Time Only Flies When You're Around

by interestedbystander

Summary

If she’d learnt one thing in all the years she’d known him, it was that he always managed to make her feel new and exciting ways of hating how much she cared about him.
To You, Valentine

Chapter Notes

I made a rule about you - I made a plan
For getting my feet back on the ground - Bury my face in clouds
For hours on end - But time only flies when you're around

If of course you're old enough to know who Belinda Carlisle is, let alone this lovely song, Valentine.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“I don’t think I’m going to go,” Sasha Benson said, putting her phone on loudspeaker as she poured herself glass of pinot, snuggled on her couch, preparing for a fantastic (boring) night in. “I’m sorry, I know it’s Seb’s early birthday drinks but I’m just exhausted.”

“No, I do not accept your excuse,” Olivia Mitchell replied. Sasha could hear the New York City traffic behind her. “I know why you’re attempting to bail on this, and I’m sorry, just because you’ve figured out you’re in love with him, it doesn’t mean you can ignore him for rest of your life.”

Sasha had to laugh. “Actually, that is exactly what it means,” she put the glass to her nose, eyes lolling, desperate for her first sip. “I’m here in my sweats, I got cupcakes from Magnolia, I’ve got a glass of wine in my hand, pizza on speed dial and I’m going to binge watch – ”

“Gossip Girl?” Olivia taunted. “No, no! Political Animals. Did you ever watch any show that Sebastian was in?”

“You’re about the worst. And why would I when I can see him in the flesh?” Sasha groaned. “I’ve taken my contacts out and I’m done for the night. I’m about to start binging Jane the Virgin on Netflix. Please let me have this.”

“Fuck you then, we’ll bring the party to you, you fucking spoil sport.”

Sasha laughed, crossing her legs on the coffee table. “I won’t let you in.”

“You gave me a key. You gave Seb a key. Frankly, this is New York. Does anyone in the city not have your key?”

“Two of my greatest regrets in life was giving you idiots my apartment key,” Sasha mumbled.

Olivia grunted finally. “Please don’t ditch me. All of the boys are coming.”

“Stop guilting me. It won’t work.”

Olivia laughed quietly. “I’m sorry. I’m just desperate to get you out of the apartment. You’re turning into a recluse! We haven’t seen you in ages…”

“I am not,” she protested. “It’s a million degrees outside and I’m so tired,” she said, hearing the intercom to her apartment buzz. Sasha sighed, uncoiling herself from the couch and went to the screen. “You’re here.”
“Be glad I at least buzzed to tell you I was here instead of bursting in dramatically. This dress is crazy, right?” Olivia beamed into the camera, opening her jacket and shimmying in front of security camera.

Sasha laughed loudly. “You look fantastic.”

“Let me in, or I’ll let myself in anyway,” she hung up. Sasha reluctantly hit the button and her friend disappeared from view, entering the building. She rested by the door for a minute until she heard the elevator ring and footsteps approach her apartment door. Olivia knocked from the other side. “It’s me.”

Sasha opened the door, letting her friend in. “It is you. Hello.”

“Hi!” Olivia beamed. “Jesus, you’re right. You look like you’re ready to hibernate for the winter,” Olivia sighed as Sasha attempted to avoid insult. “Look,” she closed the apartment door and wandered in, following Sasha to the lounge. She pulled a glass from the cabinet and poured from the bottle Sasha had opened for herself. “Just come out for a bit. You don’t even have to get dressed up – although it would be easier to get in to the bar looking cute instead of this get up,” Olivia reckoned with an unimpressed smile.

“You’re such an arsehole,” Sasha made herself comfortable on the couch again and took her first sip of her wine. “This is so good.”

“You know, the longer you avoid Sebastian, the quicker he’ll figure out something is wrong and he’ll be over here annoying the shit out of you until he gets it out of you. Pretending nothing wrong is about your best bet at this point.”

Sasha sighed. “His new flavour of the week will be there tonight. It’s not going to make me feel any better about this situation.”

“You could just tell him,” Olivia shrugged, sipping the wine.

“You and I know exactly how that will play out.”

“Yeah, he’s not very cluey when it comes to matters of the heart. He never has been, if his track record is anything to go by,” Olivia agreed. “This wine is so good, by the way.”

“I know, right? Seb left it here last week, I figured he can afford another bottle with his Marvel money.”

“Yeah, you’re really struggling with life as a Broadway choreographer,” Olivia smirked.

Sasha rolled her eyes. “Yeah, yeah. Gimme a break, career is on hiatus thanks to a torn ACL.”

“You hadn’t mentioned it in 30 seconds, but glad you reminded me in case I forgot!” Olivia said sarcastically, rolling her eyes. “Please come along tonight?”

Sasha groan, pulling her hoodie over her head and pulling at its drawstrings to hide her face as much as possible. “No,” she whinged.

“Don’t let me down. Or your friends who miss you.”

“Sorry, Ollie. No.”

“I’m calling him.”
“Call him, I don’t give a shit. Why would he care?”

“Of course he cares, you dummy,” Olivia pulled her phone out and found Seb’s number and it rang. She put it on loudspeaker. “You might be able to get away with this with me, but I know you can’t with –”

“Running out the door, Ollie. Are you and Sash on your way to the bar?” Sebastian answered.

“Mr Stan! We’re at Sash’s apartment.”

“Great! I can’t wait to see you both, especially the hermit. Where’s my Uber?” he muttered the last part to himself.

“Oh, Sasha isn’t coming. She’s in her sweats –”

“What are you talking about?”

“She’s got a date with wine, a cupcake and Jane the Virgin apparently.”

“Oh, fuck no. Put her on,” he demanded.

“You’re on loudspeaker. She’s just rolling her eyes at us. Petulant little shit she is.”

“Sash, you are coming tonight,” Sebastian ordered.

“Nah, I’ve had a big enough week already, Seb. Sorry,” Sasha said, giving Ollie the finger and sipping her wine again.

“Umm, actually, I’ll be making 2 stops,” they heard Seb tell the driver, giving Sasha's address. Ollie howled with laughter.

“See, you could have just done this the easy way. But no, you poked the Sea Bass and now he’s coming here.”

“Yup, I am,” Seb confirmed down the line. “This is for my birthday!”

“Now look what you’ve done, Sasha,” Ollie continued.

“Seb, you’re birthday is ages away –” Sasha tried.

“I week and I leave for Germany Monday!” he cut her off.

“Just don’t bother. I have nothing to wear,” Sasha put her head in her hands.

“I don’t believe you at all,” he replied. “I’ll be there in 15 minutes. Ollie, you’d better have some kind of plan in place and have Sash ready to go. Be there soon,” he hung up.

“Great, now you’ve pissed him off,” Olivia muttered. “Told ya.”

“I really don’t want to see him,” Sasha said meekly. Ollie sighed.

“It’s really bad, isn’t it?” she asked her friend, taking a seat next to her. “This isn’t just a crush anymore, is it?”

Sasha shook her head, miserably. “I held out telling you during the ‘crush’ phase in the hopes it would just go away. I honestly thought it would fade, but that didn’t happen and the more I see him
and spend time with him…”

Ollie took Sasha’s glasses off her nose, folded them and put them on the coffee table. “Right,” she sighed, a little guilty she put her friend who was clearly hurting through what she had just done.

“And now he’s going to be here in 15, and I seriously have nothing to wear, I never had any intentions to go tonight. I’m not wearing any make up –”

“Look, he really wants you there. Go shower and put on some make up as quickly as possible. Brush your hair, I’ll try and put something together in your closet,” Ollie said softly. “The least you can do is come for half an hour. Seb has been working hard. We planned this to have all his friends in one room at the same time before he heads off to Europe and we lose him again.”

“Don’t forget Alissa.”

Ollie sighed. “Yes, and the new flavour of the week, Alissa,” she stood up, forcing Sasha to her feet. She gently spanked Sasha’s butt for good measure. “Get showered, I’ll raid your closet for something to wear. We’ll have a good night. You might even feel better for it,” she promised as Sasha reluctantly walked to her room and closed the door after her.

10 minutes later with her hair in a bun, relieved she’d had her waxing done earlier that week and enough make up to get by, Sasha wrapped her towel around her and laughed at the dress Ollie had left out for her – it wasn’t the worst but she had better as she hung it back up and looked for something else. It was summer, her tan was great (the joys of being an unemployed cripple in summer meant time on the pool deck at Soho House, her membership had turned her most treasured possession), she was going to wear white. Searing white. “I’ve found something else to wear,” Sasha called out.

“I don’t care what you wear as long as you’re not as cute as me. Seb just buzzed, he’s on his way up.”

“He buzzed? He hasn’t buzzed in 7 years,” she quietly urged herself together as she heard the front door open and a small surge of commotion as Sebastian and Ollie greeted each other, she was sure she heard “Why is she making this so difficult?” from Sebastian. A knock on her bedroom door quickly followed.

“Are you decent?” Seb called from the other side of the door.

“No, I’ll be 5 minutes,” Sasha replied curtly. She could at least maintain the appearance of not wanting to go until Seb gave her that smile and she melted, and as usual, gave in. At least she’d give in looking cute.

“Okay, I’m having a glass of wine,” he called back.

She scampered into her underwear, before fastening her white, skintight midi over her body, struggling as she zipped it up. She inhaled sharply, standing before the mirror. “Okay, maybe you’re indulging a little too much without the gym,” she muttered to herself.

Taking her hair from her bun, she shook out her dark blonde hair and tried to mess it up a bit, giving it a slight tangle to give it a bedridden look. She ducked into the bathroom and spritzed herself with her favourite evening perfume. “You can do this,” she peppe herself quietly and headed to the bedroom door, grabbing her clutch and electric blue heels as she passed them. Slowly turning the handle, she walked out, catching both Ollie and Seb’s attention.

“Hot damn,” Ollie grinned.
“Hello,” Seb smiled warmly, pulling Sasha into a hug, taking her clutch and heels from her hands and kissed her cheek. “You look great. I don’t understand what all the fuss was about,” he let go of Sasha and took another sip of wine, unabashedly giving her the once over, a small smirk tugging at his lips.

“Your legs seriously just go for days, don’t they?” Ollie asked sourly as Sasha dropped her heels to the ground and stepped into them. Sasha winked in reply.

“Sebastian is wearing a fucking t-shirt and I had to get dressed up?” Sasha frowned, finally having a good look at him. Deep blue t-shirt, jeans that sat on his hips perfectly and sneakers - he could have gotten away with the get up at brunch, she sighed as he cackled, tucking his long dark hair behind his ear as he pulled Sasha to him.

“It’s hotter than Hades out there, you won’t need a jacket.”

“Oh, please don’t talk it up,” Sasha said sarcastically as he grinned widely. “You know, I had a great night planned and you stuffed it up.”

“It’s a Friday night in Manhattan and I leave Monday. All plans are vetoed except this party,” Seb retorted.

“I won’t bother calling you on your actual birthday next week then,” she sighed, shaking her head as Sebastian laughed. Weak comeback, especially on her behalf. He expected better from her.

“Liar,” he muttered, enjoying baiting her. He held his hand out to each of his girls and led them from the apartment and gearing up for a big night with all their friends.

Chapter End Notes

Interested Bystander writes on Tumblr.
Chapter Summary

If she’d learnt one thing in all the years she’d know him, it was that he always managed to make her feel new and exciting ways of hating how much she cared about him.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“I think we need to ask the obvious question here,” mutual friend of everybody in the city, Sam Knight, announced as the group sat at a booth in the club, happily tossing back the free drinks he had gladly put on in honour of the birthday boy. “Just who have you dressed up for tonight, Sash?” he grin went from friendly to shiteating in milliseconds.

Sasha grinned, shaking her head. “You know me, just leaving a trail of male destruction around Manhattan,” she winked before rolling her eyes (her abysmal love life wasn’t news to anyone). “But you have to stop planting clothes at my apartment in hopes people will think we’re sleeping together, Sammy,” she added as the group laughed.

“Regardless, you look amazing,” he gave a friendly smile.

“Thank you,” she feigned modesty. “So, tell me more about Grease rehearsals!” Sasha demanded, as Sam carded his hands through his sandy blonde hair, grinning. He’d landed the role of a principle dancer in the soon-to-be-aired television production and she was jealous as hell. “I should have gone to LA with you,” she groaned.

“Regardless, you look amazing,” he gave a friendly smile.

“I should have dragged you to LA with me,” he told her over the music that hard definitely turned up a decibel or two. “So much fun!”

“Crippled,” she reminded him.

“Yeah, yeah, 80 year old knees,” he mocked, reciting her now common line about why she gave up dancing altogether. It made sense to no one, but they knew the wound was too fresh to push at this point. “It would have been great. I thought you might have at least taken the choreographer role they offered you.”

She shook her head. “That part of my life is over,” she sipped her vodka martini, hiding her eyes. “I’ve learned to live with it,” she shrugged, playing with the olive in her glass. “Even though I’m sure it’s feels like the worst break up of my life.”

Sam pouted, pulling her to him and kissing her temple. “I know it sucks, Sash. You could always have the operation and think about taking it back up?”

“I would be out of action for at least 8-12 months,” she threw her had up in the air, downplaying how out of sorts she actually felt. “I don’t think I’d know what to do with myself with that time or how to attempt to get myself back in shape. I’m constantly getting emails and phone calls with requests for teaching roles and private classes. I’m just happy for the break away from it. And I really like eating again,” she laughed as he joined her. “I don’t want to talk about it anymore.”
“You’re enjoying the Broadway blogging job?”

She shrugged. “Pays the bills. Neither here nor there. Easy money since I’ve got a few contacts.”

“Anytime you want to come out to L.A., you can stay with me for a while. You never know, being in the environment might trigger your passion for ‘the dance’,” he exaggerated the last few words, snapping his fingers dramatically as she grinned. “The weather is better than this stifling New York heat.”

“Maybe,” she said as Sebastian slid into the booth next to her. “Hello,” she gave him a curious look as he wriggled his eyebrows, sneakily sipping her drink. “Get your own,” she said, moving the glass closer to Sam. “Drank all my wine at my place – ”

“My wine,” Sebastian reminded her thoughtfully.

“Well, you’re making Marvel bank now, you can afford to put a few rounds of drinks on every once in a while,” she mumbled, staring intently at her glass.

“And to think,” he caught her face in his hands. “I thought you weren’t going to come out tonight to make me feel like shit,” he muttered. “Glad you did now though?”

“Yeah, I would have been sad when I saw the pix on Instagram tomorrow,” she admitted with a smile.

“Hold that thought,” he pulled his iPhone from his back pocket and turned the camera on to them.

“No, no. You’re not putting me on your Instagram. Personal use photos only from now on,” she’d had quite enough of the rumours, vitriol and snide comments on his page when he’d previously posted photos of the two of them together.

“For me then?” he gave her the saddest attempt at puppy dog eyes, he wasn’t even trying to wear her down. “I’m heading to Germany on Monday, this is the least you can do for me,” he fixated the camera before them again. “Smile!”

Sasha forced a grin as he planted a sloppy kiss on her cheek. Oh Seb, she thought. I really wish you would not do that… She inhaled the rest of her cocktail as Ollie instructed the waitress to bring a couple of rounds of shots. “Send that to me,” she demanded. “So I can remember your stupid face.”

“You’d never forget my stupid face,” he smiled, batting his eyelashes.

“Nah, probably not,” she had to agree. It was not a face many disregarded. The victims in his laying in wake were countless. Those poor, innocent souls. She’d lost count how many times she’d fallen for it herself.

“Gonna miss you, you know,” he said, tucking her hair behind her ear.

“No, you aren’t. You’ll have all your Captain America buddies to hang out with. I’m sure Alissa will come visit you if you ask her nicely.”

He waved her closer to him, like he had a secret. “I told her earlier tonight that I don’t really think that’s going to work out,” he relaxed back in the seat and raised his hands in a childish shrug. “What can you do?”

Colour me surprised, Sasha thought to herself. “About right, you leave for Europe in a few days,” it came out way harsher than it should’ve, she realised as his eyes flashed. He downplayed it. “Didn’t
strike me as your type anyway,” she said a little softer, hoping to restore his ego (and save face) a little.

Seb grinned, putting his face in his hands. “What’s my type, Benzo? Stereotype me.”

“If it moves and has a vagina, it’s your type.” Harsh again.

“How generic of you,” he replied sourly. He got the point and ended the conversation as Ollie started distributing a disturbing amount of shots in front of them all. “Saved by the shot,” he murmured. “Ollie, what are you feeding us?”

“Wet Pussies!” Ollie said, throwing one back immediately.

“Perfect,” he smirked, putting a glass into Sasha’s hand. “Down the hatch, Benzo!” he ordered. “1, 2, 3,” he said as they both slammed the shots down. “Hmm. Not bad,” he grinned.

“That was actually really good,” Sasha cleaned off the rim of her glass with her thumb and sticking it in her mouth. “Were there any more?”

Sebastian stole shots from others that had moved from the table and put another drink in front of her and another for him. “1, 2, 3,” he said as they downed the next shot. “You’re right, they really are good.”

“For sure,” she agreed.

“So, when I’m back, I was thinking we go to Miami?” he suggested, absentmindedly looking at his phone.

She gave Sebastian a wary look, glad not to have his attention. “I’ve been looking at some flights home. Was thinking of staying until at least the New Year.”

“What?” he made a face, tossing his phone on the table. “Leaving when?”

“Soonish, when I organise myself.”

“So, you’re away for the rest of the year? It’s not even August yet. Summer hasn’t finished,” he protested, but even he knew that was a pretty lame excuse.

“I realise that.”

“What about your apartment?”

She shook her head. “Air BNB, sub-let? Hadn’t thought that far ahead. It would be taken over pretty easily. It’s in a good spot. What’s with the 20 questions?”

“Well, it will be a long time not seeing you,” he said quietly.

“You’re travelling so much these days, it’s just something you’ll have to get used to, Sebby,” she patted his face wryly. “You’ll find other ways to distract yourself, of that I am sure.”

“Yeah, okay,” he muttered, frowning at her.

“What? Why are you getting pissy?” she asked confused.

“Well, I don’t know. New York was your home now, I assumed.”
“We’re not mutually exclusive anymore.”

He was unamused, contemplating if he wanted to ask his next question. “What’s up? I know you’re in a funk, but you’re not really you right now.”

“I don’t know,” she shrugged, looking down. It only took Seb a half second to know she was unhappy. He knew her so well by now, she could lie all she wanted but he could see right through it. “I guess now that I don’t have dance taking up every minute of every day, there’s just a lot more time to fill. I’m not very good at being bored and having idle hands, I guess.”

“Hmm. They are the devil’s playground,” he agreed with a nod. “Why don’t you come to Germany with me then?”

She raised an eyebrow, but didn’t say no immediately. “You’ll be working the whole time.”

Seb noted her façade change and smirked. “Well, you’d still have me when I’m not on set. You have met enough of the cast – Chris, Mackie, Scarlett – to socialise with. You did say with your newly found free time, you did want to travel.”

“All true,” she acknowledged – he listens more than she figured. *Smug bastard.*

“So, it’s agreed. You,” he bopped her on the nose. “Come to Germany with me,” he pointed at his chest almost gleefully. “I’ll get Sara to book you on my flight for Monday.”

“Woah, woah, woah. That’s way too soon!” she exclaimed.

“Shall I ask Marvel to put a hold on my filming?” he asked, sarcasm evident in his voice.

She laughed quietly, blushing. “No, that’s not what I meant, Sebastian. I don’t have to fly with you. You know, gives me some time to get things in order here.”

“We both hate flying. You fly with me on Monday. I can hold your hand if there’s any turbulence and you can hold mine,” he orchestrated.

She squinted at him – he laughed at her openly. *Still adorable even through lidded eyes,* she sighed. “How long do I have to think about it? Where would I stay?”

“I think I have a two-bedroom apartment and you have until tomorrow morning. If I don’t get an answer I will assume it is a yes,” he grinned widely. “Frankly, I’m already assuming it’s a yes.”

“You’re the worst,” she told him simply.

He laughed loudly. “I just offered you a trip to Europe and I’m the worst?”

“You’re impossible to say no to,” she muttered.

He beamed. “So it’s settled then, you’re coming to Germany with me.”

“No, no, Seb – ” she pushed back on his strong chest attempting some fight back.

“Guys,” Seb announced. “If anyone is looking for Sasha in the next few weeks, she’ll be in Germany with me – ” he was cut off by Sasha covering his mouth with her hands, though he continued to attempt to speak while muzzled.

“He’s talking shit, I haven’t agreed to anything,” Sasha protested as Sebastian took her hand from his face and held it to his heart to avoid further silencing.
“You just said I was impossible to say no to,” he smiled at her. The adorable fucking nerd was ruining her life. She cursed to herself, looking down, head in her hands.

“I lied,” she continued lying.

He laughed. “We can talk more in the morning. Come back and stay at my place and I’ll take you to breakfast.”

“I’m too old for sleepovers with easy men,” she incited him.

“Who said we were sleeping together? You sleep on the couch, Benzo,” he teased. “But seriously, we can talk about it in the morning and sort out the arrangements with Sara. I’ll get bagels and cream cheese and I’ll even watch you eat it while I have an egg white omelette,” he looked miserable about the last part. He was not happily enduring his Winter Soldier diet. He never did.

She finally groaned, defeat only seconds away. “I wouldn’t be cramping your style?” she asked cautiously.

Every cute nuance about him was on display (lip biting, pout, raised eyebrow – stop, you asshole). “How could you ever think that? You’re one of my best friends, I’d love to have a piece of home with me. It’ll be great!” he crossed his heart. “I promise. You can do some writing in your free time, do some tourisy shit other days. Steins, sauerkraut, pretzels,” he raffled off.

She frowned at him hard. She was conflicted and he knew fully well he had won her over. He chewed on his bottom lip thoughtfully. “Fuck you,” she pointed at him as he cackled.

“How could you ever think that? You’re one of my best friends, I’d love to have a piece of home with me. It’ll be great!” he crossed his heart. “I promise. You can do some writing in your free time, do some tourisy shit other days. Steins, sauerkraut, pretzels,” he raffled off.

She frowned at him hard. She was conflicted and he knew fully well he had won her over. He chewed on his bottom lip thoughtfully. “Fuck you,” she pointed at him as he cackled.

“See?” he said, his full lips curling into a smile. “I see the brain kicking into gear. You’re contemplating this. I would love to have you there,” he took her hands. “Come with me, we’ll have such a great time.”

“Could we do trips to Paris and stuff on your days off?” she asked shyly, quirking an interested eyebrow. “And maybe the ballet?”

“I will take you to Paris,” he agreed, laughing. “And sit through the ballet. Yes.”

“Now you’re talking,” she smiled and he pulled her to him and kissed her cheek.

“We’ll have an amazing time. You can come to set if you want.”

“Will you set me up with Evans this time? I will need to get laid at some point.”

“Absolutely not,” Sebastian stated blankly. “Hell would freeze over first.”

“Worth a shot,” she joked with a wide grin of her own.

“There’s that beautiful smile. Been way too long since I’ve seen it,” he palmed her cheek, running his thumb against her cheekbone.

She blushed, slapping his hand away. “Shut the fuck up, Sebastian.”

He rolled his eyes. “I’m glad I don’t have to miss you now,” he whispered in her ear, hoping he was making her uncomfortable now. “You’re always the one I miss the most.”

“I am not,” she rested her cheek on his shoulder as he wrapped an arm around her, playing with the ends of her hair. He laughed quietly to himself.
“You two look any cosier and people are going to start talking,” Ollie said from the other end of the table, taking a photo of them. Olivia loved provoking the pair and put the photo on Instagram immediately. Olivia had recently learnt after tagging Sebastian in a photo, she had received an influx of new followers that mostly seemed to be his fans from the user names and Olivia found great joy in goading them.

Both Sebastian and Sasha’s photos phones vibrated at the Instagram alerts.

‘When you’re the cutest in the room, and you fucking know it #seb #sasha #adorkableaf #losers #sebgetsanotheryearolder’. The picture was sweet, admittedly. Sebastian liked it instantly, Sasha didn’t bother. Social media absolutely was not her thing (though she always ensured she checked the alerts of her own. She had her own ego to preserve).

“Well, at least she’s concise,” Sasha rolled her eyes.

“Don’t buy into anyone’s bullshit. We’ve been teased for years,” he reminded her.

“We’re not kids anymore, Seb,” Sasha chided him in a whisper as the waitress took orders.

“I know that. But who says we can’t be affectionate?” he was a little hurt.

“It blurs lines, Seb – ”

“For whom?” he frowned, eyes steely.

“Everyone else.”

“Well, as long as we know where we stand with other, I don’t understand what the fucking problem is,” he sniped. She moved out of his grasp. How quickly a warm moment could turn sour between the two of them could still stagger her.

“Relax.”

“No, I’m sick of having to defend having a female best friend,” he replied curtly. “And I don’t know why you’d fall for the bullshit either. We know where we stand with each other.”

“You’re getting upset for absolutely no reason,” she hissed at him, noting the looks from their friends. “And kind of making a scene.”

He slumped in his seat, realising his friends had stopped to watch him have a slight meltdown. “Sorry,” he said quietly. Sasha patted his knee at what she guessed was the knee but found muscular thighs and his hands instead. She took one in hers and linked their fingers.

“You okay?” she couldn’t help but giggle. He didn’t lose his cool often, but when he did, it was usually in spectacular fashion.

He nodded slightly and downed another shot. “Yeah, I’m fine.”

She touched his stubbly face. “Hey, calm down. I’ve got you, Seb,” she hugged him to her tightly. “Is your birthday over, can I leave soon?” she whispered in his ear while she had him close. He shook his head as an empathic no.

“Absolutely not. Not until you commit to Germany with me,” he said, looking up at her with hope in his sincere blue eyes. Jesus.

“Don’t do that to me,” she ordered. Be strong, don’t give in, she begged herself. You can do it.
“Do what?” he rested his chin in his hands, contemplative glance showering his handsome features.

“I’m not going to fall for it,” she muttered, knowing her resistance was futile at best.

“Fall for what?” he then cocked his head to this side, a little flick of his tongue against his upper lip.

“If I say yes, can I go home?” she snapped.

“After another round, I will accept your departure as a sign that you’re coming to Germany with me,” he giggled.

“Fine, fuck,” she grunted as Sebastian pumped his fists in the air, hugging her to his side tightly. “I’ll stay for one more drink and I guess… I’m coming to Germany with you.”

His eyes widened, feigning shock. “Does this mean I win?”

“When have you ever really lost, Sebastian?”

Chapter End Notes

Thanks to those who commented, subscribed and left kudos. I am not sure how this will progress, I’ve got a few words happening here, but a lot of filler too, so hopefully you guys enjoy this.
You Say It's Complicated

Chapter Summary

If she’d learnt one thing in all the years she’d know him, it was that he always managed to make her feel new and exciting ways of hating how much she cared about him.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Woman, how long are you packing for? A month, a year?” Sebastian asked, his head hanging off Sasha’s bed with his socked feet on her pillows as he watched her pack the next day. He was surrounded with various clothing, toiletries and other chick items that made him a little more than uncomfortable and slightly aroused to be around.

“Sweetheart Sebastian,” she pinched his chin roughly, not seeing the cheekiness in his comment as he softly swiped her hands away. “You have given me 36 hours to organise my life to go to Germany with you. I think we can both agree that it’s not a lot of time for things like this. I haven’t even called my parents to tell them.”

He laughed at her, still upside down, his face and neck turning red from exaggerated blood flow and long Bucky Barnes hair hanging freely (his hair was glorious and it was driving him crazy. She loved it). “Okay, okay.”

“Are you already packed? And sit up before you pass out,” she gave him her hand that he accepted and he turned over to sit up.

“More or less,” he replied easing back on his elbows. “I understand it’s much easier for me to pack. I need a few pairs of boxers, jeans, few shirts, gym shit,” he shrugged.

“How fortunate for you,” she told him dryly.

He grinned. “I’m not moving to Germany for the term of my natural life. Unlike you,” he picked up a dress, holding it to Sasha’s body who reluctantly stopped what she was packing to let him hold it against her begrudgingly. “This is cute, why don’t you wear this more often?”

“I haven’t had an excuse to get dressed up,” she said, pulling some bras from her drawer and placing them neatly on the bed. “I have kind of enjoyed not needing to get dressed up on stage every night.”

“Oh, I like this,” Seb ignored her as he continued rifling through her stuff. “Wear this anytime,” he picked up a silky white nightie. “Actually, I don’t want to imagine you in this. It will ruin our friendship, of that I am sure,” he buried the lace under other items, shaking the image out of his head. “Who would you be wearing this for?” he grimaced. He honestly didn't want to think of her dressing up in something so sexy for anyone, truth be told.

She put her hands on her hips. “How often are you told you’re unproductive?”

“Not often. Or people simply don’t have the heart to tell me,” he admitted cheekily. “And I wouldn’t offer my help in normal circumstances. Now, these,” he picked up a pair of metallic heels. “These I really like. Put them on, model them for me.”
“Fuck, Sebastian. I’m about to ask you to leave. You’ve mentioned your footwear fetishes to me too many times,” she visibly shuddered. He pouted with a shrug and did as he was told. “You’re like an over-stimulated man-child today.”

“I won’t disagree with you,” he chewed his lips thoughtfully as she screamed internally, he could see was borderline seething, he smirked. “What? I’m excited my best friend is coming to Germany with me! We get 3 weeks together in Europe. Tell me you’re not just a little bit excited?” he side-eyed her with curiosity.

“I’m excited,” she said monotone.

“Could have fooled me,” he dared scoff.

“Sebastian Stan!” she said, her frustration etching on her features. “You are wasting my precious time. I am trying to organise myself before we go to dinner with our friends tonight. I don’t have time to pack tomorrow unless I don’t sleep,” she paused, her eyes widening. She chewed the quick of her thumb, a scowl now casting a shadow on her face. “Oh. Oh, no.”

“What?”

She turned to him and clutched his t-shirt. “I can’t remember when my passport is.”

“Sasha Benson,” he drew out with a long groan, running a hand over his face, annoyed. “Where should I start looking?”

“Can you check the back pack in the cupboard near the front door?” she begged as she went to check her bedside table.

He sighed, made his way off the bed and wandered out. “Only you wouldn’t make this a priority,” he called back. He wandered back in a few minutes later, holding up a broken pair of silver dancing shoes. “Dragă, is this something we should talk about?”

She looked from the shoes to his face expectantly. “Why?”

“These aren’t broken heels, these have been destroyed on purpose,” he twisted and turned them in his hands, inspecting them closely. “Even I can tell.”

“And?”

“Did you do this?”

“Well, they are mine. Were mine,” she corrected herself and paired socks.

He paused to let out a small exhale. “Sash, I’m really getting worried about you.”

“You have no reason to.”

“Hey,” he dropped the shoes to the floor and walked over to her, turning her around to face him, keeping his hands on her shoulders. “Talk to me.”

“Seb, there’s nothing to say,” she reassured him calmly.

He blinked. “You know, I don’t quite believe you,” he said, a little disappoint evident in his voice.

Her agitation kicked in. “They’re the shoes I was wearing in when I did my knee. They copped it when I got home after the doctor confirmed the degeneration was so bad that if I didn’t have the
surgery, I wouldn’t dance again. I was angry, the shoes took the brunt of it. Seemed pretty reasonable to me at the time,” she pushed him off her carefully, violently shoving socks into her suitcase.

“Don’t take it out on your socks,” he teased gently, putting her passport he’d also found in the same bag from the back pocket of his jeans on the nightstand, before sitting on the bed. “I knew this was hard for you, but now I’m concerned that it’s a lot more than that.”

“Seb,” she breathed. “What the fuck do you want me to say? I turn 33 in 6 months. I’m getting too old to be hired for stage work, not including the fact that my body is shutting down on me and it’s basically all that I have. It’s all I’m good at.”

“Is that why you haven’t been taking any other dance jobs?”

She touched her nose and pointed at him. “Ding, ding, ding.”

He ignored her sarcasm. “So not even teaching, chorography?”

“Not interested right now. Besides, I can’t without the strength in my knee.”

“Really?”

“Fuck, Sebastian. Yes, really,” she spat back.

“Look, I’m sorry I didn’t want to upset you,” he stood up and hugged her. She didn’t respond so he pulled her closer again, their bodies flush, resting his chin on her head. When she finally did, he was surprised when she started quietly sobbing and she was clinging to him. Shit, he thought. He was terrible when she cried. “Oh, Sash. I’m sorry. I really didn’t mean to upset you.”

“It’s all I know Seb, what now?” she didn’t look up to meet his eyes. He kissed her hair.

“We’ll work it out, I promise. I’ve got you.”

“Yeah,” she scoffed, pulling away and wiping her eyes. “Sure. Until the next girl comes along,” she muttered, going back to her packing. This time he didn’t bother to correct her. He took the shampoo from her hands and placed it on the bed, interchanging it for his hand.

“We can do this later, come on. We’re opening a bottle of wine.”

---

BERLIN, GERMANY

“Jetlag,” Sebastian moaned as he yawned, re-reading over his script for the next day. They had been in Berlin for about 24 hours and he and Sasha were both well and truly on the wrong time zone. It was mid-afternoon and she had been dozing for the better part of the day after not sleeping a wink the previous night or the flight over, hidden under a blanket at the opposite end of the couch to him. Sebastian had slept a little, but awake pretty early, much to his detriment. He was now forcing himself to stay awake in an attempt to be all right for tomorrow.

Their apartment was fine, big enough so they wouldn’t be stepping on each other’s toes too often. Fridge stocked with food for Sebastian’s ongoing diet and little room for anything else. Sasha had generously declined Sebastian’s suggestion she take the bigger room. A couple of days in, they had succeeded in not wanting to kill the other. It was a good start!
“Hey,” he threw a pillow at her. “You have to stay awake, Benzo.”

She peaked out from her cocoon and shook her head. “I’m so tired.”

“I know. Sit up,” he ordered. “Mackie texted before, he wanted to know if we wanted to join him for dinner.”

She stretched and pushed the blankets down, rubbing her eyes. “At his place?”

“Yeah, he said he’d cook.”

“Is it okay for me to come? I don’t want to gate crash.”

“He invited us both. Said was looking forward to seeing you after you, quote ‘ditched him in Atlanta and never returned his phone calls’ end quote.”

She gave a tired giggle. “He’s cute.”

“We should probably leave soon,” he said as she moved and lay her head on his thighs, eyes closing again instead. She retrieved the blanket and tucked herself in again, covering his legs as well. “I’m not a pillow,” he told her.

“No, you’re a grump. I’m tired, give me a break. Sleep now. It’s snuggly in here.”

“You’re a pain in the ass,” he bopped her on the nose condescendingly. “I’m getting coffee, come on. Up, you can come too.”

She sighed and looked up at him. “I know you’re tired, but you don’t need to be a dick.”

“I’m just trying to prep for tomorrow,” he told her, his tone softening. “Sorry.”

She reluctantly sat up and cuddled into his side. “Sorry, I know I’m not helping the situation.”

“It’s okay,” he sighed. “I’m nervous.”

“I know,” she gave a rough giggle, standing up and stretching. He watched her bend backwards, forwards and each movement in between, amused. She hadn’t lost a stitch of flexibility, he realised. “I’m well aware you’re eager to get on set tomorrow. I’m going to shower and try and wake myself up. Coffee, please?” she popped a wet, smacking kiss on his forehead before wandering towards her bedroom.

He was surviving domesticity with her. Just. He was curious if he’d be able to say the same thing in 3 weeks.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks to those whom have commented, subscribed and left kudos - I'm frankly surprised that anyone is bothering with my little dribble that is about 80K words right now (I can't guesstimate how many chapters we're looking at here, but there will be a few). I don't know how and I don't know why, but my over-stimulated imagination has gotten the better of me and presented itself in this word vomit. I don't expect you will see all of it, but fingers crossed you'll see some of it. Please don't hesitate to leave
comments, I actually really, really love them, both constructive or not. Please continue to enjoy xo

PS - I might be away for a week or so (super busy), so if you're hoping not to miss out, please don't hesitate to subscribe.
Chapter Summary

If she’d learnt one thing in all the years she’d known him, it was that he always managed to make her feel new and exciting ways of hating how much she cared about him.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Yawning, Sasha stretched and spied the clock on the bedside table. She loved not having to answer to anyone about her sleeping habits. It was 5pm, so the banging and crashing in the kitchen was a pretty good sign Sebastian was back from work and likely preparing something for himself for dinner. She pushed the covers back and pulled her hair into a messy bun. Sliding her glasses over her nose, it was (sadly) time to re-join the real world.

“How many people are you feeding?” she smiled, taking a seat at the bench. He jumped a little and turned back to face her, ramming the sharp end of the knife in the chopping block. She was stealth as fuck and it drove him insane at the best of times that she had a silent footfall. A dancing habit she’d unlikely never break, he figured. He was sure she just loved seeing him have minor heart attacks. Especially when he held knives.

“Christ, announce yourself when you’re coming or I’m putting a bell on you,” he clutched his heart as she giggled behind her hand. “Chris, Anthony and James are coming over for a few drinks. Were you asleep? It’s 5 in the evening,” he muttered.

“It’s a really good bed,” she grinned as he rolled his eyes, showing his disproval. “And I may still have a little bit of jetlag.”

“The jetlag excuse is a few days too old now, just say you like sleeping – I am well aware how you can disappear for days on end to sleep, don’t hide from it; embrace it. Though I don’t know anyone that can sleep as hard as you can.”

“It’s a gift,” she shrugged modestly.

“Did you shower, go out, speak to anyone in the real world?”

“Yes, this morning. I went for a really long walk, got lost for a bit, finally found someone who could speak enough English to help me get back here although I think they just took pity on me because I was a lost Australian in Berlin, then read for a bit… and subsequently – ”

“Slept again,” he figured, chopping some carrots. He tossed one over to her.

“It was an adventurous day,” she told him, crunching into the carrot.

“Sounds like it,” he said, getting a variety of condiments from the fridge. “Were you going to change? I mean, as much as Chris, Mackie and James would love to see you in a ratty old nightshirt and mussed hair…”

“This look doesn’t work for you?” she put on a puss, waving her hand over her torso with a grin.
He finally smiled. “It’s fine for me. I’ve seen you much less put together than that,” he baited her as she lost her cheery grin. “…you should change, Benzo.”

“Fine, you fucking spoil sport,” she rolled her eyes and took her leave.

“Sasha?” he called after her.

“Sebastian?” she replied, opening her closet.

“We might go out later on tonight.”

“Okay, so you’re telling me dress up but don’t look too cute?”

“That is exactly what I meant,” his laugh floated down the hallway.

“I’m going to have a quick shower to wake myself up.”

“Okay,” he replied as she snuck into her bathroom to organise herself. A few minutes later and fresh again, she started dressing as the doorbell rang. She could hear Sebastian and Mackie laugh and the men greet each other.

“We saw it, and thought, ‘yes, that man deserves a birthday balloon since he insisted on no presents!’” Mackie exclaimed, his voice echoed clear as day down the hallway.

“Oh, my God,” Sasha’s face fell.

She’d forgotten her favourite person’s birthday.

The realisation set in and felt like someone was standing on her chest (would explain why he wasn’t too chatty when she appeared before though). Dressing quickly into jeans and an oversized shirt, she put on some make up and made her way to the hallway, before she rushed and crushed him in her arms. He grunted, a little taken back, looking down at her with a perplexed look on his handsome features.

“I want to be welcomed like that next time I come over,” Mackie told her pointedly.

She blushed, hiding her face from Mackie and telling Sebastian, “I’m so sorry. I’m the worst.”

“Yeah,” Sebastian blushed, a small laugh revealing on his lips, as he patted her shoulders as much as he could. He was mostly trapped and unable to move in her vice grip. “You really are.”

“You weren’t going to tell me, were you?” she smacked his chest roughly as the boys laughed quietly. Plus side to getting beaten up by your teeny best friend in front of your friends? At least he was free from her hold.

“I was going to see how long it would take you to remember, to be honest,” he replied thoughtfully, tucking some hair behind his ear. “For what it’s worth, I knew you would before midnight.”

“Oh my God,” she said, still feeling awful. “Happy birthday. Can I get away with the excuse that I’m on New York time?”

“No, crazy, New York is only 6 hours behind. We already discussed jet lag as an excuse for everything today.”

“Melbourne time?” she said meekly.
“Then it would be tomorrow already and you would have missed my birthday all together,” he laughed. “It’s fine, really. Don’t worry about it.”

“Hi guys,” she greeted the men who were smiling at the display across the bench sheepishly.

“You forgot Sebastian’s birthday?” Mackie was astounded, as she high five him, Chris and James before wrapping Sebastian up again.

“Well, he hates them,” Sasha said, trying to justify herself and failing as Sebastian attempted to get beers for the guys from the fridge, but she stuck to him like glue. Sebastian laughed, unprying her grasp on him for a second to find the bottle opener before he willingly allowed himself to be wrapped up again.

“She’s right, I do hate birthdays,” Sebastian confirmed, popping a bottle and pouring a glass of champagne for her. He knew her so well… and she forgot his birthday. She hated herself.

“Happy birthday, man,” Chris said, as they toasted.

---

A few hours later, and all of them definitely a little tipsy, the guys announced they were going to find a bar.

“Are you going to come with us?” Sebastian asked.

“Where are you guys going?” she asked as all four lowered their eyes, bashfully. “I think I’ll stay in,” she cackled. “Thanks for the invite though.”

The guys grabbed their wallets and phones and started for the door.

“Are you sure you don’t want to come?” Sebastian asked over his shoulder.

She shook her head. “You have fun – go find your future baby mama,” she winked encouragingly as he shook his head and laughed to himself. “Hope you’ve got lots of small Euros!”

“Bye!” they called as the front door closed. She sighed and put her head in her hands from her seat on the couch. What a terrible day – she’d forgotten her best friend’s birthday, hadn’t got him a present (regardless of the birthday present embargo they put on each other years ago, they both still religiously got the other a gift, waited for the other to scold them, then admit they loved the gift the other wasn’t supposed to buy) and now he was off to the titty bar with his friends. It was fine, she’d been with the guys more times than she could count, but this wouldn’t go down in the records books as her favourite day.

A few minutes later, the front door opened and Sebastian burst back in.

“You okay, forget something?” she asked concerned as he threw himself over the couch and into her arms in a rather dramatic fashion. He hugged her tightly, kissing her forehead.

“I would much rather be here, spending time with you,” he confided quietly.

She beamed. “Of course you would. But go have fun, you deserve it. You guys are working yourselves into the ground. I’ll be here when you get back.”

“Are you sure you don’t want to come?” he asked, pulling back to take in her face.

“I’m 100 per cent sure that I do not want to go to the titty bar with you,” she hoped he didn’t see
through her fake smile. I don’t need to see you enjoying a lapdance or putting Euros down someone’s daughter/sister/mother’s g-string.

“We’ll go to a regular bar with waitresses that wear shirts, the guys will understand. We can get tits in our faces any night,” he reasoned casually, pulling her to stand.

“No, no,” she laughed, resisting against his hold on her and falling back against the couch. “It’s really okay. I’ll stay here.”

“It’s my birthday,” he protested. “And I want my girl with me. I can’t… I mean, it’s not a birthday if you’re not a part of it. Please?” he asked sincerely.

She sighed, shaking her head. "Didn't we have this argument a few weeks back?"

“We did and I'm about to win again; I don't care though. Please?” he lifted her chin, a small smile playing on his lips.

She huffed. “Jesus, okay,” she pushed him away as he grinned. “I need to get shoes.”

“Oh, come on,” he whispered. “None of us are idiots around here. We know how you feel about him.”

“Everyone seems to know except him…” she admitted, casting her gaze to the frou frou cocktail Chris had put in front of her earlier. “I’m friend zoned, Anthony. I have been for years,” she shrugged. “We know where we stand with each other.”

Mackie gave her a bright smile. “Can I tell you something and you promise not to tell Sebastian? Because you two are close, and I assume there aren’t many secrets between you both.”

She shrugged. She was numb at this point, whatever he had to say would have very little bearing on how drunk she was about to get. “You bide your time. Our Sebastian isn’t too bright at the best of times. He has no intentions to call that girl. He’s just flirting and humouring her. Mostly stroking his ego, I’d say.”

“I think I’m a little more educated in Seb than you are,” she told him softly, though she knew how close Sebastian and Mackie had grown over the last few years since they’d worked together. “That sounded harsh, I know. Blondie will be stroking something tonight and I’ll be showing her out tomorrow morning. Well after Sebastian has texted me to tell me he’s at the gym and ask when he can come back. That it’s safe and clear. This is his M.O.”
“Then you make him jealous,” Mackie said simply, sipping his beer. There was mirth dancing in his dark eyes and Sasha frowned, not quite sure why but entertained him anyway.

“Why would I do that? It wouldn’t make a difference.”

“Because I think it would work,” Mackie told her. “Chris is standing there, looking at his phone, pretending he’s not bored when he really is. Or James. But I don’t know where he disappeared to.”

It wasn’t a terrible idea, she realised. Sebastian had well and truly ingrained himself in conversation in the girl that absolutely wasn’t his type, why shouldn’t she have some fun at least? “You think it will work?” she dared ask.

“Guarantee it. I’m a dude, I know how simply our brains work,” he told her seriously, the humour behind his eyes still flickering. “I wish I didn’t have to say that, but yeah. We’re motivated by getting our dicks wet. Not me, you see. I’m a married man now. You missed your shot with me, sweetheart,” he told her modestly.

She grinned, pushing out of the booth, feeling a little inspired from the pep talk. “You never had a chance with me, babe,” she said, pushing past him as he snickered and she joined Chris, who looked up with a bright, expectant smile. *So handsome, so not usually your type. What are you doing here, idiot?*

“Hi,” he said, before she could pretend she didn't stop for him and head to the bathroom. “How’s your night goin’?”

“I wanna dance,” she told him, manning up and leaning on the cocktail table he was standing at. “I haven’t danced for so long. And there is something so stupid about trying not to dance when old school RnB and dance is on,” she confided, close to his ear. “Wanna dance, Captain America?”

He pocketed his phone and grinned. “Sure,” he said as she grabbed his wrist, leading him to the dance floor as Groove Theory’s ‘Tell Me’ started. She hoped he could dance. His body, given his posture, gave her all the directives he could. She smiled as he instantly found the beat and started moving.

_Praise Jesus, Captain America knows how to use his body._ Feeling to feel eyes boring into the back of his head, Chris realised as he looked over his shoulder and gave Sebastian a single wave. Sebastian was not smiling. Sebastian was always smiling. He was ignoring the chatterbox he had previously been hitting on. This was not a good sign. That’s what that look was. It wasn’t a puss, it wasn’t anger. It was… the green-eyed monster.

And it was hilarious!

As the music changed to Next’s ‘Too Close’, Chris figured he might as well have some fun with it, moving a few inches closer to Sasha. She was gorgeous. Not really his type, but someone he enjoyed seeing move. From what he could tell, so did Sebastian. He laughed inwardly. He’d have to speak to Sebastian and force him to make a move, because Chris was not blind to the fact that other guys had their eyes on her too. He was simply going to lose her if he didn’t get his shit together.

Chris and Sasha danced a few more songs before she suggested she take a seat. “I don’t want to be dance floor road kill if my knee goes from under me,” she confided apologetically. “Sorry.”

“That’s okay,” Chris told her, grabbing her arm gently, stopping her just near their table the boys were sitting at. “Think I could get your number, Sasha? I mean, I know we don’t know each other well, but you know, maybe one night Seb is working late, we could get dinner or a drink or
something, get to know each other better?”

“Oh,” she flushed with a small giggle. “Yeah, sure, that would be great,” she said, reciting the details to him as he put the numbers into his phone. He grinned.

“Awesome,” he said, following her back to the booth where Sebastian and Anthony were chatting together quietly.

“Queen of the dance floor is back,” Mackie announced. “Oh yeah, and Captain America,” he teased, less enthused as Chris shook his head, laughing.

“Hi,” Sasha grinned a little out of breath, piling into the booth next to Sebastian. “My knee is really sore, do you mind if I escape?” she asked him, resting her chin on his bicep, staring up at him with big green eyes.

“Sure,” he replied, cool. He didn’t bother looking back at her. “Do what you like.”

“Okie doke, I’m outta here,” she reached over the table, gave Mackie a high five and slithered out of the booth again, this time with her clutch and gave Chris a wide smile. “Thanks again for the dance, Chris,” she reached over and cupped Sebastian’s chin. “Have a good night, birthday boy,” she kissed his cheek with a loud pop and made her way out.

“That is not a girl I would be letting leave on her own,” Mackie said considerately.

“I can drop her back to your place if you want, Seb?” Chris offered unselfishly.

Sebastian exhaled and pushed himself out of the booth, pocketing his phone and wallet. “Night,” he said, wandering off after Sasha quickly. Chris gave Mackie a small grin.

“He’s gonna lose that girl if he doesn’t make a move,” Chris decided, sitting across from Mackie.

“He freaked the fuck out before,” Mackie cackled. “Seeing you with her, he just shutdown. I couldn’t get two words out of him, I’ve never seen him stop all actions like that for her. You should have seen it.”

“Oh, I saw it,” Chris laughed. “Think he’ll get his ass into gear?”

Mackie smiled. “I think our little Sebastian is finally gonna get his shit together.”

“I’ll believe that when I see it!” Chris said as the waitress put a couple of beers on the table and they toasted to their friend’s stupidity.

---

In a cab back to Sebastian’s apartment, Sasha smiled and snuggled into him. “Did you have a good night?”

“Yes, guess so,” he shrugged himself free, turning his attention back to his phone. “Do you mind if I text that girl to come back to my place tonight?”

Sasha took in a breath and sat up. “Sure, it’s your place. Just keep the noise down, I guess,” she turned her attention out the car window, seeing Sebastian give her a hard look in the reflection.

“What?” she turned back.

“You’re okay with that?”
“Why wouldn’t I be? I don’t care if you want to hook up, Sebastian.” *Lie.*

“Cool,” he said, turning his attention to the text that popped up on his screen from Mackie. ‘*The girl is crazy about you, please… just don’t mess it up. This is the time. Away from distractions at home, you guys deserve each other. Don’t hesitate, you’ll lose her otherwise. Enjoy your day off tomorrow.*’

Sebastian gave Sasha a side-glance, a confused frown clouding his features. Sebastian didn’t text Mackie back. But he also didn’t text the girl from the bar either. He pocketed his phone again and pulled Sasha into his arms. “Nah, let’s go home and open the bottle of whiskey you got last week.”

“Are you sure?” she said with a small smile.

“Of course. I want to end my birthday with my girl. Just us,” he gave her a small smile.

“Okay, we can do that,” she gave him a small smile in return, cuddling into him again.

“Sash, you’re not going to date Chris, are you?” Sebastian dared ask, resting his cheek on her hair.

“No, of course not,” she replied, closing her eyes and taking in his cologne. He always smelled a dream.

He kissed her temple. “Thank you. Look, I know I’m being a bit of a dick. I’ll promise you now, while we’re here together in Berlin, I won’t bring any girls back, okay?”

“You don’t have to do that. I don’t care if you do.” *Lie. Again.*

“No, you’re here for me. I want us to enjoy the time we still have left together,” he brushed some hair back off her face. “Let’s get really drunk tonight, okay?”

“That sounds like a terrible idea. What could possibly go wrong?” she sighed then looked up at him with a wicked smile and wild eyes. “I’m in.”

A few hours later, neither were overly surprised they were taking turns holding each other’s hair as the other puked.

“Sebastian?” Sasha said from her spot in the cool ceramic bathtub, wrapped up in one of his hoodies to keep her warm – he sat across from her, his legs kicked over the side of the tub for room, somehow he’d lost a sneaker in the fury of booze and barfing. He spied her, almost opening an eye to see her.

“Hmm?”

“We’ve had some shitty ideas before, but this is by far the worst in recent memory.”

“Yup. We can’t do this anymore,” he agreed, scared if he opened his eyes he’d vomit again.

“Nope. Are we officially old?”

He let out a pained giggle. “No, you’re only as old as you feel, frumoasă.”

“That is the last word I’d use to describe me right now.”

He grinned. “You don’t even know what I’m saying,” he snorted.

“Of course I do. You called me beautiful.”
His eyes flicked open, a small rush of panic running through his veins. “How much Romanian do you know and why have you been withholding this information from me?”

“I know a few words here and there. I can ask your mum how she is when she calls to make sure I’m still alive. I can swear at you and call you offensive names. Don’t ask me to have a conversation with you, măgar.”

He howled with laughter. “I don’t think I’ve been called a donkey in Romanian, let alone English, before. I’m assuming you mean jackass though.”

“Come on. You impressed?” she gave a lazy smile, poking him in the chest with her toe.

“Yes, weirdly impressed,” he giggled again, grabbed her foot and hugging it to his chest.

“Good, I’m glad. Let go,” she said, forcing herself to sit up. “I’m going for it.”

“Are you going to be sick again?” he asked warily.

“Nah, attempting bed,” she pushed herself up and gathered herself enough to sit against the side of the tub. A minutes later, and the surge to vomit again receding, she was on two legs. “Are you going to be okay in here?”

He smiled. “I’m up, I’m up,” he said, taking a little less time to be upstanding. “Come on,” he wrapped an arm around her shoulders. “I’ll take you to bed.”

“Take? Put!” she corrected.

“Yes, yes, put. Whatever,” he yawned. “Thanks for tonight, Benzo. I had a great time.”

"And you're a whole year older."

"Jesus. Fuck you, all right," he muttered as he pulled her over his shoulder and dumped her on the guest bed. "Goodnight, nightmare."

"Goodnight," she giggled as he closed the door behind him.

Chapter End Notes

Apologies for disappearing. Life caught up with me and I was unable to write, let alone post. But I so much appreciate those who’ve left lovely comments, surprised me with kudos and those who’ve bookmarked. I hope that the story is pleasing you. It's a bit of a slow burn but we'll get there, I promise. Thank you again for taking the time and I hope you continue to enjoy. Don't forget to leave me some comments, I'm a big girl, I can handle constructive criticism :) xo
You Said My Hands Were Warm and That I Was Special To You

Chapter Summary

If she’d learnt one thing in all the years she’d know him, it was that he always managed to make her feel new and exciting ways of hating how much she cared about him.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“So, how did I not know you were a ballerina?” Scarlett asked, astounded. “That is amazing. I always wanted to be but sort of stopped getting taller yet my boobs kept getting bigger, puberty wasn't entirely kind to me. I started barre recently, but I dunno,” she sipped her wine. “You’re body is outrageous, I could tell you were a dancer.”

Sasha blushed. If puberty was unkind to Scarlett, the world was going loopy. “I hope that’s a good thing.”

“Well, I can just tell you concentrate on your body a lot. You were a lot thinner the last time I saw you in Atlanta.”

“I’ve put a bit of weight on recently. I was probably a bit too thin, but okay for a dancer’s physique,” Sasha admitted, not phased the hottest babe on the planet was telling her she had put on weight if she was going to back it up with telling her she was cute. “As soon as my knee packed in, I didn’t have a choice. I’m happy if I can maintain this weight, but I can’t seem to stay away from German treats,” she laughed behind her hands, bashfully. “I’ve had a Franzbrötchen for breakfast every day since I got here.”

Scarlett laughed, and nodded knowingly. “Trust me when I say this though? Your body is wicked. The curves could stop traffic.”

“Well, thanks,” Sasha giggled quietly. “I hope that doesn’t happen though.”

“So, were you only a ballerina?”

“No, I actually gave up on it well before I moved to New York, I couldn’t dedicate myself to it, the hours, the diet – my head is too busy to contemplate it. I enjoyed musical theatre, and had been in Australian productions since I was a kid. I’ve been offered a few stage and TV and film roles, but neither interests me like dance and choreography.”

"What was your first role?"

"I was Louisa in The Sound of Music. Sebastian found some photo online and put it on his fridge. It's horrible. It's his dream to find me singing on YouTube. It'll never happen. I'll break the internet before that happens," she muttered the last part to herself.

"Oh, you would have been adorable!" Scarlett smiled brightly and nodded towards the door. “Oh, speak of the Devil and he shall appear,” she smiled as Sebastian walked in, waving him over. He joined them a second later, smacking a loud kiss on Sasha’s cheek. She made a face, wiping the saliva off with the sleeve of her hoodie.
“Gross, Seb. Get off me.”

“How are you, ladies? Sorry I’m so late. Filming ran way overtime,” he took a seat next to Sasha. “Have you ordered?”

“We thought we’d head back to the apartment. The menu is not Winter Soldier friendly,” Sasha told him. “Too much butter and fat for you.”

“That’s okay, I’m happy to stay,” he insisted. “You eat, I’m sure I can manage something.”

“Well, I’m going to love you and leave you anyway,” Scarlett apologised. “Rose will be awake shortly for her feed. Hey, Sasha, I was thinking maybe we could go to a barre class in the next few days? Obviously if you’re up for it.”

“That sounds nice,” Sasha smiled as Scarlett kissed her cheek, waved and made a beeline for the door. “Is it wrong that I have a teeny tiny turning into exponential crush on Scarlett?”

Sebastian laughed, resting his face in his hands. “Try and resist her, I dare you. She’s a lovely woman. You could have worse friends. She loves you and couldn’t wait to catch up.”

“She’s kind of addictive, isn’t she?”

“Completely.”

“Aww, you still have that little crush on her,” Sasha laughed as he gave a small smirk.

“I spent the morning with her thighs wrapped around my head, what do you want me to say?” he smirked, pleased with himself immensely.

Sasha smiled. “Even I’m jealous.”

He laughed and spun his ball cap around so she could see his face. “How was your day?”

“Good, actually. I went to a Museum.”

“Sounds interesting,” he said at the bartender meandered over and asked Sebastian for his drink order. “Sprichst du English?” he asked, too tired to contemplate an order in German. The bartender nodded. “Awesome. I’ll actually just get a green tea and a bottle of still water, please? Sash, did you want another champagne?”

“I will have tea too, please,” she smiled at the bartender who nodded and took the order. “You okay? You look tired,” she put some long dark hair behind his ear.

“So tired,” he admitted. “Bit sore. Intense day.”

“What were you filming?”

“Fighting sequences all day. Had to kick everybody’s asses,” he said as modestly as he could muster.

“Who?”

“Emily and Scarlett, Downey, Chadwick,” he gave a grin, rubbing his tired eyes.

“Why don’t we cancel the tea and we just head back to the apartment? You can have a hot shower and an early night.”
He shook his head. “No, I promised I’d be here,” he gave her a small smile. “I feel bad enough I haven’t spent enough time with you to this point.”

“Don’t feel bad,” she told him. “I can take care of myself. I know you’re not far if I need you.”

“That wasn’t part of the deal,” he reminded her.

“You’re sweet,” she told him, gently caressing his face as his eyes fluttered closed and nuzzled into her touch. “But I can have fun on my own. Besides, I wasn’t alone today. Lizzie came with me. She is gorgeous, Seb. Gorgeous!” she beamed, a wide smile lighting up her features. “You should date her.”

He laughed. “I’m not going to date Lizzie, Benzo. Remember that promise you made me make last New Year?”

“Refresh my memory?” she teased, knowing fully well what he was about to say.

“That I should probably look to date someone that isn’t my co-star, if I recall correctly.”

“Ha!” she laughed loudly as he blushed and dropped his eyes. “Of course I remember that magnificent advice, I see you do too.”

He put his hands over her mouth. “Well, regardless, no. I’m not going to date Lizzie.”

“Well, I was just making a suggestion,” she laughed quietly. “But I endorse her.”

“I’m glad you’re making friends. I’ve missed your smile,” his face lit up remarkably. “You’re so beautiful when you grin like that, and usually it’s only reserved for when you’re dancing. Don’t get me wrong, you’re always so stunning, but that smile? God, you knock my socks off.”

“Sebastian,” she blushed profusely, hiding her face behind her hands. It was pretty infrequent her façade dropped that easily for him – she could usually play off his jerking around with a little eye rolling or a smarmy comment, but that one fell through the wayside. Dammit.

“What? I pay you a compliment and this is how you accept it?”

“You’re being weird,” she said as the tea appeared before them and she poured his first, grateful for the distraction.

“No, I’m not,” he tugged on her ponytail. “I simply told my best girl she’s stunning. I’m not blind, you know.”

“That sounded it like it came from the Bucky Barnes handbook.”

He laughed, adjusting his cap, suddenly nervous, and a little exposed he’d dropped his guard so easily. “Okay. Yes. It was a bit cheesy,” he agreed. “Give me a break.”

“Let’s drink these and I’ll steam you some chicken and veggies at the apartment while you shower. Or better yet, have a bath! Catering dropped over some food today, so your fridge is stocked.”

“I am pretty hungry,” he said. “You’re on.”

---

Sebastian held Sasha’s hips as he peered over her shoulder, whilst she unlocked the apartment door. The poor guy was exhausted; he wouldn’t make it to dinner at this point. “You okay?” she asked
him, a little concerned, as he followed her in. He pulled his hoodie off and tossed it toward the back of the couch. She mimicked his actions with her Vans.

“Yeah,” he yawned, pulling a cushion to his chest. “Glad I’ve got a few days off now. We should go somewhere, see something,” he collapsed on the sofa, rubbing his eyes. She sat next to him. “Fuck, I still haven’t taken you to Paris…” he realised.

“No.”

“No, I haven’t,” he peered at her. “I’m sorry. Sheesh,” his voice rising on the last word.

“No, sense the tone, dummy,” she corrected. “You’re sleeping in and then we’re having a couch day. You could do with a quiet day or two. You’re bushed.”

“I can’t argue with you on that one,” he moved his body so he could rest his head on her shoulder, his eyes closing.

She softened, wrapping her arms around him. “Oh, sweet Sebastian. You hit the hay, and we’ll reconvene here tomorrow at some point. Turn off your alarms and rest.”

“Will you come with me?”

“Where?”

“To bed. I don’t know. I’m feeling homesick or maybe I’m getting the flu or something. Just not feeling like me right now.”

She sighed and had to admit he wasn’t acting much like himself either, he hadn’t been much at all lately. “I think you just need a good night’s sleep. You’re mentally and physically exhausted, Seb.”

“Yeah,” he sighed, using what was left of his energy to stand. “You’re probably right.”

“Will you be okay?”

He shrugged. “I’ll be fine. Goodnight, Benzo,” he stroked her cheek tenderly and shuffled to his room, closing the door after him. She sat back on the couch, her body screaming at her to follow him. He needed the comfort of something that reminded him of home. He needed her. She shook her head, knowing how completely inappropriate it would be for her to go in there. They had bunked together a few times, but not with how she felt now. It would blur the lines way too much. Then again, how much blurrier could they actually be? She had been well and truly beyond a point of no return for a while now. Too long, too painful.

A while later and after dozing on the couch for a good hour, she went to her room and started her nightly rituals. Make up off, floss and brushing her teeth. Summer nightshirt. She looked at her bed then the door then her bed again and crept to Sebastian’s room. He hadn’t closed the door all the way over and she could just make out him under the covers. She walked in as quiet as she could, gently creeping in, hoping not to disturb him. That is exactly what she did not want. What are you doing here? Get out! Why was her body doing exactly what her head was telling her not to?! A-fucking-bort! You motherfucking stalker, get out of here!

She nestled her head in her hand, marveling at his dark hair framed his handsome face as he slept. She tenderly brushed it away and he exhaled, his eyes slowly fluttering open, eyes bright blue from sleep, he was never a deep sleeper, she knew this. Shittt. She panicked openly.

“Hi,” he breathed and moved his arm to drag her under it. “I just need to feel something like home,”
he murmured, his leg trapping hers, strong arm slinking over her waist. “Thank you.”

“Go back to sleep, Sebastian,” she whispered, trapped against him. His strong chest to her back, his body felt incredible against hers, she could freely admit it.

“Sleep well, sweet Sasha,” he kissed her shoulder, pulling her closer again. She sighed gently, hoping not to ruffle him, or attract any further attention. She wasn’t going to be able to go anywhere in a hurry, she noted.

Sure, they’d shared beds before, but never this intimately. He would have his side of the bed and she’d have hers and they would never meet in the middle. Wrapped in his arms, it didn’t take her long to join him in slumber too.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you to the babes who so generously wrote comments, provided kudos and subscribed. I do love hearing from you, so let me know what you think xxx
An Interlude. Meet Delphine.

Chapter Summary

If she’d learnt one thing in all the years she’d know him, it was that he always managed to make her feel new and exciting ways of hating how much she cared about him.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

It was 9am when Sasha spied the digital clock on Sebastian's bedside table. He was still out cold, having had rolled onto his back during the night and kicked the blankets off, clad only in his black boxer briefs (you're welcome), strong arms splayed above his head on the pillow in a tangle of long dark hair. She reached over and attempted to give him some modesty, his skin was chilly so he'd obviously been like that a while. She sighed quietly, pulling his necklace away from his Adam's apple and dragging the blankets back over him in case he was actually getting sick to keep him warm. But that body though, Jesus… it was just too sinful to be left exposed. *Fuck you, Marvel. Fuck you very much, Don. Just fuck everyone who made Seb look like that,* she thought. He was sexy when svelte, but this blew her mind. My, how her little Sebastian had grown.

Since she was free, she pushed the covers off herself and padded to his bathroom to relive herself. She spied herself in the mirror. Not looking too completely dishevelled, she combed her hair into a messy ponytail and took in his bathroom vanity. Sebastian was never known for his tidiness and the bathroom was no exception. His razor, toothbrush and other various items strewn all over the place.

She picked up his cologne and smiled, putting it to her nose. *So Seb,* she thought. She put it back down and wandered back out to find Sebastian stretching his limbs under the covers. “Hi,” she said, resting against the doorframe.

“Morning,” he yawned, not really opening his eyes. “Sleep okay?”

“Fine,” she told him, looking at her feet. “Yourself?”

“I think I could sleep all day,” he told her, reaching across to his bedside table, finding a hair tie and putting his hair into a messy bun. She’d become quite fond of the longer hair on him (he still hated it, he probably always would for the role). She’d find a way to hide her devastation when he cut it off after Civil War had wrapped. He yawned, rolling over to face her. “Come back to bed, I think we have a few more hours in us.”

She gave a tight-lipped smile, resisting a giggle. He was kidding himself if he thought he was getting the benefit of the doubt again, let alone her stupidly falling for it. There was no way this would be a precedent to sleeping in future. “I’m well and truly awake. You go back to sleep, I’m going to make myself some coffee,” she told him.

“It’s warm in here,” he patted the soft sheets but unable to keep his eyes open. So innocent, he tried again. *Bless him.*

“Go back to sleep, Sebastian.”
He gave a lazy smile, easing up on his elbows to look to her, the duvet slipping down as he moved, all muscular shoulders and chest that she’d just hidden. *This is hell.* “You don’t mind?”

“Of course not, you need your beauty sleep.”

“I don’t need beauty sleep. I’m handsome. My Ma tells me every day,” he winked. “Don’t let me sleep all day,” he ordered, snuggling back under the covers and his eyes closing.

“Sleep as long as you need. I’ll see you when you appear,” she told him, not knowing how she managed to leave his room when all she wanted to do was rip the clothes off the pair of them and just finally give in to the absolute carnal need she now had for him – she didn’t need to see him like that in daylight hours. One very cold shower awaited.

She closed his bedroom door quietly, knowing it wouldn’t take him long to go back to sleep. Grabbing her phone, she realised it was a half-decent time to call Australia.

“Well, well, well,” Delphine, the eldest of Sasha’s sisters, answered with a scoff. “If it isn’t the global jetsetter, my baby sister, Sasha. Are you sure you have the right number?”

“I miss you, Delphi,” Sasha said softly, wandering out to sit on the balcony and closing the door after her – the last thing she wanted was for Sebastian to somehow overhear her. Regardless, she kept her voice low. “I slept in the same bed as Sebastian last night and I am calling you to resist walking back in there and really complicating things more.”

“Whoa,” Delphi replied lowly. “Are you using me as a cockblock for Sebastian?” It was crude, but it was mostly true.

Sasha pulled the phone back from her ear and started at it, confused. She otherwise continued, “Seb said he was feeling homesick and I stayed in his room, in his arms and I really enjoyed it. If he had’ve wanted more, I probably would have worshipped him all night. My resistance is futile. My guard is down and in short, I’m real trouble here.”

Delphi was silent for a moment.

“But it’s okay, I don’t need my hand held or my sister to give me any kind of reassurance,” Sasha added, a little sarcastically. “I’m a big girl. My life just appears somewhat put together at times.”

“Relax, drama queen,” Delphi replied. “I’m trying to get my head around this. You didn’t sleep with him?”

“No. But I swear, if I was given half a chance – ”


“Believe me, I’m trying. It’s like someone is standing on my chest right now,” Sasha said gasping slightly, looking out on the street below. The day had well and truly started for the city with locals taking in brunch and meandering around happily. It was absolutely glorious outside.

“Are you able to get any kind of gauge on him?”

“No, you know how he feels about me. We’re mates. That’s the beginning and end of it.”

“Are you sure?” Delphi’s tone changed a little.

“Of course I am.”
“Okay.”

Sasha could hear commotion on the other end of the line. Babies screaming, calling for 'Mummy', Delphi's husband calling the babies, general madness. “I called at a bad time, I’m sorry. I know you’ve got the bubbas to organise.”

“My husband can look after the kids for a minute. I’m talking to my sister, who clearly needs any terrible advice I can give her,” Delphi said, a protection Sasha hadn’t felt in years washing over her and suddenly she understood how homesick Sebastian felt and how long she’d ignored the pang for home herself (for longer than she'd likely want to admit).

“I think want to come home,” Sasha conceded.

“We want you to come home. You’ve been away so long, kiddo,” Delphi admitted.

“But my life is in New York, I don’t know if I could even consider coming back to Melbourne now.”

“Well, you give up your apartment lease, buy a plane ticket and pack up,” Delphi said simply. "Your parents, 4 sisters and countless nieces and nephews that would love you to come back. We miss your pretty face.”

Sasha giggled and bit back a few tears. Calling Delphi was absolutely the wrong thing to do. Now she was nostalgic, missed her family and just wanted to be with them. Being with her sisters would fix everything. The older 3, Delphi, Melissa and Sasha were only separated by a few years. The younger twins, Sofia and Emerson, were the accidents at nearly 18 and finishing their last year at high school.

“I adore Sebastian. He’s sweet, funny and considerate. Borderline criminal how gorgeous he is. But if you’re just getting hurt, Sash, I need you to consider a break. For yourself,” Delphi sighed. “And for your heart.”

It was brutal to hear, but in no way was Delphi wrong. In no way whatsoever. The tears continued to spill for both sisters.

“He thinks the sun shines out of your arse, the night we were partying with him in LA, all he wanted to do all night was call you, but you were in New York and a few hours ahead and he couldn’t stop telling us how bad he felt that he hadn’t seen your new show. ‘We should FaceTime her as soon as she’s offstage and taken off her make up’, he kept saying. He said he knew that you hated being FaceTimed when you still had stage make up on. Strange thing to know about you.”

“It’s not strange for him. He knows everything about me.”

“Not everything if he doesn't know how you feel.”

“That is not helping.”

“It’s not supposed to, Sash. Sebastian is a beautiful soul, who cares for you very deeply.”

Absolutely not helping,” Sasha whined, a little worse for her sister praising him. Classic Sebastian Stan, leaving a pile of converts in his wake at every moment.

“I think you should just… no, I’m not going to say it.”

“Say what? Tell him?” Sasha figured. "Like I haven't heard that one before," she added sarcastically.
“Yes, exactly.”

“I would rather die,” Sasha said decisively.

“I know, that’s why I didn’t say it.”

Silence met the sisters. It wasn’t a stand off, but there wasn’t much more to be said either.

“I wish I was there to give you a big hug,” Delphi said.

“Yeah, I’d really love one right now,” Sasha confessed. “And I’m not running back to Sebastian for him to ask me why I’m crying and emotional. It terrifies him when I cry,” she gave a small laugh in spite of everything.

“I love you, I know you’ll do what’s right for you.”

“Because I’ve done so well to this point,” Sasha scoffed in spite of herself.

Delphi snickered. “Don’t underestimate yourself. If I wasn’t married to the love of my life, and we didn’t make the cutest fucking babies on the planet and Sebastian wasn’t an option for you, I’d fuck him too. He’s got a gravitational pull like no one I’ve ever seen before. It’s amazing how people are lured to him.”

“Delphine!” Sasha hissed.

“I’d really make it worth Seb’s while,” Delphi continued.

“Straight up appalling. I’m hanging up now.”

“Goodbye, Sasha,” Delphi giggled as Sasha ended the call.

“Jesus Chris,” Sasha said dismally. *That’s what you get when you call the lunatic sister for advice.*

Chapter End Notes

**A quick note - I'm probably not going to post much before Wednesday evenings my time. I have a Bucky fic I'm dissecting which I hope to have working enough in the next month or so.**

Thank you to all that have left comments, kudos and subscribed. It blows my mind you gorgeous babes are remotely interested in my little piece. I hope you enjoyed this update x
Chapter Summary

If she’d learnt one thing in all the years she’d know him, it was that he always managed to make her feel new and exciting ways of hating how much she cared about him.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Hey,” Sebastian yawned, appearing a couple hours later, barefoot in his sweats and a white tee close to lunchtime, bun in complete disarray. He scratched his belly, no doubt his stomach growling was what woke him. He was always eating these days. He hated it, but for work, he was constantly shovelling in food and his metabolism just wasn’t satisfied. Skipping dinner last night and breakfast this morning was the wrong decision, he knew. But fuck, he was so exhausted. Food would wait.

Correction, he loved eating. He just hated being healthy all the time. He would be glad to start eating like a normal human again in a few short weeks.

“Good afternoon, sleeping beauty,” Sasha said with a small smile, looking up from her iPad as he sat beside her on the couch. “Feeling better?”

“So much better,” he gave a relaxed smile of his own but couldn't resist putting his head back against the couch and closing his eyes again.

“Starving?”

“Always.”

“Want me to make you something?” she offered. “Kinda peckish myself. Haven’t eaten yet.”

“You haven’t eaten? What have you been doing out here?” he opened an eye and raised an eyebrow, a little surprised. "You've been up for hours."

“I spoke to Delphi for a while, then showered, finished my book and here I am. I was just on Instagram. Our friends seem to be having a lot of fun without us,” she said with a sad pout, missing them just a little more than usual.

“How dare they,” he sat up and stretched with a wide grin. “Well, they’re not here and having fun with us, so I guess it goes both ways.”

“I guess so,” she admitted.

“Is beautiful Delphine good?”

“Uhh, yeah,” Sasha nodded. “Knee deep in babies. The usual, I figure. I don't know what usual at home is anymore.”

“You're home is New York anyway,” he joked as she hummed in agreement. They sat in silence for a while before Sebastian announced, “I’m going to have a shower,” he said. “And then have to get to
“Airport? Where are you going?” she frowned, questions bubbling from her lips unintentionally. “For work? Isn't it your couple of days off?”

“No, us. I've got you and I a reservation at Alain Ducasse at Plaza Athénée in Paris tonight,” he said casually.

“What?” she yelped, jumping up onto the couch cushions, hands balled over her face. She stood over him in disbelief. He bit back his laughter. “Sebastian, what have you done? We're going to Paris for dinner!”

“Yeah, just called,” he smiled simply. Actually he got his assistant, Sara, to call and grovel for a reservation. He didn’t know how she did it on such short notice on a Saturday evening, but she did (he figured his name and current projects were dropped repeatedly. He sometimes preferred not knowing how Sara managed to get her hands on things like that). She was a gift. “I told you I was going to take you. We won’t have much time to shop, but we should be in Paris by 5.”

“Oh, my God. You are the best,” she dropped onto his lap, hugging him tightly. “This is awesome.”

He finally laughed, squeezing her gently. “You’d better go get ready, crazy. We’ll stay overnight, I’m not due on set until tomorrow, late.”

“Oh, shit. I am not prepared,” she raked her hands through her hair and started making a mental list in her head as he pulled her body closer to his, still perched comfortably on his body.

She was panicking, he knew pulling a fast one on her might backfire as it predictably had. He kept one hand on her waist as the other moved to grasp her face, his calloused palm gently thumbing over her cheekbone and bringing her attention back to him. “Hey, hey. Look at me,” he said quietly as her eyes met his, still riddled with anxiety. “You need something cute to wear to dinner and something for tomorrow. Toothbrush, make up, passport,” he helped up and along to her bedroom, his arm still around her. “I’m going to shower, I’ve already packed.”

“I thought you were sleeping!” she accused frantically. “Why didn’t you tell me before you made plans? I would have had more time to organise myself.”

“It wouldn’t have been a surprise then, would it?” he smiled simply as her body started to uncoil and relax a little, much to his relief. “I’ll put a change of clothes and my toothbrush in with your stuff. I carry on bag only. I’ve got a suit in a bag already.”

“Of course you've got a suit ready to go,” she rolled her eyes. ”You really are the best, you know that right?” she kissed his cheek as he blushed a little.

“I wanted to take you to the ballet, but I organised it too late,” he said, a little disappointed. “Can I take you another time?”

"I think I can survive without it,” she laughed, still incredulous that in a few short hours she'd be back in her favourite city in the world (not inclusive of New York City or Melbourne, of course). “Thanks Seb.”

