapter is Our Song by Ron Pope. (Only one of my favorite songs ever! I linked it at the top of the chapter, just like I did with all the other songs in the other chapters.)
Chapter 22

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Later when the curtain’s drawn
And there’s no one there for you back home
Don’t cry to me, you played me wrong
You ruin me

~*~*~*~*~*~

Wednesday, September 20, 2017.

“So,” Henry said with a mischievous grin. “What do you say you and I go grab a cup of coffee?”

I sighed heavily and rolled my eyes. “Stop asking me out, Nate. It’s hopeless. I’m not falling for you any more than that the earth is flat.”

Henry’s grin just widened. “We’ll see about that. About you falling madly in love with me, I mean. I know that the earth isn’t flat. In fact, I even know that instead of being perfectly round, it’s actually quite chunky. It was kind of weird to see—”

I held up my hand, silencing him. As he gave me an odd look, I tensed. “Something is wrong,” I mumbled, my voice low.

“Well, obviously,” Henry said. “My flirtation techniques aren’t working as they should.”

“Not that, you insufferable moron! Now be quiet so I can listen.” I cocked my head to the side, pretending to listen for sounds that would be edited in later. “There are intruders inside,” I whispered.

“I held up my hand, silencing him. As he gave me an odd look, I tensed. “Something is wrong,” I mumbled, my voice low.

“Well, obviously,” Henry said. “My flirtation techniques aren’t working as they should.”

“Not that, you insufferable moron! Now be quiet so I can listen.” I cocked my head to the side, pretending to listen for sounds that would be edited in later. “There are intruders inside,” I whispered.

“Intruders?” Henry asked, keeping his voice as low as I was. “We’re in CIA headquarters. How could there be intruders?”

I stood up from my comfortable desk chair, punched in the code to my top drawer and got out my gun. “Follow me,” I ordered quietly, enough authority in my voice for him to listen without question. I pressed on a panel on the wall, and a door that had been invisible before opened. (No matter how often we’d shot this scene already, that was still so cool.) The door let out to a narrow hallway lit by industrial lights, and Henry and I walked through it wordlessly, the only sound my heels and his boots tapping on the stone floor.

At the end of the narrow tunnel, I paused and braced myself, clasping the gun in my hand. I kicked the door open and we were immediately hit by the sound of gunfire and shouts. It took a while to catch our bearings, but it became clear pretty soon who the intruders were. They were clad in black, matching ski masks pulled over their heads. They were shouting in Russian (things I couldn’t understand, but Lily Davis, international super spy that she was, would) and shooting randomly around them. Several agents and other CIA employees already lay bleeding on the floor, some dead and some simply injured. I shot at the intruders, taking one out. Henry had taken his gun out as well, and together we ran closer to the Russians, taking cover behind anything we could.
I ducked behind a pillar, cursing. “This damned dress is making it hard for me to move,” I murmured, pointing down to the tight pencil skirt of the navy dress I was wearing. “This damned blazer, too,” I complained, and shrugged out of the white jacket, carelessly letting it fall the the floor.

“Here,” Henry said, and he grasped the hem of my skirt, pulling so hard that the fabric tore. When I stared at him indignantly, he shrugged. “What? It’s just a dress.”

“I paid five hundred dollars for this dress!” I hissed.

He grinned broadly, and I fought not to smile back at him; he just looked so cute. But cute as he may be, Lily wouldn’t smile, and that’s what mattered most at the time. “I’ll buy you a new one for our date. Cover me.” And he darted out from the pillar’s cover, shooting at the group of Russian intruders.

When we finally finished filming the scene for the last time that day, Alona gave us a broad smile. “You two did great. Keep it up like that, and I’ll only want to make movies with you two from now on.”

Blushing from her compliment, I thanked her, and then Henry and I walked off to take our makeup off and change back into our own clothes. Once my face was makeup-free, my hair was in a bun atop my head, and I was wearing jeans and a T-shirt, we walked to Henry’s car, taking Kal with us. He settled happily on the backseat as Henry started the ignition.

The car was quiet apart from the radio softly playing the latest number one hit as Henry drove and I stared out the window. It was quite dreary outside for L.A. standards, even for September, and it wasn’t improving my mood much. There was something that had been pressing on me for weeks, and I had no idea how to bring it up to Henry in conversation.

But as I turned in my seat to study him, I couldn’t help but smile. Seriously, what was it about guys driving that was so hot? But it wasn’t just that he looked good; I just loved him so much, and it still grew with every day we were together. We’d been together for six months now, and it still felt so surreal sometimes. But he really was mine, and I really was his. We’d celebrated our six month anniversary at his apartment (which he’d finally decided to rent a month ago, when he’d come back from shooting something Superman related for two months in-between shooting this movie), and he’d ordered a custom-made red velvet cake from Cynthia’s shop, plus a much smaller cake the size of a muffin covered in lots of marzipan (he knew me so well). We’d spent the day just hanging out together, having fun. It wasn’t really anything special, but I’d still cherish that day forever. It was one of my favorite days.

We reached his apartment—just a simple two-bedroom home with plenty of space for Kal, which had really been Henry’s only requirement. It was a luxurious and spacious home, but I knew Henry considered this only temporary. I was hoping that, someday soon, he’d ask me to move in together. We already spent most nights together anyway, and since Scott apparently found it pretty comfortable in the house I officially shared with Hanna, I could usually be found here with Henry.

“Should I start on dinner?” Henry asked after he’d filled Kal’s bowl with dry dog food and was already opening the fridge, scouring its contents. “I’m thinking ravioli. You?”

“Yeah, ravioli sounds good.”

Henry pulled his head out of the fridge and closed it, straightening so he could study me. “Something’s wrong. You’re usually a lot more enthusiastic when I suggest making ravioli,” he noted. Then, his voice turning gentle, he asked, “What’s wrong, baby?” He walked closer to me and placed his hands on my waist. The sincere concern in his eyes made the wall that I still kept up
around him sometimes come crashing down.

“It’s just…” I sighed. “Remember that thriller that I did with Vince Grieve?” I asked, and he nodded, his eyes narrowing so slightly that I almost didn’t notice it. “The premiere is in a few days. Steph is an absolute miracle worker, and she got me out of doing any press for that godforsaken movie, but she’s still forcing me to go the premiere. And I’m—I don’t know… Just really nervous about it, I guess.”

“Well, that’s understandable,” Henry said. “After all he’s put you through, and all the progress you’ve made since wrapping that movie… It’s only natural to be nervous about seeing him again. But you’re strong enough to power through it, especially now. You’ve come so far already.”

“Yeah, well, maybe, but… What I was really wondering, was if you wanted to come with me,” I said nervously.

He laughed, pulling me into a tight hug and rocking me from side to side. “Of course I’m coming with you, you silly goose. From now on, we’re always going to each other’s premieres together. If not to support each other, then to protect each other from evil directors. I swear, if he does anything to hurt you, whether it’s verbally or physically, I will hurt him, and it will sure as hell be physical.”

“Just having you there will be a great help.”

“I’m glad. And I won’t ever leave your side if you don’t want me to, okay?” He pulled back a little to look at me for an answer, and I nodded, giving him a smile. “Good. Now let’s go make some ravioli,” he said, slapping my butt before pulling back completely and turning to the fridge.

I giggled. “All right. Let’s go make some ravioli.”

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Sunday, September 24, 2017.

“I think we should tie your hair back into a sleek ponytail,” Ella said, toying with the ends of my straight brown hair. “It’ll add even more power to an already powerful outfit.”

I smiled. “Okay. Let’s do it.”

I was nervous for tonight’s premiere, but having Ella here to prepare me for it helped. We’d gone shopping for the dress the day after I’d asked Henry to come with me, and she’d spotted the red Alexander McQueen dress currently hanging from my closet door. It was a draped silk bustier dress in bright red, and I’d loved it as soon as she’d pulled it off the rack. It was elegant but still sexy because of the cleavage I had in it, and the color screamed power, exactly what I needed if I were to face Vince again after all those months. I’d showed Henry the dress right after I’d come home, and he’d loved it too. He’d said I looked gorgeous in it, even though I’d been wearing zero makeup and my hair had been a mess at the time. But the look on his face had convinced me his words were true. Thinking back to it still made me smile.

He was in the room now, too, getting ready with me. He’d just taken a shower, and apparently had zero reservations about walking around in just a towel in front of Ella. He was so at home here that I don’t think he even noticed it. Though, to be fair, Ella gave off that kind of vibe that just couldn’t help but make you feel comfortable. Even I would parade around in just a towel in front of her without a second thought. But I wouldn’t look nearly as good as Henry did. The towel hung low on his hips, showing off his still slightly moist torso. His abs nearly glimmered in the light. I couldn’t stop looking at him, and Ella kept giving me knowing glances. Well, could you blame me for staring
Eventually I became too entranced with Ella's work, though, and besides, there would be many other opportunities to admire Henry's physique. I watched as Ella combed my hair back into a sleek ponytail, my hair thick and shiny as it fell down my back. She wrapped a piece of hair around the ponytail, hiding the elastic band, and it added even more sleekness. She did my makeup then, evening out my face as she applied foundation, adding depth with bronzer and highlighter. She played up my eyes with dark mascara, eyeliner and smoky eye shadow, but kept my lips neutral.

Once she was done with me, she went to style Henry, and I pulled on my dress. The zipper was a little hard to reach, though, and even as he was sitting on a chair and Ella was doing his hair, Henry rose up to the challenge and zipped it for me. I bent down and kissed him on the cheek in thanks, and then went off to hunt for the black Christian Louboutins I'd been intending to wear tonight. Once I'd finally found them in Hanna's closet, Henry was already getting dressed as well.

He was wearing a charcoal gray three piece suit with a white dress shirt and a red tie and pocket square, exactly the same shade as my dress. He looked so incredibly good that it was nearly unfair, and I praised my lucky stars again for being able to call him mine.

Needing to distract myself before I'd suddenly find myself ushering Ella out of my bedroom so Henry and I could have a bit of privacy, I hurriedly went on a search for jewelry. I settled on a pair of gold earrings in the shape of feathers, and found a matching cuff bracelet and ring. I kept my neck bare, fearing it'd be too overpowering otherwise.

When I was finally done getting ready, Henry surprised me by wrapping his arms around my waist and pulling me close. I squealed a little as he placed a kiss in my neck. “You look so beautiful, Jules,” he mumbled. Then, lowering his voice even more so Ella couldn’t hear, he whispered, “I kind of wish we didn’t have to go to that stupid premiere so I could have my way with you.”

Ella, realizing this was a private moment, hurriedly busied herself by cleaning up her supplies. I blushed and bit my lip. “You can have your way with me after the premiere,” I whispered back. “If you can wait, that is.”

“He… I’m not sure. I might have to resort to silly high school ways and fool around with you in the theater. You look so good I can barely stand to keep my hands off you.”

I smiled, turning around in his arms. “You would fool around during your girlfriend’s movie?”

“I most certainly would, if said girlfriend is sitting next to me and looking the way she does now.”

My smile widened. “Even if it’s the first time you’ll be seeing the movie?”

He turned thoughtful. “Good point. We might want to leave the fooling around to the parts you aren’t in.”

I laughed. “All right.” And I reached up, wrapping my arms around his neck as I kissed him. I smiled into the kiss, feeling that warmth I always felt while kissing him. It made me feel like I was home (which, I suppose, technically I was), and safe, like nothing could hurt me. It was the greatest feeling in the world, and the one thing that was even better was that I got to feel it every day.

I pulled away again and tugged on his lapels to straighten his jacket before the three of us traipsed downstairs, meeting up with Hanna and Scott in the living room. Hanna was wearing a beautiful midnight blue halter neck gown, and her hair was thrown up in a messy bun, almost as a ‘fuck you’ to Vince, except that she pulled it off elegantly. Scott was wearing a well-fitted black suit with a tie.
the same color as Hanna’s dress, and his ashy blond hair looked magically good as always. They made a striking couple, and I was glad to call them my friends.

“You look gorgeous, honey,” Hanna said, pulling me into a hug. “And Ella, you did a great job, as usual.”

Ella smiled. “Like I’ve said a thousand times before, I just work with what I’ve got. Juliette just happens to be insanely gorgeous on her own, and I simply enhance what’s already there.”

I smiled back at her, feeling myself blush. “Oh, shush,” I told her.

“She’s telling the truth, though,” Hanna said wisely. “You are gorgeous.”

“Well, so are you,” I said, needing to get the attention off me. “That dress really makes your eyes pop. And seriously, you are the only one who could rock a messy bun to a premiere.”

She grinned. “Why put in effort for that sleaze ball of a director, right?”

Scott elbowed Henry. “Dude, how did we get so lucky?”

Henry smiled, looking over at me. “I don’t know, mate. I ask myself that every day.”

“Did you ever think, when we first started shooting If You Love Someone, that we’d end up here?” Scott asked. “Because I sure as hell didn’t.”

Henry shook his head. “No. But I hoped, though.”

Once we were done gushing over each other’s good looks, the four of us piled into the waiting SUV and Ella left for home (but not after me making her promise she was going to the next premiere with us). Steph was already sitting in the car. “Hey, guys,” she greeted us with a big smile. “Ready for the premiere?”

I took a deep breath. “As ready as I’ll ever be.”

The closer we got to the theater, though, the more nervous I got. It wasn’t just that I would see Vince again (though that was definitely cause enough to give me anxiety), but also the fact that I had to do interviews. I still wasn’t entirely comfortable doing those. One wrong word and it could haunt me forever, especially in this digital age. These would also be the first interviews I’d do since getting together with Henry, and though we’d always been very open about our relationship, both in public as well as on social media, they were sure to ask questions about us, and I just wasn’t sure I was ready for them to dig around in our love lives like that.

The closer we got to the theater, the harder I squeezed Henry’s hand. He didn’t appear to mind, though; he just continued to rub soothing circles on the back of my hand with his thumb. He seemed to realize that I needed quiet, and simply continued to be there for me. I gave him an appreciative smile, and he leaned in for a soft kiss. It was so gentle and so filled with love that it temporarily made me forget all about my inner turmoil—even my grip on his hand slackened.

“I love you,” he whispered when he pulled away almost a full minute later.

I smiled. “I love you, too,” I whispered back.

“Good, because we’re here.”

And indeed we were. We’d pulled up to the theater without me having realized it, even though the
screams were considerably loud outside the car; I’d simply been too entranced by Henry to notice. “Oh,” I muttered in surprise. “Could you maybe keep my phone in your pocket? I forgot to bring a clutch.”

“Yeah, no problem,” he said, taking my phone from me and letting it slide into the pocket of his trousers. I heard it bump into his.

We exited the car—Henry, Hanna, Scott and I—and were met with loud screams. Some screamed Scott’s name, more people screamed Henry’s name, but I was surprised at how the majority screamed my name. It was logical, I supposed: I had been sure to show up tonight, but Henry and Scott hadn’t been officially confirmed, so of course there would be less fans of theirs. But still dozens of people were screaming my name, and I hadn’t expected it.

Hanna grinned at me. “Perhaps this is the biggest ‘fuck you’ to Vince. Now go sign some autographs, Ms. Popular.”

I smiled, leaving her behind for a bit as Henry, Scott, and I went to sign autographs. I had signed autographs before, but never for this many people all at once, and the whole experience was a little overwhelming.

“I love your dress, Juliette,” one fan said.

“You and Henry are so cute together,” another said.

And yet another said, “I loved you in The Bone House and If You Love Someone, and I can’t wait to see you in this one.”

I thanked them all as heartily and warmly as I could, telling them all how grateful I was that they were here. It was mind boggling to realize they were here for me, that they loved my work enough that they would come to the premiere of one of my movies, and even crazier to realize that I had fans. I guess that was the downside of my career falling into place as quickly as it had; you don’t realize what’s happening until it’s already happened. But I guess it was also a good thing, because I was all the more grateful for all these people calling out my name. The whole experience filled me with warmth.

Eventually, though, it was time to leave the fans behind and do the interviews. But before I could do that, Henry quickly caught up with me. “So,” he said with a smile, placing his hand on my back and leaning down a little so I could hear him better. “How does it feel, meeting so many of your fans at once?”

“So crazy!” I admitted. “Before this, I hadn’t even thought of myself as having fans, and now look at this. It’s like… It’s like I’m not even experiencing it myself. Like I’m just floating above myself like an out-of-body experience, watching myself hand out all these autographs and talking to all these fans. It’s… It’s insane, that’s what it is.”

Henry smiled. “I know how it feels. But you’re doing great, love.” He pressed a quick kiss to my lips, then gave me another smile. “Time for interviews!”

I took a deep, shaky breath as Steph guided me toward the interviewers. At first, the questions were solely about me and the movie, but soon enough, the topic changed to Henry and me. “So,” the lady interviewing us said with a big smile, “you two have been together for a while now, huh?”

With a smile, Henry said, “Yes, we have. We celebrated our six month anniversary two weeks ago.”

The interviewer seemed to be surprised by that. “Six months? One would argue you’ve been
together for much longer than that.”

I nearly snorted. I’d think we ourselves knew how long we’d been together better than some stranger. “You would?” I asked instead, raising an eyebrow.

“Well, we’ve all seen the pictures from when the two of you were filming *If You Love Someone,*” she said, her smile never falttering. “And then, of course, there was a bit of confusion when you got back together with Alyssa Jeanes…”

“Yes, well, I never did get back together with Alyssa. We were simply friends at the time, as were Juliette and I when we were filming *If You Love Someone,* though I was in love with her from the moment I met her,” Henry said, smiling warmly at me. The smile gave me butterflies, making me smile back at him.

“Oh, shush,” I said, blushing as I elbowed him in his side. He just laughed.

Obviously realizing she had a huge scoop, the interviewer inched her microphone even closer to us, her eyes wide, as was her smile, making her look a little manic. “And what about you, Juliette? Were you in love with Henry from the moment you met him as well?”

“I was definitely infatuated from the beginning, yeah. I couldn’t get him out of my head, though he didn’t make it easy, following me around everywhere like the stalker he is,” I teased.

Henry grinned back at me. “And then it took us a whole year to stop being idiots and just confess our feelings for each other.”

“And do you have any plans for your future together, or are you just living it day by day?”

That was an extremely tricky question, and I kind of wished she hadn’t asked it. We hadn’t really talked about it ourselves, and in the middle of an interview was hardly the time to start discussing our future. But if Henry said he didn’t really have plans, I knew it would throw me into anxiety overdrive—and I had a feeling he knew it as well.

“We haven’t really discussed any concrete plans for the future yet,” Henry started, “but this is definitely the girl I want to grow old with.”

I felt the blush take over my cheeks, and I couldn’t stop smiling at his answer. “Same here,” I said.

Soon after that, Steph whisked us away to the next interview, and I couldn’t be more relieved. The next interviewers were a lot less intrusive and asked questions mostly about the movie, which was an even bigger relief.

And before I knew it, the time for doing interviews was over and it was time to pose on the red carpet. At first I posed with just Hanna, posing naturally at one moment and hugging and laughing like idiots the next, and then I posed with Hanna, Scott and Henry, and then just Henry. He wrapped an arm around my waist, pulling me close as he smiled for the cameras. He looked like he was proud to show me off, and knowing that awoke even more butterflies. He wasn’t the only one proud to show off his significant other, though. I smiled up at him like he was the moon and stars, like he was the most beautiful galaxy I’d ever seen. And in a way, he was.

He leaned down to press a kiss to my cheek, lingering there so he could whisper in my ear. “How are you holding up?”

“Okay so far,” I whispered back. “Thanks for coming with me.”
He smiled and kissed my cheek again—though it was closer to my mouth than my actual cheek. (Fucking tease.) “Any time, love.”

I couldn’t pose with Henry forever, though—eventually I had to pose by myself. That wasn’t so bad per say, though I definitely did miss Henry’s presence. The worst came when I had to pose with the cast and I had my first glimpse of Vince in months. He was wearing a black tux, and instead of it making him look more handsome (or whatever his goal had been when he chose this outfit), it just made him look like an evil undertaker.

I saw Henry giving me concerned glances, as well as Hanna and Scott, but I stood as far away from Vince as possible and smiled bravely at the cameras. Vince thought I was a terrible actress? Well, I was here to prove him wrong. I could act like I couldn’t be happier to be here, and I knew the whole world would believe me. The only ones I wouldn’t be able to fool were Henry and Hanna, but that didn’t matter; I was okay with them knowing me fully. But I wasn’t about to give Vince the satisfaction of breaking down in the middle of his premiere, no matter how much he was probably itching for it. I would never cry because of him again.

As I realized that, it became much easier to hold my head up high and smile as brilliantly as never before. Quickly, Henry’s concern changed to radiant pride, and I straightened even more. It had been silly to worry about tonight. I could do this, no sweat.

But posing for pictures alongside him was one thing. Actually going inside the theater and mingling in the foyer was something completely different. Once I’d been provided with a glass of champagne, I quickly went on a search for my friends before Vince could catch up to me.

“You looked like a fucking goddess out there, hon!” Hanna shouted over the room’s murmur.

“You did great, baby,” Henry said, pulling me in by my waist and giving me a long kiss.

“Wow, Cavill, you used to have better judgment in girls,” a voice I knew all too well said from behind me, and I quickly broke from the kiss, turning around to face Vince. “And Juliette, I didn’t think you had it in you to actually bag the guy, so bravo on that.” He gave me a once-over as I stared at him, slack-jawed, and his gaze was cold. “Doesn’t change anything, though. You’ll always be low-level, especially with your attitude.”

“You have no right to talk to her like that,” Henry said, his voice low and his jaw tight.

At the same time, Hanna snapped, “Why, you little fucking cockroach! You’re even worse than I imagined.”

Vince grinned, completely ignoring Henry. “I spoke with you on the phone. Hallie, was it?”

“Hanna,” she corrected him, gritting her teeth.

“Forgive me. I guess you weren’t that memorable after all. Only figures, I suppose, considering you’re a friend of Juliette’s.”

I saw both Henry and Scott gear up to attack, ready to jump to their respective girlfriends’ defense, but for once in my life, I actually felt like defending myself. My free hand balling up in a fist so tight that my nails were digging into my palm, I stepped closer to him, knowing my eyes were burning. “I will no longer accept you talking to me like that,” I hissed. “Nor will I accept you talking to my friends like that. I have taken this blatant abuse from you for too long, and I’ve had enough! All this time, you’ve been trying to convince me that I’m the pathetic low-life, while it’s been you all this time. You hate yourself so much that the only way to make yourself feel better is to bring others
down. And you know what I finally say to that?” Not giving him time to answer, I dumped my champagne over his head, thrusting the now empty glass into his hand. “Fucking klootzak!”

And with that, I guided my friends as far away from Vince as possible. I was done letting him be a part of my life in any way possible, and I wanted to drop him as quickly as I could.

Hanna grinned at me. “So how did that feel, rock star?”

I held up my hands, showing them how badly they were shaking. “That was probably the most terrifying thing I’ve ever done, but I’m so glad I did it.”

Henry pulled me into a tight hug, so tight that I felt the buttons of his jacket dig into my torso. When he pulled away again and I saw the tears of pride glittering in his eyes, I nearly started crying myself. “I’m so proud of you,” he said, bringing up his hand to cup my face, his thumb soothingly stroking my skin. “The amount of courage that must’ve taken…” He shook his head. “I’m just so insanely proud of you.”

And he kissed me hard, attempting to convey all his pride and all his love for me in that one kiss. By the time he pulled away, I felt a little dizzy, but couldn’t help the huge smile taking over my face. “Thank you. I’m kind of proud of me too.”

At that, he laughed and hugged me again. “What did you even call him at the end?”

“Klootzak. The Dutch word for asshole. Though, I suppose, directly translated it means ‘ballsack.’”

He laughed even louder.

I rested my chin on his shoulder so I could look at Hanna and Scott. Hanna was still grinning proudly at me, but Scott still looked a little worked up. “Don’t get me wrong, I’m extremely proud of you for standing up to that fuckhole, but I don’t think a glass of champagne over his head is enough payback for all those nasty things he said. I should go up to him and fuck him up for real.”

I shook my head. “Don’t. You’ll be sinking below his level.” Then I grinned. “Besides, you don’t want a scandal on your name now do you, Scotty?”

He pulled a face. “True enough. You dumping champagne all over your director’s head is scandal enough.”

I bit my lip, feeling my face grow hot. “Oh, God. I hadn’t even thought of that.”

Henry kissed the top of my head. “And you don’t have to think or worry about it, not ever. Besides, Steph will be able to work her magic and spin it in a way that makes you look amazing and Vince look like an arsehole. Just like it actually happened. Where’s Steph, anyway?”