“That's okay – go get ready. Plane departs at 3:15 and we're already wasting time.”

---

Sitting in the airline’s first lounge, Sebastian raised his champagne flute to Sasha. “To Paris,” he said
as he and Sasha toasted together. “Excited?”

“I might actually pee a little,” she replied, her good knee bouncing excitedly as he scoffed a laugh. “I can’t wait. I could literally burst.”

“I can see that,” he was pleased. He looked through his phone at the confirmation emails Sara had sent through. “So, a car will pick us up, we’ll check into the hotel and get organised for dinner then I say we go find a bar before we eat. Remind me to send Sara some flowers for helping me get all this organised, huh?”

“Sounds perfect. Sign my name on Sara’s card too,” she said, noticing Sebastian’s attention waiver. His eyes flicked over her shoulder and broke into a shy smile.

“Hello,” he said, raising an eyebrow in interest. Sasha followed his gaze.

“Hi Sebastian,” a girl about 13 smiled at him nervously. She was English. “May I please have your autograph?” she asked, handing him a notepad and a pen.

“Of course,” he smiled, signing away. “What brings you to Berlin?”

“We just finished our holiday,” she replied, flushing. Sebastian did this to women of all ages, Sasha knew. They were just putty in his hands. “Can we take a selfie?” she held her iPhone up, hopefully.

“Sure, sure,” Seb accommodated the girl, standing up and leaning down to join her in the photo. The girl struggled before Sasha volunteered her help. “Thanks Sash,” Seb winked.

“Say ‘Wiener Soldier’!” Sasha instructed, grinning to herself.

“Wiener Soldier,” they said as Sebastian laughed. The photo was great, Seb mid-giggle, they were always the best ones with that gorgeous face. The girl would treasure this one, she’d hoped. It would no doubt be all over social media in minutes.

“Cute pic,” Sasha grinned, passing the child her phone back.

“Thank you. I’m really looking forward to Civil War!” the girl told him.

Seb chuckled. “Me too!”

“Thank you again,” the girl walked away excitedly to her parents to show them the picture immediately.

“The Wiener Soldier,” Sebastian muttered, sipping his champagne. “You just couldn’t resist, could you?”

“Never. It will never be topped for nicknames – ” she was interrupted by their flight being announced. They both stood. Sebastian picked up their bag, taking her hand in his free one, lacing their fingers together.

“Want to go get lost in Paris with me?” he grinned, wiggling his dark brows.

“Yes please,” she replied giddily with a wide grin of her own.

They were joined by one of the airline team and escorted Sebastian and Sasha to the VIP boarding area. “We hope you enjoy your flight, Mr Stan,” the young airline host said gleefully as Sasha handed the flight crew their boarding passes and passports.
“Thank you,” he smiled appreciatively as they were taken through the aerobridge to their first class seats.

“Everyone turns to putty around you, don’t they? Men, women, children,” she accused jokingly as the cabin crew took her and Sebastian’s carry on luggage. “Is anyone safe?”

He shrugged. “There’s nothing wrong with being polite,” he told her honestly.

“They see your beautiful face first, darling,” she gently patted his cheek, letting him have the window seat.

He blushed profusely, taking his seat and buckling up. “I don’t know, what do you want me to say?”

“You don’t have to say anything, sweet Sebastian. You don’t have to say a word,” she winked as the air hostess brought over a glass of champagne for each of them in greeting. Sasha didn’t hesitate as her flying fears kicked in and she gulped down embarrassingly quickly. Sebastian blinked then sort of beamed with pride. That would hurt later, she realised, putting a hand to her chest, the bubbles cascading down her throat, cheeks reddening her for her over-eagerness to ease some nerves.

“You're all class, doll face,” he winked playfully.

“Sorry. I’m nervous,” she croaked, still recovering and a little bashful too.

“Excuse me?” Sebastian asked the flight attendant who blushed at the Hollywood actor making conversation with her. “My partner here? Sasha Benzo, like me, is a professional when it comes to being a terrible flier, very nervy. Likely to leave nail marks in the seat,” he ignored her glowering from beside him and patted her hand before curling his fingers around hers. “I know it’s only a short flight, but if you could please keep the champagne flowing?”

“Absolutely, Mr Stan. It would be my pleasure,” she said, a little sway to her hips as she walked away. It didn’t go unnoticed by either Sasha or Sebastian.

“See?” Sasha grinned, her point from earlier effectively made. “You did that purposefully, with the eyes and the coy smile,” she mocked him, mimicking his actions as he laughed, chewing his bottom lip, still a little caught up from the figure that just walked away. “I’m on to you. You’ve pulled this shit for years.”

He laughed quietly, shaking his head. “I admit it, fine. But don’t pretend you haven’t gotten anything out of it either, Benzo.”

“That’s true,” she conceded. “And thank you, I should have a great buzz when we arrive in Paris. But I don’t want to be too drunk,” she insisted.

“Is there an appropriate amount of drunk to be?” he offered, unable to hide his grin. “Because you’re a wee bit tipsy right now.”

“I am not,” she pouted. “3 glasses of champagne, max before we arrive.”

Sebastian nodded. “Duly noted. I won’t let you have another glass after the next one until we’re at the hotel then you can go bananas.”

“No, I’m going to be fabulous in Paris. Like Carrie. Not a cheap Aussie drunk overseas. Our reputations are terrible. I’m not going to be a statistic.”

He grinned, patting her thigh. “You will be flawless in Paris too, don’t worry.”
She flushed a little. She didn't believe she'd ever had been called 'flawless' before (even in dance) but
wouldn't knock it back if that's how he saw her. Wasn't true, they both knew that, but sweet
nonetheless. “Our 25 year old selves would be laughing so pitifully at what we’ve become. Since
when did we say, ‘no, we’re going to be responsible adults and pace ourselves’ before? When have I
ever said, ‘oh, Sebastian? Cut me off at 3 glasses of champagne’?” she asked dramatically.

“Never,” Sebastian laughed loudly, she was funny today. He loved it when she was this loose and
relaxed. It was going to be fun weekend, he hoped. He had so much riding on it.

Chapter End Notes

My. Mind. Is. Blown, or maybe I've been out of the game for too long, but 1000+ views
and 70+ kudos after 6 chapters? I'm thrilled you dolls are sticking around and
(hopefully) enjoying the view. Thank you to those who've subscribed. And I guess
thanks to Seb for being the greatest thing since sliced bread to make you want to stick
around xoxo
PARIS, FRANCE

“One bed,” Sebastian announced with an unamused pout as they wandered into their glamorous suite. He dropped their luggage at his feet with a slight huff.

“One bed,” Sasha repeated. *Damn, we’ll have to sleep in the same bed again,* she thought smugly. *No! That will never happen again,* she scolded herself. “That’s okay, I’ll take the couch,” she reassured him, throwing a thumb over her shoulder towards the lounge. “Frankly I’m happy to sleep in the tub if we’re staying here,” she beamed widely, still humoured by her earlier thoughts.

“Absolutely not. Should I call reception and get another room? I told Sara two beds,” he continued, taking a seat on the bed before flopping back. He looked a lot more relaxed than 18 hours earlier and a lot like he could care less about the bed situation. He also didn’t tell Sara two beds, not specifically anyway. He just simply forgot the request. *Truly.*

“Up to you, but I’ll be fine on the couch. I doubt we’ve got many options at this late stage anyway,” she told him as he nodded. She wandered to the closet and reached for the extra blanket. “All set.”

“We should be fine, right? Same bed. We’ve managed last night,” he shrugged, easing up on his elbows and completely ignoring her previous statements.

“It’s not a problem, Seb. Just keep your grubby mitts to yourself,” she baited as he chuckled and hid his hands under his back as Sasha opened the minibar, pulling out champagne and showed him what she’d found with a wild grin, pointing at the bottle. “Should we be pacing?” she lost her grin for a half second, apprehensive. “Or have we moved on from that?”

“Moved on. All bets are off,” he confirmed. “Pop the bottle, Sash. I know you need this,” he smiled, sitting up and moving to the bar as she retrieved a couple of champagne flutes and she sat next to him. She opened the bottle carefully and poured for them both. “Thanks. You’re good at that,” he said.

“I’d never disrespect the champagne gods. Especially not in France, Sebastian.”

He snorted and nudged her, raising his glass to toast. “I’m really glad we could do this.”

“Me too, I love Paris. Thanks again, Seb,” she smiled, taking a sip. “Okay, now I’m in Paris. Champagne in Paris, this is perfect. I just need a baguette, fromage, charcuterie and fleurs on a cute little push bike in a bright yellow sundress with a basket on the front containing said contents.”

He licked his lips and mouth turned into a smile, scoffing back a laugh. “How many more
stereotypes have you get into that imagination of yours?” he asked as she grinned with animated raised eyebrows, flute to her lips as she pondered the question. “Champagne was all it took, huh? Not that you’re here with your best friend, about to have a delicious meal and stay in one of the most luxurious hotels in Europe?” he asked flippantly, rolling his eyes.

“That helps,” she said glibly, before laughing. “Thank you,” she gently kissed his fuzzy cheek before resting her head on his shoulder. “This is amazing and you are my amazing best friend forever.”

“You’re welcome,” he said softly. “Hey, about that BFF thing?”

She giggled hysterically, swinging on the bar stool – she was overstimulated being in her favourite city in the world and she knew it, hardly able to contain her exhilaration. “Gotta admit, never thought I’d ever hear you say ‘BFF’, Seb,” she picked up her glass and moving to the window, taking in the spectacular Parisian afternoon, pushing back the drapery and opening the door to the balcony. “I would leave New York and move here in a second,” she murmured to herself, a little awestruck and distracted by the view of Avenue Montaign in Summer below her. Indescribable. A girl could get used to this. Even one that lived in the other most amazing city in the world.

“No you wouldn’t,” he smiled after her. “You’d miss me in less than one second,” he reckoned. "It's why you'll never move back to Melbourne either."

“Presumptuous on your behalf. But probably,” she laughed, stepping outside.

“Sasha?” he called after her after she had disappeared outside. “Do we need to… uhh, should we… I feel – “ he stammered. “We need to – “

She turned back to look at him with an amused grin as she popped her head back in. “You okay there, stutters?”

He forced a smile, biting his lip. “Tongue tied?” Sebastian Stan was a lot of things but tongue tied was never usually one of them. Dork, funny, sensitive, smart. Not often, if ever, was he tongue tied. “This best friend thing you just brought up.”

“What about it? Now hold on here,” she warned jovially. "Are you going to trade me in for Chacey like the old days? I worked hard for you to put me in number one place, Sebastian. And I’ll fight Chace if I have to,” she called back. “And I’ll beat that little shit too,” she muttered. “I miss Chacey. We should FaceTime him from right here. Come outside. You’re missing everything in there,” she told him, pointing her finger at him and motioning outside with her.

He sighed, unable to resist a small smile, picking up his glass and stepping out to join her. Let's try again out here, huh? She was right though, it was spectacular but kind of failed in comparison to Sasha, leaning over the balcony, champagne in hand, purely at ease and peace, he hadn’t seen her like it months. Years, even. Ever maybe, he wondered.

He laughed at her, she had absolutely no idea what was coming, he realised, mimicking her posture, following her gaze to the luxury good stores across the road, enjoying the warn sun on his skin.

“Don’t move,” he told her, picking his phone from his pocket. “I want this shot of you. With Paris trying to look as amazing as you do in the background,” he pulled the phone before his face before she predictably crinkled her nose up, not letting him get the photo he wanted. She shook his head, with a laugh.

“That was never going to happen, by the way, bub.”

“Yeah,” he gave a small laugh. “I’m not surprised.” And with a deep breath to steel himself, he
began; “Look, I’m just going to say it because the more I creep around it, the stupider I sound,” he skulled his glass. “Is there anything we need to talk about? Like, are things good between us?” he grimaced, cursing that he still was rambling. *Spit it out, Sebastian.* He was getting fed up with himself now.

Sasha forced a laugh. *Oh shit.* “Of course things are good. Things will remain that way if you keep taking me on surprise trips around the world,” she joked, turning her back to him instantly and keeping a close eye on the street below. “Fuck,” she muttered quietly.

“Yeah,” Seb said reluctantly, rubbing his tired face. “Okay.”

“Why would you think things weren’t good between us?” she stupidly asked. He sighed, taking both their champagne flutes and placing them on the bistro table behind him and moved to hold her, his forehead resting on her shoulder, sitting his hands on her hips. He was surprised when her fingers smoothed his long hair and laced into it.

“Things are always good, Sasha. Great, even. But they have changed,” he said quietly, looking up to meet her eyes.

“Seb…” she said, blood pulsing in her ears reminiscent of the rhythm her heartbeat.

“Sash, we should talk,” he whispered, his lips close to her ear.

“Okay,” her lip trembled, the confusion written all over her face.

“Hi,” he said quietly, the teeniest of smiles on his lips.

“Hello,” she swallowed.

“Please don’t be scared. Last thing I want to do is scare you.”

“What are you doing, Sebastian?” she asked. She was afraid for the answer.

“I am holding you because I really want to kiss you,” he admitted, gently cupping her cheek, his thumb tracing her cheekbone. “All I can think about is kissing you.”

“Seb – ” she started but his face, that stupid fucking face, shut her up without any words needed on his behalf.

He pulled his lip in his teeth, a nervous yet endearing trait of his. *Irresistible.* He sighed, lowering his eyes. “I guess I’m doing a pretty good job destroying this little trip away before it even starts, huh?” he asked helplessly. He was flailing. He pulled away and scratched his bearded chin, before pacing a little. “I’m so sorry, Sash.”

“What’s going on with you?” she asked softly. “What changed?”

He looked up with hopeful eyes. It’s all he had at this point: hope. “Is this all in my head, Benzo?” he finally blurted out, cocking his head to the side, his grey blue eyes shining with their honesty, he felt so desperate with the question. He pointed between them. “Because I don’t feel like it is.”

“It’s… not,” she confessed as he took those steps closer again, unapologetically invading her personal space again.

An optimistic smile came to his lips. “Really?”

“Is this about to turn into a really big joke?” she asked, clearly spooked.
He shook his head, licking his lips. “Nope,” he reached for her hand. “This is how I feel. I know how I feel, Benzo. I have for a very long time.”

“How long?”

“God, hmmm?” he scratched his neck, blushing. “I can’t place it specifically. But it’s just gotten more and more intense as time goes by. I’ve always felt like a magnet drawn to you. From the beginning, I guess.”

“You need to start talking because I’m really not sure what you want from me,” she inhaled sharply. Breathing was not coming naturally right now.

His smile was barely there but the mirth was obvious in his eyes. “Just you, kid.”

“Sash, I adore you. How can you not see it?Fuck, everyone sees it,” he gently cupped her face again and spied her lips. “I really want to kiss you… can I kiss you? We should definitely kiss.”

At some point, Sasha regained the ability to nod and his lips were on hers. Sweet, slow, nothing obtrusive to intimidate her. He pulled her a bit closer, resting his hands on her waist and she wrapped her arms around his neck and laced her fingers in the hair at the nape of his neck.

He was every bit as good a kisser as she’s imagined. With those lips and that smile, she’d have been shattered to find that not be the case – imagine Sebastian Stan not being able to kiss. Un-fucking-likely. She didn’t even mind the beard. It tickled a little. After a few moments, he pulled back and smiled, placing a chaste kiss on her lips again that she couldn’t catch, still stuck in the previous one.

“Was that okay?” he asked expectantly, thumbing at her bottom lip. She managed a nod, a lusty haze still foggy her eyes, he loved her wild, dark eyes. “Should we try again? I don’t want to overwhelm you, but that was amazing.”

“Kiss me again,” she begged as he smirked and obliged willingly. The kiss started much the same as the last. Tender, but it was her who urged him on, the kiss changed drastically as she gently bit his lip, tongue skirting his full lips. He willingly accepted the intrusion of champagne, opening his mouth to happily oblige her and continued for a while, tongues waging a war against the other. They certainly weren’t counting the seconds, minutes... years? He moved his hands from her back and to cup her face. A small moan escaped her lips as they parted, both out of breath.

“Jesus, you’re a good kisser,” she told him. He shrugged modestly, licking his lips. He hadn't ever been told any differently.

“You are fucking brilliant yourself. Shit,” he eased a smile, pushing his hair back from his eyes. “I have wanted that for so long. I thought I was gonna blow it,” he laughed quietly at himself. “Though I admit, I probably sounded like a fucking lunatic before.”

“You did,” she confirmed, forcing a breath.

He shook his head. “You, dragă mea,” he accused lightly. “Are terrifying.”

“Excuse me, Sebastian?”

He blushed, as he took her hands and led her back into the hotel suite, sitting her to the couch closely beside him. He took her palm and started drawing against the lines with his long index finger to avoid any further eye contact. “I don’t know how to explain this. Like... I am that into you, it’s
physically impossible for me not to be near you,” he confided. “I was so scared of being rejected. I’m surprised you can’t hear my heart racing in my chest.”

“Oh,” she blushed before meeting his lust blown eyes, slivers of blue grey the only colour away from the black pupils. “Can I ask… how did you know?”

“I don’t know,” he admitted. “There is just something, you know? I guess I’ve felt it for a while. The comments from everyone, maybe it just started seeming less like a joke and that you could actually feel the same as me? You didn’t know with me?” he was perplexed by this idea.

She shook her head emphatically. “It’s easy to think someone isn’t keen on you when you meet their new girlfriend every week.”

He nodded, self-consciously. “Was easier to distract myself than admit how I actually felt. I was too scared to,” he sighed, tucking her hair behind her ear and gently tugging at the ends. “You know those girls never meant anything, right?”

“That was something I did actually know,” she laughed quietly. “You made that abundantly clear to everyone.”

He flushed, mostly embarrassed. “I never meant to hurt you. I’m sorry if I did,” he thumbed her chin. “Really.”

“It’s okay, Seb. I admit I did figure the less I saw of you, the simpler it would be for me so my knee was a great excuse.”

“I knew you were avoiding me for some reason,” he told her. “I didn’t know it was because of how you felt about me.”

She shrugged slightly. “I was hoping my knee was a good cover.”

“Did it work?” he asked, although he knew the answer.


“Well, I’m not going anywhere, Sash,” still lightly gripping her chin, he kissed her gently again. “Sad to say this, kid, but if you want me, you’ve got me.”

“Really?”

He nodded. “Yeah.”

She moved to perch her body his lap, straddling his waist. She tried not to blush as she could tell he clearly enjoyed the bold move. “Kiss me, Sebastian.”

“Dragă, it would be my absolute pleasure,” he breathed and straightened up, holding her hips and pulling her down to him, filling his kisses with the lust, passion and desire he could muster.

Chapter End Notes

Hi all, sorry this is a little later than I would have liked to have posted, but life happened.
Thank you again for dropping in and leaving you comments, kudos and subscribing. I hope you're enjoying it and would love to hear your thoughts on this chapter :) xoxo
Paris - Part Deux

Chapter Summary

If she’d learnt one thing in all the years she’d known him, it was that he always managed to make her feel new and exciting ways of hating how much she cared about him.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

A few hours later, dishevelled and chap lipped, Sasha tried to pull herself together. They were going to miss their dinner reservations if they didn’t organise themselves, which meant they needed to peel themselves away from the couch and each other’s bodies. Not that she couldn’t have stayed in and kissed him for the rest of her life. There are worse ways to go than kissing Sebastian Stan into oblivion. *God, teenage crush clichés,* she snickered to herself. *You’re in your 30’s, grow up.*

“Are you decent?” Sebastian called from behind the door with a light knock, breaking the revelry in the bathroom.

“Yeah,” she replied, picking up her bronzer brush and touching up her make up in a fluffy hotel robe. “Come in.”

He walked in sporting a sharp black suit and black shirt, though he was still barefoot. “I’ll be just a minute,” he smiled, taking space next to her in the mirror. She paused what she was doing as he sifted through their shared toiletries, sprayed his cologne and ran his hands through his long dark hair before tying it into a low bun.

She inhaled sharply, noting that she had stopped breathing since he walked in.

“We should leave really soon,” he tenderly stroked her cheek with a graze of his knuckles. “I’m going to put on some socks and shoes,” he wandered out again. She stared at her reflection in the mirror.

*How is he so calm about this? Okay, I know this has been a big afternoon for you, but you need to get your shit together,* she told herself in hopes a pep talk would work (it wouldn't). *This man has poured his heart out and now you have lost the ability to talk? Can perform solos for hundreds, cannot talk to your best friend who you’ve now spent the better part of the evening dry humping. Okay, lot has happened in the last few hours. But man the fuck up!*

She inhaled deeply as Sebastian reappeared in the doorway, coolly leaning against the frame. “Hi,” she attempted to appear casual but she knew, as well as him, that was not the energy she was giving off.

“You okay?” he raised an eyebrow.

“I’m fine,” she lied. “Just trying to get myself in the right frame of mind.”

He cocked his head to the side, a small smirk appearing on his lips. “I know this is a lot to take in,” he conceded.
So are you in that suit. He always wore black well.

She pulled her eyeliner from her make up bag and distracted herself with it, applying it deeply to both eyes while he watched closely. Not her wisest idea to put an eye pencil in her hands while she was shaking and under his gaze, she knew. She managed to avoid panda eyes.

“Sash, if this is all too much – ” he started.

She stopped and turned to face him. “I’m just trying to get my head around everything. That’s all.”

“Yeah, I understand. Trust me, me too,” he said shyly. “It’s a lot to process. It’s a big change from friends to whatever this is. But I do think we owe it to ourselves to at least find out,” he wandered in and held her to him, bunching the soft robe at the collar in his fists. He kissed her again, slow and soft. She would not be getting sick of that anytime soon, even though her lips were starting to sting a little. “Don’t you?”

“I do,” she nodded. “I’m just anxious.”

He nodded, it was pretty obvious. Maybe he was hiding it better after a few hours, but he was still as shaken to the core about their new arrangement than she was. “That we will ruin something really awesome if this doesn’t work?” he figured.

“Exactly,” she barely nodded.

“Well, I don’t want to be friends anymore,” he told her with a small shrug.

“Oh,” she said a little confused.

“I want us.”

“Oh,” she blushed, a timid grin taking on her features. You walked into that one, dummy.

“And I honestly think you do too,” he reckoned. He wasn’t wrong.

“I do,” she nodded, with a small pout that Sebastian couldn’t resist to kiss. “But how are you not freaking the fuck out?” she begged. “You’re so calm and collected, and I’m sweating. Literally everything is sweating!” she hissed, fanning her face.

He laughed quietly, shaking his head. “No. Trust me, my head is mess right now. All I know is this will sound dismissive, but I guess my motivation has changed a little. Before I was just glad to see that beautiful smile… now it’s tasting those beautiful lips again,” he added with a small shrug as she felt her knees want to go from under her. Don’t let me fall, Sebastian.

Was he always so good with the one-liners? she wondered. Regardless, it was working for him.

“Sasha, we’d be stupid not to see where this goes. Besides, now that this has happened, I doubt we could just go back to being just friends, right? That part of our lives we’ll never get back. Not now. Not after today,” he told her and she had to scoff in agreement. Their friendship was figuratively over and for that she mourned for a half second until he caught her staring at his lips again and he grinned, taking full advantage and kissing her deeply. “Can I take you on a date tonight?” he asked thoughtfully. “Since really this was my plan all along, to wine and dine you.”

She managed a small smile. “I suppose I’d hate to ruin your master plan,” she gulped a breath down.

He stifled a laugh, before biting his lip. “You’re not okay, are you? Look at you. I’ve never seen you
so overwhelmed.”

“I can hardly stand. I keep forgetting to breathe,” she inhaled sharply, holding her side as a stitch overcame her. “I’m really trying though.”

“Hmm,” he replied. “Here,” he easily hitched her up and sat her on the marble vanity, his face meeting hers. Didn’t mind that, she appreciated his new body and its simple strength. “It’s okay. We don’t have to work this out in the next 5 minutes. Let’s enjoy it. Can you answer that with more than one word?”

“I’m trying,” she pulled him to her by the collar of his jacket roughly and he had to admit, he liked the show of aggression. “But you look incredible in that suit and it’s making it hard for me to articulate things right now.”

He squinted. “All black works for you?” he raised his eyebrow in interest.

“Yeah,” she smiled. “You smell so good too.”

“I wear this everyday,” he told her, a small pout on his handsome features.

“I’m well and truly aware how good you smell everyday,” she admitted, sliding off the bench. “But you have to get out. I’d better get dressed,” a little self-confidence thankfully returning as she pointed to the door.

“I can help you,” he wriggled his eyebrows suggestively. “I’m really good at that, I promise.”

“I’m sure you can,” she said, pushing back and resisting against him. “But I’m a big girl.”

“Okay, okay. I’ll wait outside,” he took her palm from his chest and kissed it gently before turning heel and wandering out, closing the bathroom door after him.

“…shit,” Sasha hissed as the zip on the back on her dress refused to come to the party. She had been in bathroom for another 15 minutes with the intent to be fully made up and dressed and Sebastian had asked if she was okay a few times now. “Seb?”

“Sash?”

“I’m stuck,” she said meekly.

He knocked. “Can I come in?”

“Yeah…” she sighed as he poked his head in the bathroom, wearing a curious smile.

“What’s up?” he asked, watching her attempt to reach other to the zip on her dress and the peak-through of yellow lingerie exposed where she couldn’t raise the zip. He swallowed and met her eyes in the mirror, straightening up.

“Zip issues.”

“What do you need me for? Sorry, no. I volunteered to help before and apparently you were big enough to take care of yourself. Offer revoked.”

She frowned. “Have you always been a smug arsehole, or have you just hidden it really well for the last 10 years?” she snarked.

“Both,” he beamed widely. “I’m surprised you didn't know this about me.”
"I take it back, you're just a cocky arsehole."

"Now I know you definitely knew that about me," he replied thoughtfully. "Fine. I'll be a proper gentleman and I will help you," he said with a pained sigh. "Only because I really want to see you in this lovely, lovely get up."

"I just figured out why I'm having trouble breathing!" she exclaimed brightly, raising a finger in the air excitedly.

"Oh yeah?" he raised an eyebrow.

"It's just your ego taking all the air from the hotel room," she nodded knowingly. "Glad I could finally put my finger on it. Thank fuck for that."

He cackled. "Fuck you. Seriously."

"This is you flirting, isn't it?" she had to grin.

"No good?" he crossed his arms. "No one has ever told me at bad at flirting," he was genuinely surprised.

"Different. Not our usual banter."

"Well, imagine that - "

"Please?" she asked softly cutting him off, pointing at her back.

"Sure. Of course," he said giggling quietly to himself, stepping behind her and placing a gentle kiss on her exposed shoulder. He bore witness the shivers down her spine and the goose bumps on her arms and bit back a smile. "This dress," he held the zip and started to raise it. "Is better than I ever imagined it could look on you. I'm glad you're wearing it. This is the one I said I liked when you were packing, right?"

She nodded. "One and the same. Thank you," she smiled, turning to face him, her white lace dress now finally zipped.

She hadn't lost that tan either, he realised. Not a single shade of it. "Wow. You wear white really, really well."

"You like?" she asked optimistically.

The dress was made for her. "Jesus," he looked at the roof, muttering away in Romanian and rubbed his chin, clearly unsettled and strangely, talking with his hands. It was often a trait when he was nervous or agitated.

"Sebastian?" she took both of his hands, urging his attention back to her. "Wanna join me back here on Earth, please?"

He turned back to her, face lighting up with a wide grin, all dimples and sparkling eyes, he was extraordinary. "Sorry, you took me a bit by surprise there. You look sexier than I think I've ever seen you," he told her, pulling her close to him, wanting to kiss her but stopping at the last second – he was smothering her and the last thing he wanted to do was scare her. He licked his lips, pocketing his hands. "Futu-i, you do scrub up well," he took a step back from her.

"Thanks," she said quietly, picking up her silver clutch. "Come on, wine and dine me," she said with
a slight grin, finally feeling a little more confident. “Isn’t that what we’re here for?”

He chuckled quietly. “Yes, ma’am,” he offered his hand that she gratefully accepted. “Let me show you what I can do,” he teased, pocketing the room key with his free hand and leading her from their room.

“Whoa. The whole Sebastian Stan Experience, huh?” she joked as he lead her to the elevator.

He laughed with a small blush. “Patented a one off special just for you, Benzo.”

Chapter End Notes

Well, well, well, I think a few of you might have enjoyed our first part of Paris and I'm so thankful for the kudos, comments and the like. Overwhelmed, honestly. Please let me know if you're enjoying the story or not, I really appreciate any comments, positive or constructive xoxo
If she’d learnt one thing in all the years she’d know him, it was that he always managed to make her feel new and exciting ways of hating how much she cared about him.

“The meal was incredible,” Sasha said, smiling to the maître d who handed her a goodie bag on the way out as Sebastian took her hand. Dinner and its courses were amazing, wine was matched perfectly from the sommelier. Kind of a dream, and neither were much for romance at heart. “Better than I ever imagined.”

The company was definitely the best part though. Especially the kisses at the table, Sebastian’s hand rarely leaving hers –

“Well worth my cheat day,” Sebastian smiled, patting his belly (abs) as the elevator doors opened and they wandered in, thankfully empty. He pressed the button for their floor and eased the beautiful woman beside him into the corner of the lift, his eager hands lightly snaking around her hips before resting on her ribs. “I cannot get over how amazing you look,” he said quietly, eyes drifting down her body. “This dress is a dream.”

“This suit is okay too,” she smiled, smoothing his jacket over his chest as he gently kissed her. “I cannot stop kissing you. I’m so sorry,” he shook his head and took a step back, slightly frustrated at himself and pushing the loose strands of long hair that refused to stay back out of his eyes.

“Seb, I haven’t exactly been swatting you away,” she reminded him, taking his hand as the elevator doors opened. He murmured in agreement as she led them to their room. He found the key in his pocket and let her in first. He followed, put the Do Not Disturb on the door handle, just in case. “I am in a food coma,” Sasha sighed, taking a seat on the bed and attempting to reach for her heels. Then again, maybe the dress was a wee bit tighter after seven courses.

“What were you thinking?!”

“Have my legs always been this long?” she whined, unable to get past her food baby belly to her feet. “My feet are so far away!”

Sebastian laughed, letting his jacket slip off his shoulders and he folded it over the armchair. “My God, have your legs have always been that long?” he mimicked in a terrible Australian accent. "Yes. Yes, Sasha, they’ve always been that irresistibly long. Let me help with that,” he meandered around the bed and knelt before her. “Relax,” he gently coaxed the strappy sandals off her feet and kissed each ankle as he did so. When he was done and had moved the heels away to avoid a tripping hazard, he looked up at her as she smiled at him, fondly. “Thank goodness we worked out that first world problem, huh?”

She laughed, nodding. “Absolutely. World peace next. Thank you.”

He smiled and moved to sit next to her on the bed and traced his finger slowly down her arm, the goose pimples instantaneous. “Hi.”
“Hello,” she smiled.

He took her face in his gym-calloused hands and looked at her lips before meeting her eyes. “This is a great night.”

She nodded. “Yeah, I don’t mind the Sebastian Stan Experience,” she couldn’t contain her grin as he gave a bashful chuckle.

“I was kidding, you know. I didn’t have anything planned. When I woke up this morning, it wasn’t my intention for any of this.”

“No?”

“No. It has been in the back of my mind for the longest time. I just needed the time to be right,” he admitted with a grin. “And the courage to do so. I guess it was,” he gently thumbed her bottom lip. “Look at these swollen lips, would you?” he looked incredibly proud of himself.

“I can handle swollen lips,” she confided. “I really enjoy kissing you. Your lips were made for kissing.”

“Wait ‘til you see what else my tongue can do,” he wiggled his eyebrows suggestively as she cackled with laughter and he subsequently joined her.

“One thing at a time, Sebastian Stan.”

He nodded, grinning. “I understand. I’m not going to rush you into anything.”

“I am looking forward to finding out though,” she gave him a light kiss as common sense prevailed and she excused herself to take her make up off. She took her PJ’s and went to the bathroom, closing herself in.

Sebastian fell back against the soft mattress, slightly dejected before exhaling with a grin. There would obviously be plenty of time for other stuff. He got up, pulling his shirt from his slacks and commenced unbuttoning it. Shoes and socks followed and he was folding his slacks when Sasha called for him. “Are you okay?” he called back, her reply only a loud grunt. He walked to the bathroom door and knocked. “What’s up? Let me guess… stuck again?” he smiled to himself.

She opened the door still fully clothed, exasperated, face red and hair everywhere though she’d removed her make up. “How’d you guess?” she grumbled, noting his opened shirt and boxers combo. “Sorry.”

“Don’t ever apologise for asking me to undress you,” he cheekily reassured her. “Turn around.”

She did as she was told as Sebastian moved her hair from her back and over her shoulder, deftly unzipping her dress – it wasn’t exactly the first time Sebastian Stan had been asked to help with a zip that refused to do as it was told. “This zip has been a real pain in the arse,” she muttered.

“You are now free, Benzo. I'll let you finish up,” he rested his chin on her shoulder, his beard gently tickling her as he watched her face in the mirror, a satisfied grin on his face. “I’ll meet you in bed,” he kissed her shoulder and took his leave, closing the door after him.

He is going to kill me. He will actually be the death of me, she told herself as she continued her usual evening beauty routine and brushed her teeth, before slipping out of the dress that was still precariously hanging from her shoulders and the lingerie she has somehow managed to squeeze under it. She would have loved Sebastian to have seen this little get up, but it’s a lot for one day,
She slid into her PJ bottoms and tank top and wandered out to the bedroom, where Sebastian was channel surfing in bed. He was playing with his necklace and smiled when he saw her, letting it fall back on his bare chest.

“Hey,” he smiled, pulling the blankets back for her. “Jump in.”

She did as she was told and looked at the TV. “What are you watching?”

“Profile on the Mars Rover.”

“Of course you are, you fucking space nerd.”

“Hey, listen here, sarcasmo,” he raised his index finger in warning and not remotely threateningly. “Don’t start on the anti-space talk. I won’t have it in our bed.”

“I can’t wait for you to get the opportunity to actually go to space,” she mocked. “Maybe they’ll leave you there?”

“When I actually get to Mars, you’ll rue the day you teased me about it,” he poked her under the blankets. She slapped his hands away, knowing if he were to start a tickle war, she’d be powerless under his touch. Again, she wondered why she would discourage such a thing.

“I think you’ll have to settle for making films about Mars until then.”

“Halfway there then,” he winked with a broad grin, all teeth, bright eyes and dimples. It was quiet for a while with only the narration from the documentary to be heard, but when the commercials commenced, he continued. “I’m going to Johnson Space Centre next month,” he said giddily, like at any moment, he would explode with excitement.

“What?!” she exclaimed.

Even Sasha, not one for astronomy in the slightest, was enthusiastic for him. He could go on and on about space programs and he’d told her so many times about his interest when he was growing up. When he was cast as Dr. Chris Beck in The Martian, it was a dream come true. He had a ball on set in Hungary and thrived on the conditions he and his cast mates were working in. He was desperate the see the final cut.

One evening after far too many glasses of wine, Sebastian took Sasha’s hand, led her to his bedroom and just yammered on and on about how much he loved this toy rocket, picking it up from the tall boy and holding it to her. He let slip it was a gift from his dad and just one of those things no matter how much he and his mother travelled, he kept dear. He chatted about various international programs he enjoyed learning about as a child, while he pushed the rocket in his hands wistfully, pretending to fire it to the full moon that lit up the room with bonus sound effects when he wasn’t busy talking. She hoped he’d never lose that boyish innocence. Not everyone got to see that part of him, she would cherish being one that occasionally got to. It wasn't a guard he dropped often these days.

He laughed. “Yeah, promotion for the movie. I’m so fucking excited.”

“I can just see it now. ‘Sebastian Stan: arrested for stealing something on the way out’, the headlines say,” she said monotone.

He giggled. “That could totally happen. You’d bail me out of NASA prison though, wouldn’t you?” he batted his eyelashes before he went back to the TV.
“We’ll see,” she snorted and turned off the room lights, leaving Sebastian’s bedside table lamp on until he was ready to turn it off. He looked incredible. God, did he know how good he looked? She was in bed with this amazing man she loved, resisting all temptation. And for what? What does keeping my hands to myself actually serve? She considered her options and inadvertently shuddered.

“Come here,” he opened his arms to her and she gladly accepted his warmth, taking his necklace and playing with it in her hands as they crowded each other.

“Sorry, someone dancing on my grave, I guess,” she told him. Not a total fib.

“I’ll warm you up,” he said as she put her head on his chest and he enveloped her arms around her shoulders. He planted a small kiss on her forehead and absent-mindedly played with her hair as he remained completely engrossed in the documentary until he jumped. “Your feet are fucking freezing!” he told her. “Seriously they are the coldest feet ever, Benzo. Have you always hidden this from me?”

“Sorry,” she replied shyly, moving her feet to the other side of the bed away from him. “I have terrible circulation at the best of times. The AC is pretty cool in here.”

“No, no,” he tutted. He rolled his body, pulling her back to him. “Come closer. I said I’d warm you up.”

“I can’t physically be closer than I am right now, Seb,” she pointed out, a little smothered.

He looked down at her and kissed her lightly. He entwined their legs, proving her wrong. “Liar.”

“I’m tired,” she admitted a while later, the documentary failing to enthral her the way it had Sebastian.

“Want me to turn the TV off?”

“It’s okay, I know you’re enjoying this. Do you mind if I go to sleep? I’ve had too much alcohol and it’s turning my brain to mush.”

“Of course. Come here,” he said softly as they met to kiss again. “Sleep well, beautiful girl. I’ve had the best day of my life.”

“Night Sebastian, thank you for bringing me to Paris.”

“I’ll take you anywhere you want to go, Sasha Benzo,” he murmured, twisting her hair around his fingers, his voice the last thing she heard before she quickly fell asleep.

---

Somewhere in the middle of the night, Sasha was relieved to wake up free as Sebastian snored lightly with his back to her. She gently kissed his shoulder as he gave a small whine before sneaking out of the bed and crept to the bathroom, all the champagne and wine presenting itself when she much preferred being asleep.

A few minutes later, she came back in and snuck back under the covers. He rolled over and wrapped his arms around her. “Okay, sweetheart?” his voice gravelly from sleep. It was an astounding sound.

“Bathroom,” she admitted in whisper. “Sorry, I didn’t mean to wake you.”

“It’s okay,” he yawned, wrapping her back into his embrace protectively, tucking the blankets back
over them.

“Seb?”

He hummed in response.

“Thank you for this weekend. It’s been incredible.”

“Stop thanking me,” he rasped a quiet laugh in the dark room. “It’s really fine. And it’s worked out much better than I could have imagined.”

“You don’t have to spoil me, you know.”

“That’s the thing, Benzo. I want to spoil you. I haven’t felt like this in a long time. It’s nice to be falling in love with you.”

Sebastian froze, before he rolled away, mortified with himself. Fuckkkkk, She’d heard him loud and clear, he knew she had heard her loud and clear – he said he loved her. Or at least was falling in love with her. It’s not like it was new, he knew he was well and truly in love with her, but she didn’t need to know that just yet.

She snuggled in closer to him as the big spoon. “Sebastian?”

“I’m sleeping.”

“Sebastian Stan,” she rolled her eyes with a loud sigh.

“Yes, Sasha?” he replied, resigned. “I’m sorry, I know that was soon, it just came out – ”

“I love you and you don’t have to say anything you don’t want to. It’s quick and it’s okay if you’re not ready to say it,” she said honestly, laying carefully placed kisses down his spine as he gently trembled under her touch.

“That’s amazing,” he said in a whisper as she massaged his muscular waist and up his sides all the while moving her lips back to the nape of his neck, moving his long hair away and leaving wet, open mouth kisses against his skin before he moaned and rolled over to his back, pulling her into his arms. He was surprised to find her hands snake to the elastic of his boxers. Instinctively, he raised his hips so she could take them off. He didn’t know where she discarded them, nor he did not care. Naked, he pulled her close and found the hem of her bed shirt and whipping it over her head, sending it away as well.

“Are you sure?” he asked, finding her hips and flipping her under him. He kissed her lightly. “I don’t want to do anything you’re not comfortable with – I know this is a lot to take in after a short amount of time. I don’t want to rush you or make it look like I’m messing you around.”

“You’re not, trust me – I want this. I’m highly encouraging this, Sebastian,” she adjusted her body and wrapped a leg around his.

“Okay,” he nodded as he let his hands roam her body. He found the elastic of her underwear and slowly dragged them down her legs, before tossing them away. Kisses fervent continued as minutes, days, maybe months passed as their hands touched and groped as much skin of the other as possible.

Sebastian moved his lips to her neck, slowly moving down and latching that mouth onto her nipple as that tongue tortured her, swirling and licking, his hand not neglecting the other. And that sound she just made? He’d sell his soul to hear it again. He held her ribs down as her back rose off the bed,
her toes curling under him.

Her hands moved south and she gripped his hard cock, gently pumping him as he continued to harden in her palm. She was surprised at the sounds he made as she touched him, the sound of Sebastian moaning because of her would be right up there as one of the best sounds she’d ever hear. Gently spreading her legs that were currently wrapped around his legs, he reached between their bodies, drawing little circles around her clit and lightly tested the waters. “Tell me again,” he slipped a finger into her as he moved his wet kisses back to her lips, the following words said against her mouth. “Do you want me? I need you to say the words, Sasha.”

“Yes,” she strained, writhing underneath his touch.

“Are you sure?” he pressed another finger into her, slightly biting his bottom lip.

“Okay,” she moaned, pulling him to her, frustrated. “Yes.”

“Sorry,” he kissed her. “Hold on,” he paused to move away. She whined as his skilled fingers left her to open the bedside table he’d carefully hidden his condoms in just in case the night went this way – there was nothing wrong with being a little prepared, was there? He ripped open the foil packet and rolled the rubber on before moving back to her. “Baby?”

“Hmm?” she asked, wrapping her legs around him as he made himself between them. He nuzzled at her neck as his other hand lined her up at her entrance.

“I do love you, iubi.”

“I love you too,” she moaned as he assertively slid into her, wasting no time filling her and pushing up. He kissed her as he began thrusting slowly, her hips rising to meet his, moulding around him.

He lowered his mouth to her clavicle and gently licked the dips and ridges of her décolletage to her nipple again as her hips again rose, pushing him deeper inside her, a little squeal of excitement escaped her as he smiled against her skin. “I really love that sound,” he said with a small laugh.

“I have no idea where it’s coming from,” she whispered back with a small giggle of her own as his hand on her hip lightly met her clit again and those sweet sounds came back. She encouraged him, pulling at his hair eagerly.

He grunted as he felt her orgasm close in on him. He almost couldn’t remember his name as she wriggled beneath him, pulling his mouth back to hers. “Come baby, it’s okay. I’ve got you,” he told her, kissing her in a fury of tongues as her body clenched and trembled around him, convulsing in a way that made her wonder why she just didn’t tell Sebastian months (years) ago how she felt. This feeling needed to be bottled. He was perfect. Beyond perfect. She kind of hated herself for thinking like that. God, he knew how to use his body and more importantly, use hers as well.

“Oh God,” he strained quietly as he enjoyed her body coil around him, thrusting to enjoy the moment as much as she was. It was all he needed to come as well. He let go with a few more erratic thrusts before collapsing on her body with a tuckered out exhale.

“Fuck,” she inhaled sharply.

“Jesus,” he kissed whatever of her skin he could, enjoying as she struggled with the sensitivity underneath him. “Are you okay?” he traced a small circle around her hardened nipple and chuckled as she grunted, begging him to stop, muttering something incomprehensible which he took it as a compliment. He’d obviously done something right and was very much looking forward to figuring out the rest. “Okay, baby. Okay,” she was running her nails down his spine when he knew he had to
break the revelry. “I have to get up,” he told her.

“Oh okay,” she replied breathlessly, obviously spent, as he left the bed and went to the bathroom to clean up. He came back in a minute later and snuggled back into the bed, holding her to him and pulling the dishevelled blankets back over her shivering body.

“You good?”

“Chilly,” she admitted, her body starting to cool after the exhilaration.

“I’ll warm you up,” he repeated as she wriggled into his waiting arms. “So yeah, we’re definitely not friends anymore,” he confirmed.

She burst into quiet giggles. “No, I guess not.”

“Years out the window because you couldn't keep your hands to yourself. Typical of you, Sasha.”

“Shut the fuck up and go to sleep, Sebastian.”

He cackled. “Good night, Sasha Benzo.”

“Goodnight, Sebastian.”

Chapter End Notes

Hope you enjoyed this chapter, dolls. Everyone remembers their strange first time with the love of their life, right? Not everything is planned or staged like the movies, so hopefully that was partially authentic to that! Please don't hesitate to drop me a line, I would love to hear what you think. This is my first foray into writing something like this, so would love to know if it's working for you all. Again, thank you for the kudos, subscriptions and comments as always xoxo
Getting To Know You

Chapter Summary

If she’d learnt one thing in all the years she’d known him, it was that he always managed to make her feel new and exciting ways of hating how much she cared about him.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

BERLIN, GERMANY

Walking back into Sebastian's apartment in Berlin the next afternoon, Sebastian dumped their carry on at the door and Sasha followed him inside, heading directly to the kitchen. He pulled a couple of bottles of water from the fridge, handing her one. She sat on the stool and he stood across from her, leaning across the bench. Pushing his hair back from his face, he gave a half smile.

“This is a bit weird, isn’t it?” he had to say.

She gave a small nod. “A little bit. I’m nervous.”

“I know. Me too. It’s okay, we’ll figure this out,” he promised though he couldn’t contain his wide smile, a little burst of laughter bubbling from his lips. “Are you happy?”

“Yes,” she smiled as he walked around the bench and stood before her. He held her face in his hands. “What?”

“This is kind of amazing,” he kissed her gently. “I have wanted this for so long and now I get to hold you. And kiss you. And love you. You are so good to me, and I want to be everything you want and need.”

He would have missed it if he wasn’t learned in the ways of Sasha Benson, but he saw the flicker of emotion hit her then disappear just as quickly. “Seb…” she stood up. “You already are.”

He kissed her again, pulling her body to his tightly. “I love you,” he whispered, before panic washed over his handsome features. “I’m saying it a lot, aren’t I?” he said, but before she could answer as his phone began to ring. He sighed and pulled back. “Hold that thought,” he checked the caller ID.

“Guten tag Sara…” he nodded, greeting his assistant. “Paris was great. Thank you again for everything…” he smiled at Sasha fondly, stroking her cheek with his thumb. He laughed. “Yes, the cheque is in the mail… so, I need to be on set at 9pm. No problem… danke. Auf Wiedersehen,” he hung up and gave her a bright grin. “They’re running a bit behind. We’ve got some time before I have to head to work – do you want to go and get an early dinner?”

“Not hungry,” she took his hands and led him to his bedroom.

He gave a low chuckle. “Baby…” his voice trailing off.

He grunted as she pushed him on the bed and crawled onto his body, smiling shyly. She kissed him. “I say we use this time before you go to work wisely.”
“I like this. You just doing whatever you want with me. Thought about it enough,” he sucked in a sharp breath as she kissed his pulse. "Hey now."

"Relax, I won't leave any marks,” she reassured him. "Hopefully."

"I don't mind if you do,” he laughed.

"Does that mean I can?” she latched into the hem of his shirt and pulled it over his head before hugging it to her chest.

“I am yours – you are free to do to me what you want when you want. I am your willing participant. Anytime, any place,” he said earnestly.

Satisfied with his answer, she tossed his t-shirt over her shoulder as he wrapped his arms around her, pulling her down to him and kissed her deeply. “I’ve got to tell you, your body is incredible. Who knew you had this hiding in you?” she smiled, a fingers tracing lines through the peaks and ridges of his shoulders, chest to his abs as he shrugged, muscles clenching under her touch as he grinned back.

“I’ve worked myself into the ground for this film. Shall I remind you how many hours I’m doing in the gym?”

“Not necessary, the proof is right here,” she smiled, resting her palms on his ribs and gently kissed just behind his ear as his breath hitched and eyes fluttered closed.

“Gee, that’s nice,” he breathed, his hands gently massaging her waist under her shirt.

“Good,” she lightly ran the tip of her nose against the shell of his ear as he bit his lip, failing to hold back a smirk.

“You’re trying to figure out what makes me tick,” he realised.

“Correct,” she whispered.

“I’ll let you in on a little secret,” he gently shuddered as he felt her tongue gently sweep against his Adam’s Apple, he swallowed roughly. “Christ. With you, everything makes me tick.”

“Have you thought about me during sex, Sebastian Stan?” she pulled back and raised an eyebrow, an amused grin on her face, hands on her hips. She was surprised how much she anticipated his answer.

“Too many times,” he admitted, his hands following her curves to cup her ass, gently massaging it under his hands. “With others. On my own – you are my fantasy so this is like all my Christmases at once…” he took a shaky breath. “Have you with me?” he raised an eyebrow.

“Once or twice,” she admitted flippantly. He laughed, not entirely surprised at her answer. He groaned lowly as her tongue flicked over the vein on his neck, through his jaw and meeting his lips again. He smiled against her mouth. “Seriously,” she sighed. “I can’t give you an honest answer because it happened so frequently. It’s embarrassing on my behalf.”

“Good. I will enjoy imagining you touching yourself all because of boring, little me,” he flipped them over, his body now over hers. “Luckily for us, we can now make the fantasy a reality. Over,” he punctuated the words with wet kisses. “And over.”

“I like your weight on me,” she confided.
“You’d better get used to that,” he told her, unbuttoning her shirt before ridding it all together and kissing the top of her breasts. “Now don’t take this the wrong way, okay? But there is a teeny tiny upside to your very unfortunate knee injury,” he told her meekly.

She made a face, a little put off – didn’t strike her as the time to remind her of her flaws. She huffed. “Jesus, Sebastian. Which is?” she covered her eyes with her hands though he had to laugh at her pout as he pulled her hands back and sitting them on his waist.

“You’re curves. It’s just made what was already beautiful so much more sexy. Your ass, hips, breasts. Just a little more rounded than they were before,” he said, pulling a bra cup down and sucking on her nipple as it hardened under his tongue, his tongue begging forgiveness for his honesty. He nibbled slightly as she whined before moving to the other, her fingers lacing into his hair. “I hope that came out right?”

“Yeah, yeah, you like my curves. Great. Thanks Seb,” she managed as she writhed underneath him. He chuckled lowly as he tossed her bra away. “Sebastian,” she grunted as he continued his attentions to her body, his tongue now lapping up her other nipple, dark hair flowing over his face.

“Yes?” he kissed between her breasts, down her ribcage and to her belly button, leaving a little swirl as he started on her jeans. “Hips up,” he ordered as she did so and he pulled them off. “When I’m done with you,” he whispered, playing with the lace hem on her underwear. “You’ll be a blubbering mess,” he muttered as she was positive she could have come without him even touching her.

How could such an angelic face turn to the devil incarnate so quickly?

She hated herself for just how eager she was to let this happen. She was already well aware of how potent his tongue was from his kiss alone and was pretty close to coming with the images flashing in her mind of his skilled kisses translating to her core. Moving her underwear to the side, he moved up her body to whisper, “You seem keen. Do you want my mouth on you, Benzo?”

“Yes,” she swallowed, fisting his long hair, toes curling in frustration. “Please, yes.”

“Good. Lay back,” he kissed her mouth roughly and went south, his finger using her wetness to slide into her easily. He left a wet kiss on her hip as his finger created an assault on her senses. “I won’t be able to talk for a while,” he said, leaving an open mouth kiss against her clit, his beard tickling her and she immediately attempted to get out of his strong grasp. “Tell me if I’m doing the right thing by you down here.”

Fingers leaving her, she whined as his hands found the hem of her underwear, slowly dragging them off and tossing them somewhere over his shoulder. Without warning, a wide spread hand pinned her belly down and he put his tongue to work. Little circles, stripes and kisses, sloppy sounds, he was spurred on by her moans and grunts as her hands clutched his shoulders, nails raking into his skin. He relinquished his hold on her and slid a couple of his fingers into her, keeping a rhythm as he felt her start to writhe under his body, he moved his focus to her clit as she fell apart. He continued his ministrations as he felt her pulse slowly ebb around his fingers before he gave her some peace and removed them. Mouth next, he nipped her inner thigh before moving up her body in slow, sloppy kisses. He enjoyed watching her body continue to lurch with little aftershocks on her stimulated skin.

“Jesus,” she could hardly catch her breath, a hand covering her eyes. “Sebastian.”

“Are you okay?” he asked softly, his tongue traced around a nipple before he lightly bit down as she squirmed away from him, squealing, her body still oversensitive after her orgasm. He chuckled, pulled her hands away from her face. “I will take that as a yes.”
“Where do you want me?” she whispered, *quite sated too*, he noted.

“I really I need to see how your body moves,” he breathed as he deftly switched their positions, her lean body now perched on his tummy. He reached over to his bedside table to reach for a condom as she stopped him, grabbing at his elbow.

“I’m on the pill, Seb.”

“Are you sure?” he raised an eyebrow.

“Yes, I’m sure. Unless there’s something we need to disclose?”

“I’m good. Part of my medicals for work. I’m tested pretty often,” he crossed his heart. “You?”

She raised an eyebrow, he was aware she hadn’t been sleeping with anyone in a while. Better incentive to show her what she had been missing without him, he decided, as she unzipped his jeans and dragged them as well as his boxers away from him. “God, your body,” was all she could say, fingers tracing his Adonis belt. He laughed quietly.

“It’s still me. Just a little less dressed than you’re used to,” he promised, urging her back to his waist. “*Iubi*, I like seeing you up there,” he licked his lips as he found the elastic in her hair and gently untied it, running his hands through her long strands. “And your hair out. You’re not on stage, baby. It’s just us,” his big hands ran down her sides, thumbing the side of her breasts and settled on her hips.

She smiled cautiously. “I really want to ride you.”

“Don’t hesitate on my behalf,” he told her, exhaling sharply and wrapping his arms behind his head.

She wasted no time coaxing his cock into her. He groaned as she slowly slid along his length, slick from her earlier orgasm.

She leaned down to whisper in his ear. “Hard and fast or nice and slow?”

“You’re not real, are you? I’ll take whatever you’re dolling out, baby,” he looked up into lust-blown eyes and moved to hold her hips as she began slow attentions on his body. She gave a thoroughly arrogant shrug as his hips met hers. As much as Sebastian wanted to keep his eyes open, it almost seemed impossible as he realised he’d completely underrated this woman’s body as she moved her hips on deep figure 8’s and grinding down on him. He muttered, catching his lip in his mouth. “Jesus…”

He gripped her hips tightly, pushing her down on him. “Doin’ okay down there?” she asked, wearing a smile he’d never seen on her before. Wicked. Wonderful. Who was this woman and what had she done with Sasha?

“I, uh – ” he tried as he moved a hand to his hair, gripping it in defeat. There was too much to touch and feel but quick as a flash, he used the same hand to move to her clit. “I need to feel you come on me.”

“Just say the word,” she told him as his magic fingers did exactly as intended as she threw her head back, riding his cock roughly, losing all sense of control as she started to come again. She let out a small whimper as he focused on her nerve centre, padding the nub until he succeeded. He sighed loudly, her grip on his dick ebbing and pulsing around him.

“Yes,” he mumbled, licking his lips and kissing her and she lowered her torso to his, spent. “Amazing, baby. I’m not far away,” his body sped up, unable to withstand any more and crashed
into her haphazardly, mumbling untranslatable Romanian expletives as he came, pushing her hips down to grind on him as powerfully as he could with his last few thrusts. He exhaled sharply, his body limp, energy expended.

“Come here,” he moved her lips back to his, kissing her deeply, appreciatively. He rolled them over, keeping her close in the most intimate of places, legs tangled. “You’re good, not sore?”

“I’m good, may not be able to walk tomorrow,” she admitted, brushing some hair from his face with a small grin. “You?”

He nodded, catching her lip between his teeth gently. “You are really good at that.”

She gave a small laugh. “I hope 30 years of dance counts for something.”

“I’ll say.”

“I need to get up,” she told him, unhooking her legs from his. “But I’m scared to stand in case my legs don’t work. I didn’t trust them before that just happened.”

He grinned mischievously. “There’s absolutely no rush.”

“I’ll make your bed while you’re out so it’s nice and neat for when you get back.”

“You don’t have to do that. I want you to stay in here with me,” he stated, taking her hand in his and linking their fingers. “The guestroom is a guestroom again and my room is our room.”

“Are you sure?” she asked shyly.

“Of course. Why would I not want to find a beautiful woman waiting in my bed for me? Legit question.”

“Wow, that feels weird to hear. What makes you think I’m ready to sleep in the same bed as you?” she asked with a playful sneer, tugging at his necklace.

“Probably because you’ve been sneaking into my room for the better part of 10 years. Why would that stop now that we’re sleeping together?” he laughed. He made a valid point. Why sleep anyone want to sleep alone when you can sleep next to Sebastian Stan?

“That sounds weird to think we sleep together now,“ she confided. He hummed in agreement. “You are thoroughly debauched,” she combed his now wild long hair through her fingers with her free hand. She loved seeing him like this. Thoroughly done for because of her.

He smiled, moving his head into her touch. “I feel like it. It’s good,” he sighed as he heard his phone ringing. It was lost somewhere with his jeans. “I don’t want to move from here ever,” he groaned.

“You might not want to move, but I have to precariously attempt to clean myself up.”

“Okay. Careful, Bambi,” he kissed her before carefully rolling off the bed as she attempted the same. He giggled quietly at the “ew” she muttered with every step before she disappeared into the bathroom as Sebastian found his phone. “Mack Attack,” he answered, finding his boxers and stepping into them again perilously as he tried to hold the phone at the same time.

“You have secret rendezvous in Paris and you did not invite me?” Anthony greeted as Sebastian bit back a laugh. “I love fancy French food! I wouldn’t have third wheeled at all.”

"How did you know?"

“Sorry, I owed Sasha dinner,” Sebastian paced. “You know I haven’t been able to spend much time with her since we got here.”

“Oh really? Dinner that includes jet setting to the most romantic city in the world, just the two of you?” Anthony’s voice rose in accusation. “And how is Miss Sasha? Did she happen to enjoy herself?”

“She’s fine,” Sebastian replied vaguely. “She had fun, I think.”

“And how are you, Sexy Sea Bass?”

“I’m fine too,” he said with a small laugh.

“Coy laugh there, brother. You hiding something from me?”

“No, not at all,” Sebastian said meekly. For an actor, Sebastian Stan couldn’t lie to save his life.

“Is she… is she there with you right now?” Anthony's tone dropped drastically low.

Sebastian laughed louder. “Not at this second, no. It’s not like that.”

“It’s exactly like that! Well, I was just going to call and see if you wanted to get dinner but clearly, you have other much more pleasant things on your plate.”

“I can't deny that," Sebastian said quietly, a faint smile toying on his lips.

“Ha!” Anthony cackled. “Well, regardless, I’m happy for you crazy kids. She’s a doll. She’s probably too good for you, you realise this?”

“I’m well aware, Anthony.”

“Yeah, well I’m happy for you, brother.”

“Thank you. Is it okay if nothing is really said to anyone yet? At least until she and I can sort this out. I don’t want any grief. Present company excluded, of course.”

“Of course,” Anthony said seriously. “I will take it to the grave and give you shit unmercifully when it’s just us.”

“Thanks,” Sebastian scoffed a laugh.

“So I’m assuming no to dinner then?”

“It’s cool. Come on over.”

“Awesome, see you soon.”

Sebastian turned back to see Sasha grinning at him, sitting up against the bedhead under the blankets, hair neatly pulled back into a bun again. “Stealth little thing, aren’t you?”

She nodded, smirking. “Anthony coming to dinner?"

“How much did you hear?”

“Enough,” she shrugged. “I don’t care who knows, Sebastian,” she said as he joined her on the bed
again and she gently cupped his face in her palms, his stubble prickling her fingertips. “It’s our New York friends that will be ruthless.”

“Oh, they will love this,” Sebastian guranteed.

“And our mums.”

A look of horror crossed Sebastian’s face. “My Ma is going to be a nightmare,” he said softly, punching the bridge of his nose in anticipation. “But Anthony said he’d be over soon, do you mind if I shower before he gets here?”

“Of course not,” she said. “It wouldn’t be cool going to work reeking like sex.”

He grinned wickedly. “I would happily go anywhere with your scent on my skin,” he bit her lip before kissing her. “But you’re right. Not the time or place,” he jumped up and ducked off for the bathroom, closing the door after him.

Chapter End Notes

Hi all, this chapter killed me and I hope it doesn't come across as a complete disaster when you read it. I will try to get another chapter in before Wednesday evening as I'll likely be offline for a week as I deal with real life instead of my over-excited imagination. Thank you again to all those that left comments, kudos and subscribed. You all give me life and I love when you make contact, please don't hesitate to.

---

I have opened a Tumblr sideblog: https://www.tumblr.com/blog/interestedbystanderwrites if anyone is keen to find out what my inspo is for certain things pertaining to chapters, Sebastian, Bucky, fic recs (I have some doozies for you, so much talent out there that I'm lucky enough to know) etc. Feel free to pop in and have a chat there too xoxo
Girls Being Girls Being Girls Being Girls Being Girls

Chapter Summary

If she’d learnt one thing in all the years she’d know him, it was that he always managed to make her feel new and exciting ways of hating how much she cared about him.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Turning her phone on for the first time since before she departed for Paris, Sasha smiled at the barrage of texts from Olivia after what seemed to be a fairly innocuous text from herself prior to leaving their apartment the day before.

Yesterday 1:23pm
Sasha: Seb and I are going to Paris for the weekend! PARISSS! *French flag emoji* I’m packing now, I’ll give you a call tomorrow when we’re back x

Yesterday 3:12pm
Olivia: Aww, how sweet. Finally taking your frenaissance to the next level.
Olivia: Why did this send as a text message and not iMessage?!
Olivia: OMG is your phone off? I just went straight to voicemail. Hmm, maybe you’re in flight mode.

Yesterday 6:24pm
Olivia: OMGGG why is your phone off? I texted this hours ago. Panicking!
Olivia: Are you dead? *dead face emoji*
Olivia: You’re fucking him I bet *aubergine emoji* *peach emoji* *a-ok emoji* *pointer finger emoji*

Yesterday 10:41pm
Olivia: I hope you’re fucking him. You two are made for each other. I’m not saying that as an unsupportive, sarcastic friend. You guys love each other, just like I love this bottle of vodka I’m sharing with Sam. Sam says hi. Sam also says I shouldn’t be texting this. Sam knows nothing.
Olivia: OK. Truth time. I love you, Benzo. You’re my best friend and that Sebastian Stan is madly in love with you just like you are him. I will be your maid of honour as I will very unlikely ever settle and take a husband myself. Sam agrees that I’m not marriage material. This vodka is killer.

Today 10:58am
Olivia: Seriously. It’s the next day. I just re-read my texts. I was clearly obliterated. But nothing I wrote was a lie. I hope I didn’t ruin anything. Seb is wonderful and you guys would be so happy together.
Olivia: TURN YOUR FUCKING PHONE ON YOU PAIN IN THE ARSE *middle finger emoji* it’s ASS in America. Learn how to say it like an American JFC. You’ve been here long enough now. Shouldn’t you technically apply for citizenship by now?

Cackling, Sasha re-read the texts again as she witnessed her Ollie go from her usual overtly stoic to purely manic in a matter of characters, feeling a little guilty – the least Sasha could have done was
turned her phone on to reply while in Paris. She fell silent as the shower shut off and Sebastian’s smooth voice could be heard singing… singing Rihanna’s part of Take Care faintly. Of course he was. Why wouldn’t he be?

“So adorable,” she said to herself, quietly giggling to herself as she distracted herself from him to reply to Ollie.

**Today 4:38pm**

Sasha: *I just turned my phone on. My God, these texts are everything hahaha* Sorry for the late reply. Here’s a selfie at the airport back in Berlin. Not very pleased as you can see x

Sasha: *I will call you later on today. Sebastian is filming tonight. Love you too, you arsehole xo*

Olivia: *Oh, you’re alive. Phew. I’ll alert Europol to call off search. Was getting dicey for a moment there* 😁

Olivia: *And I hope you had a good time in Paris. Can’t wait to hear all about it xxx*

Sebastian re-emerged shortly after still humming what he was previously singing, towel generously low around his slim waist, droplets of water falling from his long hair on his broad shoulders, she spied the sporadic splash of small freckles across his torso. *That is a good look. Drop the towel, drop the towel,* she smirked as he inadvertently caught her attention. How could he be real?

“Want to see something funny?” she distracted herself from that body and met his eyes. She was 100 per cent sure he noticed her checking (leering) him out.

“Always,” Sebastian replied, pulling clean clothes from his drawers and tossed them on the bed. Sasha handed him her phone. He grinned, scrolling through the messages, giggling to himself. “Ollie can be kind of intense, huh?”

“Definitely. You know she’s going to ask, right?” Sasha said dropping her eyes. “Everyone will know about us soon enough. Do I just tell her and get it over with?”

“Sure, it’s cool. Don’t be nervous about it,” Sebastian cupped Sasha’s cheek, leaving a sweet kiss on her forehead. “Tell Ollie if you want. I know she’s your best friend.”

Sasha grinned before repulsion took over her features. “Holy shit,” she exclaimed, covering her mouth. “She is, how did that happen?”

“I have no idea. You have only been dancing with her for 10 years and continually ensuring you were both in the same productions. You’re pretty inseparable at times too,” Sebastian raffled off the obvious reasons with a playful smirk, tossing his towel back towards the bathroom and dressed quickly (he was definitely aware she was watching him, his smug grin said it all) as the doorbell rang incessantly. “That’s Anthony. Are you going to shower?”

“Really quickly, yes. A cold shower,” she nodded, tranced as he laid a swift kiss and a giggle against her lips and parted ways for the first time in 24 hours. She noted the chill of his lack of touch instantly. “Shit,” she muttered, heading into the bathroom.

---


“Hello Olivia, how are you? It's lovely to hear your voice. I've missed you,” Sasha grinned as she looked over the balcony at the apartment later that evening. Sebastian and Anthony had left a while before to head to work and Sasha finally had a couple of minutes to try and get her head around that last few days.
“I’m fine. Did you have sex already?”

“Ollie, ugh. Just got for it, hey?” Sasha laughed, not at all surprised by the bluntness of her friend’s question. “Yes, we did.”

Hearing a couple of pops in the background, Ollie continued, “I have party poppers that I found from some party we had here. I felt I should celebrate this momentous occasion. Félicitations.”

“Well, thank you… I think.”

“So go on, tell me.”

“Umm,” Sasha inhaled deeply. “I just didn’t see any of it coming,” she exhaled with a laugh. “I had absolutely no clue that the last few days would end up the way they did. He just sort of got up, announced we were going to Paris and all of a sudden we were at the airport drinking champagne and then we were at the hotel.”

“Where did you stay?”

“Plaza Athénée.”


“We had some champagne in the room and went out to chat on the balcony. The weather was stunning, but he was all fidgety and stuttering, very unlike him,” Sasha stopped meandered back and forth across the balcony and took a seat, enjoying the warm summer evening at seeing the stars on such a clear night (she didn't often see stars in New York City). “Then he just started talking about wanting to kiss me.”

“And he did?”

“He did, yes. Thoroughly. For hours. My lips are still tingling.”

“Oh, yeah,” Ollie giggled quietly, amused. “Well, I’m glad. I'm assuming his lips were made for kissing?”

"Among other things."

Ollie hooted. "Don't put the ideas into my head. It will ruin my friendship with him. You're telling me what you're telling me, aren't you?"

"Might be,” Sasha smiled to herself as Ollie sighed.

"How European of him."

Sasha giggled. “Everything has completely changed, Ol. There is no going back now. It’s like – ”

“All or nothing,” Ollie finished.

“That is exactly it, yes. Like If it falls apart, and fuck it could, I know it can. If it fucks up, he and I won’t be friends again. We won’t be able to go back to that,” Sasha’s dread evident in her voice.

“Hey, don’t scare yourself out of it,” Ollie told her simply. “You guys care so much about each other. In no way does this not lead to everything you’ve ever wanted.”

“Please don’t say we’re each other’s lob – ”
“You’re each other’s lobsters.”

“Great, thanks Ollie. You had to reference a TV show.”

Giggling, Ollie continued, “In no lifetime will FRIENDS not be relevant.”

“For one of us, maybe.”

“Come on, I need more,” Ollie groaned. “So you guys made out for a bit. At some point he went
down on you but you're being coy and not elaborating.”

“Ollie, I hate that word.”

“What, going down?”

“Made out. It’s not an Australian word.”

"Why am I not surprised that's the way you went with this conversation? I could have given you a
hundred different words for Sebastian eating you out and you are least impressed with 'made out',"
Ollie said, cackling. It took her a few seconds to control herself. “Sebastian’s been an American for
years, I’m an American, you live in America. You’re the only un-American part of this.”

Ollie was right. “Let's just say kiss, okay? Fuck you, it’s my story. And fuck you again, we were in
Paris.”

Ollie sighed, calming herself down. “Okay, sure, so you French kissed then, I geddit. It’s your story.
So dinner was good?”

“Hardly remember it. I remember eating and drinking way too much but I was on auto-pilot, like I
don’t remember a single taste, Ol. The only smell I recall was Sebastian’s cologne, you know? It is
killing me because it was the experience of a lifetime and there was a waiter for every course,
different sommeliers for every champagne and wine, so many things happening around us in this
immaculate space and I don’t remember a single thing except Sebastian. He looked a dream.”

“Holy shit,” Ollie breathed.

“Everything is so fuzzy and I wish I could remember more,” to that Sasha was a little disappointed.

“I hate to beg you when you're being so open about relationship stuff and all romantic, but seriously.
I need to know about the sex, Sash.”

Sasha laughed loudly, throwing her head back. Pressing her fingers to the bridge of the nose, she
replied, “I don’t know what you want me to say.”

“If you want to keep it quiet, cool. I can live with that. At least give me scale of one to ten on his
work rate.”

“Solid twelve. He's a crowd pleaser.”

“I can survive with that,” Ollie admitted, then sighed again. “I know this is probably really hard to
adjust to and stuff.”

“Completely. Just trying to keep up, I must admit.”

“How is Sebastian?”
“I think he’s okay,” Sasha replied. She hadn’t really thought about it. He had been doing the majority of the handholding since everything turned on its head and she hadn’t stopped to think how he was coping. She exhaled and chewed her lip. “I don’t know, I hope he is okay.”

“I’m positive he’s tickled, babe. He’s wanted this as long as you have.”

“Fingers crossed, huh?” Sasha asked, hoping her anxiety wasn’t as evident in her voice as it was in her head.

“Hey, Sash?” Ollie said quietly, a little sniffle accompanying the comment. Was she crying? Even if she was, Sasha asking would only lead to Ollie’s denial. “I’m really happy for you two, you know? I know how good you guys are as friends and I can’t wait to see you guys get old and fat together.”

Sasha shook her head with a laugh. “Thanks Ollie. One day at a time.”

“Hey, Chace and Sam are here, my buzzer just went. I’m heading out for a Sunday session with the boys. I’d better get moving.”

“No probs. Say hi to them for me.”

“Of course. It was good to hear your voice, Benzo. I miss you and can’t wait to see your face next week.”

“Me either, Ol.”

“Bye, doll.”

“Bye,” Sasha hung up, a little relived the conversation had gone as easily as it did. Ollie could be ruthless at times. She had clearly taken pity on Sasha. Heading inside, Sasha flopped on the couch and turned on the TV. There wasn’t much in English except for news, food TV and E!. She settled on some reality show about athletes wives. “Gee, this is what it’s coming to, huh?” she sighed grimly. Hearing her phone a while later, she smiled at the photo from Ollie in her apartment, with Sam and Chace, all 3 covered in colourful party popper ribbons, cheesy grins, thumbs up and lots of tongue.

Today 11:36pm
Sasha: Hilarious! I miss you, my crazy, beautiful idiots xxx

"One more text," she told herself. "Then beddy."

Today 11:38pm
Sasha: I think our friends are supportive.

Sasha inserted the picture and sent it to Sebastian.

Sasha: Miss you. Hope work is okay. Heading to bed xo
Sebastian: Abia aştept să te văd. Sleep well, baby xxx

Sasha didn’t want to wake up as she heard the shower start in the middle of the night, though feeling the bed move a short time later, she moaned and gave sleepy grin, feeling Sebastian’s lips on her shoulder, the nape of her neck and behind her ear (wherever his lips were she’d decided were her now pleasure point even if he wasn’t touching her). “Hi,” she yawned, turning her head over to
smile at him as he slid under the covers and rolling to his side to watch her. “How was filming?”

“How was filming?” he admitted in whisper, smoothing some hair from her eyes. He looked as exhausted he sounded. “I’m sorry, baby. I didn’t mean to wake you.”

“I don’t believe you,” she giggled, voice still raspy from sleep. “That was some selective kissing, Sebastian.”

“Do you expect me to keep my hands, let alone lips, off you now?” he grinned, putting his head on his pillow, tired eyes not leaving her. “That’s not how it works anymore.”

“Guess I will have to get used to that then,” she gave groggy giggle, still dopey from sleep but the smell of him after a shower and minty fresh was pretty intoxicating too.

“ Took everything in my power to not just climb into bed with you,” he confided. “I really like seeing you in here, waiting for me. I was creepy and watched you for a few minutes before I had a shower just to make sure you were actually there.”

“Gross,” she admitted as they both giggled. “It’s a big bed, it’s nice to have you back to help me fill it though.”

He yawned, rubbing his eyes. “I missed you.”

“Yeah, I missed you too,” she snuggled close to him, cupping his stubbly cheek affectionately. “You sound so tired, bub.”

“Dog-tired.”

“Turn the light off, come on. Relax. Go to sleep. You need it. We can talk tomorrow.”

“Did you call Olivia?”

“Ollie cried, pretended she wasn’t. It was hilarious,” she giggled into the pillow. “Did you see the photo of Chacey, Sam and Ollie?”

“Yeah,” he grinned and stretched to turn off the light. “Hold on, Ollie cried? That’s the last thing I thought you’d say,” he gave a quiet laugh. “I have the day off again. I’ll head to the gym mid-afternoon, but did you want to do something before I’m due on set?”

“Let’s see how you feel tomorrow, Seb,” she told him. “As someone who has worked pretty much every night for the last 10 years, I know how exhausting and unpleasant they are.”

“Extremely unpleasant. Thank you for understanding. I really appreciate it,” he sighed deeply. “Goodnight, baby.”

“Goodnight, Seb. Sleep well,” she kissed his forehead, pulling his body to hers and curling around him as he sighed contentedly.

“I’m so glad that you’re here,” he breathed, before passing out quickly.

Chapter End Notes
Thank you again to all the babes that sent in comments, took the time to leave a kudo and subscribed, it does mean the world to me. I looks forward to hearing any thoughts you have so don't hesitate to send anything through :)  
---
If you're on Tumblr and feel like checking out my sideblog, it's still relatively on the new side but I'll be updating some recs (I know some amazing, talented dolls you should already be reading) and inspo goods for my fic (Sebastian suit porn mostly, maybe some ideas of what I see Sasha in too): Interested Bystander writes. Happy to have a chat over there too xoxo
If she’d learnt one thing in all the years she’d know him, it was that he always managed to make her feel new and exciting ways of hating how much she cared about him.

“So I get gussied up and you’re in a t-shirt and jeans?” Sasha frowned as Sebastian grinned at her from the bed with a comical shrug as she fastened her watch to her wrist, dressed in a cute black mini dress and some pretty spectacular heels that he’d insisted she buy the weekend prior. Stipulation – Sebastian would buy them for her as long as she wore them while he was in her. *It was a win-win.*

“For what it’s worth? You look super hot,” he gave her a smug A-OK before falling back on the pillows.

“Right. I kinda just want to put my jeans and sneakers on now,” she muttered. "Why did you tell me it was 'evening-y'?'"

“Well, that was your first problem - you listened to me,” he reasoned. "This isn't your first rodeo, I don't tell you how to the dress. God knows you'd never listen to me anyway."

"You said it was a sit down dinner."

"That changed when everyone get really drunk today on set," he defended himself. "I couldn't control that."

"You drive me insane, Sebastian," she rolled her eyes, giving herself the once over in the floor-length mirror, eyes inching to her luggage eager to change.

"Oh, don’t spoil it. You look gorgeous," he hitched himself up on an elbow, ankles crossed. Relaxed for the first time in months, principal photography had finished earlier that day and some of the cast, Sebastian included, had stayed in Downey’s little village to drink beer and shoot the shit.

And now he was *drunk*. He had not stopped rambling about the day since he got back to the apartment. She loved when he was well-oiled, he just rambled the most nonsensical rubbish until he sobered up or passed out. He’d had her in stitches since he got back, it was great when he was in zany moods like that. Not that they were few and far between, because he was a giant dork at the best of times (just happy when everyone else was), but you know, it was just different now. *Everything was.*

“It’s strange, you can drink spirits all night and be sober as a judge. Put a few beers into you and you’re anybody's.”

“Correction.” he announced loudly. “I am yours. Remember? We’re sleeping together now,” he waved his finger between both of them.
She snickered as she checked her make up in the mirror. The little black dress would have to suffice even if she felt most overdressed. “Oh, I forgot. You haven’t tried to get in between my legs in the last two minutes.”

“Baby, you can’t be angry at me for wanting to spend my days there,” he explained, arrogantly with a playful wink. "It's my favourite place to be. Very pleasant. Kudos," he gave a thumbs up.

She shook her head, biting back a grin. She’d take the compliment. “You’re cute when you’re drunk.”

“Excuse me, 'when you're drunk’?” he repeated in his horrible Australian accent. "Fuck you, Sasha Benzo. I’m always cute."

She finally laughed. He had an answer for everything right now, and boy, she did enjoy when he was cocky. It was such an unfamiliar trait to those who knew him that when he put it on display, she wanted nothing more than to rip his clothes off. “Bold when you wanna be, aren’t you?” she teased.

“The alcohol might have a little something to do with it,” he shrugged, grinning widely as he sat up and slicked on his cap.

“Little bit,” she agreed, moving towards him and standing between his wide, manspread thighs (he could have the worst posture at times, constantly slouching and lazy), she lifted his chin to meet her gaze. “I just don’t want to have to hold your hair back later on tonight, Rapunzel. I’ve already done that trip. We don’t need a repeat.”

“I understand. I’ll be a responsible adult for the rest of the night,” he closed his legs and perched her on his thighs so she was straddling his lap. “Hello, iubi.”

“Hi, handsome,” she returned his smile, pushing the bill of his cap back so she could see his eyes.

“I do like this little bubble we have here. Doesn’t make me want to rush back to New York, that’s for sure,” he placed his hands on her waist and slowly and purposefully moved his hands to sit on her butt, a broad grin crossing his handsome features. “Don’t move, okay? I want you close.”

“Okay,” she told him as he smiled into a gentle kiss, a quirky mix of beer and mint. “The real world waits for no one, Sebastian Stan,” she reminded him as he nodded glumly. “We go back to our friends in a few days.”

He hummed. “True,” he couldn’t resist bouncing her on his knee when she diverted her eyes and dropped his adoring gaze. “What’s up, you?”

“I am just feeling really nervous being this dressed up,” she admitted.

“I can see that, Benzo,” he said a little more sober than he seemed, pulling her closer again. “They’ve all seen you dressed up before,” he shrugged. “Why are you feeling so self-conscious?”

“Honestly?” she sighed.

“Yes. Please,” he rolled his eyes, jolting her on his knee again. “I’d love some honesty.”

“This is the first time we’ll be out with everyone as you and me. I don’t want to look, you know… like I’m trying too hard?” she whispered. “Because –”

He shook his head, raising a hand to stop her in her tracks. “Baby, everyone already knows we’re kind of together,” he began. “They also all have eyes and know you’re kind of cute. You wearing
“This,” he leaned back and took in her body in the little black dress. He chewed his lip as with her position on him, the skirt had crept well and truly as high as it could go. “It’s a good look, kid. Not gonna lie,” kiss. “You’re fit,” another kiss. “And more importantly have legs for days that in the length of that skirt and those heels, anyone would want to have those thighs wrapped around their head.”

“Oh, my God, Sebastian,” she blushed, pushing him back on the mattress and she climbed off him in a huff. “You are not helping,” she smoothed her skirt down, rolling her eyes.

He giggled but didn’t stop her this time. “I don’t understand why you’re being so insecure. You’re body is amazing. Are you sure it’s not a bit of anxiety you might have to hold my hand in public?” he raised an eyebrow.

“Sebastian,” she sighed quietly.

“Bit worried I might show you off?” he continued, pushing himself back on his elbows.

“Sebastian!” she repeated, rolling her eyes, exasperated.

“Nervous I might even kiss you?” he taunting her, standing up with a coy smile on his handsome face as he ran his thumbs up and down her arms. He felt the shudder, he saw the goose pimples. He was enjoying learning the little things that made her melt for him.

“You are such a dick when you’re drunk,” she told him with a glare.

He laughed. “I’m sorry. I can’t help it. I, frankly, can’t wait to be able to hold you in public. I’ve only wanted to for about 8 years now.”

She softened momentarily. “Seb…”

“What?” he smiled, his blue eyes warm with affection. “It’s fine. If you don’t want me to, I won’t. You sit at one end of the bar with Lizzie and Scarlett and talk girl stuff and I’ll go have fun with the guys down the other end. I’ll see you back here later if that’s what you prefer.”

“Stop mocking me, you prick,” she muttered.

“I am enjoying it though,” he grinned. “Kiss me and let’s go. You look,” he made a noise at the back of his throat as he gave her a slow, approving once over. “Stunning. That’s all I can say, whether you realise it or not.”

She gave him a small peck on the lips as he rolled his eyes. “I’m still changing,” she said, pulling away as he groaned and she disappeared into the closet, reappearing a few minutes later in a simple white t-shirt, jeans that were glued to her and the same heels.

“Okay, this works too,” he acknowledged, taking her hand and pocketing his keys with the other. “Gotta say, big fan of those jeans, baby.”

“Yeah, thought you might,” she said with a teeny grin before giving him a gentle kiss as they left the apartment and wandered quietly for a while before they arrived at the bar that the wrap party was. They had been there a few times before, it wasn’t too far from Sebastian’s apartment.

“Stay close, I’ve got you,” he kissed her temple as they joined Anthony and Daniel Brühl.

“Well, well, look at you,” Anthony hugged her tightly. “Is there ever a time you don’t look amazing?”
She blushed profusely, hiding behind her hands bashfully as Sebastian laughed quietly. “Hi, Anthony,” she mumbled in reply. “I’m just in jeans and a t-shirt.”

“Stunning,” Anthony told her and made a face, nodding in Sebastian’s direction. “Still with this guy, I see?” he pulled her to his side, glaring at a smiling Sebastian as she giggled. “He made it a few weeks without completely fucking up?”

“He’s doing okay. Might keep him around for a while longer. Jury’s out.”

Sebastian nodded biting back a smug grin. “Oh! I get it,” he crossed his arms across his chest.

Anthony hummed, not convinced. “Have you met Daniel?”

“No, I haven’t,” she giggled at Sebastian who had inadvertently put on a gun display of epic proportions as Daniel extended his hand.

"Daniel, this is Sebastian's much better half, Sasha," Anthony introduced them.

“Nice to meet you,” Daniel said politely.

“You too,” she said as champagne ended up in front of her thanks to Scarlett who pushed into the middle of the group and made a few excuses before dragging Sasha away. “Okay, looks like I’m leaving. Excuse me,” she mumbled, trying to keep up and not stumble after her.

“You don’t mind?” Scarlett called to Sebastian over her shoulder who shrugged with a smile.

“She’s all yours. She’s been trouble ever since I got home this afternoon. She’s coming home with me though,” he told Scarlett pointedly.

“We’ll see,” Scarlett poked out her tongue and led Sasha to the bar to join Lizzie, who was waiting with a grin. “That’s amazing, I love that this has finally happened. It’s taken long enough!”

“Yeah,” Sasha grinned, hugging Lizzie in greeting. “Hi, gorgeous,” Sasha had decided she’d adopt her if she could.

“Hi! Whoa, hey now. The last time we caught up,” Lizzie stated, pointing at Sasha with purpose and a forced scowl. “You guys were just dancing around each other. What the hell happened? Why did no one tell me?!”

“I haven’t seen you, and I think Seb is trying to keep it a little quiet.”

“Fucking Sebastian,” Lizzie cursed quietly. “How dare he! But seriously, when did this finally happen?”

“Paris,” Scarlett said with a knowing grin. “He took her to Paris.”

“Jesus. I see,” Lizzie sipped her champagne, nodding. "I'm impressed."

“Tell us,” Scarlett whispered. “After all this, now you two are finally together, is the sex everything?”

“Best sex of my life,” Sasha said smugly sipping her champagne.
“Apartment, sweet apartment,” Sasha sighed as she wheeled in her luggage, Sebastian on her heels with his own as they meandered into the lounge room and she tossed her passport on the coffee table. “I am so wired. I probably won’t sleep tonight. Jet lag in full effect.”

“Tell me about it,” Sebastian agreed, falling on the couch. “I’m completely awake but my body can hardly move. I slept too much on the plane.”

“What do we do?”

“I have a heap of texts from the guys that they’re going to dinner and then drinks later on. But I don’t think I could possibly go out.”

“Yeah, I got a couple from Ollie too. Would it hurt to hit the ground running?” she suggested, taking a seat beside him. He squinted at her in thought.

“It’s not a terrible idea. Might actually force us on to New York time quicker, throw ourselves in the deep end with our friends too. I did want to get to the gym as early as possible tomorrow.”

“Gross to all of what you just said,” she sighed as he stifled a laugh (he was aware she was nervous to see their friends now that most of them were aware of what had transpired while they were in Europe. He was a little anxious as well), leaning her head on his broad shoulder. “What do you think?”

“Okay, let’s head out. I’m going to need a shower though, I’m ripe from airports and airplanes. It’s 7pm, how about we meet them about 9?”

“Sounds good,” she said, making no attempt to move.

“This will be the first time they see us together.”

“Yup.”

“How does that make you feel?”

“I think I’m okay. Ask me closer to the time,” she admitted, quirking an eyebrow back at him. “How about you?”

“Well,” he said, rubbing his chin and pulling his bottom lip through his teeth. “What are we supposed to do? Pretend we’re not together? It’s not like we’re just fucking around here.”

She nodded and hummed. “Have we changed?”

He scoffed a laugh. “Well, I’m putting my dick into you more than before, if that’s what you mean. You know, because before it was zero.”

She groaned, rubbing her eyes. “Nup. Not quite what I meant.”

He grinned as she started giggling, he knew she’d laugh at him eventually. “I’m sorry, that actually was absolutely fucking awful of me. I knew what you meant. But no, I think we’re still us. There’s just a bit more touching and kissing. Hand holding,” he took her hand and linked his fingers through hers. “Cuddling.”

“So everything?”
He giggled. “Yes, everything has changed, Benzo. Everyone will just have to get used to that, because I’m not fucking changing myself for them. And I absolutely do not want you to either,” he kissed her temple. “Not that I would never expect you to.”

She high-fived him. “Thanks for the pep talk, coach.”

He leaned down to kiss her. “Anytime,” he said as his phone beeped. He forested through his pocket to retrieve it and sighed. “Ma wants to meet for breakfast tomorrow.”

“Can’t blame her, she hasn’t seen you in over 3 weeks. She misses her baby boy.”

He shrugged and texted back. “Do you want to come?”

“I can meet you if you want me to,” she shrugged.

“Meet me, why would you meet me there?” he made a face in realisation. “You don’t want to come back to my place tonight?” he asked quietly. Sleepovers in their city was not something she had thought about prior to arriving home, clearly he had.

Oh, logistics, she comprehended.

“I didn’t really think about it.”

“I mean, we were sleeping in the same bed when we were away,” he reminded her. “If you don’t want to, and need some space, I understand. We’ve seen a lot of each other lately,” he said, trying and failing to downplay his disappointment. He was not hiding his hurt well, she sighed as he made himself busy on his phone again, texting his mother back. She spied his text.

Sebastian: Sounds good Ma, usual place about 9:30? Sasha might meet us too.

That was a proper dig, she sighed. She didn’t know why it was such a fuss. It’s not like they were living together or anything. Back in the real world, they each had their apartments and own lives. He knew this. “Where are we going tonight?” she dared ask, changing the subject. She didn’t need to see those eyes again anytime soon.

“Will’s.”

“Well, why don’t we just stay here tonight? It’s closer,” she reasoned, hoping to make amends though she really couldn’t understand the big deal. It obviously meant something to him and she was missing whatever it was.

He looked at her with a frown. “I can stay at my place, it’s cool. In fact, I’ll make a move now so I can take my stuff back to my apartment. I’ll meet you at the restaurant,” he attempted to push himself up.

“Don’t go,” she urged, taking his wrist firmly. “I’ve kind of gotten used to you taking up the whole bed,” she continued dismissively as he scoffed loudly and hooted.

“Right. So, that’s how it is.”

“Little bit, yeah,” she shrugged casually as he continued broke into a grin. Her heart, that she didn’t realise had jumped into her throat, put itself back in its proper place in her chest.

“It was a teeny double bed,” he reminded her. “Maybe it wasn’t made for two people.”

“Maybe not.”

He leaned over and moved her hair to kiss that little spot behind her ear that when met with his lips,
she went to water. He was a fast learner. “Yet, I sacrificed my comfort to have you join me.”

“You’re a true humanitarian. Seb,” she praised him, her tone laced in sarcasm as she tried desperately to appear like his mouth wasn’t completely affecting her ability to remain coherent. They both knew she was failing. *Failing dismally.*

“Good thing we stayed pretty close in it then, huh?”

She giggled. “Stop.”

“Stop what?” he nuzzled the shell of her ear before gently nibbling her earlobe. “I’m literally doing nothing.”

“I thought we were going to for dinner,” her eyes fluttered closed as she giggled quietly, understandably won over. “Dammit, Sebastian.”

“I’m running an experiment,” he continued, leaving hot, wet kisses on her neck. Now heady, he smiled against her skin as her head lolled the other way, giving him plenty of access to her soft skin.

“What’s your hypothesis?” she managed, her hands reaching back to get lost in his dark hair.

“How quick it would take to get you into bed,” he breathed. “Current guesstimate? Not long at all,” he laughed.

“Oh stop,” she begged, flushed as she pushed him away. “You just said you were exhausted.”

“Pretty sure I can go into autopilot to get into those jeans,” he assured her.

She cackled, falling back against the back of the couch, putting some distance between them (mostly for her sanity’s sake). “Romantic,” she said as he put on a heavy pout and gave her the most pathetic puppy dog eyes she’d ever witness. “I’m so embarrassed for you right now. That won’t work on me. I’ve had years of practice not falling for that face, Sebastian.”

“You’re a tough nut to crack, Sasha Benzo,” he gave a small giggle in defeat, falling back on the couch himself. He gave her a wide grin, and just like that, all her resolve was out the window. It might not have been the eyes, but that fucking smile continuously ruined her.

“All right, big boy, take me to the bedroom if you think you’ve got what it takes,” she baited as he stood up eagerly, tossed her over his shoulder and marched to her bedroom. She loved how strong he was and how he could throw her around like a ragdoll at his own freewill.

“So you know how long I’ve wanted to fuck you in here?” he asked, dropping her on the bed, whipping his shirt off, breathing heavy before moving onto the bed and crawling between her waiting legs. He let slip, a small yawn escaping his lips as he tried to meekly cover it with his hands.

“Ha!” she exclaimed, sitting up and pointing at him animatedly. “You’re exhausted! Admit it!”

“No, I’m fine. Got at least 2 orgasms in it for you,” he predicted, flexing from abs to shoulders. *That body was purely created for sin,* she now knew. He knew she now knew.

“Bub?” she asked, sitting up on her elbows. He gave a smile in reply. She sat up and rested her hand on his bare, muscular shoulder. “It’s really okay,” she sat up and knelt before him as he sunk onto his heels, mimicking her stance. “You don’t have to prove anything,” she kissed him deeply. “Let’s have a little nap, then get ourselves organised so we can get better acquainted with the right timezone.”
“No,” he shrugged her off, going for his jeans buttons.

She needed a new tact. “Then let’s have a little nap and come back to this, okay?” she offered softly, running her hands through his hair and kissing him again, dragging her back down with him, both making themselves comfy in the soft pillows. “You can prove how amazing when we get back here later.”

“I just thought – ”

“It’s okay,” she rested against his chest. “You can make me scream all night if you really want. The walls are crazy thin so everyone can hear the sexual prowess of Sebastian Stan if that’s what you truly want.”

“That is actually not preferable,” he laughed, nervously. “I would prefer to keep that as a secret between just you and I and not include your neighbours.”

“I’m pretty sure Mrs Oldman would prefer that too, regardless of her hearing aids. Bless her cotton socks.”
All My Friends

Chapter Summary

If she’d learnt one thing in all the years she’d know him, it was that he always managed to make her feel new and exciting ways of hating how much she cared about him.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“You don’t have to hold my hand, you know,” Sasha reminded Sebastian as they wandered into the restaurant, greeted by the host who smiled in recognition, well aware of whom the pair before her was.

“You don’t want me to?” he asked, a little nervously, loosening his fingers from hers, before stuffing his hands in his pockets.

She softened a little. “You can if you want,” she said with a small smile. He frowned, cocking his head to the side, his puss was ridiculous. “I want you to hold my hand, Sebastian.”

Instead he pulled her to him, resting his cheek on her hair. “Before we go in there and it turns to chaos, know I love you and I will make sure they aren’t over the top.”

“I’m expecting OTT, it’s okay,” she shrugged, her apprehension escalating a little. She distracted herself, smoothing down his strong chest and looked up to kiss him deeply, nothing had changed. She could still kiss those lips every minute of every day, it would never get old. “I love you too. Our friends have been waiting for this as long as we have, let’s face the music, hey?”

“Let’s face the firing line,” he agreed, the fondness meeting his eyes.

“You look very handsome,” she told him as he gave her a bashful smile and put his hand on the small of her back, following the host to the back of the restaurant. There were about a dozen mutual friends already seated who all maturely (and expectedly) started hooting, hollering and making kissy faces as soon as they saw the pair. They drew enough attention that other patrons in the room turned their interests to the commotion. Sasha and Sebastian hid into each other, completely mortified. It had begun. It had begun loudly. “Wow.”

“That was expected,” Sebastian said to Sasha quietly and gave their friends a meek wave.

She nodded. “Good luck to you,” she replied.

“And you,” he replied cordially.

“Get away from her, I want my best friend back!” Ollie announced, getting up from her chair and running at Sasha, crushing her best friend in a bear hug fiercely. “I’ve missed you so much, I’ve had to wrangle all these guys to myself and lemme tell you, it’s damn near impossible!”

Sasha laughed, a few tears in her eyes as Sebastian kissed her temple much to everyone’s delight, gently wiping away a stray tear and starting to greet his friends with hugs, handshakes and a few congratulations on finishing the movie. “I’m sorry, I know they’re hard work,” she apologised. “I
“I’m mortified!”

“No. You’re happy and a little overwhelmed,” Ollie rectified quietly as Sasha gave a partially helpless nod, Ollie swiping away the tears that had spilt. “Never leave me again, okay?”

“I won’t, I promise. Is my make up okay?”

“It’s okay,” Ollie promised, reaching for a napkin on a free table and dabbing Sasha’s eyes. “I really should do this in the bathroom, but it’s not like we haven’t seen you cry before. Thank God you’re wearing waterproof mascara.”

“It was once, and it was one I did my knee. Don’t be a dick about it, Ollie,” Sasha hissed. Ollie smirked, facing them away from the boys.

“Sex still good?” Ollie pondered quietly.

“He has the best moves I’ve ever had the pleasure of experiencing. That Bucky body is a thing is a feat of beauty when naked. Ollie, his body is that of the Gods. And that tongue…” Ollie grunted quietly then grinned widely, flushing bashfully for her happy friend and also her friend’s boldness. “I love you and I’m so happy about this. Who knew when I introduced you to that little shit all those years ago, here’s where’d we all end up, huh?” Ollie looked awfully proud of herself as Sasha rolled her eyes with a small giggle. “But just letting you know, Taylor is in town and he’ll be here soon too.”

Sasha’s face dropped. “Oh.” Shit.

“Sebastian knows, right?” Ollie hoped the answer was yes.

“Yeah, he knows. But has anyone mentioned anything to Taylor?”

“I think Chace said he would.”

“But did he?”

“Not 100 per cent. But it’s cool. Taylor has known how you’ve felt about Sebastian for a long time.” Feeling his eyes on her, Sasha smiled at Sebastian Stan, the love of her life and he gave a dimpled grin back, kind of looking at her exactly the same way. It didn’t matter how hard he tried now, the smile on his face couldn’t be wiped.

“Good Lord, look at his smile. I don’t think I’ve ever seen the grin meet his eyes like that before,” Ollie winked at him, before he blushed and turned his attention back to Chace. “That is pure worship right there.”

“I actually feel weird I’m so happy,” Sasha admitted quietly.

“You two deserve this, don’t let anyone tell you any different,” Ollie smiled and Sam snaked a glass of champagne into Sasha’s hand before scooping her into a huge hug, her feet leaving the floor as he supported her weight.

“We’ve missed you, Benzo,” Sam told her. “How was Germany? Did you love it?”

“Loved it,” she confirmed with a smile. “I missed you fools more than I thought I would, which was surprising.”
“Bullshit,” Sam teased, cocking an eyebrow cheekily. “I bet we were just a distant memory while you and Seb played house.”

“True, we weren’t really in a rush to come back,” Sasha shrugged nonchalantly, sipping her champagne as Ollie and Sam laughed.

“We’re glad to have you both back at least. Been a while since we were all in the same town one the same night.”

“I can’t remember the last time I saw us all in one place,” Sasha admitted. “Everyone is so busy these days.”

“Oh, there’s Taylor,” Ollie said, the tone in her voice not wavering to catch Sam’s attention. And just like that, there he was. Looking as gorgeous as ever, his dimpled grin on his tanned features. “Did he break up with that Canadian girl?” Ollie asked Sam. “I can’t keep up with you guys and your girlfriends anymore.”

“I think they’re ‘on a break’,” Sam shrugged, using air quotes before excusing himself to say hi to their friend.

“Well, that answered zero,” Ollie muttered. The girls chatted amongst themselves about Ollie’s rehearsals for a new musical before they were interrupted.

“Hey,” Taylor’s smooth voice said from behind Ollie and Sasha. Both ladies turned to face him with a smile, Ollie giving him the first hug and before Sasha hugged him also. He pulled her flush against him. “Look at you. You look great, Germany worked wonders, sweetheart. Or maybe it was the Paris weekender I heard about?” he suggested, the mirth clear in his warm hazel eyes.

“I’ll just go…” Ollie didn’t finish before she disappeared back towards Sebastian, Chace and their friends at the table. Sebastian and Chace had noticed Taylor’s arrival and both watched him interact with Sasha for a moment. Sebastian may have thought his hug was just a little too long, but he’d never admit it to anyone. He watched his girl intently. He needed to get a read on her, he needed to know she was okay. Let go of him, baby.

Sasha lowered her eyes, a small smile on her lips, she could hardly meet his gaze as her nervousness took over. “It was a good trip,” she confirmed to Taylor with a nod as she slinked out of his strong arms. “Do you think we can talk later or something?” she asked shyly, trying to maintain some pretence of cool.

“We can talk now,” he offered, nodding his head towards the bar. “If you want?”

“It’s fine, man,” Chace said loud enough only for Sebastian to hear, patting his friend’s shoulder. “I promise.”

Taylor extended his hand, letting Sasha lead him. They stood at the bar, both wearing nervous smiles. Taylor ordered himself a beer, Sasha still clutching her champagne. “So yeah, look, Chace told me about you and Sebastian,” he said, a small smile playing on his full lips. “And I know your probably think you have to apologise or something, but you really don’t. You don’t owe me anything, Benzo,” he continued. “You and I had a small thing a few years back, and it was nice, but I’ve known how you've felt about Seb for a long time. And I’ve known even longer with him for you.”

The bartender put the bottle before Taylor as he raised his glass to Sasha and they toasted. He leaned back against the bar, smirking as she jittered with her glass.
“Look, I’m actually really happy for you both,” Taylor said sincerely. “But if he is stupid enough to hurt you, I’ll shove his head so far up his ass.”

Sasha blushed before bursting into hysterical laughter, so much more relieved than she was only minutes before. “I appreciate the sentiment,” she confessed. “Sebastian probably doesn’t. Thanks, Taylor,” she gave him a warm hug.

He grinned. “It’s fine, really. It’s about time,” he laughed. “This is the slowest burn to a relationship in history. In fact, you should both be ashamed of yourselves.”

Sasha nodded emphatically, still giggling. “Tell me about it.”

Chapter End Notes

In honour of Sebastian’s 34th birthday today (only for a little while longer here in Oz), here’s a teeny bit before we get a flashback in the next chapter. Thank you to those who commented, left kudos and subscribed.

---

And hi to those who might be following me on Tumblr now too, don’t hesitate to send me a message :) I recognise some of the usernames, so hi hi! Interested Bystander writes. Hope to see you there xoxo
Chapter Summary

If she’d learnt one thing in all the years she’d know him, it was that he always managed to make her feel new and exciting ways of hating how much she cared about him.

Chapter Notes

The first of a two-part flashback. I hope you enjoy. I’ll post the second part Wednesday, my time xoxo

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Sorry I’m so late,” Sasha grinned, whipping her jacket, beanie and scarf off as she took a seat next to Olivia and Chace for a very late Thanksgiving bite with her friends. She’d had two performances that day and was extremely late for dinner. “I hope you didn’t wait for me.”

They had. The sour looks on their faces proved it.

“Sorry,” she added meekly.

“We tried calling you,” Chace said, kissing her cheek. “Happy Thanksgiving, Benzo.”

She gave him a wide grin and snuggled into him. “Happy Thanksgiving, Chacey. I know, I didn’t hear my phone, sorry. I was in the cab, then got stuck on Broadway and it all went downhill from there,” she tried as Sam reached across the table to lay a kiss on her hand. Taylor poured her a glass of wine. “Only one, I can’t hang around.”

“No, when was the last time we were all together? You’re staying. We’re being Thankful today. Or at least what’s left of it,” Olivia stated. “Order, we’re starving.”

“How are you?” Taylor whispered across the table with a wide smile that cheeky dimple on full display. Their friends all moved into other conversations again.

“Yeah, good,” she grinned back, a slight blush adding to the chill she’d brought in from the cool night air. “Your hair is so blonde!”

“For the movie,” he explained, subconsciously running his long fingers through it and making a face. “Not quite sure how I feel about it yet.”

“Very handsome,” Sasha confirmed as he gave her a half smile across the table. “So, we’ve got you in town for a while!”

“Kinda, yeah. I’ll be back and forth between here and Austin until the New Year,” he nodded, sipping his beer. “Glad to be back though.”

“Are you staying in the city?”
“Yeah, not far from you actually. I want to get to your show next week too.”

“Consider it done,” she crossed her heart. “Hey, I’m not the last here,” Sasha stated, counting heads. “Where’s Sebastian?”

The table was silent, though most were amused. “He’s not coming,” Taylor told her.

“And I cop shit for being late when he no shows?” she rolled her eyes. “He’s in town, right?”

“Well, from the texts she sent to me, she and Sebastian are seeing a movie and might join us later if they aren’t too tired,” Chace filled her in. “They had a big lunch with his mom, so…” he added, patting his tummy, yawning and stretching for effect before he wrapped his arm back around her shoulders.

Sasha grinned. “Oh, this is perfect,” she got her phone out and began to text.

Sasha: This is horseshit. I drag my arse here after a matinee and evening show and you’re at a fucking movie after stuffing your face with turkey, watching some chick flick?

“He won’t reply, I’m positive she’s monitoring his calls and texts,” Olivia said, sipping her wine. “Some replies I’ve gotten just aren’t quite our Sebastian’s tone.”

“Stop baiting him, Sash,” Taylor laughed. “You know how Sebastian gets.”

“I can’t help it – he’s the first one on my back if I bail,” Sasha muttered, sipping her wine and sinking into her seat, finally relaxed for the first time in hours. It had been such a long day. Her body ached. She wanted a hot shower to ease her aching muscles, but mostly, she wanted her warm bed and to enjoy her sleep in the following day.

“Hmm, wonder why that is?” Ollie mused quietly as Chace snickered.

“She’s been texting me, asking if we’re hanging out when she can’t get him on the phone. At work, after hours,” Chace rolled his eyes. “This one might the real deal, batshit crazy.”

“Can’t wait to meet her,” Sasha said warily before raising an eyebrow. “Or have I?”

“No, don’t think so. She’s LA-based,” Chace said.

“Oh, dear. And I definitely haven’t met her?” Sasha frowned at Chace.

“No,” Chace shook his head, a small smirk on his face as he sipped his beer. "I'm positive you'd remember if you had."

Feeling her phone vibrate, she sighed and read aloud, “Not heading out, sorry I missed you. We’re heading home. Catch up soon. Happy Thanksgiving.”

“That’s concise,” Olivia said, reading over Sasha’s shoulder, watching Sasha reply.

Sasha: Well, you have my number if you find the time to catch up before then.
Sasha: Happy Thanksgiving, I guess.
Sasha: Would have been nice to have caught up while you were in town but I guess you’ve got other priorities.

Passive aggressive wouldn’t get her far, she knew. Sebastian had never responded well to it. But it was hard to hide her disappointment when her best friend found himself back in a relationship. He tended to couple up quickly and forget her number just as fast. She’d sadly and truly gotten used to
“What the actual fuck, Benzo?!” Sebastian burst into Sasha’s apartment the next morning, an unrecognisable blonde on his tail.

“Good afternoon, Sebastian,” Sasha frowned, taken aback at the unannounced intrusion. “If you’ve come in here to yell at me, I’ll take my key back, thanks,” she held a hand out.

“He has a key?” Taylor asked, bemused. “I don’t have a key.”

“Taylor, hey. What are you doing here?” Sebastian asked, noticing his friend, his eyes flicking between them both on the couch.

“Hey. We just went for a workout,” Taylor replied with a grin. “I’m flying back to Austin this afternoon. Pity we couldn’t catch up, man.”

“Uhh, yeah. Sorry, man,” Sebastian said, a little confused. He wanted to stay mellow to speak to his friend but his rage meter was skyrocketing at Sasha’s blatant, and quite frankly, expected lack of emotion as usual.

“Sebastian, if you have a point, I’d love you to make it so I can get on with my day. It’s the first one I’ve had off from the show in months and I’d like to enjoy it without the verbal abuse,” Sasha told him. “You know, the show you’d said you’d come see me in months ago? Still in it FYI.”

He blinked slowly, guilt flashing in his pale blue eyes. When he blinked again, his aggression returned. “Those fucking texts,” he accused, blatantly disregarding her hurt.

“Your texts were rude and disrespectful,” the blonde commented, egging Sebastian on.

“Have we met?” Sasha sipped her coffee from her perch on Taylor’s lap. It was the absolute the last place she wanted to be caught but Sebastian didn’t buzz his way up (when had he ever?) so she didn’t exactly have time to move before Sebastian had barged in.

“Cut the shit, Benzo,” Sebastian muttered.

“Sebby, you don’t need this,” the blonde said. “Let’s go.”

Sebby, Sasha blanched but managed to keep the up chuck reflex down. She wondered how much he was hating it. She knew he must have been. His mother was about the only person that could get away with a nickname like that.

“No,” he said. “Sasha and I are clearing this up. Now.”

“It’s okay, Sebastian. There is nothing to clear up – ” Sasha started casually.

“I thought we were friends and friends support each other,” he told her, albeit sadly. The anger had left his voice but he sure was upset. “This is bullshit. And if you can’t support us, then we have nothing else to discuss.”
“I always support you even if it seems a little unappreciated these days,” she muttered.

“I said us,” he reinforced the last word.

“I’m not deaf. I heard you the first time,” Sasha shrugged simply as he shook his head, took the blonde’s hand and left, the door slamming poignantly.

“Well, I must say, neither of your finest moments,” Taylor spoke up from the couch before pushing himself up and wandering over to join Sasha in the kitchen. “Why is this getting to you so much?”

“I don’t actually know – I just thought he and I were better friends than this. I was so excited to see him last night as he’s been on the other side of the country. I kind of feel like I’m losing him, I suppose,” she told him humbly, moving to Taylor and he pulled her into his arms.

“This is Sebastian’s mistake to make,” he smiled gently, brushing some hair from her eyes. “He’ll come crawling back to you when this new girl fizzes. He always does.”

“We’ll see,” she dropped her eyes.

“Come on, I think I have time for one more workout before I have to get to the airport,” he took her hand and lead her to her bedroom as she laughed, a willing participant. Anything to get fucking Sebastian Stan out of her head.

---

Sebastian: This is the longest we haven’t spoken to each other. It’s been over a month and I hate this.

It was Christmas Day and he was obviously feeling sentimental. Sebastian’s timing perfect as always, Sasha had just sent Taylor off to get sushi from the Japanese place around the corner.

Sasha: Can you establish this a secure text?

Where was she getting this arrogance? She was almost proud of herself at this stage. Proud, but mostly disappointed. She couldn’t keep this act up with him much longer. She officially missed him more than she could ever imagine. A month was just too long without seeing or hearing from Sebastian.

Sebastian: For fuck’s sake, I love her, Benzo. You have to give her a chance.

Sasha rolled her eyes as her phone rang. She didn’t have the energy to talk to him but reluctantly answered anyway. She’s barely got a hello in before Sebastian’s rant continued verbally. “I’m too angry at you to do this via text,” he greeted her.

“Merry Christmas to you too,” she managed to squeeze in.

He granted. “Crăciun Fericit, Benzo,” he calmed a little. “I miss you.”

“I miss you too,” she reluctantly admitted. "Are you in New York?"

“LA, I fly back tomorrow.”

“You didn’t spend Christmas with your mum?” she asked sadly. She wondered if that hurt he or his mother more? He always tried desperately hard to make sure he was home for all holidays and birthdays. The latter he could work around but usually planned the last few months of his year to stick as close to New York as possible.
“Ma wasn’t thrilled,” Sebastian admitted, the sadness in his voice evident. “But we’re going to make up for it tomorrow, she understands.”

“I would have gone to see her and your stepdad if I knew you weren’t going to be there.”

“Do you think I don’t feel fucking shitty enough as it is? Will you stop?” he growled. "You don’t have to cover for me."

“I’m sorry,” Sasha said dejectedly. She made a mental note to call his mother as soon as she hung up with Sebastian. She could probably get to the train station and pack an overnight bag pretty quickly, she realised, checking her watch and running some times through her head. Taylor would understand.

“Look, if you and – ”

“If we what?” Sasha gave Sebastian her attention again.

“If you can’t get along, I can’t be friends with you.”

There it was, plain as day. The old tomato (ultimatum) when best friends and girlfriends just couldn’t get along. “Sebastian, I don’t want that.”

“Me either, but I don’t think we have another choice,” he replied quietly.

“Can I ask... was this your idea?”

Not really wanting to hear the answer, when silence responded, she shrugged to herself. “This might just be for the best if you can’t even answer me,” she said softly.

He exhaled sharply. “Do you honestly think this is what I want to do? Fuck, Sasha. Gimme some credit here,” he snipped. "I'm trying."

“If you think this is the only alternative, then that’s fine, I respect it. If this is her in your ear and our friendship doesn’t mean that much to you, then that’s okay too. I won’t cry over spilled milk, Sebastian,” Lies, all lies. She’d cried. She’d cried a lot. She just missed him, okay?

He was silent for a while. “I’m sorry.”

“No, you’re not,” she knew.

“This is the last thing I wanted.”

“Sebastian, stop,” she begged. "Please?"

“Really, Sash – ”

“I don’t think you care that much either way. Guilt has got you.”

He sighed but didn’t reply.

“You know me, Sebastian. I’m not going to lie to you, but before I hang up on you, I’ll tell you one thing... That girl is fucking with you. Ask your mates,” she ended the call. She inhaled sharply as she stared blankly at her phone before throwing it under the couch cushions, hoping it wouldn’t ring again. Maybe the couch would eat it and it would never ring again. Preferable.

It would be typical of Sebastian to call right back. When her phone didn’t ring, she felt relief. And
complete devastation.

Taylor walked in a few minutes later, strong arms loaded with food and a couple of bottles of champagne. “The man has provided for his woman,” he smiled. The perfect distraction, she smiled, getting up to greet him with a small kiss.

“Taylor?”

“Beno?” he said, skirting around her to get plates and cutlery from her kitchen drawers.

“Has this little thing between us gone too far?”

He shrugged and peered at her. “I dunno. What do you mean?”

“Well, it was supposed to be just – ”

“Fuck buddies,” he chuckled. “Yeah.”

“Yeah.”

“And now I’m here on Christmas Day?” he grinned. He was reading her like an open book.

“…yeah.”

He put everything in the fridge and hitched her into his arms. “Let’s fuck then.”

She snickered as he sat her on the bench top, spreading her legs wide so he could stand between them, his body flush against hers.

“What do you want, baby? More, less?” he moved the collar of her hoodie to kiss her clavicle. She resisted the moan that escaped her lips but failed as he laughed into her warm, soft skin. “More.”

She fisted his long hair, pulling his face back to see him, needing his attention, not his mouth on her body. His warm eyes dark with lust and surprise. “Is this moving into something we weren’t planning for?”

He cocked his head to the side, that cheeky little dimple apparent on his tanned cheek. “Look… I hear what ya saying. And maybe this has escalated a little more than we expected. But is that such a bad thing? It’s not like we planned on it. It’s just moved this way. Spontaneous,” he shrugged simply. He took a step back and attempted to read her face. As always, it was damn near impossible. She only gave you something to work with occasionally. This was not one of those times. Predictably unreadable.

“I don’t…” she paused, lowering her eyes, trying to find the right words. “I enjoy the time we spend together. I really do, don’t get me wrong.”

“Me too,” Taylor smiled. Maybe this wasn’t about to blow up in his face, but it was definitely feeling like a kiss off.

“But when this ends, I still want to be your friend. I’m not looking for a relationship, Taylor. I’m sorry.”

It was definitely a kiss off.

He nodded slowly. “I understand that. I totally get it.”
“I think we’ve gotten in over our heads.”

He sighed, opening a bottle of champagne. He pottered around her to fetch the flutes. He poured carefully and handed her a glass before he stepped between her legs again. “If you had’ve wanted to explore this, I wouldn’t have objected. If you want to end it, I’ll at least have the image of your body on mine until the day I die,” he grinned as she burst into bashful giggles. He raised his glass. “It was nice while it lasted, Benzo.”

“It was nice while it lasted, Kitsch.”

Chapter End Notes

I will put it down to everyone feeling festive due to Sebastian's birthday, but I'm staggered with those who commented, left kudos and subscribed on Ch14. It was overwhelming that so many popped past to leave their wishes, so amazing. Thank you again. I managed to get through this chapter a little early too, so here's another bit.

---

If you're on Tumblr, don't hesitate to say hi there too. Fic recs, Sebastian looking glorious and a few other writing odds and sods: Interested Bystander writes. Hope to see you there xoxo
Chapter Summary

If she’d learnt one thing in all the years she’d know him, it was that he always managed to make her feel new and exciting ways of hating how much she cared about him.

Chapter Notes

The second of a two-part flashback. I hope you enjoy xoxo

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Hearing the gentle knock at the door on New Year’s Eve, Sasha looked up from her iPad and meandered to the door, spying Sebastian through the looking glass. She sighed before she opened the door and leaned against the frame. “Unlike you not to just invite yourself in and make me feel shit in my own apartment, Sebastian.”

“I didn’t think you’d let me in if I buzzed,” he fell into her unsuspecting arms, resting his forehead on her shoulder, overly dramatic even for an actor, she sneered. “I am well aware I’m an asshole,” he wandered in as she shook her head dismally, closed the door and followed him inside.

“Well, as long as I don’t need to remind you,” she shrugged, leaning her torso over the island in the kitchen as she watched him strip off his coat, scarf and gloves and toss them out of the way. He was obviously staying. She wasn’t sure she was completely onboard with that yet.

“It’s just…” he pulled a beer from the fridge and pushed himself up on the bench, swinging his legs before him. “I don’t know what it is about this girl.”

“Electronic clit?” Sasha blinked innocently as he gave the teeniest smirk at her crass humour, how he’d missed it. He refused to give her the benefit of the doubt and reveal the hoot that was bubbling in his belly. “What do you want me to tell you? I don’t know her, Sebastian.”

“Exactly!” Sebastian exclaimed, raising his arms in a small victory. “You don’t.”

“Yeah, but I know you, so…” she made a face. “And I know you’re just…” she sighed. “We’ve known each other a long time, Sebastian.”

“We have, yes,” Sebastian took a swig and reinforced his scowl towards her. He was the least threatening person Sasha knew, but kudos to him to maintain his displeasure with her, she figured.

“And we’re better friends because we’re honest with each other.”

She lost his attention as he took in her attire (sweats) then around her small studio, noting the glass of wine on her coffee table. “Are you getting ready to go out?” he changed the subject drastically. “It New Year’s. You aren’t possibly staying in,” he scoffed. “This is New York City!”

“The weather is abysmal, you know how I feel about snow. It’s warm in here and I have wine. It’ll
be quiet and perfect,” she shrugged. “Sam and Ollie asked me to go to Times Square. Drama-free zone... for the moment.”

He opened his mouth to say something before his phone started ringing. Looking at the called ID, he sighed and went to her bedroom to take the call, not bothering to excuse himself.

“Guess we know who that is...” she muttered to herself. She threw herself on the couch and commenced channel surfing. It was her plan all evening prior to Sebastian’s spontaneous arrival. Her phone beeped and she checked it. Chace had decided at the last minute he was having a house party. Of course he was. No doubt Sebastian would have received the same message.

He reappeared a few minutes later, looking more worn-out than when he went in.

“You okay?” she asked as he slumped down next to her with a childish huff and rested his head in her lap, sprawling his lean body out on the rest of the couch. She gave him a soft smile, running her hands through his flop of curly hair he’d recently cropped off again for a TV show that had him based in LA temporarily. She dragged her finger over his forehead, traced his eyebrows, skimmed up and down his sharp nose before moving back to his hair. “Let me guess... You’ve been castrated again?”

“Well, it didn’t help that I led off that I was here,” he sighed, wrapping an arm around her calves, making himself as comfortable as he could. “That feels so good. Don’t stop.”

“Do you love her?” Sasha asked, twirling a curl around her index finger tightly, watching him lick his lips before taking his bottom lip in his teeth, slightly gritting them. God, she loved that mouth.

“Yes. I think so,” he looked up at her, not an ounce of a lie in his soft gaze.

“Does she love you?” she continued.

He sighed, eyes fluttering closed as he resumed enjoying her comforts. “I think she likes the idea of being with me. I feel a bit smothered,” he said quietly.

“You’re in New York, she’s in LA. How are you feeling smothered?” she enquired as he groaned, he was not appreciating her pointing out the problems in his relationship. “Anyway, I thought you liked that. The girls you date all seem a bit possessive.”

“I like being wanted,” he confessed softly. “It’s nice this beautiful woman wants me.”

Sasha stayed quiet, taking in Sebastian’s perfect profile as she massaged his scalp. He actually was perfect, she realised as he chewed on his lower lip in gratification and contemplation. He was so sexy yet childlike at the same time. It was a blessing and a curse to be this close to him.

She adored him, but fuck, he was useless when it came to love and relationships. He would never get it through his thick skull that he could possibly be desired all on his own. That his natural charm, generosity, sweetness, hilarity, to name just a few things, wasn’t enough in his eyes to possibly be attractive to these women. She was saddened he felt like he needed all those beautiful women to want him to make him feel validated.

“What, what, what are we going to do with you, sweet Sebastian Stan?” she asked, kissing her fingertip and placing it on his forehead as he looked up and smiled shyly.

“Do you still hate me?”

“A little less than I did 5 minutes ago.”
“I’ve really missed you, Benzo.”

“Yeah, I’ve missed you too, Seb.”

---

“You know, when I wedge that knife out of my back,” Sasha announced, laying on the kitchen bench at Chace’s apartment later that evening. Beyonce’s ‘Single Ladies’ blasted through the apartment, there was bodies everywhere. “I’m sure my ability to move will be much, much easier,” she accepted the shot Sebastian had concocted and handed to her as he stood beside her in the craziness in the party. “Your girlfriend hates me.”

“She doesn’t hate you,” he told her sympathetically. “She just doesn’t like you... that much.”

“Oh, that’s not the same thing,” she rolled her glassy eyes, sarcasm laid thick.

“Hey,” he gripped Sasha’s thighs with a small smile, spinning her to sit up before him. She shook off the head rush as her blood levelled out again. “I’ll try talking to her again. She’ll see what I see.”

They threw the shots back together. “Thing is, Seb, you don’t have to. I’m a big girl. But believe it or not, so is she. I don’t need her to like me.”

“Well, you’re my best friend and she is my girlfriend, I need you two to be able to get along. Co-exist. It would make my life a fuckload easier if you could at least pretend to get along,” he lifted her chin and thumbed away some sugar from the corner of her lip. “For my fucking sake, at least.”

“I say you forget about all that rubbish and just have another shot with me,” Taylor cut in as Sebastian forced a smile, accepting another shot for both he and Sasha. “You know,” he continued. “Benzo, I have no one to kiss at midnight.”

“I’m sure you’ll find some unsuspecting victim, Kitsch,” she smacked his face away gently as Sebastian laughed, none the wiser.

“Can’t say I didn’t try, but when you need me, sweetheart, you know where I’ll be,” Taylor kissed her cheek roughly and left the kitchen.

“Does he ever stop with you?” Sebastian asked, sipping his beer. “He’s relentless.”

Sasha laughed, avoiding Sebastian’s scrutiny. “Taylor is sweet. He’s just kidding around,” Kind of. Sebastian didn’t need the whole story right now and she wasn’t prepared indulge either.

“Every time he comes back from Austin, he just starts eye fucking you. He’s tried to get in your pants for the last few months, you know that, right?”

“That such a bad thing?” she battered her lashes, taking Sebastian’s beer from his hand and taking a sip. "Gross."

“Has he?” Sebastian’s eyes widened.

Her face changed from teasing to unreadable. “Seb, you already know the answer to this,” she knew she’d lied way too easily at that moment and it astounded her how naturally the words crossed her lips. You’re deplorable.

“Well, I’m just trying to make sure you don’t get hurt. One of us has to be a normal functioning
human being here,” he rested his head on her shoulder.

"You actually think that’s you out of the two of us?” she couldn’t resist the smirk that was creeping onto her features.

He smiled, a small best of laughter escaping his lips. "You're right, I'm a mess at the moment."

She took his hands and linked their fingers, shuffling as close to him as possible to whisper, “Why don’t you make an appointment with your shrink while you’re in town?” she suggested delicately.

He pouted. “I don’t think I could cram enough in an hour,” he ridiculed himself in reply.

“All right, enough of the pity party, Sebastian,” she hugged him tightly. She was relieved when he hugged back and just as firmly. "I love you, please don’t be upset."

"Love you too, Benzo," he sighed. "I’m such a dick tonight, I don’t know what’s wrong with me,” he grumbled into her neck.

“That girl is fucking with you head,” she told him, poking his side as he pulled away, not willing to be tickled. “You’re smarter than this. What does she have on you?”

He laughed dubiously. “No, nothing.”

“The boys keep saying they’re getting texts from her, saying to them that you’re cheating, you’re lying to her. Sebastian, sweetheart, this isn’t healthy. You’re bending over backwards for a girl that is emotionally abusing you – and sounds a little unstable to boot,” she raised his face. His eyes were exhausted, no longer able to hide from her. Poor guy. She kissed his forehead and hugged him to her again. He fell into the hug, like it was all he needed in the first place. “Come on, we’re leaving,” she whispered.

“Where are we going?” he asked, following her through the overcrowded, noisy apartment to the master bedroom where the coats were stashed in a messy pile on Chace’s bed. They both looked for theirs before rugging up in their jackets, beanies, scarves and gloves, leaving without saying goodbye and Happy New Year to their friends. They’d understand. Wasn’t the first or last time Sasha and Sebastian had phantommed away together. It wouldn’t be the last either.

“Let’s go back to your place. You can buy us a pizza and we can just have a quiet evening. There is much pressure every year to just get as blitzed as the year before but nothing ever really changes,” she said as they waited for the elevator.

“You’re right,” he admitted, tightening her scarf gently with a broad smile. “I don’t want you to catch a cold.”

“We both lead such chaotic lives. You especially. I don’t think a night away from it all will hurt you,” she hugged into his side, mostly to keep herself warm. “I’m sorry she’s treating you like this,” she told him as they stepped into the elevator. “You deserve better.”

“Maybe I just need some time to myself? I have been in one long term relationship after another – ”

“I’ve never known you to not have a girlfriend in the whole time we’ve known each other, Sebastian,” she laughed sceptically.

“Are you serious?” he rested his head on her shoulder for the ride down with a groan and took her hand as they left the lobby, out in the snowing New Year’s Eve night. “Jesus.”
“Dead serious,” she said as they looked for cabs and knew there was no way in this weather on a night like tonight. They were reluctantly walking the blocks back to Sebastian’s apartment. “This weather is awful. This is why I wanted to stay in.”

“Could be worse, could be snowed in. Then what?” he told her as they walked another few blocks before stopping in at his favourite pizza place. The owners smiled as they walked in. The place was, not surprisingly, deserted.

“What are you two doing here?” Tony demanded, hugging them. “It’s New Year’s Eve, aren’t you supposed to be getting drunk in some fancy Manhattan club VIP in suits and drinking martinis?”

Sebastian laughed at the quaint generalisation, pulling off his beanie, his hair at right angles. Any other year, that’s exactly what they were doing. “We weren’t feeling it,” Sebastian smiled. “But there is no way we couldn’t ring in the New Year without a slice.”

(Of course, take a seat you two,” he pointed towards the window. “I’ll bring it over,” he said after Sebastian paid with a substantial tip. They took a seat and looked out at the madness as New Year’s Eve revellers celebrated in the city. It was about 11:30pm, so by the time they collected the pizza and got to Sebastian’s apartment, they could watch the fireworks from his bedroom, the best seat in the house.

“Salut, kids. On the house,” Tony put a glass of some shitty sparkling wine in front of them. Sasha smiled at Sebastian and raised her glass to him.

“You’re going to be so busy again next year and I’m devastated I won’t see you everyday. So I’m happy it is just you and me tonight, Seb. You’re my best friend and I’m so, so happy to see you get the success you deserve.”

He blushed. “Thank you,” he kissed her cheek and they both took a sip.

“This is awful,” she squeaked.

“I don’t know if I’ve ever tasted something so terrible,” he pushed his glass away. He wrapped his arm around her shoulders. “Thanks for keeping me grounded, Sash.”

“Someone has to,” she shrugged modestly. “Just don’t forget me when you’re the biggest actor on the planet, okay?”

“I’ll always need someone to carry the bags, Benzo,” he replied thoughtfully, his lips curving into a smile.

“You’re such a prick,” she rolled her eyes as he cackled, batting his long lashes at her. “Why people think you’re so sweet and adorable staggers me.”

“You and me both,” he agreed.

Tony left their pizza with them and they quickly made their way out and to Sebastian’s apartment. Stripping down to the normal amount of clothing to remain warm, Sebastian grinned as he held up a bottle of red wine that appeared acceptable to drink and she sat on the floor of his bedroom, awaiting the fireworks.

“How far out is it?” she asked, digging into the first slice and not waiting for Sebastian.

“10 minutes,” he confirmed, taking a seat on the other side of the pizza box and handing her a glass.
“Thanks.”

“Well, I for one, am glad that this year is almost over.”

“It’s been a good year,” she smiled, playing with some mozzarella between her fingers. “Hey, you filmed your biggest film role. Don’t discount that. You signed nine-film deal with Marvel. That blows my mind!”

“Nine, that number gives me so much fucking anxiety,” he breathed. “Let’s hope they don’t regret it after the first one. I die in this film, why would I sign for nine films?!”

“I dunno, that whole comic book universe just confuses me.”

Sebastian shrugged, not disagreeing.

“You said you had a great time filming. You get along well with Chris and Hayley. We both know if the chemistry is right, it will play over in film. You’ve got nothing to worry about.”

“I hope so,” Sebastian said, sipping the wine.

“Hey?”

He hummed in reply as he stared intently out over the city.

“You’re gonna be great. I know you are. You act okay sometimes.”

He burst out laughing. "You know what, Benzo? Fuck you."

"You wouldn't know what to do with this body," she shrugged, turning her attention back to the night sky.

He shook his head, biting back a comment and decided against it. He moved away from the thoughts of sex with his best friend quickly. There was no reason for them to even have that conversation. She did not need to know occasionally he’d dreamt of the two of them between the sheets, no. He’d keep that to himself, she’d never let him live it down. “This is a pivotal shift for me. I’ve done all this small stuff and now, I’m freaking the fuck out.”

“I can tell,” she moved the pizza box and hugged him. “I got you. I’ll always have your back.”

He smiled, holding her cheek in his palm. “You’re the best friend I’ve ever, ever had.”

“And the cutest.”

“Smartest. Best accent. Most limber.”

“That’s not a quality I look for in friendship, but sure,” he snorted. “You’re limber.”

She laughed. “This is so much better than the party. Sorry, Chace.”

“You're not a house party kinda gal anyway. I'm surprised you suggested we go.”

“Well, I guess I fell for the usual New Year’s cliché or something. Besides, you were too in your head – needed to get you out into the real world for a bit,” she said as he blinked and shrugged, he couldn’t argue with her, he was grateful for the distraction. “How long?”
Sebastian checked his phone. “2 minutes.”

“I think it’s going to be a big year for you, Mr Stan.”

He smiled, sipping his wine. She was right, this was perfect.

“And I expect to be your plus 1 at every premiere so I can eventually wear Chris Evans down and he begs me to be his.”

Sebastian laughed. “There’s the plan for your year, get Chris Evans to be your boyfriend. Can’t say you don’t have a goal, Sash.”

“It could be achievable if you do the legwork for me,” she defended herself. “I have to get something out of you being this big celebrity now.”

“Okay, I’ll hook you up.”

“Really?” she beamed.

“No,” he scoffed on his slice.

She laughed as the fireworks commenced. “Your phone was the wrong time.”

“Yup,” he winked.

“Happy New Year, Sebastian Stan.”

“Happy New Year, Benzo,” he sipped his wine. “Do you have a resolution?”

“Hmm,” she shrugged, watching the colours light up the skyline. “Yeah.”

“Care to share?”

“I’m going to to be more honest with myself this year.”

“Like as you are brutally honest with me?” his blue eyes wide and innocent. “Bordering insulting? Baby, you could never.”

She made a face, pushing his chin away as he giggled quietly. “Something like that. Few things have been happening the last few months and I probably handled it wrong.”

“Like what?”

“Nothing bad…” she said quietly, watching the colours blast before them. “Just not… me.”

He gave her a side-glance. “Vague, but I’m not going to push it if you don’t want me to.”

“Hardly worth the drama,” she smiled brightly. “Pass that pizza back, my high is fading and I’m starving!”

---

A few hours later at the bar, Sasha wasn’t entirely surprised to see Sebastian take Taylor aside to talk. After an intense chat that included a lot of nodding, frowns, pursed lips, some of Taylor poking onto Sebastian’s chest forcefully then in the direction of Sasha and eventually smiling, a bro hug of epic proportions followed. She was even a little embarrassed for them. *Gee, that was*
anticlimactic, she thought although relieved.

“Thank God for that,” Sasha murmured from her seat with Chace.

“See, knew it would be fine,” Chace said with a big grin. “Never a doubt in my mind. Guy shit just isn’t chick shit, sorry Benzo.”

“I didn’t want anything to get in between them, Chacey,” she told him meekly. “You guys were all friends well before you met me.”

“I understand that. So does Taylor. Trust me, he understood after that fall out you and Sebastian had years ago. He wasn’t oblivious to how you fools felt about each other,” Chace replied. “It just didn’t stop him from pursuing you. He wasn’t hurt or upset when things ended.”

“It had just run its course.”

“Exactly. And the fact you were completely in love with Sebastian.”

“Thanks Chace,” she muttered, resting her temple on his broad shoulder.

“You’re welcome. But you wouldn’t change a thing and he knew you couldn’t change how you felt, he’d known all along. I’m happy for you two. I truly am,” Chace kissed her hair. “Sebastian’s such a great guy that needs someone strong like you. You two are going to be so much better together.”

“Chacey…” she hugged him tightly.

“But if he ever hurts you, I’ll take him myself.”

“I think the line starts after Taylor.”

Chapter End Notes

As always, thank you to those who popped by to say hi, left kudos (again, a staggering amount, I'm so pleased everyone is enjoying this) or subscribed, I truly appreciate it.

---

If you're on Tumblr, don't hesitate to say hi there too. Fic recs, Sebastian looking glorious and a few other writing odds and sods: Interested Bystander writes xoxo
Chapter Summary

If she’d learnt one thing in all the years she’d know him, it was that he always managed to make her feel new and exciting ways of hating how much she cared about him.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

“We don’t have to do this, you know,” Sasha told Sebastian as they sat at the café, sipping their coffees, waiting for his mother to arrive to join them for breakfast the next morning. Both warding off minor hangovers and lack of sleep after a big night, jet lag and the rest fuelled by drunk sex. “I know you’re apprehensive about telling her about us.”

“I’m fine,” he told her quietly.

“Then why are you so fidgety?” she put a hand on his lower back, sneaking it under his t-shirt and massaging the tense muscles on his warm, soft skin. “Sitting up, slouching, your lip is almost bleeding you're chewing on it so intently – ”

“I – ” he started, before closing his mouth again. She scooted a little closer to him in the booth and snuggled closer, resting her chin on his shoulder, staring up at him dotingly.

“We don’t have to say anything,” she reminded him. “We can stay in the bubble a little while longer. No one has to rush anything. Whatever you want.”

“And then what do I say if she sees pictures in some tabloid, or online of me, like, kissing you in the street or stupid stuff like that? There were photos of us holding hands on Instagram in Germany. Ma's found out that way before.”

“Well, that’s what happens when you search your own hashtag and mentions, bubba,” she smiled simply as he rolled his eyes. “And you’ll just have to keep your dirty hands off me in public if you don’t want those photos online,” she gave him a cheeky grin as he sighed, resigned. He was not in a joking mood this morning, she figured. “Look, I get it. You don’t want her to pressure you. I don’t want that either,” she gently kissed him. “Please just relax.”

“I know, I – ”

“What, Sebastian?”

“Baby,” he took her face in his gym-calloused hands. “Telling Ma makes it real,” he spat it out softly, finally admitting what he was holding back.

She bit back a smile. “Oh.”

“That this isn’t just a dream and that this is really happening,” he kissed her forehead, keeping her eyes locked on his. “You’re not just that girl friend I had once. You’re my girl. I guess I just want to protect it for a while longer.”
“Then we don’t tell your mum. It’s fine. Really,” she smiled as he his lips met hers. He smirked and unabashedly deepened the kiss, completely going against everything he’d said seconds ago about privacy and keeping low profile as his tongue slid into her mouth. A throat being cleared interrupted them. Sebastian sighed against Sasha’s lips.

“Fuck,” Sebastian moved away from Sasha, who stifled a giggle beside him. “Bună dimineața, Mama,” he said without looking up straight away.

“Good morning, kids. Anything you want to share this gorgeous morning?” Ana smiled widely as she joined them in the booth, her eyes, the same as Sebastian’s, flickered happily (imagine Sebastian’s features, only a little more enthusiastic and you’re halfway there) – there was absolutely no way with that timing she missed her son kiss Sasha. In fact, there was no way most in the café didn’t notice it either.

Sebastian blushed, getting up and moving around the booth to kiss his mother hello, giving her a hug. He took a seat beside her.

“Hello,” she smiled deviously, winking at Sasha. “Is Sasha your girlfriend now, Sebastian?”

Sebastian gave a quiet laugh, his face flushing a deep red. “Actually – ”

“He seems to think that I couldn’t put two and two together. That I wouldn’t assume this is exactly what was happening when he told me he had invited you to Berlin!” Ana said to Sasha happily as Sebastian put his head in his hands. Ana reached across the table and took Sasha’s hand, pleased as punch at this new development in her son’s life. “Finally!”

Sasha watched Sebastian falter across from her. Was there anything better than watching Sebastian Stan be taken down a peg or 10 by his mother? Not by a long shot, Sasha imagined, thoroughly enjoying the scene unfold before her. He peeked a look at her through his slender fingers that still hid his face. “It is all pretty new still,” Sasha told Ana. Sebastian was still unable to find his words so Sasha guessed she’d be doing the talking. “We don’t have any labels on anything.”

“You’re not in a relationship?” Ana frowned. Sasha bit back her first comment, Ana didn't need a critique of her son's abilities in the bedroom.

“Well, uh – ” Sasha stuttered.

“I saw that kiss, Sasha,” Ana smiled as a waiter brought a glass of water over for her. "I wish I didn't," she admitted. "But yes, I saw it."

“Only been a few weeks,” Sasha shrugged casually. She didn't mind how blasé she sounded, it wasn't her mother. She hadn't bothered telling her family about Sebastian either, bar her older sisters and felt absolutely no rush to tell her parents. She just assumed her sisters would do it for her.

“But you’re in love with each other.”

Sebastian and Sasha looked at each other, unsure how to answer the question they both knew the answer to, but weren’t ready to say to anyone else yet.

“Is he taking you to Toronto next week?” Ana asked, changing tact.

“No, I’m staying here.”

“We haven’t discussed it,” Sebastian finally managed. He gave Sasha a small smile.
Sasha raised an eyebrow. “I didn’t think there was anything to discuss. You'll be flat out.”

“Well, I mean, did you wanna come?” he offered.

“Of course you should, Sasha!” Ana exclaimed.

“We just got back from Germany,” Sasha said, suddenly shy.

“Let’s talk later. I know my mother isn’t through with grilling us.”

“You’re right,” Ana grinned. “She’s not. Start talking, Sebastian.”

---

“We talked about it, he wants me to go but I don’t need to go to Toronto with him. He’ll be working the whole time,” Sasha said on the phone to Delphi a few hours later. Sebastian had taken off for the gym (Sasha assumed to try and work off his hangover and the tension that he couldn't shake since brunch with his mother) but promised he’d come back with food.

Delphi laughed down the line. “He wants you with him, it can’t be all bad.”

“It’s just weird, you know?” Sasha unzipped her suitcase.

“What would be strange is if your boyfriend didn’t want you there,” Delphi declared.

“We have our own lives, I refuse to be one of those people that is glued to their – ” Sasha put her sister on loudspeaker, tossing her phone on the bed and started sorting her clean clothes from dirty. “He's not my boyfriend, it’s weird and not where we are yet.”

“Shut up – you two are young and in love. He’s said 'I love you' and you’ve been shagging a whole lot. He’s your boyfriend.”

Sasha grunted in reply. “I’m not ready for that yet, it's too quick. It's just…”

“Just what?”

“Fun,” Sasha said simply, not able to hide the blush that flooded her features (at least no one was there to see it). Fun would be an understatement.

“Uh huh. Yeah, it’s just sex. Sure it is.”

“Topic change, thanks.”

“So you said no to Canada.”

“We can live without each other for a week or so, we’ve seen a lot of each other the last month. Might give me some time to slow down and figure this all out.”

“How mature of you.”

“Delph, you know I’m not a relationship person. Never in my wildest dreams did I see this coming.”

“Not once did you ever imagine being with him?” Delphi didn't seem to believe this idea.

“Sex? Yes, all the time.”

“I didn’t mean that,” her sister said softly. “Like, Sebastian Stan starring as husband and the father of
“your kids?”

Sasha couldn’t hold back the blanch that escaped. “I think I just threw up in my mouth a little.” *No. Just no.*

“Wow,” Delphi replied. “That is a reaction at least. At least we know where you stand.”

“It surprised me too,” Sasha admitted.

“I know you’ve always done your own thing, Sash.”

“Of course I have. Mostly to the detriment of people’s opinions,” Sasha smirked, a little proud.

“Yes, but it’s different now,” Delphi pointed out. “It’s Sebastian.”

The logic was hard to argue with.

“Aren’t you even a little excited?”

“If you mean, isn’t your anxiety through the roof?” Sasha sighed. “Then yes, it is.”

“Benzo?” Sebastian called, the front door opening. “Where you hiding, baby?”

“He says hi,” he replied, with a cheeky smile as he walked to Sasha and kissed her hello.

“Loverville, huh?” he repeated as Sasha wished the floor of her room would swallow her up.

“Gotta go. My man *friend* just got here,” she said, a small smile on her face as Sebastian meandered into her bedroom, pulling his earphones from his ears. He made a face at the name. Didn't like being called *man friend*, Sasha figured, biting back a grin.


“Loverville, huh?” he repeated as Sasha wished the floor of her room would swallow her up.

“Gotta go. My man *friend* just got here,” she said, a small smile on her face as Sebastian meandered into her bedroom, pulling his earphones from his ears. He made a face at the name. Didn't like being called *man friend*, Sasha figured, biting back a grin.


“Loverville, huh?” he repeated as Sasha wished the floor of her room would swallow her up.

“Gotta go. My man *friend* just got here,” she said, a small smile on her face as Sebastian meandered into her bedroom, pulling his earphones from his ears. He made a face at the name. Didn't like being called *man friend*, Sasha figured, biting back a grin.


“Loverville, huh?” he repeated as Sasha wished the floor of her room would swallow her up.

“Gotta go. My man *friend* just got here,” she said, a small smile on her face as Sebastian meandered into her bedroom, pulling his earphones from his ears. He made a face at the name. Didn't like being called *man friend*, Sasha figured, biting back a grin.


“Loverville, huh?” he repeated as Sasha wished the floor of her room would swallow her up.

“Gotta go. My man *friend* just got here,” she said, a small smile on her face as Sebastian meandered into her bedroom, pulling his earphones from his ears. He made a face at the name. Didn't like being called *man friend*, Sasha figured, biting back a grin.


“Loverville, huh?” he repeated as Sasha wished the floor of her room would swallow her up.

“Gotta go. My man *friend* just got here,” she said, a small smile on her face as Sebastian meandered into her bedroom, pulling his earphones from his ears. He made a face at the name. Didn't like being called *man friend*, Sasha figured, biting back a grin.


“Loverville, huh?” he repeated as Sasha wished the floor of her room would swallow her up.

“Gotta go. My man *friend* just got here,” she said, a small smile on her face as Sebastian meandered into her bedroom, pulling his earphones from his ears. He made a face at the name. Didn't like being called *man friend*, Sasha figured, biting back a grin.


“Loverville, huh?” he repeated as Sasha wished the floor of her room would swallow her up.

“Gotta go. My man *friend* just got here,” she said, a small smile on her face as Sebastian meandered into her bedroom, pulling his earphones from his ears. He made a face at the name. Didn't like being called *man friend*, Sasha figured, biting back a grin.


“Loverville, huh?” he repeated as Sasha wished the floor of her room would swallow her up.

“Gotta go. My man *friend* just got here,” she said, a small smile on her face as Sebastian meandered into her bedroom, pulling his earphones from his ears. He made a face at the name. Didn't like being called *man friend*, Sasha figured, biting back a grin.
his gym shorts leaving very little to the imagination. “Isn’t it? Doesn’t that mean you have to love me, no matter how disgusting I am?”

"I really wish you didn't hear that. It was a stupid Sex and the City joke,” she explained. She could argue that there was nothing wrong with him worked up after gym. Slicked from sweat, all bulging arms and chest and shoulders. She figured which day it was and wasn’t too surprised when he hitched her into his arms. She grunted.

"What's the population of Loverville?” he dared ask.

She lollled her head back dramatically and meekly held up two fingers as he chuckled quietly and brought her face back to his. “Hi.”

He smiled softly. “Hello, gorgeous.”

“Did you miss me?”

“Yes, like a limb. Amazed I could get through a few hours without you,” he jested, looking at her clothes all over the room. “You tidied up, I see?”

“I was trying to unpack, sarcasmo.”

“Adulting, I like it,” his grin widening.

"You haven't even gone home yet," she nodded towards his suitcases taking up the little space left in her teeny bedroom.

He laughed. "Why go home when you're here? What's living out of a suitcase one more day?"

"A mess. It's a bit cramped in here."

"Tell me you want me out. I won't be offended," he dared her, his grin bright.

“I don't want you out. But I'll need to get this place in order if we're going to spend time here,” she managed a small dreamy sigh. “That is my favourite thing.”

“What?” he knew she couldn't possibly mean being a responsible adult.

“Your smile, and this dimple right here,” she poked the indent on his fuzzy right cheek as he blushed under her touch. “You can put me down now.”

“No. I just bench pressed your weight and then some. I like having you right here,” he chewed his lip. “Question. Is there joint showers in Loverville?” he asked, backing her towards the bathroom. She laughed as he reached around her to turn the water on. He placed her on the ground, put his cap on the sink and pulled his sweaty blue gym tank over his head, tossing the garment at her face.


“Was pretty dirty what we got up to just before I left,” he reasoned, slowly sliding her shirt over her shoulders and at least aiming it towards the hamper this time. Still missed.

“I showered while you were gone. You’re just wasting the City’s natural resources.”

“You don’t want to shower with me?” he dragged his tongue so thoroughly over his lips, they
glistened.

“Don’t play that game with me, Sebastian,” she warned.

“Or you’ll what?” he asked, undoing the top button on her jeans, lowering the zip slowly and purposefully, batting his eyelashes innocently before sliding her jeans and underwear off her hips and squatting so he could rid them off her fully. “You’re amazing naked,” he kissed her belly and through her middle. “I think we should institute a naked cocktail hour.”

She tried to push him away but only managed to bring him closer as he resisted. “Stupidest idea I’ve ever heard. Too many people have our keys none of them know how to knock.”

He laughed. “Better call a locksmith,” he reached around to unclasp her bra, pushing the straps down her shoulders, his fingers tracing down her arms, the chill of the room sending her into a small shiver, her body betraying her for Sebastian’s actions.

“I have stuff to do,” she protested weakly with a giggle as he wrapped her up and trailed wet kisses against her neck.

“Yeah, I can tell I was interrupting a lot,” he roughly smacked her butt, the slap echoing through the bathroom and radiating heat through her body. “Get in the shower, Benzo,” he pushed his shorts down, primed and ready to go and moved into the shower, under the warm stream, shaking out his still long dark hair from its hair tie and fastened it to his wrist. He really was a marvel, she noted, finding it very difficult to avoid giving in to him. He flicked his hair back. “Shower will get cold. Get in here with me while it’s still hot, baby.”

She shook her head dismally, will power gone and unable to control herself. Reluctantly, she joined him. “Since I’m standing here naked anyway,” she grunted as he gave a low chuckle and pulled her into his arms, kissing her deeply. “Do you even have a change of clothes here that aren’t dirty in your suitcases?” she asked dubiously.

“No,” he grinned. “But we don’t need them here in Loverville,” he kissed her, backing her into the shower tiles as she squealed against the cold, goose pimples coated her skin, nipples turning little pebbles. He wasted no time before swirling _that_ tongue onto one, his hand roughly massaging and pinching the other. “We don’t need anything but us.”

She giggled as his cheesiness, lacing her fingers into Sebastian’s wet hair. She kissed his shoulders as he kept his head low and moved the tips of his fingers to her clit. She couldn’t bite back the small moan that rumbled from her. Sebastian’s lips moved up her body, his tongue tracing from her breast, up her neck, jaw and to her lips.

“I love you,” he whispered before claiming her lips, his thigh parting her legs, long fingers moving in and out of her slick pussy, scissoring her inner walls and thumb padding her clit. Unavoidable, she moved against his thigh for as much friction as possible. Wrapping an arm around Sebastian’s shoulder and the other moving to his cock, she gently pumped him as he kept his eyes on her under a hooded stare, quiet coos held back from his mouth.

“I love you too, Sebastian. Come closer,” she strained as her legs quivered under his touch, his hips meeting hers eagerly. His fingers left her and took hold of his cock, purposefully teasing her clit with it.

“Do you want me, baby?” he breathed, resting his cock at her core and wrapping his strong arm around her waist.
“I need you,” she pleaded as he thrust in, not hesitating to push in as deep as possible. Rolling his hips, he played a ruthless assault on her body, senses in overload. Kissing, licking, biting her soaked skin, Sebastian couldn’t get enough. She couldn’t resist moaning into his movements as she moved both hands behind his neck, knotting her fingers in his hair and dragging his lips back to hers with hot, slippery kisses.

Saturated, Sasha watched Sebastian's naked form move for their pleasure. Though she had now almost memorised every ridge and rippling muscle on his body, she was drunk by how spectacular he really was. From hair to toe, he almost make believe. His inability to keep his eyes open, creased dark brow, how he chewed his lip to maintain his control, the bob of his Adam’s Apple, the strain of his muscles from shoulders, chest to clenching abs. The V of his Adonis belt and the soft hair that led to where their bodies met –

“Jesus,” Sasha exclaimed as she saw white, not expecting to come as quickly and as hard as she was, setting Sebastian off, groaning in pleasure as his pace quickened to enjoy the pull of her orgasm around him, hoping to drag it out as long as possible. He moved his lips to hers as he stopped playing with her and dragged her in close, grunting against her mouth as he came.

“Fuck,” he breathed, his forehead resting on hers as he panted.

“That was so good,” she muttered, pulling his mouth back to hers.

He chuckled quietly. “Tell me that it wasn’t worth getting into the shower for.”

“Okay, you win,” she agreed, kissing his chest as she watched him move to reach her shampoo and washed his hair as she commencing washing her body again. They might have wasted the City’s resources, but fuck, how they made each other feel was well and truly worth it. The water went cold.

"Shit."

Chapter End Notes

My head is exploding, last thing I expected was to be looking at a multi chap fic, with over 3K views, 200+ kudos for some thing that started for me to attempt writing again. Dying. Hopefully you've enjoyed this chapter, I'll post again Weds my time. Thank you again, dolls xoxo

---

Interested Bystander writes
Worst Laid Plans

Chapter Summary

If she’d learnt one thing in all the years she’d know him, it was that he always managed to make her feel new and exciting ways of hating how much she cared about him.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

TORONTO, CANADA

“Okay, so this officially sucks,” Sebastian answered the phone a week later. He was in Toronto for The Martian premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival and 72 hours was the longest time they’d spent apart since they’d arrived in Germany. He would be gone for another two days. He had wandered out of a tech gig with his co-stars when he saw Sasha’s face pop up on his phone screen. He would have declined the call in normal circumstances but she’d set some pretty selective pictures that he should have been ignoring and enough was enough.

“Hi to you too,” she laughed. “What a lovely greeting.”

He grinned, walking away from some fans that were hunting for autographs. He knew he’d already signed and taken photos with them and gave them a small apologetic smile, indicating he’d come back later. “Sorry, I meant to add, ‘because you’re in New York and I’m in Canada’.”

“Ha! You miss me.”

“Of course I do,” he admitted, lowering his voice. “What are you doing?”

“I just got back from lunch with Chace and Ollie. Chace is heading back to LA tonight and figured he’d prefer the flight back with a buzz. Ollie and I didn’t disagree so we have buzzes as well. Was better option than Bergdorf’s burning cash I didn’t have.”

“That sounds a lot better than hawking products I don't use for an afternoon.”

“Bored, baby?”

“Bored, baby,” he confirmed. “Did you have fun?”

“Yeah, it was good. I had 4 cocktails. Could be anybody’s.”

“Damn, now I definitely wish I was there,” he chuckled quietly.

“And I wish you were not in public.”

“Yeah, about those photos,” he growled. “What do ya think you’re doing, woman? A little professionalism, huh?”

“I’m not on the job. Keep your phone in your pocket,” she retorted. “Besides, I’m just having a little fun here.”
“You didn’t strike me as the…” he turned his back away from crowd. “Naked selfie type.”

“No faces,” she said simply.

He groaned, learning all these little things about Sasha when he least expected it was thrilling and unpleasant at the same time. “I can’t do this here…”

“Of course you can,” she giggled quietly.

“I can’t, devil. These pants couldn’t be tighter as it is.”

“Have to dust the cobwebs off my vibrator, haven’t needed it for a while.”

“You’re making it harder than needed.”

She giggled. “Sorry. Are you cute today?”

“Maybe we FaceTime when I get back to the hotel and I’ll let you judge.”

“I wish you were at the hotel now,” she said, a little squeak down the line. “You can’t leave early?”

He frowned before he heard the same sound again. He’d grown familiar to it lately. “No, I’ve got another half an hour here or something. Do you need any Samsung stuff?” he tried desperately to change the subject and ignore what was happening down the line.

“No, my life has been ruined by Apple,” another squeak. “Thank you though.”

“If you come before I can talk you through it, I’ll be devastated,” he warned, his tone low. “Please stop.”

She sighed. “Fine. I’ll wait – I don’t want to, but I will.”

“On edge, baby?” he attempted to even out his breathing, knowing he’d have to try better to appear controlled in mere moments.

“You do things to me. I love your voice.”

He stifled a laugh as he noted his minders approaching and giving him a pointed look to get back inside the store. “Baby, I gotta go. I’m about to get reamed for disappearing.”

“Call me the second you get in.”

“I will. Keep your hands to yourself until then,” he cautioned.

“I will try.”

“Try harder,” he ordered.

She sighed. “Okay, I promise.”

“I’ll call in a few hours. Be good.”

---

“So, you are pretty good at that,” Sebastian tried to even his breathing as he dropped his phone on the bed to tidy up the mess he’d made, pulling on his boxers. “Be right back.”
“I didn’t say I wasn’t,” Sasha replied drily. “That was on you for thinking I couldn’t.”

“I’ll learn that lesson any time you want me to.”

“What a great view of the hotel room roof.”