“I think I saw her talking to some big shot producer,” Hanna said, a twinkle of amusement in her eye. “She was seriously getting her flirt on.”

Henry laughed, and I smiled when I felt it rumble in his chest. “We’ll talk to her in the morning; it can wait. Besides, we should probably find our seats now.”

Seeing the people slowly move out of the foyer, I realized he was right. I took a deep breath, gearing up to watch myself in a movie, knowing my performances in it weren’t my best.
“Babe, you were amazing,” Henry exclaimed once the movie was over.

I furrowed my brow. “Seriously? I was so flat in some scenes.”

Henry shook his head. “You just think that because you’re comparing it to your life on set. But honestly, you were brilliant.”

“You really were, Jules,” Scott confirmed. “You could be up for an award for this one.”

I snorted. “Good one, Scott. But thanks anyway.”

“You were amazing, Julie,” Hanna said with a smile. “I’m so proud of you. You’re just rising higher and higher while Vince is digging himself in a deeper and deeper hole. You should be proud of your accomplishments.”

I smiled. I actually kind of was.

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Sunday, October 1, 2017.

Poring over the books in the bookcases in my room, I debated what book to read. What was I in the mood for? Endless adventure? Romance so cute that it made me squeal? Horror, fantasy? Eventually I selected a book about time travel called *Ruby Red* and settled on the unmade bed, making myself comfortable before I opened it to the first page.

Scott and Hanna were over at Scott’s house for once, leaving this place to just Henry and me. Henry was downstairs, preparing a surprise for me (whatever the hell that may be) and had instructed me to stay upstairs until he came to get me, and under no circumstance was I to go downstairs until he gave me the okay. So that’s why I now found myself reading about centuries old family secrets instead of spending some quality time with my boyfriend. I didn’t really mind, though. I liked to disappear in fictional worlds for a while, the longer the better. And it didn’t take long for me to get lost in the book.

So it was a bit of a surprise when there was suddenly a hand on my leg, and I had to admit I yelped a little, dropping my book. “Sorry, I didn’t mean to scare you,” Henry said with an apologetic smile. “But your surprise is ready downstairs.”

I picked up my book again, marking my spot by placing a pen in-between the pages. (I had plenty of bookmarks, but they were never close by when I needed them.) “It’s about time,” I joked.

His smile widened, turning more amused than apologetic. “Yes, well, it took a little preparing, but now we’re ready for you.” As he started leading me downstairs, he explained, “I got the idea ages ago. Actually, you gave me the idea, and since you did, I couldn’t get it out of my head. And so I started scouring everywhere once we got together—not very seriously, though. That is, until I found her. And then I just knew.”

Then he took me around the corner, leading me into the living room, and I got the surprise of a lifetime when I saw her, lying patiently in front of the couch, a curious look in her eyes, a blue bow tied around her neck: A chocolate brown Labrador Retriever puppy.

I gasped, my hands flying up to my mouth in shock. “You didn’t…”

He smiled. “I did. You’d mentioned a few times that you wanted a dog again, and since then I started thinking about getting you one someday. And then that someday felt a little closer when we got
together, and then I started looking. I found her in an animal shelter about two weeks ago, which, I suppose, happily coincided with you telling me about the premiere of Vince’s movie, and once I knew what was wrong, I just wanted to make you feel better. They found her abandoned alongside the road.”

“Oh, no, poor baby,” I crooned, kneeling down next to the puppy and gently stroking her head. She just looked at me with that curious look in her blue eyes. “What’s her name?”

“The people at the shelter started calling her Jane—you know, for Jane Doe? But you can rename her if you want. So what do you want to call her?”

I looked at her, still stroking her soft fur as I pondered names in my head. I wanted something Greek, but what? Then I knew, and I smiled. “Persephone. I want to call her Persephone.”

He smiled. “Persephone, huh? I like that.”

“And what about you, Persephone?” I crooned, carefully lifting her up and placing her in my lap. “Do you like your new name?” She curiously sniffed my face. Then, apparently deeming me worthy, licked my nose, making me giggle. “I’ll take that as a yes then.” I hugged her close to my chest and turned my head to look at Henry, feeling the tears well up in my eyes as I smiled. “Fuck you, Henry. Seriously. Go fuck yourself.”

He laughed, throwing his head back. “I love you, too, Juliette. And you’re welcome.”

“But seriously, though, Henry. How will I ever be able to repay you for this?”

“Just take good care of her. Love her, like I love Kal. Give her a good life and that will be thanks enough.” He grinned. “Of course, a kiss will be greatly appreciated too.”

I shook my head, smiling. “You are so predictable, Cavill. But come here.”

I beckoned him with my finger and he knelt down next to me, cupping my face in his hands as he brought his lips down on mine. I kissed him passionately (or as passionately as I could with a puppy on my lap), trying to convey to him how grateful I was. I mean, he’d given me a puppy, for fuck’s sake! I lifted my hand up to his face, my fingers relishing in the feeling of his short stubble. He had to shave every time he geared up to play Nate Johnson, which meant he refused to shave every time he had a break. I lived for those breaks, and I just thanked my lucky stars that those breaks weren’t ever long enough for him to grow a full beard. I loved his stubble, and he knew it.

I pulled his head a little closer and opened my mouth for him, our tongues colliding. He tasted like chocolate, and I smiled, knowing he’d broken into my secret stash. Punk.

He moaned suddenly and fell forward slightly, and I pulled away in confusion. “What’s wrong?” I breathed.

“Kal’s being jealous, that’s what’s wrong.” He pointed to his back, and that’s when I realized Kal had jumped onto his back, paws resting on his shoulders.

I couldn’t help but laugh. “Aw, poor baby. Aren’t you getting enough attention?” I petted his head and he excitedly dug his nails even deeper into Henry’s shoulders.

Henry turned so Kal had no other choice but to jump off his back, but he made it up to him by pulling him onto his lap. “Come here, you jealous little git,” he crooned, scratching behind Kal’s ears.
“Have you already tested how Kal and Persephone get along?” I asked, smiling down at the little pup as she started licking my hand.

He nodded. “Yes, I did. That’s actually what I was doing while you were upstairs. I didn’t want to give her to you only to find out then that she and Kal don’t get along, which would force me to bring her back, and that would really suck. I also talked it over with Hanna, seeing as this is her house too, but—as you might imagine—she was totally okay with it.”

“When did you do that?”

“Around the same time I really started looking for a dog, so about a few weeks ago.”

I felt my mouth fall open. “A few weeks ago? And she managed to keep this from me for that long?”

Henry grinned. “I may or may not have threatened her with one of Keegan’s brother’s swords if she blabbed to you.”

I laughed. He really was part of the group if he’d started using that threat too. “Wow.” I shook my head and gave him a smile. “You’re cute.” I leaned over to give him a quick kiss, then picked Persephone up to move to the couch. He joined me, wrapping an arm around my shoulders. With his free hand, he patted the spot next to him, and Kal clambered onto the couch. As he lay his head in his owner’s lap, I snuggled into Henry and smiled up at him. “I love you. I really, genuinely do.”

He smiled and pressed a long, hard kiss to the top of my head. “I really, genuinely love you, too.”

Once again, I felt that warm, happy feeling bubbling up in my chest. It really felt like Henry and I were building a life for ourselves, and Persephone felt like a new addition to our slow-growing family. And I, for one, couldn’t wait to see what would happen next.

Chapter End Notes

As you might have noticed, I skipped a lot of time in-between this chapter and the last one. I’ll probably do that a lot from now on, mostly because I have no other choice if I want to wrap this story up nicely. Other than that, I genuinely hope you guys enjoyed this chapter as much, if not more, as I enjoyed writing it. Them being so cute together is SO much fun for me to write! I just love it. And as always, thank you all so incredibly much for reading! I really, genuinely love you all ;)

The lyrics at the start of the chapter are You Ruin Me by The Veronicas.
Chapter 23

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

He said I’m going to have a bed with lots of pillows
And that we’re going to build a house with lots of windows

~*~*~*~*~*~

Thursday, October 26, 2017.

“That dress looks absolutely amazing on you, Jules,” Hanna complimented me as she took me in with a smile. “Now if you’d only stop fidgeting, you’d look like royalty.”

I gave her a smile as I again smoothed my dress down nervously. It was a fitted lace cocktail dress by Burberry, and its soft pink color complimented my naturally tan skin. The neckline had a V-shaped cutout detail that gave me a little bit of cleavage, but definitely not too much for a classy restaurant. I’d paired it off with white Mary Janes with a rose gold skull on the strap and rose gold jewelry. It was an amazing outfit, and Ella would’ve been proud of the simple but sultry makeup I’d applied. My hair fell down my shoulders and back in its usual silky smooth, straight strands. “Do you think Henry will like it?” I asked, once again smoothing the material of my dress down even though there wasn’t a single wrinkle in it.

“Girl, I’m telling you this now: The sexual tension between you two will probably get you kicked out of the restaurant, especially once you see what he’s wearing. He came to me for advice.”

At that, I raised an inquisitive eyebrow. “Henry came to you for clothing advice? Why?”

Hanna shrugged. “I guess because he knows I know you best, and I know what you like on a guy.”

I snorted. “He’s not showing up in jeans and a T-shirt, is he?” I didn’t know what it was about that simple outfit, but I loved it on Henry. His butt looked great in jeans, and his shirtsleeves tended to span tightly around his biceps.

She laughed. “No, he’s not, though I did suggest it. But you’ll just have to see. Either way, it’s Henry we’re talking about. He always looks like a god descended from the heavens.”

“True,” I admitted, fighting the urge to bite my lip as I recalled what he looked like in my favorite outfit, or simple sweatpants and a sweatshirt, or naked… I shook my head, not wanting to get sidetracked now. “Did… Did Henry seem weird to you?”

Hanna frowned. “Weird how?”

“Like, nervous? I don’t know, he just seemed really nervous when he asked me out last week, and he’s been a bit fidgety since then. Normally, he doesn’t even really ask me out. He just kind of casually suggests we go out for dinner or something, almost like an afterthought. But this time he was very formal, as if we haven’t been dating for nearly eight months and he’s asking me out for the first time.”

A slow smile spread out over Hanna’s face, reminding me eerily of the Cheshire from Alice in Wonderland. “Maybe… Maybe he’s finally popping the big Q. Or maybe he’s—”
“Oh. No! Shh! Stop!” I said quickly, throwing up my hands to silence her. “Don’t put those thoughts in my head, or I’ll be such a big bundle of nerves that I won’t even be able to go out to a simple dinner.”

She pressed her lips together and mimicked zipping them shut.

I took a deep breath and smoothed my dress down again for good measure before nodding at my appearance in the mirror. “All right. I’d better get downstairs before Henry gets here.” I grabbed a shiny white clutch and hung it on my shoulder before Hanna and I left my room and went downstairs, where I was greeted with an over-excited Persephone. I crouched down, a wide smile immediately taking over my face. “Hey, Sephy,” I crooned. The Labrador pup had already grown quite a bit in the nearly one month I’d had her, but she was still as adorable as the first time I’d seen her, her brown coat still as shiny as ever. “Excited to have Hanna all to yourself for tonight?”

“I sure as hell am excited to have her to myself tonight. She’s so cute.”

I smiled, scratching under Persephone’s chin before getting up again. “She is. Still the best gift Henry’s ever given me.”

“And we all know Henry showers you with gifts.”

Blushing, I said, “I try to get him to stop giving me things, but he simply won’t. Every time he does, he says he saw it and it reminded him of me, so he ‘simply had to get it.’ It’s sweet, but… a little overwhelming sometimes.”

“Well, he might as well stop trying after Persephone. There’s no way he’s ever going to top a freaking puppy.” She grinned. “Unless it’s a huge-ass diamond ri—”

“Shht!” I interrupted her, holding up a finger. “Don’t.”

“Right. Sorry. Anyway, it sounds like he’s here. I listened, and then I indeed heard a car pulling up. “I’ll open the door. You take that time to smooth that ridiculously straight dress down a million more times.”

Feeling myself blush, I automatically smoothed my dress down again, making her laugh. “Shut up!” I told her, even though she wasn’t saying anything. I could hear her cackle all the way to the door.

When the door opened and I heard Hanna say, “Damn, Henry. Looking good,” Persephone immediately rose to attention. She always seemed to know when Henry was coming, and always went completely insane. Her love for Henry nearly rivaled mine. When the door to the hallway opened and Hanna came back inside, followed by Henry, Persephone shot towards him with amazing speed, skidding to a halt in front of him and jumping up to rest her paws on his knees. He laughed, the sound deep and joyous, and picked her up to cuddle her.

His undivided attention had been given to Persephone, so he hadn’t seen me yet, but I sure as hell was seeing him. It was like I was hypnotized. He was wearing a black fitted suit, a crisp white shirt and a skinny black tie. His trousers were hanging reasonably low on his hips, the shirt tucked into it. He looked amazing. He looked better than amazing. Either way, it’s Henry we’re talking about. He always looks like a god descended from the heavens. Oh, how right Hanna had been. His hair was dark and curly, and now that we’d finished filming the spy movie, the stubble was back full-time.

I was the luckiest woman on this earth.

Finally, he looked up and his eyes connected with mine, and the world fell away. It was almost like we were standing in a tunnel, and he was my light at the end of it. He was all I could see. As his blue
eyes raked over every inch of my body, I blushed at the intimacy of it. It was a good thing only Hanna was in the room with us—anyone else and I would’ve been mortified they’d witnessed this intimate and charged moment.

“Wow,” Henry said, his voice hoarse. Ignoring Persephone as she poked her nose against his jaw to ask for his attention, he cleared his throat. “You look amazing.”

Feeling myself blush once more, I shot a quick glance to the floor before looking up at his eyes again. “Thank you. You look amazing, too. I hear I have Hanna to thank for that.”

This time, I succeeded in making him blush, if only a little. “Uh, yes.” Setting Persephone back on the floor, probably so he wouldn’t have to look me in the eye, he said, “She gave me a little advice. But I picked everything out myself, though. She just kind of gave me a guideline.”

Grinning, Hanna said, “You’re welcome. Not that you can’t dress yourself just fine.”

Slowly, I approached Henry. “You picked well.”

When I finally closed the distance between us, he smiled and took hold of my hand. “I sure did. Hey, beautiful.”

I couldn’t help but smile up at him. “Hey, handsome.”

“Right… The sexual tension is already killing me, so I think this is my cue to leave,” Hanna said, not at all awkwardly. “Are you coming with me, Sephy? We’ll cuddle on my bed.” She picked my puppy up and disappeared up the stairs. “I won’t wait up!” she shouted down from the top of the stairs, making me laugh.

“Privacy at last,” Henry said, pulling me closer by my hand and circling his free arm around my waist. “You really do look beautiful, Juliette.”

I lifted my hand to cup his face, the tips of my fingers disappearing in his hair. “So do you.”

He smiled at that and dipped his head down, his lips lingering in front of mine, not yet kissing me. His proximity was making me light-headed, and it was a good thing he had his arm wrapped around my waist, or I probably would have fallen. He smelled so amazingly good, his musky cologne mixing with his own scent. That alone was enough to make me dizzy.

When he finally did kiss me, I felt the sparks fly, heating up the blood rushing through my veins, and I was glad that Hanna had gone upstairs. It was a tame kiss, just his lips capturing mine and mine capturing his, but it felt so intimate and tender that I didn’t want to share this moment with anyone else. I pressed a little closer to him, my thumb stroking his cheekbone. His skin there was really soft.

I didn’t want to pull away, but eventually he did it for me. He broke the kiss and pressed his forehead against mine, not creating any distance between us. It was like he didn’t want to be any farther away from me than necessary either. “I love you,” he whispered, tightening his grip on my waist a little.

“I love you, too,” I whispered back, my hand slowly sliding from his face down to his chest. His heart was beating as fast as mine was.

He gave me another kiss, this one much shorter than the previous one and again much shorter than I would’ve liked, and said, “We should probably go,” though his heart wasn’t fully in it, like he was distracted. “I made reservations…”

I nodded. “Yes, we probably should.”
But neither of us moved. When we both realized that, we laughed, and he said, “Okay, I’m gonna step away now. Just let me gather up the strength.”

I giggled, and we finally stepped away from each other at the same time, though there still wasn’t much distance between us. To distract myself, I tugged on his lapels to straighten his jacket and then straightened his tie. “Maybe Hanna wasn’t that far off when she predicted our sexual tension would get us kicked out of the restaurant.”

Henry laughed. “She really said that?”

“She did. But then, you know Hanna—she likes to exaggerate. Either way, we should probably go or we’ll never leave this living room.”

“Reservations be damned. I kind of don’t want to leave this room. And otherwise we can always go to my place,” he said, suggestively wiggling his eyebrows, a smirk on his lips.

I playfully slapped his chest. “You insisted on going out, so we’re going out. No take backs. But…” I reached up, my lips grazing his earlobe. “We could always go back to your place after dinner.”

Henry groaned, the sound almost guttural. “You are a very, very cruel woman, Juliette Morrison.”

I grinned up at him. “I know. And yet, you love me anyway, Henry William Dalgliesh Cavill.”

“I do.” He kissed my cheek and took my hand, leading me outside to his car. “By the way, it really sucks that you don’t have a middle name. Me saying your full name just doesn’t have the same impact as when you say mine.”

“Not my fault, William Dalgliesh,” I teased.

He playfully rolled his eyes in response before opening the passenger door of his car and helping me inside. As I switched between radio stations, Henry drove us to the restaurant he’d made reservations at. I had no idea where we were going, just that it was a classy place (hence the fancy outfits), but I trusted Henry’s judgment. When we finally arrived, Henry helped me out of the car and handed the keys to the valet before taking me into the restaurant. It was named something French that I couldn’t pronounce in my head, let alone out loud, but it sure did look fancy. It was one of those restaurants that I never would’ve been able to afford before I’d landed *If You Love Someone*, the lighting dim, and romantic candles on every table.

Henry approached the hostess, his arm wrapped casually around my waist, and said, “I have a reservation under Cavill.”

The hostess smiled, and I couldn’t help but notice the awestruck look in her eyes as she took him in. Funnily enough, though, it didn’t make me jealous—just amused. “Of course. Right this way, sir.” She led us to our table in the back, and I knew right away that Henry had requested for that seeing as it was kind of sequestered. Apparently he wanted privacy for our date. “A waiter will join you shortly. Have a wonderful evening.”

I held back a giggle when she nearly curtsied before she walked off again, and I couldn’t help but wonder if she always did that or if it was just Henry’s presence affecting her. I wouldn’t be surprised if it was the latter. He sure knew how to play with a woman’s mind, even when he was far from trying.

“You know what? I’ve decided you need to become just a tad uglier,” I teased. “You’re making women fall for you left and right.”
He frowned in confusion. “She wasn’t flirting with me, was she?”

I smiled at his adorable innocence. “No. But she was so flustered by you that she curtsied.”

Snorting, he asked, “So you noticed that too, huh?”

I giggled, covering my mouth with my hand in attempt to stifle it. “Yes, I did.”

I was still giggling when our waiter showed up, introducing himself as Gordon. Henry ordered us a bottle of (unnecessarily expensive) red wine, but I noticed how Gordon kept sneaking glances my way, worsening my urge to giggle as my cheeks heated up.

When Gordon was finally gone to retrieve that bottle of wine, Henry leaned closer to me across the table conspiratorially. “I think it’s you who needs to get ugly, Morrison,” he told me confidingly. “That poor kid couldn’t stop staring at you.”

I couldn’t help myself—I burst out in an unstoppable giggle fit. Henry just regarded me with an amused curiosity as I attempted to reel it back in. “So fucking typical,” I hiccuped, trying to keep my voice down. I had a feeling this place frowned upon cursing.

“What is?” Henry asked, trying not to laugh himself as he reached for my hand.

Feeling the tears prickle in my eyes from laughing so much, I said, “I don’t even know why I find it so funny that we both have people ogling us while we’re on a date.”

He smiled. “Well, I don’t blame Gordon for staring at you. You’re looking extremely gorgeous tonight.”

I grinned, my thumb stroking the knuckles on his hand. “Nor do I blame our hostess. I just blame you for looking so goddamn good all the time.”

Henry snorted. “I do love your way with words, love. And just for the record, you look goddamn good all the time too.”

“You’re biased.”

“Probably true,” Henry admitted with a halfhearted shrug. “Gordon would probably agree with me, though.”

I shook my head, laughing. “Let’s just forget about Gordon, okay?”

“Kind of hard to, considering he’s bringing our bottle of wine over now,” Henry whispered, and I took that as my cue to seriously reel my amusement back in.

Restaurant employees ogling us and giggle fits aside, Henry and I had a really good time on our date. It was a nice change from busy workdays and late nights of being lazy on the couch (though I did always love those nights). I had another giggle fit when I tried to pronounce the dishes on the menu and failed miserably. They were all in French, and luckily Henry was there to translate and order for me, seeing as he spoke French fluently. He did try to make me order escargot, though, ensuring me I would love it. I did have some knowledge of French, and I threatened to put snails—or better yet, slugs—in his pillowcase if he ordered the escargot for me.

We were now sharing a giant brownie as dessert—which was amazingly delicious, just like my steak had been—but I noticed that Henry was growing quieter and quieter. That nervous edge that I’d already noticed earlier this week was back, and my anxiety-prone mind couldn’t help but wonder if
something was seriously wrong. I kept quiet, though, not wanting to ask him if he was about to bring me bad news.

“So,” Henry said when we were nearly entirely through the brownie, obviously attempting a light conversational tone. He was a good actor, but I knew him too well by now, so he didn’t entirely succeed. “Did you have fun tonight?”

I smiled, nodding. “I did, yes. Then again, I always have fun with you, whether we’re dining in a fancy restaurant or watching *SpongeBob SquarePants* in our pajamas because there’s nothing else on TV and we’re too tired to go upstairs.”

He laughed. “Admit it, secretly you love *SpongeBob*.”

I grinned, holding my thumb and forefinger a quarter of an inch apart. “Maybe just a little bit.”

He smiled, but it quickly dimmed as that nervous energy came back. “I, uh… I got you something.”

Feeling a little flustered, I smiled at him. “Henry… You’ve already given me so many gifts.”

He gave me a sheepish smile in return. “I know. But this is more a symbolic gift, I guess.” He reached into his pocket, and I felt my heart stop when I noticed he pulled a jewelry box out of it. I relaxed a little when I realized it was too big to be a ring box, but I didn’t entirely know how to feel, either. Did I want him to propose to me or not? Looking at him and at the sincerity on his face, I decided that I would’ve said yes had he proposed tonight. I would’ve said yes a thousand times. But I could definitely be patient and wait for him to actually pop the question.

He slid the box over to me and gestured for me to open it. I unclasped it and lifted the lid. Inside was a gold necklace with an antique key as pendant. The word ‘love’ was engraved into the key. “Wow, it’s beautiful, Henry,” I said as I let my finger slide along the jagged edge of the key. It really was beautiful. It had this vintage feel to it that I loved immediately.

“Juliette?” he asked, and I looked up again at the nervous note in his voice. “Will you move in with me?”

The question didn’t register with me at first, so I just sat there, staring dumbly at my amazingly cute and adorable and nervous boyfriend. My finger was still sliding along the key’s edge.

“Juliette?” he asked when I still hadn’t answered, seeming even more nervous than before. “I’d get it if you don’t want to move in with me. I mean, it would be a pretty big step in our relationship. I just thought that, since you spend most nights at my place anyway, you might not object to the idea,” he rambled. When I still didn’t answer, he kept rambling. “And of course we’ll find a new house and make it entirely ours. I mean, the apartment was always meant to be temporary anyway, and I really want to build a life with you. I always knew that eventually I wanted to live with you. We kind of already are, but I mean officially. And really, you can stop me anytime.”

I giggled. “I’m sorry, I was just… a little surprised, that’s all. And I thought it was my job to ramble,” I teased.

He smiled sheepishly. “We can switch jobs every now and then. But? What do you say?”

“Of course I’ll move in with you,” I told him, reaching for his hand and squeezing it reassuringly. “I’d love nothing less.”

“Oh, good,” he breathed, a wide, relieved smile spreading over his face. “I was pretty sure you’d say yes at first, but then when you didn’t say anything… You had me kind of worried for a sec.”
“I’m sorry. I just wasn’t expecting it. But it’s a very pleasant surprise.”

He squeezed my hand. “I’m glad.”

“So,” I said, picking up my fork to steal the last bit of brownie. “You said you wanted to look for a new house.”