“I’m prettying myself up for you again,” Sebastian replied from the other room, washing his hands and sliding them through his long hair to settle the chaos he’d made before dashing back to the bed and diving on it tummy first, holding the phone to his smiling face as Sasha inspected her nails, now in covered in his old Knicks jumper. “I’m back.”

“Hi,” she gave him his attention again with a grin.

“So… Who’ve you been having internet sex with, Sasha?” he asked thoughtfully.

“No one recently. I just know what I like,” she replied with an unashamed shrug. “I figured I could guess at what you might too.”

“You’re a talker, I like it,” he laughed quietly. “Kudos. I miss you, kid.”

“Yeah,” she said softly, adjusting her pillows behind her. “I miss you too. It’s only a few more days. Are you ready for the premiere tomorrow night?”

He shrugged. “I guess. My suit is hanging up in the wardrobe, but I’ve got press all day tomorrow.”

“Such as life, being an actor,” she scoffed.

“I don’t like being away from you,” he replied. “You’ve put some spell on me and when you’re not near me, I’m so distracted.”

“Gross. Don’t blame me for when you space out,” she rolled her eyes.

“Baby, if you only knew what I was thinking about…” he smirked. “I had press all day before that tech thing and I don’t think it’ll go down in the books as my best day on a press tour. I felt bad for Kate and Peña, I let them do all the heavy lifting,” he sighed a little guilty.

“You can make up for it tomorrow,” she encouraged him. “Be your charming, smiley self. Everybody falls for it away,” she teased as he shook his head, an unamused raised eyebrow replied her. “You’ll be fine – ” she was interrupted by a knock at the door. She frowned. “Lemme go get that, I’m not expecting anyone,” she told him, dropping the phone and disappearing from his view. Reappearing a few minutes later, Sasha was a little misty eyed.

“What’s up?” he exclaimed.

“I just got a package from home.”

“Oh,” he smiled widely. “More Vegemite than you expected and the smell made your eyes water?”

“Hey, fuck you. I can get Vegemite from that British store off Hudson St. I geddit, you don’t like it. I’m just nice enough not to eat it in your presence. Awesome, now I feel like a Vegemite bagel,” she muttered. “And I’m all outta sesame bagels.”

“Awful. You’re bastardising bagels,” he made a face. “I can’t be in your apartment when you eat that shit.”

“You don’t like Vegemite, yet you eat all my Tim Tams when I have a stash.”
“They are the best thing to come from Australia,” he agreed. “Present company excluded.”

She gave him the finger as he cackled. “I don’t complain when you get inspired and want to make sarmale. Your apartment stinks for weeks. Not just one mealtime.”

“Oh, that sounds amazing right now…” he smiled wistfully. “I’m going to get Ma to make them for when I’m home,” he laughed. “Hmm, and mici, while she’s at it. It’s no wonder I was so chubby as a kid.”

“You weren’t chubby. It was just puppy fat,” she corrected him. “You grew up okay,” she shrugged, nonplussed.

He laughed, blushing. “What did Mel and Delphi send you?”

“This,” she turned her phone to the closet, an ivory long sleeve mesh beaded gown with low V back, beaded cross over detailing and train hanging from the open door. “It’s stunning.”

“Wow,” he commented as she moved with the phone to show him a clearer image from a closer distance. He saw her hand move into the frame as she touched the dress adoringly. “Beautiful, baby.”

“I know, right? I have nowhere to wear it though. So random to end up in the mail,” she laughed. “But it’s amazing. My sisters cut off the price tag, so I don’t even know what I have to pay… saying that, I probably couldn’t afford it right now even if I wanted to. I need to start working again…” she sighed, rubbing her face, tired at the thought.

Sebastian hummed. “You could come to Toronto tomorrow and wear it to the premiere?” he suggested tentatively, pursing his lips together in anticipation.

“Nah,” she replied, shaking her head. “I can save it for another day,” she said, her face back in frame, grinning happily. “Maybe NYFF in November, before you go to China.”

“Sash…” he exhaled, laughing quietly. “Take a hint. I want love you there tomorrow night. I emailed Delphi to help me out and send you something. She found it right away and sent it to The States the same day. I was beginning to think it wouldn’t turn up in time.”

“Sebastian,” she crooned quietly.

“Baby, you can drop anything at this point to come to Toronto, 90 minute flight. It’s an overnighter,” he reminded her. “I’ve booked you on the 11am AA from La Guardia. You can be in my hotel room and in my arms by 2pm. The premiere starts at 5. All you need is that beautiful dress, your passport and yourself. We’ll fly back together the next morning,” he noted the less-than-thrilled squint she was directing at him. She crossed all extremities and stared at him hard. Oh, no.

“Presumptuous on your behalf, don’t you think?”

Her tone was cool and to the point. He knew she would be reserved regardless, she was never an overexcitable kind of chick. Never had been. It drove him insane when he couldn’t get a gauge on her. Unfortunately she looked, simply, ticked off at him.

“Yup,” he replied, crossing his arms over this chest.

“I’m not good with spontaneity.”

“You are not,” he agreed, his head lolling back as she made him wait. Saying that, after all this time,
he was still pretty bad at it. Patience, especially with her, was a painful concept. “Come on, throw me a bone here.”

“I’m not going to drop everything for you under the guise of romance,” she replied simply.

Okay, it stung more than it should have, he realised. “Right.”

“I’m sorry, we discussed this.”

“We did,” he agreed. “I just thought it might have been nice to do this together.”

“Don’t guilt me into this,” she accused.

“I’m not, I swear. I just didn’t think it would blow up in my face like this though. You are so fucking stubborn sometimes. It never changes with you.”

“What, now we’re together, you think I’ll just give in to everything?”

“Within reason and discussion, we should be able to talk things like this through.”

“We did. Last week. We agreed I stay in New York while you were to Toronto.”

“I don’t know what I was thinking, assuming I could pull something like this off,” he shook his head. She stayed quiet, rolling her eyes. “I simply thought it would be nice to surprise you. That is the beginning and the end of it.”

She sighed. “If I gave in every single time you put something like this on me – ”

“I know. You would feel like I’m stifling you,” his eyes widened in realisation. “Oh my, God. Is that how you’re feeling right now?” he asked, alarmed.

“No, not at all,” she admitted quietly.

“Then what is it, Benzo? I have tried for years to read your mind and you’ve made it your personal business to make sure I cannot.”

“It’s not like that.”

“Bullshit it’s not,” he frowned sceptically.

“It’s just protecting myself,” she admitted.

“I guarantee it’ll backfire if you keep me at arms’ length,” he told her. He knew it sounded like a warning, but maybe she needed to hear it.

“I know,” she sighed. “I’m a mess.”

“You are,” he didn’t disagree. “It’s one of things I love about you.”

“Don’t be a jerk,” she pulled a pillow from behind her and covered her face with it, the phone dropping as he assumed she hugged it. He understood her displeasure at a view of the roof.

“Sash, I’m trying to be a good man friend,” he couldn’t resist the joke. He noticed the phone shake, so she was crying or laughing, he hoped for the latter. “I’m not trying to pressure you, Benzo. I just want to see you. It’s as simple as that.”
She was suddenly in focus again, a sad smile on her features. “I’m an arsehole.”

She’d been laughing, he noted relieved. “No, you’re not,” he said softly. “Just a tough nut to crack sometimes.”

“I’m sorry, I know I’m completely overreacting.”

He nodded with a small laugh. “Apology accepted. Don’t worry. I won’t try a stunt like this again.”

She gave him a duckface over the phone and he couldn’t resist a laugh. “What if it doesn’t fit? I’ve put on weight.”

“I love those curves regardless. You try it on and call me back? Let me know.”

The duckface didn’t cease. “Sebastian.”

“Yes, baby?” he gave a hopeful smile.

She sighed, all she wanted was to get into that dress. “I’ll call you back,” she hung up on him.

Sasha: Fine, you win. The dress fits like a glove. I’ll see you at your hotel tomorrow arvo. But you can’t assume that I’ll just keep doing this. Now I have to try and find somewhere to get my waxing done last minute.

Sebastian: I won’t do it again, I know it was a ballsy move on my behalf. Thank youuu xxxxx

Sasha: I can’t wait to see you – you’re lucky you’re so hot xxx

Sebastian: haha The dress is beautiful and you will be exquisite. Already thinking of taking it off you though xxx

Sasha: Please don’t let me look like an idiot in front of Matt Damon!

Sebastian: I promise I won’t let that happen xxx

---

Feeling her breath catch in her throat, Sasha couldn’t contain her grin as Sebastian adjusted his tie, wandering to the bedroom from the bathroom. His crazy dark hair slicked back into a little bun that he’d asked her to pull back for him earlier, his stubble shaved back and a black suit that would impress the devil himself. Gee, she didn’t often forget how gorgeous he was, but she definitely took it for granted and was reminded right there and then. He smelt incredible too.

“Are you almost ready to go?” he gave a small smile as she nodded. "Car is waiting."

“Can you zip me up, please?” she asked as he nodded and moved behind her, doing as instructed. He left a small kiss on the nape of her neck before turning her to face him, his strong hands resting on her hips. “You look amazing… it’s a good look, kid. Very sexy,” he chuckled quietly, his bottom lip sliding through his teeth.

“Is it too much?” she asked, a little nervous.

“No,” he shook his head as he took her hands, helping her balance (her knee had been giving her grief since the plane landed) as she slipped into her shoes, now almost eye level with him. “Are you okay for this?”
“I’m fine, you’ll be with me.”

He grinned. “Yup,” he gave her a small kiss on the forehead, knowing she had just reapplied her deep plum lipstick. “We look pretty good together, Benzo.”

“You look incredible. You are so handsome in black,” she told him, gently clutching his tie. He pulled his phone from his breast pocket and took a quick picture of them together. He’d stayed true to her earlier demands of no more photos of each other on their Instagrams, but she looked amazing. He couldn’t resist as they sat in the car a little while later and he typed into the app. Their friends would at least like to see some pictures of them together if they’re weren’t posing on the red carpet. He understood that she didn’t want to and he didn’t want to put any focus on their relationship. It suited them both.

Hearing her phone buzz, she sighed seeing the photo of them and the caption. ‘She hates when I do this…’

“I wonder if you were dropped when you were a baby sometimes.”

He laughed and kissed her temple. “Yes, dragă. I’m well aware.”

---

“Sasha, this is Jessica and Kate,” Sebastian introduced her to his The Martian co-stars later that evening after he walked the carpet (Sasha refused) and the photocalls were finished. He left a gentle hand on the small of her back and kept her close, knowing she was a little nervous. He’d noted a similar reaction when she’d met Downey when they were in Germany. It was always such a rarity to see her speechless though she was old hat meeting celebrities, she’d worked with enough. She was a mess around Matt Damon earlier in the evening.

It had been a whirlwind couple of days. He would be lying to say it wasn’t the biggest movie he’d filmed in to date. Bar his Marvel contract and the other 6 films remaining, there was already so much hype around the film for the fast approaching awards season.

“She’s so tall, Sebastian,” Jessica beamed, kissing Sasha in greeting as Kate mimicked the action as he was sure he could feel Sasha move closer to him. God, she was nervous, he smirked to himself. He stroked her back soothingly. “It’s so lovely to meet you. Sebastian talked about you all the time.”

“No, he talked about how he could never get you on the phone with the different time zones when we were in Hungary,” Kate corrected with a giggle.

“I’m positive she was screening me,” Sebastian rolled his eyes, teasingly.

“I was,” Sasha shrugged casually as Kate and Jessica laughed.

“Well, it’s nice to put a face to the name,” Jessica continued as Kate distracted Sasha to talk about her dress. “You’re so cute,” she laughed at Sebastian. “Watch you watching her. Oh, Sebastian.”

“I can’t help it,” he admitted quietly. Sebastian smiled that wide, watch your eyes or you’ll lose your eyesight grin that brought most to their knees. Jessica blinked through it, keeping her composure.

“You’re in love with her,” she recognised that look he was giving her anywhere.

Sebastian bit his lip. He wasn’t exactly running around telling everyone but yes, he was. He had been for a long time. “Yeah,” he admitted, his knuckles skimming the skin on the low back on Sasha’s dress, his light touch forcing her to turn back with a small smile before going back to
chatting with Kate.

“I’m glad she makes you so happy and that it’s all worked out.”

“Me too. Thanks,” he told her, blushing deeply. “I think we’re going to leave,” he announced, catching Sasha’s attention, who looked up in surprise but happy to do what he wanted on his night. Truth be told, her knee was officially killing her and she was more than ready to get off her feet. She no longer had the stamina for heels on a dodgy knee. That would be another conversation.

“Now?” Sasha smiled, as his hand skimmed her side to find her hand.

“Yeah. Are you ready to go, iubi?” he asked with a small smile.

“Whenever, bubba,” she told him as they said their goodbyes and made their way back to the car to drive them back to the hotel from the film festival.

“How was the night, Mr Stan?” his driver asked, opened the back door of the SUV. Sebastian smiled, shaking the driver’s hand.

“Great, thank you,” he let Sasha in first before climbing in after her. She wasted no time snuggling into his side, the close yet not close enough affection they’d showed each other all evening nice but now she was ready for him to be all hers again. “Did you have fun?” Sebastian asked, draping his strong arm over her shoulder as she tucked her arm around his waist.

“I loved the film,” she told him, resting her cheek on his chest as kissed her hair. “It’s gonna win some awards.”

“Yeah, I think so too,” Sebastian agreed wistfully. “I’m glad you enjoyed it.”

“Did you?”

“Yeah. Came together well,” he smiled as she gazed up at him, proudly.

“You were fantastic, Sebastian Stan,” she told him.

“Thank you, baby,” he kissed her hair again.

“I forgot what you looked like clean shaven. God it’s been so long since you’ve gotten rid of all the scruff,” she recalled, quietly, her free hand joining his and linking their fingers.

“I thought you liked the scruff.”

“Oh, I do. More than I thought I would. But you were such a babyface in the movie with your floofy hair. I sometimes forget what the boy I fell in love with looked like.”

He smiled, her words meaning more than she probably intended. “I’ll shave it all off when you least expect it,” he cautioned.

“I’ve never kissed you fresh-faced before either.”

“I promise you’ll still enjoy it. Maybe even more,” he chuckled softly. A few minutes later after a content silence, they arrived back at his hotel. Out of the car, Sebastian took Sasha’s hand and led her to the elevators. “I kinda don’t want to let you out of that dress,” he smiled.

“Well, sorry bub, but the second we are get into the room, this dress is off,” she said as they headed upstairs, a few moments of silence before they arrived at his floor and his room. Sasha smiled, taking
a seat on the bed immediately to get off her feet, her heels dropping from her feet and she rolled onto the pillows as Sebastian sat on the side of her. “Come here,” she sat up as he did what she said, as she pushed his jacket off his shoulders and folded it beside her before moving to loosen his black tie slowly and unbuttoning his top and second button. She sat up on her knees and moved in to kiss him. “You were great tonight. And I’m not just saying that because I have to.”

He smiled against her lips, wrapping his arms around her and falling to trap her under his body. He pulled the skirt of the dress up to spread her legs and settle in between them, ivory train sprawled across the bed under them. “Thank you for tonight. I couldn’t have had a better time.”

“You deserved it,” she said, grinning. “Thanks for bringing me.”

“Who else would I want here with me?” he leaned down to kiss her gently.

“I’m sure you would have had fun if Chace and the guys were here.”

“Could only invite one person – you’re my plus one now, sweetheart, sorry to inform you.”

“Do I get a say in this?”

“No,” he shook his head with a smile. “You don’t,” he eased up on his elbow as she rolled her eyes, before a small smile appeared.

“Hi, handsome,” she said, reaching around to pulling his hair out of its hair tie and mussing it up through her fingers.

“Hi,” he gently kissed her. “I had a thought,” he said against her lips.

“I hope it didn’t hurt.”

He sighed and shook his head. “You’re trouble, has anyone ever told you that?”

“You made me this way. I was an angel before I came to America. I didn’t drink, eat badly, swear, never did drugs – ”

“You saying I’ve corrupted you?” a humoured smile collecting on his plump lips, his eyes darkening. He hummed, pleased. “You were such a good girl,” he acknowledged. “Now look at you, a strange man between your legs and these dark lips begging me to kiss them.”

“What gave it away?” she laughed.

“Well, you can’t keep your eyes from my mouth when my eyes are up here,” he pointed, wetting his lips with his tongue thoroughly.

“You think you know me so well…” she scoffed, falling back in the pillows.

“I admit, I thought I had you all figured out. I’ve had to go back to the beginning and start again. But I’ll get there. And I know you’ll hate every minute it.”

“I’m not entirely hating it,” she admitted, thumbing his bottom lip as he gently latched onto it with his teeth.

“God, the ideas you put in my head, woman,” he sighed, resting his forehead on her shoulder.

“What are you thinking out?”
He shook his head, not looking up. “No.”

“What’s brewing in that pretty head of yours, Sebastian?” she whispered, close to his ear, her warm breath sending ripples through his body. He looked up.

“Occasionally, completely randomly, I just get images about your body in certain positions or doing certain things to me is all. It affected me a lot the last few days,” he admitted, propping himself up on his elbow again.

“Things we’ve done, or what you’d like me to do?” she asked softly.

“Both,” he shrugged.

“Is there anything you’d like me to do tonight?”

He flushed. “I like the spontaneity of when we fuck,” he admitted.

She broke into a wicked grin. “Really?”

“Yeah,” he said softly. “We know how to make each other feel good,” he stood them up, reaching behind her to unzip the dress, pushing the long sleeves down her arms and watching the weight of the material pool at her bare feet, left in only her white lace underwear.

“I wholeheartedly agree,” she said, pulling his shirt from his slacks and unbuttoning his shirt before sliding it off his broad, strong shoulders and adding it to the clothing pile developing around them. She undid his the clasp on his pants, slowly but surely pushing down the zip over his hard on as they fell from his slim hips and he stepped away from them.

He wouldn’t tire of Sasha undressing him, he realised as she moved gingerly to her knees and undid the laces on his shoes before she pulled them from his feet, dragging his socks off as well, leaving him about as dressed as she was. Raking her nails back up over his thighs and one hand massaging him through his boxer briefs, she gave him a small smile as he helped her back to her feet.

“I’m going down on you then we’re going to spend the night making each other feel really good, okay, iubiţel?” she said, moving him back towards the bed. He nodded, his heart rate rising as he blinked trying to gather his thoughts. Nothing was better than hearing her speak his native tongue.

“Da, sufleţel. Do what you want to me. I – ” he shook as she didn’t bother with the foreplay as she dragged his boxers off. “I’m yours.”

Chapter End Notes

Thank you for all the lovely words on the last chapter, it's truly appreciated! I'll be disappearing again this week, but hope to drop a chapter on the weekend if I'm lucky. If not, next Thurs unfortch! Drop me a message here or come say hi at Tumblr. Thank you again, lovelies xoxo

---

Interested Bystander writes
Adulting and Pretending You Like It

Chapter Summary

If she’d learnt one thing in all the years she’d know him, it was that he always managed to make her feel new and exciting ways of hating how much she cared about him.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

New York, USA

“So, guess who got another email from the Knicks doctor’s office? They are a very considerate bunch,” Sasha sighed, handing her MacBook to Sebastian as she took a seat next to him on the couch. Sebastian paused the TV and looked at what she’d passed him. “He had a cancellation.”

“He can book you in November for your surgery, that’s great,” Sebastian smiled, scrolling through the email for his information. “I’ll be back from China then too. Perfect timing.”

“You’re going to have the best time,” she sighed, a little jealous. “You’re going to freeze, but you’ll have a great time.”

Knowing it was a work promo trip and up to now, a lot of things had been in their favour for her to travel with him, Sasha was a little sad not to be going with Sebastian. She was now very accustomed to falling asleep beside him. Used to being woken up in the middle of the night by slow, sweet kisses down her spine, snuggling into him and then making love as leisurely as they pleased. In fact, since they got back to New York, she couldn’t quite recall a full night’s sleep –

“The next few months are going to be crazy busy. You’re off to China, then Christmas and New Year and have to be in Atlanta in January.”

He sighed, rubbing his face. It made him weary to think about it and could only hum in response. He kissed her before handing the MacBook back. “Forget me. Back to your knee…” he said, picking up her hands and playing with her fingers, knowing their conversations prior to Germany about this topic had been silenced by her pretty quickly. “Have you considered my offer?”

“What, that you pay for the surgery?” she rolled her eyes.

“Yes.”

“Still no. I refuse your money. Thanks all the same.”

Sebastian sighed loudly. “At some point, Sasha, you’ll have to realise that your knee has to be in your short-term plan,” he urged. “I’m well aware that you’re trying hard to make it look like you’re not uncomfortable most of the time. I know the money aspect scares you. But I can help you with this. So just let me, please?”

She rolled her head back, predictably exasperated. “Seb, I love you,” she held his face as he smiled, hopefully. “But my knee is my problem.”
“You know, if I just paid for the doctor right away after that first appointment, you wouldn’t have any reason to be a little shit about this,” he sniped. That escalated quickly, she realised. “This could all have been done months ago.”

“I don’t need your money,” she muttered, pulling away from him.

“I won’t own your knee, Sasha. I won’t own you. I don’t want you to pay me back,” he stood up and started pacing. Never, ever a good sign. “It has been four months that you’ve put this off. Your blogging job won’t pay to cover this. And I’m fine, 100 per cent happy to take care of it. I’ll give you whatever you want or what the fuck ever you need and you know this. Why are you being so fucking proud? Jesus fucking Christ, it’s like talking to a child with you. Take the money, and confirm this fucking surgery,” he snapped.

It was strange and awkward when Sebastian was angry at her. They’d fought often (pre relationship because they drove each other mad and refused to agree on anything and now during relationship that they put down to teething problems and attempting love from best mates to lovers and whatever else in between), but him being legitimately angry with her like this was certainly new and she definitely did not appreciate his concern this time.

She whipped her laptop shut and stood up, pointing at him. “You’re a fucking arsehole. This isn’t your decision to make.”

“Well, you’re not fucking making it!” he shouted incredulously, running his hands through his hair, frustration etched out on his handsome features. She shook her head and went to his bedroom to get her bag. She quietly put it over her shoulder as he noticed her heading for the front door. “Where are you going?” he called after her, hands on his hips. “We’re talking here.”

“No, you’re yelling and being a douche. I’m going back to my apartment. You can go fuck yourself,” she opened the door but he was there before she could attempt to get through it and shut it again quietly. It was times like this she cursed not having full mobility on her knees. Her reflexes were shot and a quick getaway rapidly slipped through her fingers. This was exactly what made Sebastian’s point and she hated it.

“No, enough,” he said forcefully, gripping her wrists. “I don’t even want you to pay me back. I don’t need the money, I just need to see you happy.”

“You’re happier when you’re dancing,” he didn’t wait for her rebuttal before he slid his fingers up her arms, pulled her back pack off from her shoulders and put it at their feet. He took her in his arms and lifted her face to his as her eyes watered. “Baby.”

“Don’t.”

“Baby,” he softened, seeing the sheer terror in her eyes.

He was well aware she had lost a lot of confidence with her body, her lifeblood, breaking down on her and he felt absolutely horrible for having to give her her ultimatum, but someone had to. He was convinced she hadn’t explained the severity of the injury to her parents or she was keeping quiet about any pressure she was getting from them too. He supposed it was up to him now anyway.

“I want to be here for you. I know you’re so scared, this is the most important decision you’ll have to make and it affects your whole life. You are the most important person in my life and I need to see you dancing again, doing what you love and you are astounding at. I know you don’t trust your
body, you’re feeling let down by it. But it can be fixed and I want to be able to help you do that. I’ll take all the time that I can off, and I’ll be there the whole time,” he padded away the fat tears that fell from her eyes, he was heartbroken at her utter devastation. He rarely caught glimpses of her like this, and it had floored him. “God, baby. Please? Look at you.”

“What if I don’t recover well?” she managed to get out before she could swallow the sentence.

“Then we find another plan,” he powered on. “But we won’t know until we try,” he kissed her salty cheek. “I love you and I want what’s best for you. You just can’t put this off anymore. I’m aware it’s getting more difficult for you on your feet, you can’t hide from me.”

She inhaled sharply, knowing he was right. “I know,” she said reluctantly, resting her forehead on his broad shoulder. “I have to do it.”

“I’d never let you do this alone. Not that you ever would be with Ollie and the boys to help you too. But no one will take care for you better than I will,” he whispered the last part.

“Okay,” her breath still shook as he kissed her deeply. “I’ll take the November slot.”

“Te iubesc din toată inima. Everything will be fine.”

“I love you too.”

“I know. Come on,” he hitched her into his arms (she would forever be thrilled with his stronger, newer body and its ability to toss her around like a rag doll). She let out a surprised peep as he held on to her thighs. “Come on, I’m taking you out,” he suggested. “I’ve got a couple of apartments I really want your opinion on then we’re getting a drink because I think that was kind of our first real fight and it feels weird.”

“That wasn’t our first fight,” she sniffed. “We’ve had worse than this.”

“I’m not going to fight about a fight with you. And I meant as a couple,” he corrected himself.

“When it’s a fight, you’ll know.”

“Don’t pick a fight about a fight.”

“I’m great at fighting.”

“Put it on your headshot, see how far it gets you,” he rolled his eyes. “You are fucking melodramatic sometimes. Absolutely batshit crazy.”

“Takes one to know one,” she sighed, he’d won that bout. Lame retort on her behalf, she knew. He grinned widely, putting her back on the ground. “I suppose so.”

“I need to freshen up though. Let me go get organised.”

He nodded and grasped her cheek, before laying a gentle kiss on her lips. “Okay.”

“I think I’ll need some help though,” she said over her shoulder as she wandered to his bedroom. He grinned.

“Coming, dear.”
The penthouse apartment was huge. Sasha knew that Sebastian was making good money now, but to afford this was a little surprising even to her. The view was amazing, with a large roof balcony that overlooked the river would be perfect for all sorts of mischief in summer with their friends. But it wasn't Sebastian. They both knew this place wasn't going to be his new apartment, it would take a bit of work to be perfect for him and the storage was almost a deal breaker on its own. Agreeing with the agent to try the alternative, it was only a short walk to the other building and Sasha was already salivating at the location as they wandered through the hallway.

“Now obviously, this isn’t the penthouse and it doesn’t have the balcony like the previous apartment but the living areas area much larger and of course, the third extra bedroom,” the agent told Sebastian, who nodded. As soon as the door opened, Sebastian hid his grin as he adjusted the bill of his cap.

“If you don’t want it, I’ll take it. I can’t afford it even in my dreams, but I’ll take it,” Sasha said, bursting through the hallway first and into the open living room and kitchen, pirouetting on her good side. “This kitchen is massive,” she wandered to the bar in the living room, appreciating the current owner’s taste of crystal. “Better storage too.”

“Your wife seems to like it here, Mr Stan,” the agent said, with a smile.

“She’s not my wife,” Sebastian muttered, opening a door to a butler’s pantry. “In fact, she rarely acknowledges me as her boyfriend. Three months, by the way, Benzo,” he added as she rolled her eyes dramatically. “Your grace period is nearly over.”

“Where are the guest bedrooms?” Sasha asked as the agent pointed to the area off the hallway. “You know, the one my man friend will be sleeping in for comments like that,” she said as Sebastian winked.

“Master is near the entrance,” the agent added, snickering. “Smaller bedrooms are towards the back of the apartment,” he pointed.

Sasha took Sebastian’s hand and led him to the master first. Her jaw dropped at the daytime skyline before them. “Wow. This is better than your current view,” she said, flopping on the bed. “I know I stay at your place a lot already, but I would probably stay here a lot more to see this everyday.”

Sebastian pulled her off someone else’s bed. “Check the wardrobe,” he instructed with a gentle slap on her ass as she did as she was told.

She gasped. “Take it, make an offer now,” she told him, astounded.

He followed her in and smiled as he watched her count how many imaginary pairs of shoes that would fit on the shoe racks. “Well, this is nice. For you and your staggering collection,” he laughed. She slid past him into the bathroom.

“The bathroom is bigger than my studio,” she whispered in awe.

“Everything is bigger than your studio.”

“Don’t hate the studio. It’s housed you when you’ve been homeless before.”

“Yeah,” Sebastian acknowledged. “I’m glad I can share your bed now, the couch is not as comfy as it appears,” he teased as she made a face. “I wanna see the other bedrooms.”

“I love this place,” she told him. ”There is no way it can be this easy though; this is the first place you've looked at."
“You know how much I hate moving. If it's meant to be, I am not hesitating to go in fast and high,” he said, trailing behind and holding her hips as she led him towards the back of the apartment. The first guestroom was large enough for a comfortable queen size bed and some furniture and the same with the second. A bathroom connected between. “I really like this place,” he whispered against her neck as he slid his warm hands into the waistband of her jeans. “What do you think?”

“I think you’ll really like it out here when you’re in the doghouse,” she smirked.

He laughed, his lips lingering on her skin as she snuggled back into him. “I’m sure I will. Smartass.”

“Seb,” she said seriously. “Is it in your budget?”

“Yeah,” was his only reply. She had never given him enough credit when it came to money. While she could be quite flagrant in her expenditures, buying things for pleasure alone, usually suffering buyer's remorse more often than not, Sebastian was measured, not entirely frugal, but purchased things based more on needs instead of wants. Except his cars. All bets were off with his cars. Sort of summed their personalities up in a nutshell.

She could hardly contain her surprise. “Wow. And when is it available?”

“Uhh, February? Shitty time to move, but I will have the time to do it then.”

“Can you live without a roof balcony?”

He kissed her neck lightly as she squirmed under his touch, giggling quietly before he started talking again, his lips still against her skin as she reached back and knotted her fist into his hair, he clearly needed her close. “I don’t know. I don’t have one now, and I’m surviving. I guess it’s not a deal breaker if I don’t have it. There is more space in the living areas here.”

“You don’t have to decide today, bubba,” she replied and turned to face him.

“Yeah, I know. I just really don’t want to have to rent another place if I miss out though, fuck moving unnecessarily. I like my place – if I didn’t have to move because the owner wanted to move back in, I’d stay there. Should have brought the fuckin' thing when I had the chance few years back,” he cursed to himself.

“You can stay with me,” she reminded him. “Or Chace or whatever,” she added just as quick.

“Why would I stay with Chace? I get to have sex with you,” he told her earnestly as she sighed loudly. He bit back a laugh as he chewed his lips in contemplation. “But I’d still have to move my stuff into storage. Your place is smaller again when there are two of us there, it’s fine for the night. Doesn’t answer any questions long term.”

“You don’t have to decide right now.”

“Yeah, okay,” he nodded, taking her hand and leading her back to the kitchen where the agent was waiting. “Thanks, man. This is a great space. I appreciate the time today,” Sebastian smiled, shaking his hand. “I’ve got a bit to think through and talk to my girl about. Can I give you a call in the morning?”

“Absolutely, Mr Stan. It was great to meet you and Sasha today. Call me, we’ll talk. There are plenty of options available.”

“Great, thanks again,” Sebastian led Sasha out. “You owe me a drink, let’s find a bar, Benzo.”
“Are you allowed to drink?”

“I’m an unemployed actor in between projects. I’m not on anyone’s dietary watch right now,” he kissed her temple as they dodged traffic and crossed the street. A few minutes later a host had sat them at the bar and Sebastian ordered them both a drink as Sasha sat. He refused to do the same, bouncing on his heels a bit.

“You’re edgy, bub,” she noted as he tossed his cap on the bar and ran his hands through his hair.

“A little,” he admitted, as she pulled his waist to bring him closer.

“What’s up?”

He groaned, holding her face and leaning down to rest his forehead against hers. “I’m so fucking busy, there will be no good time to move.”

“You’re stressing for no reason. I’ll help you.”

“Yeah, I know. I just… there’s a lot happening.”

“Come here,” she kissed him gently, hoping not drag any unnecessary attention to them. He gave her a small smile, holding her face in his calloused hands, eagerly wanting to kiss her again. “I know there is a lot happening. But I’m actually good at this kind of stuff.”

“I guess this is where your OCD and anal retentiveness really comes into play, huh?” he teased, as she pushed him away and sighed. “No, no,” he laughed, though he hadn’t relaxed enough to sit. “I agree, I guess we should make some short-term plans for your operation, me moving and so on.”

“We get through my surgery, Christmas and New Year, then we’ll start packing you before you go back to Atlanta. It’ll be a sinch,” she told him simply. He let out a small groan, not entirely believing her. Just hearing it out loud made him fret. “What?”

“I’m going to sound like a whiny little bitch actor asshole for a second, okay?” he said meekly. She nodded to let him continue as he finally took to the stool beside her, it wasn’t often Sebastian let his guard down like this. While he was generally gave people the impression he was fairly relaxed, he rarely complained about things in his life, he did have moments of absolute uncertainty that he would shake him inexplicably – like right now. “I love what I do, right? But I’m kind just not coping too well with... stuff.”

He wouldn’t ever get specific. There was a lot that Sebastian didn't share and she was fine with that. She knew he wasn’t keeping deep, dark secrets from her. But a lot of his past crept up on him when he least expected it, especially when he was stressed and it clouded his judgement at the worst of times.

She reached towards his front pocket pull his phone from his pocket and held it to him before sitting again. “Call your shrink. You obviously need some time,” she told him.

“And here I was thinking you were about to get fresh with me,” he joked, tired.

Sasha pinched his chin gently. “Go and see him this week.”

Sebastian nodded, lowering his gaze. “Thank you for understanding.”

“Of course. I know the noise you hear in your head, regardless of it you tell me or not,” she stood before him and cupped his face in her arms, mimicking his earlier posture. “I’ll do whatever I can,
but you’ve never been one to open up fully,” she paused as he gave a small, yet sad, smile. “Do you
honestly think that I’d hold it against you?”

“Because you’re as bad, if not worse, when something is eating at you?”

“Exactly. I’m not a complete hypocrite,” she smiled, kissing the frown line between his eyebrows.
“But fuck you anyway.”

Sebastian gave a shy giggle. “Have I told you today how much I adore you?”

“No, but I’m listening. Go right ahead,” she said as the bartender put a G&T in front of Sebastian
and a glass of red wine before her. She took an eager sip and sat down again, batting her lashes at
him, resting an elbow on the bar to sit her chin in her palm.

He laughed. “I love you, thank you for just being, you know.”

“Perfect?” she suggested.

“Yes,” he smirked.

“Gorgeous?”

“Of course.”

“Your dream girl?”

“Always.”

“Conceited and arrogant?”

“Especially,” he laughed loudly, it was exactly what he needed from her to get out of his head. As he
lifted his glass to his lips and sipped, he pointed at her. “You forgot smart, sexy, legs for days and an
ass that won’t quit.”

“Oh, my bad,” she blushed as she scrunched his face in her hands. He loosened her grip and held her
hands in his.

“You are my dream girl, all right. The whole fuckin’ package,” he continued, noticing how
uncomfortable she was starting to look under his gaze. She blushed, resting her forehead on his
shoulder. “Bravado only lasts so long with you though,” he added. “Where did that ego go, baby?”
he whispered teasingly.

“You’ve embarrassed me,” she said quietly.

He laughed, shaking his head. “No, I paid you a compliment. Several.”

“I love you,” she told him decisively, tucking some dark hair behind his ear. “Everything, all of
you.”

“I know,” he gripped her thigh. “You’re a patient woman. I know I don’t make it easy.”

“No, neither do I. But you’re super hot and you’re amazing in bed. Makes up for it,” she kissed him
as he rolled his eyes and sighed at her, the tender moment gone as quick as it came. “I can get over
the other stuff.”

“You’re the worst.”
“You too, boyfriend,” she grinned, before sipping her wine.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you for all the lovely comments, kudos and subscriptions on the last chapter, I'm still so surprised people are even reading, staggers me! Sorry for the longer than usual break, tho it was much needed.

---

Interested Bystander writes on Tumblr.
If she’d learnt one thing in all the years she’d know him, it was that he always managed to make her feel new and exciting ways of hating how much she cared about him.

“Now you’re sure, hundred per cent you don’t wanna come?” Sebastian asked for the tenth time that evening. He looked back at Sasha, who was reading on his bed in his NASA hoodie (it was huge on her, he loved it) and little else while he dressed for the NYFF premiere of The Martian. He was leaving the next day for China and hadn’t been backward in being forward wanting her to go with him.

Sasha put her iPad down and pulled her glasses away from her eyes. “I’ll meet you at the bar afterwards with Ollie and the boys,” she smiled. “You look cute.” Understatement, he looked like walking sin. He gave a modest shrug, attempting to pull his hair back into a little bun. “Leave it out,” she winked, putting her glasses back on and rolling onto her tummy to keep reading, kicking her legs up and crossing at the ankles.

In truth, she had to turn away because in the suit he was wearing, she was rendered speechless. It was simple, a royal blue suit with a crisp black shirt underneath and she was breathless and distracted. It was so easy of him to do that to her. Jelly. Wet. Disaster. The bed dipped as Sebastian sat beside her, slapping her ass roughly bringing her attention back to him.

“Hey now,” she winced, rubbing the spot he’d smacked. “Don’t start something you can’t finish.”

“Was that all it took to start something?” he grinned widely, rolling her hips to move her onto her back as she grunted. “Car will be here shortly, I’ll see you about 9?”

“Yeah,” she nodded as he pinched her chin and leaned down to kiss her.

“Be good,” he told her.

“No promises,” she replied as he gave her another kiss, before reluctantly getting up and pocketing his wallet and phone from the bedside table. “Don’t break too many hearts.”

“It’s never my intention,” he winked. “Bye baby,” he wandered from his room and she heard the front door close soon after.

---

Sebastian: Where are you hiding? I can’t find anyone xxx
Sasha: VIP. Hurry up! xo

Appearing a few minutes later, Sebastian grinned happily as his friends greeted him. He was a little late after getting predictably stuck in NYC traffic. He palmed her face and kissed Sasha sweetly as she handed him a G&T that she’d made sure was waiting for him when he arrived. “Thank you,
baby,” he told her, keenly taking a sip as he took a seat beside her.

“How did it go?” she asked.

“Pretty well,” he assumed.

“I’m sure you were your cheeky, charming, smily self as always,” she told him as she adjusted the lapel on his jacket, smoothing her hand down his chest, feeling the clench of his muscles underneath her touch. “This is a good suit, you look so sexy tonight.”

He gave her a half smile. “You stayed home. We could have ditched these guys for you to take it off me instead.”

She laughed as Ollie handed her a vodka, soda and lime. “I’m instantly filled with regret. If you’re lucky when we get home, I may still do that,” she said as he laughed, easing back against the seat, relaxing Sasha back with him, snuggling into his side and crossing her leg over his.

“So, I don’t think I’ve seen this dress before,” he admitted, twirling the ends of her ponytail between his long fingers, peering at the silk drape dress that barely covered up her shapely legs, the split placement perfect. “It’s good, kid.”

“It’s new,” she admitted. “Wanted to leave you with something nice to remember me by when you leave for China tomorrow morning.”

“I don’t remember clothes,” he reminded her, nuzzling the shell of her ear as she giggled quietly. “I’ll remember other things instead.”

“Such as?” she dared.

He hummed, adjusting his posture to move his lip closer to her ear. “What’s underneath it,” he stifled a small laugh as her nails creased into his thigh. “What’s underneath me,” he continued, leaving a single kiss on her jaw as their friends tutted them.

“You guys are in public, can you try for five minutes to keep your filthy hands off each other? These assholes in new relationships, smutting up the place because they can’t keep their mitts off each other,” Sam warned, giving Sebastian a playful wink. Sebastian agreed to a point and gave Sasha an inch of space before he blushed a little. “That’s better.”

“Sorry, baby,” Sebastian apologised. “My imagination got away from me.”

Sasha shrugged slowly. “What gave you the impression that I minded?”

He groaned, his forehead falling on her shoulder. “Don’t say that.”

“I didn’t say anything,” Sasha cackled, unable to maintain a sexy exterior, it just wasn’t in her personality. She was no vixen though Sebastian vehemently disagreed (she could turn him on quicker than anyone he’d ever been with before) but she just didn’t see herself that way. She was irresistible in the simplest of tasks, like as she raised her glass to her lips just then. He sighed wistfully.

“You know what you said.”

“It was your imagination, not mine. My imagination has had me going down on you since you left tonight.”
A whimper, that was the only way Sasha could describe the sound Sebastian had just elicited.

Leaving a small kiss on the corner of his mouth, Sasha smiled. “I’m gonna go dance with Ollie until my knee gives out.”

“Okay, baby,” he smiled as he watched her lean frame unfold itself and saunter away from him. “Have fun,” he took a grave chug of the rest of his drink. He’d need a lot of booze to contend with her tonight. He joined his friends and started to enjoy the night. The anxiety of the film festival wearing off and the joy to be with his friends slowly taking over.

---

A few hours later, Sebastian had his arm wrapped around Sasha, taking a sip of his whiskey at a cocktail table. “This is different, isn’t it?” he asked over the music of the club. She cocked her head to the side, mostly to hear him. She was loving the pulse of the music on her body and he knew she’d enjoyed her time on the dancefloor.

“How so?”

“You and me, at a bar with all our friends.”

“Not that unusual,” she joked. ”Very usual.”

“Not having to stay away from each other,” he continued. “I gotta tell you something that’s a bit embarrassing for me,” he confided as she grinned, eager to hear and pushed closer to him, ducking her body between him and the table. He breathed and took her in, his hands resting on her hips. “I loved watching you in clubs, dancing. We’d drink and laugh and then you’d be lost to the dancefloor and come back all sweaty and primed. You’d just leave a trail of destruction in your wake for guys who wanted to get close to you and you would just brush them aside like peasants. God, so sexy,” he lowered his eyes in recollection, a nervous chuckle bubbling from his lips.

She gave him a small smile, he was drunk. He would never admit something like that otherwise, she realised. He’d moved onto whiskey a few drinks back and knew he hadn’t eaten since brunch. “Really?”

“Yes, really,” he nodded emphatically, eyes wide and dark as he focused on her again. “And I’d have to pretend every time not to be one of those guys who was just a fucking mess after you’d moved past them. But it was worse for me, because then you’d come back and we’d drink and laugh again and I had to fucking pretend that you were just my friend, not the girl I wanted to take home that night.”

“Seb,” she blushed, as he gripped the back of her neck and lowered his face to hers before ducking her lips to hers. He smiled against her mouth, feeling her shudder gently. “You have to stop. Our friends are think this is the best thing they've ever seen,” she muttered, attempting not to lose control as he traced down her back to the gentle curve of her ass, leaving his hand there.

“Do you think that they don’t know how much I want you? I’m not exactly hiding it,” he giggled quietly as he moved his hand back to her hip. “If I had my way, we'd have left by now.”

“Sebastian,” she hissed, with zero malice in her voice, only need that she’d failed to mask. She needed him to stop before she gave in. "Everyone is here for you."

"I'm only here for you."

"Bub, please."
He hummed, not really giving much thought to it as his lips moved from ear across her cheek and to her lips. “Just kiss me,” he said, his hands moving to her hair as his tongue traced her lips and moved into kiss her deeply. He smiled when she finally reciprocated. “I know you’re resisting, but I can't help myself,” he smoothed his fingers down the side of her face before kissing her again, her tongue smoothly teasing his lips before he took it as his own. “Give in.”

They could both hear the raucous laughter and taunts of their friends well veiled behind the loud music but he didn’t care. “Wanna get outta here?” she finally asked, tearing her lips from his as he stood without an answer. She wrapped her arms around his neck, he in turn wrapping an arm around her waist and finally nodded, sipping the remains of his drink.

“Probs for the best you guys go, doubt Seb wants an arrest for indecent exposure on his wrap sheet,” Ollie teased, pulling both into a hug. “You,” she pointed at Sebastian and poked his chest. “Have fun in China, you hear?”

“I will, you gotta take care of this one though,” he nodded towards Sasha who batted her lashes.

“I will, we know she can’t be trusted with idle hands,” Ollie agreed.

“Exactly,” Sebastian said with a grin. They said goodbye to the rest of their friends, giving lame excuses that Sebastian hadn’t finished packing for his promo tour and had to be at the airport early. No one believed it and nor should they have.

---

Shoving his apartment door open, it smashed loudly into the wall as Sebastian and Sasha fell through it in a mess of limbs and tongues. She shoved the door closed before backing Sebastian into it, a pleased grunt falling from his lips. She pushed the suit jacket from his arms and met his whiskey-laced lips hungrily again. Forcing her hips to his, Sebastian groaned as Sasha ground into his groin and rubbing against his straining hard on, her fingers attempting to unbutton his shirt at the same time.

At this rate, they wouldn’t make it to the bedroom, he realised as he pushed the sleeves of her dress down her shoulders to mouth and caress her breasts, moving her hands to pull his shirt from his slacks and tearing the rest away from him. “Pants,” he demanded of her as she willingly moved her hands to his fly and unbuttoned them, her hand instantly disappearing into his boxers as his head fell back to the door, losing all sense as she pushed his slacks and boxers to the floor, massaging his raging cock in her warm hands, smearing the pre-cum over the head.

In a strange role reversal, Sasha found herself still dressed and Sebastian down to almost zero as she pumped his cock in her hands. Sebastian latched onto her hair, pulling her face to his. “What do you want? Tell me what you need,” she begged breathlessly, her lips taking his pulse as he gently pushed against her shoulders and guided her carefully to her knees as she scratched her nails lightly down his torso.

“I haven’t been able to think of anything else since you said it before,” he chewed his lip as he felt the first swipe of her warm, wet tongue swirl around the smooth head, a strained whine escaping his throat as she traced the vein and gently cupped his balls in her hands. “Baby...” he managed, tangling his fingers in her hair as she took him in her mouth and began the sweetest assault on his body. His muscles coiled under the delightful stress she’d put upon his body.

A string of Romanian curses littered the apartment as she gripped his cock in one hand, gently stroking him to the rhythm he set and wrapped her free arm around his strong thighs for balance. Not before long, she felt his hips move, unable to resist thrusting into her slick, welcoming mouth.
“Arăţi foarte sexy. Te doresc,” he continued muttering as she hollowed her cheeks around him, taking him as far back as she could manage. He knew he was close, he couldn’t stop now. “Baby, I’m gonna cum,” he managed, holding the back of her head to him and wrapping her ponytail around his fists. She gripped his thighs again, a sure sign to tell him to let go as his hips moved to her mouth as his stomach twitched, his release sudden and strong as she swallowed around him, milking all he had to give. “Good girl,” he breathed, smoothing her hair as she moved her mouth from him with a small pop, licking her lips in finality. “Such a good girl to me,” he repeated, bringing her to her feet and kissing her deeply, tasting himself on her tongue. “You okay?” he wiped a single tear from the corner of her eye as she nodded. “I’m good,” she promised.

"That was..." his voice trailed off, unable to find the words. "Oh, guriţă," he regained his breath as he kicked off his shoes and let his pants collect around his feet before carefully stepping out of them and whipping his boxers back up, adjusting himself as his body calmed. “Look at you, still very dressed and worse, devoid a handful of orgasms.”

She giggled quietly as he held her to him as closely as he could without smothering her, resting back against the door. “I think you can work on that – you’ve got about five hours before you get to the airport. You’d better get to work, sport.”

He laughed, tossing her over his shoulder as she squealed, his large hand smacking her ass as he made his way to the bedroom. “You’ll rue the day you said that, Benzo. You won’t be able to move the whole time I’m gone after I’m through with you,” he flung her on the bed as he whipped off his socks, tossing them towards the hamper. “I have to take that dress off, baby. I gotta see you.”

She turned her back to him and sat on her knees, silently asking for the zip to be lowered.

“Gotta ask, how did you do your zips without me?” he muffled a laugh, happily dragging the zip down the short few inches.

“It’s a hassle. The only zips that are acceptable while a boyfriend is away is a jeans fly. Or I simply screech until Ollie comes over and rescues me,” she admitted as Sebastian pushed the straps off her shoulders again and turned her to him, pushing the rest of the flimsy garment over her hips and off. He threw it away and gave a small smile, feeling his dick pull again.

“Hm. This is nice.”

“Oh, this old thing?” she asked, laying back on the still messy bed, crossing her long legs at the ankles as his eyes drank in her from heels to the black bra and hot pant set that left so little to the imagination.

“You were wearing this the whole night?” he bit back his smile.

“Not gonna lie, a little uncomfortable for an extended period. Not easy to visit the bathroom in.”

“Fute-mă… baby, you look incredible. But at some point, these are coming off.”

“Your reaction is enough for me,” she grinned. "Worth it.

He chuckled with a small nod. "Definitely worth it. Would you be against me undressing you now?"  
“Knock yourself out,” she told him as he eagerly put her on her knees facing away from him. “Ha,” he snickered, zips on the bra and hot pants and wasting no time unfastening them. He left a cheeky kiss on her lower back before dragging what was left of the material off and ridding it.
“On your back,” he whispered, watching her make the action. “Ladies choice tonight,” Sebastian instructed, pushing her body back down on the bed, keeping her legs wide, core wet and exposed, as he started from her ankles and started kissing up her body. He was greeted by a dreamy groan of pleasure as Sasha hitched herself up on her elbows to watch his dark hair bob through the curves of her body. “Whatever you want, you’ve got it.”

“I just want you close,” she admitted. He paused and looked up at her.

“You okay?”

“Better than,” she said with a small grin. “I have Sebastian Stan between my thighs, no one can argue that I’m not okay.”

He had to laugh. “You never say things like that.”

“That I want you close?” she repeated, a slight blush cast over her cheeks.

He nodded, massaging her calves in his gym-calloused hands. He moved up her body and dared ask, “How in love with me are you right now?” he teased. "A lot, right?”

She giggled quietly, wrangling her fingers in his long, dark strands. “Did you want me to say get out the paddles and blindfold?”

“I can improvise,” he grinned.

“You leave tomorrow,” she reminded him as he dipped his head, hating the reminder. “I’m going to miss you is all. Believe it or not, I’m quite accustomed to your face.”

He gave her a soft smile. “I’m gonna miss you too,” he laid on of the most passionate kisses on her, pulling her into his arms and rolling her body on to his. “I love you.”

“I love you too.”

“You getting soft on me, Benzo?”

“No, are you, Sebastian?” she cast a glance down his body, licking her lips at the well-oiled machine under her.

“No, Miss Benson,” he raised his hips to meet her, gently biting her glistening bottom lip. "When I’m done with you, we’re going to need to burn this bed.”

---

Hearing the alarm a few hours later, Sebastian sighed. He had barely slept. He never really did when he was about to travel. He reached for his phone and noted it was still dark outside, before quietly unprying Sasha’s body from his.

“No, don’t move. Stay there,” she mumbled, tightening her grip.

“I have to get up, iubi. I have to get ready for the airport,” he replied, wrapping his arms around her bare shoulders. He noted how chilly she was and pulled the duvet over them again.

“Nooo, stay here with me. We can stay in bed the whole time.”

He giggled quietly. “Don’t test me, suflețel.”
“It’s not a good suggestion?” she yawned, kissing across his strong chest. God, how she craved the strength of his broad chest and shoulders.

“It is, I admit,” he replied, pushing her away gently. “No, baby.”

“What if I strapped you to the bed?”

“Sounds a lot like your first suggestion.”

“Argh,” she groaned. “Actors with jobs are the worst. Go, get ready,” she grunted, rolling over and snuggling back into her pillow. Sebastian smiled and curled his body around hers, kissing between her bare shoulder blades.

“Go back to sleep, I’ll be quiet,” he promised, chewing her ear lobe before scooting from the bed. He pottered around quietly. Shaving, showering, putting the last of his toiletries in his luggage and dressing. 45 minutes later, he knew the car wouldn’t be far and he put his stuff by the front door before creeping back to the bedroom. “Baby?”

“I’m awake,” Sasha replied, turning on the bedside lamp and sat up sadly, hands writhing in her lap. He wandered over with a small smile and sat next to her on the bed.

“I’ve gotta go,” he whispered, pulling her close and nuzzling her neck. “I love you.”

“Yeah,” Sasha held Sebastian tightly. “I love you too.”

“I’ll be back before you know it. You won’t have time to miss me.”

“Too late,” she admitted.

Sebastian kissed her as his phone started ringing. He sighed and pulled back. “That’s my car. I’ll see you next week, okay?”

“Okay. Safe flight, baby.”

“Thanks,” he gave her one last kiss and moved away, knowing if he went back for one more, he’d be no-showing. “Bye, baby,” he said and disappeared. Sasha sighed and turned off the light, hearing the front door close quietly. She snuggled back into the covers and grabbed his pillow, clutching it tightly. It’s not like he’s be there to claim it anyway.

Chapter End Notes

This is kind of an unplanned chapter. I managed to sneak this in today, ahead of where I planned to take the story. Timeline-wise, it kind of works if you're keeping tabs on Sebastian's 2015 haha Anyway, thank you for reading, the comments and kudos are wonderful and I wouldn't keep doing this if you babes weren't keen. Thank you again xoxo

---

Interested Bystander writes on Tumblr.
Sasha's lingerie if you're keen.
“Hi, frumoasă,” Sebastian smiled, closing his GQ and tossing it on the bedside table before he stood up from his uncomfortable hospital seat, stretching his back and hovered over her. “You’re finally awake. Are you in much pain?” he asked quietly and kissed Sasha’s forehead, gently smoothing her hair.

“Hi,” she said, her voice groggy post-surgery, throat dry, eyes not entirely ready to open yet. She was still on a lot of sedatives and pain medication, he knew. She swallowed and made a face. “Thirsty.”

“I have ice chips right here,” he told her. “The doctor said I could give you one or two when you woke up. Do you want some?”

She nodded, adjusting her posture in the bed gingerly as Sebastian sat on the bed beside her, a small groan of discomfort snuck out. “Please,” she caught sight of her bandaged and braced leg from ankle to mid-thigh and took it in – she wouldn’t be running anywhere fast. It was bold and heavy, but this was the new reality for the next little while.

He smoothed back some of her mussed hair from her eyes and kissed her forehead again. “Here you go,” he collected some ice on a spoon and helped her carefully shovel it into her mouth, thumbing away the water that dropped from the spoon onto her chin.

After a few moments, she asked, “Surgery go okay?”

“Doc said it went pretty routinely. He seemed happy with everything in there and said he’d come back in a few hours to check up on you and meds, so no need to amputate,” he couldn’t resist joking, he noted the humour flash in her eyes momentarily in response. “Do you feel okay?”

“I guess,” she mustered her energy and gripped his sweater. “Thanks for staying.”

He smiled softly. “Tell me one place I might otherwise be? At some point, sweetie, you’re just going to have to realise that it’s you and me,” he offered her another piece of ice. “I’m not going anywhere.”

The anaesthetic from earlier seemed to have left her system. When the nurses brought her to before, she was emotional, a little volatile and talking about needing to see Sebastian immediately. The nurses took great joy in letting him know. She seemed much calmer this time. He put it down to her painkillers kicking in.

“You’re sweet,” she said quietly.

“I did leave to pee,” he said. “Just once though.”

She smiled. “Don’t make me laugh. I’m scared it will hurt.”

“Are you in pain now?”

“A bit,” she admitted.

“Do you want me to sweet talk a nurse and sort out your pain meds?”

She nodded. “Yes, please.”
“And small reminder, you have a catheter. So at least you won’t need to hop up.”

“No!” she moaned sadly. "I forgot about that."

He laughed quietly, not wanting her to feel self-conscious. “You knew they were going to do that in surgery. You will need it a couple of days until you’re mobile again, but they won’t let you leave before you can pee on your own though,” he grinned, looking down, knowing she was exerting unnecessary energy with being cross at him and it’s the last thing he wanted.

The door opened and Sasha’s surgeon meandered in with a friendly smile. “Miss Benson, glad to see you’re awake. Have you managed to have any water, ice chips?”

“Ice chips,” she replied, yawning.

“You aren’t feeling any nausea?”

She shook her head.

“How is the pain? 1 being okay, 10 being awful.”

“About a 7, my back. But I think it’s just because my leg is elevated. Uncomfy.”

“I’ll up your morphine anyway. You’ll want to try and sleep as much over the next few days as possible,” he said, tinkering at her IV.

“Did everything go well?”

“Stock standard,” Dr Owen replied. “Routine. Very pleased with the surgery. There wasn’t anything else we needed to be concerned about, so hopefully you’ll be out of here in 2, 3 days depending on swelling, food intake and bowel movements.”

“Okay.”

“Am I allowed to stay tonight?” Sebastian asked. “I don’t want Sasha here by herself.”

“Only family, son,” Dr Owen apologised.

“I’m her boyfriend and my name is the In Case of Emergency person. Her family is in Australia. She ditched them for me years ago,” he gave a meagre joke at the end as a look of reflection crossed the doctor’s features – it was a little more obvious that he’d still not cut his hair and was maintaining his beard until reshoots in January.

“You’re the Winter Soldier, right? Now I get what the nurses were gossiping so excitedly about.”

“Oh, Jesus,” Sasha rolled her eyes. “Here we go – ”

Sebastian grinned, hiding Sasha’s mouth under his large palm. “Uhh, yeah,” he instantly went into bashful actor mode, but after knowing this man for 10 years, there was no denying he knew all the tricks of the trade to get his own way somehow. Men, women and children fell for this shtick all the time. He didn’t often use it to manipulate situations to his advantage, but was clever enough to do so when required.

This was apparently one of those times.

“My daughter is a big fan.”
“Oh, that’s great. I appreciate it,” Sebastian nodded, shoving his hands in his pockets and ducking his head. Blushing, he was actually blushing.

“Do you think I could get something signed?”

“I’d prefer not. I’m here for Sash as you can understand. I’m sorry. Trying, and I guess failing, to keep a low profile.”

Dr Owen nodded slowly, noting Sebastian’s game. “One autograph in trade for you staying in that horrible bed side chair?”

“Done deal,” Sebastian giggled gleefully as he signed the doctor’s notepad. Sasha shook her head, embarrassed yet a mostly impressed. It wasn’t often he put on a spectacle like that, it just wasn’t Sebastian’s style. But kudos when deserved. After a quick selfie between orthopaedic surgeon and Sebastian Stan, Dr Owen went back to being Sasha’s doctor again.

“Okay, Miss Benson, we should stick to ice chips tonight until the aesthetic wears off and we can think of something solid tomorrow,” Dr Owen signed her charts and smiled. “Get some rest, I’ll be in tomorrow morning. Nurses will be in routinely to check your vitals through the night.”

“Thanks, doc. We appreciate it,” Sebastian said for them as the doctor shook his hand and left the room, quietly.

“You don’t have to stay,” she murmured quietly, as he resumed his spot on the bed next to her, taking her chilly hand in his warm one.

“I want to stay. I’m only going home to a cold, empty apartment otherwise,” he kissed her temple. “Go back to sleep,” he smoothed her hair. “I will be here when you wake up.” he was sure she didn’t make it through his goodnight, watching her eyes close. “Sleep well, beautiful girl.”

---

“This chair is fucking awful,” Sebastian muttered to himself as Sasha grinned at him the next morning, a lot brighter than the previous night. She had woken up a few times in pain or discomfort and of course, the nurses popping in to check vitals. It wasn’t restful for either. “Hey, you’re awake.”

“I ate too,” she pointed at the crusts of the white bread sandwich that was left. “But not the crusts – they make your hair curl.”

He laughed quietly. “That’s good, how long was I asleep?”

“A while,” she confirmed. “You looked so uncomfy. I’m sorry.”

He stood up and stretched, his blue wooden sweater riding up and exposing a little bit of toned belly. “Nothing a shower and run won’t fix.”

She smiled. “Thanks for being here, bub.”

“That’s okay, sweetheart,” he leaned down and kissed her forehead. “I need coffee though. Do you mind if I head out and get us both one?”

“Yes, please. You’re the best.”

He smiled. “Painkillers good?”

“Really good,” she grinned, giving an eager thumbs up as he stifled a laugh. “They lowered my
dosage again before. I can’t really tell the difference though to be honest. I’m certainly high. I know what that feels like.”

He laughed quietly, hiding his mirth behind his hand. “You get tired when you’re stoned,” he pointed out in a knowing reminder. “I’ll be back shortly.”

“Oh, cutie,” she replied as he shook his head (she would never in a million years call him that, he loved these drugs she was on), putting his cap on. “Come here,” she opened her arms to him and crushed him in a hug. “I love you.”

“I love you too,” he kissed her again. “I’ll be right back. Don’t run away.”

“You’re fucking hilarious,” she muttered as he laughed and disappeared. She picked up her phone to see well wishes from her friends and family and a series of voicemails and texts from her mother.

Mum: Sweetheart, just checking in. Sebastian has been texting, just want to hear your voice to make sure you’re okay. Give me a call. Love and kisses.

Sebastian was texting her mother? Weird. Checking the time, she noted how late was in Melbourne, but if she called she knew her mother would pick up.

“Hi, darling,” her mother answered. “How are you feeling?”

“Hi Mum,” she replied. “I feel okay today. Not too much pain, but I’m on a lot of drugs still.”

“That’s understandable. Your father and I know we discussed not coming to New York, but we still would like to see you.”

“It’s pretty expensive now, Mum. Going into Christmas and all. I don’t want you guys out of pocket,” it wasn’t an unreasonable excuse, but it’s not like her parents couldn’t afford it.

“Sebastian seemed to think it would be okay if we stayed at his apartment while he was staying with you at yours.”

“You spoke to Sebastian?” she asked. “He has your number?”

“Delphi had it. Don’t stress, she’d asked him if she could pass the number on. He was fine with it. We spoke earlier today, sometime in the middle of the night for you. He’s such a sweetheart, darling. He was so hospitable and kind.”

“Yeah. He is,” Sasha gave a small laugh, happy her mother had quickly picked up on only a few of his desirable traits. “You’ll really like him when you finally meet him.”

“Your younger sisters are having heart attacks that they’ll finally be able to meet him.”

“You’re bringing the twins?”

“Well, we can’t leave them with Delphine and Melissa at home for Christmas,” her mother reasoned. “They don’t need to babysit young adults as well as their own babies.”

“Christmas?” Sasha repeated, eyebrows shooting to the roof. I’m going to kill him.

“Sebastian suggested we fly in around the 20th for a week or so. It’ll give you some time to adjust to getting around before we get there and we won’t be under your feet.”

“Did he now?” Sasha bit her lip, not sure if she was touched or a little upset he organised
this without discussing with her.

“Yes. He said we should meet his mother and step-father too, as they will also be staying in New York City. Sounds pretty serious, sweetheart.”

“I guess so.”

“Are you in love?”

Sasha sighed. “Mum.”

“Sasha, it was a simple question. I think I’ve figured it out from talking to him anyway. You don’t share this stuff with me, never have,” the tone semi-accusatory. “I’m happy for you, he sounds like a sweetheart.”

Softening, Sasha admitted, “He is. Add that to devastatingly handsome, polite, handsome, sweet, handsome,” she joked to try and break some of her own tension. It didn’t really work but her mother laughed anyway.

“All right, all right. You’re loved up, I get it. Well, regardless, we can’t wait to meet him, his parents and see our wonderful daughter.”

“Looks like it will be a big Christmas now,” Sasha acknowledged, a little daunted.

“Are you okay with that, darling?”

“I’m just not sure how mobile I’ll be,” Sasha replied meekly. It was a pitiful excuse, she knew.

“Oh, of course. I’m under no illusions you’ll be taking in the sights with us.”

Sasha gave an uneasy laugh. “Okay, I’ll discuss it with Sebastian when he comes back from getting us coffee.”

“Okay, darling. I’m so glad you’re feeling okay.”

“Yeah, I’m okay,” she admitted. “I’ll let you go, I know it’s late.”

“Sure, sweetheart. You rest up and call me in a few days. I’ll email you our flight arrangements when we get them sorted. You okay with that?”

“I’m sure it’ll work out fine.”

“Your sisters all miss you. We’ll have to plan to get you home soon so you can see how big your nieces and nephews are getting.”

Sasha smiled fondly. She missed the rugrats. And her sisters. And her parents. “We can look into that, yeah. I miss them too. I know Seb would like to come to Australia.”

“We’d love to have you both here! Okay, you take care, darling. Speak soon.”

“Night, Mum.”

“Bye, darling,” she hung up as Sebastian wandered back in a few minutes later, slurping on an iced coffee and a skim flat white for her. Sasha put her phone back on the table and forced a smile that he saw straight through.
What?” he frowned, he offered her the coffee.

“Just got off the phone with Mum.”

“Oh?” he retracted the coffee. Shit.

“Yeah. Mum seems to think they’re coming to New York at Christmas.”

He took a seat, chewing his cheek, contemplating his answer. “Look, I was gonna tell you as soon as I got back with these,” he handed her coffee finally. “I just thought it would be nice for you to see them. It’s been nearly a year since you went home to Melbourne last.”

“Yeah…” she acknowledged, time had surely flown. “Sebastian, these are the kinds of things both of us hate. The fuss, I mean.”

He shrugged, not disagreeing. “I mean, it’ll be okay. My parents, us, your parents and your sisters. Eight. Nothing I can’t handle.”

“Eight where?”

He sighed, hiding behind his coffee cup. “I’ll hire extra furniture and shit. I don’t care, I’ll find a way to have us all together.”

“Bub,” she sighed. “I don’t think I’m going to be very welcoming.”

“When are you, generally?” he smirked, slurping his beverage.

“Fuck you,” she rubbed her weary eyes. “I mean, I can’t get around and do stuff, you know,” she eased off a little, retracting her frustrated tone.

“I know. I can though,” he had an answer for everything right now.

“Bub,” she said again, a little more exasperated. “That’s not your responsibility.”

“Well, it kind of is since I invited them,” he played with the straw in his cup, the ice making a racket. “Look, I can be really resourceful when I need to be, you just need to trust me. I’ve already made some lists,” he picked up his iPad from the bedside table. “Watch this. Let me dazzle you,” he thrust jazz hands in her face as she gave a wry grin, smacking his hands away lightly.

“Please do,” she adjusted her pillow as he grinned.

“You and I stay at your place because of your knee. It’s smaller, more open. Your family stays at my apartment. There’s two bedrooms, so the twins can share, that will be okay, right?”

She gave a wary nod and lit up when she found a catch. “Your parents usually stay with you when they’re in the city. Where will you evict them to?”

“I’ll put them up in a hotel close by,” he said like it was no big thing. “Something close to us and my step-siblings. We’ll probably have something with them too some night if you’re up to it. And I’ll have a van service on call to get everyone around.”

“It will cost a fortune.”

He shrugged. “I’m sure it won’t break the bank,” he handed her his iPad and showed her the notes he’d already made. She had to hand it to him, he’d never appeared so prepared. He even had deciphered times he would be able to manage the gym (early, she’d hope Don was a morning
person), get her to her physio appointments, options for venues that could possibly cater Christmas lunch or dinner/or go to if Sasha was up to it and a list of presents for everyone, minus the two of them, with the provision note Sebastian had made for himself, reading, “get girlfriend something spectacular because she’s amazing and smart and sexy and a smartass”. She grinned at the last note that he’d clearly left there for her purposefully.

“This is pretty concise,” she was impressed knowing Sebastian Stan did not make lists. He was serious about this.

“You think you’re the only one who can organise something at the drop of a hat?” he scoffed, but secretly pleased he’d impressed her. He gave her a small kiss.

“You usually leave this stuff to me,” she pointed out.

“I’m not a total man-child,” he defended himself, finally smiling again.

“Jury’s still out.”

He made a face. “It will be great. I’ll do everything I can to not overwhelm you and make sure you’re still recovering well. I’ll send the Moms to spa days and I can take the Dads to basketball or hockey with Chace and the guys,” he suggested. “I can get Ollie to take the twins shopping, Broadway and do some touristy shit. Ollie’ll love having kids to corrupt.”

Sasha inhaled sharply, taking in the somewhat proud, handsome man before her. She knew it wouldn’t be as easy as he made it sound, but stuck in the hospital with a lot of morphine in her system, she was feeling a little claustrophobic and a lot homesick. He was doing what she didn’t even know she needed by bringing her family to them. Her eyes watered a little as he jumped up, surprised.

“Are you okay?” he asked, taking her hand. “Have I fucked up?”

“I just really love you, Sebastian,” she said as a few stray tears fell down her cheeks. “I didn’t realise this is what I wanted, I didn’t even want to consider it, but it’s amazing. Thank you.”

He smiled widely. “You are most welcome,” he reached down and kissed her gently, resting his forehead against hers. “I love you too. I will make sure to shoo everyone when you’re tired, I’ll make sure the Moms don’t fuss too much and I’ll even make sure Ma makes you gogosi on Christmas Day.”

“Now you’re just showing off,” Sasha rolled her eyes, running a hand through his dark hair, giving it a little tug. “Thank you,” she gave him the tiniest smile.

“It’s fine,” he shrugged simply. “It’ll be great. I promise. Guess I’m gonna have to organise a tree too. Think Rockefeller will let me buy theirs?”
Chapter Summary

If she’d learnt one thing in all the years she’d know him, it was that he always managed to make her feel new and exciting ways of hating how much she cared about him.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“My pits are killing me,” Sasha tried to hide her whine as she stood in the elevator and adjusted her crutches for the millionth time. Sebastian had picked her up from the hospital and they were staying at her apartment as everything was smaller and much more open until she was a little more mobile.

“Is your knee okay?” he asked, resting a warm hand on the back of her neck tenderly, softly massaging the tense muscles after a few uncomfortable days in a hospital bed.

She leaned into his gentle touch, sighing deeply. “I’m okay. The painkillers they gave me before we left are kicking in. I think I’ve got a couple of doses to go today and the next couple of days. Then I’m on my own.”

“Well, bright side is you don’t have to go anywhere,” he reminded her, reaching around her to kiss her softly. “And you’ve got me waiting on you, hand and foot.”

She grinned, jabbing his side as he jumped away – he was sensationally ticklish around his waist. “That might be the best part about this.”

“Well, bright side is you don’t have to go anywhere,” he reminded her, reaching around her to kiss her softly. “And you’ve got me waiting on you, hand and foot.”

“Hey,” he exclaimed a little defensively. “I’m happy to take care of you. But tickling me will get you nowhere.”

Her eyes softened, mirth disappearing. “I know,” she shuffled closer to him and kissed his stubbly chin. “I love you, thank you for being here for me.”

He couldn’t resist and broke into a shy smile. “I love you too, and it’s no problem,” he said as the elevator doors opened. He stood in between the doors as Sasha hobbled out slowly and he followed her to her apartment door, her back pack over his shoulders. Sebastian opened the apartment door and she made a wobbly beeline for the living area. Dropping her crutches with a noisy crash and rolling to the couch, narrowly avoiding injury, she grinned like an idiot. Paranoia washed over him was he waited for her to tell him she’d ruptured her stitches or something worse but she only looked back with an arrogant smirk, thoroughly proud of herself. Relaxing slightly, he chuckled uneasily. “That was impressive. Only you would somehow flip onto the couch after knee surgery. 10 points for creativity from the Romanian judge.”

“I’ll take it since your beautiful Motherland gave the world Nadia Comaneci and you must know something about it since you were a gymnast in a film that one time,” she winked, opened her arms wide, nodding her head to bow as he blushed, shaking his head a little. It wasn’t the time to bring up some of his other scenes for The Bronze just yet.

"Don't do that again, okay? Just stand up and sit down like a normal person,” he begged as he
retreated put her bag in her bedroom and returned a minute later, shrugging off his leather jacket, cap and taking a close seat beside her, gently pulling her braced leg onto his to keep it elevated. “Water? Tea? Food?”

“Just Sebastian, please.”

“Me what?”

“I just want you.”

He smiled. “I can do that,” he snuggled closer, kissing her temple. “Do you want to watch Netflix?”

“Just Netflix. Sadly no chill.”

“Sadly, no,” he laughed. “But when that brace comes off, we’re chilling, you hear me?” he cupped her face, laying a sloppy kiss on her lips.

“There will be lots of chilling,” she promised. “Any other day and we’d just walked in, we’d be ripping our clothes off at this point.”

He nodded with a pout. “True.” That was a sad revelation, Sebastian realised. He cleared his throat, forcing a smile.

“I’m very much looking forward to ripping your clothes off.”

“I can’t wait,” he cupped her face and kissed her again. “You’re so beautiful.”

“Seb…” she blushed. “I don’t think I’ve ever looked more unkempt in your presence before. This is not a look I practice,” she said, taking in her sweats, messy hair and her more than alluring leg brace.

"I don't care about that other shit,” he said simply.

"Well, give it a few days. The novelty will wear off."

“One day you will learn to accept a compliment, for fuck’s sake,” he chuckled, reaching for the TV remote, turning it on. “What have you been binging on?”

“Movies mostly.”

“Is there a show neither of us have watched?”


“I did shower with soap after gym this morning,” he teased, wriggling his eyebrows suggestively before giggling quietly.

“Oh, that’s what it is,” she reached around and gently kissed his neck.

“Woman, what do you think you’re doing?” he moved away from her kiss, squinting at her disapprovingly. “Stop, devil. I am not having sex with you. There is no physical way, so you need to cut it out, okay?” his voice said it was his first and final warning. His face told another story, though - he didn't mean what he was saying in the slightest.

“There is nothing we can do?” she battered her eyelashes, innocently. “I’m sure I could do something.”
He laughed, rubbing his eyes. *Good Christ.* “I’m going for fucking sainthood, I swear to God,” he muttered to himself. He looked back at her, crossly. “No, I’m not letting you wear me down, let alone trick me into doing something that will only hurt you. While you’re in a knee brace, no. That includes going down on each other. Even though you’re amazing at it and I wish I hadn’t just thought about it because all I can imagine is your mouth on my dick now,” he muttered ruefully. “*Fuck it.*”

She grunted. “Argh, fine,” she made herself comfortable again, adjusting her posture to sit against the back of the couch instead of him.

“Don’t get angry,” he leaned over and gave her a sloppy kiss on the cheek. “You’re well aware of this, crazy. The doctor was pretty specific.”

“I just don’t want you to get bored,” she murmured quietly. She picked her fingernails, unable to meet his perplexed gaze.

“Why would I get bored?” he asked, frowning. “I’m never bored with you, Benzo.”

“I don’t know,” she blushed, almost embarrassed to say what she had been thinking.

“What’s going on, Sasha?”

“What if some pretty girl comes along and I’m just the sloth sitting on the couch in a knee brace?” she spat out. “You’ve got auditions coming up, who’s to say some pretty actress isn’t running lines with you?”

He blinked a few times, trying to get the words through his head before he smiled widely. “That is so incredibly insulting. Are you actually insinuating that I’d hook up with this woman you’ve made up in your head?”

“I just don’t want you to get disinterested while you wait for me,” she added quietly.

“I waited for you for the better part of 10 years,” he pinched her chin, his grin not faltering. “Think another month or two will hurt me?” he licked her nose, highly amused.

She used the sleeve of her hoodie to wipe her nose. “I don’t know,” she said softly, before hiding her face behind a pillow. He pried it away from her and kissed her deeply.

“Benzo, I’m not going to sleep with anyone else. Aren’t we, you know... Committed?” he asked shyly, obviously more than a little confused. They hadn’t exactly spoken about being completely exclusive, but he hadn’t considered them not to be and he was sure she was the same.

“Are we?”

“Have you been dating anyone else since Germany? Mind you it’s been 4 months,” he raised an eyebrow. *He knew the answer.*

“No.”

“Have I?” he asked. *She knew the answer.*

“No,” she blushed as he nodded and took her hand in his, drawing circles on her palm.

“Baby, it’s just us now. I’m sorry, you cannot sleep with anyone else anymore. But if you are, I guess that’s another conversation we have to have – ” his lips twitched, biting back a smile as she
looked back at him, aghast. “I honestly didn’t think we needed to have this conversation,” he was a little baffled that he needed to reassure her of this. But maybe he was a little disappointed too.

“I know, I love you. You’re my person.”

“But?” he leaned down and gently kissed her neck. “There’s something on your mind.”

“I just, you know, want to be enough for you.”

“You are,” he promised, nuzzling her pulse. He smiled against her skin as she shuddered under his touch. “You’re more than enough of a handful for me, Sasha Benzo.”

She laughed bashfully. “I don’t mean to be that either.”

“We’re both a challenge, we know that. You’re an absolute perfectionist, I’m a complete neurotic. Its got fuckin’ disaster written all over it,” he joked. “You know that.”

“Yeah…” she snuggled into his arm, hiding a yawn. “I’m just a little… I dunno. Insecure. This, being with you, this is new for me. Just learning how to cope with it all still, I guess.”

“What do you want? A ring?” he asked.

“No, God no,” she brushed the notion away. They stared at each other, a little stunned – neither had expected him to say that (him especially, he’d stipulated many times over the years that he had little intention getting married after the rotten impression his parents left on him). She finally exhaled. “Things are changing for you, Sebastian. You’re the busiest you’ve ever been. I just… I know at some point or another, I might not be there and there will be temptation.”

He sighed loudly, a little put off. He couldn’t believe she was still so unassured. “Then you don’t know me that well,” he pursed his lips together before chewing his bottom lip, contemplating his reply. “Benzo, you were, and you always will be, the temptation,” he rubbed his eyes. He didn’t want to get into this now. They were both exhausted. She certainly wasn’t thinking straight and he suspected her pain medication was making her a little loopy. “Let me explain something to you, okay?” he held her face in his hands, forcing her eyes to meet his. “Real simple, real quick.”

She nodded meekly.

“When I was seeing other people, the problem in those relationships was you. None of them survived because of you, Sasha. I was always distracted by you. Or those girls were jealous of our friendship. But now that I actually have you, that we’re us, do you honestly think that I would jeopardise that?”

“I just…” her eyes welled up. “What if I’m not good enough for you?”

“You are the best for me,” he vowed. “My best friend, the best lover I’ve ever had. The person I trust most in the world. Why would I do something so stupid – and I know, I have done some fucking stupid things in the past with other girlfriends and you’ve been right there in the front row to watch, so you might not have all the faith in me that you should – but I don’t plan on having other women, Sash. This is it. Us, right here, getting old and chubby together. Please don’t resent me too much for telling it to you straight.”

She failed holding back a stray tear, resting her head on his bicep. “I don’t know why I’m like this. Why am I going out of my way to ruin this?”

“You’re not ruining anything, trust me. We’re both insecure at the best of times. The drugs are not helping your psyche, that’s for sure,” he moved his arm and wrapped it around her, kissing
and nuzzling her hair. “I know it’s taken a while for us. We both probably should have just told each other years ago how we felt. Some days, I wake up and think, ‘oh God, Sasha’s going to get so bored of me. She’ll find someone else that will interest her – ’”

“No!” Sasha exclaimed, “That could never happen!”

He grinned with a shrug. “Then you get it, kiddo,” he said simply. “Come here,” he pulled her face to his. “Kiss me please, you crazy pain in my ass.”

She did as she was told and threw in as much love and adoration that she had for him. It was a good kiss. It she wasn’t days out of surgery, surrounded in a leg brace and on some really fucking good painkillers, in normal circumstance, she probably would have taken him on the couch right then and there. She held onto his arms and yawned again as he tightened his grip around her. “I love you, I love you, I love you,” she repeated, hoping he could remotely feel what she felt. He smiled widely.

“I know, baby. Ești jumătatea mea. Te iubesc din toată inima.”

“You said you loved me but I don’t know the rest.”

“You’re my other half,” he translated, with a casual shrug, like saying it was no big thing. “I love you so much. Don’t ever doubt it, okay?”

“Oh,” she nodded, reaffirmed by his words. Those eyes, she sighed. Those stony eyes staring back at her and all she could see in them was her. Absolute adoration. “I don’t know why I’m being like this.”

“You can admit the drugs are kicking in now,” he said with a small smile.

“The drugs are kicking in now,” she yawned again, snuggling into him as he kept her close. He grabbed the blanket from the back of the couch and threw it over her, tucking them both in.

“Should I get off my soapbox now?” he asked as she blinked slowly.

“Yes, please.”

He nodded. “Okay. Do I love when we have sex? God, yes,” he groaned as memories flooded his imagination. “Will I miss having sex with you for a while? Okay, yeah, sure. But I’m pretty sure I won’t die…” he looked down at her and laughed quietly. “And you’re asleep. Good argument,” he grinned, kissing her forehead, flipping to Discovery channel. “If only I could win all disagreements with you that easily.”

---

“I’m so sick of this couch,” Sasha wailed, tossing the TV remote in disgust as Sebastian rolled his eyes.

It wasn’t a good day, he noted as he closed the script his management finally pressured him in to reading over his fingers not to lose the page (he was happy for the break, he wasn’t enjoying it in the slightest). She was officially in hell. Still fairly immobile and now off painkillers, while she wasn’t in any real discomfort, she was going stir crazy and desperate to leave her apartment. Outside the first snow had started falling for the season and she knew that it wasn’t the best idea while still on crutches but didn’t make her want to stay indoors any more.

If only she’d had the surgery in Summer, he’d told her smugly. He wasn’t surprised when a couch cushion smacked him in the face and she added, “And then I’d never have gone to Germany. You’d
never have taken me to Paris and we’d never had fallen in love. And you’d be lonely without me.
The end.”

Of course she was right.

“Why don’t we pack you up here and go to my place for the night?” Sebastian suggested. “We can invite everyone over. Turn on the fireplace, have a few drinks?”

She raised an eyebrow at him. “You trust me enough to leave my own apartment?” she feigned surprise. “I thought I was still under house arrest.”

“You’re only under house arrest for a few more days,” he laughed, shaking his head. “You are getting around pretty easily now. But, like, aren’t you enjoying us just having some time together?” he added softly.

“Don’t get romantic on me, Sebastian. You’re feeling as cooped up as I am,” she muttered. “At least you get to escape for coffee and gym every morning.”

He sighed in defeat. She wasn’t wrong, he realised. To this point, they had done really well tolerating each other in her small apartment. He was (mostly) happily on her beck and call (it was easy since he knew she held back on asking him even for the simplest thing, preferring to hobble around to do it herself). They hadn’t fought per se, but they were both starting to get stir crazy and he didn’t want them to fight over something silly like being contained indoors for far too long. He creased the page in his script and tossed it on the coffee table. “Okay. You’re right.”

“Great,” she beamed, clapping. “Let’s got to Rockefeller so I can finally see the big tree.”

He rolled his eyes, lowering his gaze to laugh. “Sure, wanna go skating too? Come on, be realistic.”

“Okay, let’s go to your place then,” she said in a bored tone, but she was secretly thrilled. She didn’t care where they went as long as it was out of her apartment.

He smiled. “Great.”

A few hours later, both on the floor in front of the fireplace, Sasha snuggled back against Sebastian’s broad chest as she sat between his legs. He happily left a trail of wet kisses on her skin when he lazily felt like it. “Have you decided what we’re doing on Christmas Day?”

“I’ll book a chef tomorrow, Will gave me a few options,” he nuzzled behind her ear as she smiled. “I need to get a cleaner too, this place has been a bit abandoned with us at your place and your family gets here in a few days.”

He sipped his wine as she stared at the flames before them. “Sebastian?”

He hummed in reply.

“Thank you.”

“For what?”

“Everything. I know I’ve been a real pain the last few weeks.”

“What, after major knee surgery?” he asked sarcastically. “Don’t be silly, you don’t have to thank me. Even if we weren’t us, I’d still do this,” he reminded her. “You’d do the same for me.”

She nodded. “Yeah, but you know… I haven’t been the nicest, I haven’t looked the greatest and I
definitely have been a burden.”

He laughed. “Okay, you’ve been a bit shitty because you’re frustrated. You haven’t been parading around half-naked, turning me on like crazy, but shit. I love seeing you in my snuggled up in my NASA hoodie I’m clearly never getting back – I’d never let anyone else ever wear that, you know – your nerd glasses and if you’re a burden, Jesus, I dread to think what I am to you on a regular weekday,” he bit her earlobe gently and her head lolled back onto his strong shoulder. “Quit thanking me. Just appreciate it. There might be a time I need a little TLC too.”

“I do, trust me,” she turned a little to face him. “I love you.”

He smiled back, his eyes flickering. “Yeah, I know you do,” he gave her a soft kiss. “Who should I call to come over?”

“No one,” she told him, settling back into his chest. “Just you and I. This is nice.”

He gave a lopsided smile. “Okay… a change of scenery is as good as a holiday, huh?”

She nodded, with a small giggle. "Yeah, guess so."

Chapter End Notes

This was one of the first pieces I wrote months ago and probably the chapter I’m most pleased with, esp the first part. I hope you enjoy it too. Thank you again for the comments and kudos on the last chapter. It was so exciting to hear from you all, I just adore you xoxo

---

Interested Bystander writes on Tumblr.
Chapter Summary

If she’d learnt one thing in all the years she’d know him, it was that he always managed to make her feel new and exciting ways of hating how much she cared about him.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The chaos was immanent, Sasha realised as Sebastian laughed in the kitchen with his mother and step-father about some story about when he was a teenager and some mischief he thought he’d gotten away with but apparently hadn’t. Sasha was sitting on a stool, having a silent mini-meltdown knowing that her family would be pressing the buzzer for Sebastian’s apartment in minutes and bombarding them. She was aware Sebastian was making an active watch to avoid her having a panic attack.

Still a few days out from Christmas, the city was bright and sparkly as she picked up her crutches and hobbled over to the frosty window, peering out to the street below. Within a few seconds, Sebastian was behind her and wrapped his arms around her waist, his cool hands sliding under her warm woollen jumper away from the sight of his mother, she shuddered gently but didn’t resist against him as his fingertips dragged against her ribs. “You okay?” he nuzzled her neck with the scruff on his chin.

“Yeah, just the calm before the storm,” she said quietly.

“It’ll be fine. I’ve got you,” he told her, kissing her temple. “Relax. Come have a glass of wine with me. I opened some good stuff just for you.”

A few minutes later and everyone again laughing at poor Sebastian as an awkward teenager again, his doorbell buzzed. “Oh, shit,” Sasha said, breath hitching.

“You okay, dragă?” Ana asked, a small smile similar to the one her son was wearing lighting up her beautiful face.

“She’s freaking out her family are here, Ma. She's fine,” Sebastian rolled his eyes, carrying his wine glass to the buzzer. “Hello?” he answered.

“Merry Christmas, Sebastian!” a group of Australian accents replied. "Hi! Hello!"

“Has to be a hoard of Bensons,” he joked, buzzing them in. “Come on up.”

“Can’t wait!” Sasha's mother exclaimed.

“It’s all good, baby,” Sebastian tried to reassure Sasha, opening the apartment door and standing in the doorway, patiently. He was hiding his nerves well, considering it was the first time he’d met her family. He’d met her eldest sister Delphine on her honeymoon in LA when he was working out there permanently a few years back – Sasha had politely asked (forced) him to show her sister and new husband a night out in Hollywood (the hangovers are still spoken about to this day when Sebastian is discussed with her family).
Ana stood before Sasha and took her hands. “Stop fidgeting and sit up straight like a dancer, please,” she scolded gently as Sasha did what she was told. Sebastian gave a small smile as his mother attempted to compose his girlfriend since nothing he’d done to this point had worked and there goes his mother, just fixing everything like always. “Why are you so nervous to see your family?”

“Because I’ve been a terrible daughter and sister who hasn’t done enough to get home in the last few years,” Sasha confided, Ana brushed Sasha’s hair from her eyes, tutting her.

Sasha didn’t bother to add that Sebastian was the first real boyfriend she’d introduced to her family to. Not that she was nervous of them to meet him, not at all. Everyone who came into contact with him, they fell head over heels for him, her family would be the same. She just knew that since family was now involved, things were about to become a lot more real and serious.

“Cry me a river, you’ve been busy having a successful career,” Sebastian called back, shaking his head as the elevator opened and noise erupted in the hallway. Sebastian gave a light laugh as he was enveloped into a large hug immediately by Alexandra, Sasha’s mother. Sebastian had to admit, the Benson gene game was strong. Sure, he’d spoken to them on FaceTime and seen lots of photos, but all the girls were dead ringers for their stunning mother. It wasn’t all that upsetting to him, he realised with a cheeky grin.

“Sebastian, it’s so wonderful to finally meet you!” Alexandra gushed.

“You too, Mrs Benson,” he said politely as she pulled him back to inspect him closely, cradling his face in her gloved hands, wearing a bright smile – she was extremely impressed with her daughter’s choice in suitor, Sebastian’s handsomeness was astounding, he gently blushed under her gaze, not dissimilar to Sasha’s when she was trying to read him. “Come in,” he moved away from the door as Alexandra led the twins, Sofia and Emerson and Sasha’s father, Davis, inside.

“Oh, my girl,” Alexandra exclaimed as the Bensons converged on her, a group hug ensuing. Davis stayed back until he could get near his middle child.

“I’ve missed you, sweetheart,” Davis said, giving her a hug, letting his warmth attempt to appease his fretful daughter. “How’s the knee?”

“Hi, Dad. It’s okay,” Sasha shrugged, not letting him go - she was Daddy's Girl. After being the youngest for such a long time, not much had changed after the twins arrived. She would force her sisters to fight her attentions for their dad and they'd always lose. “Less painful everyday as long as I keep moving and not over do it. Can ditch the crutches in the New Year.”

“Good girl,” he smiled, kissing her cheek, proudly. “So, this guy that opened the door, do I have to be concerned about him?” Davis joked with a glare as Sebastian blushed and ducked his head behind his long hair Sasha had begged him to leave out.

“Davis!” Alexandra warned. “Sebastian, don’t listen to him. Sasha, introduce your father to your boyfriend, please?”

“Uhh, of course,” Sasha inhaled as she hobbled to Sebastian. He gave a half smile and met her in the middle, wrapping an arm around her waist to support her without her crutches. “Dad, this is Sebastian, my boyfriend.”

The men shook hands, Davis wearing a friendly smile. “It’s great to finally meet you, mate. Hope my girl isn’t giving you too much grief?”

“No ‘sir’. Sebastian. Davis is fine,” he told Sebastian who nodded, with a small flush. “And these terrors are our youngest daughters, Sofia and Emerson.”

The twins gave simple waves, a little quiet still. Although very similar in features, they were fraternal twins and Sebastian had been worded up by Sasha that Emerson was blonde like the rest of the girls in the family, where Sofia was a little more experimental, currently sporting lilac hair.

“Uhh, this is my Mom, Ana and step-dad Mark,” Sebastian introduced everyone.

“My God,” Alexandra’s green eyes widened as the dad’s shook hands. “Ana, you are just stunning. I know where Sebastian gets his good looks from,” she hugged Sebastian’s mother openly.

“Mum, calm down,” Sasha begged as Alexandra brushed her daughter’s humiliation away. “I don’t know where she has this energy after twenty plus hours on an airplane. I had a nap two hours ago and I’m ready to go to bed again,” she whispered to Sebastian who gave a small laugh in reply and kissed her hair.

“Did you hear that my Sebastian is sending us to a day spa tomorrow afternoon then cocktails at his friend’s new bar?” Ana asked, pouring a glass of wine for Alexandra and Davis. “We can talk about how we get these two married and spitting out some grandkids for us.”

“Wow,” Sebastian said under his breath in awe of his mother. “She just went straight for it. Like, no hesitation or nothin’,’” his New York accent thick courtesy to his wonderment.

“Oh, my God, are we talking about grandkids already?” Alexandra held her heart, giving Sasha and Sebastian pointed look of hope.

“They aren’t, but we can,” Ana reassured Alexandra. “They say it’s too soon. Too soon after 10 years!”

“This is all your fault for bringing my family here,” Sasha smiled broadly, patting his tummy (abs) affectionately as Sebastian gave a tight-lipped smile. “Now they want me pregnant. I can’t walk on my own, but a belly will certainly help my balance. High five, Seb,” she offered a hand as he glared back, leaving her hanging.

He made a weak noise in the back of his throat. “Yeahhh…” he dragged out. It was like a car accident, Sebastian realised. And he just couldn’t look away.

“Mum wants Stan grandchildren,” Sofia spoke up.

“She’s been very vocal,” Emerson added.

“Girls,” Alexandra hissed as her youngest daughters.

“That’s wonderful. I am all for this!” Ana gushed, excitedly. “We’ve just been waiting for so long for you two to get together and now you are, so beautiful together. No pressure of course, Sebastian darling,” Ana told her son.

“Nah, course not,” he replied dryly. Sasha could feel every one of her muscle seize under her touch and giggled quietly. “We don’t live together –”

“Oh please, she’s at your apartment every night,” Ana reminded him.

“Correction, the Bensons are at my house,” he gave her a smart smile as she shook her head.
“Don’t listen to them, mate,” Davis said. “Alexandra already has enough grandkids to keep her busy for now.”

“For now,” Sasha muttered under her breath as Sebastian sighed. They knew it was a losing battle.

“You must show me pictures of these grandbabies!” Ana told Alexandra who nodded emphatically. “Tomorrow, at drinks! How many do you have?”

“Our eldest daughter Delphine has two boys, they’re 3 years and 18 months and Melissa, our second, has fraternal twin daughters, they’re 2.”

“Twins are strong in your family,” Ana smiled widely at Sebastian. The idea that she could have two grandbabies at once was electrifying. Sebastian, on the other hand, did not agree.

“Again, no pressure, Sebastian darling,” Sasha taunted him as he broke into a smile, laughing quietly and whispered, “Hope you’ve got potent swimmers, bub. There is a lot of pressure building on you to perform now.”

“Shut up, you,” he warned into her ear. “You’re supposed to be on my side. We’re a team now. You and me against our Moms.”

“They will beat us!”

“You’re not wrong,” he conceded.

“Have you two spoken about weddings?” Alexandra queried.

“Mum!” Sasha exclaimed. “Enough.”

“I will take that as a no,” Ana sighed. “Perfect for each other, these two.”

“No, we haven’t,” Sebastian told everyone. “But it seems like a conversation we’ll be having all together in the not to distant future,” the sarcasm in his voice did not go amiss to Ana and Sasha as he raised his wine glass, cheekily. Sasha grinned at him, impressed at his snark. It was a rare he displayed his sass, but when he resorted to it, he picked his moments well. Sasha gave Sebastian a light pinch on the ass and winked, proudly as he couldn't resist his low chuckle.

Ana frowned at her son. “Sebastian,” she chastised. "Sasha, don't encourage him."

“I’m going to show the twins their room,” Sasha spoke up with a giggle, as Sofia handed Sasha her crutches. “Thanks, come on, you two,” she lead the twins down the hallway and opening the guestroom door that Sebastian had organised for them both. He’d removed the double bed and put in a couple of singles and got rid of some work things he’d stored in there (festerling prosthetic arm casts he’d kept after the Winter Soldier’s metal arms were constructed, plastic knives, Team USA jacket, NASA paraphernalia and scripts to name a few things that were now stashed as Sasha’s for safekeeping). “How were your flights?” Sasha asked, sitting on one of the bed’s as the twins sat on the other.

They both shrugged, visibly pretty tired. “It’s awesome to be here though. How hot is Sebastian, seriously?” Emerson whispered as Sofia winked. “Did you know he upgraded our flights? We were in First all the way here. We only found out at the airport! We couldn't drink on the plane from Los Angeles to New York though.”

"Melbourne to LA was a nice 15-hour booze binge," Sofia winked as Sasha realised how different 18 was for her to her younger sisters. "Your boyfriend is good."
A small surprised smile passed Sasha’ lips. Her sweet man, a typical Sebastian Stan move. His generosity overwhelmed her sometimes. “I had no idea he upgraded you guys. But don’t be star struck, you know. It’s just Sebastian. You’ll realise he’s not remotely Hollywood very quickly. Mostly just a good looking nerd, whom at times, is quite hilarious.”

“And you get to have sex with him,” Emerson said.

“Hey,” Sasha warned. She didn’t need to hear her 18-year-old sisters talk like that.

“We know what sex is,” Sofia rolled her eyes. “But he… he is something else.”

“The longer hair is awesome,” Emerson added.

“He has reshoots for the next Captain America film in late January, he has to keep it long. He is hating it although I think I kind of prefer it that way now,” Sasha told them with a smirk.

“How do you just look at him?” Sofia asked.

Sasha had to laugh. “Looking at him is pretty easy. He is getting better as he gets older,” she admitted.

“No one knew he would end up like that…” Emerson said with a wide smile.

“You mean as big as he is now?”

Emerson nodded. “It suits him.”

“Yeah, it’s pretty good, right?” Sasha giggled as her sisters smiled in reply. “Mum seriously talking about us having kids?”

“Yup,” Emerson said. “Wants brown haired, blue-eyed southeastern European grandkids, you can quote that.”

“Wow,” Sasha sighed.

“Are you guys really not going to?” Emerson continued.

“We haven’t talked about it,” Sasha admitted. “He’s not a huge supporter of marriage.”

“Why not?” Sofia asked.

“Dunno. Guess his parents divorcing when he was so little has a lot to do with it. Some stuff has stayed with him,” she shrugged. “I can’t answer for him. It’s not a conversation we’ve had.”

“Well, aren’t you going to have to soon? I mean, you’re not getting any younger.”

“Thanks, Sof. Appreciate it,” Sasha rolled her eyes and pushed herself off the bed, carefully. “Let’s have something to drink then I think Seb and I and his parents will probably leave. It’s been a long day for you guys.”

“Yeah,” the twins agreed, following their hobbling older sister back to the group, where Sebastian was being interrogated by his mother and Alexandra still. It was hard to give him any sympathy considering this whole thing was his idea in the first place.

“Help me!” he mouthed as Sasha grinned and gave him a thumbs up in reply before moving her attention to her father and Mark.
“I’m exhausted,” Sasha yawned. They were finally back at her apartment after a few drinks and a light dinner with their families, leaving the Bensons settle in after long day of travel and his parents checked into their hotel.

Sebastian stretched his muscular arms above his head as he meandered back into the room in his boxers, fresh from brushing his teeth. He climbed into the bed beside her and kissed her deeply with a pleased hum, before falling back on his pillow. “We survived though.”

“You have a full week of this, sweet Sebastian. You survived Day 1. Don’t get ahead of yourself,” Sasha smiled, rolling to her side and tucking some long hair behind his ear. She looked at that gorgeous face, he was amazing. He was fantastic tonight.

He laughed. “Yup, a week to go.”

“Thank you,” she reached over and pecked at his jaw. “For organising all this. It means a lot.”

He opened his arms as she snuck into them and snaked an arm around his strong waist. “No problem, Benzo. Hey,” he kissed her temple and sighed as she gave him her attention. “Do we have to talk about the marriage and kids thing?” he asked a little apprehensively. “It was a hot topic tonight.”

“I know it’s not in your plans,” she told him with a casual shrug, she hadn’t recently considered it to be in hers either. “Don’t let everyone scare you, Seb.”

“I’m not,” he said quietly. “It’s just, you know, I didn’t think we would have been remotely close to that place in our relationship. It’s awesome we’re here after all this time, but this is so new still –”

“We’re not, bub. We’re still working out how it all fits together,” she reassured him, drawing patterns on his hips as he leaned down and kissed her, gently chewing her bottom lip and sighing again, sadly unable to contain his frown. She pressed her fingers to his forehead to try and alleviate the lines he was causing. “I can barely take care of myself let alone anyone else.”

“That’s not true. You’ve been looking out for me for 10 years,” he shuffled closer, throwing a strong thigh over hers carefully.

“Sebastian,” she said. “We’re not having babies, we’re not getting married. We’re not at that place.”

"I don't want you to get some idea in your head -"  

"I haven't, I won't," she cut him off. "Trust me."

“You’re lying to me,” he said, holding her face and kissing her deeply, his tongue gently caressing hers, deliciously tasting like her mint mouthwash. “In Atlanta a few years back, you told me you seemed to think you wanted a baby. I haven’t forgotten.” No, he absolutely had not forgotten that humid afternoon as he dropped their groceries and held her as she wept in the street on the way to Evans’ place for drinks and a BBQ. Another story for another day.

“That was then. I don't feel like that anymore,” she mumbled, shuffling away. “Please forget I said that. God, I wasn't even drunk when that shit spilled.”

“I can't forget you feeling that way, you were so... distraught. I never wanna see you like that again. It was a big revelation, iubi.”
“What do you want me to say?” she asked quietly, heart pounding. She really didn't want to discuss this.

“What changed your mind?”

“You,” she told him simply.

“Sit up,” he demanded, as he did the same thing and she pulled herself up to sit before him. “I made you not want to have a kid?” he asked in disbelief. He knew that was not a good thing.

“No, not like that,” she took his cheeks in her warm palms and focused on his sweet face, concern etched all over it. “I mean, sure I wanted a kid. My sisters and my friends back home had all turned 30 and were buying houses and getting married, popping kids out. I guess I felt the pressure of everyone else doing it, I should be thinking the same thing. But then, I came back to the city, went back to work and remembered how much I loved my career and Jesus, I love life in New York. No one at home would understand that as they all moved into the next part of their lives.”

“Are you happy without a baby?” he asked quietly, dropping his eyes. “Answer me honestly. Because if that's what you really want, we probably need to talk.”

“I have gotten to an incredibly selfish point in my life,” she told him, rolling his body over so his weight was on her again, his thigh sneaking between hers, rubbing against her soft skin gently. She hoped to reassure him, he was as nervous as she was and the last thing she wanted was for all this to end because of some stupid thing she thought she wanted a few years ago. Needing to convince him, she said, “I like having you to myself. I don’t want to have to fight some stupid baby for your affections just yet.”

He broke into a small smile. “Oh.”

“It’s taken us so long to get here, and I kind of… like it being just us,” she continued. "I'm not in the same place I was then, Seb.”

He nodded slowly. “Okay.”

“And,” she shrugged, knowing it wasn’t entirely about her that her priorities changed. “It’s not secret that you’re not exactly wanting to get married or have kids.”

“You know I want that, right? Just not in right now,” he breathed. “My career, I feel like, has just got its momentum going,” he added. “When I am a husband and tată, I want to be around for everything. Everything. Hands on. I’m not going to miss out like my old man did.”

“Well, see I didn’t even think you wanted to be a husband,” she laughed bashfully, hiding her face on his chest – fuck it. But he continued, admitting he wanted their child to call him tată and now her ovaries were having a party she wasn’t invited to.

“Of course I do. I know I’m not shouting it from the rooftops, Benzo but being married to you wouldn’t be so bad,” he reckoned, his hands caressing her sides before he hitched her good leg and intertwined it with his, he nuzzled her neck, eagerly taking in the remains of the perfume she’d spritzed earlier, grounding him. “I’d probably really enjoy it,” he teased with a shy smile as he hovered over her.

“Gee, thanks,” she said sarcastically.

“No, really. You’re well aware I’ve been engaged before,” he squinted in memory at one of his less than stellar decisions in life. “God, I’ve made some stupid decisions, but with you, it would be
different. It would mean something. I would like to do all that stuff with you.”

“It does surprise me,” she confessed. “You’ve never mentioned wanting to get married to anyone except She Whom Shall Not Be Named and I’ve never seen someone move further away from a child than you when one is in the room. Are you scared of them?”

“No, I’m not scared,” he replied, a small blush covering his handsome features. “People just shove their kids into my arms at conventions and stuff and they think I’m okay with it. I am not okay with it. I don’t want to break it.”

“Why?”

“They. He, she. Whatever,” he rolled his eyes before he broke into a quiet chuckle, lowering his eyes. “I do have hopes and dreams, you know. I didn’t intend to be a bachelor all my life.”

“I know, I just didn’t see you being hubby or tată,” butterflies fluttered in her belly, almost nauseating her on the last word. “Romanian, seriously. That’s just unfair, bub.”

He gave an arrogant smile. “You don’t want our hypothetical child to learn my native tongue?”

“Of course,” she smiled as he kissed her again. *Just don’t make me imagine a little brunette child with sparkling blue eyes sitting on your lap, learning how to speak Romanian!*

“I like where my life is now. I love that I’ve finally got the girl and that work is going so well. I just want to enjoy that for a little while longer.”

She smiled. “Good, me too.”

“Come here so I can kiss you,” he told her as he ducked his head and kissed her softly. “What a mature conversation for us.”

“Fuck, right?” she let out a breath she didn’t know she was holding, looking up at him with big eyes. “I think we’re growing up.”

“You have to be honest with me though, baby,” Sebastian told her quietly, he continued kissing her. That hungry way he kissed her when he was about to show her how much he really loved her, she had noticed the decisive change in his eye colour from his usual stony blue grey to a foreboding lusty black. “It’s nice now, but if things change, if you don’t feel happy, if I’m not enough for you? You gotta tell me,” he told her. “I’m going to work so hard to make you happy –”

“You do, Seb. I don’t want to change a thing,” she watched as he raked his teeth over his bottom lip and finally broke into one of his coy smiles. The ones that pooled heat in her tummy and lit up her core. “Baby, I miss you.”

“I’m right here,” he gave a low, raspy laugh.

“That’s not what I meant,” she ran her hands over his strong shoulders and wrapped her arms around his neck.

“I know what you meant, believe me,” he told her softly. “Patience is a virtue.”

“You’re the most impatient person I know,” she reminded him.

He nodded, hair falling over his eyes. “Many, including myself, agree.”

She raised an eyebrow. “How tired are you? On a scale of 1 to 10.”
“Solid 8,” he replied. “Why?”

“Wanna stay up and kiss for a while?”

He smiled. “Mighty offer you’re making there. Make me feel like a horny teenager when I’m really just a horny adult.”

She laughed, a genuine belly laugh that warmed his heart. He hadn’t heard one from her in so long and it made him feel so good that it was because of him. “Well, I can’t do what I really want to do in case I rupture my stitches,” she pointed out. “And it’s killing me,” she covered her face with her hands. “One more week.”

“Seems like we’re in the same boat, huh?” he pulled her hands away.

“I’m sorry, I know you’re suffering. I was hoping by this point you know, we’d be –”

"I'm not suffering."

"Could've fooled me."

“How much do you trust me?” he whispered as moved his lips to her neck, leaving a trail of hot, wet kisses along her sensitive skin.

“Fully,” she said, appearing anything but.

“If I could guarantee to stay away from your knee and make you feel really fucking good, would you let me?” he asked, moving to sit on his heels between her legs as she frowned, hitching herself up on her elbows.

“I don’t know where you’re going with this.”

“South,” he told her, moving back between her legs, gently pushing up his old Rutgers t-shirt she was wearing up to ribcage and slid his long fingers under the seams of her boyleg knickers before tugging them down. She cringed a little, definitely not feeling her sexiest after a few weeks without waxing (after years of dance and keeping her body primed at all times, she just would not be that girl that was comfortable with her own body hair. She was well aware she was a failure to feminism. But wasn’t that her choice to keep herself presentable for herself? Wrong time for this debate with Sebastian’s tongue tracing along her clavicle).

“I’m not as presentable down there as I’d like,” she said nervously as he reached down and kissed her belly. He smiled as it constricted under his touch.

“Absolute least of my worries,” he said in midst of kissing from one hip to the other, enjoying the little moan that had escaped her. “Unless you’re uncomfortable and I can try something else,” he slid up her body again and kept his face close to hers. “I don’t really give a shit about any of that stuff you put your body through, you know. I’m appreciative and all, but it’s not going to stop me from wanting you.”

She blushed, pulling a pillow over her eyes miserably. “Please stop saying all the right things. For once, could you just a prick about this situation?” she begged as he giggled quietly, pulling the pillow back and throwing it across the room so she wouldn’t be tempted to hide from him again. “I just…” she reached for his necklace and toyed with it nervously, needing the distraction from his eyes.

“It’s okay,” he smiled affectionately. “How about I improvise then? I don’t want you to feel
uncomfortable. If you just want to kiss, I will gladly oblige you,” he suggested quietly, moving his lips to hers, gently nipping her lower lip as she gratefully accepted his skilled tongue in her mouth. His fingers skimmed from her ribcage, circling past her belly button and made himself comfortable, opening her legs carefully and using his exceptionally skilled fingers, finding her clit and giving it a little tickle. “I love you and you’re perfect,” he breathed.

“You’re so corny,” she said before he pressed just hard enough to illicit a gasp from her in retaliation for her name-calling. “Jesus, Sebastian.”

“Don’t call me corny,” he warned and she gave a small moan and he moved his lips to hers. “I want you to come really hard, okay?” he whispered, his clever fingers not leaving her.

“Yes, please,” she said as his lips moved to her jaw. “I want you,” she could hardly make the words out, her body responding to him swiftly, her feet wriggling uncontrollably.

“Where do you want me?” he whispered, not ceasing his nurtures, moving his mouth to her throat, a hand ascending from hip to breast, groping her through her shirt. “You are so wet, it's killing me,” he grunted. She had to wonder how he simply didn't realise she was always on that brink when she was around him. He was a constant aphrodisiac and he had absolutely no idea. Same guy that didn't realise how obscenely handsome he was and could be brought to a blush at the drop of a hat if complimented just right.

Self-consciously, she said, “We can try old faithful. Boring, but practical. Just have to be careful.”

“Are you sure?” he asked, stopping to search her face for doubt.

“It will be worth any discomfort tomorrow,” she reassured him.

“Okay, okay,” he moved back from her with a small grin and whipped off his boxers, giving himself a slow few pumps before moving his body to her, and resting his tip at her slick entrance. “This isn’t going to be a marathon,” he instructed. “And you tell me if it is too much. I’ll stop as soon as you say,” he ordered, taking the hem of the t-shirt that covered her torso and gently lifting it over her head, tossing it over his shoulder. “Ya hear me?”

“Just good old fashioned getting off. Yes, boss.”

“That’s my good girl,” he chuckled quietly at her bluntness as he kissed her and slid into her at the same time, a guttural moan exiting his mouth. “God, it’s been 3 weeks and it feels like a lifetime,” he whispered, letting a slow, exceptionally gentle rhythm develop. She bit her lip, meeting his eyes as she held his face.

“I’m sorry.”

He smiled, rolling his hips into hers. “Baby, don’t be crazy.”

“Jesus, I’ve missed you,” she mumbled, her fingers lacing into his hair as he hit that sweet spot. She was unable to hold back her grunts as he repeated the action a few times before adjusting his hips to change tempo.

“Yeah, baby. I’ve missed you too,” he breathed in his pleasure and kissed her. “I love you.”

His lips met hers and they kissed intensely, happy to re-connect. She hadn’t felt as close as she did to him right then in weeks. She probably had done her best to push him away as much as possible, and here he was, adoring her, his tongue caressing hers, his fingers toying with her, just to make her feel good (and maybe a little for himself too). Loved. Sexy. Cherished.
“I love you too,” she breathed as he smiled against her lips, her body unravelling under him and moved his free hand back to her clit, leaving gentle circles on her sensitive bundle of nerves. His body moved with hers slowly but confidently as his tongue moved to a nipple, tracing circles, sucking and finally a gentle bite. That little squeal as she gripped his shoulders, her toes curling and unfurling with a mind of their own as her grip on his body tightened.

It didn’t take much work on Sebastian’s behalf for her to breathing to hitch and her walls to close in around him. He knew he wouldn’t last after the touch-starved last few weeks and would come hard, her walls throbbing around him, her nails raking up his back and pulling at his hair as he lost lost all resolve and those last few thrusts, sinking into her, hard and rough, spilling into her, absolutely wrecked.

“**Inima mea îţi aparţine,**” he breathed, resuming kissing her, hungrily. He honestly wasn’t sure what brought it on, but he knew that he hadn’t ever felt as in love with her as he did right there and then. “**Vreau să fii lângă mine.** I’ve got you,” and he did so, keeping her close to him for the rest of the night.

---

**Interested Bystander writes** on Tumblr.

Chapter End Notes

I am so glad you guys liked Chap 22, it really was one of the ones that pushed me into doing this again, so thank you so much for the overwhelming messages of support, comments and kudos. I adore you, dolls. Apologies this chap isn't as well edited as I'd like, I've run out of time before I go on vacation so this is kind of it for me. See you soon, don't hesitate to say hi here on Tumblr. Will be checking there periodically.

---

Interested Bystander writes on Tumblr.
If she’d learnt one thing in all the years she’d know him, it was that he always managed to make her feel new and exciting ways of hating how much she cared about him.

Christmas Day

Hearing the alarm, Sebastian wasn’t too surprised to see Sasha drag her pillow over her head. He stretched as he reached for the relentless noise of his phone and yawned loudly. It was Christmas Day and there was too much to be done. He wouldn’t admit it out loud, but the week had exhausted him, ferrying his and Sasha’s families around just as he said he would. He knew Sasha had a big old bag full of ‘I told you so’ prepared on her tongue the whole time but she had done her best to support him and keep quiet to this point. She knew Sebastian’s threshold for family stuff was reaching its climax. Luckily for him, lucky for them, they were into their last 48 hours and the next few days couldn’t go quick enough.

“God,” he muttered, pulling the pillow Sasha gripped for dear life into his hands and tossing it across the room, it had become their little game with the alarm - he did the same thing when his early gym alarm went off, he knew she’d one day kill him. She whinged, even on Christmas Day, Sasha’s ritual of hating the alarm continued.

“Five more minutes, please!” she begged, slithering across the bed to Sebastian’s waiting arms. He laid a lazy kiss on her hair, his eyes refusing to stay open. She kissed his shoulder and tucked herself around him tightly, dragging the duvet with her, snuggling them back into their warm cocoon. “Stay there, don’t move. You’re nice and cuddly.”

“We don’t have five minutes. I set the alarm as late as possible,” he told her, his voice raspy from whiskey the night before he had shared with Davis after dinner and general fatigue finally catching up with him. “Crăciun fericit, frumoasă.”

“Merry Christmas, bub,” she looked up at him with a sleepy smile before her eyes closed again.

“We should get up,” he sighed, making zero attempt to do so. “I need coffee before we see our families again. Coffee and booze.”

“You’re so cute when you’re tired,” she told him with a giggle as he smiled and covered his eyes with his muscular arms before raising them to stretch again. “Do you want first shower?” she kissed his ribs as he shuddered under her touch.

“I don’t care. But you will have to stop that,” he warned with a low growl.

“I’m not doing anything,” she insisted, her lips moving to his abs as they clenched under her lips.

“You know exactly what you’re doing,” he retorted, his hips defying him as they wriggled uncontrollably.
“Sebastian, please,” she maintained her innocence as her tongue swirled around his belly button, her fingers trailing down his sides to the seams of his boxers. He groaned and pulled her body up to him again, trapping her against his chest before she could do any real damage.

“Stop it. We’ll definitely be late if you intend to finish what you started. And do you really want to explain to our Moms that we were late because you just couldn't resist going down on me?” he gave a wide, wicked smile, eyes flashing in humour. “Unless it’s a present, then yes, you can go right ahead,” he let go of her and relaxed his arms behind his head. “Be my guest. It's all yours.”

“You’re right, absolutely a conversation that doesn’t need to happen. Your loss though,” she smacked his belly and he lurched unprepared while she pulled away from him and sat up, rubbing her face. He gave a small groan, his plan backfiring.

“Shit.”

“How is it Christmas Day again?”

He shrugged, pushing himself out of bed, unhappily adjusting his unused morning wood and tossing a hoodie over his head. It was chilly in Sasha's apartment, he noted, flicking the radiator on near the window. He pushed the blinds back and took in the frosty morning. “Beats me,” he stopped before her and leaned down to kiss her. “But I’m very glad to be spending it with you.”

She smiled gently. “That was sweet.”

“Yeah. Don’t know what came over me,” he smirked, shaking it off, heading towards the bathroom. “Sorry.”

She laughed, sliding her ugg boots on and hobbling after him. “You have first shower,” she said, picking up her toothbrush as he turned on the water, stripped off and scampered under the scorching water. 30 minutes later, both cute and ready to deal with the onslaught that approached them, Sebastian stopped Sasha as she picked up her crutches to move towards the door.

“I got you a little something.”

“What, for Christmas?”

“Noooo,” he replied sarcastically. He blinked a few times, giving her a pointed look.

She frowned in return. “Seb, we said we weren’t going to get each other anything,” she said a little dejectedly. It's not like she'd be hobbling to Bloomingdales' to get him something in her predicament. Like he'd have let her leave the apartment on her own anyway.

“Yeah, but I couldn’t resist. I passed it in the window on my way back from the gym one morning,” he shrugged, taking her crutches and replacing them with a small box from Cartier. “That’s my excuse and you’ll just have to deal with it.”

“Seb…” she sighed, touching his cheek and kissing him softly.

“You haven’t even opened it yet,” he laughed. “You might hate it.” She wouldn’t.

She nodded and opened the box to reveal a diamond tennis bracelet, (thank Christ). She had a pretty fair idea what it retailed for and gasped at the twinkles under the lights in her apartment. “This is so beautiful,” she told him. “And way too much,” she scolded in the same breath.

“It’s fine, don’t get silly about that,” he took the box from her and took her wrist, securing it. “Before
you freak out, it’s already insured. You just have to promise me you will try not to lose it, okay?” he
gave a small laugh as she nodded with wide eyes and gave him a deep kiss.

“I love you. Thank you, bub.”

“I love you too. Ești frumoasă and you deserve beautiful things. Crăciun fericit,” he kissed her
again. ”Come on, let’s go face the music and hear all about how I got you a diamond bracelet instead
of a diamond engagement ring. My balls are ready for their vice.”

Sasha had to laugh, tugging his newsboy cap over his manbun at they wandered to the elevator. Poor
Sebastian, he’d received it from pillar to post this week from his mother and Alexandra. They had
formed some super mother alliance that when in force together, brought Sebastian to his knees. Sasha
had made it relatively unscathed to this point to both their surprise (only once hearing from her
mother, ‘you’re not getting any younger, sweetheart’). Sasha had assumed Sebastian and his niceties
just always made him the easier target. Until last night. Last night when he put everyone at the table
in their place.

After some gentle snark form his mother about traditional Romanian weddings and how she
expected Sebastian to shun all that was expected of him, he gave his mother a wistful smile, twirling
his spirits in his tumbler and replied, “Well, yeah. Why would I bother with tradition? Mama, we left
Romania when I was 8. I was just gonna put Benzo on a private plane, just the two of us, have a
huge bender in Vegas and see where the night takes us. $5 steaks for recovery breakfast. Whattaya
say, baby?” he batted his long lashes at Sasha as his mother looked down her nose at him.

Sasha was too shocked to speak before erupting in peals of laughter. “Sounds fantastic, Sebastian. I
never realised you’d given it so much thought.”

They then high-fived much to their mothers horror and Davis smirked before changing the subject.
Sasha had never been prouder of Sebastian.

---

"Christmas is over," Sebastian announced happily as he handed Sasha a steaming mug of tea later
that night. Both with full bellies, too many glasses of wine and familied-out, they were relieved it
was just the two of them again.

"Thank you," she smiled as he took a seat on the couch beside her.

"No problem," he told her, flicking the TV on. They had planned all day to watch Christmas movies
that night when they were finally free. Sasha was gagging for National Lampoons Christmas
Vacation, something she watched every year without fail with her family but had decided against it
without her older sisters (it wasn’t as well received with her younger sisters sadly). Sebastian was
happy to oblige, keen for something breezy (for a serious actor, he had a strange addiction to
ridiculous comedies) after such a long day. He hummed quietly as he flicked through movie titles,
Sasha watching him closely.

"Before we watch the movie... I've got something quite shocking to say," she told him, swallowing
roughly. Sebastian froze, remote still caught mid-air and side-eyed her.

"What?"

"I'm going to show you something I don't show to anyone."

"I've seen every inch of you," he replied with a smug grin. "There is nothing on or in you that I do
not know intimately."
She sighed. "That's not what I meant," she reached for her iPad, unlocked it and pressed an app. A few seconds later, she handed it to him and his eyes bulged as "So Long, Farewell" from Sound of Music commenced before him, a stage production. Sebastian broke into a wide grin that he couldn't contain as he covered his mouth with his hand.

"Oh, my God, it's you," he told her. "Look how cute you are! So little and blonde!" he giggled eagerly. He looked at her. "This is the best thing I've ever seen."

Sasha didn't exactly know why she was showing him this, but after the all-consuming guilt she'd felt all day with the weight of her Christmas present around her wrist, it almost seemed like the least she could do. Sebastian had scoured YouTube looking for anything that showed Sasha as a child on stage and mostly came up short. And now he was witnessing it with his own two eyes without even having to grovel. Her very first production and she was just adorable.

"Ironically, I was living in Austria when you were doing this. Listen to your solo!" he noted the year of production in the notes as Sasha flitted and floated on the screen. "So good," he grinned to himself, rewinding the song when it ceased and watching it again. "Why could I never find this? What did you search?"

"That secret dies with me," she replied monotone.

"Are there anymore? Please, tell me there is more!" he begged.

Sasha rolled her eyes, taking the iPad back and searching again. Sighing, she handed the iPad back as "Do-Re-Mi" began. He giggled again, settling into the couch cushions. "Yeah, so that's me as an awkward 13 year old."

"My nerdy 14 year old self would still have had a massive crush on you," Sebastian winked before turning his attention back to the screen. "You rarely sing."

"Because I cannot sing."

"Well, you had to have sang okay to do this."

"It was after this I realised I didn't want to act. I wanted to dance," she admitted. "My singing voice is like nails on a blackboard."

When the vision stopped, Sebastian grinned widely and handed back to the iPad. "This is the best thing. Why are you showing me now?"

She shrugged, a slight blush creeping over her features as Sebastian shuffled closer and held her face in his warm hands. "I don't know. You got me the most beautiful Christmas gift and I only had empty hands. I had to give you something and I guess I went with my humility, or lack there of."

Sebastian laughed, kissing her forehead. "I have spent a lot of hours looking for this, you know."

"I know, how sad."

"I really want to show everyone this."

"No."

"Is there something little I can put on Instagram? I want to show this off."

"Absolutely not."
"Please? You said this was my Christmas present," he batted his lashes, the pad of his thumb tracing her cheekbones.

"This is the worst blackmail you've ever pulled."

He nodded gleefully. "Yes, it is. Okay, not Instagram, can I at least send it to Chace and my ma?"

Sasha sighed, handing him the iPad. "Goodnight, Sebastian."

"Hey, wait," he laughed, catching her quickly as she made a beeline to her bedroom. "Don't be like that. This is just so good. I loved it," he wrapped his arms around her to support her weight.

"That was for you, and only you," she told him simply. "Like I'm not embarrassed enough as it is."

He nodded slowly. "Okay, it's mine," he promised. "It's fantastic. Even when you were a kid, you were so talented, you make me very proud of you, Benzo."

She blushed. "Shut up, Seb."

"No," he gave her a little jolt. "You were amazing and thank you for such a thoughtful gift."

"You're welcome," she replied meekly. "Now you've seen my first stage production."

"Haven't missed any since you moved here," he replied proudly.

"No, you haven't," she could hide her small smile. "Thank you for supporting me."

"You're welcome," he tugged her to him tightly. "C'mon, let's watch Christmas Vacation, let me take you to bed then we're sleeping in."

"Perfect," she said as he took her hand and lead her back to the living room. "No alarm?"

"Nope, I'm not even going to the gym tomorrow."

"Can I get that in writing?"

"I'll probably change my mind," he joked, starting the movie. "Love you, baby. Merry Christmas."

---

New Years Eve

“It is weird to be staying on New Year’s,” Sasha admitted, her forehead pressed against the cold glass of Sebastian’s living room window, staring out to the snowy city lights below them. She had been forcing herself all day to wander around and attempt to keep her blood circulating. She’d had an appointment a few days earlier and no longer needed her crutches, her stitches had been removed and was now walking relatively freely on her own. “You can go out, you know. Will has that ‘do on at the restaurant.”

“I'm happy here,” Sebastian smiled from the couch, not looking up from his iPhone. “You can’t get rid of me. So fucking stop trying to. This is the first time we’ve had alone since our parents terrorised us. Can we just have a nice time together, please?” his voice gave her the impression he was in no mood for bullshit. She secretly loved when he was gruff. He generally hid his Romanian temper well, but occasionally she adored pushing his buttons because a fired up Sebastian Stan was sexy as hell.
She made a face. “Just thought you’d like to see your friends tonight. I was trying to be considerate.”

“I can see them next year,” he joked lamely. “You were trying to get rid of me,” he corrected, tone the same.

“I remember when you used to be social. Who’s the recluse now?” she scoffed.

“Is it so much to ask that we have a nice night in together? Preferably without you up my ass?” he pleaded. “Please, Benzo?”

She batted her eyelashes at his snarkiness. “Aww. You’re just a big sap at the best of times for someone who claims not to have a romantic bone in his body, aren’t you?” she shuffled around and accused him gently, playful grin on her face.

He winked with a small laugh, softening slightly. “Ooh, got me with that one,” he faked a wound to the heart.

“What do you want to do then?”

“There is two very expensive bottles of wine breathing in the kitchen,” he started, tossing his phone on to the couch beside him. “There is the pizza I’m going to get delivered from Tony’s and then there is you and me. Just being us.”

“God. You are such a sap. I didn’t sign on for that, Sebastian,” she mimicked chunks rising. “Cut it out.”

He grinned, a small laugh escaping his lips. “You know what you got yourself into when we started, Benzo,” he humoured her. “I might even light some scented candles, play some nice jazz, really set the mood. Make you plead for the night to end as soon as possible,” he taunted as she looked back at him in horror.

“Gross,” she replied, carefully wandering back to the couch and taking a seat beside him. "You'd hate that more than me."

“I thought we could watch some old movies and then if we make it to midnight, watch the fireworks,” he shrugged simply. “Aren’t we a bit beyond having to have a bigger New Year than the one before?”

“Yup, we’re officially boring and old,” she snuggled into his arm.

He put the same arm around her. “Yes, we are. I’m happy to be boring and old with you though,” he kissed her temple. “It is our first New Year together,” he pointed out.

“And by far the most low key New Year we’ve ever spent.”

He laughed. “Yes, it is and I’m completely fine with that.”

---

About 11:45pm and happily engaged in An Affair to Remember, Sasha couldn’t help it. She was wrapped in Sebastian’s arms on the couch before she turned to face him. Screaming handsome and all hers. Maybe it was because they were on their second bottle of really good Bordeaux red he’d been given and wanted to use on a special occasion, maybe it was his smell, his warm body tangled with hers, she wasn’t sure. She took his wrist and laid a gentle kiss on his pulse before he looked down at her.
“Hi.”

“Hi,” she replied. “I love you.”

A slow smile formed on his handsome features, his dimple appearing on his cheek. “I love you too,” he bopped her on the nose.

“I’m glad this isn’t us and we don’t have to meet at the Empire State Building.”

He laughed quietly. “You probably would have stood me up anyway,” he muttered, motioning in reference to the TV.

“I would have worried myself stupid if I waited 6 months,” she sighed. “I would have told you that I loved you immediately. It’s kind of one of my biggest regrets for you and I. God imagine turning up and the other person isn’t there.”

He frowned. “Sweetheart, don’t be like that. Look at us now. So much to look forward to.”

“Yeah, I know. I just look back on these great things that we’d done together but then think,” she inhaled as her eyes watered. “How much better it would have been if we were together together.”

“It’s unlike you to have regrets, sweet girl,” he told her, honestly surprised. He geared up, it was so unusual of Sasha to show him any kind of emotion, he didn't know what to expect and never knew what she needed from him. He decided it best wait. "Don’t think that way.”

“Yeah, I know…” she gave a shaky breath. He moved so he could crouch on the floor before her. He linked his fingers with hers and gave a half smile. “We won’t miss out on anything else,” he promised her. “Because you’re stuck with me. Just like I’m stuck with you. No more regrets and bad timing.”

“Uhh,” she groaned, embarrassed and hid her face behind a hand. “I’ve had too much wine and now I’m sooking. Starting the New Year in tears. When did I turn into this person with you?” she cursed her frustration. “I never used to be this emotional. Fucking hell, I hate it.”

“I’ve been secretly breaking down your walls for ten years. Yes,” he pumped his fists in the air. “I finally get some emotion from you,” he grinned, mopping up a single stray tear that fell with his thumb. “I bet I can cheer you up before midnight though,” he stood up and pulled her into his arms. “I love you. I will never regret that.”

“I love you too.”

“I didn’t realise I could love you more than I did before. Since we got together, I’ve learnt more about you than I have in nearly ten years. You’re a whole new person to me, your walls were built so high and I didn’t even realise – I didn’t know how far at bay you kept me.

“I learn so much more about you everyday. Do you honestly think that when you have a little breakdown and tell me how you feel that I’m remotely upset about it?” he laid a gentle kiss on her lips and swaying them gently, taking her palm in his and resting his chin on her hair. “Unless you’re telling me to fuck off, which you’re fairly notorious for too.”

“It’s embarrassing,” she said unable to hold back a wobbly, watery sigh. "Your form is good," she had to mention, taking in his posture as he gently rocked them.

"I had a good teacher," he reminded her fondly, pressing his other hand into her lower back before laughing. "This is not the time to remind me of my lack of dance skill."
"You have dance skill?" she said sarcastically.

"You're a shitty teacher if I'm still crap," he sniped back.

She laughed, thinking back to finding Sebastian in her living room, pacing the night before rehearsals for his Broadway show's, *Picnic*, little dance scene. He wasn't great on the dance floor at the best of times (if you haven't seen his attempt in *Ricki and the Flash*, you're truly missing out. What a mess) and she'd joked about it enough for him to know that the little white lie on his headshot would be the end of him if the producers and director realised he in fact, could not dance like his skill set suggested. "You're doing beautifully," she admitted.

"Thank you," he blushed slightly. "I'm not going to dip you with that knee."

"That's okay," she smiled widely. "Been there, done that."

"I love this woman in front of me," he continued. "She's the one I want. Sasha, you're amazing. You are so much more hilarious than I ever realised and when you think I'm not watching, I love when you dance to something in the kitchen. You're a new person to me now we're in this relationship. I don't want you to have to hold back, you know?"

"You've never caught me dancing."

"Heaps of times, filming you heaps too. I don't think you even realise you do it, it's so innate in you," he grinned. "You dancing is as good as any sext you could ever send me. This body moving, it's a thing of the Gods."

"Jesus," she said, completely taken back by his honesty.

"What do you want me to say? That it wasn't this incredibly built body that first attracted me to you? We were 25 when we met, baby. I was not thinking about your brain the first time I saw you," he laughed loudly. "Not fucking close."

"Really?" she asked shyly.

"Really. All I could think about was your legs wrapped around my head. Ha," he scoffed. "Okay, maybe not that much has changed," he frowned to himself before shrugging.

She giggled quietly. "Terrible."

"I apologise for objectifying you then."

"No, you don’t."

He grinned. "Nup, not remotely," he giggled quietly.

She shook her head. "Do you have a resolution?"

He nodded. "Always."

"Which is?"

"To remind you every day why you’re my favourite person."

She smiled and gave a small laugh, resting her head on his shoulder. "You’ve started well."

"And it’s not even next year yet," he marvelled, dragging his long fingers through her hair. "I'm
really good at this,” he told himself proudly. “What’s yours?”

“Mine seems way too practical.”

“What is it?”

“To get back to work as soon as I can and to do that, I need to work my bum off to get my knee right and back into shape.”

“Always the sensible one,” he kissed her hair.

“How many dreamers can be in this relationship?” she grinned up at him.

“Good point,” he admitted, her smiling lips looking to good to resist as he gently pressed his to hers. “You can’t rush anything,” he reminded her. “And your shape is seriously amazing. I like the few extra pounds, the curves are incredible.”

“I need some stability back. It won’t be in this body.”

He nodded. “I know. I’m proud of you,” he held her face in his palms and left a single kiss on her lips before leading her over to the window, sitting before she sat in front of him in between his strong legs, leaning back against his chest that was still nice and broad, thanks to him not losing any condition of his body before reshoots commenced in late January for Civil War. That body.

“Is it nearly next year yet?”

He looked at his black wristwatch. “In a few minutes,” he confirmed.

“I’m going to be the best girlfriend you ever had.”

“You are the best girlfriend I ever had,” he gently chewed on her earlobe teasingly.

“True,” she giggled as the fireworks started before them. “I love you, Sebastian Stan. Happy New Year.”

“Hmm. I love you too, Benzo. Happy New Year, I’m glad it’s just us.”

“Yeah, me too, baby. Me too,” she smiled back at him before kissing him deeply, contentedly wrapped up in his strong arms.

Chapter End Notes

Hi all, apologies for the longevity of my break, I hope you were happy with the last chapter. I did get a lot of feedback and the like and as always, appreciate it so! But I'm back and regular updates shall commence as of right now. Don't hesitate to drop me a line, always happy for a chat or visit me on Tumblr. I occasionally post other stuff I'm working on and lots of inspo of Seb and NYC.

---

Interested Bystander writes on Tumblr.
The Art of Spontaneity

Chapter Summary

If she’d learnt one thing in all the years she’d know him, it was that he always managed to make her feel new and exciting ways of hating how much she cared about him.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Guess who got medical clearance today?” Sasha howled as she wandered into Sebastian’s new apartment and dodged a few boxes in the hallway he’d clearly given up on, she realised. He sat up from the couch as she pirouetted into the living room where he was watching Game of Thrones, he smiled at her confidence. “That better not be the new ep, Seb. You said you’d wait for me,” she grunted, sitting on his lap, blocking his view on the TV in retaliation.

“It’s old, realised half way through I’d already watched it,” he promised, moving to kiss her hello. “Congrats on the knee, by the way,” he turned the TV off and gave her his attention, shifting back into the cushions and she grinned and turned around to straddle his waist. “So, what does that mean really?” he gave her butt a gentle grope.

“Well, I can start jogging again. Some swimming too, doc stressed running was still a while off. But I need to continue two physical therapy sessions a week. I can resume some dance in about a month within reason, the doctors want to test the knee strength so I’ve got a bunch of daily exercises to do as well. I mean, it’s still a long way back, but as long as I’m not too stupid and don’t get ahead of myself, I should be well on my way now.”

“Awesome, you can come to the gym when I go,” he teased, knowing she had zero interest in early morning gym sessions. “Don would love to work with you.”

She blanched. “No, thanks. 6am workouts are your domain. I’ll go at a decent time. Like… never.”

He grinned. “You will never be a morning person, will you? I’ll just see you at lunchtime everyday when you decide to grace me with your presence.”

“I will never be a gym person either. I’m a night owl. Working nights on stage made me this way. You’ve done it before, you should have more sympathy for my inability to appreciate the AM. I’ll never understand how you’re a morning person. Gross, we’re absolute opposites. We’re doomed. We should break up right now.”

He laughed. “Well, I’m happy for you, baby. This is great news!” he kissed her gently. “Can’t wait to go for a run around the city with you.”

“Thank you. I feel like I finally can get my life in order again,” she confided as Sebastian grinned.

“Absolutely. I think we should celebrate.”

“Are you going to take me dinner and drinks?” she smiled excitedly. “Inadvertent date night since we’re both turning into hermits and I can’t actually remember the last date we actually went on?”
“Oh,” Sebastian said faltering, chewing his lip, noting how long it actually had been since they’d been on a date (his calculations suggested before her surgery). “I just thought I’d bring my cheat day forward and we order pizza and drink wine. But yeah, date night. We can do that too if that’s what you really want.”

“No, no. Staying in sounds great too,” she got up and put his iPad on his lap in her place, kissing his forehead. “You order, I’m getting changed. Can I steal something?”

“Course. Hey,” he called after her. “I got a call today.”

“From?” she sang back over her shoulder as she disappeared into his bedroom.

“Marvel PR. About the final cut of Civil War,” he gave a half-grin as she reappeared in one of his navy sweaters, white tube socks and not much else. She stopped past his bar, grabbed a couple of glasses and a bottle of red (some of the first things necessarily unpacked, she realised), before placing the items on the coffee table and moved into his arms on the couch.

“I can’t wait to see it,” she told him. “Does Bucky smile at all?”

“A couple of times. One almost laugh,” he humoured her, raising his index finger.

“Well, that’s progress, let’s be honest. So, you gonna head to LA?”

“Yeah, I think I want to,” he said. “The Russos are putting on a rough cut next week for the cast.”

“Okay.”

“Do you want to come?”

“I hate LA. Ew,” she poured them each a glass of wine and handed him one.

“Spoken like a true New Yorker,” he nudged her, his accent thick. “But I kinda want you there.”

“Are you about to blackmail me?” she raised a wary eyebrow, moving the glass to her nose and giving a gentle inhale. He was so good at selecting wine, she wondered if he knew how desperate she was to devour the glass. It had been a day to celebrate, she was ready to celebrate hard.

“Yes,” he smiled softly, wrapped an arm around her, gently massaging the nape of her neck as she giggled quietly but didn’t ask him to stop.

“That’s really nice…” she told him. He knew she didn’t mean the sun.

“No rain and cold…” he continued, manipulating her muscles.

She pondered his question, mid-bliss. It wasn’t an undesirable thought. “How long are you heading out there?” she managed as he bit back a smile, enjoying her pleasure, her little moans doing things to him.

“Couple of nights,” he moved closer and lightly chewed her earlobe as she giggled quietly but didn’t ask him to stop.

“If you want me there, I’ll be there… I need to defrost anyway,” she managed.

“Great, I’ll get Sara to book us,” he said, taking her wine glass and putting it on the coffee table before it ended up over the new rug.
“Okay,” she nodded, sniffing as she sat up properly, snuggling into his side. “Sounds fun. Wanna watch a movie?”

He shook his head, his wine glass joining hers on the coffee table before grasping her hips and flipping her body as she squealed and was suddenly flat on her back on the soft couch. “No thank you.”

“What are you doing?” she frowned, creeping onto her elbows to watch him as he adjusted his posture on the couch to sit on his knees and dragged her socks off. “I just got changed, Sebastian.”

“You did,” he nodded, grabbing her ankle and bringing it to his lips.

“Seb…”

“Yes, Sasha?” he pecked to behind her knee as she struggled to get away from him. She relished the sweeping of kisses, she did not enjoy the bonus tickling coming from his stubble. She writhed under his touch as his lips continued their wicked assault on her legs as he kept her ankles in his tight hold.

“What are you doing?”

“I am kissing you,” he reported.

“I can see that,” she said as he whipped his shirt over his shoulders and into an open moving box before making his way up her body and met her lips, kissing her gently, settling his body above hers, legs entwined.

“And this?” she giggled quietly.

“This is me all the time,” he confided. “I just thought since you were barely dressed anyway, might as well make the most of it,” he added, grinding into her hips, cock hardening between their bodies as she inadvertently rose her body to join his.

She grinned as his lips met hers again, kisses in no way as polite as they were previously. Hungry, demanding, set as their tongues waged war on the other. Not breaking the kiss, Sebastian crept his hand down to her knickers, fussing the flimsy material to the side and zealously slipping his long fingers into her folds, using her instantaneous wetness against the pads of his index and middle fingers to trace the sensitive nub of her clit. A pleased moan escaping her mouth, encouraging him.

“You don’t waste any time.”

“I hate when people waste time,” Sebastian confirmed. He held back a little smile as her head fell back against the end of the couch, another little grunt of joy escaping her lips. He would never tire of the groans, squeals, whimpers and occasional giggle of Sasha in the heat of the moment. Her enthusiasm to his touch was his favourite soundtrack and spurred him on to be the best time they’d ever had, every time. “Whattaya say we lose some clothes?” he suggested, nuzzling her jugular. She nodded emphatically as he chuckled quietly, jumping off her to whip off his socks. He reached over and pulled the sweater over her head and reached around to unclasp her bra, sliding the lingerie off her shoulders and down her arms, appreciating the goose pimples as they formed on her smooth skin, before it fell between them.

“Wait,” she told him, pulling him to her by the waist of his jeans, popping the button before unzipping them and pushing them down his lean hips, her fingers easing into his boxers and dragging them with the jeans that Sebastian just couldn’t resist helping her remove, his cock happily bouncing towards his strong stomach. He stepped out of everything before kissing her again, her body flush to his as he returned to playing with her clit, fingers disappearing down the front of her
panties again as she sighed against his lips, he grasped her against him tighter.

She eventually eased him back and forced him to sit back on the couch, pushing away her remaining offending undergarments and slipping onto his thighs, skin to skin.

“Hi,” he smiled, pushing some hair from her eyes, before settling his calloused hands on her ribs, thumbs teasingly tracing against the soft skin on the side of her breasts.

She licked her lips, before her lips crushed his, pushing herself further up his body and taking his dick into her warm palms, giving it a few generous pumps before teasing them both with her wetness. Sebastian cursed in Romanian quietly, grasping her hips and guiding her into him. Tucking her toes under Sebastian’s thighs, Sasha grounded herself on his length, wrapping her arms tightly around his neck as she drowned his shoulders and neck with her lips, not hesitating to throw in the occasional bite between licks and warm kisses, his head lolling back in sheer hedonism and she hadn’t yet moved on him. Urging her lips back to his, Sebastian’s kisses were frenetic as Sasha finally raised and lowered upon him. His kisses told her he didn’t want her soft and slow, he needed her hard and fast, and now.

Pulling his mouth away, he chewed at his bottom lip contemplatively as he dug his fingers into her hips, dragging her body on his, shameless eyes watching where their bodies met, his body keening to hers above him. He had the control despite their position and she loved when he was in charge. Gently grabbing at Sasha’s ponytail, she opened her chest to him as his mouth latched onto a waiting nipple, swirling it on under his hot tongue as her fingers knotted into his longer hair.

“Sebastian,” she managed. “Baby, touch me,” she begged as he wrapped his arm around her, relying on himself to power her movement and he licked his free fingers, eager to please her. Play with her. On impact, her insides constricting around him as he grunted, taking his hands away to bring her close again, both arms around her waist, forcing her body down on him harshly. He wasn’t ready to give this feeling up yet and knew she was too close, her walls contracting around him in erratic bursts but he wasn’t ready for her to come yet.

“Soon, baby,” he promised as she sighed, keeping an arm around him and steadying herself by bracing the other on the couch, relentlessly bouncing onto him roughly, needing any friction she could get. She knew how much he was into it and could play with him all night long, their sweaty bodies slapping together, simply only wanting to indulge the other. “Fuck,” he drew out, moving his mouth to hers again. “Fucking love your body,” he said against her lips before kissing her furiously. “Look how perfectly you work on top of me.”

She couldn’t reply as he repeatedly hit her spot inside, shaking her head. She couldn’t be wetter, couldn’t want him more but needed to come desperately. “Baby, please,” she said finally as he didn’t need to be asked twice, his fingers pressing against her pulsating clit, so close. “Jesus, fuck,” she muttered, her forehead resting on his shoulder as her body tightened and she felt herself coming. And coming. And coming, her body shuddering with elation as Sebastian kept his fingers to her, wanting to elongate her orgasm as much as he could. Sometimes she amazed him with how long she could stretch pleasure for both of them.

“Jesus,” he finally exclaimed with a low growl as he couldn’t take another second, raising his hips to scream into her, coming like there was no tomorrow. “Fuck. Fuck,” he said as she kissed him, letting go of her cobra-like grasp to hold her to him, tenderly. He made no attempt to move, quiet gasps the only sound in the apartment as they tried to regain their composure.

Nibbling at his chapped mouth, Sasha smiled at Sebastian. “Sated, bub? That what you needed from me?” she asked quietly. He hummed appreciatively with a small laugh. Clearly talking wasn’t in his short-term plan. Sasha smoothed his wild hair back as he collected himself, curving into her caresses.
“You okay?” he asked finally, resting his forehead on her clavicle.

“I’m good,” she told him as he met her eyes for reassurance.

“God, you’re stunning,” he told her. “Skin flushed, covered in sweat, lips swollen. Look at you. I know you’re gorgeous, but baby, when you lose yourself with me…”

“Seb,” she blushed, her skin only getting more and more blush.

"And I suppose we blessed the new couch too."

Sasha laughed. "I suppose we did."

---

**LOS ANGELES, USA**

“I know I love New York, right? Couldn’t imagine living anywhere except Melbourne if there was a choice,” Sasha said, laying back on the lounge, shades covering her eyes, barely covered in a bright yellow bikini. Sebastian sat at a table, doing some writing wrapped up all snuggly in his sweater, staring at his laptop screen behind his shades. They had house swapped with Chace and were staying at his home while in LA and Chace was in New York, staying at Sebastian’s. Sasha was grateful for the heated pool and space of LA. Not that she’d ever admit she was in too close confines in New York, it was nice to breathe for the first time in a while. “But what I’d give to have weather like this everyday.”

“It’s not really warm enough to be out here,” he pointed out, not looking up.

“I’m not freezing yet and the sun is out.”

He grinned, looking over his Ray Ban’s at her goose pimple-covered body. “You're close to freezing,” he reckoned.

“Seb, please. I’m tanning here.”

“I’ve had plenty of years of practice checking you out in stealth mode. You’re the one display, not me,” he closed this laptop and eased his hands behind his head, kicking his legs out and crossing them at the ankles. “Do you want to go to dinner tonight?”

“I don’t mind. It’s LA, you always get stalked here,” she pointed out as he sighed.

“True.”

“Do you feel like anything because my tummy is on New York time and I’m getting hungry.”

“Yeah, me too. Want an early dinner then?”

“I don’t mind. I’m happy with anything.”

Hearing his phone bing, Sebastian chuckled as he checked his texts. “Okay, Mackie is in town.”

“Oh course he is,” Sasha smirked. “Want to see your boyfriend?”

“He’s here alone and wants to go to dinner and maybe a club.”

“That is definitely not the senior citizens early bird special we just discussed.”
Sebastian laughed. “No, it isn’t.”

“We should do one night out. I haven’t been out out in so long, I kind of miss music so loud that it makes my ears bleed.”

“Will your knee be okay?”

“Yup,” she shrugged.

“You let me know when you’re done and we’ll hit the road.”

“Okay,” she said, turning her attention back to the sun above her. “I’m going in. I’m officially freezing.”

Sebastian laughed, picking up his gear. “Figured you’d realise soon enough.”

---

“Well, well. Look at you all gorgeous and tanned,” Anthony smiled as he enveloped Sasha in a hug (she poked her tongue out at Sebastian. At least someone appreciated her hard work in the sun earlier that day, he shook his head with a wry smile). They had decided to meet for dinner before heading out. “Sasha, you blow my mind every time I see you.”

As per usual, Sasha blushed a deep shade of crimson at Anthony’s compliments.

“It’s amazing,” Sebastian spoke up. “Mackie speaks to her like that and she falls apart. I speak like that to her, she tells me to shut the fuck up,” he chuckled as he greeted Anthony and Chris.

“You’ll always have a special place in your heart for me, won’t you, baby girl?” Anthony took her arm and led her in.

“Of course I will,” she smiled as the host took them to the bar, still stuck under Anthony’s arm, Sebastian felt no jealousy – just thrilled she could get along so well with his friends.

“Hello, gorgeous,” Scarlett smiled as she enveloped Sasha into a warm hug. Sebastian sighed, realising he’d already lost his girlfriend 30 seconds into them walking in the restaurant doors (they were having a bite with some of the cast and crew before they were going to a club. The film would be shown the next night). He kissed Scarlett’s cheek and made himself scarce. “How are you, how is your knee?”

“Better by the day,” Sasha smiled. “Thank you for the flowers, by the way. They were just beautiful.”

“Of course,” Scarlett waved the notion away. “But you’re not in too much pain anymore?”

“No. Nothing a few drinks teamed with some painkillers usually doesn’t subside,” Sasha giggled quietly Scarlett took her hand and took her to the bar. “I didn’t know you would be here.”

“I flew in from Paris this morning. I’m exhausted but jetlagged, so Evans texted me the details.”

“Is Rose here?”

“No, she’s with the nanny,” Scarlett said a little sadly. “She was sleeping, so I didn’t want to wake her, dress her and haul her out if she was settled – and I’m not one of those asshole moms that bring their child to an establishment like this,” she said pointedly. “Come visit us tomorrow, she would love to visit.”
Sasha lit up. “Really?” Not that Sasha was clucky or anything.

“Yes! I’m sure she’ll remember you,” Scarlett smiled though Sasha doubted it, with a small smile. “So, how’s Lover Central going?” she nodded towards Sebastian, who was laughing hysterically with Mackie and Chris. She loved watching him let go like that. She missed his uncontrollable cackle when he was laughing without restriction. Thank God for Anthony Mackie.

“Really good,” Sasha blushed. “He’s been a godsend since my knee.”

“Well, he’s a sweetheart, first and foremost. But he’s in love. He’d bend over backwards for you.”

“I guess,” Sasha hid her eyes.

“I’m not blacking out time in my calendar for a wedding in New York in Summer?” Scarlett raised an eyebrow.

“Oh, God no. Just… no,” Sasha held her hands up, urging Scarlett to chill. “We’re just not at that place. Happy together as things are,” she added as a glass of champagne ended up in each of their hands with Jeremy Renner passing them wearing a friendly grin in greeting. Scarlett raised her glass to Sasha and they toasted and each took a sip. “Things are crazy for him at the moment. In between running around after me, he’s been auditioning, training, gym, trying to write. He’s exhausted but he’s trying really hard not to show it.”

“You’ve got a good man there, Sasha.”

“I really love him a lot,” she said before she could stop herself, eyes crossing to him across the room again. Still hooting hysterically as Anthony threw his hands up, still telling his story, Chris and Sebastian almost leaning against each other in a fit of laughter to keep upright.

Scarlett grinned. “Isn’t that a good thing though?”

“Yeah, just scares me a bit sometimes.”

“You watch him a lot,” Scarlett noted.

“It’s hard for me to keep my eyes off him, you know? For a long time I had to hide it,” she laughed incredulously. “He’s also like fine wine, he just keeps getting better with age. I honestly don’t think he realises how sexy he is most of the time, always the most handsome in the room. One day he’ll realise that he’s stuck with a boring ex-dancer with very little going for her and he’ll walk out the door.”

“Oh, my God,” Scarlett exclaimed. “How could you say that? Sebastian has been in love with you for YEARS,” she hissed. “I’ve never seen someone so comfortably in love as he is. It’s natural for you two.”

“It’s never been that easy.”

“Sure, when is it? But sweetheart,” Scarlett smiled, noting Sebastian and Sasha catch each other’s eyes across the room and give each other small smiles, Sebastian throwing a wink in for good measure. “It’s real.”

Sasha was still grinning when she looked back to Scarlett. “It is, yeah. Real.”

“He is always watching you. God, I miss that part of relationships,” she laughed, taking Sasha’s hand as Lizzie Olsen joined them. “How long has it been now?”
"Since Germany, so I guess nearly six months?" Sasha asked as Lizzie hugged Sasha and Scarlett between her.

"Wow, that's gone quickly," Lizzie said, nodding to the bartender for a glass of wine. "Booze, a lot of it."

---

“You were so good,” Sasha smiled as she wrapped her arms around Sebastian’s waist from behind and snuggled into him as he attempted unlock Chace’s front door, finally back from the screening of the film the next night. Sebastian smiled back impishly at her in reply. “No, Sebastian, look at me.”

He sighed and gave her an amused look. “You have my undivided attention, baby.”

“I’m so proud of you,” she took his face in her hands and gave him a slow kiss, pushing him against the door. “All the lack of sleep, the gym, the training, eating until you were sick. It all paid off. The film was amazing, but you…” she grunted, kissing him roughly again. "You were so good. I'm so happy for you."

He smiled shyly. “Thank you,” he took her hands and led her into the house. “Now what?” he asked, stretching. “I’m exhausted, I’m still on the wrong time zone and should be in bed, but I’m completely amped,” he said, digging his hands in his pockets and bouncing on his feet vigorously.

“We probably should have gone out tonight,” she laughed. “Just hope for the best to get to the airport tomorrow. Ha, hindsight.”

He grinned. “There is still time?”

“I dare you to back last night up tonight,” she challenged, sliding out of her heels and wriggling her toes, forcing the blood flow to circulate though her aching feet again.

“Yeah. We’ll remember how old we are pretty quickly,” he pulled her to him. “Come. Let’s go sit out back with a drink.”

She nodded as they wandered into the kitchen and picked up tumblers and a bottle of whiskey he’s found in Chace’s bar and followed her outside. It was a nice backyard, pool, cabana, love seat and fire pit. Chace and Sebastian had partied here a lot in the past. He poured her a glass before sitting and she wrapped her body around him and his consistent warmth.

“Did you have a good night?” he asked as she nodded.

“Of course, you were there,” she winked as he chuckled quietly, happy she said the right thing, ego gratified. “I can’t believe Bucky went back into cryo. I feel you could have spoiled that for me so I didn’t bawl like a baby in the cinema.”

He grinned. “And ruin your reaction? Nah! Worth it," he nudged her as she rolled her eyes. "Shit, 6 films to go,” he breathed, sipping the amber liquid, needing the burn as a distraction down the back of his throat. That was a common theme when discussing his Marvel contract, there usually of a spirit or beer close on hand to attempt to relax him or appease his anxiety.

“Yeah,” she nuzzled his neck, hoping her touch would appease him. “That’s a lot of Bucky Barnes. I love it.”

*Oh, that body.* The body he had when they first slept together, she was fascinated by its mechanics, strength and how muscle clenched under soft skin. He had starting to lose some of the bulk,
slimming down with a less rigorous gym schedule and no needing to eat his body weight in protein every day but his current physique was no less worthy of study.

And that’s just what she did… from the top of his head as she drew her fingers through his long dark hair and withdrawing it from its little manbun, a little groan from him telling her he was appreciating her caress, the blink and you’ll miss it curve of his nose, the most perfect lips and those kisses, those wicked grins and best of all, when he spoke in Romanian to her in the throws of passion. His adorable chin cleft, the thick veins trailing his neck, the bob of his Adam’s Apple (the place he loved being kissed the most), to his broad, muscular shoulders –

“What are you doing?” he asked finally as she continued tracing his features.

“Blatantly checking you out,” she admitted. He blushed, his head drooping, embarrassed. How, at 33, he couldn’t comprehend how good-looking he was, and how he was getting more gorgeous as he aged flabbergasted her. Not that she wasn’t always attracted to him – she remembered the first night they met. Fluffy, dark curly hair, his wide, slick smile and those mischievous flashing stony eyes. While she may not have fallen quickly, that boy was just a distant memory to the man in front of her now.

Truth be told, she preferred a grown Sebastian. While he was still as bashful, if not more these days, as he heard how gorgeous he was a hell of a lot more, he was self-assured, wiser, not as eager to please everyone else before himself anymore. His heart was purer, if possible. If she didn’t know him as well as she did and how all those perfect quirks grew on her, she would probably not be interested and he would just be her friend, Sebastian.