“Well, yes. I mean, yours isn’t very private anymore,” he reasoned (which was true—the paparazzi had discovered my address and often stood outside my door these days, plus there was the fact that Hanna and Scott were there often, giving us hardly any privacy inside the house either), “and my place was always supposed to be temporary. I want to look for a place that’s actually a house. Something that could really become our home, and where maybe…” he said, getting a little nervous again, “where maybe we could start a family. If you want, I mean.”

I smiled. “I do, eventually.”

Relief spreading through him once more, he relaxed a little. “Good. And I want to look somewhere in Los Angeles. I know how much your friends mean to you, and how big a part they are of your support system, so I would never try and take that away from you. I’m here most of the time anyway. Maybe, down the line, we can look for a place in London or something, but for now I mainly just want to settle down here.”

“Are you sure? I mean, L.A. traffic is horrible, after all,” I teased. But despite the lame joke, I was being completely serious. I knew how much he loved England.

He laughed. “You’re right, it is. But your life is here, so mine is as well.”

I smiled, feeling the tears jump into my eyes once I realized what this meant for him. “All joking aside, are you really sure? I know how much you love your family, and London would be much closer to them.”

“And I know how much you love your family. And I don’t mean the one you were born into, but the one you made for yourself here. And I have to admit… they’ve kind of become my family too.”

I squeezed his hand even tighter and blinked rapidly in an attempt to prevent the tears from spilling over. “Have I told you how much I love you recently?”

He brought my hand up to his lips, kissing my knuckles gently. “You don’t have to; I already know. Doesn’t hurt to hear it again, though,” he joked.

I laughed, dabbing at my eyes as one fat tear finally spilled over. “I love you so incredibly much. I love you so much that it kind of hurts sometimes. It’s like a physical ache in my chest, but like a good ache. I don’t really know how to explain it.”

“I know exactly what you mean, love. And I love you, too. Goddamn, I love you, too.”

“Maybe we should ask for the check,” I suggested with a small smile. “Both so I can cry my happy tears in private in the car, and so I can show you just how much I love you when we get home.”

He pressed another kiss to my hand, and maybe it was just the candle light, but I was pretty sure his eyes had darkened. “That sounds like an excellent idea.”

As soon as we were in the car, the energy between us became extremely loaded. I kept stealing glances at him, and his hand was resting on my knee, his fingers occasionally dipping down to my inner thighs. Every time he did so, my breath caught in my throat and my head spun. I kind of felt
like asking if he could drive faster, but seeing as he was already pushing the speed limit, I refrained.

When we finally reached his apartment and he parked his car in the garage, I didn’t even wait for him to open the door for me, something he always insisted on doing. He didn’t seem too bothered by it, though—he just fumbled with the keys to open the door to the kitchen, disabling the alarm before it could start blaring. Then he turned to me, finally taking me in his arms.

We kissed feverishly, and I pushed at his suit jacket, carelessly letting it drop to the floor when it finally slid down his arms. I burned everywhere he touched me; his lips on mine, his hand cupping my neck, his thumb stroking my jaw, his other hand on my waist, his fingers digging into the lace of my dress. I loved how, even after all this time, kissing him still felt as exciting as that first time on the set of *If You Love Someone*. He was such a good kisser that it was almost unfair. It would’ve been, had I not enjoyed these kisses as much as I did.

We stumbled past the living room, still kissing passionately—almost desperately. When I felt Kal press his wet nose against my bare leg, I managed to pull away enough to look down at him. He was panting happily, his tail wagging fast. “Hey, buddy,” I said, but Henry was already whisking me away before I could say more. Kal was smart and didn’t follow.

We reached Henry’s bedroom, and as he shut the door firmly behind us and kicked his shoes off, I bent down to unclasp my own. When I stepped out of my platformed Mary Janes, I was about six inches shorter, but I knew we could make up for the difference in height.

I grabbed Henry’s tie, pulling him closer with a playful smirk. “Have I told you…” I started slowly, “how sexy you look in this outfit? It’s giving me fantasies of you fucking me on a desk, to be quite honest.”

A slow grin that made him look even hotter spread over his face. “I quite like that fantasy of yours,” he mumbled, dipping his head down to let his lips graze my ear. “So that’s the first thing we need in our new house, huh? A nice, sturdy desk that I can fuck you on.”

I loved it when Henry was being the extremely sweet boyfriend that I knew he was, but his dirty talk… it never ceased to make my blood boil in the best sense ever. “That’d be nice,” I said, smiling coyly as I tugged his shirt out of his pants. “And where would we put this desk?”

“We could make an office,” he mumbled, placing wet, sensual kisses in my neck, just below my ear. “Do we need an office?”

I felt him smile against my skin. “Not really, no. But it’d be nice to have one. We could fill it up with tons of bookcases, and I’ll buy you all the books you want. It’d be especially nice to have an office if I can fuck you in it. Slow and tender… or hard,” he said, suddenly tugging me closer to him roughly.

I moaned at just the mental image he was giving me alone. “That really would be nice.” A little reluctantly, I undid his tie and threw it on the floor. I loved seeing him in this outfit, but I loved seeing him naked even more. Slowly, one by one, I unbuttoned his shirt, and then when I was done, he helped me slide it down his arms. “Fuck, you’re hot,” I nearly whined.

He laughed, the sound low and deep, driving me even crazier. “Why do you say that like it’s a bad thing?”

“Because it’s unfair. It’s unfair how you distract me simply by being in the same room, how you look so damn good that it makes my head spin, and just one smile from you renders me completely
fucking useless.”

He gave me a lopsided smile, that one where one of the corners of his mouth goes up and the other goes down. “The feeling is entirely mutual. Now come here.”

Henry turned me around, slowly tugging my zipper down, kissing every inch of newly bared skin. The hairs on his chin were scratchy, but his lips immediately soothed the sting. He kissed all the way down to where the zipper ended on my lower back so he ended up on his knees. He let my dress fall to the floor, and after I’d stepped out of it, made me turn around. He kissed my stomach, just above the waistband of my underwear, and slowly kissed upwards as he stood up. When he reached my breasts, he bit into my flesh, his fingers skimming the material of my sheer lace bra. “Oh,” I moaned in surprise, twisting my fingers in the curls on top of his head, pulling hard.

“Have I told you how much I always love your bra choices?” he asked, his voice low as his thumb grazed my nipple through the material.

I smiled, biting my lip. “You leave subtle hints every now and then. And by subtle, I mean—oh!—not subtle at all.”

Henry grinned. “Oops.”

I grinned back and pulled his head down, his lips landing on mine again. I kissed him hard, nipping at his lips with my teeth and always soothing the sting with my tongue. “Enough talk about my bras. It’s time for you to let me show you just how much I love you,” I said, unbuckling his belt.

Wednesday, November 1, 2017.

“Henry?” I shouted, doing my best not to fall over as I balanced mostly on one foot.

“Yes, love?” Henry called back from the kitchen.

“Have you seen my other shoe?”

“Oh! Yes.”

One foot clad in a five inch heel, one foot bare, I managed to make my way towards the door and moved to close it. There, I indeed found my other shoe. “Thanks!” I put the other heel on as well and, now much better balanced, walked to the kitchen. Kal and Henry were there, the latter frying up some eggs for breakfast. The bacon was already on the table, and, the delicious smells in the kitchen making me realize just how hungry I was, I stole a piece.

“You thieving thief,” Henry said, laughing.

I stared at him. “You have your back to me! How did you know I took a piece of bacon?”

He looked at me over his shoulder, a grin that made my heart melt shaping his lips. “Because I know you, and because I know how much you love bacon.”

“True enough. Would’ve been embarrassing for you, though, had I had better impulse control.”

Henry laughed, sliding the eggs onto two plates. He set them down on the table and sat down next to me. “When it comes to bacon, you don’t have any impulse control.”

“I giggled, popping another piece of bacon into my mouth. “True.”
Henry surprised me by planting a sudden kiss on my lips, even as I was still chewing. “I love you.”

Smiling, I swallowed my bacon before I said, “I love you, too.”

“So, we’ll be meeting the realtor in an hour, and she’ll probably want to know what our demands are for our house.”

My smile widened as he said ‘our house.’ “I’ve had a few days to get used to the idea, but I still get butterflies every time I think about us officially moving in together. In our own house.” I shook my head. “Anyway, I don’t know. A pool?”

Henry laughed. “A pool is a very good start. And we’ll need an office or a space we can convert into one so we can put a desk in it.” He gave me a meaningful smirk, making me blush. “And of course we’ll need enough space in case our friends come over—I mean, there’s twelve of us, so we need enough space if they’re staying over—and for potential additions to our family.” I shook my head with a smile. Of course he would be able to hint at kinky sex and then talk about kids in the same minute. “Is there anything else you want?”

I shrugged. “Just a good place where we can chill, especially if we’re having another horror night. And I want a big backyard, for the dogs but also for when we eventually have kids. And of course it needs to be private.”

He smiled, that sparkle in his eyes letting me know he was as excited about our future as I was. “Those are good points. And what style do you like? Modern? Old fashioned? Bohemian? I’m literally just naming things that pop into my mind.”

“I don’t know. I’ve always been partial to modern, but then I also like those Victorian houses, or those amazing mansions. Or a castle,” I joked. Getting serious again, I said, “Honestly, I think I won’t know what I want until I fall in love with it.”

“True enough. We’ll just see then.”

I smiled. “We’ll just see.”

An hour later we met up with our realtor, Marianne, and after telling her our demands, she showed us the first property. It was beautiful, but a little too modern for both our tastes, and the small backyard was nearly entirely taken over by the pool, so we soon decided to go see the next property.

That one was by the beach, and had all our demands. It was modern, with a lot of light because of the big windows. The pool looked amazing, and there was even a really cool fire pit. It would’ve been perfect, had it been a little more private. Our neighbors would be able to look right into our kitchen.

So we moved on yet again. This house was yet another amazing one and ticked off all of our demands, even the privacy and the big sturdy desk. And even though it was a perfect mix between old and modern, Henry and I just couldn’t fall in love with it.

But then we saw our fourth option, and not being able to fall in love was no longer an issue. It was a huge mansion, reminding me a little of a fairytale castle with its pale yellowish walls and blue roofs. It had a long driveway and a big garage with enough room for ten cars in total. I could see a lush green backyard from where I was standing, and I knew it would be perfect for the dogs and any eventual kids somewhere down the line.

When we walked through the huge double doors, we were met with a grand entrance hall. It was a beautiful aristocratic design but with a slight modern touch, and I loved it immediately. And that was
only the hall. To our left was a staircase going up to a mezzanine landing, to our right was a bathroom, and right in front of us was a door that led to the patio. The realtor took us there, and we were half outside, half inside. It was like a huge covered patio, with a chandelier hanging over the sitting area and a TV on the wall. When we walked farther, we encountered a large dining table with room for ten, still covered by the ceiling. The patio could be closed by thick curtains, obscuring the view of the huge backyard.

Our realtor took us there, and I fell in love with the place even more. Adjoining the patio, there was a big grass field, certainly big enough for running around. To our left, there was a big barbecue setup, with a kitchen island big enough to prepare an entire meal on. To our right, there was a big pool with fountains on the side. Henry and I shared a glance, both knowing that we loved the backyard.

We went back inside to explore the kitchen. It was huge, with two stoves, two ovens, and two fridges. It wasn’t likely we’d use all of it all the time, but it would definitely be nice if we’d ever have a party here, like maybe for Thanksgiving or Christmas. The kitchen led to a smaller dining room with place for eight, but just around the corner was another dining room, but this one looked much more impressive, with place for twenty. There was another living room area, this one much cozier than the one on the patio.

“How now, you said you wanted an office,” Marianne said, a somewhat smug smile shaping her lips. “This house has quite an impressive one.”

She took us to a kind of round room by the side of the house. It was a cozy room with definitely enough space for a ton of books. And right in front of us stood a huge oak desk.

Henry eyed me, a mischievous glint in his eyes. “That’s definitely a sturdy desk.”

I felt the heat rise to my cheeks. “It is.”

Then our realtor took us to the basement level, where three bedrooms could be found. Each bedroom had a queen size bed, a TV, and an en-suite bathroom with shower. The rooms were spacious and tastefully decorated. But what was perhaps the most impressive room on the basement level was the home theater. It had big plush seats covered in a soft, red fabric, and the ceiling was dotted with tiny lights made to look like constellations. Adjoining the theater was a cozy room with a bar, perfect for hanging out with friends.

Marianne then took us to the second and top level. It had seven more bedrooms, each with an en-suite bathroom. They were all pretty similar to the bedrooms on the basement level, except for the master. It was a little bigger than the others, and had an adjoining walk-in closet with definitely enough room for both my and Henry’s clothes. The bedroom had a king size bed with lots of pillows, and the mattress was incredibly comfortable. This was the only room that had a balcony, and it looked out over the backyard. The bathroom was a little better than the others as well, light and spacious, with a big two-person shower and a jetted tub.

When we’d seen everything, Marianne left us alone to discuss things. Henry and I sat down on the bed inside the master bedroom, holding hands.

“Henry… This is… entirely too…”

“Perfect?” he asked, grinning.

“Much. It’s too much. I mean, this house is absolutely fucking gorgeous and I can definitely see us living here, but… It’s so big, and it’ll only be the two of us until maybe we get kids one day.”
“Maybe?” Henry asked, quirking an eyebrow.

I smiled. “I definitely want children; I was just checking if you were serious. You are serious, right? I mean, there’s still time for you to back out, but if you want to run for the hills, you’ve gotta do it now.”

He pulled me closer so I was nearly sitting on his lap. “Juliette, shush,” he told me sternly. “I’m as serious about this, about us, as I am serious about… my hatred for Donald Trump.”

I snorted at that. “That’s very serious.”

He smiled, cupping my face in his hands. “It is. So, though I know it’s in your nature, try not to worry. I love you, and I wanna have your babies,” he joked. “Not yet, but eventually.” He pressed a long, soft kiss to my lips, and I swayed a little when he pulled away.

“How about we even afford this place?” I asked, looking around the grand master bedroom. It really was quite beautiful.

“I think we might have to rethink our budget a little, but we already left plenty ofwiggle room. We can definitely afford it, especially considering the projects we both have lined up so far. Besides, we’re both—okay, no, you’re pretty frugal, and you’ll probably watch me closely the coming time to make sure I don’t spend too much.”

I laughed. “As if you can be stopped when it comes to buying gifts for yourself or for me.”

He grinned. “Don’t forget Kal and Persephone. They’re spoiled rotten as well. Speaking of the dogs, the yard will be perfect for them.”

“It definitely would. So… Should we take it?”

Henry smiled at me, his eyes shining. “I think we should.”

I copied his smile. “Yeah?”

“Yes.”

I squealed, throwing my arms around his neck. “Oh my God, Henry. Did we just find our new place?”

He laughed, wrapping his arms around my waist and pressing a hard kiss to my cheek. “I think we did.”

~*~*~*~*~*~

Tuesday, December 5, 2017.

“I can’t believe this is really happening. We’ve been joined at the hip since we were four, and now you’re moving away for good.”

I laughed, hugging my best friend tight. “It’s only Beverly Hills. It’s not like I’m moving to the other end of the world.”

“For as long as we’ve known each other, we’ve either been neighbors or roommates,” Hanna reminded me. “So fifteen miles might as well be the other end of the world.”

“We’ve been apart before.”
“True, but at least then I knew you were coming back. Now you’re really starting the rest of your life, and it’ll be without me constantly by your side.”

I laughed. “Stop being so dramatic. I thought that was supposed to be my thing? Besides, it’s us we’re talking about here. We have way too much to share and way too many things that have to be discussed a million times, so we’ll still be talking nonstop. Besides, I have a feeling you’ll be found in the theater room more than Henry or me.”

She grinned cheekily. “True. But all joking and drama aside, I’m really, really happy for you. You’re starting a life together with Henry, and I know that’s something I know you’ve always wanted. I mean, you might’ve had Brad Pitt in mind when you first started fantasizing, but Henry Cavill isn’t a bad second choice.”

I giggled, hugging her again. “I really am gonna miss you, Hanna Banana.”

“I’ll miss you, too, Julie. But seriously, look where we are. We both found amazing guys, you found an amazing house, and my script finally got picked up by an actual film studio, and you’ll play the lead in it. For as far as life goes, we’ve pretty much made it.”

I smiled, trying my damnedest to ignore the urge to cry. Things were just going so extremely well. “We really have, haven’t we?”

She smiled, giving me one more quick hug. “We really have. Now, get your butt moving. We need to move your stuff into your brand new fancy house.”

“You know I love you, right?”

“I do,” Hanna answered, her smile widening. “And I love you, too.”

Chapter End Notes

Hey, guys! I don't really have an author's note for y'all today, seeing as I'm sick on the couch. I also haven't had the chance to proofread it again, so if the chapter's not as good as usual or you encounter any typos, I'm so sorry! I still hope you enjoyed the chapter, though. <3
Chapter 24

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

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"Now I'm here blinking in the starlight

Now I'm here suddenly I see

Standing here it's all so clear

I'm where I'm meant to be"

Tuesday, December 19, 2017.

"Sephy, be careful, baby," I told the Labrador as she jumped up to try and grab my hairbrush from me. She’d been incredibly playful all morning, but as I was brushing my hair, I’d rather she stay down. “Go play with Kal.”

Of course, she was as stubborn as her owner, so she didn’t go to find Kal, but she did calm down a little, sitting next to me, waiting patiently for me to be done with my hair so I could finally play with her. Eventually, I finished brushing my hair, and, just to be safe, I put it up in a ponytail, in case Persephone was still feeling playful.

And, just like I’d expected, right when I stood up, Persephone sprang up as well, jumping around my feet.

"Sephy, no,” I scolded, trying to stay balanced in my heels. I had a little break from her wild playfulness when I walked down the stairs because she had to concentrate on going down herself, but as soon as I was on a flat surface again, she started once more.

It was December, and Henry and I had put up the Christmas tree a few days ago. Ever since, Persephone had gone completely berserk. Something about the combination of pine needles, bright lights and shiny ornaments had flipped a switch in her head that made it entirely impossible for her to be quiet for more than five minutes, apart from when she was sleeping. So far, thank God, no accidents had happened.

But then it happened, before I could full and well realize what exactly was happening. All I knew was that, suddenly, just as I walked into the living room, my foot caught behind something, I heard a high-pitched yelp, and I fell forward. Just before I could smack to the floor, Henry dashed forward and caught me, pulling me to his chest.

"Are you okay, baby?” he asked, concern clear in his eyes.

"Yeah, no, I’m fine,” I assured him, pulling away to bend down, far more concerned for Persephone’s wellbeing. “Are you okay, baby girl?” I cooed, scratching her behind her ears. She seemed completely fine, happily attempting to lick my hand. “Persephone, you fucking idiot! I could’ve broken your neck!”

“She doesn’t really seem to care about that,” Henry said, trying to look amused but still too shaken up to really succeed. “I’m just glad the both of you are okay.”
“So am I, but she really needs to learn to calm down. She’s been out of control ever since we put up that damn tree. And I, for one, have no clue why, nor do I feel like putting up with this every year or, God forbid, having to take the tree down.”

“I understand, but I’m sure she’ll calm down soon enough. She’s still young, after all, and everything is just still excit—wait. Are you wearing a corset?”

I’d straightened up again, happy that Persephone was fine, granting Henry a first good look at my outfit. I was wearing ripped skinny jeans with a peasant blouse and a lace-covered waist training corset over the blouse, matched with red pumps. I’d known the outfit would get a rise out of Henry, but Persephone’s craziness had kind of made me forget about what I was wearing. I looked down at my outfit, knowing I was blushing, and nodded. “Yeah, I am. I came across it in the closet, and I thought, ‘Why the hell not?’ Do you like it?”

“Fuck, Jules, do you really need to ask?” He placed his hands on my waist, pulling me closer. “I could’ve done without this shirt underneath, though.”

“Then my boobs would’ve been out,” I reminded him.

He grinned. “Exactly.”

I shook my head, smiling. “You can be such a typical guy sometimes.”

Henry dipped his head down, his lips grazing my ear. “I can’t help it that I find you so goddamn sexy. Nor can I help it that I can’t keep my hands off you.”

I sucked in a breath. “Well, I don’t really mind that…”

“No?” he asked softly, and I could tell he was smiling, even though I couldn’t see his face.

“No. Now stop teasing me and fucking kiss me, you asshole.”

He tightened his hands on my waist, pulling me even closer so our hips were flush together. “Have I ever told you that I love it when you use your foul mouth?”

“Many, many times. And you know what I love?”

“Hmm?” Henry hummed, gently grazing my earlobe with his teeth.

“When you put that foul mouth of mine to good use.”

Henry groaned, wasting no time in finding my lips with his. He kissed me hard, pulling me so close to him that I could hardly breathe. Not that I really minded, or that it mattered. His kisses had always made it impossible for me to breathe, especially when he kissed me like this. It was like all that existed was the two of us, and like we would disappear as well if we’d stop kissing. We kissed as if we were desperate to drown in each other.

I loved how our passion never faltered, never wavered. I had a feeling it never would.

When we finally pulled away, we were both breathing hard. My heart was hammering in my chest, and I guessed his was, too. I cupped his face in my hands, my fingers dipping into his hairline, making sure that he was still here, still real.

He pressed another soft kiss to my lips before whispering, “I love you.”

I smiled, giving him a soft kiss in return. “I love you, too.” Then I gently untangled myself from him,
before he’d tear off my corset and we’d spend the entire day in bed (or on the sturdy desk in the office, which we’d already christened a long, long time ago). “So… What’s the plan for today? Meetings? Movie prep? Gym?”

“Actually,” Henry started, giving me a smile, “my schedule is completely cleared for today. So what do you want to do?” He wiggled his eyebrows at me.

I laughed. “I know what you want to do. But you know what we still haven’t done because we simply didn’t have the time?”

“Well?”

“Marathon’d a TV show together. Today would be the perfect day for that.”

“Very true. Which series would you want to marathon then?”

“Well, I actually wanted to introduce you to Smallville. Honestly, I can’t believe you’ve still never seen it. It’s the whole reason I even fell in love with Superman. The only problem is that Clark pines for the wrong girl for the first six, seven seasons, but I do think you’ll like Lois, when she first shows up. And Amy Adams plays in the first season, too, though I always found that episode a little awkward to watch. But otherwise, I think you could really like the show.”

“If you’re this passionate about it, I’m sure I will. Go grab the first season.”

I squealed and kissed him on the cheek before dashing upstairs and grabbing the DVD-box of the first season of Smallville from my bookcase filled with various movies and TV shows. Dashing downstairs again, I found Henry in the kitchen, getting us a few drinks and snacks. He took a gulp from his own glass before filling it up completely again. “So, where do you want to watch? Bedroom? Living room? Theater room?”

“Let’s go to the theater room. It’s cozier than the living room, and I know what’ll happen when we watch in the bedroom. It’ll be a classic case of ‘Netflick and chill.’”

Henry furrowed his brow at me. “What the hell is that supposed to mean?”

I giggled. “I think you already know what it means, you dork. It’s when a guy—or, well, mostly a guy anyway—says he wants to watch shows or movies on Netflix and chill, but he actually means for it to end entirely differently.”

He smirked. “In that case, let’s watch Smallville and chill.”

Laughing, I said, “You’ve gotta stop being so predictable, Cavill.”

He just smiled and gave me a soft kiss before handing me my drink. “Let’s go downstairs. Kal, Sephy, you coming?”

The four of us traipsed down the stairs to the basement level, heading into the theater room. I settled down on one of the couches and Kal and Persephone cuddled up on another while Henry made us some popcorn in the machine in the corner of the room. As the corn popped, he slid the DVD into the player. The sound of that oh-so-familiar theme song by Remy Zero filled the room.

“You don’t have this on Blu-Ray?” Henry asked, closing the DVD box again.

I shook my head. “No. They didn’t release the first five seasons on Blu, sadly enough. The quality looks good from afar, but up close it looks a little grainy.”
“Oh, that sucks. So why didn’t they release the first five seasons on Blu-Ray if the others were?”

I shrugged. “I’m an actress, and even I don’t know how studios truly work. Probably didn’t feel like putting in the effort and money, maybe thinking that people would actually want to own seasons one through five on DVD and seasons six through ten on Blu-Ray. I don’t know, man. Studio execs are weird as shit.”

Henry snorted, grabbing the popcorn and joining me on the couch. “True enough.” We cuddled close, careful not to knock our popcorn or drinks over, and started the very first episode of Smallville.

Three episodes in, and Henry was already loving it. “Why did you not force me to watch this sooner? I really have been missing out.”

I pointed at him, grinning. “Dude, don’t go trying to blame this on me. You know I totally would’ve, had we had the time before. Besides, it’s not my fault you hadn’t discovered this amazing show on your own.”

“Oh, shush,” he joked, smiling as he kissed me softly.

I smiled back, happily letting the kiss make my head swim for a little, but soon enough, my curiosity resurfaced. “So, is it strange to watch someone else portray what’s basically your character?”

Henry thought about it for a second. “Yes… and no. I mean, this Clark Kent is very different from mine, and yet they’re very much the same. The same values, the same strengths, the same weaknesses… They’re both still Superman, after all. But I played Clark as an adult, apart from that one scene where Jonathan dies. Welling’s Clark Kent is only fourteen, which makes a difference. The story also has a less serious feel to it than Man of Steel. I don’t know. I guess it is a little weird.”

“But you do like the show?”

He smiled, nodding. “Yeah, I do. The only reason I didn’t watch this show before—and why I’m a little hesitant still, I guess—is because I’m afraid I’ll take over aspects of Welling’s Clark Kent, instead of just focusing on my own perception and portrayal of him.”

“I get that. But maybe it could help, too. Maybe you’ll find aspects of this Clark Kent that really fit yours but you’d never realized before. Kind of like a second perspective. And if it’s not working, you’ll hear soon enough from the director. Besides, I know you. As soon as you’ve got a fix on a character, you ain’t letting go.”

He kissed my temple, tightening his arm around my shoulders. “Thanks for your confidence in me, babe. Either way, shall we go on to the next—” He was suddenly interrupted by his phone ringing. He shot me an apologetic smile and retrieved his phone from his pocket. “It’s my brother. I should probably take this. Sorry, babe.”

“It’s okay. Go ahead and take it.”

As Henry answered the call, I rested my head on his chest, not really listening to the conversation as I dragged my fingers through Kal’s fur. We might be living together, but we still tried to give each other privacy every now and then. Henry probably wouldn’t mind me listening in on his conversation with his brother—otherwise he probably would’ve left the room—but somehow it still felt wrong.

When he ended the call, he slowly slid his phone back into his pocket. “That was my brother, Ethan.
Apparently he’s in town with his wife Emma and their daughter Willow.”

I raised my eyebrows. “And he didn’t tell you?”

“He said he wanted to surprise me in a couple of days, but,” Henry smiled wryly, “now he needs my help. Emma’s sister lives here, and the plan was to visit her for a bit, and then leave Willow with her so they could go out on a date. My brother sucks at romance, so that shocked me more than them suddenly being in L.A.,” he said, making me snort. “Either way, Emma’s sister is sick and can’t watch over Willow, so now he asked if I—well, we—could watch her.”

“Oh. Yeah, no, of course. No problem, right?”

Henry gave me a brilliant smile. “So you’re okay with it?” When I’d assured him that I was, he gushed, “Oh, good. And I’m sure you’ll like Willow. She’s a kick-arse little girl.”

“She’s your niece, so I’m sure I’ll like her.” I tended to be pretty good with kids, so I wasn’t really worried about getting along with her. What I was much more nervous about was meeting Henry’s brother for the first time. Despite dating for nine months, I’d never met any of his family members before. We were both just so ridiculously busy that there was just no time for all of that. What made it even harder was that his family lived all the way in Europe, which wasn’t just an easy trip you could make and be back by the same day. Likewise, Henry also hadn’t seen my parents anymore since Disney World. Needing to get my mind off of the stress of meeting my boyfriend’s family for the first time, I asked, “So, how old is Willow?”

“She’s six, I think.”

I grinned. “Perfect.”

Henry raised an eyebrow. “Perfect for… what?”

“Six is the perfect age to watch Disney movies. We could have a marathon. It’s been much too long since I’ve broken into my collection.”

He shook his head, smiling. “I do quite love you, even despite your Disney obsession.”

I grinned at him. “Despite? Despite, Henry? Don’t even lie to me, Cavill; you love my Disney obsession, just like you love everything about me.”

He smiled, pulling me close. His lips hovering right in front of mine, he said, “Yes. Yes, I do.” And he kissed me, soft and slow at first, but soon enough, it progressed into something more.

My lips never breaking from Henry’s, I crawled onto his lap, my fingers tangling themselves into the curls on the back of his head. I tugged gently, making him moan, and I smiled in return. His hands roamed all over my back and butt, as if they weren’t sure what part of me to touch most.

I pulled away slightly, but still remained close enough so my lips brushed his as I spoke. “When is your brother coming?” I whispered.

“I don’t know,” he breathed, and he gently bit my lower lip, eliciting a moan from me. “And I don’t really care.”

With that, he kissed me again, his tongue tangling with mine as his fingers dug into my thighs.

I couldn’t really argue with that logic, so I tugged his shirt up, my fingers exploring every bit of newly bared skin on his back. His skin was soft and his muscles hard, and that combination never
ceased to drive me absolutely crazy. Along with his face, his back and shoulders were two of my favorite features of his (okay, and the rest of his torso. And his butt. And his arms. All right, maybe I thought he was extremely hot in general, but I did really like his back and shoulders), and I never stopped enjoying exploring them time and time again. And again. And again.

I tugged his shirt over his head, his arms getting stuck in the long sleeves for a moment, but I had the garment tossed on the floor soon enough. Henry wasted no time whatsoever in evening the score, and unzipped my corset in the front. He took it off and tossed it somewhere in the same vicinity of his shirt. I was still wearing the peasant blouse, however, but he didn’t seem to care much. His hands moved from my waist, slowly moving up until he was cupping my breasts.

Henry nipped at my lips one more time before pulling back far enough to look into my eyes. His had darkened to a royal blue. “You’re not wearing a bra, huh?” he asked, his voice hoarse.

I moaned as he tugged on my nipple through the fabric of my shirt. “It would be—fuck—uncomfortable together with the corset,” I explained, trying very hard not to let my head spin off my shoulders.

“Well,” he breathed, his lips tracing a path from the corner of my mouth to my throat, “I’m not complaining.” Without warning, he suddenly sucked on my neck and I moaned, hard. “Maybe we should go find ourselves a bedroom. God knows we have enough of th—ugh.” He groaned as he was suddenly interrupted by his cellphone ringing for the second time that day. “I should’ve turned the damn thing on silent,” he grumbled under his breath, pressing the ‘accept’ button on his phone. “Hello?”

As Henry talked on the phone (with what sounded like George, the guard stationed at the entrance of our gated community), I pressed slow, languid kisses to his chest. I enjoyed that I was distracting him almost as much as I enjoyed the feeling of his skin underneath my lips. I gently bit into his skin, then soothed the sting by softly sucking on the same spot.

“Yes, Ethan is—” he cleared his throat in attempt to stifle a moan “—Ethan is indeed my brother. You can let them through. Sorry for not—ah—calling in first, George.”

“Are you all right, Mr. Cavill?” I could faintly hear George saying from the other end of the line. “You sound a bit strange.”

It took everything in me to not burst out in giggles, especially when Henry tried throwing me a chastising look—which he failed at a little, what with the remaining signs of lust and endearment still on his face. “I’m fine, George. Just send them through.” He hung up, flinging his phone on the empty couch beside us. “Juliette…” he grumbled. “You are such a little… Oh, who am I kidding? Come here.”

And he tugged me closer, reuniting my lips with his. He kissed me hard and passionately, and I felt it all the way in my toes. My stomach did that weird thing it also does during the drop of a roller coaster ride. I kissed him back just as hard and just as passionately, my fingers knotting in his curls.

Then I suddenly pulled back, adrenaline pumping through my veins. “Wait. What the hell are we doing? Your family is going to be here any minute!”

I jumped up from his lap, nearly tripping as I raced over to where my corset had landed. I picked it up and tossed Henry his shirt. I tried to get the corset back on, but fumbled with the zipper. The clothing garment was extremely tight and it took some serious patience to get it on, but right now I didn’t have time to be patient.
Henry pulled his shirt back on, pushing up his sleeves, and stood up. “Here, let me do that for you.” He pulled the two ends close and managed to get it zipped. As he slowly tugged the zipper up, careful not to get my blouse stuck in its little teeth, he made me look into his eyes. “Juliette, baby, relax,” he said, his voice soothing and calm. “Ethan and Emma are going to like you just fine, especially once they see how fucking in love with you I am.” He smiled, stopping in the middle of his task to place a soft kiss on my lips. “And if your relationship with Caitlin is any indication, Willow is going to love the shit out of you, too. So there is nothing to worry about. And damn, that thing really is tight,” he said once he’d finally zipped up my corset. “Are you sure you can breathe?”

I nodded, smiling faintly. “Yeah. It’s not so bad once you get used to it again.” Then another thought crossed my mind, and my worry slammed back into me. “Is it too much? This outfit, I mean? For meeting your brother and his wife for the first time? I could just throw on a sweater or something.”

Henry cupped my face in his hands. “There is absolutely nothing wrong with your outfit. You look gorgeous. Granted, Eth will probably check you out, which I’m not too excited about, but he would check you out when you’re wearing a sweater, too—you’re just that beautiful. It’s just…”

My eyes widened. “Just what?”

“It’s a little obvious that you’ve just been making out with me. Your lipstick is a little smeared and your ponytail is a little crooked now. But I actually like your hair like this.”

I couldn’t help it—I giggled. “Your hair shows obvious signs of being tugged on as well.”

“I’m not gonna have any hair left if you keep doing that, by the way,” he joked.

“Well, I can’t help it if I love your curls almost as much as I love you.”

He chuckled. “Come here,” he said, and without a single warning, he picked me up and threw me over his shoulder before jogging up two flights of stairs.

I giggled even harder as I helplessly bounced along on his shoulder. He didn’t put me down until we’d reached our bathroom. “I can walk, you know,” I told him once I was standing on both feet again, a little out of breath.

“Yes, but can you run up the stairs in those heels?”

I pointed at him. “Good point.”

I quickly moved to the mirror to fix my makeup, but as I went to fix my hair, I realized Henry had been right—my hair did look cute like this. Maybe I should make out with Henry before going out more often.

Just as I finished reapplying my lipstick, the doorbell rang, the sound echoing through the entire house.

“Hold on tight,” Henry warned, and he threw me over his shoulder again, running downstairs.

“Henry!” I shrieked. “Put me down!”

“No,” he said, and even though I couldn’t see his face, I could tell by the sound of his voice that he was grinning. And with his free hand, he opened the front door. “Hey, guys!”

“Henry!” I hissed. “Put me down.”
With a laugh, he carefully lowered me down to the floor. I tried to glare at him, but couldn’t quite succeed when I saw the pure joy in his eyes.

“Well,” his brother said, an amused smile dancing on his lips. He looked strikingly like Henry, like only a brother could, but where Henry’s features were a little more rugged, Ethan’s were softer, and his eyes were brown instead of blue.

“Sorry about that,” I muttered, embarrassment coloring my cheeks.

“No problem,” Ethan said with a grin. “I always prefer to meet people by seeing their bum first.” That earned him a slap on the arm from his wife, making him laugh. As he shook my hand, he said, “Hi, I’m Ethan, and this is my wife, Emma, and our daughter, Willow.”

“Hey. I’m Juliette,” I said, shaking Emma’s and Willow’s hands as well.

“I see Henry’s lost quite some of his manners since last seeing him,” Emma said, an amused glint in her eyes.

“Yeah… He seemed to have them when I met him, but he kind of lost them the longer we were together.”

“Hey!” Henry protested, laughing. “I have manners.”

“Yeah? And showing your brother my butt as our first meeting, you’re calling that manners?”

“You’ve got me there. Anyway! Hey, man.” Henry pulled his brother into a tight hug, clapping his back. “I’ve missed you, mate. And Emma, you look even more gorgeous than the last time I saw you. And Willow! My, look at how much you’ve grown!” He picked her up and swung her around, making her giggle loudly. I couldn’t help but smile at the scene. There was just something extremely attractive about a guy who’s good with kids.

“Hey, Uncle Henry. I’ve missed you,” the little girl confessed, wrapping her arms around his neck.

“Well, I’ve missed you, too. Good thing we have the entire day to catch up, huh?” Willow beamed. “Anyway, guys, come in. Can I get you anything?” he asked, still carrying Willow as he led everyone into the living room. Kal and Persephone had already come upstairs, and were now curiously sniffing the newcomers. Noticing Willow’s clear interest in them, Henry set her back down.

“No, we’ll be going soon,” Ethan said. “We’re gonna catch a film, and then Emma wants to do some shopping before dinner.”

Henry chuckled. “Couldn’t you just have gone to the movies in London?”

“The particular movie we want to see isn’t out yet in England,” Ethan explained. “What is even up with that?”

“It’s an international thing,” I said. “The movie studios in the countries themselves decide when to release a movie, not the one who is responsible for the American release.”

“Well, that’s stupid,” Ethan decided. “Either way, mate, you got yourself a nice place here. Like, really nice.”

“Thanks, man. But I let Juliette pick it.”
“You did not!” I protested. “We both really liked it, and you’re the one who convinced me we should get it. Are you always like this when introducing girlfriends to your family?”

He grinned, pulling me close. “Only the extremely special ones.” He kissed my temple, and whispered, so only I could hear, “Only you.”

“Christ,” Ethan said, staring at us, mild surprise shaping his features.

“What?” I asked, feeling slightly insecure.

“I have never seen my brother this in love or this at ease with a girl before. Ever. You must really be special.”

I blushed and looked down at my feet in attempt to hide it. “Oh.”

Henry placed his fingers under my chin, pushing my head back up so he could kiss me, very softly and only for a second, but it still made my heart skip a beat. “You are. Anyway, are you guys sure I can’t get you anything?”

“No, we really must be going now. But, tomorrow—lunch. You’re not getting out of this one, mate.”

“Wouldn’t dream of it.”

“Have fun, Willow,” Ethan said, bending down to kiss the top of his daughter’s head. “Listen to Uncle Henry and Aunt Juliette, all right?”

Ethan calling me Aunt Juliette made me inexplicably happy. It suggested I was already part of the family, and that was all I’d really wanted in the first place—acceptance.

Willow nodded. “Yes, Daddy.”

Emma gave Willow a hug and a kiss goodbye. “Love you, baby girl.”

“Love you, too, Mummy.”

Henry hugged first his sister-in-law goodbye, and then his brother. Ethan pulled him in tight and clapped his back twice. “She’s gorgeous, man. I’m proud of you.”

Henry smiled as he pulled away from Ethan, looking at me with a happy sparkle in his eye. “I’m kind of proud of myself, too. And not just because she’s gorgeous. I’m not as shallow as you,” he joked.

“Pssh,” was Ethan’s only retort, smiling. “Well, either way, we’ll see you all tomorrow morning. We’re going out for lunch immediately after, so you’d better be ready.”

Ethan and Emma left after that, and Henry and I were left alone with Willow. “So, Willow,” I started with a smile. “What’s your favorite Disney movie?”

A little shy, she looked up from petting Kal and Persephone with equal attention. “I really like Beauty and the Beast.”

“Really? That’s my favorite one, too! High five!”

Warming up to me a little, she grinned as she gave me a high five. “Is it really?”

I nodded. “Oh, yeah. Just ask your Uncle Henry. I can watch it over and over and over again. Which
means we’re totally going to watch that movie, but first, let’s get you something to drink. What do you want?"

“Do you have iced tea?”

“As a matter of fact, we do. A friend of ours is totally addicted to it, so we always keep a bunch of it in case he decides to drop by.” Keegan could easily drink away an entire bottle within an hour, so ‘a bunch’ was kind of an understatement. “Peach or lemon?”

I went to the kitchen to grab her drink, smiling as I poured it into a Beauty and the Beast glass I’d gotten years ago.

She beamed when I handed her the glass. “That is such a cool glass, Aunt Juliette!” she gushed, and my heart skipped a beat at her calling me ‘aunt’ so easily. It made me feel all kinds of warm inside, and I actually felt a blush rise to my cheeks. “Where did you get it?”

“Oh, I got it years and years ago. My best friend gave it to me to make up for going to Disneyland without me,” I joked. “Anyway, Henry, do you want something to drink before we go downstairs?”

“Why don’t you take Willow down to the theater room, and then I’ll go get it. Do you want something too?”

“I’ll have a Coca-Cola Life. Thanks, babe.”

“No problem.” Henry gave me a quick kiss and then walked to the kitchen, leaving Willow and me alone in the living room.

“Do you need me to carry your glass while we go down the stairs? I wouldn’t want you to fall.”

We walked down the stairs to the basement together, one of her hands tightly clasping mine, and the other holding on to the banister. Kal and Persephone slowly followed behind us, and I couldn’t help but smile at them. Normally they would fly down the stairs so fast you could hardly see their movements, but now, with Willow, they both seemed to realize a slower approach was the way to go. Smart doggies.

We reached the end of the stairs, and Willow looked her eyes out when she entered the theater room. “You have your own film theater? That is so cool!”

“Yes, we do. We even have our own popcorn machine. You want some?”

Just as I was getting Willow some popcorn, Henry came down with our drinks. He sat down next to his niece and struck up an animated conversation with her, his face lighting up as only it could when talking to a child. As I looked at him, I was once again hit by the realization of how much I loved him, and how much I wanted to build a life with him.

I was pulled out of my personal love fest by my phone buzzing in my pocket. I pulled it out to find a text from Hanna.

Whatchu up 2?

Henry and I are watching his niece. She’s so cute.

I covertly snapped a picture of Henry and Willow when they weren’t looking and sent it to Hanna.

awwwww QTs! u 2 need 2 make babies ASAP.
Shush.

hahaha! anyway, i’ll let u 2 it. scott is making me visit his ’rentals. love u.

Hahaha good luck. Love you, too.

I slid my phone back into my pocket and joined Henry and Willow, giving Willow her popcorn.

About an hour later, Willow and I were completely immersed in the movie, loudly singing along to the songs.

“Tale as old as time / Song as old as rhyme / Beauty and the Beast!” we sang dramatically, both of us pretending to hold microphones up to our mouths.

Henry shook his head at us, amusement and affection clear on his face. “I do quite love the two of you,” he said, barely audible over our loud singing.

“Can we watch Tangled now?” Willow asked when Beauty and the Beast ended, her eyes wide with excitement.

“In a moment, darling,” Henry said, kissing the top of her head before getting up. “But first I’m afraid we’ll have to walk Kal and Persephone.”

“Ooh! Can I hold Persephone?”

I eyed Persephone carefully. “I’m not sure,” I said slowly. “She’s been acting a little crazy lately, and I wouldn’t want you to get hurt.”

“I could handle her. I’m really strong, I swear.”

Henry smiled at her indulgently. “You most definitely are, but so is Sephy. Even I have trouble keeping up with her sometimes,” he said, which was technically a half-lie. The only times she’d managed to tug him forward were when he wasn’t paying attention. Otherwise, he could keep up with Persephone just fine.

Still, the half-lie seemed to be enough to impress Willow. “Wow,” she said, her eyes wide. Despite Henry’s brothers jokingly trying to downplay his strength, it obviously hadn’t fooled Willow.
(Though, when you have a gigantic uncle like Henry who’s also Superman, you probably perceive him as a little stronger than he actually is.)

“You know what? We’ll try it out, and if she’s too strong for you, I’ll take over, okay?” Henry suggested.

“All right,” Willow agreed.

It turned out that neither of us had needed to worry about Persephone acting like the rabid dog she’d been ever since we’d put up that Christmas tree. Apparently all she needed to calm back down was to hang out with a six-year-old.

“Sephy’s good with kids,” I told Henry as we watched her play with Willow in the park.

“So are you,” Henry said with a smile, gently nudging me with his elbow. “You’re going to be a great mother one day, and it’s nice to know that Persephone is gentle around kids.”
“Labradors usually are,” I said, trying not to dwell on Henry casually mentioning future kids and how happy that made me. “And you say I’m good with kids, but you ain’t bad, either, Mr. Cavill,” I teased jokingly.

He smiled, again looking at Willow playing with the dogs. The three of them were running around the field, Willow’s bubbly laughter filling the air. “It’s easy with Willow. She’s a great kid. Same goes for Caitlin.”

I smiled, remembering how Henry had carried my cousin through Disney World on his shoulders. Despite all the anxiety, having to deal with my aunt and the uncertainty surrounding my relationship with Henry, that was still one of my favorite days. “Something tells me that it isn’t just Willow and Caitie. You’re just good with children in general.”

He started to smile, but then annoyance distorted his features. “Dammit, George…” he grumbled under his breath.

“What?” I asked, more than a little confused. “What’s with George?”

Henry nodded to his right, to a thick tree. “There’s a paparazzo over there.”

I looked a little closer at the tree, and then I noticed a man leaning around the trunk with a camera in his hand. “Oh. Damn. But hey, don’t blame this on George. You know it probably isn’t his fault.” It’d actually happened before, when paparazzi had managed to sneak into the gated community by hacking George’s system, putting their names on the ‘cleared for access’-list. There were more A-listers living in this community, and the paparazzi had luckily never come as far as sneaking into anyone’s backyard, but Henry and I just had the unfortunate luck of being out right now. “Do you want to leave?”

“We probably should. I’m not sure Ethan would appreciate it if there were suddenly a shit ton of pictures of his kid up on the Internet. Willow!” he shouted, catching his niece’s attention. “Darling, it’s time to go back and watch ourselves some Tangled.”

“Yay!” she said, excitedly clapping her hands. She ran over to us, Kal and Persephone following at her heels.

I clicked the leashes back to Kal and Persephone’s collars and Henry lifted Willow onto his shoulders so we’d be able to walk faster. “Let’s get back home,” he said, holding on to her legs so she wouldn’t fall backwards.

Willow, completely oblivious to the paparazzo silently following us, happily sang at the top of her lungs, holding on to Henry’s head for support. “Tale as old as time / Song as old as rhyme / Beauty and the Beast!”

When we got back home, Willow and I went down to the theater room to start in on Tangled while Henry stayed upstairs to make a quick call to George, telling him about the intruder. He joined us fifteen minutes later, an annoyed expression on his face. “They caught him,” he whispered, so only I could hear. “They’re arresting him for trespassing as we speak, but George said he’d already sent out the pictures.”

“Don’t worry,” I whispered back. “I’m sure everything will be okay. Besides, Ethan can’t be that mad if those pictures are half as cute as I expect them to be.” I cupped his cheek in my hand and kissed him softly, trying to distract him from his annoyance.

When I pulled away from him, he smiled at me. “I love you.”

~*~*~*~*~*~

Time really does fly when you're having fun, especially when you spend it with amazing people. Before we knew it, it was already time for dinner. I fixed us up some spaghetti while Henry entertained Willow in the living room, and after that, we had to wash the spaghetti sauce off her face, so we decided to just run her a nice bubble bath.

Now it was already time for her to go to bed, and Henry had tucked her in in the guest room next to our bedroom. She was lying in the middle of the giant bed, covers pulled up to her chin, Kal and Persephone on either side of her.

I gave Willow a kiss on her forehead, told her goodnight, and moved to the door opening, where I could blend in with the shadows.

Henry sat on the edge of Willow’s bed, a book in his hands. Willow had asked him to read her something before she went to sleep, and because we didn’t really have any children’s books, he’d had no other choice but to raid my collection. The only things I had that were even remotely suitable for her age were either Harry Potter or Percy Jackson, and Willow had chosen the latter. Her main motivation for picking that one were the chapter titles (Grover Unexpectedly Loses his Pants, I Become Supreme Lord of the Bathroom, We Get Advice from a Poodle, etc.), which had her giggling for about a minute before she could calm down.

As he read to her, I couldn’t help but be hypnotized, not only by the story that I still loved so much, even though it had been well over ten years since I’d first started reading it, but by his voice too. He had an amazing storytelling voice, doing voices for the different characters almost as if he didn’t even realize he was doing it, adding suspense wherever it was needed—he especially nailed Percy’s sarcasm.

I didn’t know if he knew I was silently watching them or not, but I couldn’t look away. The loving look he gave Willow every time he glanced away from the book’s pages, the way his mesmerizing mouth moved as he spoke… He was so damn beautiful, and just the realization that he was mine… The picture in front of me had me imagining our future together, and my heart swelled with want and need and love.

When the first chapter ended, Henry closed the book and placed it on the nightstand. Willow pouted in protest. “Oh, no, Uncle Henry, please read some more,” she pleaded.

He smiled in amusement, probably seeing how she struggled to keep her eyes open. She probably wouldn’t even make it two pages. “No, darling, it’s bedtime now. Besides, you’re not fooling anyone,” he joked gently. “You’re exhausted. Maybe if you’re good, I’ll read you some more tomorrow morning, before your parents come to pick us up for lunch.”