On paper, Sebastian Stan was not her type. She needed her space, liked to come and go as she felt, but he saw what she really needed a mile away and made her change her mind.

“Well, I can’t stop you, I guess.”

“You do it to me.”

“All the time,” he agreed, wrapping an arm around her shoulders, giving her temple a tender peck.

"You're so weird."

"You make me horny," he shrugged simply as she had to laugh. Same could be said for how he made her feel.

“Scarlett looked amazing tonight,” Sasha abruptly changed the subject, sticking close to Sebastian, knowing if they continued talking the way the were, their drinks would be a distant memory and their clothes would be shed.

“She always does.”

“I hate to say this, but I’d leave you for her.”

“You think I’m not acutely aware of that? It worries me that it might be reciprocated,” he smirked, biting back a laugh. “You’ve had her two nights in a row, I haven’t had a look in.”

“You locked me with you in the bathroom while you took me from behind in the club last night,” Sasha said monotone. “While you told Mackie and Chris you were going to the bar. Or do you have short term memory?”

He grinned. “Oh yeah,” he winked with a thoughtful giggle, wiping his mouth. “Fuck, that was hot.”
“Threesome with Scarlett?” she suggested helpfully.

“No,” he shook his head, partially scandalised. He couldn’t look at Scarlett that way anymore. She was someone’s wife and mother. The attraction for Sebastian had well and truly dissipated. “And they are so much less practical than they sound.”

Her eyes widened. “He said with a note of experience in his voice. You’ve had one?”

He raised 2 fingers with an unreadable, although extremely modest, shrug.

“Wow. Kind of wish I didn’t know that now…” Sasha conceded, a teeny bit put off. Her mind raced, thinking of all the girls he’d dated in the past, how vanilla some of them appeared and which ones of them would be interested. He took her hand reassuringly, noting her mind clearly racing.

He laughed quietly, blushing. “Baby, they weren’t impressive. Truly. I thought trying a second time would make up for the first – ”

“I’m really not looking for details, Sebastian,” she lied, side-eying him.

He grinned. “Okay. Come here. I’m not interested in sharing you with anyone,” he put his tumbler onto the side table and kissed her deeply. He brushed her cheek as they ended the kiss, resting his forehead against hers. "Sadly for you, it's just us in the bedroom now. I veto any further threesome plans, male or female."

"I guess I can live with that," she mocked a sigh as he laughed loudly at her forced puss and kissed her gently again. “I’m pretty sure I could kiss you all day,” she told him. It was all the encouragement he needed before he kissed her again. Another of those slow, toe curling embraces that turned her to jelly. He lost his hands in her hair as his tongue duelled with hers. He knew exactly what he was doing to her. He knew the power he had over her with a truly hot, wet kiss. She was practically a bag of bones that he was keeping upright.

“Get over here,” he ordered, pulling her body to his and resting her on his thighs, lips crushing hers again, his hands scaling her back and his cool fingers disappearing under her shirt, lightly massing her soft skin. After a while, lips swollen and a little out of breath, she pulled back and smiled through lust-hooded eyes. He held her close, laying another chaste kiss on her lips. “Sebastian, bub?”

“Yeah?” he replied quietly, nudging her hips to his.

“Take me to bed, make me scream,” she instructed him.

“Yes, ma’am,” he bobbed his head. “I have one request though.”

"Anything."

"I want you to scream so loud, the neighbours hear and Chace gets noise complaints, okay?"

“I really feel like I can give it to them,” she high-fived him.

“That’s my girl,” he growled, tossing her over his shoulder as she squealed and steered her inside to their bedroom.

Chapter End Notes
Hi all, apologies for the lateness of this post - my intent was to have this updated over the weekend, Sunday at the latest, but it kind of backfired after my long-suffering footy team made the Final and WON! So it's been celebrations, disbelief and time away from my Mac. Sorry this isn't as well edited as I would like. Hopefully I can pop back in ASAP and amend as required. Please don't be too offended if you see too many mistakes :(

Thank you for the lovely comments, kudos and subscriptions. I hope you continue to enjoy xoxo

---

Interested Bystander writes on Tumblr.
Big Girl Steps or Putting Her Life Back Together

Chapter Summary

If she’d learnt one thing in all the years she’d know him, it was that he always managed to make her feel new and exciting ways of hating how much she cared about him.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

NEW YORK, USA

“How was your day?” Sasha asked, kissing Sebastian’s lips as she wandered into his new apartment after a yoga class. He was meandering in the kitchen, leaning back against the bench, fiddling on his iPad. “Get up to much?” she handed him an iced coffee that she’d picked up for him. He smiled, smacking her yoga-panted ass, she grunted. “Ouch, dammit, Sebastian,” she frowned as he pulled her back and smacked a kiss on her mouth again instead. “Hi.”

“Hello. Thank you, sweetheart,” he grinned and wasted no time indulging in his desperately required beverage. “Uhh, nothing overly exciting today. Suit fittings for all The Bronze promo stuff so got felt up by a dude most of the morning. Not as sexy as it sounds,” he said as she snorted before continuing, “Got a haircut,” he shook his head and revealed his newly cropped locks, pulling it over his face to show off its new length. She knew it was coming (he needed shorter hair for a film role in a month or so), he was so eager to get rid of his longer locks but it made her blood run cold.

“Oh, Jesus…” she sighed, playing with the newly trimmed strands, soft under her fingers. “But you don’t look like a caveman anymore…” she whined, devastated at this new development.

“What?” he frowned, pushing it back from his face. “You don’t like it?”

“No, it’s hot. As expected,” she muttered, wandering into the living room and dramatically falling on the couch. “You just have to warn a girl, you know?”

“Strangely over the top for you. What are you talking about?” he followed her and didn’t hesitate to nestle himself between her waiting legs, wide grin across his face.

“I really like the hair, I’m angry that you are like a chameleon and you keep getting hotter each time you remotely change your look. It’s frustrating to be dating to you.”

He blushed profusely. “I’m not sure if I’m insulted or incredibly flattered?” he asked no one in particular, before considerately pointing out, “And we’re practically glued together, we’re not exactly dating anymore.”

“Get over here,” she pulled him up her body by his shirt and kissed him slowly. He knew that kiss.

“So you like the hair, hmm?” he smirked, licking his lips, bringing her thigh to his grasp. She nodded.

“Yes, now take off your pants,” she put her palms under this t-shirt and drew patterns on his back which he smiled into before he laughed, easing back on his heels, pushing his hair back off his face –
it would drive him mad pretty quickly at this new length, she realised. She gave it a week before he threatened to shave it off (he’d never, but he wouldn’t survive hair this length. At this stage, neither would she). She frowned as he withdrew himself from her grasp.

“As much as I would love to, I’m on the clock, Chace is on his way over. We’re getting a drink with a few of the guys.”

“Well, that’s shit timing.”

“Guess so,” he said, standing up and straightened his white t-shirt down his shirt, combing out her nail marks. “Clawed me,” he muttered. “Benzo, really.”

“Not sorry. Are you bulking up again?” she squinted.

“Not yet, no. Why?”

“Okay… That t-shirt is too small for you. And by too small, I mean too tight and I would prefer you didn’t wear it out to a bar where other women can, you know… See you.”

He laughed. “This t-shirt is clean, I’ll continue watching it. Thank you for your concern though.”

“Seb, your biceps are offensive in that shirt,” she scoffed, loving every single thing about his t-shirt.

“Offensive how?” he raised an eyebrow and humoured her, crossing his arms over his broad chest, flexing just a little because he was Sebastian Stan and he was aware of his biceps, he worked hard for those biceps. And he loved that his girl was aware of them too. He knew he was doing something right while he killed himself in the gym when she was a mess before him like right now.

She blinked, and licked her lips, knowing exactly what he was up to. “Too big.”

He cackled, throwing his head back jovially. “I love when you come back from long yoga classes,” he leaned down and kissed her soft and slowly. “Something triggers in your brain, I guess in shavasana, and you come home all riled up. And kind of batshit crazy,” he added with a thoughtful smile. “You’re a maniac right now.”

“That’s not true,” she laughed as he did the same thing, grabbing her glasses from the coffee table and slipping them over her eyes. “You’re just super sexy, I suppose I have to hide my needs and wants better,” she wriggled her eyebrows playfully as the buzzer sounded.

“That’s Chace. Did you want come with us?” he asked, making his way to the buzzer to let him in. “We’ll start here with a few beers and wait for you.”

She sighed. “I kind of feel like loafing, if that’s okay? Go talk about boobs and farts without me, enjoy some time with the boys,” she admitted, he shrugged. “Hey, guess what?”

“What?” he came back to the couch and sat on the end, pulling on his sneakers.

“I got a job offer today.”

“Another one?” he smiled simply as she sat up and nodded. “Where? Why didn’t you lead off with that when you walked in?”

“You distracted me. I actually skipped here,” she replied wistfully. “Must have looked like a complete nutter.”

“This is New York City – no one would have noticed the babe skipping down West Broadway.
Probably brightened a few guys days, in fact,” he grinned. “Amazing. Details, woman.”

“Do you ever remember meeting one of my dance class friends, Eva?” she asked though the blank look on Sebastian’s face said it all, he clearly hadn’t attempted to sleep with her (yes, it happened with a few dance friends, Sasha tried not to give it too much thought). She shrugged and continued, “Anyway, Eva. She’s opened her own little school in Soho, right near my apartment.”

“Can’t place an Eva,” Sebastian admitted. “That is fantastic news though, sweetheart,” he kissed her gently as Chace walked in, Sebastian waved him over. “What kind of classes?”

“Did you say Eva? Super hot,” Chace commented, wandering into the living room to join them, high fiving Sebastian in the dude way they always greeted each other. “Legs for days, brunette. Yeah, I remember her. Well.”

Sebastian shrugged. “No recollection at all,” he confirmed.

Chace shook his head. “Pretty sure you were out of town. I stood half a chance,” he said as the guys snickered quietly.

Sasha rolled her eyes. “I probably should have lead off with which one of our friends slept with her,” Sasha rolled her eyes as Sebastian giggled to himself. Chace nodded with an empathic dimpled grin and a lively thumbs up.

“Was a good night,” Chace kissed Sasha’s hair as she sighed. “Thanks for the hook up, toots.”

"Yeah, yeah..."

Sebastian laughed, shaking his head at his best friends. “Tell me more, baby. Sash looks like she’s lined a job up,” Sebastian filled Chace in who smiled upon hearing the news.


Sebastian straightened up, not entirely believing Sasha had said that aloud. “Really? You couldn’t.”

“I have some stuff to weigh up,” she admitted as he nodded and rubbed the back of her neck, tenderly.

“Have you been looking for work?” Chace asked.

“T he gets a dozen offers a week,” Sebastian told Chace a little smugly on Sasha’s behalf.

“Hey,” Sasha muttered. “I’m here. I can answer for myself.”

Sebastian lowered his eyes. “Sorry. True.”

“But he’s right, I’ve gotten a few calls. There were a few shows this summer that contacted me earlier in the year, but I wasn’t quite ready yet. I’m finally in a place I can start contemplating jobs again. I started dance classes again this week.”

“How’d you go?” Chace asked fondly.

“Yeah,” Sasha blushed. “It was fun – I missed it. A lot.”

“I really do,” she agreed sourly. “They’re sticky. They’re snotty. I can’t trust their intentions.”

He shook his head, laughing quietly. “Well, it sounds like you’ve made your mind up, germaphobe.”

“Maybe,” she reluctantly got off the couch as Sebastian and Chace continued to laugh at her. “Well, if you buttheads are heading out, I’m going to make my way back to my apartment,” she started towards the kitchen to collect her bag as Sebastian shook his head and grabbed her wrist, pulling her back to him, sitting her on his lap, tightly winding his arms around her slim waist.

“Aren’t you staying tonight?” he whispered, nuzzling her cheek. “We won’t be too late.”

“We will bring you back pizza in our drunk stupors,” Chace winked.

Sasha laughed and shook her head. “Don’t bother, I’m attempting to get back into proper shape but thanks anyway,” she turned back to Sebastian. “I don’t have any clothes here,” Sasha told him, tucking an arm around his shoulders. "It's cool, I'll head home. Or come back to my place?" she suggested.

“You're already here, baby. Just get some sweats from my drawers and chill for the night. You know where everything is," Sebastian said quietly.

"You make a pretty tempting offer," she acknowledged.

“Sure do,” he gave her a tempting kiss. Chace cleared his throat, shuffling on his toes. "We better go though."

"Don't confuse my discomfort, man," Chace spoke up jokingly. "I just didn't need to see you two start procreating."

"Sorry," Sebastian stood them both up, resting his hands on her hips, a slight blush rising to his features.

“It’s gross that you two talk so easily about relationship stuff,” Chace commented. Sasha and Sebastian looked at him, cocking their heads in unison. “I mean, not gross, just weird. You know, after all this time as friends - " he paused, noting Sasha's gaze turn dark against him. "Am I missing something here?"

"No," Sasha and Sebastian said in unison.

"No, don't let your imagination get the best of you. He just can't keep his hands off me," Sasha shrugged.

"Says she who was trying to have sex with me on this couch seconds before you walked in," Sebastian responded as Chace covered his mouth with his hands, chuckling deeply.

“All right, dummies, that's enough. Get out,” Sasha rolled her eyes, pushing the boys towards the door. “Have fun, meet up some cute girls. Get some numbers, you know. Like the old days.”

“Does she dare you to do that often?” Chace muttered to Sebastian who laughed.

“No, she’s just showing off how happy she is in our relationship,” Sebastian reassured him, sliding his wallet into his pocket. “I hope.”

“Go, the bath won’t run itself,” she mumbled as Sebastian looked back with the saddest puppy dog eyes.
“Bath?” he repeated sadly. “Devil woman and your black magic –”

Sasha grinned. “Someone has to christen it. Might as well be little old me, here on my lonesome,” she teased, making a point to wave her fingers and make him consider the fun she could have on her own. “Have fun, Sebby. Buh byeee,” she kissed him roughly, patted his cheek and closed the door on them as he whined.

---

A few hours later, Sebastian wandered in alone, finding Sasha on the couch, reading. “Hi,” he smiled, sitting at the other end of the couch, taking his sneakers off before taking her book from her, placing it on the coffee table and putting his head in her lap clearly demanding all the attention from her he could muster. “How was your night?”

“Quiet, nice. God, you’re like a cat some days,” she said, affectionately running her hands through his shorter hair and kissing him hello. “How was yours?”

“It was good to have a few drinks with the guys,” his eyes fluttered closed, extremely relaxed, very un-Sebastian-like. He drank so infrequently these days that when he did, he got drunk quickly, Sasha suspected this was one of those times. “Did you have your bath?”

“I love your new bath,” she told him, smirking. “You’ll get to enjoy it eventually.”

“I’ll take that as a yes,” he chuckled quietly. “I was hoping you might have waited,” he wriggled his eyebrows suggestively. “Make sure there is enough space for two.”

“Aww. Did you miss me?” she teased.

He touched her face and reached up to kiss her. “Of course I did. Wanted to text you all night but knew I was opening myself to ribbing of epic proportions. I’m failing to pretend my entire life doesn’t revolve around you with our friends at this point. They’re placing bets on when I’ll propose.”

"Did you tell them that isn't in our plans?"

"Like they'd buy it," he scoffed a slight laugh. "I can handle it - worse things to be mocked about. Glad to be home though."

“You need guy time,” she reminded him. “We’ve spent a lot of time, maybe too much, in each other’s pockets lately. I survived on my own without a few texts.”

He nodded. “I know, I don’t disagree,” he told her. “I just like having time for us. Maybe I’m just growing up, or catching up on lost time?” he offered.

“Aww. You’ll never grow up,” she reasoned mockingly to the big kid below her.

“Probably not,” he smirked as he sat up and closed in on her personal space. He moved to hold her face in his hands. “Pot să te sărut?”

“You a little drunk, Sebastian Stan?” she licked her lips in high hopes as he shrugged.

“You only break out the Romanian when you’re drunk,” she started counting on her fingers. "If we’re having sex or you’re calling me a pet name.”

“Okay, I’m a little drunk,” he agreed, indicating on his fingers his guesstimate of his intoxication
with a small giggle, his striking features flushed form one too many drinks. “I guess you do know me pretty well.”

“Don't leave me hanging here. You asked to kiss me and all my lips are doing is talking,” she giggled lightly as he nodded, as he took her face in his hands and placed a lazy, affection-laced smooch on her before moving his head back to her lap, insistently placing her fingers back in his hair.

“I never give you enough credit for how much Romanian you've gone out of your own way to learn. I love that you have at least tried. None of the other girls ever did,” he scoffed, his eyes happily fluttering closed again as her nails lightly scraped his scalp.

“Well, they aren’t me,” she reminded him, poking him in the sternum sharply.

“No,” he yelped, catching her pointer in his hands to avoid more punishment. “They most definitely are not, they don't hold a candle to you, baby. Tu ești sufletul meu pereche,” he said, a little softer this time.

“I don’t know what that means.”

“It means ‘you’re my soulmate’,;” he told her as she kissed his stubbly chin.

“I like that one,” she confided shyly. “Doesn’t strike me as something you believed in though,” she couldn’t resist calling him out. He wasn’t that kind guy, and not remotely romantic in the slightest. He'd send flowers occasionally but wasn't big on huge romantic gestures and suited Sasha to a tee.

But she occasionally enjoyed when he lavished her with loving comments, wouldn't let her move from his strong arms or kiss her like he just had.

“You are, baby. The beginning and the end of everything,” he said, thumbing her bottom lip.

“If you mean it, then teach me.”

“Okay, ready?” he sat back against the couch, pulling her under his arm. “Tu yest su fle tul mew pe re ke,” he whispered slowly in her ear, before gently chewing on her earlobe, knowing it was clearly one of the ways to turn her on. She giggled, pushing him away, knowing he had no intentions of really teaching her, preferring to torment instead.

“Tu yest su fle tul me-yeah pe re ke,” she tried, shaking her head disappointed, knowing she had kind of bastardised her lesson and attempted to get her mouth around the annunciation again but not feeling confident. “No, no good.”

He nodded slowly, unable to disagree with her evaluation. “Not terrible and not a complete insult either,” he admitted quietly.

“Twill keep practicing," she promised. "It's a good one."

“Okay, I'll teach you some stuff," he said, pleased that she was so interested in learning his native tongue. None of the previous girls had bothered going to the lengths Sasha had for most important things in his life. His language, family and culture, although he hadn't been back to Romania in years, it was something he never wanted to lose grasp of and was ecstatic Sasha was trying for him.

"Come on. Bed,” he stood up and took her hand to the bedroom. He stopped her at his door and kissed her gently. “Here’s an easy one: Te iubesc.”

She rolled her eyes. “I love you too, Sebastian,” she gently pushed him against the wall and kissed him, slow and purposefully. When the kiss ended, Sebastian blinked a few times before blinding her
with a megawatt smile.

“That was an amazing kiss. Again,” he demanded, losing his hands in her hair, tongue begging for entrance as she sighed against his lips, his arms wrapping her to him as closely as possible, chest to chest, hips to hips.

“Take me to bed, please?” she begged quietly.

He nodded as he followed her in to his bedroom. She was already in an old t-shirt of his and went to do her teeth while he stripped down to his boxer briefs, joining her in the bathroom so he could wash his face and teeth too. She gave his butt a firm thwack as she wandered past and he grumbled with a smirk, mouth full of toothpaste. “Hey!” he grumbled.

Sliding under Sebastian’s cool Egyptian cotton bed covers, she waited on her side as he appeared a minute later. “Vreau să te sărut,” she said as he gave her a quirky smile and moved under the sheets with her.

“I don’t remember teaching you that one,” he said humoured.

“Did I say it right?”

“About 99 per cent,” he smiled, proudly. “Say it again.”

“Vreau să te sărut, iubitel,” she said again, a little more confidently.

“Look at you go,” he said, grinning. “Well done, sufletel. You'll be fluent in no time.”

"I highly doubt that," she blushed. “I Googled for hours,” she confessed bashfully.

He laughed. “Of course you did. Well, the translation was pretty good,” he assured her. ”But tell me, do you just want to just kiss?” he winked, laying on his side, chin in his hand, his other hand drawing circles on her hip. “Can you answer me in Romanian as well?”

She scrunched her nose, trying to weasel out of his tickling. “Lemme think…”

His fingers traced up her arm to her shoulder, leaving goose pimples in his wake. “Take all the time you need. I’ll be waiting,” he told her as his fingers continued down her front, over her breast and circling her eager nipple, through her ribs and back to her belly button. It was not conducive behaviour to help consider her answer.

“Stop,” she giggled. “I can’t think when you do that.”

He chewed his lip, contemplatively. She groaned, covering her eyes as she rolled away from him. He laughed, shuffling across the bed to spoon her. “I’m sorry, that was mean. I know you have an oral fixation with me,” he nuzzled her pulse, grinding his pelvis into her butt, making absolutely no secret what he wanted.

“I do. You distract me on purpose.”

“I can be bad,” he growled, gruffly pushing down her bed shorts, his feet kicking them away, his fingers moving over her hips and pulling a thigh back for access to her clit, instantly drawing small circles with purpose.

She body contorted under his touch. She loved that Sebastian thought he could be but he was a softie at heart. He was gentle, loving and tender. Rough as required. Longing, slow, painstakingly
passionate. Agonisingly on point. “Yes, you can be bad,” she couldn't disagree as he continued taunting her.

“Get over here,” he dragged her gently by her waist and again moved his groin back to her ass.

“Take off your boxers,” she told him as he did so, before shuffling close again and resting his cock in between the backs of her thighs. She loved when he took her from behind, no discredit to any other time they had sex, but he could get her off so easily this way and repeatedly. He resumed playing with her clit, his fingers unable to resist to test the waters and see just how desperate she was for him as she reached back to kiss him, his fingers curling inside her, little shocks to the system distracting her from meeting his lips.

“Do you want me, *draga mea*?”

She nodded, eyes clouding in lust. “Yes,” she frowned as he pulled back with a disappointed hum, laying back and wrapping his arms behind his head, staring at the roof, a mocking grin on his full lips.

“**Gură**... **Vorbiți românește**?”

Of course she could hardly remember her name at that point but he wanted her to tell him in Romanian.

“*Da, dragul meu*,” she muttered.

“Good girl,” he laughed quietly, moving back to her as he pulled off her nightshirt and threw it away before he entered her and pushed in for deep, long strokes that almost set her off the bed. He held her waist, keeping her close and dragged in her long, lean legs open, playing with her body however he could before his long fingers settling back on that bundle of nerves that he knew as she tightened around him, was only a question of when she came. He teased a little and moved his fingers away as she groaned, his lazy thrusts turning her inside out.

“*Seb*...” she grumbled, needing his skilled fingers to get her over the line as he kissed her shoulder, shuffling an arm under her and wrapping both around her ribs and reaching for her breast, both palmed in his warm hands, tangling her lean legs with his muscular ones.

“What?” he smiled against her skin, gently rolling her nipples under his fingers. He let out a small moan as she pushed back into him, forcing him deeper and he sighed in satisfaction. Giving up on him, she played with herself as he appreciatively watched on, another low groan escaping his mouth. He loved watching her touch her body, her slick covering her now glistening fingers and it may or may not have been his plan all along. Her fingers prodded her clit as he bit his lip, keen to watch as his strokes got a little more forceful as her orgasm came across her. She grunted as she throbbed around him in her, her body taut as she attempted to move her body closer to his.

“Fuck,” he muttered quietly, lacing his hands with hers so he could keep touching her and hopefully drag out her orgasm out for both of their benefits as he fucked her through it. His thrusts sharper and quicker and he came as she continued to writhe before him. “**Jesus...**” he said, resting his forehead on her shoulder as he hissed through his teeth, attempting to collect his breathing, his hands smoothing down her sides.

“That was so good,” she told him.

He kissed along her shoulder to her ear, nuzzling it as she quietly whined at the over-sensitivity. “So good. I love you.”
“I love you too. So much,” she reached back to kiss him.

“We didn’t even kiss,” he teased as she swatted at him.

"You're drunk, Sebastian."

"Yeah," he laughed. "I'm sorry."

"It's okay, no complaints from me, bubba. None at all."

Chapter End Notes

I'm so sorry for the lateness of this chapter, the last few weeks have been manic at best and TOFWYA has been on the receiving end of a lack of inspo as well. Probs because I know we're kinda getting to that point of wrapping things up (I will be publishing seperate vignettes in future but we're not far off now...). Thank you for being so patient and kind in your comments, the kudos ad subscriptions still just blow my mind. I appreciate the effort you all make to let me know how you feel about this and I appreciate it more than any of you could ever know xoxo

---

Interested Bystander writes on Tumblr.
Sasha: When did Sebastian get so hot that I actually couldn’t be in his presence?
Olivia: That’s gross – don’t talk about Seb like that to me. But yes… it’s all working for him at the moment. If you’re just staring at him, sitting in front of the TV, I’m going to vomit.
Sasha: No, no. He asked me to come to his photoshoot today (for The Bronze stuff, they're getting their meagre $$$ outta him, that's for sure!), and I swear, it’s taking every inch of willpower not to jump on him. He's having a lot of fun though.
Olivia: You know Seb is happy to promo anything. What photoshoot?
Sasha: Buzzfeed. Doing all the cute things, it’s ridiculous. His fans will be suitably impressed and gifing the shit out this shoot. I'm trying not to do that same.
Olivia: You're an adult - act like one.
Sasha: TRYING. I'll send you a pic.

“Benzo, quit it,” Sebastian rolled his eyes with a goofy grin as the stylist took his jacket from his hands and his girl attempted stealth behind the photographer, clearly hoping to take a sneaky pic, as he continued to basically eyefuck the camera. He was wearing some well fitting white jeans and a grey t-shirt. The purple backdrop made his grey eyes pop in ways she’d never imagined possible.

“You look cute, isn’t that what you want me to say?” Sasha asked Sebastian as he creased up laughing, blushes taking over his handsome features, the photographer taking the opportunity to get some off the cuff photos of Sebastian. “This is for Ollie anyway,” she went back to her stool in the corner and sent the picture to her friend. She poked her tongue out at him when she noticed him looking her way again. "Don't look at me. Focus," she mouthed, motioning him away as he nodded and redirected his attention back to the photographer. Sasha sent the picture to Ollie.

Olivia: Okay, maybe I kind of get what you see in him. Everyday is a photoshoot for him.

Sasha gigged at her friend, blushing on Sebastian’s behalf. He’d have a fit if he knew how the girls were texting each other about him. About him looking so incredibly sexy, she thought she could cry.

---

“You look so hot today,” Sasha pushed Sebastian into her apartment (it was closer to the photoshoot and she made no apologies for dragging him through the busy Manhattan streets, stopping occasionally to kiss and manhandle him and get him naked as soon as possible), pulling his jacket from his arms and dropping it as they kept moving into the kitchenette as he tripped over his sneakers, trying and failing to kick them off, bracing the island to avoid falling over. “Get in my bedroom and let me put all this sexual frustration to use.”

Sebastian had no idea what had come over her, but he was absolutely not arguing the point. She pushed him back into her bedroom in record time and on the bed before crawling over his body and pulling his t-shirt off, discarding it over her shoulder as she made light work on his jeans, pulling them down his legs and taking his socks with them. Moving to his waist, she straddled his lap and latched onto his necklace and brought his body up to hers, fisting a tight grip on it as they kissed the other zealously, Sebastian wrapping his arms around her tightly.

“I have no idea what is going on, but I like it,” Sebastian managed a laugh as he threw Sasha on her back and worked her over similarly to how she and just him, undressing her down to the underwear.
frantically.

“I don’t know either, it’s just all working for you today,” she demanded, unclasping her bra and throwing it somewhere near the end of the bed. He took care of his boxers, hardness eagerly springing free before pulling her knickers from her. “Where do you want me?”

“You are not going anywhere,” he ordered, his hands pushing against her belly and easing her on her back. “I’m gonna take care of you for a while.”

“That wasn’t what I had in mind – ” she gasped as he pulled a knee over his broad shoulder and kissed her inner thigh. "Oh, no," she muttered in anticipation, though not filled remotely with dread.

“Well, I got here first,” he snarled with a wink, leaving a long lick from where he last kissed back to her hip. “So deal with it.”

All arguments ceased as he pushed his way further down the bed and allowed her long legs to crossed over his strong shoulders as he gleefully went to town on her. She lost time, no idea how long he was down there. But he would not be moved until she at least had one orgasm down, not that she’d ever let him know that just seeing his mop of dark hair hovering over her and lavishing her was usually enough to make her come undone. *He couldn't have that information and be trusted with it.*

Chuckling to himself, mouth still on her, he peered up as Sasha thrashed at the other end of the bed, nails clawing pillows, her lips pursed in deep pleasure.

"Seb, Seb, Seb," she panted, fingers snaking into his hair as he raised an eyebrow. She had to snort at the sight which only amused him more.

"I know you're trying to stop me, and okay, the laugh got me. What?" he begged, his mouth moving at the sight which only amused him more.

"I know you're trying to stop me, and okay, the laugh got me. What?" he begged, his mouth moving the her hip, leaving wet kisses against her hot skin.

"Don't stop," she pleaded. "So close."

"Jesus, woman," he rolled his eyes and was immediately in her face and traced her lips with his tongue. "Be right back," he said, popping back down and his mouth resuming its previous workout.

"Christ," Sasha cursed, toes curling as he put just the right amount of pleasure in the just the right place and just like that, everything was white and stars and heat. Never one to give up even when a mission was complete, Sebastian kissed up Sasha's body, leaving well places licks and wet kisses in places he knew turned her inside out, her body jolting at the sensations as she came down from her excruciating high.

He finally pulled her to him and kissing her hungrily, his tongue running against her lip and invading her mouth, allowing her to taste herself on his mouth. “On top,” he flipped their bodies so she was sitting across his hips again. The groan he elicited as she gripped his cock and slid down over him was sinful, warm, wet and tight from her previous orgasm.

“Fuck,” he breathed, taking his lower lip between his teeth and gripped her hips. “You look incredible,” he mumbled as her hips bobbed and gyrated round him. He was so turned on, completely spurned by her need for him. He had to admit he loved knowing he could agitate her like this. Make her tremble for him. Maybe he just hid it better because there wasn’t a moment in his life he wouldn’t prefer to be right where he was right now, but he would never get sick of them like this.

Sebastian used his hands, his thumb making pointed, small circles around her clit, holding her hips down and she gasped, the electricity surging through her body, pooling in her belly. She sucked in a
breath, her body only just coming down from its last high and prepping for its next. “Right there, babe,” she managed, everything too bright and vivid to keep her eyes open any longer. He felt her toes curl under his hamstrings, her thighs trembling above his.

“You going to come for me again?” he pleaded. “I need you to.”

“Yes,” she changed her tempo as he raised his hips to fill her as deeply as he could muster. She shuddered, resting a hand on his chest, the friction almost unbearable, knowing he was finding that spot inside that made her unravel. His breath hitched as he felt her constrict around him, her body crumbling for them bringing him closer to his release as well.

“Good girl,” he cheered for them as his hips speed up and brought her down, chest to chest. He tightened and came, the last few ramming strokes lacking rhythm before he collapsed back and she fell on him, a mess of limbs still connecting them. “You okay?” he kissed her forehead, with a quiet laugh.

“Completely fucked,” she managed. "Oh, my God. That was fantastic, you're fantastic," she kissed him hard.

"Team effort," Sebastian grinned, running his fingers through her hair, untangling it from her sweaty back, sating her as she traced the lines and ridges of his ribcage.

“I have to move. I’m a mess here,” she whispered, knowing the second she moved, it was going to be a mess between her legs, the bedsheets and likely him.

He attempted to sit up but he was well spent, he definitely needed a minute. “Can you move?” he whispered back.

“Nope. Scared my legs will go from under me.”

“Okay,” he breathed, rolling them over carefully. “I’m gonna pull out. I’ll be right back. 1, 2, 3,” he did so as she made a face, slick moving a expected and wandered to the bathroom, closing the door behind him.

“Holy shit,” she managed, stretching her arms and legs in satisfaction, the worked out muscles pleased under her skin. Sebastian returned a minute later with a warm washcloth and a glass of water. “Best boyfriend ever,” she wrapped an arm around his neck and kissed him again.

“Absolutely,” he agreed completely as he helped her tidy up. “Can you move?” he asked.

“Yeah,” she yawned. “Are you done for the day? I’m sorry, I know I dragged you outta there like a bat outta hell. And if you’re due anywhere, you probably missed that appointment.”

Sebastian laughed loudly, realising she wasn’t remotely apologetic. “No, it was just that strange BuzzFeed thing today, but I have AOL something tonight. I didn’t even get to say goodbye to my manager.”

“Oops,” Sasha blushed, taking his necklace again and playing with it between her fingers. “I was a little over the top back there, I’m sorry.”

“Don’t you dare ever be sorry for wanting me,” he insisted. "I love it."

“You were irresistible,” she looked up and rested her chin on his chest. He resisted the bubble of
laughter that threatened as she gazed at him adoringly (she was still coming down from her high, he
guessed. He'd gladly take it) “The hair, the stubble is just right. And those white pants, I never knew
that white pants would be so good on you.”

“It was leg day today,” he joked modestly.

“I like leg day. But if I'm being honest, I do like arms, back and core days too.”

“Yes, I know you do,” he laughed quietly.

“I am completely obsessed with you. It sickens me. What have I turned into?”

He grinned back at her. “I personally love it that you want me all to yourself.”

“Am I too much?” she asked a little fretful.

“There is never enough of you. I hate being away from you.”

“Hmm.”

“So yeah, I was thinking…” he paused, chomping on his lip, a little nervously as he tapped his
fingers on her shoulder. “You move in with me.”

“Oh,” her face was unreadable. That wasn’t quite the reaction he was after. She may as well have
said, ‘move in with my man friend? No thank you’.

“We are together every night, whether it’s here, which is rare, or my place. It would really be nice to,
you know… just call one place home, together,” he continued, a little self-consciously. “Don’t you...
think?”

“We can walk to each other’s apartments,” she rolled her eyes. “Five minute walk on a bad day.”

“On a good day,” he protested. This wasn’t going how he expected. He thought she’d be keen for
their relationship to move forward with this huge step. What was he thinking? “What do you think?”

“About moving in together?”

“Yes, about moving in together,” he clarified, rolling his eyes, suddenly completely exasperated and
fisting at his hair. “Jesus, Benzo. You’re fucking killing me here.”

She shrugged. “Eh. Okay.”

“Eh, okay?” he mocked in his terrible Australian accent. “That is a casual fucking commitment right
there, Benzo,” he noted, a little disappointed, his arm covering his face.

“Aren’t we already committed?” she asked innocently, sneaking up and pulling his arm away,
kissing his wrist.

“Well, yeah, of course. Completely.”

“Then what’s your problem?”

“You're so hard to get a read on sometimes. Will you ever change?”

“Probably not,” she shrugged, maintaining her little act he was starting to see through. He pouted, a
little hurt she wasn’t taking this as seriously as he would have appreciated. “Your closet isn’t big
“Yours is smaller than mine,” he pointed emphatically at the stand-alone dresser across from them as she bit back a small smile. “Do you think when I got the place and dragged you to see it, I didn’t consider what you’d need it as well? I can extend your closet, Sasha. Fuck,” he muttered, now completely put off. He shook his head, almost ready to get out of her bed, get dressed and head home. A small smirk was still playing on her features and he realised she had been teasing him all along. “You interested, woman? You wanna live with me?” he pretended to threaten her, his accent thick, as he put his finger in her face. She bit it. He quickly retracted his hand before he lost it. “Ow.”

“Of course I do, dummy. I would love to have all of our things in one place,” she whispered, kissing his shoulder. “I’ve been waiting for you to ask for months.”

“Of course you have,” he finally smiled. “You have a way of making me feel so inadequate at the best of times. You drive me absolutely insane.”

“You like being kept on your toes,” she told him. "You'd be bored without a challenge."

He bit back a smile. “Sometimes,” he slapped her side as she groaned with a giggle.

“Was there even a remote part of you that thought I’d say no?” she dared ask.

He pouted. “No, not an ounce,” he admitted.

“Then I don’t see what your problem is,” she clamped down on his lips as he wrapped her in his arms. “Mum always taught me, 'Treat 'em mean, keep 'em keen',' she explained. "She must be doing something right since my parents have been together for nearly 40 years."

"Forty years, shit. Some days I can't be in the same room as you for forty minutes."

"You are such a dick," she sighed. "But I had that coming."

“I just wanted some enthusiasm, some excitement. Passion!” he declared. “Or are you completely devoid of those emotions too?”

“I just had two amazing orgasms and you want me to find the energy to dance for you too? Fuck. And you think I’m high maintenance,” she rolled her eyes.

He grinned widely now, rolling them over as he hovered over her wolfishly. “Since you put it that way – ”

“You’re the worst.”

“We can be the worst together,” he kissed her nose.

“Can I have a shoe closet like Carrie?” she asked hopefully as he made a face and nodded, like he expected it. “It’s a real precedent these days, you know.”

“Sex and the City has made it really difficult to maintain a woman’s low standards and I blame Big,” he smiled as she shrugged modestly. “If we need to extend, I will. We can put stuff in the guestrooms and change things around a bit,” he continued. “Whatever you want.”

“Can I get rid of some of the bachelor stuff?”

“Do you think I haven’t noticed that stuff is already kind of missing?” he cocked his head to the side as his hair fell into his eyes as she grinned proudly, combing it back off his face but it was impossible
to stay back in his position over her.

“The stuff on your bar is so bloke-ish, it’s embarrassing. This, mine, is an adult’s apartment – and yours finally will be when I move in and subsequently take over.”

“You’re going to just burn through my cash, aren’t you? Re-design the whole place! Leave me bleeding and broken on a street corner, begging.”

“You’re cute, someone would take pity on you.”

He cackled which in turn made her laugh. “So, we’re moving in together,” he slapped her bare hip again, giddily inflicting a little bit of pain on her that he knew she enjoyed too and she flinched, a quiet moan escaping her lips, continuing with a good ass grope for good measure.

“Guess so. Can we get a dog?”

“I’m a cat person.”

“Deal breaker. And you’re allergic to cats.”

He maintained his wide grin, kissing her hard. “Okay, you and your dog can stay here in your little studio that you can’t have a pet in. Can you feed my cat while I’m away though?”

“Sure,” she played along. “Nap with me.”


“Fuck, Sebastian, you’re bossy today. Force me into moving in with you, then spoon me.”

“I’m awful. But my apartment is 20-times as big as yours. Makes no sense to move in here. This is fine for you. But we’re us now. And apparently a dog too.”

“I get it, you have a nice apartment,” she joked as he forced her to roll over and he curled around her, stretching his arms before wrapping them around her tummy. “This is a cute apartment though. It’s close to work. I’ll miss it, I’ve lived here the whole time I’ve been in New York. Not once did the landlord ever raise the rent.”

"Ever open the door to him in your dance stuff?"

"Sometimes less," she giggled as he shook his head. "Think that has something to do with it?"

“Good chance. We’ve had some fun here, Benzo,” he acknowledged. “But it’s time to make some new memories though,” he kissed her neck. “Go to sleep, we can talk logistics later.”

---

MOVING DAY

“Hey, come on, lazy bones, get off the couch. We’ve gotta pack,” Sebastian said as he put together yet another box on his own. “I asked you if you wanted removalists to do everything. You said no, so here we are boxing your life up before the moving guys get here later in the week.”

“I’ll do it tomorrow. You don’t need to help,” Sasha replied, blatantly channel surfing. Her tone made him look up and watch her, frowning slightly.

“Something up?” he asked, softly. “You’ve been a bit miserable all afternoon. Sad to be moving?”
he reckoned.
“A bit, yeah,” she barely replied, channel surfing as he had to laugh.

“Baby, we are not going to move in here,” he pointed out, moving to crash on the couch next to her and wrapping his arms around. “I just got all that new furniture to fill the new apartment for us, it won’t fit in here.”

“No, I guess it wouldn’t.”

He frowned. “Sash, baby,” he kissed her forehead. “Are you okay?”

“I am just having second thoughts about giving this space up, that’s all.”

“I wouldn’t call it ‘space’,” he teased, nuzzling her cheek affectionately. It was a bedroom that barely fit a queen bed and dresser, bathroom that two couldn’t be in at the same time and small kitchenette jammed in the living room. When there were two people in it, it could be considered crowded. So in midst the jumble of moving and both of them there, there was little breathing room. “You decided against sub-letting.”

“I should have kept it. It’s near work. I could stay here when I have early classes.”

He pulled back a little, she wasn’t remotely brightening. He resigned himself to knowing something else was eating at her. “All right, I’m listening. Tell me all about it,” he sat back against the back of the couch and tried to hide his confusion.

“I dunno. I should just have something to fall back on.”

“Gurîţă, you don’t own this place,” he grinned cheekily. “It’s not yours to fall back on.”

“It was like she lined him up and kicked him in square in the balls. Well, that was unpleasant, he pulled his mouth into a thin line. “And what makes you think that will happen?”

“Futu-i,” he muttered, tension rising if he was breaking out the Romanian swears. "Not once have you looked at me while you’ve dragged us. Turn the TV off and look me in the eyes,” he snatched the remote and did it for her. “Honestly, Sash, were you always such a fucking commitmentphobe? I thought we got past this,” Sebastian pushed his hair back from his face, frustrated. “Why, at this late stage, are you looking for an excuse to not move in?”

“Why was she texting you again?” she finally met his eyes, her tone even, even a little stoic. Tired.

“Why was who texting me?” his voice wavering. He knew exactly whom Sasha meant. Lying was not his strong suit and he knew she was already on to him and too late to facilitate a feasible white lie. “Baby,” he moved closer, reaching for her face as she slapped his hands away. “It is not what it seems – ”

“No. You got a fucking text from your ex-girlfriend at breakfast this morning and kept texting her all day. If it was one of the boys, you’d have just said so. You tell me she’s out of your life, which clearly she isn’t. She asked you for coffee and you said yes.”
His heart stopped for a moment. “How did you know that?” he asked quietly. She rolled her eyes and picked up another newspaper, wrapping up a vase that he snatched from her in case it was going to be hurtled. “Did you go through my phone? Of course you fucking did,” he seethed. “What a complete invasion of my privacy.”

“You want me to move in with you and you’re still texting her? This is the one girl that made my life a misery while you two were together and you sit in my kitchen, texting her while I am trying to pack my life up to be with you?” she hissed as he moved to the other side of the couch. "Be more transparent, Sebastian."

He rubbed his suddenly exhausted eyes. “Jesus fuck, Sasha,” he said composed.

“Don’t make me ask,” she begged him.

“Ask what?” he massaged his temples.

“Sebastian, are you sleeping with her?” Sasha asked, voice barely audible. It felt like she’d smacked him square across the cheek.

“Are you fucking serious?” he asked. “You think I’m sleeping with her?!”

“Getting the obvious question out of the way first. Should I have a reason to be suspicious? This wasn’t just a text or two to say hi, Seb. You were texting her all day. You’re on the fucking phone all day and I don’t say a word. I’ve seen you do this to other girls before, I’m not going to be cheated on by you.”

It suddenly felt like there were miles between the two of them as they sat on the couch together. Sebastian had fought with Sasha so often, but even in their darkest arguments, nothing had made him feel this empty before. He knew she didn’t believe what she was asking, but her paranoia had taken over and the one person who’d made her felt most inadequate in the whole time they knew each other, the one who Sebastian thought he’d spend his life with at the time, the one Sebastian shouldn’t have even deigned with a reply had brought them here. But he was angry. Accused, upset. Untrusted.

He counted to 10 in his head and exhaled. “You’ve lost your fucking mind. I am not having a fight as ridiculous as this with you.”

“You know where the door is.”

Her calm disturbed him no end.

“I don’t know why I even have to defend myself,” he spat. “I’m fucking good to you. I’ve got nothing to hide. Here,” he collected his phone from his pocket, unlocked it and dropped the phone in her lap. “Read the rest of the messages. I think you’ll be pretty fucking embarrassed in about three seconds.”

She sighed and read the rest of the messages, gently blanching the ex had the audacity to use her pet name from the time of their relationship for him. It was Sebastian telling his ex that they shouldn’t text anymore, he was happy in his Sasha (“I always guessed you'd end up with her, she was just always there, wasn’t she?” the ex taunted him. "She's the love of my life", he replied.) and should probably delete each others numbers, which she agreed with if ‘that’s what he really wanted’. He said it was with a simple ‘it is’ in finality.

“If I was cheating on you, don’t you think I’d be a little smarter about it and at least delete the messages?” he added before he could stop the words. “No,” he watched her face change as she
handed him back his phone. “No. That’s not what I meant. Don’t take it the wrong way.”

“Get out, Sebastian,” she got up and silently went to her bedroom, closing the door quietly after her.

His head fell back against the couch cushions dismally. “Fuck,” he followed her to her room and knocked gently. “Sash, can I come in?”

“Go home, Sebastian,” she replied as he rested his head on the door.

“Please?”

He didn’t receive a reply. A few minutes later, he knew better to barge in. It wasn’t going to reassure her tonight after he’s put his foot in his mouth. He grabbed his wallet from the kitchen bench and left.

---

I mean, c’mon it couldn't possibly be all moonlight and roses, right?

My mind is kind of exploding - over 5.7k views (and seriously, me stalking the stats on AO3 like 5k of those hits), 200+ comments and 300 kudos, gee whiz, I didn't think anyone would bother reading this as obv the content doesn't suit everybody being RPF but I really want to thank those who have taken the time and stuck around from beginning to end of TOFWYA, it really means so much to me. Again, thank you so much xoxo

---

Interested Bystander writes on Tumblr. I've started publishing some Bucky stuff over there if you're keen to check them out, I do intend on bringing it here along with my Bucky X OFC that I've been writing longer than TOFWYA.
If she’d learnt one thing in all the years she’d know him, it was that he always managed to make her feel new and exciting ways of hating how much she cared about him.

“Hey,” Ollie smiled, knocking on the door as she entered Sasha’s apartment the next day, face still made up of her stage make up from her earlier matinee. She spotted Sasha in midst of walls of boxes, pages of newspaper and wearing in her new dance shoes as she sat crosslegged in the living room.

“Hot shoes. How are they going?” she nodded towards the metallic heels Sasha had picked up the week before in prep for her new job she was starting the next day.

“I love them,” Sasha admitted, reaching for a photo frame with a black and white picture of she and her twin sisters from the previous Christmas and picking up some paper to wrap it up in. “Feels weird to be in them again. My toes are pinching. Have to get used to losing feeling in my feet again.”

Ollie laughed quietly, pulling her jacket and scarf off, tossing them on the couch. “Thought Seb would be here,” she replied as Sasha’s phone started ringing again. She didn’t even bother to look at the call ID to ignore it. She knew who was calling for the tenth time that hour and frankly, she still had very little to say. “Not gonna get that?”

“If it’s important, they’ll leave a voicemail,” Sasha shrugged as Ollie squinted, taking her friend in as she placed the wrapped frame into a box clearly marked ‘FRAGILE’ in bold red letters.

“True,” Ollie said, not entirely sure how Sasha wanted to help her pack so she stayed back and waited for direction. “When do you have to be outta here?”

“Three days,” Sasha replied.

“And how did the lesson plan go for the class tomorrow afternoon?”
“Oh, that was easy,” Sasha replied, unfurling herself from the floor and heading to the kitchenette to turn on the kettle. “Tea?”

“Please,” Ollie said, picking up a frame with a photo of Sebastian, Sasha and Chace. It would have been at least 5 years old and from what she could remember, maybe Chace’s 25th birthday? They all looked pretty drunk, pulling faces and red-eyed. “When was this photo?” Ollie asked.

“Judging by Seb’s long hair, I guess before he went away for The Winter Soldier?” Sasha shrugged, not giving the photo too much consideration.

“Okay, spit it out,” Ollie replaced the frame where she found it. “Something going on?”

“I’m packing,” Sasha said smartly, pulling out the mugs and tea bags. “That’s why this teeny space is a disaster,” she opened her arms, wildly showing off the mess and disorganisation. "In case you missed it, of course."

“You know what I’m talking about, you little shit. Sebastian said you guys were packing together so you could divide and conquer what stays and what goes. He’s not here, you are more standoffish than usual… did you guys have a fight or something?”

“No, no fight,” Sasha could answer that part honestly - it wasn't a fight per se. A monumental overreaction on her behalf, yes. Probably a few texts he shouldn’t have sent, that too but not a real balls to the wall fight. There was far too much unsaid to call it a fight. “Turns out I’m just a lot more jealous of Sebastian’s girl friends… than I should be.”

"I'm his girl friend. You're not jealous of me," Ollie said casually. Sasha didn't answer, but the pointed look she gave made Ollie take a step back. "Be specific."

"Lily."

Ollie blinked a few times. "Benjamin?"

"Yeah."

"The Lily Benjamin?"

"That same one."

"The one that got away from Sebastian..." Ollie said wistfully.

"Olivia, for fuck's sake! How are you helping?" Sasha begged.

Ollie winced. "Sorry, it was just literally the last name I thought you'd actually say."

"Yeah, well..." Sasha said, as Ollie gave her an incredulous look.

"Same woman that though Sebastian never dated her, you know they kissed and probably were a little too close for comfort for too long?" Ollie continued as the kettle squealed and Sasha continued pottering around boxes to pour and hand Ollie the steaming tea. Sasha wondered if Ollie found joy in pressing her buttons like she currently was. She decided yes, Ollie was definitely a masochist at heart.

"They always gave everyone the impression that they should have been a couple," Sasha didn't disagree with Ollie. "They were just texting like I didn't even exist."

“Wait - Seb texted her back? Wow,” Ollie’s eyes widened. “Seems he's a glutton for punishment
sometimes.”

“I dunno. Doesn’t matter now,” Sasha dunked tea bags to avoid Ollie’s over-made up face. It wasn’t the friendliest face to have this conversation with, too dramatic.

“Why were they texting?” Ollie demanded.

Sasha shrugged. “She wanted to catch up. Guess she’s coming to New York.”

“Well, his star is rising and tabloids haven’t been overly kind to her lately. Pap walk?” she suggested with a snort. “Although I imagine Sebastian isn’t that desperate for attention these days.”

“We can’t go anywhere without him being stopped on every street corner.”

“She still texted.”

“And he still responded. And he was fucking here while he did it, didn’t even hide the fact,” Sasha said, a little riled. It was the first time she felt her pulse rate in crease since the previous day’s disagreement - not fight. "He knows how I feel about her."

“Is that why you guys are fighting?”

“We’re not fighting.”

"Could have fooled me."

"It didn’t help that I might or might not have gone through his phone to find out what they were texting about... and whom he was texting,” she gave Ollie a wary look, awaiting Ollie's retort that was always begging, Ollie’s jaw agape. “Don’t look at me like that. I’m ashamed enough as it is. I kind of wish I didn’t do it because when I saw her name, I honestly thought there would be an iPhone 6S impaled through the wall.”

“Would have stopped any and all texts though,” Ollie offered.

“Right?” Sasha sighed, picking some books and shuffling through the titles. “You want any of these? If not, they’re going to charity.”

Ollie shook her head. “I don’t read books anymore.”

Sasha hid her grin. “Don’t leave a door open like that for me.”

“Hold your chill,” Ollie dared. “I read on my iPad. I don’t feel the need to kill a few trees to feel a hardback between my fingers, get off my back.”

“Okay, okay,” Sasha managed a snicker and tossed the books in the corresponding box.

Ollie sighed. “Can I ask what exactly were they texting about?”

“She wanted to catch up for coffee. Sebastian said yes. By the end of the texts, I guess Seb’s guilt took over, told her that he was happy with me and that it was best if they just deleted each other’s numbers.”

Ollie frowned. “Isn’t she in a relationship herself?”

Sasha shrugged. “She’s not someone I bother to cyber stalk these days,” she sipped her tea.
“For good reason,” Ollie agreed, pushing herself on the bench and holding the warm mug in her hands. “So, why did you guys fight? Did you just put the phone back and walk away?”

“Yes to the first part, not so much to the second,” Sasha rolled her eyes at her own stupidity, her nails rapping on the kitchen top.

“You started a fight,” Ollie smirked knowingly.

“I started an 'argument', yes. It wasn't a fight,” Sasha muttered the last part, putting her head in her hands, humiliated at her actions. “And things have been so good lately, like – ”

“Yeah, you're grossly in sync, I’ve seen it. Repulsive to most, just FYI.”

“Chace said something similar, are we that gross?” Sasha raise an eyebrow, grimacing.

“Nah,” Ollie admitted. “You're hot for each other, we’re jealous mostly.”

Sasha made a face. “Sebastian was so angry. Like, blood boiling.”

"Red hot Romanian anger, huh?"

Sasha nodded. "Yeah... I love seeing him agitated, but not when it's because of me."

“Did you consider just asking him straight out without the snooping?”

“I didn’t realise whom he was texting until I saw myself and my annoyance jumped directly to... I dunno. Rage blackout? I am so good at ruining good things, it’s impossible for me to not just leave things as they are. We’ve been good. Even better than we were friends, you know? I felt closer to him recently than I have any one else in my life. He gets me. He gets me better than I get me.”

“You trust him, right?” Ollie asked quietly.

“Yes, that’s the stupid thing. This isn’t even him, this is me! I know it’s me and these stupid fucking hang ups that even after all this time with her. I’m actually with him now, I’m his and he’s mine ad I still accused him.”

“She was fairly heinous to you on more than one occasion,” Ollie said softly. “I can understand why you don’t want him speaking to her, but I can promise you, on Sebastian’s behalf without talking to him and having no previous knowledge of you guys in a fight, there was nothing malicious about it.”

“I know that,” Sasha wailed, aiming some CD’s into the charity bin. “I know I have to be better. Women throw themselves at him every day, whether his arms are around me or not,” Sasha took a shaky sigh. "It’s not easy to be around that, you know? And he'll introduce me to them as his girlfriend, because he always does without hesitation and you see these girls, right?" Sasha managed a pained laugh. "You see the challenge level for getting his number increase a hundred-fold! I'm zero threat."

“That isn’t new for you. Gotta tell you, regardless of him being any kind of star, he’s never not been good looking,” Ollie managed a giggle. “I know you know this. And you know Sebastian, he doesn’t get by on his looks, that’s not his style. He’s as baffled at these babes wanting a piece of him more than anyone.”

“That doesn’t make it any easier for me...”

“You gotta see, Benzo... he only has eyes for you, even if Lily wants to catch up, you've got
nothing worry about. Come on, after all this time, you have to know this by now.”

“Ollie, it’s just made me question everything.”

“Like what?”

“Made me realise he needs someone who understands all this. Like Lily.”

Ollie blew a raspberry, taking another sip of her tea. “Horseshit. He needs someone who understands *him,*” she corrected. “And no one knows him better than you. He doesn’t need some page six starlet. He used to say he wanted someone who just understood what he goes through and maybe someone who can sympathise but he’s been there and done that, and it simply didn’t work. He needs someone who lets him be him. You already know how he operates, you know – ” Ollie tried before she was interrupted by Sasha’s phone ringing again. “How many times has he called?”

“I’ve lost count. He’s killing my phone battery and my voicemail is full,” Sasha said, at least checking it was Sebastian – it was and the ridiculously gorgeous face she used as his background when he called – lowly lit, a warm, wide smile with a whiskey tumbler to his full lips that he dared her to take the photo at Thanksgiving supper the year before with their friends.

“You should answer.”

“And say what?”

“You could start with that you’re sorry. I’m sure that’s why he’s calling,” she answered easily as the phone stopped again. “Maybe trying telling him what you just told me.”

“Ollie?”

She hummed in response, pulling the unopened packet of Tim Tams from the cupboard eagerly. “I fucking love these things, I know I’ve got another show tonight but I’ll work off the calories. I’m helping you pack by packing these in my belly,” she informed Sasha, patting her toned tummy before tearing into the packet and popping a full chocolate-covered delight into her mouth. “So good,” she muttered to herself, offering Sasha one, who refused as a text come through.

*Sebastian*: *I hope you’re packing, I can’t wait for us to start this next part of our lives together. Can I see you? Help you with anything? I love you, Benzo. Call me back, baby. I miss you xxx*

“Credit where credit is due, the motherfucker is persistent.”

“I should call him.”

“Yes!” Ollie exclaimed. “Call him immediately… and I’ll eat these,” she winked as Sasha crisscrossed through her apartment, around boxes and trinkets to her bedroom, throwing herself on her unmade bed. She stared at her phone for the better part of 15 minutes, looking at his number and locking the phone before she could dial.

“Pathetic,” she told herself. She pried herself off the bed and made her way back out to the living area, reporting to Ollie that she didn’t know what to say, that she didn’t want anymore of Ollie’s running commentary and resumed packing while Ollie continued her assault on the Tim Tams. By the time Ollie left, the Tim Tams were gone and they had boxed up most of the room and moved onto the crockery in the kitchenette.
Sebastian slammed his beer bottle down, beer splashing on the white stone top bench as Chace watched him wipe the mess away with the hem of his t-shirt. It was infrequent Sebastian got so pissed off over something like he currently was. “The fucking thing that drives me insane is I know I shouldn’t have replied to Lil’s text, right? Been there, done that. She stays on her coast, I stay on mine.”

“You make it sound like it’s a standoff. Is she aware of that rule?”

“No, that's my rule. Was safer that way at the time.”

Chace nodded, not bothering to comment.

“Lil’s texted a few before, I ignored them,” he muttered to himself, pulling his phone from his pocket and looking at Lily’s details. All it was now was a number, email and assistant’s number’s deleted. All gone. "I don't know what changed this time."

“You're too polite,” Chace replied, less than helpful.

Sebastian rubbed his face. "Why did Sasha go through my phone?"

“She didn’t trust you,” Chace shrugged, taking a pull of his beer. “We've all been there. I mean, I’m not proud of it, but when I’ve felt inadequate in relationships, I’ve done it too. Are you trying to tell me you’ve never, never ever, looked through someone’s phone?”

“Nope,” Sebastian replied, not a doubt in his mind.

Chace could actually see the honesty shining in Sebastian’s eyes and kind of felt a little guilty on his own behalf. Chace shouldn’t have been surprised. Must be nice to be reassured in relationships all the time. “Sometimes you can be a real puritan,” Chace couldn’t resist muttering.

Sebastian pursed his lips together in frustration before sipping his beer again. He desperately felt the need for something stronger. “She did not fucking trust me.”

“Were you hiding anything else?” Chace couldn’t resist asking. "Wasn't just Lily - "

“No, of course not. Unless she went through my emails and read about the ring,” Sebastian’s face fell before straightening, reassured. “No, no way. She wouldn’t do that. And after her behaviour last night, she’d mock me if I was thinking of proposing and tell me not to bother.”

“So I’m assuming that’s on the back burner?” Chace couldn’t resist snickering.

“Yes,” Sebastian straightened up. “Now it is. I mean, I wasn’t going to propose until I took her back to Paris in August anyway. I mean, she isn’t even talking to me. I’m not going to panic propose.”

“Good idea,” Chace empathically agreed, a little humoured. “But you were texting Lily. And it's no secret neither is the other's biggest fan. I know you weren't with Lily at the time but to a lot of people, me and Sasha included, it looked like you were together. Seb, man, I know you like to pretend it didn't happen, but there were times that Sasha would leave early because she’d had enough of both you and Lily.”

"Lily and Sasha were a catastrophic mix together."

"Bro, that couldn't be further away from the truth. They are like polar opposites. Repelled each other. I think you just didn't want it to be as bad as it really was."
"It wasn't that bad..." Sebastian protested, recalling times before that Sasha had left without saying goodbye. *Chace was wrong.*

"Benzo was your friend first, you were the one that pushed that friendship to its boundaries. You could've had Sash years ago, she was just waiting for you to realise what was in front of you, Sebastian... and then you parade Lily in. And fuck, I've never seen you fall harder or faster than you did for Lily, ignoring the fact you kept telling everyone you were 'just friends'. But Sasha. Sebastian, you dropped Sasha like a sack of shit, you hurt her then like you're hurting her now. You blindsided her and she didn't see it coming. And you expected there wouldn't be fireworks?"

For a while, Sebastian didn't say anything. Maybe he'd picked the wrong friend to discuss this with? He assumed he might had gotten a little sympathy, but Chace seemed keener to remind him of his poor life choices and how he was repeating the same ones now. He should have kept his trap closed.

"Thanks for staying impartial, my man," Sebastian finally muttered.

"I'm not trying to make this harder for you. But I have known Benzo as long as you, and yeah sure, these days you know her a little more intimately, but you didn't know her the way I did when you shelved her. She will never admit to you how much you hurt her. But every once in a while, she'd let that fucking wall she'd built up crumble a little, and you didn't have to be a genius to know she was in love with a guy who was in love with someone else."

Sebastian dropped his gaze. He didn't want to think about things that way.

"You seem to know a lot about this," Sebastian couldn't help but mention, picking up the bottle and finishing it before heading to the bar and picking up a bottle of whiskey and a couple of tumblers. Chace retrieved the ice from the freezer, Sebastian gratefully pouring a couple for them and passed a glass along the bench top for Chace.

"I do. She was my friend too and she was hurt. What do you want me to say? I'm not going to sugarcoat it."

"Was it really that bad?" Sebastian asked warily.

"It wasn't *that* good."

"Why didn't you say anything before?"

"You and I know that isn't up to me to do. You figured it out eventually. You and Sasha both did."

"I'm gonna try and call her," Sebastian said decidedly, as he dialled her number again and put the phone to his ear. The phone rang and rang, but again, remained unanswered. He sighed, hearing her voicemail again. He'd gotten very acquainted to it in the last 24 hours. "Baby, c'mon. Please just answer your phone," he hung up and shrugged at Chace. "About right."

"Are you inundating her?"

"Yes. I was going to send flowers, but she's supposed to be packing."

"Why don't you just go over?"

"I don't know if I want to be there when she finally tells me how she really feels."

"Are you expecting the worst?"
The look on Sebastian's face didn't deny Chace's question. "I dunno."

"This is just a hump in the road," Chace told him. "I swear."

"Feels like a fuckin' sink hole."

Chase gave Sebastian a tight smile. "Just a hump," he repeated. "One thing you have on your side is that regardless of all this, Sasha loves you. It'll be enough."

"She is supposed to move in tomorrow."

"And she will," of this Chace was certain as Sebastian shook his head a little, not entirely believing him. "You guys are gonna drive each other mad and I'll get front row to be able to witness it."

Sebastian gave him a small, hopeful smile. "I hope you're right."

"You're gonna need to get your shit together though. The guys will be here in a few."

The last thing Sebastian wanted to do was head out for drinks, but took Chace's advice and threw his tumbler back and tossed the ice in the sink as the door buzzed. Maybe a really good night out was what he actually needed? A clear head and a night out uninterrupted with his friends.

---

VOICEMAIL #16: “Okay, it’s 24 hours later and I’ve texted more times than I can count. You haven’t returned one single call. I’ll give you one more night but if I don’t hear from you, maybe you start thinking about finding another apartment because it’s alarmingly clear that you don’t want to be here with me in ours.”

VOICEMAIL #17: “You’ve made your point. You want out. Okay, I get it.”

Sasha: I don’t want out. I just need space xoxo
Sebastian: Can’t talk, out with the guys. Take all the fucking space you want. I don’t give a shit, Sasha.
Sasha: Bub…
Sebastian: We’ll talk tomorrow if you don’t have other things to make me feel like shit about.
Sasha: Ok.
Sebastian: You don’t get to be holier than thou this time. Talk tomorrow, I’m turning my phone off.

Sasha failed to see the threat, Sebastian never had the gall to turn his phone off. He hated even turning his phone to Flight Mode when he was flying. She deleted his voicemails, she didn’t need a reminder of his anger and disappointment in her. She was well aware she had taken a nosedive in his estimations.

The pain of disappointing Sebastian was the worst feeling she'd ever experienced.

She chewed her lip and finally hit the dial icon next to his number. It didn’t ring.

“I’m not available. Please leave a name and number. I’ll get back to you when I can.”

“Fuck,” she muttered to herself, ending the call before she could leave a message. Last thing she wanted to do was engage, if he was out, he was out. She didn't want to start a fight over the phone while he was out with their friends. That wasn't fair.
They were officially fighting in the digital age. Why was she surprised? She shouldn’t be, she knew she’d pushed him well and truly to his limits through her own stupidity and inability to get it through her head that this flux was happening, that him texting Lily was just a shitty coincidence. Sasha was no longer angry about it, only pissed off at herself.

She opened her Instagram and saw the photos of the boys starting at Sebastian’s (or what was supposed to be ‘their’) apartment, Sam, Chace, Ollie and a bunch of other acquaintances including girls she didn’t recognise (and made her feel a little ill). Argh, he looked so handsome in his low jeans and too tight white V-neck, smirking while in conversation with Sam.

Other photos at what appeared to be a restaurant. Not surprisingly, no posts from Sebastian. Heartbreak warfare, thanks to social media, she realised. It worked and he didn’t even have to try. Their friends had unintentionally reminded her that he could have fun without her. She wasn’t missed.

How she wanted to be missed.

Dialling Ollie’s number, Ollie sent it to voicemail but a text came up right away.

Olivia: You know where we are, come meet us! Sorry, it’s loud as fuck in here, can’t hear the boys talk let alone hear a call.
Sasha: I’ll get changed. Does everyone know Seb hates me?
Olivia: All he said to the boys was that packing had hit a snag. No one asked any questions. Sebastian definitely does not hate you. Think he is missing you being here tbh! You Ok? I can leave here now if you need me to. We can go somewhere else...
Sasha: I’m okay. I’ll come to you guys. Ruining the best thing that ever happened to me, so I’m going to fix it.
Olivia: I’m proud of you, Benzo! It’ll be fine, I’m sure he wants you here. He’s a bit off, that’s for sure. I’ll put your name on the list. See you soon.

It was times like this that Sasha had just wished her apartment wasn’t in complete disarray and half-packed to move into her still-maybe-boyfriend’s apartment. She had to think where her knock-his-socks-off outfits were. It was still chilly enough to need a jacket and God knows where they were packed.

Why were clothes packed first?! She cursed herself. “Because they were the easiest for you to pick up and drop in a clothing box. As usual, Benson, no one to blame but yourself,” she muttered to herself. “Fuckkk. Shower, then let’s try this again,” she told herself, hoping to maintain some calm. She was not.

She needed a drink and she needed to be in Sebastian’s strong arms in no specific order but enough was enough. She’d officially lost her cool and had turned to panic. They’d had some massive fights in the time they’d knew each other but nothing in the tone of this. Irritation, spite. No longer hurt or anxious.

30 minutes later, shoes paired, outfit truly outrageous, coat over arm and make up done, Sasha grabbed her keys and left her apartment. Scoping a cab easily (too easily), she gave the address to the driver and commenced the short trip. “Keep the change,” she told the cabbie, thrusting the cash at him as she got out in front of the bar. She went straight up to the bouncer and gave her name. He nodded and let her in amid protests from others in line.

“She’s VIP, shut your mouths,” Sasha heard his bold Jersey accent reprimand the whining as she walked in past the mob. She checked in her coat and was greeted with the familiar pounding of bass and too many bodies for mid-week (it was New York City, who was she kidding?). Maybe she
didn’t miss it as much as she thought she had. She couldn’t spot Sebastian, Ollie or any of their friends. She sighed, moving to the other side of the bar and finally found them. All grinning, laughing, Ollie wrapped around Sam and Sebastian talking to some girl she’d never met before – did he think he was invisible and that no one (including their friends) would see the woman’s palm grasping his thigh? Sasha prayed she wouldn’t witness it go any higher as her heart fell to the floor.

Did he not notice the way he was being touched?

Fuck, Seb, Sasha sighed as revellers pushed around her. She muttered, nudging back, not in the mood to be walked over.

Sasha kept her eyes on Sebastian as he and whomever she was kept their heads close and Sebastian laughed at something quirky the girl had told him. Sasha sighed, her heart stopping as he felt eyes on him. Maybe her intuition wasn’t completely off?

Her imagination had played tricks on her for a day and now it all felt completely justified. Fuck.

Alarm bells rang in his ears as he saw his Sasha and that face. That look of absolute pure devastation.

“Shit,” he muttered to himself, putting his glass on the table beside him as he got up to go to her. "Baby," he called, but she evaded him, slinking back into the crowd before he could remotely get near her. She’d made it to the door, leaving her jacket behind, well before he’d gotten through the bodies and those who attempted to stop him. “Jesus Christ,” he muttered, finally outside and Sasha nowhere to be seen on the block. He rubbed his face, debating whether he got a cab straight to her apartment. Where else would she be going? “Taxi!” he yelled.

---

“Sasha,” Sebastian unlocked the door and burst into Sasha's apartment. “Baby, talk to me, it’s not what it looked like. She was just a friend of Sam’s, I can explain...” he said, tossing his keys, phone and wallet on the bench top. Frowning as he noticed she wasn’t in the living room, boxes taped up and balanced precariously on top of each other reassured him a little. He went to her room and knocked before opening the door quietly. “Where have you disappeared to, Benzo?” he sighed. “Fuck.” He wasn't leaving again and attempted sleep (tossed and turned mostly, frustrated most of the night) in her bed in hopes she'd finally come home. He had turned his phone back on and started calling relentlessly though her phone was now turned off. All calls directly to voicemail. When she hadn’t returned the next morning, he knew that things were falling apart and he had no idea how to fix them.

Chapter End Notes

If you're reading EonA03’s Back to One (and if you aren't, baby, we have to talk), you might see a familiar character in this chapter! EonA03 has kindly let me use her amazing OFC, Hollywood A+-lister Lily Benjamin, for this chapter in an AU sense. Obviously this doesn't affect her fic, but seriously, why are you still reading this when you should be reading BT1?

Thank you, sweet EonA03. I doubt this is the last we'll see of Sasha and Lily together muwahahaha
Interested Bystander writes on Tumblr.
**The Storm Before the Calm**

Chapter Summary

If she’d learnt one thing in all the years she’d known him, it was that he always managed to make her feel new and exciting ways of hating how much she cared about him.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

When Sasha got home late the next morning, she was relieved to find Sebastian had left. He'd inundated her voicemail again overnight, desperate to get her on the phone but to no avail, begging her to come back to her apartment where he was eagerly waiting for her. Her phone was being used primarily for music she could let her frustrations out on the boards. Her legs were sore, her back aching and she felt the most physically normal than she had since well before she'd injured her knee in the first place. A masochist at heart, Sasha lived for the pain of a good session, dancing and sweating her heart out.

Heading for the fridge, Sasha did a double-take noting the additional marked boxed up items (cutlery, plates, glasses) in the living room. "He's been packing," she told herself quietly as she moved towards the bedroom, her bed made and just to be sure, no Sebastian to be found. He rarely slept late and knew he'd have to head home and organise himself for the day. He'd already taken any sweats or jeans he had there back to his place. She sighed, realising he'd gone home in last night's clothes. He looked *so* good last night. He didn't look so good with that woman's fingers tickling his thigh.

Nope.

Deciding to feed her frustration since she hadn't eaten since lunchtime the day before, Sasha found the Vegemite and remembered she was out of bread and worse, sesame seed bagels. She eyed the bread box (one of the only items still unpacked) and a bright yellow post-it note plastered to it:

*Bagels inside. Didn't want you to miss breakfast. Cream cheese in the fridge. I know you went directly for the Vegemite though. Love you, S x*

Sasha sighed and debated picking up her phone. The last thing she needed him to do for her was make sure she'd do something as simple as eat. It was that kind of stuff, things he knew so innately about her. Something as simple as him knowing that if she wasn't reminded, she'd forget a meal. For the first time, over a toasted sesame seed bagel lathered in butter and Vegemite, Sasha allowed a few tears to fall.

Had she ruined everything?

---

“Very good, Eliza. 2, 3, 4,” Sasha smiled as she counted and watched the eclectic mob of 5-year-old dancers in training before her. The class was small, 6 in total (more than enough for a woman who’d failed at babysitting her younger twin sisters when they were toddlers), in their various coloured leotards and skirts, dance shoes and hair in classic rolls. Sasha’s first class as a dance teacher was travelling well and together they had started putting the fundamentals of jazz together. “Lovely work, young ladies and gentlemen,” she gently patted the shoulder of the lone little guy, Bobby (he was
adorable, extremely energetic and keen to learn). “Congratulations on your first class. We have a lot to cover this term, but I know already that we’re going to have so much fun together. I’ll see you all next week,” she smiled as the children scurried in different directions to their parents and nannies, shyly calling out their little thank yous and goodbyes as they departed.

“Thank you, Miss Benson, that was a fantastic class,” one of the mother’s called on the way out.

“Oh,” Sasha said a little taken back, not really expecting the compliment. “Uh, thank you. See you next week,” she called back with a timid smile, inhaling as the room started to empty. Waving a few more farewells, she went to put her gear together, more than a little pleased with herself that she’d gotten through her first children’s class as an actual dance teacher (which blew her mind in itself) – a little tougher to wrangle than professional adults, but fun just the same. And everyone survived, that was the main thing.

Sasha took a seat on the hard wood floorboards and started unbuckling her shoes, laying back, covering her giggle with her hands. She wasn’t sure why she felt so exhilarated, but she did and she couldn’t remember feeling so happy in months. The joy of dance would always be a completely different passion to what she had with Sebastian and she knew he’d never quite grasp it, but he understood as it wasn’t dissimilar to his feelings on acting. They could never be jealous of the other's passions.

Hearing a small knock, Sasha sat up quickly and crossed her legs in case it was a parent that had forgotten something (she wanted to least appear somewhat professional), turning her gaze towards the door and spotting a large bouquet of colourful roses, attached to a very familiar muscular bicep. She sighed and started clearing her gear away. It was time to face the music.

“How did your first class go?” he asked quietly. “You look beautiful, by the way. Been a while since I've seen you dressed like that,” he noted the leggings, covering her lean, shapely legs like a second skin and bralette that was hidden under a slouchy grey t-shirt, her long hair pulled up into a messy bun. He leaned against the doorway, in a sweaty blue t-shirt, his baggy gym shorts and sneakers, obvious where he’d just come from. “Your feet aren’t hurting too much?”

“They’re fine,” she replied a little more curtly than she wanted.

“How did your first class go?” he asked quietly. “You look beautiful, by the way. Been a while since I’ve seen you dressed like that,” he noted the leggings, covering her lean, shapely legs like a second skin and bralette that was hidden under a slouchy grey t-shirt, her long hair pulled up into a messy bun. He leaned against the doorway, in a sweaty blue t-shirt, his baggy gym shorts and sneakers, obvious where he'd just come from. “Your feet aren’t hurting too much?”

“They’re fine,” she replied a little more curtly than she wanted.

“Did you enjoy it?” he asked, the smallest hint of a smile on his face, relieved she was talking even if it was a little spiteful. A bonus, she hadn’t asked him to leave again.

She broke into a wide smile. “I loved it.”

Sebastian actually felt like his heart was exploding for her. That beautiful smile reassuring him more than he liked to admit. “I’m so happy for you, baby,” he said, finally smiling himself. “I’m so sorry,
Benzo. Can I come in?"

She nodded, hating that he was still so far away. All she wanted was for him to pull her into his arms and kiss away all the pain and confusion of the last few days with that beautiful mouth, while it was perfect when he grinned, it was *made* for kissing. He smiled and dashed to her, pulling her to him and wrapped her up tightly, kissing her face all over; cheeks, forehead, chin, saving her lips for last and both savouring the kiss neither wanted to admit they had missed most, the varying blushes of roses bruising between their bodies.

Sebastian started rambling, nervous and anxious together, “I don’t know why I didn’t tell you Lily was texting. I can’t make up an excuse as to why I stupidly kept answering, I just… fell for it by replying when I should have ignored it. She wanted to know how work was going – ”

“I read, Seb,” she said quietly.

“I never had any intentions of meeting up with her,” he admitted. “You know this.”

“I know,” she admitted.

“She texted me again – ” Sebastian paused as Sasha rolled her eyes so far into the back of her head, the pupil colour disappeared but he continued as she slowly eased herself away from him. “She wished her best and congratulated us.”

Sasha shook her head. “Of course she did,” she rested her head on his shoulder as he kissed her temple, reassuringly, his hand snaking up her back and massaging the nape of her neck.

“You don’t have to care, but she said she wouldn’t text anymore,” he added in a gentle whisper.

“Okay,” Sasha sighed, giving up. What good would holding a grudge to a woman across the other side of the country actually achieve? Sasha already knew nothing. Sebastian pulled back to hand her the smashed flowers.

“These looked a little better a few minutes ago,” he admitted with a disappointed pout. She nodded, accepting them and kissing him gently.

“Thank you. You’re right – they did look better a few minutes ago,” she couldn’t resist commenting. The beautiful burnt orange and pink roses looking a little worse for wear. But she didn’t care, they were still stunning.

Sebastian took a deep breath. “And what happened last night – ”

“Why did you let her get so close to you?” Sasha couldn’t resist cutting in, although her voice even. He shrugged tiredly. “I don’t know. I have no clue. My subconscious even baffles me.”