She sighed. “Fine,” she dragged. She was quiet for a moment, staring thoughtfully at her uncle, before suddenly asking, “Are you and Aunt Juliette going to get married?”

I held my breath at that, my eyes wide. I hadn’t expected her to ask that, but more than anything, I wanted to know what Henry’s answer would be.

“Hopefully one day, yes,” he said, and the absolute certainty with which he said it made my heart skip a beat.

“Can I be at the wedding?”
“Of course you can, darling. I can’t get married without you there, now can I?”

“Good. And Uncle Henry?”

“Yes, darling?”

“I really like her.”

Henry smiled. “I really like her, too.”

Happy tears stinging my eyes, I quietly tiptoed to the room I shared with Henry, trying not to disturb them, and hoping Henry didn’t know I’d been standing there all that time.

I was still smiling by the time I reached my bed, and I sat down on it, removing my jewelry. I zipped down my corset, knowing that the tight material had probably left marks on my skin. I lifted up my shirt to check, and sure enough, angry red lines ran down my ribs. It had been worth it, though, especially with the way Henry had looked at me the first time he’d taken a good look at me.

“That looks painful.”

I looked up to see Henry standing in the door opening of our room, a concerned look on his face.

I smiled at him. “It’s not as bad as it looks, I promise. Besides, I looked good, didn’t I?” I joked, my smile widening into a grin.

Henry bit his lip, closed the door behind him, and slowly approached me. He took my hands in his and pulled me up. His arm automatically snaked around my waist while his other hand cupped my neck, his thumb stroking my jaw. “You looked so much better than good,” he mumbled, his voice raw. “You… were gorgeous, hot, and mindblowingly sexy.” He tilted my head back and kissed my neck, his lips hot on my skin. The hand resting on my back slowly pushed up my shirt, and he took the time to feel every inch of newly exposed skin as he sucked on my pulse point. It drove me crazy, and he knew it.

“Henry…” I mumbled. “Henry, no…”

“Why not?” he asked, kissing down to my chest before taking off my blouse entirely. He threw it on the bed, where it landed right next to my corset. Then he kissed even lower than he had before, taking my left nipple in my mouth. He sucked so hard that I felt it in my core, and I fought to keep in a moan.

My head was swimming with lust, but I knew I had to stay reasonable. “Your niece is—oh, fuck—is right next door.”

He pulled away from my nipple to smirk at me. The look he gave me nearly made me throw all my reason out the window. “We’ll be quiet. Or at least, I’ll be quiet, seeing as you tend to scream my name when I—”

“Henry, you are the worst,” I protested, laughing softly.

“No, you are the worst,” he countered, smiling cheekily. “You have been teasing me all day, knowing full well that you were, and now you’re saying no?”

“I’m just not comfortable doing it while your six-year-old niece is right in the other room, separated by just one thin wall. What if she walks in on us, huh? Having your brother walk in on us having sex would be bad enough, but imagine his daughter walking in on us and telling her father—because she
is six years old, and trust me, I have experience with this—she will tell her father.”

“Caitlin walked in on you having sex with some guy I’ve never heard about and told her father?”

“Well, no. But I did accidentally cuss in front of her once and she wasted no time in telling on me. The point I’m trying to make here, is that six-year-olds don’t have a filter, man. They’ll say anything that pops into their minds.”

Henry sighed. “Fine… But no more teasing me all day if you don’t intend on having steaming hot sex with me in the end.”

My lips trembled as I tried to hold back a smile. “In all fairness, I only teased you this morning, before your brother called, and I had every intention of having ’steaming hot sex’ with you today. I stopped teasing you as soon as your family arrived.”

“You kept wearing the corset, though.”

“You were the one who told me to keep wearing it in the first place, you dork! Besides, would it really have helped if I’d taken it off?” I asked, raising one eyebrow in skepticism.

He thought about it seriously for a few seconds. “Probably not, no.”

I laughed. “You are so predictable, Henry. Either way, I’m gonna go take off my makeup and get ready for bed.”

Henry’s face lit up with an idea. “How about a quickie in the shower?”

“Tomorrow, as soon as we’re alone, I promise. And I promise it won’t just be a quickie. I’ll make it worth your while, Cavill.” I kissed him long and hard, and he broke away with a groan.

“Fuck,” he grumbled. “I’m gonna need a cold shower…”

~*~*~*~*~*~

Wednesday, December 20, 2017.

“Aunt Juliette? Uncle Henry?”

A soft, gentle voice woke me up that next morning, a small hand shaking my shoulder.

“What’s up, baby?” I muttered, still half-asleep. Half my face was mushed up against Henry’s bare chest, and by the sound of it, he wasn’t fully awake yet, either.

“Go back to sleep, beautiful,” he mumbled to me, almost inaudibly so, tightening his arms around me.

“Aunt Juliette, I had a bad dream, and now I can’t go back to sleep.”

That woke me up a little bit more, and I managed to free myself from Henry’s tight grasp, rolling to the side of the bed to face Willow. “Oh, no, baby. Come sit here with me.” I scooted back to make room on the bed for her, my butt bumping against Henry’s thigh in the process. Willow went to lie down next to me, her back to my chest. “What was the dream about, honey?”

“Spiders,” she whispered. “They were really big, like almost as big as me, and they tried to eat me, but just before they could, I woke up.”
“Good thing you did. And that sounds scary. I think I had a dream just like that not too long ago.”

Willow craned her neck to look at me. “You get nightmares too?”

“I do, sometimes. But every time I have a nightmare, I just think of all the people and all the things I love, and then they don’t seem that scary anymore.”

“I’ll try to do that,” she said, and she was quiet for a while as she thought. She was quiet for so long that I’d nearly fallen back asleep by the time she spoke again, and as she did, her voice was so soft I thought I’d imagined it at first. “Can I sleep with you guys for the rest of the night?”

“Of course, darling,” was my immediate response. “No problem.” I lifted the duvet over her so we were all underneath it. As I did, Henry rolled around so my back was pressed to his chest, and he wrapped an arm tightly around my waist. Together, the three of us made the perfect spooning sandwich.

Willow was quiet after that, her nightmare chased away by the presence of her uncle and her newly acquired aunt. The three of us fell asleep like that, almost like a little family. The nightmares stayed away for the rest of the night.

Chapter End Notes

The end is in sight, guys. After this, only two chapters and an epilogue left... It's all passed by so quickly.

On a related side note, I have realized that I often cut off their sexy times or have a build-up without an actual climax, so to say. So I have written something that's a little more intense than anything in this story, and I thought about posting it here, but then I would have to change the story's rating to explicit instead of just mature. So, if you guys want the chapter, I'll be posting it as a separate story tomorrow (so Saturday). Let me know if you guys would be up for that!

Lyrics at the start of the chapter are I See The Light by Mandy Moore and Zachary Levi.
Chapter 25

Chapter Notes

I mentioned last week that I'd written something a little spicier, and I've posted it on Saturday. So, in case you missed it and you want to read a Henry/Juliette added scene for chapter 24 that's a little sexier than what I've posted in this story, you can check it out. It's called Promises, and you'll be able to find it in my works :) Happy reading!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

‘Cause I didn’t say only till the night time comes

No, I didn’t say only while we’re both still young

No, I didn’t say only while the music plays

I said always, I said always

~*~*~*~*~*~

Friday, April 20, 2018.

“Happy birthday to you / Happy birthday to you / Happy birthday, dear Juliette / Happy birthday to you!”

I smiled groggily as I forced my eyes open, rolling over in bed. Henry was walking into the room, balancing a tray on one hand as he closed the door to our bedroom behind him. He sat down on the edge of the bed, a happy but still sleepy smile on his face, his eyes sparkling. “Happy birthday, baby,” he said, leaning forward to kiss my forehead.

I beamed up at him. “Thank you, babe.” I slowly sat up, my back resting against the mountain of pillows on our bed, and Henry placed the tray on my lap. On it was a plate with a short stack of chocolate chip pancakes, two birthday candles in the shape of a two and a nine stuck into it. A can of whipped cream stood next to the plate.

Henry retrieved a lighter from the pocket of his gray sweatpants and lit the two candles. “Make a wish.”

I thought for a moment as I stared at the flickering lights of the candles. There wasn’t much I really wanted anymore. I looked at Henry and smiled.

I wish to always feel at least this happy and content.

I blew the candles out in one breath and Henry grinned. “And now for the most important part…” He pulled the candles out of the pancakes carefully and placed them down on the tray, grabbing the can of whipped cream. He shook it before uncapping it and spraying a smiley face onto my pancakes. “Dig in, beautiful.”

“Only if you help me eat it.”
“Honey, I made it for you.”

“I know, but we’ll also have lunch with my parents in a few hours, and I don’t want to be too full for that. Not to mention the dinner tonight.”

He sighed, but there was a smile tugging at his lips. “Fine.”

We shared my knife and fork as we ate, feeding each other bites every now and then. When the short stack was completely gone, I grabbed the can of whipped cream, shaking it with a vicious smirk on my face.

“Juliette, don’t even think about—”

It was too late. I’d already sprayed a little bit of cream onto his cheek. It very slowly slid down his face, making me giggle. “Now you’re even more delicious.”

Henry wiped the whipped cream off his face with his finger and sucked it off. “You are the worst, Juliette Morrison.”

I grinned at him, trying to look innocent. “It’s my birthday. I can do whatever I want.”

“Yeah? That doesn’t mean you can get away with everything, though. Sometimes a little payback’s in order.” He grabbed my hips and tugged me down so I was lying flat on my back, no longer resting against the pillows. He pushed my shirt up (which was really one of his navy Royal Marines sweatshirts that I’d claimed for myself early on in our relationship), and sprayed a line of whipped cream on my exposed belly.

“I gave him a mock stern look. “You had better clean that up, Cavill.”

He grinned cheekily. “Gladly.” He licked the whipped cream off my stomach, sucking on my skin until everything was gone. He gently bit on the flesh just below my bellybutton. “Is there anything else that needs cleaning?” he asked, his voice low.

“Loads,” I answered airily, knowing what he was really hinting at. “I need a shower, so I should probably go do that right now,” I said as I propped myself up on my elbows.

“You just ate,” I reminded him, fighting a smile.

His grip on my thigh tightened and his eyes darkened. “I want to eat something else.”

“Fuck, Henry,” I protested, feeling heat pool between my legs at just the thought alone. “I really should shower, though.”

“We can at least shower together, right?”

I giggled, and before I knew it, Henry was standing on his feet and I was slung over his shoulder. I giggled and shrieked as he took me to the bathroom, slapping my butt as I hung there helplessly. He didn’t put me down until he’d turned the shower on.

“Time to take back what is mine,” he said, tugging the Royal Marines sweatshirt over my head.

“You know full well that that shirt is completely mine now,” I said, grinning.

He threw the sweatshirt on the ground, missing the hamper by miles. He cupped my face in his
hands, stepping closer so we were nose to nose. “It’s ours,” he mumbled, nipping at my bottom lip. I smiled. “Ours, huh? I like that.”

“Good,” he said, and he kissed me, sweet and slow at first, but quickly gaining intensity. He pushed me back until my back hit the glass door of the shower cabin, his lips never breaking away from mine. He tugged my hipster down until it fell to the floor, and I stood there, trapped between him and the shower door, completely naked. I pulled his pants down, evening the score. He tipped my head back with his hands, placing sloppy kisses on the sensitive skin of my neck. I moaned when he sucked on a particularly sensitive spot and dug my fingers into his waist.

I felt him smile against my skin before he pulled me tighter against him, pulling me away from the shower door so he could open it. Then he forced me back until the warm water cascaded over both our heads, his lips never breaking away from my skin. He kissed down to my collarbone when we were both soaking wet, gently biting into my skin. He slowly kissed lower, to my breasts, to my stomach, to my hipbone… Eventually he was on his knees right in front of me.

“And now let me give you your first gift of today, birthday girl…”

~*~*~*~*~*~

“And now that you’ve so loudly enjoyed my first gift,” Henry teased when we’d finished showering and were sitting on the bed, wrapped in towels, “let me give you my second gift.”

He reached over to the nightstand on his side of the bed and got out a square Tiffany’s box. By the size of it, I could quite safely presume it was a bracelet. I opened the box with an expectant smile and gasped once I saw what was inside. It was a hinged white gold bangle, half of it covered in three rows of small brilliant diamonds. It was gorgeous.

“Oh my God, Henry… It’s so beautiful.”

“It’s engraved,” he said, pointing to the inside of the bracelet. I read the inscription and smiled at its simplicity. I love you. X – Henry. “It’s perfect,” I told him honestly. “Absolutely perfect.” The inscription might’ve been quite simple, but I liked that about it. It didn’t need to be complicated and an entire novel’s worth, as long as it was genuine and heartfelt.

“I’m glad you like it, love.”

“Will you put it on for me?”

“Of course.” He opened the bangle and clasped it around my wrist. “It looks even better on you than I’d envisioned.”

I smiled and cupped his face in my hands, capturing his lips with mine. I tried to pour all my love and gratitude for him into the kiss. I didn’t want to pull away, but knew that I eventually had to. Resting my forehead against his, I muttered, “We really should start getting ready. My parents…”

“I know,” he mumbled back. “But I kind of don’t want to let you go.”

“You won’t have to. You’ll be coming with me.”

“I know. But that’s not what I meant. I just want to sit here with you forever. Just kissing you whenever I want to,” He smiled. “Which is all the time.”
I took one of his curls in-between my thumb and forefinger. I gently pulled it straight, watching, enraptured, as it sprang back into place when I let it go. “Same.”

He took a deep breath, as if gathering up the courage to let me go. “All right. Let’s get ready.” He got up, draping the towel that had been wrapped around his waist over the door to the bathroom.

In attempt to not get distracted, I avoided looking below his waist and quickly went to get dressed myself.

But when I had the skirt of my military-style dress hiked up so I could roll up my fishnet pantyhose, Henry apparently decided he couldn’t take it anymore. “All right, that’s it,” he said, marching over to the dresser standing underneath the TV. He opened the drawer holding his underwear and socks, and rummaged around in it.

Confused, I finished putting on my fishnets and let my skirt drop down again. “Henry, what are you doing?”

He found what he was looking for and marched over to me, wearing only jeans, his belt still unbuckled. He hid whatever he was holding in his hand.

“Juliette,” Henry said, looking into my eyes with an urgency that immediately demanded my attention. “I love you. I know I say it all the time, but I don’t say just how much nearly enough. I love you so much, it makes my chest ache. But it’s a good ache. When I look at you, my heart smiles. You know when you’re smiling so big, your cheeks hurt? It’s like that. I love that just us being in the same room is enough for me, and yet I will always need more of you. I love it when we have a night in and you’re wearing my clothes, no bra, no makeup, your hair’s a mess, and you’ve never looked more beautiful. I love when we’re laughing so hard, we’re rolling on the floor, tears running down our faces. I love it when you tell me I can calm you down with just a single touch, because I feel exactly the same about you. I love it when you burp louder than me just because you can. I love it when you say my name, whether you whisper it or scream it at the top of your lungs—it doesn’t matter; it always sounds like magic on your lips. I love how you can calm the storms in my head by just looking into my eyes. I just really, really love you.”

I stared at him in amazement, trying hard not to cry at how sweet he was. “I love you, too,” I mumbled, my voice breaking. “I love you in exactly the same way.”

Henry smiled, his eyes shining. “I had been planning to wait, but I guess you can’t plan a perfect moment. You just know when it arrives. And this is it.” He took a deep breath. “I guess what I’m trying to say is…”

I gasped as he dropped down to one knee, finally revealing what he’d been holding in his hand. He opened the box, revealing the most beautiful piece of jewelry I’d ever seen. “Juliette Morrison, will you marry me?”

The blood rushing through my veins, I felt my knees get weak as a single tear finally spilled. “Henry…” I managed, my voice hardly above a whisper. “Oh my God…” I looked into his blue eyes, so filled with hope and love that I couldn’t help but smile. “Yes. Yes, I’ll marry you.”

Henry grinned widely, relief and pure happiness on his face. He took the ring out of its box and slid it onto my left ring finger. It was a beautiful vintage-style ring, made of platinum and covered with tiny diamonds that sparkled in the light. The center stone was a two carat diamond that caught the light perfectly, reflecting it on its many facets. Once it was securely wrapped around my finger, he pulled me down to my knees, his arms wrapped tightly around my waist as he pressed his lips to mine, kissing me hard. “I love you so much,” he muttered against my lips.
I couldn’t stop smiling. “I love you, too.”

“I can’t wait to spend the rest of my life with you.”

“Me neither.” I pulled back enough to admire the ring more closely. “It’s so beautiful, Henry. I’m never taking it off.”

He smiled, running the pad of his thumb over the ring. “I’m glad you like it. It was a lot of pressure, picking out a ring you’ll hopefully be wearing for the rest of your life.”

“I will. Don’t you ever doubt that.”

He kissed me again, and I couldn’t remember ever being this happy. “Good.”

“I have just one condition for marrying you, though,” I told him, tangling my fingers in the curls at the back of his head.

He raised an eyebrow, trying to look amused, but I could see a twinge of worry seeping into his mind. “And that condition would be?”

“That we get married in Jersey.”

That clearly took him by surprise. “You want to get married in Jersey?”

I nodded. “I never really properly thanked you for settling down here in Los Angeles with me, which really meant a lot to me. I know it was a sacrifice for you, no matter how small you say it was. So the least I can do is marry you in Jersey. If that’s what you want, at least.”

He grinned, getting up to his feet. He lifted me up with him and spun me around, my legs flying into the air. “Yes,” he said, setting me back down on my feet. “I would love for us to get married in Jersey.”

I never wanted to stop staring at my engagement ring, never wanted to break physical contact with Henry, but knew that, eventually, I had no other choice, unless we really wanted to be late to lunch with my parents.

And so I pulled on my brown boots while Henry pulled on a light blue V-neck sweater. I brushed my hair up into a high, messy ponytail and quickly did my makeup, and we were ready to go.

As he drove, Henry didn’t let go of my hand once. We’d always felt a strong need to stay connected physically, but it was like, since he’d slid that ring onto my finger, that need had intensified. Like it was insufferable to not touch each other.

We reached the restaurant and held hands as we entered. We spotted my parents quickly, sitting at a table for four in the back. I temporarily released Henry’s hand to hug them hello. I hadn’t seen them in months, and though, yes, I’d just gotten engaged to Henry, I’d missed them dearly.

“Mom, Daddy! God, I missed you two!”

“Oh, we missed you, too, love,” Mom said, tightening her arms around me. “Happy birthday!”

“Happy birthday, baby girl,” Dad told me with a smile.

We sat down at the table set for four, Henry taking out my chair for me.

“We got you a little present,” Dad said, taking something out of his pocket. “It was your
“From your father’s side,” Mom clarified.

My eyes widened a little as I accepted the black velvet box Dad handed me. My grandmother on his side had died two years before I was born, so I sadly wasn’t fortunate enough to have ever met her, though both of my parents had regaled me with stories of her. I opened the box, finding a beautifully simple gold chain with a single diamond hanger. “It’s beautiful… But Dad, are you sure you don’t want to keep this? I mean, it was grandma’s…”

He smiled, but it was a little sad. “I have no use for a necklace, baby girl. You might actually wear it, and honor her through that. I thought you might like it.”

“Daddy, I love it. I really, really do. I just wanted to make sure that you were really sure about this.”

“I’m sure, don’t worry. But I see you’ve already got a bigger diamond on your finger,” Dad said, looking pointedly at Henry.

I quickly pulled my hand back, but it was already too late. Dad had obviously already spotted the engagement ring, and if he’d spotted it, Mom probably had, too, but she was just waiting for us to say something about it first.

Henry’s cheeks turned red. “I had actually planned to ask you both for her hand formally, but I just… I looked at her today and I just couldn’t hold it in any longer. I just had to ask her to marry me. I hope you don’t mind.”

“Of course not,” Mom said, smiling so wide the phrase ‘face-splitting grin’ came to mind. “I’ve never seen Juliette happier than when she’s with you. Besides, asking parents for their daughter’s hand in marriage is an outdated concept anyway, wouldn’t you agree, Jack?”

“As long as I get to walk my beautiful girl down the aisle,” Dad started with a smile, “I don’t care about anything but her happiness. You are happy, right?”

I looked at Henry, and automatically, a huge smile took over my face, butterflies dancing around in my stomach. “Yeah, I definitely am.”

“Good,” Dad said, satisfied. “I’m really happy for you both.”

“Thanks, Daddy.”

“So, when’s the wedding?” Mom asked, her smile widening even more.

“God, Mom, we literally just got engaged an hour ago,” I said, laughing. “We haven’t really discussed it yet. But we do know that we want to get married in Jersey.”

Mom’s eyebrows shot up. “You want to get married in New Jersey? Isn’t there anywhere more glamorous you want to go?”

I smiled. “Not New Jersey, Mom. Jersey, as in the island where Henry was born, close to the coast of France.”

She laughed. “Well, that makes a lot more sense, doesn’t it? So how are you going to do that with your guests? Are you going to fly them in, or are you planning on keeping it more private?”

I looked at Henry. “Well, I don’t want too many guests, but I do want my family and friends there,
and I’m guessing you do, too.”

Henry nodded. “Jersey doesn’t really have venues that can hold a lot of guests anyway, so we’ll have to keep that in mind for when we make the guest list. And we could definitely fly people in. We’ll figure it out.”

I smiled at him. “We’ll figure it out,” I echoed.

~*~*~*~*~*~

“I have another present waiting for you at home,” Henry said while we were in the car, my parents sitting in the backseat. “It should be waiting in the living room now, courtesy of George.”

“Another?” I exclaimed, turning in my seat to look at him. “Henry… You’ve already given me so much. You really didn’t have to get me another present.”

Henry grinned knowingly. “Trust me, Jules, you’ll like this one.”

“I can attest to that,” Mom said, wearing a copy of Henry’s grin.

I turned to look at the backseat, staring at my parents. They were both obviously in on Henry’s secret present. I turned back, staring out of the window as I gnashed my teeth. I hated surprises. It had to do with my anxiety. I always had to know what was happening. Also, when people were in the know and I obviously wasn’t, I always felt excluded. It wasn’t Henry’s fault, nor my parents’, but it was still a sucky feeling.

I took a deep, slow breath. I was being absolutely ridiculous. This was Henry we were talking about. He would never do anything to hurt me, and he would never surprise me with anything I wouldn’t like.

I wrung my hands together and started a little when I felt the ring around my finger. I looked down at the engagement ring and smiled automatically. It really was quite beautiful. I traced my finger over the stone and the intricate platinum band it was set in. The two carat diamond was probably smaller than the one Henry had wanted to give me, but I appreciated that he’d restrained himself while shopping for the ring.

When we arrived home, I found that me being left out of my own surprise didn’t really matter anymore. I was actually kind of looking forward to my present. The bracelet around my wrist was proof enough of Henry being great at giving gifts.

“Holy shit,” Dad said as soon as we stepped out of the car. He was looking up at the house with wide eyes, his mouth slightly ajar. Mom was wearing an equal expression. “You really have done well for yourself, haven’t you, baby girl?”

I smiled at my parents. “Come on inside and we’ll give you the grand tour.”

When we reached the living room, giving my parents a grand tour was the last thing on my mind, though.

“Oh my God!” I exclaimed, my hands flying up to cover my mouth. “Oma, Opa, what are you doing here?”

My grandparents stood up from the couch, where they’d been petting both Kal and Persephone, and smiled at me. “Henry here flew us in as a surprise for you,” Opa said.
“Happy birthday, dear!” Oma said brightly, walking up to me. She gave me a tight hug, rocking me from side to side. I hugged her back just as tight.

As Opa joined us for the hug, tears clouded my vision. The last time I’d seen my grandparents was when I’d visited them with Henry during promo of If You Love Someone, a year and a half ago. It had been much too long, and I’d missed them so much, without really having realized it.

I pulled away from the hug and turned to Henry. I pointed at him. “You… You are both the worst and the best. Thank you so much.”

“Happy birthday, sweetheart.”

In the middle of Henry’s sentence, Oma snatched my hand out of the air. I had pointed at Henry with my left hand, the one wearing my engagement ring. “Juliette! Why didn’t you tell me you and Henry got engaged?”

“They what now?” Opa asked.

Oma showed him my ring—the only problem was that my hand was still attached to it. She nearly made me fall over as she pulled my hand towards him. “Look at this giant rock!”

“Actually…” Henry started, “I wanted to go bigger, but I knew Juliette wouldn’t want me to.”

I smiled. “I knew it. And Oma, I would’ve told you sooner, except for the fact that it happened only a few hours ago.”

She dragged me over to one of the couches and forcibly sat me down. “Tell me all about how he asked you, dear. Were you in a nice restaurant? What were you wearing?”

“Uh, not much,” I said, and I immediately felt myself grow bright red as I saw the looks on my grandparents’ faces. “Oh, God! Not like that! We were in the middle of getting dressed when he suddenly decided to propose. I was still pulling on my fishnets and Henry was only wearing jeans.”

Oma grinned mischievously. “Well, I’m sure you didn’t mind being proposed to by a shirtless Henry.”

“Oma!” I protested, laughing. I was still blushing a little when I admitted, “And, no, I definitely wasn’t complaining about him being shirtless when he proposed.” I looked at Henry and smiled, remembering his proposal fondly. “He was really, very sweet, though. He recited all the ways he loved me before he finally popped the actual question.”

“Not all,” Henry said with a grin. “I didn’t even begin to make a dent.”

“Oh, shush,” I said, trying to suppress my wide smile.

“I, for one, am very happy for the both of you,” Oma said. “Of course, I already knew the two of you were meant to be. You looked so in love already back when you visited, a year and a half ago. Both clearly in denial, but obviously in love.”

“Oma!” I protested again.

Henry smiled. “Well, is she wrong?”

“No,” I admitted grudgingly. “No, she isn’t. Anyway, how would you guys like a grand tour of Chez Cavill?”
Henry and I gave my parents and grandparents a tour of the house, showing them each floor. Right when the tour was over, the doorbell rang.

“That’s probably Hanna,” Henry said, already getting up to open the front door.

“Oh, good,” Oma said with a smile. “I haven’t seen that girl in much too long. So you two are still good friends?”

I smiled. “The best. I don’t think we can ever really be—”

“HAPPY BIRTHDAY!”

Before I could fully realize what was going on, a small person flung herself at me, and I was pinned to the couch in a monster hug. I laughed as I awkwardly hugged her back from my crushed position on the couch. “Hi, Hanna.”

“HAPPY BIRTHDAY, JULIE!” she yelled into my ear.

I scrambled up into a sitting position as much as I could with Hanna on top of me. “Thanks, Han.”

I heard my grandmother laugh. “Yes, still thick as thieves, I see.”

Hanna shot up, her eyes wide. “Oma, Opa, hey! It’s so nice to see you both again.” She greeted them both with hugs. “Jack, Anne, it’s really nice to see you guys again, too.” After having hugged my parents as well, Hanna turned to me, a stern look on her face. “Jules, why didn’t you tell me your grandparents were visiting for your birthday?”

I grinned. “You know that I would’ve, had I known myself. It was a surprise from Henry.”

Hanna turned to glare at Henry. “And why didn’t you tell me about this surprise?”

Henry returned Hanna’s glare with a grin. “Because you can’t keep your trap shut,” he joked.

Before Hanna could retort with a playful jab of her own, Scott quickly stepped in, introducing himself to my grandparents. He’d already met my parents on their visit to the set two years ago, and he greeted them both warmly. Then he turned to me. “Happy birthday, Juliette,” he said, giving me a tight hug.

I smiled. “Thanks, Scott.”

Scott pulled away from our hug and pounded Henry on his back. “And you, congratulations with your beautiful girlfriend.”

“Actually…” I started slowly, and I held up my left hand for them to see.

I didn’t entirely know what I’d been expecting, but I definitely hadn’t been ready for Hanna’s high-pitched scream. She didn’t even form words at first—she just screamed. I automatically covered my ears to protect them from her loud screech, but I couldn’t stop smiling.

When Hanna finally stopped screaming, she started jumping up and down in excitement. “Oh my God! Oh my God! My best friend is engaged! Come here!” She pulled me into a tight hug, but quickly pulled away again. “No, wait! Show me the ring! Show me the pretty! Oh my God, tell me everything about how he asked you! Was it romantic? Did you cry? Well, of course it was romantic, it’s Henry we’re talking about, and it’s you, so you definitely cried. Come on, tell me everything!”

I grinned. “I will, as soon as you give me the chance.”
Hanna quieted down a little. “Right. Sorry. I’m just so excited for the both of you! Sorry. I’ll calm
down now. Just tell me.”

After I’d finished telling Hanna and Scott everything, Henry filling in some gaps here and there,
everyone helped to set up for the party tonight. Eleven more guests would be arriving later, bringing
us up to a grand total of nineteen. We’d be having dinner together, and then just relax with a few
drinks. When Henry and I first got this house, I never thought we’d have any use for a huge dining
table that could seat twenty people, but I guess I was mistaken.

Sadly, I wouldn’t have the time to cook dinner myself, so Henry and I had hired a few professional
chefs to cook for us. I had, however, made the dessert myself. I’d worked all day yesterday to make
enough stroopwafel ice cream for at least twenty people, but I knew it would definitely be worth it. It
would also be fun (and terrifying) to have Oma taste what I’d done with her recipe. I prayed to God
that she would like it.

As the chefs cooked in the kitchen, delicious smells already filling the house, we set the table. I’d
gotten special plates earlier this week. They were white, lined with gold, and they fit nicely in the
elaborate-looking dining room. The room would look absolutely stunning once it was dark outside
and the candle centerpieces were burning later tonight.

“You do have yourself a nice place here, love,” Mom said once the table was set. “This dining room
is especially elaborate.”

I smiled, looking around the room with its red velvet chairs and golden details. “I know. We’ve
never even used it before, but it’s good for dinner parties like this.”

“Dude, you should use this room more often,” Hanna said. “You on one end of the table, Henry on
the other… It’ll be just like a Disney movie. Like Beauty and the Beast!”

I laughed. “That’s a little impersonal, don’t you think? Besides, what would the two of us do with a
dining room big enough for twenty people when we have a smaller dining room too?”

“I guess that’s a good enough point. Anyway, we’d better get changed before everyone starts
arriving. I know Cynthia, she’s always early.”

Henry and I went up to our room to get changed. I traded my military style dress, fishnets and boots
for a white lace skater dress and silver gladiator heels. I pinned my hair back with a pearl clip, but
kept the long stands straight, having no time to curl them. Henry traded his pale blue sweater for a
white button down and a black skinny tie. He tucked the shirt into his jeans and turned to me.

When he saw me, however, he froze. “Juliette, wow…”


“No. No, of course not. You look absolutely breathtaking. It’s just…”

“Just what? Henry, you’re making me nervous.”

He closed the distance between us and took my hands in his. “There’s nothing to be nervous about,
baby. You really do look beautiful. It’s just that, in this dress… you look kind of bridal. And I guess
it’s just now hitting me that we really are getting married.”

I couldn’t help it—I smiled so wide that my cheeks hurt. “It’s strange, isn’t it?”

“I knew I wanted to marry you the moment you literally fell into my life, but seeing you like this…”
He took hold of the lacy material of my dress. “It just makes it more real.”

I wrapped my arms around his neck, tangling my fingers in the curls at the back of his head. “I love you.”

He smiled, cupping my cheek in his hand. “I love you, too.”

He kissed me, wrapping his free arm around my waist to pull me close against his body. As I kissed him back, I felt that familiar fluttering in my stomach that always made me want to kiss him a little harder, press my body a little closer to his.

“Christ, why do I keep doing this to myself? Geez! We don’t even live together anymore!”

I pulled away from Henry with a smile, turning to look at the entrance of our room. Hanna was standing there, a hand covering her eyes. “Hey, Hanna. Did you need something?”

“I wanted to ask if you had any bobby pins. My bun won’t stay secure on my head. But if you’re busy, I could probably figure out a way to make it stay without.”

I laughed. “Yeah, I’ve got some bobby pins. Do you need me to put them in for you?”

“If you could, that would be a great help,” Hanna said.

I took her to the bathroom, positioning her in front of the mirror. I took a few bobby pins from my collection of hair products and slid them into her hair, securing her messy bun to the top of her head. “There you go. Do you want me to curl the loose strands?”

Hanna snorted. “Jules, it’s your birthday. You don’t have to glam me up.”

“Yeah, I know, but I kind of want to. It’s been too long since we’ve done something like this.”

“True.”

“I see I’m no longer needed,” Henry said with a grin. He was leaning against the doorpost that connected the bathroom to the bedroom.

I plugged the curling iron in before walking up to him and pressing a soft kiss to his lips. “I’ll always need you.”

“I’m glad.”

I finished curling Hanna’s hair just as the doorbell rang, and we made our way down the stairs. When we got there, I discovered my mom had already opened the door, letting Keegan and Klarissa in. Keegan was, in true Keegan fashion, greeting my mom with a big hug. “It’s good to see you again, Anne.”

Mom laughed. “It’s nice to see you again, too, Keegan. And you as well, Klarissa. Are the two of you still together?”

Klarissa smiled. “Four years and counting.”

“JULIE! Happy birthday!” Keegan yelled before Mom could respond.

I grinned. “Hey, Keegs! Riss!”

“Happy birthday, Jules,” Klarissa said with a wide smile.
After that, guests started arriving quickly, and we were almost ready to get seated. Before we did that, though, I wanted to mingle a little, make sure that I’d greeted everyone already.

“Natascha, it’s so nice to see you again!”

“It’s so nice to see you again, too! Oh, you look so gorgeous. And this house! Holy shit, dude!”

I laughed. “It’s nice, isn’t it?”

“Understatement of the year,” she teased. “Oh, hey, there’s Ella! Let me say hi real quick,” she said, and before I knew it, she’d dashed off to greet Ella, who’d been talking to Keegan, Klarissa and Cynthia. Belatedly, I realized Natascha had never met my other friends before, apart from Hanna and Scott, but I knew she’d get along with them perfectly. She’d fit right in with our group.

I felt a tap on my shoulder and turned around, only to have Harvey wrap me into a tight hug. “Happy birthday, ex-employee!”

I laughed, hugging him back. “Hey, favorite ex-boss. How are you?”

“I’m great,” he said, and his eyes sparkled as he grinned. “You know me. Anyway, I was a little madd at you, though, when I found out you’re having this party catered. Why not just let me do it?”

“Because I wanted you to actually enjoy the party, not stand in the kitchen for most of it,” I told him, though what he said was giving me ideas about what his role might be in the wedding.

“True enough. You’ve got a nice house here, by the way. It looks like it’s come straight out of a fairytale, and I know how you love your fairytales.”

I smiled. “That is very true. But hey, there’s someone I want you to meet.”

Harvey narrowed his eyes at me in suspicion. “You’re not trying to set me up with someone again, are you?”

I gave him a guilty smile. “Maybe. But you’ll like her, I promise.”

“Fine,” he said, and he let me drag him over to where Ella was still talking to Natascha, Keegan, Klarissa and Cynthia.

“Hey guys!” I said happily as I butted in on their conversation. “Harvey, this is Ella, my occasional makeup and hair guru, and this is Natascha, my favorite production assistant and good friend. Guys, this is Harvey, my favorite boss of all time.”

Just as expected, Harvey and Ella immediately hit it off extremely well. So well, in fact, that they soon secluded themselves from the conversation, leaving Natascha, Keegan, Klarissa, Cynthia and me so they could talk more privately. Maybe if I got a little more alcohol into their systems, by the end of the night, they’d be ready to go on a date.

“You sly dog,” Keegan said, laughing. “You always have to play matchmaker, don’t you?”

I just grinned at him in response.

“Matchmaking, huh? Do you have someone for me?” Natascha joked, nudging me with her elbow.

A slow smile crept over my face. “As a matter of fact…” I said, my eye falling on Alfie, “I think I have the perfect guy.”
Keegan just shook his head as I led Natascha over to Alfie, where he was joking together with Shaye, Ryley and Braeden.

The only one I hadn’t greeted yet was Colin. I looked around the room for him, and was amused to find him being coddled by my grandmother. “Do you eat enough, boy? You look so scrawny. It’s like you haven’t eaten anything since I last saw you. How have you been doing? I’m sure such a strapping lad like you has already found a boyfriend.”

Colin blushed furiously. “Actually… I have.”

“Holy crap, Col!” I called out, butting in on their conversation. “You’ve got a boyfriend? How come you didn’t tell me earlier?” I said, too surprised by this news to remember that I hadn’t even as much as said hello to him.

“I wanted to, but I wanted to tell you in person.”

“Oh my God, I’m so happy for you!” I said, giving him a tight hug. “What’s his name? What does he look like? Do you have a picture? Does he treat you well? Because my God, he had better treat you well, or I will grab one of Keegan’s brother’s swords and stab him in the gut.”

Colin laughed. “So far, Liam’s treated me very well, so I think you can hold off on the sword threat, at least for now.”

“So his name is Liam, huh? Do you have a picture of him?”

“Yeah, I do,” Colin said, his cheeks still a little red. He retrieved his phone from his pocket and searched through it for a picture of his boyfriend. Finally having found it, he showed my grandmother and me the screen. On it was a picture of Colin kissing Liam’s cheek. Liam had a friendly face, a big smile plastered on it. His eyes were green and his hair was curly, actually not unlike Henry’s, but his were blond instead of brown.

“Aw, he’s cute,” I gushed.

“He most definitely is,” Oma agreed.

“I especially like the curls,” I said, pointing at the screen.

“What curls?” Henry asked, suddenly appearing behind me. He wrapped his arms around my waist and rested his chin on my shoulder. “You wouldn’t be talking about my curls, would you?”

“Don’t be so egotistical,” I joked. “I was talking about Colin’s new boyfriend.”

Henry perked up at that. “You’ve got a boyfriend? Hey, congrats, man!” He clapped Colin on the back before turning to me. “Have the proper sword threats already been made?”

I nodded. “They have.”

Oma giggled. “What’s this sword thing about? Is it like a running joke or something?”

“It sort of is, yes,” I said. “Keegan’s brother is a history nut, and he has actual swords hanging on his wall. So now every time one of us is in trouble or has a new boyfriend or girlfriend, we threaten to use those swords on them if they hurt our friends. But, we still totally have to threaten Liam in person, so when are we meeting him? You could’ve brought him to the party, you know.”

“I know,” Colin started, “but we haven’t been dating for that long yet, and I also didn’t really want to
spring a new boyfriend on you and just bring him along like that. But soon, though, I hope.”

“We had better,” Henry joked. “We’ll throw another horror movie night so he has an excuse to come around and meet us.”

Before I could agree with that plan, I felt a tap on my shoulder. I turned around to find Hanna. “The chefs are ready to send out the first course,” she told me.

“Oh, okay. I’d better get everyone seated then,” I said. “By the way, Col has a new boyfriend.”

Hanna released a high-pitched yelp. “Oh my God! I’m so happy for you! Quick, show me a picture.”

As Hanna and Colin gushed over Liam, I told everyone to get seated. Before the chefs brought in the first course, I stood up and tapped the side of my wine glass with a fork to get everyone’s attention. “I’ve always wanted to do that,” I said, making them all laugh. “Anyway, hey, guys. I just wanted to thank you all for coming tonight. It really means a lot to me. Especially to those who have come a very far way to be here tonight; thank you,” I said, smiling at my parents, grandparents, and Natascha, who’d flown in from Louisiana just for my birthday. “I couldn’t imagine better people to start the last year of my twenties with than you guys. That having said… I have an announcement to make.” I looked around the table, at the people who already knew what I was about to say and were smiling brilliantly back at me, to the people who didn’t know and were probably worried that I was about to say that I was gonna die soon. Getting ready to say the words aloud, an unstoppable smile covered my face. “Henry and I got engaged this morning!”

People all reacted at once, in different ways. Natascha, Cynthia and Klarissa all released high-pitched squeals, and Keegan exclaimed, “HOLY FUCKING SHIT!”

Before I realized what everyone—even the people whom I’d already told—was doing, they were standing up and hugging Henry and me in the biggest group hug I’d ever been in.

I stood there, surrounded by all my favorite people, my best friends in the whole world, the people I couldn’t imagine living without. They hugged me tight, all congratulating Henry and me, and I just couldn’t stop myself—I cried. The tears streamed down my face as I realized just how lucky I was to be loved the way I was, and to love in return. Already, my birthday wish was coming true.

Chapter End Notes

Henry and Juliette are engaged! You probably saw this coming from a mile away, but I still thought it was kind of a cute scene, haha! Here’s to hoping that their future is as bright as that sparkling ring around Juliette’s finger ;)

The lyrics at the start of the chapter are Always by the Veronicas.
Chapter 26

Chapter Notes

This chapter is dedicated to Keegs, who will have to miss his amazing girlfriend for four months starting Monday because she'll be studing in Norway. He's gonna have a tough time—tougher than his girl, probably—but buddy, I'll still be here to pick up the pieces.

(Keegan and Klarissa are loosely based off of them. Yes, Keegs's brother is a history nut. No, he doesn't have actual swords. No real ones, anyway.)

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

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"Lock me up with joy and kisses"

"Lock me up with love"

"Chain me to your heart's desire"

"I don't want you to stop"

Saturday, September 15, 2018.

Nerves and excitement warred within me, fighting for the upper hand. Today was the big day, and I couldn’t be more excited to become Mrs. Henry Cavill in a few hours. But no matter how excited I was, I still couldn’t quite still my anxiety. I’d known that would happen beforehand, though.

I worried about Henry potentially getting cold feet, but the fear wasn’t too pressing. What worried me more was that I might trip on the hem of my dress, tear the skirt off like in a bad comedy, and sprawl all over the aisle.

“You’re not gonna trip, Jules.”

I looked up at my best friend. I was in a car with Hanna, Ella, Klarissa, Cynthia and Shaye, driving to the venue I’d be getting married at.

“How the hell did you know I was thinking about that?”

Hanna grinned. “You didn’t pick me to be your Maid of Honor for nothing, Julie,” she teased. “I know you. But you’re not gonna trip. Honestly, how many premieres have you been to now? You were wearing floor length dresses for most of them, and you never tripped once. You’re not gonna start now. You’ve been wearing your heels pretty much all the time to get used to them, and they’re lower than what you usually wear to premieres, so you’ll be fine.”

I smiled at her. “I know. I’m just nervous, I guess.”

“You have nothing to be worried about, hon,” Klarissa told me. “Not today. All you have to do today is enjoy yourself and be incredibly in love with Henry. If any problems arise, we’ll take care of them before you can notice them, and I’m sure Henry’s groomsmen will do the same, though I can’t
promise they’ll be as efficient as us.”

I laughed. “Thank you. Seriously, though, thank you all so much for being here and being my bridesmaids, and Ella, thank you for fighting me when I told you I wanted you to be a guest and just enjoy yourself, and insist on doing my hair and makeup anyway.”

“There’s nowhere else we’d rather be,” Cynthia assured me.

“And do you honestly think I would let anyone do your hair and makeup for your special day but me?” Ella asked with a grin.

“I guess not,” I said with a laugh.

“So don’t worry about any unnecessary shit, okay?” Shaye said. “Just enjoy yourself today.”

I smiled. “I will.”

I stared out of the window, watching as the Jersey landscape whizzed by. Henry and I had arrived a week ago, and the journey here had been hell, but well worth it so far. First we flew from Los Angeles to London Heathrow for ten and a half hours, taking off from LAX at five p.m., and landing in London at eleven thirty a.m. local time. Then we’d had a five hour layover in London before our one hour flight to Jersey. Our flight from LAX had landed at Heathrow, but our flight to Jersey departed from Gatwick Airport, so two hours of our layover were spent on our transfer there, one hour was spent getting a bite to eat at the Nando’s inside the airport, and the rest of it waiting.

Henry initially couldn’t believe I’d never eaten at a Nando’s before. He nearly went out of his mind when I admitted that to him, and practically dragged me over to the restaurant. He made me try something with chicken wings that was some sort of Russian roulette type of thing. Some wings were reasonably spicy, and some were extremely very spicy. Joke was on him, though, because I could handle the spiciness better than him. Other than that, the food at Nando’s had been really good, so being dragged by my arm all over the airport had been well worth it.

From the moment we left our house in Los Angeles, to the moment we stepped foot in our hotel room in Jersey, more than twenty hours had passed. Because I could never sleep whenever I traveled, I had not slept a single wink in those twenty plus hours. I was absolutely exhausted by the time we got to our hotel, so the moment my head had touched the pillow, I had fallen right asleep. I hadn’t even showered, which was an abnormality for me, and a testament to how tired I’d been. I always felt incredibly gross after flying, especially for that long, so I always, always showered afterwards. I’d been so tired that I had slept for fifteen hours straight. Lucky for me, that meant I woke up at ten in the morning, so jet lag didn’t bother me, unlike Henry, who had slept on the flight and, as a result, couldn’t sleep right away when we reached Jersey.

Our first full day in Jersey had been spent in our hotel room, just lying around like the lazy bums we were, enjoying each other’s company and the realization that we were getting married in a week. The rest of the week, Henry had shown me the sights on his home island, and we’d gone over the final details of our wedding. We’d also eaten at his parents’ house more than once—his father turned out to be an amazing cook.

I’d met Henry’s parents and the rest of his brothers a few months ago, shortly after getting engaged. I’d been incredibly nervous, more so than when it was just Ethan, Emma and Willow. But despite my worries, I’d gotten along great with Henry’s relatives, especially once they realized just how in love Henry and I are.

“We’re here,” Hanna said, pulling me out of my reminiscing.
I stopped staring mindlessly and looked out of the window, up to the castle sprawling out on the hill. Henry and I would be getting married in Mont Orgeuil Castle, and I couldn’t be happier about it. The location was amazing and beautiful, and who doesn’t dream of getting married in a castle?

We got out of the car and carried our dresses and all the makeup and hair stuff into the castle. The woman who worked at the castle and had been assisting us throughout the planning of our wedding led us to a private dressing room with more than enough room for all of us. There was cold champagne waiting for us, along with a variety of other drinks and snacks.

The castle employee left us alone again, and I was practically forced into a chair by Ella. She grabbed a primer and started pumping a bit onto her fingertips. “Hanna, why don’t you polish her nails, then I’ll start on her makeup.”

“Yes, ma’am,” Hanna said, digging around in her bag for a nail file and a bottle of nude nail polish. “Cynthia, Shaye, you two go check if everything in the venue is in order, like the flowers and the table settings and everything. Klarissa, you call Scott and check if the boys have everything in order. I love all of them, but I don’t trust them for shit. Once you’ve made sure the boys aren’t busy sleeping late or dying in a ditch somewhere, or experiencing some kind of The Hangover shit, I want you to help Cynthia and Shaye.”

Klarissa, Cynthia and Shaye nodded and started on their appointed tasks. I couldn’t help but smile as Hanna took hold of my left hand and started filing my nails to equal lengths. She was extremely good at being my Maid of Honor, but I had a feeling she just liked bossing people around. But other than doing that, she really had taken care of a lot for me. All I really needed to do was just make the decisions, and then she’d enforce them like it was law.

Time passed by incredibly quickly as we got ready together, blasting music and drinking champagne. Hanna—of all people—made sure we didn’t drink too much of it, which I was grateful for. I didn’t have the best track record when it came to drinking too much, and it was actually nice to not have to be the mom of the group for once. But before I knew it, I had my makeup and hair all done, and it was time to put on my wedding dress. I let my hand slide over the garment bag that held the dress, memories of the day I picked it washing over me.

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“That dress… is so super beautiful,” Hanna said as we exited the wedding parlor. I’d just ‘said yes to my dress,’ and I couldn’t be happier with it. It looked amazing on my figure, making me look almost regal. I was 99,9 percent sure that Henry was going to love it.

I couldn’t fight a smile. “I know. I’m in love with it. I kind of didn’t want to take it off. I want to sleep in it. Hell, I even want to shower in it. It’s so amazing.”

“Henry is going to cry buckets when he sees you in it for the first time.”

“I guess we’ll see.”

“Oh, trust me on this,” Klarissa said. “He’s gonna fucking bawl.”

“Yeah, well, what about you and Keegs?” I asked, pointing to the new diamond on her left ring finger. Keegan had finally, after nearly four and a half years of dating, gotten the hell over himself and proposed to her, like we all knew he eventually would. “When are you going to shop for a wedding dress?”

Klarissa turned red a little. “Oh, I don’t know… We just got engaged a week ago. We haven’t even
set a date yet.”

“You can’t be too early on shopping for a wedding dress,” Shaye pointed out wisely. “What if your dress needs alterations? They take a while, you know.”

“True enough. I guess it just hasn’t sunken in yet, you know? I guess I’m just waiting for that.”

“Riss, trust me,” I said. “It takes a while for it to sink in. Actually, going dress shopping makes it feel more real.” I grinned. “I’m speaking from experience.”

Cynthia nudged me. “Your fiancé is waiting right over there,” she said, pointing across the street.