“No one else gets to touch your thighs anymore. Only me,” Sasha stated. "In fact, no one, unless they're getting paid to do it, gets to touch your anything."

Sebastian brightened, a small chuckle escaping. “Claim everything, it's yours.”

"Hold on," she said thoughtfully. “My legs are better than yours.”

“I’ve got it on pretty good authority my thighs are fantastic. You’ve said it yourself while riding me,” he couldn’t resist the cocky smirk that took over his features.

She hummed in contemplation. “Okay, we both have great legs.”
Sebastian gave a dismal inward chuckle. “God, what a fuck up,” he muttered to himself, rubbing his scruffy face. “I’m so sorry for last night as well. You didn’t need that. I was a little tipsy, but trust me when I say this, nothing happened with that girl and nothing was going to happen.”

“I know,” Sasha told him, putting the flowers back in his hands and held his stubbly cheeks in her palms. “Sebastian, there are always women around you. Flirting, looking for a way to get your number or get you into their bed, I see that all the time. And I know you’re true to me, I do,” she swore softly. “But would it hurt for once in a fucking while to say you aren’t interested instead of just trying to be so fucking nice about the attention all the time? I feel like such a dick sometimes. Bubba, I’m a mess when other girls are around you acting just like that girl did last night and you don’t even realise it.”

His eyes dropped – he never expected being polite would ever turn into so much of a crime. He understood though, while he never actively flirted with others, he would be lying if he didn’t realise his friendliness could be conceived as more at times, he was guilty of it. He nodded, adjusting his backpack straps over his broad shoulders. “I hear ya. I do.”

“Thank you,” she kissed him slowly, feeling his body soften against hers.

“I love you. I’m sorry this all happened. Are we okay?” his eyes scanned her face desperately.

She nodded softly. “Yeah. I’m sorry I overreacted. I don’t know why Lily sets me off the way she does.”

“Chace has some theories and it mostly has to do with how I treated you at the time,” he said ruefully.

“You spoke to Chace?” she seemed surprised as Sebastian nodded with a timid smile. “I’ll kill him.”

“If it makes you feel better, he didn’t take my side.”

“I love him,” Sasha corrected herself as Sebastian had to laugh. “You rarely talk to the guys though...” she pointed out.

“That’s why I have a therapist on speed dial,” he shrugged. “Spoke to him too.”

“I’m glad you spoke to someone. I should never have shut you out.”

“It’s a Benzo coping mechanism, I know how you operate but it didn’t mean I was going to stop trying to get you to open up and communicate. The whole time I knew you weren’t going to get back to me until you’d finished internalising. Drove me fucking crazy, but I know what you do when you’re upset.”

“I’m sorry about that too, it was immature. I won’t let it happen again.”

“I know you won’t. You had your reasons though. I probably drove you crazy. I was inundating you. After all this time, you’d think I’d know that the more I push, the more you resist. You are such a pain in my ass.”

“You filled my voicemail...” she told him as he blushed. “Twice.”

“I was pretty desperate,” he confessed. “I thought the worst, baby.”

“I’m an asshole.”
“Yeah, but I wouldn’t have you any other way,” he gave her a half smile, before kissing her gently. “Come on. We should go.”

“Yeah. I’ve got to lock this place up,” she told him, putting her backpack over her shoulders, he took her hand as she led him to the door. He stopped them and tugged her wrist tightly. “I can’t apologise enough for not seeing how badly you were feeling. I thought you were happy and confident and okay with me talking to other girls. I know you support me and trust me,” he mumbled. “Come home tonight, please?” he asked, resting his forehead on her shoulder, relaxing as her nails raked his hair. “Two nights of you not taking my calls, texts or emails has been torture, baby. I miss you. Turns out I am shitty at sleeping alone. Barely slept a wink last night or the night before. I think I only went to Don’s to socialise, didn’t really work out.”

“Join the club,” she kissed the side of his jaw. “I love you. I know you wouldn’t – ”

“Trust me, I would never. I would never intentionally ruin this,” he promised. “I love you too much to do something like that. Come on, please let me take you home. We’ve got to pack you up before you are evicted tomorrow. We’ll need a couple of bottles of wine to do that and celebrate your first day here too.”

“And cheese and crackers?” she asked hopefully.

“Sure,” he nodded. “This is a lovely space,” he commented, taking in the mirrored room, the barre placement, the flooring as Sasha started locking the door. “Eva has done a beautiful job.”

“Yeah, made sure I broke it in last night,” she said quietly as he watched her fuss with locks, hands grasping her waist, nose nuzzling along the pulse of her neck, taking in her sweet scent, familiarising himself again. Her smell on their pillows was just not good enough, not when the real thing was in his arms.

“You were here?” he asked sadly. At least he could punch a pillow in bed.

“Yeah.”

“Where’d you sleep?”

“I didn’t,” she admitted.

“You didn’t?”

“No.”

“Sash – ”

“I danced all night, only way I could get the frustration out.”

He sighed and nodded slowly. “I’m so sorry I made you feel like that.”

“Don’t be. I took everything way too seriously, I overreacted. In fact, I’m mostly just embarrassed by my behaviour and understand if it kind of makes you want to take a step back.”

“What do you mean by ‘step back’?” he frowned.

“You know, can the moving in together thing – ”

“We’re not ’canning’ anything. It’s made me want this more, Sash,” he stated.
“How?” she grumbled, a little confused as he turned her body to his and pined her back against the hard door.

“My God, woman, I don’t know how else I can spell out how you make me feel. I’ve been in love with you so long, I wanted to ask you to move in for months, I bought the apartment we, you and me, fell in love with. I honestly could have cared less where I lived as long as you were there. Think this little blip is gonna change that? Not seeing you only confirmed what I already knew. You are the one, you dork. Get it through your head, baby. It’s us versus the world.”

“Is that a line from a film or a movie you were in?” Sasha couldn’t resist taunting him as she chewed the inside of her cheek, biting back a smile. She knew she didn’t have to break up the reverie, but he looked like he needed it and the wide grin that spread across his gorgeous face proved it.

Sebastian laughed. “No, Sebastian Stan original, actually. You can quote it, if you want. No one will believe you that I’d be capable of saying something so incredibly romantic and kind without a sarcastic undertone, but hey, knock yourself out.”

“Oh, my God, I’m so embarrassed for you right now,” she rested her forehead on his strong chest as he giggled quietly and kissed the back of her head. He forced her to look up, his skin flushing in deep embarrassment.

“Try being me, Benzo. Imagine the mortification I’m feeling right now.”

Pushing some dark hair from his handsome face, she sighed, leaving her warm palm on his cool skin, his cheek pushing into her touch like a greedy puppy, lapping up the attention. “I’m just joking, you know. I’m not always put off when you say cute things like that.”

“Oh, thank God. I was about to re-evaluate my entire cuteness process,” he muttered, eyes flashing cheekily.

“Pity for you I just don’t fall for it all the time like everyone else.”

“That is a pity,” he agreed longingly. “My life would be so much simpler if you were easily pleased all the time. Would be pretty boring though,” he acknowledged, nodding solemnly, a sly grin still lighting his striking features. “Come on,” he took her hand and started towards the street. “Let’s get outta of here. I’m taking you home and you’re having an early night. And I’m going to join you because I’m exhausted too.”

“My place?” she suggested as he had to laugh.

“Probably a good idea since you’re evicted tomorrow. Removalists will be around at 11. You’re my roommate tomorrow, sucker,” he sneered gently.

“Oh, God,” Sasha said, voice filled with dread, colour draining from her face. “It’s actually happening, isn’t it?” she stopped them in the middle of peak hour in Manhattan and took a deep breath. “You and me, living together.”

“In sin, yup,” he nodded softly, protecting them both from the nudges and curses from passers by that they’d stopped foot traffic. “You okay with that?”

“What was I thinking by starting a new job and moving at the same time? I’m such an idiot,” she bemoaned as he pulled her to him. He held her face before leaning in and leaving a soft kiss on her lips.

“Nothing really changes, baby. Not including the last 48 hours, we basically spend every waking
moment with each other as it is. Only difference is, you don’t have to race home for clean clothes or grumble about how brutal my shitty dude shampoo is on your gorgeous long locks,” he smiled. “Just us, a couple of losers, bunking together. It’s going to be fantastic. You’re gonna hate every minute, I guarantee it.”

“...”

“I could sleep for a hundred years,” Sasha muttered, stripping ungracefully and tossing herself under the blankets of her bed. Sebastian was already in bed, eyes closed but still awake.

“I’ve set an early alarm,” he told her, rolling over and snaking his strong arms tightly around her waist, needing as much of her soft skin on his as possible. He could finally relax with her in his arms, his body to hers.

“Of course you have,” she groaned as he giggled, wickedly.

“Are you gonna miss it here?”

“Yeah,” she said solemnly as he gently kissed between her shoulder blades, she inhaled sharply. “I think I’ll survive at your place though.”

“Our place,” he corrected.

“Our place,” she repeated quietly.

“Yeah,” he smiled against her skin. “If it’s all getting too much, if you feel smothered, you have to tell me, okay? We can’t fight like this again, Sasha.”

“I know. We’re better than this.”

“Exactly.”

She nudged closer to him. “Did you stay here last night?”

“Yeah. How’d you know?”

“The bed was made when I got back this morning.”

He laughed. “Well, I wanted it to be neat for you.”

She couldn’t bite back the grin. “And I noticed the kitchen was packed.”

“I didn’t sleep much last night,” he confided. “MTV was actually playing music and not something about knocked up teen moms, so I turned the music up and packed.”

“Was it cathartic?”

“No. I hate packing and cannot for the life of me understand why you didn’t just hire packers.”

“This is the first time I’ve moved in a long time. New York has amazing memories for me. It was nice to reminisce. Minus fighting with you.”

“Yeah...”

“I’m sorry you were here to pack alone.”
“Don’t be. Been a while since I pulled an all-nighter,” he teased.

“Think you could back it up again tonight?” she wriggled back into him teasingly.

“Could probably make it worth your while,” he said into her skin. “If that’s what you’re implying?”

“That is exactly what I am implying.”

Sebastian rolled Sasha on to her back and hovered over with a wide grin. “You’re incorrigible.”

“I’ll take it as a compliment.”

“Insatiable.” he reckoned. She could only shrug. “Unreal,” he finally kissed her. “So, you’re in love with me again?”

She sighed and nodded weakly. “Couldn’t stop if I wanted to.”

“Good,” he smiled. “Fuck sleep,” he dove on her as she giggled wildly.

---

The next morning, Sasha's apartment thankfully packed, Sebastian wrapped his arm around Sasha's waist with a contended yawn as they watched the removalists take the last of her belongings towards the elevator. “You’re done.”

“Yup,” she replied. “My life in New York: all boxed up.”

“You okay?”

“Yeah, I’ll be okay. I'll be with you. Are you?”

He kissed her temple. “Very much looking forward to the next part, kid.”

Chapter End Notes

The comments on the last chapter were hilarious! Outrage, shock, disbelief! Thank you to every lovely one of you that let me know what you thought about it. I do appreciate the effort you all go to by taking the time to say hi and wave your fists at me (virtually, of course. I hope?!) both here and on Tumblr. The last few chapters, the feedback has been out of this world, thanks to those kind kids who left kudos or subscribed as well, warms my heart so much!

---

Interested Bystander writes on Tumblr.
Sebastian will never be Lord of the Dance, Sasha has made sure he's aware of it. He is, and that is the problem he will force her to remedy in this flashback.

Unravelling her scarf off as she left the elevator in her apartment building, Sasha yawned. She’d just pulled the double matinee and evening performance and was exhausted. She needed grilled cheese, a glass of wine and a hot shower before bed in no particular order (though grilled cheese and red wine in bed after a shower seemed incredible, crumbs be damned). Fiddling with the door, Sasha’s breathing stopped as the door creaked open a little before she’d even unlocked the door.

Hopefully I’ve been robbed and the burglar left and isn’t here still to gut me, she pleaded silently as she clenched her umbrella, now her weapon of choice, tightly in her fist. Lot of good it would do, it hardly withstood a gusty wind.

“Great, this is how I’m going to die,” she muttered to herself, pushing the door open quietly. Peering inside with the door still open wide in case she needed to bolt, Sasha pursed her mouth into a tight line, the lamps to the apartment on, lowly lighting the room as Sebastian paced a hole into her floorboards, sipping a glass of wine. Noticing her, he grinned widely.

“Hey, you’re back,” he exclaimed. “Finally!”

“Why did I give you a key? It’s a question I have to keep asking myself, Sebastian Stan,” she demanded as she approached him, adrenaline still cursing through her veins. “You gave me a fucking heart attack, you arsehole,” she whipped him with her wooly scarf, before clutching her heart and falling on the couch. He chuckled and swapped her scarf for his wine glass.

“You look like you need this,” he reckoned.

“I do,” she gratefully accepted the glass and attempted to compose herself. "What are you doing here, Sebastian?"

Sebastian looked back at the door. “Are you okay? Why didn’t you close the door when you walked in?”

“Thought you were a rapist or killer,” she replied, inhaling and trying to regulate her breathing with a sip of the wine. It was good, she noted the bottle in the kitchen, realising he must have brought it with him. Her bar stayed fairly empty when she had a job. “I've been far too flagrant with my apartment key. Can I have it back?” she held her hand out to him which he slapped.

He grinned. “Nope, I’m taking it to the grave. Though, rest assured I’m not here to kill you either,” he trotted to the door and slammed it closed with his sneakered foot.

“Oh, thank God,” Sasha rolled her eyes as he stood before her and pressed his hands into her shoulders, gently kneading them. “Oh, no.”

He couldn’t resist laughing, she could read him like a book. “Need a favour. Kinda desperately
“Is this blackmail wine?” she figured, gently sniffing the red. It smelt incredible and exactly what she needed, but hesitated another sip before she got roped into Sebastian’s scheme.

He dropped his hands, much to Sasha’s displeasure and returned to his pacing, forcing his hands through his thick mop of dark curls. “Yes.”

“What’s up, Seb?” she asked warily, putting the glass on the coffee table and crossing her arms in preparation.

“You know how occasionally people lie on their headshot, right?” he asked casually. “I mean, I’m sure you have,” he reasoned, though it looked to be more for his benefit than hers.

Sasha, a little pressed, replied, “I haven’t. Why would I suggest I can sing when I can’t?” she chewed her lip, stifling back a giggle as realisation washed over her: Sebastian had been caught out on something. “But I’m familiar with others faking their way to the top,” she couldn’t resist adding.

“Like, it’s just an itsy bitsy teeny little white lie,” he continued dragging out.

Sasha’s grin could not be contained. “What did you lie about, Sebastian?”

He groaned, rubbing his stony eyes, tiredly. “Remember when we first talked about me auditioning for Picnic and you may have reminded me about my lack of dance ability?” he squinted.

She finally cackled. “Yes. I’m familiar with Picnic and your issues with dancing.”

He ignored her laughter as she hid behind a cushion, unable to help herself contain her giggles, her eyes wicked. “Well, the rehearsals are for that scene tomorrow and – ”

“You’re fucked?” she figured, tossing the cushion at him before picking the wine back up for an exceptionally excited sip. Sebastian couldn’t understand why she was so giddy about this.

“I’m fucked, Benzo,” he confirmed with a slight whimper. “I honestly didn’t think it would be that big a deal, and in reality, you,” he pointed at her harshly. “You got in my head and now I’m freaking the fuck out so you owe me one dance lesson,” he accused, a little frustrated. “At the very least. To prepare me for tomorrow.”

“I don’t owe you anything,” she kept laughing.

“Sash, please,” he begged, falling to his knees before her dramatically, palming her rosy cheeks in his large hands, thumbs brushing her temples. “I wouldn’t ask if I wasn’t absolutely desperate.”

She sighed and took a long sip, watching him over the rim of the glass. “You look absolutely desperate.”

“I am,” he reassured her.

“I assume this is for Moonglow?”

“Yeah,” he replied, a little dejected as Sasha started fiddling with her phone. “What are you doing?”

“Texting everyone that you’re here, gagging for my help,” she teased.

He grunted, pushing himself to his feet and grabbing his leather jacket, shrugging it over his
shoulders. “Thanks for nothing, Benzo,” he headed towards the door as Sasha giggled. “I’ll go see Ollie instead.”

“Calm your farm,” she told him quietly. “I’m just downloading the song, Seb,” she said as he stopped before turning the door handle. He looked back at her sceptically. “Promise, I’m paying 99c to Steve Jobs to ensure you can dance a foxtrot tomorrow at rehearsal.”

“Foxtrot,” he looked at the roof with his hands on his slim hips, daunted. “Am I going to be terrible?”

“No,” she smiled as he moved back to the living room slowly. “You’ve got me.”

“Thank you,” he reluctantly bent down to kiss her hair.

“Can you move the coffee table? Let me just get changed, I have danced all day and my body needs a breather,” she said, getting up and heading to her bedroom, closing the door after her. This would be torture, she thought, taking off the layers she’d put on from theatre back to her apartment, stripping off her shirt, jeans and socks for some tights and a baggy sweater. She forewent her dance shoes before she headed out to find Sebastian tossing his jacket, scarf and sweater on the couch, leaving him in a white V-neck and his low jeans, now barefoot himself.

“I’ll try not to break your toes.”

“I’d really appreciate that, considering they are what keep me gainfully employed,” she smiled gently. He gave a nervous smile in return.

“Thanks for this,” he mumbled quietly and she guided his posture to stand up straight, pressing a hand on his tummy (abs coiling under her touch, she tried to ignore the intake of breath he took upon her touching him) and lower back, straightening him out. He was a notorious sloucher, it wouldn’t work in her favour, but he was strong, so it shouldn’t be too difficult to keep him upright.

“It’s okay, you’ll be fine,” she reassured him, gently patting his smooth cheek across his dimple. “Let’s get the basics down first, huh?”

He nodded apprehensively as she pushed lightly against his chest. “Okay. Be gentle, huh?”

“I understand this is your first time,” she winked as he couldn’t resist a laugh. “It will only hurt for a minute.”

“Don’t tease me,” he pleaded, a smirk retained on his plump lips. “I’m trying to be serious here.”

“Sorry, just trying to break the tension,” she admitted. “I gotta ask though, your mum is a concert pianist. How do you have little understanding to music and movement?”

“It’s not like Mama didn’t want me to learn piano, she really did,” he shrugged as she took his hands and linked their fingers. He stopped talking to watch what she was doing, unable to suddenly multitask as she casually lead them backwards and forward, hoping to relax him. There was nothing to yet learn, just to be on the same chilled level. He continued, “And I did learn it as a kid, I just didn’t see it through. Didn’t read music, only played by ear and remembering Mama’s fingers on the keys. When we came out here, we didn’t have a piano for a while and I was too busy being a teenage boy anyway.”

“You have the hands of a pianist,” Sasha told him (she’d always noted his gorgeous strong hands and his long, slender fingers).
He smiled. “I’m aware.”

“Okay,” she told him. “Let’s start with a waltz, huh? The dances are pretty similar.”

“Thank God. The waltz is slower,” he pointed out as she grinned, a little surprised.

“I wouldn’t throw you in the deep end.”

“I know.”

It’s okay, we’ll get you there, all right?” she promised as he nodded, a little reassured. “Okay, let’s begin. Let me lead and then we’ll commit to some basics, okay?”

---

“And there is a dip or something at the end. Fuck, I didn’t mention that,” Sebastian said, hand on Sasha’s waist, his other hand grasping hers, continuing the slow waltz around Sasha’s living room. He’d graduated from staring at his feet, counting out loud and now just able to look at her and speak easily as they continued moving.

“Romantic,” Sasha muttered, thoroughly exhausted. “Maggie was a dancer, right? She can guide you to what feels right for her. It will vary every night on stage anyway,” Sasha assumed as she felt the hand on her hip slide further into her lower back.

“Can I try? Benzo, I need to get this right. The last thing I wanna do is drop her,” he told her quietly. “Please? I won’t drop you, I promise.”

“Seb – ” Sasha tried.

“You don’t trust me?”

Sasha sighed. How could she say no? He’d done so well at the point. Don’t you do it, she begged him silently. Dammit. And there they were. His puppy dog eyes gazing at her under his long lashes, little pout accompanying them. He might as well have said, resist me at your peril. Of course he’d play dirty. “Count the music, then see what feels natural,” she said reluctantly. It wasn’t worth arguing the point.

He nodded, chewing his lip, the challenge written all over his face as he stared intently into Sasha’s eyes. His was concentrating so intensely, that when he manoeuvred his leg between hers and carefully lowered her, she gasped in surprise, suddenly horizontal. “What do you think?” he whispered, knowing her body didn’t need to be released immediately and holding her in place with his strength.

Thigh to thigh, hip to hip, chest to chest, their faces closer than she thought they’d ever been. She had never noticed the gold in his stony eyes until right then. “I think you’ve got it,” she managed without a breath, hoping he didn’t notice that she was a downright mess in his arms. She didn’t give him credit for how strong he was to keep her in this position. He could kiss her if he really wanted to.

“You have the cutest freckles on your nose,” he said as he broke into a small grin, his long fingers splaying across her back, keeping her body flush to his securely. His body was like marble above hers.

“I grew up on the beach, I have freckles everywhere,” she replied before she realised how stupid it sounded. He gave a small laugh, his tummy rumbling against hers.
“I’m sure they’re all as beautiful as these ones,” he grazed his nose against hers. There was no way he missed her blush, she felt the heat creep from her feet to her hair. The grin that grew on his face almost proved it.

“Seb – ”

“I only have freckles on my shoulders, chest and low on my stomach. Few on my back,” he continued. “Different sun in Europe, I guess.”

She’d sell her soul to see the smattering of sun kisses against his skin. It was true enough though, none on his face that she could spot from this close (except a teeny one on his forehead that was currently hidden by hair) while he was clean-shaven. “Oh, right,” she blinked, dodging his gaze as he pulled her back up to stand and Sasha immediately gave him a wide berth, taking a breath and a much needed step backwards.

“I feel so much more confident about tomorrow – I mean, today,” he blushed, seeing it was nearly 5am. “Thanks, Benzo. You are the best.”

“Hey, yeah, no problem,” she uneasily brushed the appreciation away with a shrug, turning the music off. She’d heard Moonglow one too many times that evening to enjoy it anymore.

“I know it’s late, I’m sorry.”

“It’s okay,” she said, putting their empty wine glasses and bottle in the kitchenette, forcing distance between them. “What time is rehearsal?”

“8:30,” he instinctively yawned. “I’ll hit the road,” he told her, putting his jacket on, stuffing his feet in his sneakers and pulling them on before tossing his scarf and sweater over his arm. “God, I’m exhausted.”

“You and me both,” she laughed quietly.

“Are you off today?”

“No, evening show.”

“At least you can sleep the day away,” he offered a friendly smile, another yawn stifled as he tried in vain to cover it with his hands.

“You okay?” she knew he’d been rehearsing almost non-stop the last few months (previews were only a month or so away) and like her, was burning the candle at both ends. Pretending to their friends they weren’t dead on their feet at all hours, trying to please everyone. Stage was a full time job, your brain didn’t switch off even if the stage lights had. He was constantly running lines and making notes, she was constantly rehearsing dance sequences for multiple characters as an understudy as well as herself.

“Just hit me how tired I am,” he admitted with a grin. “All good.”

“If you wanna stay…” she said, nodding to the couch before she could stop herself. Wouldn’t be the first time or the last, she knew. They probably stayed at the other’s place far too often to be usual.

He sighed and looked back at the couch, the idea definitely tempting him. They were both in desperate need of sleep. Sure, they still pulled all nighters more than they should, but they were both emotionally and physically done for. Long days backing onto late nights. “You mind?”
“Uhh, no. Of course not,” she said, hoping he didn’t catch the nervousness in her voice. “You’ve crashed here – ”

“Plenty of times,” he finished for her.

“I’ll get you some blankets,” she said, moving towards her bedroom as he stopped her and pulled her to him for a warm embrace, lifting her feet from the ground.

“You saved my ass, Benzo. Thank you.”

“Oh,” she said, taken aback. Pulling back, he smiled his broad, sunny grin. “It's fine.”

“You’re the best.”

She shrugged, gently struggling from his grasp. “Well, lying on your headshot will get you nowhere,” she tutted as he laughed.

“I have well and truly learned my lesson,” he raised his hands in defeat as she smiled and retreated to her bedroom. She pulled the extra blankets from the end of her bed and trudged back out to find him snuggling into cushions in his sweater, boxers and socks. She couldn’t resist a laugh as she tossed the blankets over him.

“Are you warm enough?”

“Yeah, for now. If not, I’ll just sneak into your bed and snuggle with you,” he wriggled his eyebrows mischievously, straightening the blankets over him.

“I wouldn’t,” she told him with snark. “And be quiet when you leave in the morning.”

“Quiet as a church mouse,” he promised, crossing his heart before throwing his arms in the air.

“Hug me.”

“Hug yourself,” Sasha muttered as his fingers wiggled and arms thrust at her desperately. “For fuck’s sake,” she sighed as she leaned over and he pulled her into a bear hug as she squeaked, falling on him. “You’re a demanding little shit sometimes.”

“You’re the best, thank you again, Benzo,” he kissed her forehead, holding her in his arms tightly. “Sleep well, huh?”

She unwound herself from him. “You too, Seb. Night,” she forced herself to her bedroom quickly and closed the door before he could get another word out. Hiding behind the door, she rested her head on the wood and wondered which diety she had pissed off to put her into that position that night. It would never get easier with him.

How were these feelings just getting stronger? He’s your friend, Sasha, she told herself before tossing herself on her bed and retrieving her PJ’s form under her pillow and commencing her night time rituals too late to consider even bothering. You have to get over this little crush before it does what it says it will.

Crush you.

---

Hearing an alarm, Sasha whined, burying her head in her pillows. “I didn’t set a fucking alarm,” she muffled to herself, rolling over as Sebastian stretched beside her, reaching out for the alarm next...
to their pillows.

“I did.”

She should have known. “When did you crawl in here?” she couldn't lift her head from the pillow. She refused to.

He gave a weak grin and brushed some hair from her eyes as he sat up, torso bare as he rubbed his arms in the chill of the room. “Dunno, few hours ago. You sleep like you're in a coma, has anyone ever told you that?”

“Once or twice,” she admitted, recalling previous lovers and their comments on how deep a sleeper she was. Taylor was convinced she could sleep through a hurricane. Point in fact: she could and had.

“You don't even move. Like - ”

“Did you sleep or just watch me?” she raised an eyebrow. "Because that's gross.”

He laughed coyly. "Well, I tried to wake you to ask if I could come in, but when you didn't reply, I just made my own arrangements.”

"Of course you did."

"It's okay," he told her. "You don't talk in your sleep either. You didn't admit your true feelings for me." Sasha blushed, finding his pillow and smacking him in the face with it as he cackled and groaned when the pillow wallop him. "You're too chirpy for first thing in the morning. You should leave."

"I am, I am," he told her. "FYI, it was fucking freezing out there on the couch, get your super to look at your furnace. I gotta go, I need to change before I get to the theatre,” he pushed himself upright, scratching his toned belly and stumbling towards the bathroom, closing the door after him.

“What the actual fuck…” she muttered as she heard the shower start. “Just make yourself at home, Sebastian,” she said, rolling over and going back to sleep. 10 minutes later, he giggled quietly as he tucked Sasha under the warm blankets again.

“Sleep tight, sweetheart,” he gently kissed her temple and crept out.

He really had to stop doing that.

---

“Did you get to any of his rehearsals?” Ollie asked as she precariously took a seat with Sasha and Sebastian’s mother Ana a month or so later. Both the girls had a forgiving night off in the first few night’s of Picnic’s run and after Sebastian bribed them with free tickets, there they were, a few rows from the front. Ana had already seen a preview and couldn’t wait to see her son on stage again. She had raved about it at dinner, how proud she was. Both Ollie and Sasha couldn’t help but feel the joy stemming from her as she talked about Sebastian.

“Nah,” Sasha replied. “Haven’t had time.”

“Why would you want to spoil it?” Ana asked.

“Exactly, why would I want to spoil it?” Sasha asked, giving Ollie a small grin.
“Well, you helped Sebby with his dancing,” Ana pointed out. “My poor baby boy and his two left feet.”

“Dancing?” Ollie spoke up, moving her eyes from the Playbill to Sasha with an unreadable flash across her face.

“It was nothing,” Sasha brushed the question off.

“Sebastian needed help with the dancing,” Ana explained. “Sasha graciously gave him a hand.”

“Well, wasn’t that generous of her?” Ollie asked, unable to hide the jest in her voice as Ana laughed quietly. “You are one in a million, Benzo.”

“She is,” Ana patted Sasha’s hand as she blushed hotly under both women’s knowing gaze. Nothing got past either of them. Ollie had finally asked Sasha to cut the shit and admit she had feelings for Sebastian a few months earlier, and Sasha couldn’t help admitting that yes, something had changed and she couldn’t explain how or why. And of course, Ana’s subtle as a sledgehammer goading of Sasha and her son to just get together already. “Sebastian is very lucky to have you in his life, Sasha.”

“Enough of the the games with the girls without a future, Sebastian. Beautiful Sasha is before you, you would make a lovely couple,” Ana had previously chastised them both, much to their gross discomfort.

Thank God timing was on Sasha’s side as the lights dimmed and went down.

“You can’t win this one,” Ollie whispered. “Ana is on to you now too.”

“Shut up, the play is starting,” Sasha hissed.

A little while later, Sasha couldn’t resist the tears that sprung to her eyes as Sebastian thundered across the stage, in a dancing mess. While it was still wild and a little flagrant, she couldn’t resist the giggle that escaped her lips as he put all his enthusiasm into it. It only stung a little while later when he took Maggie’s hands and moved gently with her and dipped her, just as he’d done with her. Sasha couldn’t resist thinking maybe he’d pressed his body a little closer to hers than he currently was with Maggie.

“You practice that too?” Ollie whispered. “Because fuego.”

Sasha sighed, giving her friend the international signal for ‘shut the fuck up’. Ollie frowned, scolded but lit up as Sasha gave the weakest nod in acknowledgement. Ollie smirked, turning her attention back to the stage. Ahh, kids these days. There was a reason he went to Sasha instead of herself, Ollie knew. And it was for that dip alone. What was Ollie going to do to finally get these morons to see just how much they wanted the other?

It was just getting embarrassing now.

---

"Hey," Sebastian smiled, kissing Ollie's cheek as he joined her at a loud bar later that night.
"Where's Benzo hiding?"

"Not even a 'hi, how are you Olivia?'" Ollie teased, sipping her cocktail. "I know she's your fave, but sheesh, Seb."
"Sorry. It's not like that at all," he blushed, looking at his phone and sure enough, seeing an apology text from Sasha. "How are you? Did you enjoy the show?"

"I did," Ollie confirmed. "Thanks for hooking us up with the tickets."

"Of course," Sebastian said, shucking off his leather jacket and looking over the drinks menu.

"And Sash went home. She's got a matinee tomorrow so she didn't stay," Olivia supplied as some chips came to the table. "From what I could tell, she really enjoyed the play though."

"Oh, good," Sebastian replied as he nodded to a waitress who eagerly joined them for his order. "G&T," he pointed to himself. "Another Caipirinha for my friend. Thanks," he gave Ollie his attention again as the waitress scurried away.

"Sash seemed especially moved when you danced."

Sebastian made a sound in the back of his throat as he rubbed the back of his neck, shyly. His skin turned a crimson colour, bashful for various reasons. "Oh, yeah?"

"Yeah, she cried. Pretended she wasn't, but you know, sometimes you can just tell," Ollie put her chin in her hand, content to see Sebastian squirm under her gaze. "Heard she gave you a free lesson to uhh, save yourself for utter embarrassment."

"She say that?"

"No, I just assumed," Ollie grinned. "Sorry, I'm just giving you shit because I know you're completely in love with her," she continued flippantly, like it was no big deal.

Sebastian's face broke into a frown. "Huh?"

"Oh, is it a secret?" Ollie covered her mouth, feigning shock. "Oops."

He cocked his head to the side. "What's your play, Ol?"

"Nothing, nothing. Don't you think it's just time to start facing reality and accepting how you feel about our beloved Benzo?" Ollie asked thoughtfully.

"You're crazy. It's not like that with her. She's my friend, that's where it starts and ends."

"You sure?" Ollie finished her drink, pushing it to the side, her finger tracing condensation it left.

"Of course I am."

"Shame, you two would make a cute couple. Like super hot."

"You're mad, Ollie," Sebastian finally broke into a smile.

"Did you practice that dip with her?"

"Well, yeah," he replied. "Had to. God forbid I drop Maggie!"

"True, true. Just like a down and up again? Or like a down, look into her eyes, tell her how pretty she was - "

"Ol, c'mon," Sebastian sighed, fistling his hair back nervously.
“What did you notice about her then?”

“Has anyone suggested you could be an interrogator if this dancing thing fell apart for you?” Sebastian clipped, needing to get one back for his pride.

“I'm just good at reading people. So, what did you notice?” she pressed as the waitress brought their drinks over, Sebastian thanking her. "How good she smells? She loves Chanel. Coco Mademoiselle, you know if you ever wanted to get her a bottle completely randomly when you're going through duty free - "

"Her freckles," he muttered under his breath, cutting Ollie off.

Ollie cupped her ear, leaning towards Sebastian, her grin shiteating. “Sorry, bit louder for the cheap seats!”

"Her freckles, she has freckles on her nose."

“Oh, not how green her eyes are? Or were they that crazy hazel colour and they almost look amber? Crazy how they constantly change," Ollie had him. It felt like the greatest victory of her life. She had them, she had both of them. They were in love with each other and now she had the information first hand from both. What a time to be alive!

Sebastian stared hard at Ollie as he took a long sip of his drink. Five minutes ago required to relax after a gruelling night on stage, five minutes later helping him stomach what he had been keeping to himself for the last few months. "When did it become so obvious?"

“When did what become so obvious?"

"How I feel about her."

“Well, let's see," Ollie offered, tapping her chin reflectively. "Always?"

“What?!” he yelped.


"Does she know?" he asked meekly. "I mean, has she said anything to you?"

Ollie bit back her grin. Sasha would never believe her anyway. "No, she's not so good with relationship stuff, you know that. Deplorable, if we are being brutally honest about it."

Sebastian barely registered a nod. "Okay."

"And don't worry," she grabbed his hand across the table. "I won't tell anyone." Except Sam, she thought. Because he didn't believe me.

"Thanks, Ollie," Sebastian said shyly, shooting back the rest of his drink, wiping his mouth with the back of his hand. He breathed as the alcohol burned on the way down, pointing at a waitress to bring him another. "Do you know how she feels - " he started before stuffing his face with chips. He couldn't bear to ask, or he didn't want to know, he wasn't sure but knew it was for the best he didn't bother with the rest of the question. And Ollie knew better than to tell him. Now it was for Sasha and Sebastian to work it out on their own.

---

Little did Ollie know how long it would take those morons to finally get their shit together. Far too
long, she'd tell anyone whom ever asked.

Chapter End Notes

Obv living where I do, I never had the pleasure of seeing Picnic on stage (I have a cam version that I haven't forced myself to sit through yet for some reason), so I'm taking some creative license in this chapter. Hope you enjoy, you guys! Thank you to all that said hi and left kudos (I see you lurkers too, guys). Love hearing you responses to TOFWYA so don't hesitate letting me know what you think.
---
Interested Bystander writes on Tumblr.
Domesticity

Chapter Summary

If she’d learnt one thing in all the years she’d know him, it was that he always managed to make her feel new and exciting ways of hating how much she cared about him.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Walking through the hallway in their apartment building a week or so after Sasha had officially moved in as Sebastian’s "live in girlfriend", he gave his elderly neighbour Mrs Haberman a friendly smile as she left her apartment. "Something smells good in there, Sebastian," she commented as she wandered to the elevator. He stopped in front of their door as he smelled food cooking from within. He looked at the number on the door. It was definitely their apartment.

“My mom is probably here and has convinced Sasha to let her cook,“ he forced a meagre grin as Mrs Haberman gave him a gentle smile and stepped into the elevator, disappearing from his view. He sighed, a little miffed Sasha didn’t give him a head’s up his mother had turned up unannounced (it had been a long day and he couldn't be bothered entertaining anyone) as he retrieved his keys from his jeans pocket and unlocked the door, pushing his was in, dropping his keys in the ceramic bowl on the entry table and backpack under it. The only real noise was Bruno Mars playing in the background and definitely not the giddy chatter of his mother and Sasha gossiping about him.

He moseyed into the kitchen and spotted Sasha hovering over the stove, tongs in hand clad in yoga kit and ugggs. He noticed the Greek salad on the bench filled to the brim with lettuce, olives, cucumbers, avocado (not traditional but they were both obsessed), feta and a generous slathering of olive oil and he guessed oregano on top, the loaf of olive bread, lemon wedges, red wine breathing and started panicking slightly in spite of himself.

He’d entered another dimension.

“Sash, baby, what’s going on in here?” he asked gently, humoured at her surprise at his voice.

She grinned, clutching the tongs to her heart. “Bub, you scared me! Hi, how was your day?” she asked, grabbing a glass of wine and handing it to him, giving him a lingering kiss before heading back to the stove. "Audition went well?"

He couldn’t figure out if he should be frowning or smiling as something in between registered on his face. “Uhh, fine, went well, I guess.” his eyes still zipping between what she was cooking and what was already prepared.

“Good. Dusted, vacuumed - ”

"We have a vacuum?" he asked astounded, distracting him from the fracas in the kitchen momentarily.

"How do you think your cleaner cleans this place?" Sasha frowned.

"Just assumed they brought their own stuff," he shrugged casually. He'd never given it much
thought. He quickly realised how impractical it sounded.

Sasha sighed, he was dead serious. "No, Sebastian. Sara organised you a cleaner when you moved in. There is a whole cupboard worth of cleaning stuff in the laundry that I'm assuming you have absolutely no clue exists?"

"Nope," he blinked a few times. "Makes sense though."

She couldn't resist a giggle and put a warm palm to his stubbly cheek. "You're so pretty, Sebby baby," then shook her head amazed but not entirely surprised.

One thing at a time, Sebastian figured, sipping his wine. "How was your day?"

"Yeah, pretty good. Went to yoga around the corner to try out their classes. You’ve lived around here for as long as I’ve known you but I feel like I’m still trying to find my bearings with lots of my day to day stuff,” she admitted. “So I asked myself, 'there’s yoga on every block. Why would I go back to my old studio?'" she rambled as he willingly took another sip of wine, head stuck somewhere between where the cleaning stuff came from, Sasha prattling on about yoga and the food that was starting to make his tummy rumble - she was right. He couldn't multitask. “When I’m sure there are perfectly good yoga studios within 100 meters of your apartment, right?”

“*Our* apartment,” he managed to reply. “And yeah, I guess so. I’m glad you had a good day. Uhh, what’s happening in here though?” his wine glass-holding hand gently waving around them, Sasha's eyes watching the splottes, hoping they wouldn't end up on the hardwood.

“I'm craving Greek food, but really didn’t want to go out so I went to the market and picked everything up.” she replied simply. In honesty, it was probably the most under utilised kitchen in Manhattan. Sebastian couldn’t recall a time he’d ever actually seen Sasha using a cooking apparatus aside from a toaster. Maybe a frying pan for grilled cheese if he thought really hard.

“Babe, you don’t cook.”

She raised an eyebrow. “Of course I cook. Are you mad?”

“I’ve known you ten years. I’ve never once seen you cook.”

“None of us cook, we live in New York City,” she replied with a laugh as if it was the most obvious answer in the world, using the tongs to flip over whatever was on the stove. “Lamb cutlets with garlic and rosemary. I'm going to cook *saganaki* while the lamb rests,” she let him know, his stomach inadvertently growling. “Dinner will be another 15 minutes or so.”

She appeared to be saying all the right things, he admitted. “Did your mom send you some recipes or something?” he asked, moving over to her and wrapping his arms around her waist, mouth watering as he inspected what was on the griddle pan over her shoulder. The carnivore in him suddenly ravenous. It smelled pretty damn good.

“It’s lamb, fried cheese and salad. Why would I need a recipe?” she scoffed, turning in his arms as a look of recognition crossed her face. “You honestly think I can’t cook,” she burst into laughter. “Oh, bub. Sorry to disappoint you but I know my way around a kitchen. My old apartment was too teeny to really do something this like but your kitchen is perfect. Come on now.”

“I’ve never seen you cooking, sue me!” he exclaimed, burying his face in the crook of her neck, taking in her scent. “Fuck, that smells good though. Now that we’re living together, does that mean I’m going to get fat from all this food you’re going to cook me?” he blinked, patting his tummy hopefully.
“Don’t get too excited. I wasn’t working tonight, I had time to get to the store and whip this up. I don’t have most nights off,” she reminded him as he took their wine glasses, placing them on the bench beside her and couldn’t resist kissing her. “Ease up,” she urged softly, pushing him back a few steps. “I don’t want to burn anything.”

“Okay, okay,” he raised his hands. “I honestly thought the kitchen was just another place around the house to bend you over and have my way with you. Turns out you know how to use it too. You little homemaker, you,” he teased, rescuing his wine again and sitting himself on the bench to watch her. She rolled her eyes.

“Mum is half-Greek. If you thought for one second I couldn’t put something as simple as this together,” she paused to turn the heat off on the stovetop and pointed the tongs at him, accusingly. “You’re kidding yourself.”

“How often should I expect this kinda thing?” he teased with a grin, raising his palms in surrender. "Will this be an every night-type deal?"

“Not often,” she moved the lamb to let it rest, before putting the cheese on the hot plate and moved to him, standing herself between his manspread legs. He cupped her chin and leaned down, his face close to hers.

“I am really impressed, Benzo. You little domestic goddess, you,” he teased as she sighed, attempting to move away but he caught her in time and dragged her back with a gentle kiss though it was interrupted by his hungry belly. "When should I expect you meeting me in nothing but the apron, heels and a G&T at the front door?"

"When hell freezes over," she muttered as she moved to flip the cheese and he cackled.

---

“Oh, my God,” Sebastian rubbed his belly a while later, easing himself back from the table, his wine glass twirling contentedly in his other hand. “I haven’t eaten like that in ages.”

“It was okay?” Sasha asked, resting her elbows on the table, finding stray olives in the salad bowl to continue munching on.

“Yes, fantastic,” he grinned. “I thought you already were the total package and then you spring cooking on me. What next? You secretly enjoyed cleaning earlier today too?”

She made a face as he laughed, not entirely surprised by that reaction. “No, that’s why you're doing the dishes.”

“Fair,” he admitted, he leaned over to kiss her. "Guriţă, that was amazing. Thank you.”

“You’re welcome,” she offered him a lazy smile.

“So, what are you cooking tomorrow night?” he dared.

She raised an eyebrow. “I’ve got classes until 8pm, what are you cooking tomorrow night?”

“Better find the Chinese flier,” he laughed quietly and started cleaning up as Sasha made herself comfortable on the couch, Sebastian joining her once the kitchen was tidy a while later and the dishwasher doing its job. “This isn’t so bad, right? You’re not hating all this?” he grabbed her feet, whipping her ugggs away and started massaging lightly. He knew her feet were hurting a bit after wearing in a few different pairs of dance shoes the last few weeks.
Sasha smiled as Sebastian. “I promise I am not hating living with you,” she adjusted her posture to face him and sunk further into the couch.

“I’m not doing anything that is driving you insane?”

“No,” she replied, face turning to horror. She could live with his inability to aim his dirty socks in the hamper. “Why, am I?”

“No, no at all,” Sebastian grinned widely. “Best roommate I’ve ever had.”

She laughed quietly. “Righto.”

“I love having you here, baby. I hope you’re starting to feel comfortable and at home.”

“I’m getting there,” she reassured him. “I haven’t lived with a boyfriend before. I know we spent a lot of nights together before I moved in. And it has been strange, but I like it.”

“Good.”

“You go to LA next week anyway. That hardest part will be not having you around.”

“Yeah. Guy’s gotta work though,” he said quietly. “I would love if you were coming with me.”

“You know I can’t now. I would love to but I am really loving my new job too.”

“I’m happy for you, baby. I can tell you enjoy it. Those little kids love you too. Has it – ” he started, before shutting his mouth abruptly.

“Has it what?” she asked, forcing her other foot into his hand as he laughed a little at her demands.

“I don’t wanna ask now,” he admitted, blushing a little. “It would be mean of me to do so.”

“Well, you have to ask now,” she urged.

“I don’t want to piss you off.”

“You wouldn’t,” she shrugged. But if he recognised he could’ve...

He raised his eyebrow warily. “Okay,” he breathed as she nodded him to move on. “Being around the kids hasn’t made… you know, the biological clock start ticking again?”

Sasha grinned, resisting a giggle. “No. Would you believe it has been detrimental not to forget a day of birth control? I’ve never been so proactive to avoid pregnancy in my life.”

He gave a shy grin. “Right.”

“Why? You starting to feel broody?” she gently kicked his thigh with her free foot.


“Clucky,” she amended herself. “Paternal. Feeling the urge to knock me up?”

“Oh,” he was definitely blushing now. “I mean, I really enjoy to practice,” he admitted. “There is a lot on soon. We’ll be apart more than together. I don’t wanna miss a thing. It wouldn’t be fair to you if I was gone.”

"So, nothing has changed for you?" she dared ask, not entirely wanting the answer. He shook his
head lightly.

"No, baby," he noticed Sasha drop her eyes. He wasn’t sure what part of what he’d said had
saddened her: the fact he was going to be working constantly for the rest of the year or that his stance
hadn’t changed that much on the kid thing, both of which she’d reassured him she was fine with but
clearly was not. “Hey,” he pressed gently into her heel, wanting her attention back. “I told you to tell
me if things were changing –”

“It’s not the kid thing,” she looked up with a weak grin. “Just used to having you around, Sebastian.”

“You have been spoilt,” he agreed with a small smirk, a little relieved.

She laughed. “Yeah, I guess I have. It’s okay, I’m sure I’ll survive in this big apartment all on my
lonesome.”

“What about my needs though? Are you sure I just can’t pack you in my suitcase?”

“I know for a fact I wouldn’t fit.”

“Money isn’t an issue, you know. It never has been. If you want to leave work and come with me,
you can,” he offered quietly.

“It’s not about money,” she told him, shaking her head. “I still need to be my own person. And that
includes my life in New York.”

“Your family would have a heart attack if they heard you say that.”

“Well, since we started dating, they have resisted putting the hard word on me coming home.”

"Shocking,” he admitted. “Let’s go to Melbourne at Christmas, huh?”

“You are the only person I know in America that says Melbourne correctly,” she told him,
thoroughly impressed.

“I got sick of you correcting me, so I made sure I learned to say it right. 'It's not Mel-born. It's
Mel-bun!',” he gently mocked. "'Melbourne is not a Bourne sequel, Sebastian'.'"

She laughed loudly. He said a lot of things like she did these days, especially if it was something that
related to Australia. He’d joked on enough occasions that if she attempted to learn Romanian for
him, the least he could do was learn a few Aussie colloquialisms for her. His current favourites
included: avo (avocado), arvo (afternoon) and Maccas (McDonald’s when he wanted a cheat day
though it was hard to come between the man and his pizza). He found himself saying enough to the
point that their friends were suggesting he and Sasha spent far too much time together. “You wanna
go?”

“Well, yeah, of course. I won’t miss snow and sleet and shit on Christmas Day. You can make sure
you don’t have any tan lines and you haven’t been home since Christmas before last.”

She broke in a small a smile. “That would be awesome.”

Sebastian suddenly slapped her thigh. “Great,” he pushed himself to his feet. “Food has settled now,”
he hitched her into his arms as she squealed (she hated when he made her do that) and
manhandled her to the bedroom.

---
“Night babe, I’ll be quiet when I get back. I know you have early gym in the morning,” Sasha leaned down to kiss Sebastian tenderly as he loafed on the couch. He had found a new show he was watching and hadn’t pulled his eyes away from the TV in nearly three hours. Impressive binge on his behalf. He was never really much for just sitting around doing nothing at the best of times.

“Bye, baby,” he kissed her again absently as he kept his eyes on the TV. “Enjoy girls’ night. Might see you later.”

Chace was in town so they were going to dinner with some friends and no doubt to a bar afterwards.

“He almost tore his eyes from the TV to say goodbye,” Olivia threw a grape that bonked him on his cheek, he glared back. “Rude, Marilyn Monroe,” she taunted him and his newly bleached hair for his next role.

“Hey,” he muttered, pausing the show seriously. “Take my woman out and show her a good time, please?”

“Yes, Captain Cranky Pants,” Olivia rolled her eyes, taking Sasha’s hands and leaving their apartment. “Jesus. What’s up his butt today?” Olivia closed the apartment door behind them. “He gets into a sass so infrequently that it’s really quite noticeable when he’s not in a good mood.”

“He hasn’t told me,” Sasha sighed. “He’s off to LA for a new film and then the film premiere. He gets pretty spacey when he knows he’s travelling alone,” she shrugged. “Gets in his own head of all the stuff he has to do. He’ll be okay.”

“Picked a great career for himself then,” Ollie scoffed. “Are you sure you wanna go out if he leaves in a few days? I understand if you want to be that chick that chooses her man over her girlfriends,” Ollie half-joked, Sasha registered the sarcasm in her tone and realised heading back inside would not be appreciated nor tolerated.

“I’ve seen him everyday basically since we went to Germany. He can survive a night with the guys while we’re out.”

“So, he’ll be away a while, huh?”

Sasha nodded. “After filming and some press in LA, he flies to Beijing then Singapore and I think London, so he’s away for a month, give or take – he’s been trying to get me to committing to going to LA for the Civil War premiere, but I’ve got work and stuff.”

“He knows you had to take a job sometime,” Olivia reminded her.

“Yes, he’s trying to understand that I can’t drop everything at the last moment anymore,” Sasha agreed as they stepped into the elevator for the lobby.

“How is he with you working again?”

“He’s really happy about it actually and the kids are so sweet, it’s a lot of fun considering I’ve got zero clout teaching. He came in after my last class last week and because the film posters are all over the City, the kids thought it was the coolest fucking thing The Winter Soldier had come in for whatever reason. Since then, the kids have been wearing some Captain America stuff to classes,” Sasha giggled. “I guess for a glimpse of Seb again.”

Ollie laughed. “How did Seb take it?”

“As expected, smiling on the outside, freaking out on the inside. He always does with kids.”
“I’m glad it’s all worked out so well, Sash,” Olivia hugged Sasha’s arm as they went out into the cool New York night.

“Well, I couldn’t just stay cooped up in the apartment for the rest of my life.”

“True,” Olivia agreed. “I thought I almost lost you for a while there but look at you, living your life again.”

“That’s really sweet,” Sasha said, knowing Ollie could be the most sarcastic pain in the arse at times but never meant any harm.

“So, how drunk are you willing to get tonight?”

“Obliterated,” Sasha confirmed.

“Perfect, let’s find a bar!”

---

Sebastian sighed as he looked at his watch. It was 1:35am and Sasha and Ollie hadn’t turned up to the bar. They must have been having a good night, he figured, reaching for his phone. He tried to hide his yawn, reading Sasha’s last text:

Sasha: I miss you. It’s not the same being out without you xo

He grinned a little, reassured he was still being missed while she was out with her friends, replying:

Sebastian: I’ve got a glass of champagne here with your name on it xo
Sasha: I’ve had a lot to drink. BTW the girls say thank you for the bottles you sent earlier. You’ve been voted as the most generous boyfriend by everyone except Ollie xxx

He giggled quietly as Chace nudged him, motioning to the phone. "She good?" he asked.

"Always," Sebastian replied, with a fond grin.

"They coming?"

"Dunno."

"Tell them to get their asses here, I'm only town a few days."

Sebastian: Least I could do. Where are you? Chace wants to see you.
Sasha: Somewhere in Soho, it’s getting a bit messy here, might have to catch Chacey another day. We will leave shortly. I’m tired and my feet are hurting and I want to kiss you.
Sebastian: Want me to come and get you, baby? We can just go home if you want me to yourself.
Sasha: No, bub. I’m a big girl. We’ll be another half hour, latest. If you wanna meet at home or if you go to another bar, lemme know xxx
Sebastian: I love you, baby. Be safe, see you soon xxx
Sasha: Love you too xxx

He put his phone back in his pocket and attempted to make small talk. He knew Sasha was a big girl, but it had been a while she was out without him and while he didn’t worry so much about Sasha, he did worry about the other idiots on the streets. It wasn’t much longer before the guys called it a night anyway.

Sebastian: Baby, the guys are done. Want me to get you in my cab?
Sasha: *I'm on my way back too, sexy man. See you soon in our bed xxx*

Sebastian couldn’t resist his little smirk, suddenly very eager to get home.

---

Sebastian beat Sasha home and contemplated opening a bottle of wine but noted she seemed a bit tipsy in her texts so decided against it, heading to the bedroom. Turning on his bedside lamp and ridding himself of his cigarette-smoke laden clothes, he crawled into bed, exhausted himself. He had a strange case of guilt, he’d been an arsehole the previous day and felt weird as hell for it. He was so thrilled that Sasha had taken the job with the small dance studio, it was a couple of evenings a week, teaching little ones ballet and modern dance. She had agreed to take up other classes as required (which suited her especially with Sebastian being away a lot in coming weeks). Sasha’s headspace was remarkably better and she was thrilled to take the job.

But in his own selfishness, he knew it meant she couldn’t commit to coming on the Civil War press tour (Charles was going with him in Sasha’s place and he knew they’d have a great time). He would be travelling a lot between Los Angeles and Europe in the short-term. She did promise to visit him as often as possible.

Half an hour later and still wide-awake with enough alcohol creeping through his veins, he heard the front door open. Tiptoeing around the apartment with a curse as she bumped into the bench as he couldn’t resist his quiet laughter, fridge opening and closing, before continuing to their bedroom.

She smiled, leaning against the doorframe, seeing Sebastian in all his glory, the light from his bedside table low in the dark room. He was so sexy, but waiting in bed for her? Well, gee, if she didn’t want to strip for him on sight. She’d never given him a lap dance that she could recall but was definitely too drunk to consider it tonight (and dammit, if she was going to do it, she was going to do it right). She really liked the blonde hair on him which completely surprised her.

“Hey, blondie,” she said quietly, walking to Sebastian’s side of the bed. “Mi-am fost dor de tine,” she leaned down to kiss him as he reached up and hungrily kissed her in reply, pulling her body down on his. He had decided there was nothing sexier than his girl speaking in his native tongue. He never got sick of it and always encouraged it when she tried.

“You taste like champagne and bourbon. Guess you had a good night, huh?” he smiled sweetly, still holding her face and thumbing across her cheekbones as she nodded. “I missed you too.”

“Did you have a good night?” she brushed his soft hair back as he watched her intently.

“It was fine,” he shrugged as she moved her hands to trace across his bare muscular shoulders. “I love you so much,” he whispered. “Get in here with me.”

She kicked her heels off and snuck under the blankets with him. “This dress is really uncomfy.”

“We’ll get rid of it shortly. I’ve got plans for you yet, kid. I need your skin on mine,” he mumbled. “I need to talk to you.”

“Are you okay?” she shuffled back a bit. Had she read his pissy mood completely wrong and things were worse than she thought?

“Yeah,” he sighed. “I just want to say sorry for being a complete fucking dick yesterday. It’s just starting to dawn on me that we won’t be able to spend every minute of every day together in the next little while and it’s really bugging me. I leave in two days.”
“Oh,” she replied. “It’s not like we haven’t gone long times not seeing each other before,” she reminded him, playing with his hair tenderly.

“Yeah, that’s was before we were in a relationship,” he reminded her right back.

She hummed and pushed his blonde hair from his handsome features before tracing his dark brows. “Babe, I will miss you so much. But this is what you do - I’ll never be sad watching you explore your passion,” she lightly kissed his chest, his eyes closing under her touch. “I will see you in LA for the premiere but I’m not going to wish time away when I am right next to you.”

"Are you gonna come?" he asked softly, pulling her to him tightly. He needed a yes.

"Yeah, I'll be there," she promised. What was there to think about? The man she loved was in the biggest film of his life. She'd never forgive herself for missing it.

“Thank you.”

"I don't know why I was hesitating," she shrugged, a little at a loss.

"I want you with me all the time, I'm a selfish asshole.”

“Yeah, but you’re my selfish asshole and I love you,” she moved her lips to his. “Now you pissy little shit, help me take this dress off. I’m just drunk enough to make the next little while really, really worth your while,” she whispered hotly as he laughed.

“I cannot argue with that,” he told her, sitting the both up. “Turn around so I can unzip you,” he instructed. “Step,” he told her as the dress fell to the floor and he traced her spine. “Turn around, let me see what you’re wearing.”

With her hands on her hips, she gave an exasperated eye roll as he covered his mouth, staggered. “You went out with this under that dress?” his body surged, the black and light mauve longline bra and matching briefs killing him softly. “Without me?”

“Well, I thought we might meet up and make our own fun,” she reached down to kiss him, ensuring he got a nice long look at the goods before crawling over him and catching her lips to his, his hands lightly drafting up and down her sides before he parked her roughly on his crotch.

"What did you have in mind?" he wondered, a light smack greeting her ass.

She chewed his lip, reaching off the side of the bed to grab her clutch. "I was a bit later because Ollie wanted to go to a sex shop."

Sebastian's eyes flicked open. "What?"

"Yeah, dunno. She got all these goodies and I thought, why should she have all the fun?"

His tongue swept over his lips. "And you indulged too?"

"May've," she replied, taking his wrist from her waist and lifting it over his head. Before he knew it, he was fastened to the bedhead.

"How the fuck did you manage that?" he asked as she grasped his other hand gently in case he resisted (he didn't) and clipped the other hand above him.

"Guess you were just distracted enough," she shrugged, tossing her bag away and her lips commenced at his shoulders, working their way down, her warm hands massaging his thighs.
Sebastian gave a light giggle.

"Guess so."

"You're okay with this?" she looked up, her tongue still eagerly sweeping across his abdomen.

His tummy clenched, arms taut at the bedhead as he tested them himself, the waves of shock pleasure in itself. He wasn't going anywhere. "I'm more than okay," he promised, watching her mouth descend lower. "You little minx - " his voice trailed off with a grunt, head lolling back as he tried to control his breathing. "How long have you had this planned?"

"Honestly thought I'd chicken out," she admitted thoughtfully.

"Anything else in your bag o' tricks that I should know about?" he hissed as her hands drifted up to his hips as she shook her head.

"Nothing else, for now."

"Fuck," Sebastian breathed. This is not how he saw the end of their night going.

"Just thought we could try something a little different," she smiled sweetly - it was almost a crime. A hand wrapping around his already straining dick, she put it to good use along with her wet tongue as Sebastian cursed, hips rising from the bed, pulsating towards her accommodating mouth.

"You have no idea what you do to me," he managed as she gave a soft giggle, the vibration sending shockwaves through him. "Jesus fucking - " he inhaled deeply, trying to compose himself. "You pull stunts like that and I will be done in no time."

She withdrew her lips, but not her hands, hoping to allow him to recuperate. "Okay, I'm sorry, Sebastian," she chewed her tongue as she watched him attempt some control over himself and just when he thought he had, she pushed her mouth over him again. She had to push against his legs that quivered under her touch. She knew fully well the end was close if this was how he was reacting.

"Baby, I'm gonna come if you do that," he whined, her lips sliding from his cock again as his head fell back, needing the relief.

"You don't want to?" she blinked.

"Please. I want to drag this out as long as possible," he panted. She knew if his hands were free, he'd be begging her to continue, tangling his hands in her hair, lightly tugging it - "Fuckkk," he muttered as she took him again. "No, no," he muttered, his lack of control truly a sight to be seen. "Baby, baby, baby," he inhaled deeply. She knew he was painfully close and never in her right mind thought she could ever be so cruel to push him to the edge and then let him falter. The power was genuinely thrilling her but she knew she couldn't continue this all night. It always baffled her the pain that could come from such pleasure.

"Are you okay?" she asked again. He nodded, wincing as his torso shuddered.

"Good, baby. But I can't hold on, I'm sorry."

"What are you apologising for? You don't think I'm going to let you come?" she grinned, kissing his hip. She could feel his muscles twitch beneath her mouth.

"I hope you are," he quietly begged.
"Would you like to?" she pushed herself up to lay a single kiss against his lips and he breathed a barely audible 'da, te rog'.

"Okay, bubba, relax. Lemme take care of you," she reassured him, nuzzling a trail between abs, his hips contorting from that alone. Putting her mouth back to work, swirling around his throbbing head, he was coming hot and eager, hips thrusting as he grunted loudly and collapsed back on the bed, cursing wildly in Romanian. Clutching his hips, Sasha kissed her way back up his body, enjoying the little aftershocks that careened through his body under her touch. She licked her lips before he desperately kissed her. She had to admit, she missed his arms around her as she reached for the key she'd placed on his bedside table and unfastened the lock. He readily stretched them before tucking his arms around her, wringing his hands and wrists to relax and recirculate the blood flow. He moved his thumb to the corner of her mouth and rid it of leftover excitement, before gently pushing it in her mouth.

"Well, that was unexpected," Sebastian said once he found his voice again. Sasha covered her face and hid against his chest, highly embarrassed. "We'll have to bring that Sasha out to play again as soon as possible," he continued, patting her butt. "Are you okay? Why are you shying away from me?"

"I dunno," she didn't look up as he held her face and forced her eyes to meet his. "That was amazing, and you have nothing to be bashful about. Believe me."

"I just thought I'd give it a go - " she tried explaining.

"You were fantastic, you always are. I like your darker side, we can have a lot of fun, baby," he gave a little shrug, his fingers sliding against the clasps on her bra and happily ridding her of the garment. "Now..." he tossed it away. "Let me show you what you've been missing, îngeraș."

---

"I'm so hungover," Sasha whined as Sebastian’s alarm went off for his 6am personal training, she could have thrown his phone to stop the noise. “Can’t you tell Don to fuck himself and stay here and take care of me?” she pouted. “I’m in dire need of TLC.”

Sebastian laughed tiredly, rolling out of bed. He’d slept maybe an hour after the festivities with his beautiful girlfriend had ceased but didn’t exactly want to leave the bed with the naked woman either, his body sore from a mild hangover and overexertion the night before. “I have to go,” he kissed her décolletage slowly, savouring the moment before reluctantly heading to the bathroom to run himself a shower. He dragged his sorry ass out a few minutes later and found clean gym clothes in the drawer, pulling on his t-shirt and shorts, sock and shoes. “I’ll bring you back coffee.”

"Thank you," she moaned, every fibre of her being raging.

"No problem," he promised, kissing her again. “Go back to sleep, prietenă.”

"Yes, prieten. I am definitely going back to sleep," she mumbled.

He stopped in his tracks and smirked. “You figured out what I was saying.”

“Yes, iubi. Stop forgetting you’ve spoken Romanian to me for years, you didn’t invent it.”

“Now you’re just showing off with that smart mouth,” he walked back and kissed her, longingly. “You’re incredible.”

She yawned. “And you’re going to be late.”
“Okay, don’t move until I get back. I have plans for you.”

“Couldn’t move if I wanted to,” she bemoaned. “This is what death feels like.”

He laughed. “Bye, babe. Go back to sleep.”

Chapter End Notes

THIS CHAPTER DIDN’T END UP HOW I EXPECTED. AT ALL. But I hope you all enjoy anyway!

---

Today, this scribble that I started for shits and giggles hits over 100k words. That is a lot of bullshitting on my behalf. I didn't think this would get past 1 chapter let alone have over 7k hits, 350+ kudos (on an RPF which most puritans find quite on the nose) or have made some lovely friends. I have heard from some of the sweetest people in the last few months because you simply took the time to read what I was dishing out.

You guys have made this so much more fun than I ever thought it could be and I want to thank you for taking the time out of your busy lives for just checking this out. My mind is blown. You’re all very dear xoxo

---

Interested Bystander writes on Tumblr.
Apart

Chapter Summary

If she’d learnt one thing in all the years she’d know him, it was that he always managed to make her feel new and exciting ways of hating how much she cared about him.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Heart come with me,” Sebastian whispered as they stood in each other's arms at the front door. His towncar had been waiting downstairs for the better part of 15 minutes, waiting to get him to the airport and on the plane to LA. He was filming I'm Not Here (the reason for the blonde hair) before the Civil War promotional tour commenced and frankly, he was kind of acting like a baby. Sasha had never seen him act out like this before. Saying that, she wasn’t entirely sure how she was keeping herself together either. She’d promised herself no tears in front of him though. She wasn’t going to sook for Sebastian, it would not make the situation easier for either of them.

She played with his mop of blonde hair running her nails over his scalp as he pushed into her touch. “You know I want to, bub. But I will join you in LA in a few weeks.”

He grunted. “I knew this was coming, but fuck, it feels a lot worse than it should.”

“Babe,” she kissed him gently. “We will survive, I promise. You’ll be so busy, you’ll barely have a second to remember me.”

“I’ll be thinking about you the whole time,” he reckoned.

“Of course you will,” she shrugged modestly as he scoffed a small laugh.

“Baby, I hate sleeping without you,” he maintained protesting childishly and forced himself to pull back abruptly, straightening himself up. “Where has this clinginess come from?” he asked himself as Sasha bit back a grin.

“You probably always felt like this, you're just able to verbalise to me it now,” she joked as he formed an easy grin but didn’t deny it. She pulled him close by the collar of his jacket. “Kiss me, then you’d better go.”

He put his backpack down and pulled her into his arms tightly. “I love you so fucking much,” he kissed her forehead gently and she finally pushed him away.

“Go break some hearts on the other side of the country... but not too many.”

He made a face. “Bye, baby.”

“Bye, Sebastian. Safe flight,” she watched him pick his stuff up and toss it over his broad shoulder. Heading to the elevator, he gave a simple wave with a forced half smile as he stepped in and left. It was the first real time they’d spent apart since before going to Germany the year before. They knew they had been massively spoiled to spend all the time they had to this point. But now it was time to return to normal… whatever normal was, or would be.
Wandering through Bergdorf’s a few days later, Sasha paused, spotting a jacket she thought Sebastian might like. He had a huge affliction for leather and the black jacket would be gorgeous on him. She sighed, thinking about Sebastian in leather did not provide conducive behaviour to the task at hand. She happily imagined pushing it off his shoulders -

“See? This is why we didn’t need to go through the men’s section,” Ollie rolled her eyes. “It’s just making you sad.”

“I’m not sad,” Sasha protested weakly, fingering the slick material and imaging it straining over Sebastian’s muscular shoulders and arms. “You know he’d love this though.”

“He would,” Ollie settled, checking the price tag and blew a raspberry. “Jesus Christ, this is more than I make in a year,” she showed Sasha as her eyes widened and happily moved away from the men’s department, heading for women’s designer. “Any ideas what kind of dress you want for the premiere?”

“Nup,” Sasha replied, a little bored. “Whatever I see, I guess. This kind of thing always makes me extremely nervous.”

“You’ll have a great time. And I’m sure he’ll be in some unbelievable suit and you’ll fuck in some random LA Starbucks because you just can’t wait to get back to the hotel.”

Sasha raised an eyebrow, an entertained smirk on her lips. “I’m intrigued. Just what kind of couple do you think we are?”

“You’ve fucked in clubs before. I’m not stupid… none of us are. Think it’s not half obvious when you guys disappear for an hour randomly and you come back like the cat that got the cream?”

Sasha blushed and crossed her arms over her chest. “Ollie – ”

Ollie grinned wickedly. “By the way, I’m very proud of you.”

“You make it sound so seedy.”

“It is seedy. You know how disgusting bathrooms in clubs are. Coke on the toilet seats, previous patrons se – ”

“Fuck, Olivia, can it,” Sasha begged, voice dropping in warning. “We’re at Bergdorf's. Have some decorum.”

“You’re right, this is definitely a conversation for Macy’s,” Ollie giggled, holding an Alexander McQueen dress up to her before making a face and returning it to the rack.

“You imply it happens every time we go out. We just get a little drunk and – ”

“Horny.”

“I was going to say ‘adventurous’ but that would have been too simple for you, wouldn’t it?”

“Yes. One day you guys will be a Page Six blind item and I can say, ‘that was my friends who were fucking like bunnies in that bathroom this time’,” she looked off in far off wonderment with a dreamy grin.

“Disturbing,” Sasha patted Ollie’s should supportively, highly creeped out. "Positively disturbing."
“Has he ever been a blind item?” Ollie frowned in recollection.

Sasha forced a laugh dismally, eyes scanning the designer labels for a dress that jumped out at her. It wasn't a great start. “Umm, that was true? I dunno, I doubt he'd admit it anyway. I think I know too much about him at this point to call BS on most stuff if it made a headline,” Sasha shrugged. "He’s been outed a lot though with Chace, so there’s always that," she joked.

“They are very good friends,” Ollie agreed.

“Very, very good friends,” Sasha agreed in jest. "Sebastian just isn’t that kind of level celebrity, I don’t think. Spotted everywhere but just too nice and polite to be caught doing anything stupid.”

"Except fucking you in bathrooms in bars and clubs."

"Like I said..."

“Something tells me things are changing for him though, Sash. After this film comes out, things will most definitely not be the same. His mug is already all over the city.”

Sasha hummed, blanching at its price tag. “Look, I know things are changing for him, he’s had audition after audition, the rest of his year is just booking up. He’s off to Ireland in a few months, then Atlanta and something else at the end of the year that isn’t confirmed yet but his people are in talks with other studio people.”

"His people," Ollie chuckled with an eye roll. "He has people now?"

"He's always had people, they just call a fuckload more these days. He says a lot of movie jargon that doesn’t really make sense to me.”

“A bit like when we talk about dance?”

Sasha snapped her fingers and pointed at Ollie. “Exactly like that. His eyes glaze over and he smiles all cute and nods when he thinks I’m looking for a reaction. He’s so sweet sometimes, it’s impossible to get angry at him when I know he hasn't been listening,” Sasha’s heart dropped, her response surprising her. She adored when he was cute, but Ollie didn’t need to know that.

“Oh, stop it. I get it,” Ollie muttered, hoping to lift Sasha’s spirits by scolding her. “You are in love with him. Cool. I don’t need to lose my breakfast though.”

Sasha adjusting her glasses under the bright department store lights. “Sorry, Ol. I know you are allergic to love and people’s feelings.”

“I really am, I prefer you keep that bullshit to yourself.”

Sasha finally gave a half smile. “Have I mentioned today that I don’t enjoy clothes shopping? It’s tedious and it’s why I shop online," she blatantly changed the subject. If deferring a topic could be an art form, Sasha had mastered it.

“You really miss him, huh?” Ollie figured.

“I’m okay. It’s been a few days, got a hell of a lot more to go,” Sasha shrugged, as usual completely non-committal when it came to admitting how down she was. She distracted herself, pulling out a Valentino midi, her spirits lifting a little when she inspected it a little closer. “Fuck, I like this.”

Ollie laughed, putting it up against Sasha’s front. “I know you – there is no way you would ever go
with the first dress you’d find. What colour is Seb’s suit?”

“Black, double breasted, I think he said. Oh, I love this, Ollie,” Sasha moved towards the change rooms decisively.

“Well, I guess we’re trying it on,” Ollie chased after her. Sasha was already in a change room when Ollie caught up, taking a seat to wait as a gorgeous shop assistant joined them wearing a blank smile (she worked on commission, Ollie figured. When out of work and not on stage, she did the retail shop girl thing on commission too). “Show me when you’re dressed.”

“Hi, sweetheart,” the woman at least 10 years younger than them said to Sasha through the closed door, with a light knock. “I’m AJ. Are you okay with the size?”

“I think so, just attempting to zip up,” Sasha replied.

“Do you need a hand?”

“Yes, please,” Sasha huffed as young AJ ducked into the change room.

“Oh, wow,” young AJ giggled quietly. “This dress was made for you,” she said, popping back out as Ollie sat up, interested.

“Get out here, lemme see!” Ollie begged.

The door burst open with Sasha wearing a maniacal grin (it did not match the dress, but Ollie could sense Sasha’s excitement). Extremely unlike her to have a reaction to anything that way, Ollie snickered at Sasha’s reaction. “What do ya think?”

“You look amazing,” young AJ nodded appreciatively, clasping her hands together. “You definitely need a certain type of frame to pull this off – are you a dancer?”

Young AJ knew her clientele, Ollie noted. “What gave it away?”

“Amazing long legs,” young AJ admitted. “Your body is incredible. I used to dance myself. Now I’m mostly into fashion blogging.”

*Fashion blogging*, the next frontier in careers. Of course she was. Sasha suddenly remembered why her Instagram profile was dull at best.

Ollie humoured young AJ. “How many followers do you have on social media?”

“Insta, a hundred thousand or so,” young AJ shrugged, albeit modestly.

Ollie hid her grin, turning her attention back to Sasha who was giving herself another once over, smoothing the cotton under her hands. “It’s amazing,” Ollie admitted with a complimentary nod. Sasha was made for the dress. Mock neckline, lace flutter sleeves, natural waist, pleated, semi-sheer skirt in forest-print and rust. “You need a tan, but that is hot. God, you’re not even wearing make up, are you?”

“Well, no. It makes me break out. I’m attempting to stay clear-faced in the hopes I don’t get a zit or ten for the premiere and mostly, I am going to have a flawless completion when I see my boyfriend,” Sasha replied, checking her ass out in the mirror and standing on her tiptoes, imagining the heels she’d wear for Sebastian. “I don’t think he cares about that kind of stuff, Sash.”

“Probably not, but I’ll know and I know his fans will pick me apart if they see a pic of me online and
I have one hair out of place,” Sasha visibly shuddered. On the random occasion Sebastian had posted a picture of the two of them, even well before they had started dating, the question about her were relentless: Who is she? What does she do? Are they together? They're just friends, she's friends with the whole group, she is in Chace's pix sometimes too. Sebastian could do better though. Now they're dating, he could definitely do better, needs someone on his level of hotness. Needs someone with the same profile. Needs anyone but her. He's too good for her.

“You can be such a girl,” Ollie taunted, stealing Sasha's attention again as Sasha squeezed her boobs together to try and get some cleavage in the mirror. “It’s sexy, you should get it.”

“Premiere?” young AJ asked finally. “And yes, you should definitely get the dress!”

“Her boyfriend has a premiere in LA next week,” Ollie supplied. Sasha glared, she didn’t tend to randomly blurt out much about Sebastian to random people at the best of times. “What?” Ollie asked innocently.

“Can I ask…” young AJ said quietly, a little excited at the prospect Sasha could be wearing the dress on a red carpet of some sort with some hot actor on her arm.

“Oh, her boyfriend is a Marvel superhero,” Ollie continued as Sasha slowly cocked her head at Ollie (reminiscent of Robert Patrick as the T-1000 in Terminator 2: Judgement Day), silently pleading her not to continue or she’d cut her (also reminiscent of Robert Patrick as the T-1000 in Terminator 2: Judgement Day). Ollie enjoyed the challenge – when Sasha wanted her to shut up, she’d make her.

“I’m not really into superhero films,” young AJ said apologetically. “Would I have seen him in anything else?”

“Were you old enough for the first few seasons of Gossip Girl?” Ollie couldn’t resist.

“Olivia!” Sasha hissed. “Shut the fuck up.”

“I loved Gossip Girl, I really loved Blair. Leighton is so beautiful, she comes in sometimes,” young AJ tried to hide her excitement as Sasha tried to hide her eye roll. She was looking for the dress for Sebastian's premiere, not his ex who’d long moved on, married and had a child since. Sasha felt a twinge of guilt, it wasn't like the shop girl had said anything untoward though. “Sebastian Stan?” she asked, a little enthusiastic again.

“Ding, ding, ding,” Ollie winked.

“I’m so jealous – he is gorgeous! Lucky you,” young AJ told Sasha a little envously.

“I’m mortified,” Sasha dropped her head into her hands as young AJ stood her back up to stand her up straight. Slouching wasn’t the best look for the dress and young AJ didn’t want to have to steam it if it went back on the rack.

“Did you want me to check with Valentino to make sure the dress isn’t already on loan?” young AJ offered. “At least that way we can ensure no one else is wearing is since it’s not a one-off couture piece.”

“This is what you get for wearing off the rack,” Ollie mocked Sasha. “Why didn’t you just use Sebastian’s stylist like he suggested?”

Sasha only frowned in reply. “Because I don't need a stylist.”

Let’s do that, for sure. This is for the Captain America: Civil War premiere in LA next week if you have to mention the film.”

“On it,” young AJ ducked away.

“It’s Valentino, I can’t afford this,” Sasha told Ollie quietly, the disappointment evident in her voice and crossing her face.

“Just buy the fucking dress, credit card be damned.”

“You are the worst influence in my life, you know that, right?” Sasha’s shoulders slumped again and Ollie nodded with a grin.

“Imagine the lack of fun you’d have without me though?”

It was hard to argue with as Sasha headed back towards the change room, closing the door behind her. Ollie pulled out her phone a little desperately and put it to her ear. “Oh, I didn’t expect you to answer!” Ollie exclaimed as Sasha carefully lowered the flimsy zip. “At Bergdorf’s, watching your girlfriend find a dress for your premiere,” Ollie added as Sasha’s face reappeared from behind the door.