I looked to where she was pointing and found a grinning Henry. He waved at me, his grin growing even more, almost impossibly so.

I couldn’t stop an equally as big smile from taking over my face. Even just seeing him from a distance, I felt my heart beat a little faster in my chest. “Yeah, I’m meeting him for coffee. But hey, guys, thank you so much for coming with me.” I gave each of them a tight hug. “Dress shopping wouldn’t have been the same without you, and I really do value all of your opinions.”

“And we really did enjoy playing dress-up with you, even though you were the only one dressing up,” Hanna said with a smile. “Now go get your man.”

I smiled, hugging them all one last time before jogging to the other side of the street. Once I got there, Henry scooped me up in his arms in a tight hug, and placed his lips on mine. I kissed him back eagerly, not caring that we were in public, not even caring that there could be paparazzi around, snapping pics of our blatant public display of affection. I giggled as he lifted me up and swung me around, never breaking his lips away from mine.

When he set me back down and finally broke the kiss, he was smiling. “Hey, beautiful. Did you have fun?”

I nodded, looping my arm through his as we started walking. “Yeah, I did. I already have my dress.”

“That’s amazing! What does it look like?”

I snorted. “Nice try, Cavill, but you know I’m not going to tell you. You’ll just have to wait until the wedding day.”

He groaned. “You know I’m terrible at waiting. Can you at least give me a hint?”

“Nope. I’m not telling you a single thing. And don’t you dare try and finagle it out of my bridesmaids, because they’re not dishing, either. They wouldn’t do me like that.”

Henry laughed. “Well, no matter which dress you’ve picked, I’m sure you’ll look absolutely stunning in it, even if it’s pure black. Actually, you do look extremely good in black.”

I laughed, nudging him with my elbow. “You know as well as anyone that I’m not getting married in black, idiot.”

“Ha!” he exclaimed. “Looks like you spilled something after all.”

I groaned, just as we entered the coffee shop. “Oh, come on! Just because you know it’s not black, doesn’t mean I really spilled anything about the dress.”
“A detail is still a detail,” he teased, a grin pulling up the corners of his mouth. He looked so adorable, wearing that toothy grin, that I couldn’t stay annoyed for long. “Anyway, what do you want?”

I grinned. “I want the biggest caramel macchiato they’ve got.”

This time, it was Henry’s turn to groan. “Oh, no… This means you’re going to be hopped up on caffeine all afternoon. You do realize that you’re gonna crash extremely hard later tonight, right?”

“I know, but right now I could use the caffeine. I’m feeling so inspired right now, and I just want to continue planning the rest of our wedding.”

“I guess I can’t complain in that case,” Henry said with a smile. “Speaking of the wedding details, have you already decided on what flavor cake you want Cynthia to use in our wedding cake?”

I smiled. Shortly after my birthday dinner, I’d asked Cynthia to make the cake for the wedding. She’d agreed enthusiastically, by way of screaming really loudly and attracting the attention of all the guests at the party. As if I’d choose anyone else to make my wedding cake. It was kind of an unspoken agreement between my friends and me that whenever there was a special occasion that required a cake, Cynthia would bake it. “I was actually thinking about—”

“Hey, Alyssa,” Henry said, sounding a little helpless himself as he hugged her back. She’d flung herself around Henry’s neck, and I remembered him telling me that Alyssa was physical with everyone. “You’re in L.A.?” Henry asked when he’d managed to extricate himself from Alyssa’s embrace.

“Yeah, just for a few days. For a job, you know.”

“Right.”

Only then did Alyssa’s eyes fall on me. She brightened once she realized who I was. “Oh my God, you’re Juliette!” she exclaimed, wasting zero time in hugging me tight. “I’m so glad to finally meet you! Henry’s told me so much about you that I practically feel like I know you through and through.”

“Has he now?” I asked. I had no idea how else to respond. It was like I was nailed to the floor, paralyzed. This was one of those moments where my social skills were put to the ultimate test.

“He totally did. God, I’m so glad the two of you are finally together, because I just couldn’t handle his moping. I felt so bad for him.”

“I was not moping,” Henry protested.

Alyssa smiled. “You kind of were, though. But that doesn’t matter now, especially not now that
you’re engaged. Congrats on that, by the way!”

Henry smiled a little more genuinely now. “Thanks, Lyss.”

“Can I see the ring?” Alyssa asked me, smiling kindly. I held up my left hand, still not entirely sure how to feel. “Huh. It’s smaller than I expected it to be.” Alyssa grinned. “Let me guess, Henry held himself back because he knew you wouldn’t like an extremely big rock?”

I couldn’t help but laugh. “Yup. He’s considerate like that.”

Alyssa snorted. “True. Sometimes his common sense does rise above his intense need to give. Anyway, I wish you two all the best and all the happiness and all the love. I’m really happy for the both of you,” she said, and the crazy thing was, I could tell that she was actually being genuine. “I’ll let you two lovebirds be now.”

“Thank you, Alyssa. It was nice to have met you,” I told her, and I found I myself was being genuine too.

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“Dude, are you gonna keep staring at the garment bag, or are you actually going to get your dress out of it?” Hanna asked, pulling me out of my thoughts.

I shook my head, chasing the last of the memory away. “Yeah, no. Sorry.” I zipped open the garment bag and felt that same awe I felt the first time I saw the dress hanging from the rack in the parlor’s dressing room. The girls helped me put it on, because there was no way I could fasten all the buttons on the back by myself. When I had the dress on, I turned to the mirror and nearly got emotional all over again.

The dress was a satin princess wedding dress in a pearly white, with a sweetheart neckline. It had a sheer lace, off shoulder over-bodice with three quarter sleeves. There were small buttons running down my back, stopping where the princess skirt started. The dress even had pockets. It was a beautiful, timeless wedding gown, and I was still so incredibly happy with my choice.

“You look so fucking beautiful,” Hanna told me, and I could hear from her voice that she was close to choking up, bringing me even closer to tears as well.

“Thanks,” I managed.

“Now, now, dearie, save those waterworks for when you walk down the aisle,” Ella said. She handed me my Harriet Wilde bridal shoes. The heels were decorated with delicate silver flowers. I had fallen in love with these shoes the moment I’d seen them. Too bad they wouldn’t really be visible under my dress. “Put those on, and then I can put on your veil.”

I slipped on the heels, standing four inches taller when I stood up again. Ella had done my hair in an elegant up-do, curling my hair beforehand so it had more texture than my usual straight hair. Ella slid the veil into my hair, just above the up-do, with a comb decorated with pearls and diamonds.

“Oh my God…” I whispered when I saw myself in the mirror. “I’m really getting married.”

“If it’s taken you this long to realize that,” a male voice said from the door opening, “then you might really get your brain checked.”

“Scott, what the hell are you doing here?” Hanna demanded, marching up to her boyfriend to push him out of the room. “You’re not supposed to be here!”
Scott raised his hands in surrender, but he held his ground against his tiny girlfriend trying to push him away. “I know. I know, I’m sorry. But Henry was basically going out of his mind with nerves, so he sent me here to make sure Juliette was okay.”

“Why wouldn’t I be okay?” I asked, smoothing down the skirt of my dress.

“He was worried that you were getting cold feet.”

I laughed. The notion alone was ridiculous. I could never leave Henry at the altar—nor did I want to. “Well, you can go back and tell him that I’m definitely not getting cold feet.”

“Will do. I’ll also tell him to prepare himself for when you do finally walk down that aisle, because you look stunning.”

Smiling, I said, “Thank you, Scott.”

“Don’t you fucking dare tell him what Juliette’s dress looks like,” Hanna warned him. Her hands were still on his chest, either by choice or because she just didn’t realize.

“I won’t,” Scott said, taking Hanna’s hands in his. “But I will tell you that you look beautiful, because damn.” He looked down at her deep purple chiffon dress, the same dress my other bridesmaids were wearing. The dress had an empire waist and ended just above the knee.

Hanna blushed. “Thanks.” She reached up to kiss him and then shooed him out of the room. “And don’t forget, five minutes until Henry needs to be at the altar. Do not let him be late.”

“I’m not as incompetent as you think, dear!” Scott called out before he disappeared down the hallway.

In the final few minutes before I had to walk down the aisle, Ella slid a pair of vintage earrings into my ears and Klarissa handed me my bouquet of white and purple roses.

“Do you have everything?” Cynthia asked. “Something old, something new, something borrowed and something blue?”

I smiled. “Got it all. Do you all have your bouquets?”

“Got them,” Shaye said, holding up hers. Their bouquets only held white roses.

“I’d better go find my seat,” Ella said with an excited smile. “Good luck, dearie. But above all, enjoy it. It’s your special day, after all.”

I gave her a quick hug. “I will. Thank you for everything, Ella.”

“No problem, dearie.”

Ella went to open the door just as there was a knock on it. She opened it and let my parents in. She said a quick hello to them before going off to find her seat.

“Oh my God, love,” Mom said, tears falling from her eyes the moment she saw me. “You look so beautiful.”

To my embarrassment, tears sprung to my own eyes as well. “Thanks, Mom,” I managed.

“I just came by to drop your father off here, but I’ll go and find my seat now. I love you, and have fun out there.”
I smiled, trying to wipe my eyes without messing up my makeup. “I will.”

“I mean it, though. Don’t get caught up in all the stupid stuff, just enjoy this day that you’ve been planning for months, and enjoy Henry. I don’t want you to look back on your wedding day and realize that you didn’t enjoy it as much as you could.”

Mom gave me one more hug before she went out to find her seat as well. I turned to my father then, and half laughed, half cried when I realized he was crying too. “Come here, Daddy,” I said, holding my arms out for a hug. “I love you.”

“I love you, too, sweetheart. I’m so proud of everything you’ve done and all you’ve achieved, and I’m so happy for you now that you’re taking the next step in you life.”

“Thank you, Daddy.”

There was a knock on the door then, and Hanna called, “Come in! Unless you’re Henry! In that case, get your ass over to the altar!”

The door opened and Ryan poked his head into the room. Henry had chosen our director for If You Love Someone, who also happened to be a very good friend of ours, as one of his groomsmen. He was dressed like Scott was, in a black suit, white dress shirt and a purple tie. A single white rose was pinned to his lapel. “Henry’s at the altar right now,” he informed us. “We’re ready to go out there now.”

I nodded. “Yeah, okay. Cool. I can do this. I can definitely do this,” I told myself.

“You’re not getting cold feet, are you?” Ryan checked.

“Of course not, idiot,” I told him jokingly. We’d come a long way in our friendship. Two years ago, when we were still filming If You Love Someone, I never would’ve dared to call him an idiot, not even as a joke. “I’m just worried about me tripping my way down the aisle.”

“Remember what I told you in the car?” Hanna said. “You’re not going to trip. You’ve walked in high heels and dresses many times before—the only difference now is that it’s your wedding, which shouldn’t matter. Now let’s get out there.”

We left the dressing room and walked out into the hallway, where all of the groomsmen and flower girls were already waiting in front of the big double doors.

“Oh my gosh, you look so pretty, Aunt Juliette,” Willow said, her eyes wide. She, along with Caitlin, were the flower girls. They were both wearing identical dresses, with a white satin top, and a deep purple tulle skirt. The purple in their dresses was the same as the purple in my bridesmaids’ dresses.

“Thank you, Willow,” I said with a smile.

“You really do look pretty, Julie,” Caitlin said, and she must’ve been telling the truth, because I had never seen her so awed. She had also picked up on Hanna’s nickname for me, and hardly called me by my full name anymore.

“Thanks, Caitie. You look beautiful, too. As do you, Willow. I picked good flower girls.”

They both beamed at me, but we couldn’t stand and chat for long, because Willow and Caitlin had to go out soon. I heard the music playing, and once they got their cue, the double doors opened and Caitlin and Willow walked out with their woven baskets filled with flower petals.
Once the flower girls were going, it was Shaye and Ryan’s turn to walk down the aisle. After that, Cynthia and Colin were up, and then Klarissa and Keegan. Just before Hanna and Scott’s cue came up, Hanna gave me one last quick hug, and then they were off.

My arm looped through my father’s, I waited anxiously for my cue. When I heard it, I took a deep breath and started walking. It helped that the pace was slow, so I didn’t have to concentrate too much on walking. Instead, I could look ahead of me and spot Henry for the first time that day.

He looked amazing. Gorgeous. Breathtaking. He had never looked as perfect as at that very moment. He was looking at me like I was the only one in the room, like I was his whole world, like I was the sun and the moon and the stars. He was smiling and fighting off tears at the same time, but he didn’t really succeed at that last part, because some tears spilled over.

I couldn’t hold them back either after that, and had I not been in public, I probably would’ve run up to him, wrapped my arms around his neck, buried my face in his chest, and just bawled my eyes out.

I had been so worried about walking, but now I just wanted to run to the altar. The pace was too slow. I just wanted to be with him already, to touch him, make sure that this was really real, really happening. When I finally did reach the altar and Dad kissed my cheek and told me he loved me, I hardly remembered to say it back. I just wanted to be with Henry already.

When finally—finally—I released my father and stepped up to Henry, he took my hand in his, wiping my tears away with his free hand. I laughed a little and returned the favor, wiping his tears away as well.

“I love you,” he whispered.

I broke out in a wide smile. “I love you, too,” I whispered back.

“Beloved guests, friends, and family, we are gathered here today to celebrate the love that is so very apparent between these two people.”

James, one of Henry’s brothers, was officiating our wedding. Henry had asked him to as soon as he’d announced our engagement to his family, and James had consented, saying he was gonna work on an amazing speech right away. I hardly heard any of it now, though—which was why it was a good thing we were having our wedding filmed professionally. The footage would be just for ourselves, not the media. We simply wanted a memento of our special day.

All I could focus on now was Henry, and the way he looked so incredibly happy, the way his eyes were still red and teary, and how he could just not stop smiling. I wanted to reach up and kiss him, but knew I had to wait.

When James reached the real part of the ceremony, however, I was able to focus a little better.

“May I have the rings, please?” James asked.

Scott retrieved the ring box from his pocket and handed it over to James. James handed Henry my ring.

“Do you, Henry William Dalgliesh Cavill, take Juliette Morrison as your lawfully wedded wife?”

Henry’s smile widened even more, his grip on my hand tightening. “I do,” he said, his voice ringing clear through the entire room. My heart soared at those two simple words. He slid the intricate wedding band, designed especially to match my engagement ring, around my finger. As he did, his fingers softly caressed my left hand.
James handed me Henry’s ring. “Do you, Juliette Morrison, take Henry William Dalgiesh Cavill as your lawfully wedded husband?”

I smiled, feeling the butterflies in my stomach. “I do,” I said, my voice clear and steady. I slid the platinum band around Henry’s finger and admired it for a moment. It was the thing that marked him as mine. The ring looked like it belonged on his finger, like it had always been there instead of just for a few seconds. This is what Henry must’ve felt like when he slid the engagement ring on my finger all those months ago.

“We’ve reached the part in the ceremony where Juliette and Henry exchange their vows for each other. Henry, do you want to go first?”

Henry nodded and took a deep, nervous breath before he started. “Juliette, I vow to you that, from this day forward, I will choose you. I will choose to love you every second of every hour of every day for the rest of my life. I will choose you when times are easy, and I will choose you when times are hard. I will choose to love you even when everything is working against us, because there is nothing stronger than what we have. I vow to protect you from any harm that may come. I vow to be there for you when you need me, and even when you don’t. I vow to you that I will do everything I can to make you feel better when you’re feeling down or sick, because I love you, now and forever.”

Henry couldn’t make it through his vows without spilling some tears, and neither could I. Sadly, that meant that my voice was a little pitchy when it was my turn to say my vows. But honestly? I didn’t even care that I sounded as choked up as I actually was.

“Henry, from this day forward, I promise to love you for the rest of my life, and beyond. I promise to always be there for you, no matter what hardships are trying to knock us down. I promise to be strong for you, even when I can’t be strong for myself, because I know you’ll do the same for me. I promise to never doubt you. I promise to always let you be you, just as I know you will always let me be me. Henry, you have one of the purest hearts of anyone I know. You inspire me to be the best version of myself I possibly can be, and for that, I’m so very grateful. I love you.”

When I finished my vows, we both turned to James. He was smiling and stalling the very moment everyone was waiting for. When I thought I couldn’t handle it anymore, he said, “I now pronounce you husband and wife. Henry, you may kiss your bride. Make it count, brother.”

That last statement triggered laughter among the wedding guests, but that laughter quickly turned into loud whoops and cheers when Henry actually followed his brother’s advice. He cupped my face in his hands and stepped closer to me so we were pressed flush against each other. I tilted my face up to meet his and he kissed me.

It was a kiss that made my entire head spin and my knees grow weak. He kissed me with so much passion and love, and it was like we were all alone again. It didn’t matter that dozens of guests were watching us kiss, nearly bordering on making out. It didn’t matter that our parents and grandparents were amongst those guests. All that mattered was that we were in love and we were married. I had missed him all day and had wanted to kiss him from the moment I’d first seen him waiting for me at the altar, just a few minutes ago. I gripped him tight as I kissed him, never wanting to let him go.

Eventually, though, I knew we had to. As the grand finale, Henry dipped me low, triggering even more and louder cheers, and didn’t stop kissing me until he’d brought me back up again. He kissed my forehead before whispering, “I love you.”

I broke out in my biggest smile yet. “I love you, too.”

After the ceremony, it was time for pictures and cocktail hour. After that, it was time for the dinner.
The menu had been thought up entirely by Harvey, and he had instructed the chefs on everything, but he wasn’t actually cooking himself. That must’ve killed him, but I hoped he was secretly glad that he didn’t have to work and could instead enjoy my wedding, just like I’d intended him to. Ella was sitting next to him, whispering something in his ear that made him laugh. They’d been together for a little over two months now, and I couldn’t be happier for them. Maybe if this acting thing didn’t work out, I could go into the matchmaking business.

Before we could start eating, however, it was time for the Maid of Honor and Best Man to give their speeches. Hanna went up first.

“I have known Juliette pretty much all my life. For more than twenty five years, she has been my very best friend, the person I can confide anything in, and it could never be weird. I mean, we’ve showered together more than once, so we don’t really have any boundaries,” she said, and while the crowd laughed, I covered my face. “But before y’all get any ideas, we haven’t showered together in approximately twenty years, but you know, we’ve still seen each other naked, so…”

“Oh my God…” I muttered.

“But now Juliette’s found a new type of best friend, and I couldn’t be happier for the both of them—just as long as Henry knows I’m still her best friend, too, and if he ever hurts her, I’ll have his balls. But he knows that already, because I already threatened him the moment he started dating Juliette, and I think I made it pretty memorable,” she joked, to which Henry nodded, pretending to look terrified. “Also, I can guarantee that it has definitely not been twenty years since Juliette and Henry have showered together, but let’s not get into that.” The crowd laughed even louder, and I turned bright red. I wanted to rip the microphone out of Hanna’s hand. I had no idea of what was still to come, and with Hanna, all bets were off. But the look on her face softened, and I had a feeling we’d approached safer waters now. “Juliette, I just really, really love you a lot, and you know that. No matter what happens, you’ll always be my best friend. Henry, I’ve really come to love you, too. You’re a great guy, and I couldn’t imagine a better person for Juliette to spend the rest of her life with. Juliette, Henry, I wish you all the love, all the happiness, and all the joy in the world, and I think you both know I mean that from the bottom of my heart. I love you both.”

Hanna set the microphone down and walked over to give us both a hug. I hugged her tight, trying hard not to cry again, and said, “I love you, too, Han. So fucking much.”

Scott was up next. “Well, I’m most definitely not as eloquent as my amazing, lovely girlfriend, so don’t get your hopes up, guys,” he said, and I snickered. “Henry, Juliette, I haven’t known you as long as Hanna has, but in those two years that I have known you, you both have taken up huge chunks of both my life and my heart. Any fool can see that you two love each other, and I’m so glad you got the hell over yourselves and just confessed that to each other,” he said, and Henry and I laughed. “Anyway, because I’m not as well-spoken and hadn’t really written a speech or anything, I decided to do something different. I contacted the directors of the movies you did together—one of which is sitting in this very room and is one of the groomsmen, Ryan Zachary—and asked them to send over some behind the scenes footage of these two. I chose my favorite moments and made a fun little montage. So enjoy.”

Scott started the video, and it was displayed on a big screen in the front of the room. The first clip showed us on the set of our second movie together. We were sitting on a bench, and I remember thinking that we were being covert, but we obviously hadn’t been. We were laughing together, sneaking kisses here and there. Then the next clip showed one of my favorite bloopers to this day. It was the day we were filming that scene of If You Love Someone with Kal, Hanna and Caitlin in the back and Kal had been sick of sitting still, so he’d ran at Henry and me full force. When Caitlin yelled, “Blooper!” the whole room laughed.
“That’s my baby!” Lorene yelled loudly, but no one really paid her any attention as another clip was shown.

It was another favorite of mine. In the second movie, we’d been kissing against a wall, when suddenly the set no longer held and the wall fell down, taking Henry and me down with it. Neither one of us had gotten hurt, and it had been a hilarious moment in the end.

The video showed some more clips of us filming both movies. Some were romantic, and some were hilarious bloopers. All in all, the video was a great gift, and better than any speech could’ve been.

Time passed by incredibly quickly after that. The dinner passed by in a blur of loud laughter and good food. Before we knew it, it was time for us to cut the cake. It was a beautiful three-tiered cake, and Cynthia had said she’d been inspired by my dress when she’d started designing it. The white fondant looked a little shiny, almost like satin. The fondant on the bottom tier was a little flowy, like a skirt. Here and there, Cynthia had applied some piping made to look like lace appliqué, just like my over-bodice. Over the top two tiers, small buttons ran down the middle, just like the back of my wedding dress. On the edge of the bottom tier she’d placed a fondant bow and a bouquet of edible white roses. There were more roses on top of the cake as well. She’d done an amazing job, and it was almost too beautiful to eat.

After cutting and eating the cake, it was time for our first dance. The room was dim with purple accents all around it. There were purple and white balloons covering the ceiling. That might’ve looked tacky, but in this castle setting, it actually looked romantic.

“Please clear the floor for Mr. and Mrs. Henry Cavill,” Ryley’s voice sounded through the speakers. He was standing by the DJ booth, holding a microphone. Normally, a microphone plus Ryley would equal disaster, but I knew he’d hold out on his usual crazy antics for me. “It’s time for the lovely newly weds’ first dance.”

As the floor cleared, Ryley pressed play. When the subject of our first dance had come up, Henry and I knew immediately that we’d want to dance to a song by Ron Pope. The real challenge, though, had been what song to choose. After narrowing it down to seven possibilities, we’d spent hours and hours on listening to them over and over before finally ending up with our final choice: Our Song.

On our first date, I asked you to dance / You turned bright red and started to laugh / I stayed straight-faced until you stopped

I wrapped my arms around Henry’s neck, and he placed his hands on my waist. He pulled me closer, so I was pressed flush against him. I released a happy sigh and rested my cheek on his shoulder as we swayed.

Said, ‘Won’t you take my hand / Take my heart / Promise to never stop dancing once we start / Oh / ‘Cause this is our song’

We weren’t really dancing as much as swaying, but I couldn’t care less. I also didn’t care that people were watching, which was strange for me. All that mattered was that I was wrapped in my husband’s arms, feeling more loved than I ever had.

Got up my nerve and asked your old man / Said, “Oh, this is love, may I have her hand?” / He smiled and said, “Son, that’ll be just fine.”

Henry cupped my face with one hand and brought his lips down to mine. He kissed me softly, but all the love in the world was poured into that one simple kiss. I wanted this moment to never, ever end.
And I will bring you the mountains / Or write your name 'cross the sky / Anything that you need I will try to find

I laughed as he spun me around and dipped me low, kissing me again as I was leaning on his arm, his other hand on my waist.

If the stars burn out and no longer shine / I'll still search for heaven right in your eyes / Oh / Oh / 'Cause this is our song

As the song ended, the crowd cheered loudly as Henry kissed me one more time, harder than the previous ones. He had my face cupped in both of his hands, holding me so gently as if I might break. When he pulled away, he gave me a brilliant smile. “I love you, Mrs. Cavill.”

I smiled back at him, my heart fluttering at the sound of my new name. “I love you, too.”

The music was much faster paced after that, and I happily danced with my friends, glad I’d chosen a wedding dress I could dance in. I danced with every single one of my friends, and I even danced with Caitlin, Willow, and the rest of Henry’s nephews and nieces. It was noticeable that Henry had a much bigger family than I had, but that didn’t matter, especially not now. We were all a big family now.

“Have you even had time to let it sink in that you’re now Henry’s wife?” Hanna asked me when I was finally dancing with her.

I shook my head. “No, not really. But every time I catch a glimpse of my wedding band or Henry’s, I feel this fluttering in my stomach. It’s so surreal and so strange, but it’s real. I’m just so happy,” I told her.

She smiled. “I’m glad. And I’m so very happy for you, Julie. I love you, hon.”

“I love you, too, Han,” I told her, smiling back at her. I’d smiled so much today already that my cheeks hurt, but I couldn’t stop. I really was just too happy. “So,” I started with a mischievous smile. “When is Scott finally going to pop the question to you, huh?”

Like magic, Hanna immediately turned bright red. “I don’t know. We’ve never really talked about it.”

“You’ve been together longer than Henry and I have been, though, so you never know. He might have bought a ring already.”

She narrowed her eyes at me. “Do you know something that I don’t?”

I laughed. “No, I definitely don’t. He’s Henry’s best friend, remember? Not mine. But I do think that he loves you insanely much.”

Hanna smiled, still blushing. “I know. And I love him so incredibly much, too. But anyway, this is your day. Speaking of, I think your husband wants to dance with you now,” she said, pointing behind me.

I turned around and spotted Henry standing there with two champagne glasses. I gave Hanna a quick hug before approaching Henry. “Hello, husband,” I said with a wide smile.

“Hello, wife,” he said, copying my smile. “Here, I brought you some champagne.”

I laughed. “As if I haven’t had enough of that yet,” I joked, but I accepted the flute anyway. We
clinked our glasses together before taking a sip at the same time.

“Can you believe we’re actually married?” Henry asked me.

I shook my head. “No, I can’t. But I’m actually Mrs. Juliette Cavill right now.” I giggled. “That sounds so odd!”

We’d discussed the matter of my name early on in the engagement. Legally, my name now really was Juliette Cavill, but just because it was simpler, I would still be credited as Juliette Morrison in projects.

Henry pulled me close with his free hand. “I wonder if I’ll ever get used to it.”

“I don’t know if I ever will,” I admitted, wrapping my arms around his neck. I was careful not to spill any of my champagne over his head.

“I love you,” he said, bending his head to kiss me softly.

“I love you, too,” I mumbled against his lips.

The party continued well until after midnight, but eventually it really was time for us to leave, otherwise we’d miss our flight. Our honeymoon location would be the Maldives. We’d rented one of those cute houses in the sea, with a glass floor in the middle so you could look down at the water below. I was extremely excited to spend two weeks there, but before we could leave, I had one more thing to do.

“All right then!” Ryley called out through his microphone. “It’s time for Henry and Juliette to leave on their honeymoon. What they’re going to do there, I have no idea,” he joked, much to my embarrassment. I blushed bright red, but Henry just smirked, wiggling his eyebrows, making the crowd laugh. “But first, there’s apparently this tradition where Juliette throws some flowers around? I don’t know if that’s entirely safe, because I’m familiar with Juliette’s aim, and it’s completely whack, but oh well. So all the unmarried ladies, if you dare, go stand behind Juliette.”

I turned around as a crowd of women started gathering in the middle of the dance floor. When it seemed that no one else was going to join, Ryley started his countdown.

“Three… Two… One!”

I threw my bouquet over my head and quickly turned around to see where it would end up. I laughed loudly when I saw Hanna standing there with a bewildered look on her face, my bouquet clutched in her hands. “Oh, God…” she muttered, making me laugh even louder.

“Well, Hanna, you’re next,” Ryley dead-panned. “Scotty, I think it’s time for you to go ring shopping, or get the hell out of dodge. If you do that, though…” he said, his voice turning threatening as he pointed at Scott. “Remember Keegan’s brother’s swords. We have not forgotten our promise.”

Scott laughed good-naturedly, but Hanna was bright red, still clutching my bouquet in her hands. To save my best friend from mortal embarrassment and uneasiness, I quickly diverted the attention back to myself. I walked up to Ryley and pried the microphone out of his hands. “Everyone, thank you so much for coming today,” I said sincerely, looking at all the people gathered before me. “It means a lot to Henry and myself that you shared this amazing day with us. I feel like the luckiest girl in the world. I love you all.”

“What she said,” Henry joked, leaning over me to speak into the microphone.
It really was time to leave then. Henry and I hugged all of our guests goodbye, receiving last-minute well-wishes. I didn’t think my heart could be this filled with love without bursting, but I was still alive and breathing, so it must’ve been possible after all. When we’d said goodbye together, Henry took my hand.

“On to the next step of our lives,” he said, smiling as he wiped one stray tear off my face.

Feeling choked up, I smiled back at him. “On to the next step,” I agreed.

Chapter End Notes

THEY’RE MARRIED! MY BABIES ARE MARRIED! I've been writing towards this moment for a loooooong time, guys.

And you know what that means. This was the last chapter, and I feel so strange because of it. Don't worry, of course there's still the epilogue, but... it's not the same as an actual chapter. I have been working on this story for SO long, much longer than I've simply been posting it, and it's been such a ride. I've fallen in love with these character (and I've possible also fallen in love with Henry a little more), and it's going to be hard to leave them behind. Anyway, thank you all so much for taking this ride with me. It's been so much fun!

And now, for the last time ever... See you guys next week!

The lyrics at the start of the chapter are Lock Me Up by The Cab.
Epilogue

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Should this be the last thing I see

I want you to know it’s enough for me

‘Cause all that you are is all that I’ll ever need

~*~*~*~*~*~

Five years later

~*~*~*~*~*~

Sunday, June 18, 2023.

“Stil zijn, okay, William?” I whispered to my three-year-old son, asking him to be quiet in Dutch.

William nodded. “Yes, Mommy,” he whispered back. He clutched the banister with one hand as we descended the stairs, holding my hand with the other.

“Jij ook stil zijn, okay, Allison?”

My one-year-old daughter just giggled up at me as she sat on my other arm. I shushed her with a smile, and we continued our slow descent down the stairs.

When we finally reached the bottom, Kal and Persephone greeted us happily, and I thanked the stars that they didn’t bark. “Hey, babies,” I told them. “Come with me, and I’ll give you guys your breakfast.”

“Can we have breakfast, too, Mommy?” William asked. “I’m hungry.” He would be turning four in two months, but he was very intelligent for his age. I tried not to pressure him into learning, however. If he wanted to learn, that was great, but I wasn’t about to raise him like my aunt raised Caitlin. She was fourteen now, and already getting quite rebellious.

“I’m gonna make some as soon as I’ve fed the dogs, all right?”

“Okay, Mommy.”

“Mama!” Allison shrieked happily.

“Shh,” I reminded her, but I couldn’t stop the laugh that bubbled up in my throat.

We reached the kitchen and I put her up in her high chair as William clambered onto a regular chair. I handed William his coloring book and crayons to keep him pacified, and gave Allison her favorite picture book. As William colored and Allison looked at the pictures of animals in the book, I couldn’t help but smile at my children, feeling my chest grow warm with love. William had his father’s curls and my green eyes, but Allison had her father’s eyes, right down to the brown specks in her blue irises. She was nearly two, but still too young to really see what her hair was going to be like, though the ends of the short, brown strands were already starting to twist up a little, so I suspected she’d have curls as well.
As the children were busy, I filled Kal’s and Persephone’s bowls with dry dog food. Then I washed my hands before getting out the ingredients for chocolate chip pancakes. I sang as I cooked, William doing his best to sing along as he colored.

“I’m a little hunk of tin, nobody knows what I have been,” I sang, mixing the ingredients together in a bowl.

I started in on *Mary Had a Little Lamb* by the time I put the pancake batter in the frying pan, but William had already lost his interest in singing along.

“Allie, draw with me,” he said, and he scooted closer to her, taking his coloring book with him. He handed her a random crayon, and she seemed a little confused as to what to do with it. “Here, Allie, like this.” He set his blue crayon to the paper and started moving it, inspiring his sister to do the same with her green one.

I smiled at my children as they colored together, giggling at their own personal inside jokes. Later, there would probably be sibling rivalry between the two of them, fighting all the time about nonsensical stuff, and I tried my best to appreciate the peace that still ruled this household. For now, at least.

“William, honey, go wake your daddy, okay?” The pancakes weren’t done yet, but they would be soon. If I timed it right, Henry would come downstairs just as I was plating them up.

“Oh, Mommy.” He turned to his little sister and said, “You keep coloring, okay, Allie? I’ll be right back, I promise, and then I’ll color with you again. Maybe Daddy will even join us.”

Allison gave him a bright smile and continued to scratch her green crayon violently over the picture of Winnie the Pooh.

William slid off his chair. “I’ll be right back, Mommy.”

I smiled. “Don’t forget to bring your daddy with you when you do.”

“I won’t, Mommy. *Ik beloof het*,” he promised.

“Wees voorzichtig op de trap,” I said, telling him to be careful on the stairs.

“*Ja, mama.*”

Henry and I had decided to raise our kids bilingually because we’d heard that raising them like that improved their learning skills. Also, I’d personally always wanted to raise my kids bilingually, way before I’d ever met Henry, because I’d been raised that way, and I wanted to share that with my kids.

William padded off towards the stairs and I continued making the pancakes. I made a heart of chocolate chips on the top pancake of Henry’s short stack, and just when I finished plating up, I heard footsteps too heavy to be William’s coming down the stairs.

I put the plates on the table and turned to the door opening with an expectant smile on my face. When Henry finally did walk through the door, William on his arm (William had become much too big for me to carry him like that, but of course his superhero daddy could still easily do it), my smile widened. “Happy Father’s Day, handsome.”

Henry broke out in a big but tired smile. Every time I saw him, even after almost five years of marriage, I was still amazed by how good he looked. His dark curls were a mess, his white T-shirt was rumpled, but none of that mattered. Not when his smile was brilliant, his eyes were alight with
love and happiness, and his stubble was just the right length. Not to mention that his biceps were bulging with the strength it took to hold William up. Henry had turned forty last month, but he still looked as gorgeous as he did that day I first met him, seven years ago—possibly even more so.

“Thank you, love.” He set William back down on his chair before walking up to me and giving me a kiss hello. “Good morning.”

I cupped his cheek, reveling in the feel of his stubble under my hand. “Good morning. William, have you wished your father a happy Father’s Day yet?”

William looked up from his drawing. He nodded and grinned. “It was the first thing I did after I woke him up, Mommy.”

“Good. I’m proud of you. And you, Allison, can you say ‘happy Father’s Day’?”

“Happy fas day!” she called out, and then giggled loudly.

Henry laughed. He walked up to where she was sitting in her high chair and lifted her up, cradling her to his chest. “Thank you, Allie. Give me a kiss.” He pursed his lips for her, and she gave him an open-mouthed kiss. It made Henry laugh, which she had known would happen, and she giggled in return. “I’m gonna have to teach you to stop doing that before you’re even remotely old enough to date, little giggle monster.” He kissed the top of her head before settling her back in her high chair.

“You’re always so cute with her,” I said, getting the orange juice out of the fridge.

“It’s easy when we’re all such a cute bunch,” he joked. He walked up to me to give me another kiss, a little harder and a little longer this time. “Thanks for making breakfast, by the way.”

“No problem,” I said with a smile.

Henry kissed my forehead before stepping away. “Okay, guys, let’s clean up your coloring stuff so we can eat breakfast. You can go back to it when we’re done, okay?” He grabbed William’s coloring book as William gathered up all of his crayons. As I set the table, Henry put both the coloring book and crayons away.

I cut William’s pancakes up and gave him a plastic Superman fork, and gave Allison a single pancake to eat with her hands, seeing as she was still too young for utensils. Once I was sure everything was on the table and everyone had what they needed, I sat down as well. “Dig in, everyone.”

Henry tugged on my chair to pull me closer and pressed a kiss to my cheek. “I love you,” he whispered.

I smiled, resting my hand on his cheek to pull his face closer, and kissed him softly. “I love you, too,” I whispered against his lips.

He gave me one more kiss before picking up his knife and fork. “So, what were you coloring with Allie, Will?”

“A bear!” he said, excitedly straightening up in his seat. “Just like Uncle Keegs! Because he’s not crazy; he’s a bear.”

“Keeg!” Allison yelled, crushing the edges of her pancake with her tiny fists.

I laughed. The kids, especially William, loved Keegan to pieces. To make them laugh, Keegan
would say, ‘I’m not crazy; I’m a bear.’ Other times he was a plane, and other times he was a cookie. Mostly, though, he claimed he was a bear. “Should we take a picture of your drawing when you’re done, so we can send it to Uncle Keegan?”

William nodded so fast I was afraid it was making his brain tumble all through his skull. “Yes!” he said, before shoving another forkful of pancake into his mouth.

Breakfast went by with a lot of laughter and talk. Once William got started, he was incredibly chatty. He’d probably spent too much time with Hanna, his godmother, already. When we were done eating, Henry helped me clean up while William and Allison went back to coloring in Winnie the Pooh.

“We’re done, Mommy!” William announced, putting down the crayon he’d been using. “You can take the picture now.”

I walked up to my children, leaning over them to see the final result, and had to fight a laugh. It was quite easily discernible who’d colored what. William had tried to stay within the lines, though he’d used colors that weren’t usually associated with Winnie the Pooh, but Allison’s main goal had mostly been to just scratch her crayon over the paper. Still, I did what any good, supportive parent would do—I lied. “Oh, wow, guys! That looks amazing! I’m gonna take a picture right now and send it to Keegs. He’ll love it, I’m sure.”

I took my phone from the pocket of my sweats and took a picture of the drawing. I sent the picture as an attachment to a text to Keegan:

The kids colored a drawing of you. Literal quote from Will: “Just like Uncle Keegs! Because he’s not crazy; he’s a bear.”

Seconds later, I got a reply:

HAHAHAHA! Glad to see I’m making an impression on Will. Tell them I loved it. Actually, ask them if I can have it so I can put it on the fridge.

“What did he say?” William asked eagerly, smart enough to know whenever my phone received a text.

“He loves it. He wants to know if he can have it so he can put it on the fridge.”

“Of course he can! Right, Allie? It’s your drawing, too, so you can say.”

“He have it!” she said, clapping her hands together happily.

I smiled at her. She was such a happy child, and I hoped she could hold on to that as she aged. “All right. We’ll keep it in the book for now, and the next time we see Uncle Keegs, we’ll give it to him, okay?”

“Okay!” Will and Allie chimed.

“Cool. Now, let’s give Daddy his gifts, yeah?”

“You got me a gift?” Henry asked, looking genuinely surprised. “You really didn’t have to.”

“Gifts,” I said with a smile. “Plural. And I know, but we wanted to, right?” I asked William and Allison. They both nodded. “Besides, you’re always the one giving us gifts. I love any opportunity where I can give you something in return.”
“You’ve already given me so much,” he said, grabbing me by my waist and pulling me closer. “You’ve given me true happiness, the kind that I never thought I could have before I met you. You’ve given me Will and Allie. There’s nothing else I could want.”

I grinned. “The same goes for me, and yet that never seems to stop you whenever you give me something. So shut up and let us give you your gifts.”

He chuckled, letting me force him down onto a chair. “Yes, ma’am.”

I received two gifts from a drawer no one ever looked in, and gave the lightest to Allison so she could give it to her father. “Go on, Allie, give it to Daddy.”

Allison reached her short little arm towards her father, and Henry reached the rest of the way to accept it. “You, Daddy!”

Henry smiled at her. “Thank you so much, Allie.” He carefully unwrapped the cylinder-formed present. In it, was a rolled up piece of paper. He rolled it out, his smile widening when he saw what was on it. It was a drawing made by William. It showed the four of us, our names under it. In the sky, there were two handprints. One purple one—William’s, and one smaller, blue one—Allison’s. “That is the most beautiful drawing I have ever seen. Thanks, you two.” He reached over to his kids, ruffling their hair lovingly.

I gave the second present to William. “Careful with that, Will, it’s heavy. Go ahead and give it to Daddy.”

“Happy Father’s Day, Daddy,” William said, padding over to Henry in his Superman slippers. He handed the gift over to his father.

“Thank you, Will,” Henry said, bending down to press a kiss to William’s head. He opened this present just as carefully as he had the first one. When the wrapping paper was off completely, he smiled, and I could tell he was tearing up a little. He was holding an inscribed silver plaque that he could hang on the wall. “A father is his children’s first superhero,” he read aloud. “Thank you all so much. These were the perfect presents.” He set the plaque down on the table carefully before getting up. He walked over to where Allison was sitting and kissed the top of her head, then did the same for William, and then turned to me. He gave me long kiss. “Thank you, Juliette. These really were the perfect presents.”

I smiled back at him, gently stroking his cheek with my thumb. “You’re welcome, baby. But that wasn’t all.”

Henry’s eyebrows rose. “It wasn’t?”

“But I thought we didn’t have any more presents, Mommy,” William said.

“You didn’t know about this present, either, honey. I wanted it to be a surprise for you as well.”

“Suppise?” Allison asked curiously.

“We’re going on vacation together, just the four of us,” I said with a smile. “One week to London, one week to Jersey, where your Daddy was born, and one week to the Netherlands, where Grandma Anne and Grandpa Jack were born.”

“You didn’t,” Henry said with an expanding smile.

I grinned back at him. “I did. It’s been so long since either of us has been to Europe, let alone for fun,
so I thought it was high time to go again, and this time we can actually take Allie and Will. Besides, I’ve never properly seen England, so I can finally do that, too. And in the Netherlands, we can maybe go to the Efteling, an amazing amusement park that has this beautiful fairytale forest, and the kids would love it. We’re leaving in September, so I hope you didn’t have anything planned for our anniversary.”

“Not yet, no. It is our five year anniversary, though. We’ve got to do something special.”

“We will. We’ll be in Delft then, so we’ll figure something out.”

Henry smirked, leaning in close. He whispered, “Maybe we could book a room in that hotel in Amsterdam. We could reenact our first time together. You know, without the running away part.”

I laughed. “We’ll see. Those weren’t really romantic circumstances, so maybe we could find something else.”

His smirk widened into a grin. “Who says it needs to be romantic?”

I slapped him on his chest softly. “It’s our five year wedding anniversary! Some romance would be nice.”

“All right, all right, all right,” he relented, laughing. “But we will redo the tour, with the kids this time.”

“I can handle that. I’ll leave out the gory parts, though.”

“Seems like a good idea.”

He picked up Allison from her high chair and William slid off his stool before we walked into the living room. We settled on the couch together, Allison on Henry’s lap, William on mine, and Kal and Persephone on the floor by our feet. We turned on the TV, old school cartoons filling up the screen.

As the kids were quickly immersed in *Tom and Jerry*, I rested my head on Henry’s shoulder. “I love you,” I told him.

He smiled, pulling Allison a little closer to his chest. She had proven herself to be a real daddy’s girl, just as William was a true mama’s boy. “I love you, too, Juliette Cavill. I still do so enjoy saying that.”

A slow smile spread out over my face. “And I still love hearing you say it.”

“And I love you, Allison Amelia Cavill,” he said as he kissed the top of Allison’s head. “And I love you, William Noah Cavill.”

William turned to smile at his father. “I love you, too, Daddy. And I love you, Mommy.”

I felt my heart expand, just as it did every time William told me he loved me. “I love you, too, Will.”

Will had been named after his father, Henry William Dalgliesh Cavill, and his middle name had been after the character Henry had played in *If You Love Someone*, the first movie Henry and I had starred in together. Allison’s middle name, Amelia, had been after my character. We’d made another movie together with Ryan after that (which did actually end up giving us a box set of movies, which was the exact thing Ryan had joked about), but *If You Love Someone* was still special to us. It was the movie that had made us meet, that made us fall in love, no matter how stubborn and stupid we may have been while working on it. We wanted to pay homage to that through our children.
“Did you clean the stone grill outside?” I whispered, as to not disturb our children as they watched Tom chase after Jerry.

Henry nodded. “Yeah, I did,” he whispered back. “It’s all ready to go when Scott, Hanna and Emmett arrive.”

“Good. Thanks for cleaning it, babe.”

“No problem,” he said, kissing the top of my head.

Every Sunday evening, Hanna and Scott would come over for dinner. Hanna had officially been Hanna Tayler now for three years. Scott had asked her a few weeks after my wedding with Henry. Apparently he’d had the engagement ring for months, but had just been gathering up courage. Amazingly, and also typically us, Hanna had become pregnant with Emmett around the same time I got pregnant with Allison. We’d always joked how alike we were—I bump my head, she bumps her head five minutes later; she falls down the stairs, I fall down the stairs a week later—so I guess we should’ve seen the simultaneous pregnancies coming. It had all our friends joking that, one day, Allison and Emmett were destined to fall in love.

“Mommy?” William asked suddenly, looking up at me.

“Yes, sweetheart?”

“Are you happy?”

The question took me by surprise. It was a very existential question for a three-year-old. “Why do you ask that, Will?”

“I saw a movie about a girl. Her mommy was very sad all the time, and it made the girl sad. I don’t want to be sad, Mommy.”

I nearly cried at that. How could I not, especially with those beautiful green eyes staring up at me? I tightened my arms around him and pulled him closer, kissing the top of his head. “You don’t ever have to be sad, William, not about that. There was a time, long ago, before I ever had you, where I was very sad all the time. But not anymore. How could I be sad, when I have the perfect husband, the perfect daughter, and the _perfect_ son? Now I’m happy all the time.”

William smiled, showing his tiny baby teeth. “Good. And Mommy?”

“Yes, sweetheart?”

“I’m happy all the time, too.”

I fought my tears as best I could, knowing William would see them as signs of sadness, while that was far from the truth. “I’m glad, Will. I want you to be happy.”

“Allie, are you happy, too?” William asked his little sister.

Allison clapped her hands together. “Happy, happy, happy, happy, happy!” she sang, making Henry and me laugh. I quickly wiped a tear away while everyone was distracted by her.

“And Daddy, are you happy all the time, too?”

Henry looked at me, the purest form of love in his eyes, then down at Allison, who was still chanting, and then at William. “Yes, Will. I’m happy all the time, too. I love you for being so
considerate.”

William furrowed his brow. “What does that word mean?”

“It means that you care about what other people feel,” Henry explained.

“Well, then I’m very considerate. And I love you, too, Daddy.”

We all snuggled a little closer, our happy little family. If I compared myself from seven years ago to how I was now, I could hardly recognize myself. I went from an insecure, lonely girl to a woman surrounded by love and happiness. My anxiety attacks still came, but with a much lower frequency and intensity. I was truly happy, and content, and loved, and I knew it wasn’t going to stop. This little family that we’d created was forever. I was grateful for my life, instead of resenting it. And all thanks to that one day, that one moment, where I literally fell into Henry’s life.

Chapter End Notes

So this is officially the end... I'm not exactly sure how to feel about it. This story has been such a big part of my life, for months now—much longer than I've been uploading it. It feels so strange to finally upload the epilogue... As if it's leaving a hollow in my chest.

Some of you have asked me if I was going to continue their story, and though I really, really, really want to, I just honestly don't have the time. In two weeks, I'll be starting college again, and I have no doubt that I will be crazy busy with that. Also, I should really focus on writing the books that I actually want on people's bookshelves one day, because one day, I hope to be a professional author.

However, I still have many ideas for Henry and Juliette's story—ideas that demand to be written. So, I figured that I could make a collection of drabbles. I won't be posting anywhere near as regularly as I did with MaS, but it's something, right? Some will be never-before-seen scenes from in-between chapters, some will be from after the epilogue, some will be scenes, new or old, from Henry's point of view... So if you guys would like that, I will post the first drabble on Friday, but I can't guarantee that the next drabble will follow soon after.

To everyone who's read MaS, I am so, so, so grateful to every single one of you. I appreciate all the kudos you gave me, and every single comment made me dance with happiness. Thank you all so much. To Keegs, thank you so much for your unwavering and undying support. This story never would have been posted without your encouragement. (Your comment on the previous chapter made me cry, by the way, so fuck you for that. <3)

Again, thank you so very much for everything. It means the world to me.

P.S. I forgot to mention this earlier, mostly just because I was so overwhelmed by this being the last installment, but you might have noticed that this story often deals with anxiety. If you deal with it yourself or just want someone to talk to, I’m always available. My Twitter handle is JoniBvH, or should you want it to be a little more private, my Tumblr is cloiskane. I’m always in the market for new friends, and if you could use one too, consider me a listening ear. No one should go through shit alone, and
if I could be a positive influence on only one person, I’ll feel like I’ve done my part at least a little bit. <3

The song at the start of the epilogue is Tenerife Sea by Ed Sheeran.

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