“That Seb?” Sasha asked.

“Nooo,” Ollie replied sarcastically as Sasha sighed. She’d been trying to get him on the phone most of the morning before the girls left to shop with no luck.

“At least one of us can get him on the phone…” Sasha muttered.

“You not taking your girl’s call?” Ollie demanded of Sebastian before laughing. “He said he’s called you a half dozen times in the last hour while he was at lunch,” Ollie defended Sebastian as Sasha checked her phone. Sure enough, there were missed calls and her phone on predictably on silent. She did it all the time and got flustered at Sebastian when it was really her inability to use her phone properly (she rarely had the phone on overnight and usually forgot to turn the sound on in the morning most days. She was absolutely notorious for her gross misuse of the stupid gadget). She closed herself back in the change room with a huff.

“That was about the best puss I’ve ever seen, by the way,” Ollie continued to Sebastian. Sasha made a face as she heard Ollie hum and make noises in response to things Sebastian was obviously saying to her as she got dressed, putting the dress back on the hanger. “Your boyfriend wants to talk to you. He’s due back on set so make it snappy.”

“I’m naked.”

“She said she’s naked,” Ollie cackled. “He said he’s spoken to you naked before. I’ll put her on. Sash, take the fucking phone,” Ollie opened the door a smidge and thrust the phone towards her. Sasha chewed her lip, taking the phone. “Hey.”

“Just hey, huh?” Sebastian asked quietly.

“Sorry,” Sasha said meekly. “Hi, bub.”

“I miss you.”

She hummed, towing the carpet under her bare feet. “Yeah, me too.”
He laughed quietly, knowing that she was holding back because Ollie was in close proximity. “Baby, whatever you want, you get it, okay? I want you to feel confident, comfortable and beautiful. I don’t care how much it costs. Don’t hesitate, just take my credit card and get whatever you want.”

“I don’t have your credit card.”

“Yes, you do,” Ollie supplied from the other side of the door. “Sebastian gave his Black Card to me before he left for situations just like this.”

“I just can’t with you two conspiring against me,” Sasha muttered exasperated, plonking herself on the change room bench. “Why would you give Ollie your card? Jesus, Seb.”

He giggled. “Sometimes I trust her to do the right thing. Baby, if you want it, get it,” Sebastian urged again. “I have to get back to set, but I hope you find something fantastic. Remember you could wear anything and still be the sexiest woman in the room. I love you, okay?”

Sasha heard Sebastian get reprimanded by Sara on the other end of the line and smiled a little. “You’d better go.”

“Bye, baby. I’ll call you tonight at a reasonable hour, I promise. Love you.”

“Mi-e dor de tine. Te iubesc din toată înima.”

He groaned, almost pained. He was so thrilled how her Romanian was coming along. He didn’t need an aphrodisiac when she said things like that to him. “That was perfect, îngeraș. Te sun dîseră.”

“Okay, talk then.”

“Bye.”

“Bye, bub,” she hung up and finished dressing before exiting the change room, Ollie waiting hopefully with young AJ.

“That had better have been Romanian for ‘I’m taking the dress’, ” Ollie said, fingers crossed.

“It’s okay. I’ll keep looking,” Sasha told her, handing Ollie phone back and put her bag over her shoulder. "Thanks for your help, AJ."

Ollie nodded slowly, watching Sasha head out, but not before instructing young AJ to hold the dress and she would pay for it over the phone later that day. “And find matching shoes in an 8,” she hissed, chasing after Sasha as her phone pinged with a text. “Thank you, you’re a gem!”

Sebastian: Sebastian just told me to text you, “Whatever Sasha wants, she gets. If she loves it, make sure she doesn’t leave the store without it”. If it all falls apart, get the dress details and I’ll organise it and have it waiting in LA for Sasha when she gets here next week. Thanks, Ollie, you’re the best! Cheers, Sara!

---

“Sufletel,” Sebastian smiled wide as Sasha’s weary yet smiling face appeared on his iPad. She looked adorable, hair in 19 different directions, eyes puffy and snuggled into the duvet – fuck, he wanted to be next to her in their bed. He, on the other hand, was well and truly on LA time. Blonde hair dark and dripping from the shower, laying flat on his tummy on his hotel bed, smothered in a fluffy olive-coloured robe, he needed some comfort after a long day. “Hi.”
“Hi, bub. How was your day?” she asked, sitting further up in bed, stifling a yawn. He knew he’d woken her. Filming had run way overtime and again he’d called much later than he’d intended to.

“Yeah, good. Super busy,” he nodded, adjusting to try and get comfortable, slightly tangled and struggling in the robe as Sasha giggled quietly. “One sec,” he sat up and tossed the robe away from him, leaving him in his Calvins, Sasha suddenly much more interested and resisting the one line that lingered on her tongue: ‘You want to know what comes between me and my Calvins? Nothing.’

“I didn’t realise it was that kind of FaceTime,” she joked instead, not entirely sure if the ad was as notorious for him as a youngster in Europe as it was for her in Australia. Her older sisters were obsessed with Brooke Shields because of it and begged their parents for a pair. Needless to say, Mel and Delphi were rebuffed.

“It can be any kind FaceTime you want,” Sebastian laughed bashfully, sitting back against the bedhead. “How was your day? Did you get the dress?” he asked, although Sara had already confirmed the charges had gone through on his credit card, thanks to Ollie.

“Nah, I gave it a miss. I will try and find something in LA next week.”

“Baby, I thought you loved it?” Sebastian asked softly.

“Yeah, I dunno. That money can go to other things.”

“Such as?”

Sasha blinked. “Umm… a charity that can provide clean water for third world communities? Immunisation programs, education?”

Surprisingly swamped in guilt, he made a conscious effort to look into Romanian charities he could get involved with once he’d found a minute to do some research. “You’re right, the money can be much better spent. I will ask Ollie to return the dress and shoes tomorrow.”

“I knew you’d buy it,” she rolled her eyes, sinking back against the pillows. "You can't help yourself, can you?"

“I thought you wanted it. Ollie said you were upset to put it back.”

“Sebastian, it’s a really expensive dress,” she said quietly.

“You’ve never hesitated to spend on things you like before.”

“Well, I don’t have five grand in church change these days. And I never would have been spending that kind of coin in the first place.”

“I have that kind of coin,” he gently reminded her.

“Are we about to talk about how much more cash you make than me?”

“No, definitely not. It's not about that,” he said quickly. It’s not how he wanted the conversation to go. She’d finally started making some steady cash again, he didn’t want to scare her over something so trivial or material as a dress, he’d never want to fight over money. “But it’s fine, you don’t want it, you don’t have to have it. You’ve made your point. Quick question though? When are you going to accept what mine is yours?” he asked a little cynically, pushing his hands through his damp hair. “And what’s yours is mine?” he added the last part on a whim, a little apprehensive at what her reaction might actually be.
“I wouldn’t feel comfortable of anyone buying that dress for me,” she sniped back, nervously twisting the bracelet he’d gotten her the previous Christmas before crossing her arms and legs in an attempt to get comfortable in her agitation. “Don’t take it personally.”

Sebastian sighed, taking it very personally. “We’ll never get to that place where you’ll be one hundred per cent comfortable with me, will you?” he asked somberly.

“I am comfortable with you,” she replied drily.

“Sash, look at you,” he sighed. “You are coiled into a ball right now, you couldn’t look more defensive if you tried.”

“You’re just pissing me off at 3am when I have kids classes starting at 7.”

“Okay, fine. I’ll leave you to it, I shouldn’t have called.”

“Probably not,” she agreed. “I’ll call you tomorrow if you’ve got time to pick up.”

“Fuck me,” Sebastian muttered, starting to seethe a little. “All right, this is how it is, Sasha. I have been there for you a lot in the last year and for you to act out the way you are right now – baby, it’s embarrassing for you. I’m exhausted and I just wanted to see you, maybe get off if we were really lucky, but I’m beginning to think you didn’t even want to answer this fucking call.”

“It’s 3am, why would I want to answer a FaceTime looking like this and having barely slept? I just fell asleep because I waited up for you so late. You didn’t even text to tell me you were leaving set. Were you even at set at midnight?”

He rubbed his face. He knew lying wouldn’t get him anywhere. “No, I was at dinner.”

“Oh, how fucking lucky for you. Am I supposed to be a mind reader? Or just be here on your beck and call?”

“I worked all day, I don’t need this. The dinner was for my next job, it was the only time I could get time in the production notes to meet up with the producers and my manager.”

“Amazing,” Sasha said, mockery seeping through heavily. “I hope you had a fantastic night.”

“And if you were here, I would have expected you at my side, Sasha.”

“But I was here, Seb. Waiting for you.”

He shook his head. “Fuck it. I’m going to bed, I have to be at the gym at 5am.”

“Goodnight, Sebastian,” she muttered, ending the call. “For fuck’s sake,” she tossed her phone on the bedside table, not entirely sure how the call went so quickly. If there was a world record of how quickly a couple could push the other’s buttons into a fight, they must have had some kind of a record. One neither was entirely proud of. But they knew each other so damned well. When they wanted to stagger the other, it was just so fucking easy. And pointed. And low. And… always something they’d regret instantly. That was the problem when you were in love with someone who had known you so intimately for such a long time. You knew their weak spots and how to antagonise them quickly.

Pulling the covers back over her forcefully and settling into the middle of the bed without Sebastian taking up his usual ¾, Sasha wasn’t surprised as the phone started ringing again. She sighed, picking it up. It took a second for the FaceTime to connect again and see his miserably unhappy face. She
knew he was looking back at something similar.

“I’m so fucking sorry,” he started. "Turns out we're not so good away from each other, huh?"

Sasha shook her head sadly. "Nope, I'm just hating you being away. I'm sorry, too," she said as pathetic as him. “I'm so tired, I’m sorry I’m such a cunt tonight.”

He laughed quietly. “You’re not a cunt. Not always anyway,” he couldn’t resist adding. “I’m exhausted too. I should have let you know I was going to be so late.”

“Did you at least sign the contracts?”

He nodded. “Yeah. I’m back to back for the rest of the year now. Got confirmation Infinity War will roll over to the New Year. I have been thinking a bit today… that you come to London with me. You can get a job there if you wanted to? You won’t have to wait around for me and we won’t be flying to different continents all the time to see either other. I’m just throwing shit around, I know it’s completely your choice, but thought it might be cool to live in London for a while. I could show you around my old haunts.”

“Reckon England will let you stay for an extended period again?” she teased.

He nodded with a cheeky smile. “I’m sure I can charm them enough to let me. And how could they say no to you? Don’t all Aussies migrate to the UK at some point anyway?”

“No all, but some,” she humoured him. “It’s a good idea, we can talk about it more closer to the time. It would be nice to be with you while you’re away again.”

“Germany was great. Fucking Paris. I want to go back,” he smiled wistfully in recollection. “I can’t believe it was nearly 8 months ago.”

“Yeah. Gone quickly, huh?” she replied fondly.

“I wish you were on set today. The little guy I’m working with, Jeremy, you’d love him.”

“The little one from Modern Family?” she frowned.

“Yeah,” Sebastian giggled. “He’s got more acting chops at five than I do at 33.”

Sasha laughed, tightening the blankets around her - it was chilly in the apartment tonight. “I’m sure you managed to hold your own.”

“You’d be surprised. He’s adorable though.”

“Sebastian Stan,” Sasha stated for his attention as he gave it to her, chewing his lip, good natured. “Are you surviving around a child?!?”

He laughed bashfully. “He’s a cool little dude,” Sebastian shrugged. “Don’t get any ideas.”

“Unless you can get me pregnant over FaceTime, I’m pretty sure we don’t have a problem.”

“You wanna do this?” he asked hopefully. Sasha pushed the blankets back, revealing herself in a very, very little sheer satiny dark blue chemise (the girl loved her lingerie and he was just happy to be the one that generally got to rid her of it) - not usually her style he knew, but he appreciated the effort after 3am in New York. Sebastian let out a little groan, adjusting his posture on the bed. “I’ll take that as a yes.”
“I was laying here, waiting just for you, Sebastian,” she reminded him – he now understood a little further why she got as frustrated with him as she did.

“We promised each other hell, didn’t we?” he muttered, rubbing himself through his Calvins. “And by hell, I meant only getting off with the other.”

“What were we thinking?” she face palmed as he chuckled.

“No fuckin’ idea,” Sebastian agreed cluelessly. "Gee, that is a nice slip, baby."

“I’m glad you’re enjoying it,” she gave a modest smile. “Have you gotten off without me?”

“I’ve been very tempted. I wake up and just curse because you’re not cuddled up next to me, all soft and warm,” he admitted, chewing his bottom lip as she pulled her hair into some working order. He loved when she wore her hair down. It was so rare. He always liked to think her hair out was especially for him. Then she took off her slip to reveal everything, her body reacting to the chill as goose pimples covered her flesh and nipples hardened as he eagerly rid himself of boxer briefs in utmost anticipation. He groaned, inhaling sharply. “I need this, you have no idea.”

“Wish I was there so help you the way I really want to,” she admitted, pushing her hair to the side as adjusting the camera angle, her fingertips tracing her nipples, gently pulling and rolling them as she watched him take his length into his palm, lightly dragging his growing cock in to action.

“And what way might that be?” he asked, thumbing the wetness at his tip before fisting a grasp on himself anxiously – after today, he didn’t realise how desperate he was for a release. He hoped she felt the same.

“Well, I’d want to go down on you for a while, because I love hearing you lose control with my mouth on you.”

“Fuck, yes,” Sebastian hummed in agreement, adjusting his posture on the bed for some relief as the bed squeaked at his movements. “I love when you’ve got your mouth around me, when you gently run your teeth over me. Touch yourself, baby, lemme see you. Please?”

“Tell me what you want, Sebastian,” Sasha said as her hand travelled to her thighs, adjusting her posture and easing her long, shapely legs open for his eyes only.

“I want to hear how wet you are. Play with yourself baby, imagine it’s my hands. My fingers in you, on you. My mouth licking that spot behind your earlobe that makes you a mess for me,” he continued working himself over as Sasha met his tender demands, fingers playing with herself, enjoying the pleasure she gave herself but knowing it sadly wasn’t the same without him, positioning the phone so it was more about what she was doing and not her. She always appreciated his voice, that distinct hiss of New York mixed with this desire - a beautiful disaster.

“How are you feelin’ over there, bubba?” she asked softly, attempting in vain to contain her whines as he clenched his cock in his hands as a steady, even pace, his dark eyes contently focused on the phone before him.

“Incredible. But it’s not the same without you,” his hips rising a little to meet his hand. “It never will be.”

Watching him take his lip in his mouth, his head falling back against the hotel bedhead, Sasha sighed. Nobody – nobody else on the planet got to see this man the way she did right now. Face contorting in pleasure, shoulders, broad chest and pecs rolling and strong like he’d just gotten back from the gym. Abs rippling under the pressure cursing through his groin, legs solid muscle. It was a
sight to behold. A sight only for her.

“I almost feel like I’m cheating on you with that blonde hair,” she giggled quickly, a jolt of pleasure hitting her and eliciting a salacious moan as she changed the tempo of her fingers, teasing and testing herself, the noise her glistening fingers made with a light squelch. “Fuck. I don't know if I want you do go dark again.”

Sebastian laughed quietly. “Cheating on me with a blondie, huh?”

“It’s okay, he’s incredibly sexy and makes me want strap him to the bed 24/7.”

“I’ll allow it this time, but only until you get here then you're all mine again.”

That possessiveness, Sasha couldn't get enough of being the one Sebastian wanted above all else. Giggling though a little pained, Sasha continued, “He’s sweet and funny and you’d – ” she cut herself off to whimper, shaking her head, removing her hands from herself. “Seb, baby. I’m close. I’m sorry.”

"Just slow down, put your fingers back were there were, just enjoy what you're feeling. Just like I am,” he cooed, his voice like silk over her shuddering skin.

He could be make a living for saying the right things in the throws of passion. It was incredible. "Okay,” she managed, back contorting a little and pushing her chest a little further forward, moving into her hand again, slow and evenly.

"You look incredible, guriță," he gasped and managed his breathing. "Maybe I'm not as far behind you as I thought,” he stifled a small laugh.

"What are you waiting for?"

“I’m only waiting for you, baby,” he breathed, managing to keep his dark stony eyes open as he watched her hands on herself, the angle adjusting a little, as she started to come undone. “Yes, lemme hear you – ” he was cut off by her hisses and whines as he watched her body unravel, the previously quieter moans raising as he lost himself in her sounds. Her body writhed as her body visibly ebbed, riding out her orgasm. He cursed in pleasure as he noticed the light sheen of sweat covering her lean, taut body. “Fuck, baby,” his hand increased its intensity and speed as he couldn’t hold back any longer and came in spurts across his muscular torso, making a mess across his flawless skin. “Jesus Christ,” Sebastian slumped back against the bedhead, releasing himself and trying to even his breathing.

“You okay?” Sasha asked softly, adjusting the angle of the phone so it was mostly her face again, flushed, rosy-cheeked, gorgeous. She broke into a grin as he smiled, unable to open his eyes just yet. He nodded, well spent. He was stunning.

“One sec, lemme just clean up,” Sebastian said, dropping the phone on the bed, the vision bouncing as he dashed away from the bed. He eventually reappeared and met her gaze and fixed the phone position. He was obsessed with the perfect angle and as usual, reappeared looking like he had a full camera crew before him. “Hello,” he gave a relaxed, dimpled grin. “That was fantastic. I know it’s not the first time we’ve done that, but after a fight, gotta say, so much more intense.”

"Did you come hard?"

Sebastian exhaled. "So hard. It's been a long day. I would have loved you to have talked me through it when I was at lunch. I think about you randomly and I swear, I just get hard. Thinking about you without relief made what we just did so much more worth it.”
"I don't want you hurting yourself, bubba," Sasha said bashfully. “I get so nervous.”


“One of us makes a living being on camera.”

“I don’t make a living fucking over FaceTime though,” he wriggled his dark brows suggestively.

“That’s true. But you’ve fucked pretty convincingly on screen,” she had to joke as he blushed, covering his eyes with his free hand.

“There was also a whole production team on a sound stage. They’re paid to make me look convincing,” he laughed. “Nothing will ever be more intimate than what you and I can do together, baby.”

“Makes being apart slightly more tolerable,” she admitted, shrugging the duvet back over her cooling skin.

“Just a little,” he agreed. “It’s late, baby. You have to be up in a few hours.”

“Yup,” she nodded. “I can talk all night, but you need your beauty sleep.”

“I will be filming until late tomorrow.”

“Okay, call me when you can.”

He nodded. “I will. Love you, baby, sleep well, huh?”

“Love you too, bubba. Speak tomorrow,” she waved with a small smile as he did the same with a wink in return before ending the call.

Sebastian: I would love you to keep the dress if it truly makes you happy. But if you’re upset about it, that’s okay too. Love you xxx

Sasha: I'll keep it - I can't wait for you to see it next week. Thank you, my sweet man. I love you xxx

Chapter End Notes

I'm sorry this story has been MIA a little while - have been so busy but life update: new job sucks and can’t see myself staying at it in its current format so we’ll see how we go! Posting will remain every few weeks or so and I apologise :( This is a bit rushed, so sorry about the typos, I know they’re in there but I’m so tired, I think my eyes are about to fall out of my head! Thanks so much for sticking around, I do appreciate each and every one of you that pops in, has a read, leaves a comments, drops a kudo. What babes xoxo

---

Interested Bystander writes on Tumblr.
Chapter Summary

If she’d learnt one thing in all the years she’d known him, it was that he always managed to make her feel new and exciting ways of hating how much she cared about him.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Hearing the quiet knock, Sebastian smiled, dragging on his gym shorts and trotting to the door, opening it to Sasha keeping herself upright against the wall opposite him, carry on bag and luggage slumped beside her. “You’re finally here. Welcome to Los Angeles,” he whispered with a smile as he pulled her into his grasp, his long fingers sinking into her hair. She sighed, her arms wrapping around his warm, bare torso. “God, I missed you,” he tilted her face to kiss her temple. “How was your flight?” he took her hand, tossed one bag over another and led her into his hotel room, letting the door close behind them.


“I’m glad you’re here now.”

"Me too," she agreed, snuggling into him. “You’re hair is dark again!”

He giggled quietly, watching her. He could see how clearly exhausted she was and realised he was mostly holding her up at this point. “Yeah, coloured it yesterday. I wanted to look all salon fresh for you and didn’t trust that blonde you were so hung up on.”

She giggled bashfully. “Are you going to the gym? I just got here. I wanna cuddle,” she pouted, having to pull away from him, almost dead on her feet and moving towards the unmade bed. She was pooped. She slipped her sneakers off and let her jacket drop from her shoulders before tumbling into the still warm covers, taking in Sebastian’s cologne left lingering on the sheets, immediately feeling like home again and relaxing for the first time since she’d left New York. "Get in here with me."

He followed and sat on the edge of the bed beside her. “Your plane got in late, I have to start my day, gurija,” he chuckled quietly, finding the button on her jeans and unzipping the fly before dragging them off her lifeless legs trying in vain to ignore the lace knickers, knuckles skimming her skin as he removed them as well, tossing them behind him. “Sit up,” he said softly, lifting her t-shirt over her head and reaching around to unclasp the matching bra. He pulled the duvet over her. Naked, and he had to leave her. He really had to start questioning his priorities.

“Thank you.”

“S’okay. You don’t want to get into your PJs?”

“I can’t even be bothered showering. I’m sorry if I stink,” her eyes fluttered closed as he cupped her cheek and kissed her forehead. “I haven’t worn PJ’s in the whole time we’ve been together, I don’t even consider packing them if I know you’re going to be with me.”
“I prefer it that way, you wicked, wicked little girl,” he laughed quietly and kissed her longingly. “The quicker I get to the gym, the quicker I get back into bed with you.”

“Oh, okay,” she yawned, pushing some dark hair back from his eyes, dragging her fingers over his five o’clock shadow. “How was Chelsea last night?”

Sebastian rolled his eyes. “Usual expected bullshit. Get some sleep, I’ll be back in an hour or so. Just gonna go for a run on the treadmill, meeting Evans.”

“Have fun. Tell him I said hi,” Sasha mumbled, dragging his pillows to her and snuggling into the warmth, surrounding herself around him.

“I will, be back soon,” he pushed himself off the bed reluctantly. He grabbed his t-shirt from his luggage and pulled it on as well as his hat before grabbing his phone, earphones and room key. “Love you, baby,” he said, to no reply before slipping out soundlessly.

---

Creeping back in a while later, Sebastian grinned as he watched Sasha dead to the world in his bed, making a beeline for the shower to de-sweat and crawl back under the covers as quick as he could. He figured he had a half hour of prime time with her if he was really lucky. Warm after the shower and shaving, he snuck into the bed and enveloped himself around Sasha, revelling in her soft skin against his. He missed her, the understatement of how much he’d missed her. Phone, FaceTime, it wasn’t the same when the real deal was shuffling into his body heat and pulling his arms around her tighter.

“How long do I have you for?” she asked groggily as he was overcome with guilt for waking her.

“Long enough for a cuddle,” he kissed her shoulder and ensured she was flush against him. “Go back to sleep.”

“I can’t stay awake,” she rasped a giggle as Sebastian grasped as much skin as he could. He wouldn’t go back to sleep after the gym and a strong coffee but it didn’t mean he wouldn’t enjoy the time of the warm, naked woman in his arms while he did. He knew there was plenty of time for other things later.

“You don’t have to, I’m not going to make you.”

She wriggled her hips into him. “Liar. You and your one-track mind.”

He chuckled. “Sue me. Gorgeous naked woman pressed up against me? Yes, I’m going to be hard. But it’s okay,” he reassured her jokingly. “I’ll live. You can make it up to me later,” he teased, giving her a gentle spank.

“Ow,” she groaned a little with a small giggle.

“Go back to sleep,” he ordered again softly.

“Will you be gone all day?” she yawned, enjoying his hands roam over her belly, thighs and wherever else he could reach.

“Yeah. But then I’m taking you out to dinner.”

She looked back at him, a little shocked. “Are you taking me on a date?”
Sebastian shrugged against her, nuzzling her shoulder. “Am I not allowed to?”

“I can count on one hand how many dates we’ve been on.”

“Well, now you can count on two hands,” he replied smartly. “I just want some 'us' time before it’s completely bombarded by this press tour and I’m heading overseas again.”

“You don’t have to take me out. I’d be happy here with you,” she settled back into the pillows as he kissed the nape of her neck. He hummed in reply.

“Yeah, but it would be nice to go to dinner.”

“Do I have to get dressed up?”

“Wow,” Sebastian feigned being put out with a grin. “We are that officially the couple that is way too comfy in sweats, aren’t we?”

Sasha giggled. “I didn’t mean it like that. I meant, are we going to Salazar, or are we going to Petit Trois? How fancy do I need to be?”

“Oh, how fancy you need to be,” he chuckled quietly. “Thought Bestia or Catch, Will recommended them.”

“Okay, so not jeans.”

“You fill out jeans pretty well,” Sebastian mocked. “Just wear those heels I like.”

“To dinner or afterwards?” Sasha wondered, wiggling her butt back into him. He pushed her hips firmly back to her side of the bed.

“I can’t be late this morning, diavol,” he groaned. "And I really, really want to be late." 

“I geddit. First day of a press tour,” Sasha rolled over to watch him, a sleepy smile on her face. “I can keep my hands to myself until you leave.”

“Why must you hurt me like that?” he grunted, rolling her onto her back and pining her under him as his phone started ringing to The Imperial March (specifically for Sara, she loved it). “Argh,” he muttered, resting his forehead on her shoulder. “That is Sara.”

“You’re on the clock, bubba.”

“Yeah,” he sighed, his body rigid as he collapsed on her gently. “Sorry.”

“It’s okay. I know you’re here to work,” she ran her hands down his sides, memorising the muscles under her fingertips again, taking a butt cheek in each hand and giving him a teasing grope, his hips pushing into hers, not helping either of them much.

"Please stop," he pleaded. "My blue balls couldn't be worse, baby."

"Okay, I'm sorry. We can catch up when you're back."

“Okay,” he sighed, picking up the phone as Sasha traced the soft skin on his face – it was so infrequent she saw him clean-shaven, it kind of reminded her of the boy she fell for years ago, all wild curly hair hair, sparkling stony eyes and the wickedest grin she’d ever laid eyes on. She was smacked with a sudden hit of nostalgia as Sebastian kissed her palm as it graced over his mouth. “Hi, Sara. I’m getting dressed now,” he answered, sliding from the bed and moving to his luggage for
underwear, his clothes for the day prepped and hung in the wardrobe.

Sasha sighed, before grinning to herself. She wasn’t entirely sure how she’d gotten so lucky. How the love of her life seemed to feel exactly the same that she did. But she’s praise whatever deity brought Sebastian Stan into her life until the day she passed to make sure he kept smiling at her the way he was right then and there.

“Okay, see you soon,” Sebastian finished up, stepping into his boxers and adjusting himself, she could see how unpleasant the situation was for him. “I’ve gotta go.”

“I know.”

“I’ll text when I can.”

“Don’t have too much fun with Mackie.”

“Could never happen,” Sebastian joked, whipping a white t-shirt over his head.

“And don’t make too many female reporters swoon.”

“Only females?” he stepped into his navy blue slacks and zipped the fly, a little cockily. Though he played it down, he was very aware at how attractive he was and when pressed, how attractive he could be when effort was required. He’d heard it enough to believe the hype.

“Get dressed and get out of here. I need to sleep and you need to hear the same interview questions for the next ten hours,” she taunted him in retaliation to his ego.

He rolled his eyes, pushing his long fingers through hair and off his face. “Talk it up. What are you going to do?”

“After more sleep, yoga. I might try and get lunch somewhere and if I’m really lucky, a dance class if I can get my shit together.”

“So, sleep,” Sebastian figured, tucking himself in and pulling a grey sweater on.

“Get out, Sebastian Stan. You’re snark isn’t wanted here.”

He laughed and the bed dipped again as he sat to her side, patting her hip. “I love you, I’ll see you later today.”

“Love you too. Be good.”

“Can’t do that.”

“I know, but try.”

“I will,” he kissed her temple and collected his phone, wallet and jacket before saying a quiet goodbye and escaping again.

God, she loved that dork.

---

“So, your boy is keeps saying the word ‘lube’ and I’m little concerned he’s a little too self-reliant on it,” Mackie announced, strolling in after the day for press as Sasha looked up from her iPad, frowning. Sebastian was on his toes, arms open wide in protest. She was finally awake and dressed
after a few hours catching up on some sleep (she would be regretting taking the red eye all day, she was shattered).

“It’s not like that at all – ” Sebastian blushed horribly, rubbing his face. “We’re talking about putting the arm on,” he explained as Sasha nodded slowly, a little confused.

“That’s not the tour buzz word, I hope,” she was slightly aghast as Sebastian took a seat next to her, snuggling in.

“Missed you,” he whispered.

“Cut it out, you two,” Mackie ordered as Sasha grinned sheepishly in reply. "Honeymooners."

“Hello,” she smiled as Sebastian kissed her deeply and gave her a small smile in greeting, giving Mackie the finger all the while. “I don’t understand who thought it would be a good idea to put you two together for this junket. But somehow I know they will regret it pretty quickly.”

“I was just talking about how I have the arm slipped on. You’ve seen the effects team do it, Benzo,” Sebastian defended himself but he was already starting to grin and his resolve fading.

“Yes, it’s repulsive,” she made a face as Anthony smiled smugly, pleased with Sasha’s response.


“This is a conversation I didn’t expect us to be having today,” Sasha sighed, though amused by Mackie’s jovialness and Sebastian retreating after a clear slip of miscommunication. Or maybe not, she couldn’t be sure, he was a lot cheekier than most gave him credit for, she loved his wicked sense of humour. What his face could get him away with staggered her at the best and worst of times.


“Oh, for fuck’s sake, Seb,” Sasha rolled her eyes as he wrapped her in his arms, draping his leg over hers.

“He always this clingy with you?” Mackie asked, a little put off.

“Nope,” Sasha replied as Sebastian lightly smacked her hip. “Jesus,” she rolled her eyes. “Anthony, Seb doesn’t need KY for me or himself. Happy?”

“I feel like you’re only saying this because I want you to,” Sebastian sighed, lips twitching as he resisted a cheeky grin.

“Get off me, you moron,” she rolled her eyes and went to the minibar, Mackie’s booming laugh following her.

“It’s okay, man. I know you must be doing something right to keep that beautiful woman around,” Mackie told Sebastian who was now giggling gleefully to himself. “So, what’s the plans tonight?” Mackie asked, stealing Sasha’s perch beside Sebastian as Sasha returned with a bottle of water for all of them. “Thank you, sweet princess.”

Sasha lightly slapped Mackie’s face in affection before sitting on the coffee table before them both.

“I’m taking Sasha out for dinner,” Sebastian replied.

“How sweet, he takes you on dates,” Mackie teased.
“I know, was surprised when I heard myself,” Sasha admitted.

"Hey," Sebastian muttered. "Is it piss all over Sebastian day?"

"Absolutely. Check your calendar."

"You gotta marry this girl, Seb," Mackie told him, enjoying the banter of the younger couple. "Marry her good."

"Yeah, I'm a catch," Sasha winked modestly as Sebastian distracted himself with a slug of water.

"Are they your PJ's?" Mackie frowned.

"No, I went to a yoga class with Chace's girlfriend on the beach today. This is yoga kit. It was amazing to be in the sun."

Sebastian grinned secretly to himself. Her flexibility staggered him at times.

"That is a lot of time in downface dog," Mackie grinned as she flipped him the double bird and Sebastian laughed quietly, not overly surprised by her reaction. "Okay, lovebirds, enjoy your night. Spoil her, Sebastian," he shook Sebastian's hand and kissed Sasha's forehead as he passed and left them. "Diamonds, lots of them!"

"I like Mackie," Sasha beamed as the door closed. "He says some things you should take on board."

Sebastian rolled his eyes. “Finally, I get you all to myself. Been thinking about you all fucking day,” he took her hands and dragged her over to his lap. “I missed this,” he grinned, sneaking his hands under her tank top and resting on her hips. “Did you miss me even just a little?”

“Of course I did,” she told him. “Was weird to be home alone especially to a much bigger apartment.”

“You were okay?”

“I lived to tell the story,” she replied. “Gonna be longer when you head overseas.”

“You have me for now.”

“Then you go to Ireland.”

“I hope you can come for a while.”

“Might be easier through the week since we’ve added a few more classes to weekends.”

He smiled proudly. “It’s all worked out right, baby.”

“I know, huh?” she confided, more than a little surprised how her luck had turned after such a horrible time the year prior. “The class sizes are increasing, the classes run have doubled. It’s blown Eva and my minds. We’re even thinking of getting another teacher in.”

“You should buy in,” he suggested, his large hands massaging her soft skin across her ribs.

“It’s Eva’s baby. I kind of like not having all the responsibility.”

“Well, if it comes up, it’s something you should consider I think,” Sebastian told her as she shrugged, tracing his clavicle. He was never big on business, he was happy doing his acting thing but he’d
been speaking to some friends about buying into a restaurant recently and he was a numbers guy, he knew good investments when he spotted them.

“You think?”

“Absolutely,” he nodded with a small smile. “Get a good business manager and you’re all set. Or speak to Will’s guy.”

“I’ll think about it,” she promised, tracing his nose and caressing his face, it was so unusual for him to be fresh-faced these days. “You look cute,” she smiled, changing the subject. She didn’t feel like talking about work. She just wanted to focus on him – *them*. “I like this sweater, bub.”

*Translation: I like your arms and shoulders in that snug-fitting grey cashmere. Take it off.*

“Stylist dressed me,” he told her with a small smile, pleased. “Glad you approve.”

“How are you comfortable in those pants?”

*Translation: You hardly fit in those well-fitting navy pants, your thighs are bulging. Take them off too.*

“They’re okay,” he frowned, a little muddled under her gaze.

“Your hair sure is nice today,” she raked her fingers through his again dark locks and playing with the ends as his eyes fluttered closed under her touch.

*Translation: If my hands aren’t pulling at in less than five minutes, I’ll rip it out in frustration.*

Sebastian licked his lips before chewing his tongue, pensive. “What’s your play, woman?” he leaned forward, his face nearing hers. “What do you want from me, are you buttering me up for something?”

She shook her head innocently, eyes wide as he broke into a squint. “Nope,” she popped the P, watching him figuring out the problem in his head.

“Oh,” Sebastian stifled a laugh, easing back into the couch, fingers carding through his hair before resting them behind his head, biceps proudly on display. He jolted her on his lap with his knee, a little entertained and smug. “You’re horny,” he silently congratulated himself on a problem solved. But not a problem rectified, he wasn’t going to rush this if this was how she was feeling.

“We haven’t had sex in weeks, you jerk,” she smacked his chest as he laughed, catching her hands to avoid risk of injury. “I may have missed this body a little,” she adjusted her posture. “I wasn’t kidding though. You really do look really good today.”

He rolled his eyes with a slight blush as she kissed him. “You know what would look better though?”

She hummed curiously, wrapping her arms around his neck. “Tell me,” she replied, gently biting the sensitive skin near his pulse. He shuddered and pushed her back to arm’s length.

“Control yourself, bite anywhere you want except here up,” he motioned from his neck up before giggling quietly. “I’ve got more TV interviews in the next two days than I’ve had in my entire career and make up doesn’t need to be hiding the bruises your teeth leave on me. I can hide bites a little easier down there,” he pointed suggestively below his neck.
Subtle hint - subtle like a sledge hammer. She giggled quietly. “Fair.”

“Kiss me,” he demanded.

She nodded, contemplating the suggestion. “Yes, sir,” she answered as he pulled her flush against him and kissed her deeply, warm, wet and thorough. “Did you have a good day?” he mumbled against her lips as he pulled her top off and tossed it behind him.

“I did. The weather was amazing,” she confirmed, whipping off both his sweater and undershirt in one go. “There we go,” she gently toyed with the muscles on his tummy that twitched under her fingertips, tracing his shoulders to his light sprinkling of chest hair. “So perfect,” she said happily.

“You’re acting like you haven’t seen me in years,” he joked, pulling her to her feet and pushing her yoga pants off as she attempted the same, unbuttoning his slacks and dropping them with his underwear, erection springing free, before she pushed him back on the couch, Sebastian landing with a grunt.

“It’s felt longer,” she sat on his lap as he pulled out her ponytail, easing his fingers through her long hair. She watched him zero in on her shoulder, licking it.

“New freckle,” he reported, making a verbal inventory for himself, pushing her back to give him better access to her breasts. “Okay, you’re right,” his tongue swirled, his gleaming teeth chewing down on the sensitive bud. She gently pulled on his hair in retaliation. “It feels longer than it has been,” he told her before moving to repeat the action on the other side, his fingers trailing her sides, one settling between her thighs, gently tickling her as they brushed the soft skin, her head bobbed to his shoulder as he parted her folds and barely circled the delicate bundle of nerves.

She sighed, needing to respond as she forced his lips to hers again, his kisses a little slower, he wasn’t in the mood to speed through anything, she could tell and if that is what he was dishing out, it was exactly what she’d take as he pulled his hands away and tightened them around her shoulders, enjoying her kiss.

"Come on, lemme take you to bed. We got some time to make up for."

---

“I have never been prouder of you, Seb,” Sasha bopped him gently on the nose a few days later as she finished knotting his grey tie for him and buttoning black double-breasted Prada jacket across his tummy. She smoothed down his strong chest, extremely impressed. Prepare thy selves, ladies. Her man was looking fine. “I mean, I say that a lot, but no one gets to see you like I do. Please enjoy tonight. A lot of things are about to change for you, bub.”

Sebastian smiled hopefully, tugging at the tie on her hotel robe a little anxiously. “I’m really nervous.”

“You’re always nervous at these things. But I’ll be right there with you.”

“Will you walk the carpet with me?” he watched her face contort nervously before holding his hands up. “Just a few photos. Away from the cameras before you can squirm your way out of it. I’ve had a few questions about you this week, guess it couldn’t hurt to clarify a few things. I won’t ask you to do it again.”

"You're outing us?" she figured as he laughed.

"If you want to put it that way. Saves me from verbalising it. We don't owe anyone anything, but I
know you're coping some fuckery online and I'm sorry for that."

"Well, I am a *quote* gold-digging whore *end quote,*" Sasha mocked herself, a direct quote from a picture she'd posted with herself and Ollie at *Hamilton.* Had absolutely nothing to do with Sebastian but that is the way any comments on her pix went these days. "I never want to hear you talk about yourself like that again, you hear me?" he demanded. "You don't fall for that bullshit."

"I know, I know," she replied solemnly, playing with his tie, not able to meet his eyes. "Just gets to me."

"I know. But you're better than that."

She sighed. "Okay."

"So, you gonna join me out there?" Sebastian asked, hopeful again.

"Do you really want me to?" she asked quietly. She tended not to enjoy his red carpets if she wasn’t with their friends and if they stayed for the film, she would usually meet him in the cinema (if he was even staying for the film). She was going to hang with the boys and Sebastian’s mother that night. She and Chace had joked they were each other’s plus one as his gorgeous girl was working and not able to make it.

Sebastian unloosened the hotel robe and snuck his warm palms under the soft, fluffy white terrycloth, resting his hands on her waist and kissed her again, a little of her lipstick smudging on his plump lips that she thumbed away. “I want to show you off to everyone. And to anyone who doesn’t like it? They can fuck off."

"I know it means a lot to you," she said reluctantly. "Okay. But just for a bit."

"Thank you," he gently kissed her neck, smiled and continued getting ready. “You’d better get changed."

Sasha closed herself into the bathroom and looked at the beautiful *Valentino* dress hanging on the door. She hoped Sebastian didn’t think it was a little too over the top or daring... camera flashes wouldn’t be her friend but she was so in love with dress and after the fight they’d had about her taking it, she hoped she made it worth it for Sebastian.

She tossed her robe on the side of the bath, leaving her in the fleshy-coloured bodysuit before stepping into the dress and took a deep, shaky breath. “Don’t be an arsehole, zip. Just be *on my side,*” she looked to the room, gritting her teeth in apprehension and turned herself inside out, raising the zip all the way up. “Oh my God,” she mumbled, astounded and barely raising a sweat, no muscles sprained, her neck not out of whack. Most importantly, she didn’t need Sebastian’s help, last thing she wanted to do was spoil the surprise. “Thank you, frock gods!” she made an overzealous sign of the cross.

She gave her hair and make up the once over again. She had gone to the Downeys earlier in the day to primp herself with Robert’s better half, Susan (Sasha still couldn’t believe she was now part of this crazy world, thanks to Sebastian, and she got to hang out with the Downeys). It all still looked pretty good to her but quickly reapplied her nude lipstick anyway and spritzed herself in the perfume she always wore for him (way back when they were kids, he always told her he loved it. It was a hard
habit to drop 10 years later when he still got a dreamy look on his face when he caught a hint of it on her). Stepping out of the bathroom, she tried to ignore Sebastian as she picked up her matching clutch and put her lipstick in it. She stepped into her heels, taking a seat on the bed to buckle them up.

She was met with silence but Sebastian’s gaping jaw said it all. Sasha reached over and lightly pushed it back up, tapping his cheek affectionately. “You okay?”

“Show me properly, smart ass. Don’t just walk past all casual like I’m not waiting here impatiently for you,” he accused, his hands on his hips as she stood up straight to give him the entire view. He moved his hand to his mouth and tried to hide the small smirk, wandering around her to get the 360 degree view. “Well, all right.”

“All right?” she hoped the begging in her voice wasn’t as obvious as felt as he took a few steps to pull her into his grasp. His hands ran from the nape of her neck, down her sides of the silky material and rested on her ass, enjoying the feel under his palms.

“You look incredible.”

“Thank you,” she recovered a little. It would have been way too late to have found something else at that stage, especially considering the trouble he went to (or, made Ollie and Sara go to), to make sure the dress was hers. “I was worried you wouldn’t like it.”

“Are you mad? You look beautiful,” he pressed his nose to hers, knowing she’s reapplied her lipstick. “I don’t think I’ve ever seen you look so breathtaking and you take my breath away every damn day.”

She blushed straight through her make up, her skin flushing. “Sebast…”

“I love you.”

“I love you too,” she continued blushing thoroughly.

“Completely worth the fight and make up sex for,” he decided, face changing into a wide grin. His phone went rang, distracting him momentarily. “Christa,” he explained, not needing to check the call ID to know it was his publicist.

“You’d better go,” she told him. “I’ll see you there.”

“You sure you’ll be okay with the guys?”

“Of course, they’ll make sure I keep my nose outta trouble,” she nodded. “I’m looking forward to spending the night with my favourite boys.”

Sebastian kissed her on the cheek. “Okay. I’ll see you there. You look just…” his voice trailed off into a sort of groan at the back of his throat.

“Thank you,” she glowed again. “Don’t look so bad yourself,” she picked an imaginary piece of lint from his breast pocket then pushed him away. “Remember to breathe.”

“I’ll try,” he nodded before making his way to the door. “See you soon, gorgeous,” he gave her a fond grin before slipping out as Sasha finally took a breath. He still made her feel like that girl when he first told her how he felt, that Summer afternoon in Paris. If he ever knew the power he had over her...
“You’re a bit clammy, bub,” Sasha whispered to Sebastian, swiping a tissue from her clutch and stealthy dabbing his forehead out of the view of cameras as they stood with the guys. He’d just completed his interviews and flooding the panties of all the reporters before he was about to have his photo call.

“I’m sweating my ass off, nerves are shot,” he confided, sipping from a bottle of water in his hands. “Thanks.”

“Sebastian,” Christa took his wrist, gently pulling him towards the waiting cameras. Sasha gave him a nervous smile, her heart racing. She knew it was now or never. He gave her a small wink to have his photos first. He shared a couple of minutes smouldering on his own before he reached his hand back. Jesus Christ, he was a fucking sight.

“Benzo,” he said softly. He could feel the tension radiating off her from their few meters distance. “Baby?”

“Lemme take that,” Chace spoke up, taking Sasha’s clutch from her grasp. “Just smile, you don’t have to do anything else. He won’t let anything happen to you. You look amazing,” Chace gave her his kind, dimpled smile, seeing his friend’s fear taking her over. He gave her a light push towards Sebastian, who kept his hand out, waiting for her. She took a deep breath and took the few steps to Sebastian.

“Hey,” Sebastian whispered quietly. “Just be here with me, we’re okay,” he promised.

“Please don’t let me look at the internet tomorrow,” she made a meagre joke as he laughed, his arm softly sliding down her spine to ease around her waist, keeping her body close and protected.

“I will keep you distracted, I promise,” he kissed her temple before they both gave easy smiles to the cameras. Sasha had no idea how Sebastian did this. She was suffering brutally under the flashes, hoping the photographers at least used the flattering photos tomorrow. “No one else’s opinions matter except yours and mine.”

She nodded softly. She knew he was right, but it didn’t make her any less nervous for those who thought less kindly to her, regardless of if they thought they knew her because of Sebastian or not.

“Thanks Seb, thanks Sasha,” his publicist smiled, touching Sasha’s forearm, supportively. “You guys are so gorgeous together,” she assured Sasha. "The pictures will be great."

“Thanks,” Sasha said, voice wavering.

“Am I done?” Sebastian asked Christa. “I need a G&T now,” he said.

“You’re done,” Christa confirmed. “Go relax. Get Sasha a drink, she looks like she needs one,” she smiled, moving towards the Marvel people.

“Ready to unwind?” he gave her a smile.

“Yes!” she said desperately. “I don’t know how you do this.”

He shrugged. “It’s always easier with you by my side.”

She gave him a weak grin, she knew he was delivering anything to make her feel better at this point and it was working. “I love you.”
His face squished up before he grinned. “Love you too,” he took her hand and urged the fellas to come with them. They were ready to party the night away.

Chapter End Notes

MIA again. I apologise - with Christmas around the corner, things are madness as I'm sure most of you can appreciate. Work still sucks, baby belly expanding by the day (and my insides are being used as a punching bag a la Steve Rogers). But I'm so happy you guys are still sticking with me, I appreciate you all so much and this will be the last chapter of TOFWYA for 2016 (I'll be posting on my Tumblr some drabbles in the next few days if you want to read a bit more of my stuff - link below). I'll see you bright and early in 2017! Happy Holidays, stay safe, remind your loved ones how much you adore them, it's the best time of the year! Thank you to you all for making this year the year you all gave my the courage to start writing again xoxo

---

Interested Bystander writes on Tumblr.
Chapter Summary

If she’d learnt one thing in all the years she’d know him, it was that he always managed to make her feel new and exciting ways of hating how much she cared about him.

Chapter Notes

The first of a two-part flashback. I hope you enjoy. I’ll post the second part Wednesday, my time (I hope) xoxo

“She just got there,” Sebastian inhaled deeply. “I can’t wait to see her, missed her like crazy.”

“Why don’t you just tell her how you feel then?”

Sebastian shrugged, he didn’t really have an answer at this point. “It’s not that easy, you know? We’re kind of just living in different worlds at the moment. She’s working non-stop in New York, I’m here and travelling with work.”

“I’m sure you could figure something out. Does she feel the same?”

Sebastian pursed his full lips into a smile. “Umm, I don’t know,” he dragged his teeth over his bottom lip and eased back in his chair. “Naw. I don’t think so.”

“You have girls falling at your feet on any given day, yet this is the one that scares you the most.”
“Terrifies me,” Sebastian corrected. “I can never predict what I’m gonna get with her. I mean, I can, I know what she’s thinking most of the time, but she’s… fuckin’ Sasha.”

“You can predict other women?” James was astounded as Sebastian shrugged modestly, dropping his eyes. “Of course you can,” James laughed. Sebastian blushed slightly, taking another deep pull from his iced coffee. “That doesn’t even surprise me. You’re Sebastian Stan.”

Sebastian rolled his eyes. “But Sasha, she’s unlike anyone I’ve ever met. She’s so sure of herself and everything she needs and wants in life, I don’t know anyone as focused as she is. Like a fuckin’ laser pointer. She’s nothing like me. She’s controlled and precise. She never leaves any room for failure. And she rarely does.”

“She’s a perfectionist.”

“If there is a word for more than that, that’s Sasha. Don’t get me wrong, she out parties us, all our friends, under the table, she is reckless and so fucking opinionated,” the frustration evident in his voice. “At times, she drives me more insane than anyone else I’ve ever met.”

“But she drives you wild.”

“I deserve an Oscar for not giving her an inch. Or I push and she resists,” Sebastian explained. “Got disaster written all over it.”

“Opposites attract?”

“I guess.”

“But she’s also super hot.”

Sebastian finally giggled quietly. “It helps, but it’s beyond that now. She’s the most supportive person in my life. The best.”

“And you’re crazy in love with her.”

“I don’t even have a crush anymore. She was just always there and now, the lines are really blurred for me. Being away from her is much easier than being around her.”

James smirked at Sebastian’s rambling. “Yet, you invite her to see you and she comes running.”

“I couldn’t stay away from her even if I tried.”

---

Sasha laughed wildly as Sebastian walked into his apartment in Atlanta – she was visiting for the weekend had been waiting impatiently for a few hours for him to finish filming for the day. “I’ve missed you so much!” she exclaimed as he lifted her off the ground into a big hug, muscular arms pulling her flush against his broad chest. “Holy shit, your hair!” she pulled at its longer length, impressed. “I miss your crazy curls.”

“Hey,” he smiled, kissing her cheek. “What do you think?”

“I think you’ve been gone too long,” she accused, thumping his chest.

He rolled his eyes. “Thanks, Benzo.”

Hearing a throat clear behind them, Sasha peaked around Sebastian to see Chris Evans and
Anthony Mackie grinning broadly. “Put me down,” she hissed as he laughed and did so, Sasha straightening her clothes and hair. “Hi,” she gave a small wave. “I’m Sasha.”

“So this is the Australian Tassie Devil?” Anthony offered his hand as she blushed and accepted the kiss he planted on her knuckles. “Anthony, but honestly, sweetheart, call me anything. Anytime – ”

“I’m sorry,” Chris said. “Mackie has no resolve around pretty women. Would you collect yourself, man? Jesus,” Chris smiled, offering his hand. “Nice to finally meet you, I’m Chris.”

“Nice to meet you both,” she smiled widely. She would be having a chat with Sebastian about his inability to let her know when she was going to meet his co-stars in the future. She was two minutes from putting on her PJ’s. The thought was mortifying. So were the PJ’s she packed. Fuck, did she really pack a Garfield t-shirt for bed? Yes. No sex this weekend, she realised.

“So, we were thinking of hitting a bar,” Sebastian suggested, wrapping an arm around Sasha and putting her in a small headlock, she frowned at the strange movements - it was so hyper masculine and completely un-Sebastian. “Since we have tomorrow off.”

“Oh, I opened a bottle of wine about 15 minutes ago,” Sasha gave a lopsided grin, nodding to the bottle breathing on the bench. “And I gave myself a tour as well – your room is a disaster!” she pointed accusingly at Sebastian.

He gave a half smile, pulling wine glasses from the cupboard. “Of course you did, can’t help yourself. Everyone for wine?”

“You gotta a beer, man?” Mackie asked.

“Beer for me too,” Chris agreed as Sebastian smiled and put a beer before them both himself and poured Sasha a glass of wine. “So cheers, to Seb having his best girl in town. It’s nice to finally meet you Sasha and put a beautiful face to the name.”

---

Sasha: Now, Evans… he is just so much more gorgeous in real life. I cry at the beauty. And Anthony... if he didn't have a partner!

Olivia: Does Chris have a girlfriend?! Where are you guys? What is Seb’s hair like?! Tell me everything! EXCLAMATION POINTS!!!!

Sasha: We are in a bar downtown. It’s hotter than Hades outside, I swear I thought NYC got hot. Seb’s hair is wayyy long. He hates it. I’ll text you as soon as we get back and fill you in. Sebastian is watching me x

Sebastian smiled as Mackie and Chris got chatting to some fans near the bar, leaving them both in the booth alone across from each other. “So, how have things been, Benzo?”

It was the first time they’d had a chat together since he got back that afternoon.

She gave him a bright smile. “Busy. But okay. How have things been here?”

“Yeah, good. Movie has been kicking my ass, but it’s been fun,” Sebastian explained.
“Oh, awesome. The guys are lovely,” she nodded towards Chris and Mackie.

“Yeah, they’re really great,” Sebastian said, sipping his beer. Feeling his phone vibrate, he snuck it from his pocket and a small smile came over his face. After knowing him a million years, Sasha knew that fucking smile. He had a hook up. When he started replying, Sasha downed her cocktail. She should have known. There was always fucking girl waiting in the wings with this dude. Not surprisingly, she was about to be ditched.

She sighed, if he was going to be anti-social, so could she, pulling her phone back out too.

Sasha: He’s met someone.

Olivia: I don’t even have to ask who you’re talking about. Is she there? Is she pretty? Nice? Do we hate her already?

Sasha: No, he hasn’t told me yet.

Olivia: Then how do you know?

“Yeah, how do you know?” Sebastian asked, peering over the table at the phone with a strange smile, maybe a little of a confused frown scrunching his handsome features. He crossed his arms on the table and leaned in, interested in her reply.

“Know what?” Sasha played dumb. She played dumb terribly.

“What you were just texting Ollie,” he replied flatly. Oh fuck, he was pissed.

“That’s none of your business,” Sasha tried to say flippantly, hoping to play it off as a little joke. He wasn’t buying it.

“Isn’t it, if it’s me you’re talking about?” he retorted, a mix of muted humour and disappointment etched in his smooth voice.

“We weren’t – ” Sasha tried as he rolled his eyes. It was enough to silence her.

“You were and you were caught out. You’re assuming I’ve met someone,” he told her quietly. His eyes changed from a deep blue to stormy grey. “If I did, don’t you think I would have told you?” he reasoned.

“Well, you’ve hardly said a word since I got here let alone communicated since you got to Atlanta, how would I know?” she countered, sipping her drink. “It’s about the usual display when a new chick comes on the scene, isn’t it?”

No, just the display of a guy needing space to get his head around the fact he’d recently realised just how in deep he was with the woman that was, for all intents and purposes, his best girl. Nothing more, nothing less. And fuck, work had him busy. Forgive him for not being on the clock for her.

It was a strange feeling for him. He would never forgive Chace and that fucking bottle of absinthe he had weaselled back in the country from Germany. It had made every stupid thought, feeling and emotion about Sasha spill from his mouth. He couldn’t wipe the shiteating grin from Chace’s pretty boy face.

“I knew it – you’re in love with her!” Chace told him gleefully, pumping his fists in the air. "I mean, no shit. But it's nice to finally hear you admit it, you little shit."

“I am not in love with Benzo,” Sebastian scoffed, lighting a cigarette and taking a deep inhale,
enjoying the taste on his tongue. Trying to quit right now was a terrible idea.

“Okay, I don’t believe you,” Chace reasoned, sipping his beer.

“You don’t have to,” Sebastian replied casually. Flippant was not his style, and it was completely transparent to someone who knew him as well as Chace did.

“No one believes you. We all know,” Chace smirked.

“Know what?” Sebastian asked exasperated.

“That you, Sebastian Stan, are in love with Sasha Benson, our little import with legs for days and the ass that frankly... is traffic stopping.”

Sebastian broke into a little smirk, that was true. That ass was the cause of nightmares and wet dreams. “Maybe I should be asking you the same questions? Seems you are all over this.”

“I adore Benzo, she’s my favourite Aussie. But she's not my type. Saying that... I wouldn't have thought she was yours either.”

"She isn't," Sebastian lied with a sigh, taking another drag.

"Nah, she is. She's artistic, smart, pretty. Has the smartest fuckin' mouth I've ever heard. And she doesn't take an ounce of your shit." 

"She doesn't," Sebastian agreed.

"Yet, here we are, pretending you don't have feelings for her." 

"I don't get why we're having this conversation," Sebastian picked up his beer bottle and walked away.

"Walk away," Chace giggled quietly. "But your actions speak louder than your words, man."

Sebastian shook his head, bringing himself back to Sasha. “That’s pretty shit of you,” he said thoughtfully, sarcasm never suited him.

“Well, what is wrong? You won’t talk to me. This is weird.” Sasha shifted uncomfortably under his gaze.

“There’s just not much to say,” he shrugged, sipping his beer. His heart was racing, he didn’t know what he was saying. He didn’t know what to say with her, so he’d stupidly gone with ‘push her away’. Better run with it, Sebastian.

“Fuck you, this is bullshit.”

Okay, maybe she was getting a little too agitated after too many drinks in quick succession. She pushed another empty glass away.

“Aren’t you a ball of joy today?” he asked, standing up. “I’m going to piss. Be in a better mood when I get back,” he ordered and sulked off as Mackie came back and sat beside her.

“Where’s ya boy off to?”
“Bathroom,” she shrugged, swirling ice in the empty glass with her chewed on straw.

“You okay?” Mackie asked warily.

“I think I’m gonna go,” she said, putting her handbag over her shoulder. “The heat has knocked me around a bit, I haven’t eaten and I’m getting a bit lightheaded.”

“Wanna order some food? I can get you some water,” Mackie told her.

“No, that’s okay,” she said. “It was lovely to meet you,” she forced a smile and gently kissed his cheek. “I hope we can catch up before I head back to New York City.”

He gave a curious smile. “Yeah, me too. Have a nice night, Sasha. I’ll let Sebastian know you’re heading home,” he said as she gave him a grateful smile and wandered out of the bar and into the humid Atlanta evening.

She moved towards the road and looked out for a cab. “Fuck,” she hissed, not seeing any coming in her direction.

“Hey,” a deep voice said, standing next to her. Chris.

“Hi,” she gave him a small smile and went back to looking at the road.

“Taking off?”

“Yeah, it’s been a long day travelling and this heat is a bit much for me.”

“It wasn’t too bad in the bar,” he saw through the lie instantly.

“Just a bit tired,” she continued. “And I want to get to a barre class at 6am.”

“You’re keen,” he stifled a laugh, stamping out his cigarette.

“No rest for the wicked,” she replied.

“No, I think it’s great. You’re clearly very dedicated to your craft.”

She looked at him and smirked. “What’s Seb told you?”

“Just that you’re an in-demand choreographer and dancer on Broadway,” he said easily. A small smile played on his lips. “Are you sure you want to go? I know he’s missed you like crazy.”

“We can catch up when he’s got time.”

“Well, you’d think he’s just going to get busier,” Chris shrugged, taking her elbow and stepping back from the corner. “You guys have been friends a long time, right?”

She nodded. She felt her handbag vibrate. No doubt it was Sebastian. She noticed a cab approaching and raised her arm. Relief washed through her when the cabbie pulled over to take her fare.

“Really want to leave?” Chris asked, sharing a cheeky smirk. “I’ve got a round of shots with your name on them.”

She laughed, opening the cab door. “Yeah, I’ve had enough for one day. Thanks though.”
“Okay,” Chris watched her get in the cab and close the door. He poked his head through the open window. “Let’s barbeque or something tomorrow?”

“Yeah, maybe,” she said and told the cabbie the address. “Night, Chris.”

“Stay safe. Night,” he tapped on the door and stepped back as the cab drove away.

Pulling her phone out again, Sasha sighed and completely disregarded Sebastian’s pissed texts about her leaving him without even saying goodbye and dialled Olivia’s number instead.

“Yooo, tell me all about it!” Olivia said excitedly. “Sounds like you’re smothered in hot dudes.”

“I messed up. I was texting you and Seb saw I was kind of giving him shit about this new girl and then just cracked it. So I left and now I feel a bit stupid. And just drunk enough to want to burst into tears,” she added, feeling the prickle of hot tears behind her eyes.

“Just cracked it? That doesn’t sound like Sebastian,” Olivia replied. “Whatcha do to press his buttons the way you did?”

“Ollie… He hasn’t been himself since he got back from work today, or maybe since I got here. He’s said ten words to me if I’m lucky. I don’t think I can stay the whole weekend. Maybe I’ll just fly out in the morning.”

“Oh, you can’t! You haven’t seen Seb in months. You guys were so looking forward to this.”

“I don’t know who that guy was Ollie. It just wasn’t… it wasn’t my Sebastian,” the first tears slipped. Dammit. “I mean, I dunno. He just couldn’t even look at me.”

“That’s weird, even I can admit that,” Olivia said quietly. “Want me to go into damage control for you?”

“No,” Sasha gave a watery sigh. Ollie sighed in reply. “I’m probably just making more of it than I should. It’s a million degrees and I haven’t had more than a day off here or there in about six months. I’m probably reading into this wrong. I’m hot, overtired and probably due for a period,” Sasha rambled.

“Maybe,” Ollie replied. “Look, you head home, run a bath and have a good night sleep. I will call you tomorrow. I can get you from the airport if you need me to.”

“Okay. Thanks, Ollie.”

“No problem. But try and talk to him, okay?”

“Okay…”

---

**Chace:** What do you mean Benzo JUST LEFT? She’s in Atlanta visiting YOU, you’ve pissed her off enough to leave and she doesn’t know the city. If she ends up a pretty Australian corpse in a ditch, I’ll fucking kill you, Seb and I’m sure I won’t be the only one.

**Sebastian:** She has apartment keys, she can get herself back.

**Chace:** Remember when you told me how you felt about her and you wanted to talk to her about it? This is the EXACT opposite of this.

**Sebastian:** She was shit talking me.

**Chace:** Because you were texting me about how good her tan lines looked in the white dress she
was wearing and ignoring her. You should have just said you were texting me, dickwad.

*Sebastian*: She thinks there is someone else. Doesn’t she trust me enough to know if there was, she’d be the first person I’d tell? She knows this. She knows everything about me.

*Chace*: She can’t read your mind, Seb. You’re completely overreacting. Sounds like both of you are, tbh.

Sebastian smiled as Chris put another beer in front of him and pocketed his phone. He didn’t need a lecture from Chace anyway. “Thanks, man.”

“No problem. She got into a cab okay, I made sure she gave the cabbie the right address,” he reassured Sebastian as her nodded.

“Thank you, I appreciate it,” Sebastian said, using his thumb nail to start and peel back the label from the bottle.

“No problems. She’s a sweet girl, Sebastian.”

“She’s not herself tonight, that’s for fucking sure,” Sebastian muttered.

“What do you mean?”

“She’s upset that – ” he paused, took a deep breath to not rile himself up again and smiled at his stupidity. “I don’t even know why she’s upset aside from me being an asshole to her. That’s the only reason she left,” he put his head in his hands, miserably. “She’s been here for six hours and I’ve said about a dozen words to her.”

“Sounds like you better hit the road?” Chris reasoned. Sebastian nodded.

“Yeah, I’ll finish this and call the car. Sorry man, I really fucked up.”

“It’s okay,” Chris smiled. Mackie joined them a minute later with a round of shots.

“Bottoms up, and you,” Mackie pointed at Sebastian. “You go fix that frown on that beautiful woman’s face. Every guy, single or not, in this place saw her when she walked in and she’s got stars in her eyes for you. You might be the actor but Sebastian, fuck man, she’s the one in demand.”

The three men threw the shots down.

“Don’t you think it’s just time you tell her?” Chris asked. He’d heard about Sasha for a long time, he know the dynamics of male/female best friends and the complications that came along with them. Chris didn’t give Sebastian the benefit of Chris realising he could see through the facade of both and how the really felt about the other.

Sebastian blinked and sat back in realisation, Chris could see it too, he knew. He rubbed his tired face. “I know I have to tell her. I’m just scared that she’ll think – ”

“You don’t know what she thinks,” Chris pointed out. “If we ever knew what a woman was thinking, would we honestly have any problems in our lives?”

When Captain America doled out logic like that, it was almost impossible to ignore.

“I’m out,” Sebastian said, bro-hugging both the men. “Wish me luck?”

“Good luck you aren’t locked out of your own house,” Mackie smirked as Sebastian left.
Arriving back a while later, Sebastian sighed, unlocking the front door. “Sash?” he called for her gently. Last thing he wanted to put across was anger, because the only anger he was feeling was for himself. He wasn’t going to stupidly take his emotions out on her again but he wasn’t entirely surprised when she didn’t reply. He put his keys on the bench and wandered to the guest room. He knocked quietly, hoping not to wake her if she was asleep – he knew her though. There was no way she’d be asleep so quickly. She was nocturnal.

“What?”

“Can we talk, please?” Sebastian asked shyly. “And you know…”

Sebastian was again met with silence as he inhaled and opened the door slowly. Oh fuck, she’d been crying – he hated when she cried. He could handle any other woman in the world crying (the other notable exception, his mother) but this girl… when she cried, his heart broke. And he couldn’t feel worse knowing it was because of him.

“What?”

“Hi,” he leaned against the doorframe but didn’t dare come closer. “I’m glad you made it back okay.”

“I have good direction,” she huffed, looking at some photos on her phone. “I’m not an idiot.”

“I know. I never said you were,” he sighed. “Whatcha lookin’ at?”

“Delphi sent some new pix of her ever expanding baby belly,” she showed Sebastian without thinking.

“Woah, niece or nephew?” Sebastian squinted from where he stood, the picture not clear but he forced his gaze as much as possible. He wasn’t going to move a step closer until she gave him permission to do so.

“She didn’t want to find out. What do you want, Sebastian?” she finally looked up. Her eyes were rimmed red raw, face blotchy yet make up free.

He hid his cringe, cursing himself. “Can I come in?”

She shrugged, looking back at her phone and texting someone. “Your house.”

“Look,” he took a step or two and sat on the edge of bed. He kicked his sneakers off and pulled her to him, tucking her body into his, resting his chin on her hair. He ignored the smell of vanilla intoxicating his senses, enveloping him. Bad idea, abort. You’re too close, Sebastian! “I’m sorry I such a dick tonight. I don’t know what came over me,” he whispered, lips against the curve of her ear.

Sasha wasn’t sure how she’d bitten back her shudder at the feel of his lips on her. “Not you’re finest hour,” she instantly fell into his hold, grasping him back just as tightly. “I just thought you were texting some girl,” Sasha explained simply. “And that’s totally fine,” she rushed. “I just thought I should have just staying in New York if you were going to ignore me the whole time.”

That one stung, Sebastian was unable to hide his pout.

“No, no chick,” Sebastian explained, rubbing her back softly. “Only Chace.”

He felt her body constrict under him. “Oh,” she said almost inaudibly.

“I know probably should have just said that. But you were being shady with Ollie, I guess I was
being just as childish,” he sighed, moving to rest his forehead on her shoulder, now taking in her perfume. God, he’d missed that. Sasha wore two: one that he knew from the first night they met (or as she referred to it, her everyday perfume) and another she wore in the evenings – the one he preferred. Fruity and floral, it usually rendered him useless and he had to act his ass off and pretend he wasn’t moved the way he was. Again, this was one of those times, his eyes closed, inhaling the scent he knew so well... but wanted to know so much more intimately. “Benzo,” he looked up, his stony blue eyes light and flooded with guilt. He gently lifted her chin to meet his eyes, cupping her cheeks in his hands, his thumbs tracing the curve of her face. “I didn’t mean to make you cry. And I’m not really sure why I’m being such an asshole. I’m just so tired and maybe just not quite myself at the moment.”

Not an entire lie on either account.

“I don’t even know why I am crying!” Sasha said incredulously, her eyes watering again. She averted her gaze to rest her head on his chest, sitting her warm palms on his hips as he couldn’t rest cupping the nape of her neck, his massaging the soft skin. “You feel different. You are all muscly. I mean, you always were strong, but now you’re... big,” Sasha turned 18 shades of red at her poor selection of words.

He snorted a laugh. “Is that a good or bad thing?” he moved further onto the bed, dragging her with him.

“I think it’s good. I’m not used to you being so...”

“Chunky?”

“Beefy.”

He laughed. “Oh. I must admit, hadn’t heard that one yet.”

“I’m starting to like the longer hair though,” she looked up and tucked some behind his ear that had slipped from its confines in the ponytail behind his head. “Suits you actually. I just have to get used to the new Seb.”

“Same Seb. Just in different packaging,” he offered as she smiled. “God, I missed you.”

“Yeah, I missed you too. Skype and texts hasn’t cut it,” she agreed, solemnly.

“Yeah, I know. Can I jump in?” he asked, spotting the free space beside her on the bed, noting his extreme exhaustion all of a sudden. It had been a long, hot, hard day. “I want a proper hug, please.”

“Yeah,” she said and he kicked the covers back and pulled his body around hers, chest to chest. Sebastian curled a hand on her hip and breathed.

“I’m glad you’re here.”

“Me too,” she admitted. “I missed you more than I thought I did.”

“Same here,” he said nervously before he kissed her forehead and she moved closer again – he saw his queue, he’d had just enough booze to be somewhere between making a move that was against their friendship code and sober enough to realise the immanent mistake he might have made. “I better hit the sack,” he pushed himself off the bed suddenly and grabbed his sneakers, getting to his feet. “Sleep well, you.”
She sat up, pulling her legs to her chest and resting her cheek on her knee, watching him shuffle to the door. “You too, Seb. Goodnight.”

He smiled as he closed the door after him. “Goodnight. Like the Garfield, by the way.”

He rested back against the door, swallowing roughly, his head falling back in defeat. It was officially murder being in Sasha’s vicinity. While he couldn’t wait to see her, the torture was just too much at this point. Was being without her easier than being close to her? He wasn’t sure anymore. He forced himself to move as his phone vibrated in his pocket.

Chace: Is our girl alive?
Sebastian: She’s alive and well and I am forgiven.
Chace: Did you tell her how you feel?
Sebastian: I felt an apology was probs enough for tonight.

Sebastian wandered into his room and closed the door behind him, turning his phone off. He didn’t need to hear any more tonight.

Chapter End Notes

Happy New Year, everyone! I can't believe I'm posting this well and truly 2/3rds through January and for that, I apologise! It's been madness. I won't make excuses but being 7 months pregnant and working full time, the motivation to turn the lappy on after hours is a struggle at best. My intent is to get myself together, but please bear with me. I'll post as quick as I can (this post is no doubt a clusterfuck of punctuation mistakes and whatnot, so I hope it's not a disaster). Thank you to all those who've left comments, kudos and dropped in to say hi on Tumblr, you guys are truly the best xoxo

Interested Bystander writes on Tumblr.
Just Friends

Chapter Summary

If she’d learnt one thing in all the years she’d know him, it was that he always managed to make her feel new and exciting ways of hating how much she cared about him.

Chapter Notes

The second of a two-part flashback. I hope you enjoy xoxo

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Sebastian threw himself on his bed, drained. What a night, he breathed.

Hearing the knock only a few moments later, he wasn’t entirely sure if he was surprised or not. “Sebastian?” Sasha called from outside the door.

“What’s up? Come in,” he told her, pushing himself up on his elbows. The door opened slowly before Sasha appeared and wandered over to his bed, pushing into him with surprising force as she hugged him fiercely. “Argh,” he mumbled with a small laugh, the wind taken out of his sails. “What’s up, draguți?”

“I just missed your hugs. I’ve decided beefy Seb hugs are okay, too,” she replied slyly as he laughed and watched her crawl under his covers, covering up to just under her nose. “Can I stay in here tonight?”

“Well, I guess you’re already there,” he noted, genuinely amused as he smoothed the covers over her, hovering over her slightly. “Let me get changed, okay?” he murmured, moving off the bed to raise his t-shirt off his top and jeans down his slender hips. Sasha averted her eyes, a little surprised as he unabashedly stripped before her. While there was nothing sexy about it (who was she kidding? Of course there was), he didn’t hesitate. He slid off his socks and got back under the covers in his boxers with her. “You can look now,” he snickered as she shyly did so, a slight flush creeping across her features. Sebastian bit back his grin, her reaction surprising to him. He rolled to his side and mimicked her posture, laying across from each other, face to face, enough space so they were absolutely not touching.

“Sorry, that was a little confronting.”

“You’ve seen me half-naked before.”

She wanted to cackle – Sebastian had never looked so fucking good before. Her brain wafted back to her 30th birthday trip she, Ollie, Sebastian and the boys had been on only months earlier and while his body was developing, it was not what it looked like right now… Not with this new and improved, bulky Winter Solder body. He looked so fucking good, Sasha felt a little breathless as she watched him lift an arm and push down the blankets to his waist, attempting to avoid the heat.
Sasha wanted to chop off her hands to avoid the need to touch him. All shoulders, chest and abs. "They wax your chest too?" she couldn't resist teasing.

Sebastian gave a wide-eyed nod. "Yes, it was fuckin' awful."

Sasha giggled into her pillow. "Poor Sebastian."

“It’s one million degrees in here,” he grunted, thrashing his legs under the blankets over his lower half. "You realise I usually sleep naked, right?" he dared joke. “I am just a gentleman when you invite yourself into my bed."

Was he flirting?! They never, ever talked about nakedness. They so infrequently spoke about sex. Neither really enjoyed hearing about their other relationships (suited when the other generally didn’t agree with the suitors) let alone other random sexcapades.

“You can keep your boxers on for one night, Seb,” she rolled her eyes as he dared snake an arm around her, dragging her body a little closer to his. “Your arms are different too,” she added, a lot quieter.

"Let's just make the next few days about you and me, okay?" he suggested.

She nodded gently before cringing. "I think I may have inadvertently agreed to a barbecue or something at Chris's?"

Sebastian sighed, a knowing smirk crossing his features. "Of course you did."

"You can cancel, right?"

"I won't yet, you might be sick of me by then and need a change of scenery," he teased.

"Never," she admitted shy as he hummed, humoured though not convinced. She pulled her phone out from under the pillow, announcing, “We need a photo,” she told him, turning the phone on them, she in her night shirt and flushed post-crying face and he bare chested and quite simply, glorious. “Smile, Wiener Soldier,” she clutched his cheeks and smooshed them in her palms as she took the photo. He grinned, all teeth and dimples.

"You ruined it!" he exclaimed, snatching her phone, though pleasantly surprised. It was pretty cute, both mid-laugh at each other as they squirmed in the other's embrace.

"It's adorable, you're kidding yourself," she finally gave him a smile just for him. His chest tightened, relieved to see her smiling again. “I’ve really missed you. Too much.”

“Yeah, I know I haven’t been around much lately,” he sighed, his hand on her hip giving her a gentle squeeze, relieved for her night shirt – skin on skin would break him at this point. “I’ll make it up to you when I’m home, I promise.”

“I’ve had to hang out with Ollie on my own and I don’t know if you know this, but she can be a real bitch sometimes,” Sasha joked like a badly kept secret.

Sebastian giggled. “Yes, I’m aware she can be a handful. I’ve missed you too, you know, iubită.”

She gave him a shy smile. “What does that mean?”


“Ha, suck on that, Ollie,” Sasha sniped as Sebastian snorted and rolled to his back, retrieving his
hand away. The lines felt blurry and between the heat and the meek amount of alcohol still in his system, he knew resisting touch was futile. It got him in trouble with other women and he wasn’t about to make a move only to be rebuffed by the woman he loved. Best he just take the temptation away at all costs. Sasha rolled over as well, turning off her bedside light, the room suddenly dark.

“Come on, you know you’re my favourite. I’m not asking anyone else to come and visit me out here. You’re the only one I can handle in concentrated doses,” Sebastian teased, pushing the blankets off him, save a sheet.

“That’s wonderful. I’m glad I’m the most tolerable,” she muttered.

“You are, I promise. C’mon. Go to sleep, you.”

“Yeah, goodnight Seb,” Sasha shifted her posture to move further away and snuggle onto her side. “Sleep well.”

“You too, Sash. Night.”

---

“Is Chris’s place far?” Sasha asked as she pulled her hair into a high, messy bun. They had just returned from brunch and had agreed to go to Chris’s for a barbecue after Chris sent Sebastian a text earlier to see if they were still keen. Sebastian probably could have skipped it and slept all day, but knew he owed Sasha more than a cop out like that.

“Few minutes away,” Sebastian placed a cap on his head, holding his sunglasses. “We can walk.”

“Cool, let me just freshen up,” she disappeared into the guestroom, closing the door after her. Sebastian stared into the fridge, Sasha had suggested it wasn’t polite to turn up empty handed.

“And we might have to go to the market,” Sebastian called.

“Thought so,” she called back. The door opened a minute later and she appeared in a skimpy, cute white playsuit. A very short playsuit that in most countries would be illegal with legs like that and tan sandals roped around her ankles. “Look okay?”

Sebastian pursed his lips together. Beautiful, sexy, perfect. “Sure,” he managed. “Shall we?”

“Yeah,” she put her bag over her shoulder and met him at the door.

“You smell really good today,” he couldn’t resist telling her.

“Oh, thanks. I found an old bottle of Euphoria when I was packing to come here,” she giggled with a blush. “I used to wear it a million years ago and couldn’t afford the high-end stuff.”

“That’s why I remember it,” Sebastian grinned.

“When we could handle being out all night, then going to a day job then backing it up the very next night?” she laughed, hugging him from behind as he pressed the button for the elevator.

“Seems like another world away.”

“It does,” she agreed. “I don’t even go out after shows now. My body clock is like, ‘oh shit it’s nearly midnight. You might turn into a pumpkin if you don’t get home!”’

Sebastian laughed as the elevator doors opened and they piled in. “Are we that old now?” he asked
after the quiet ride to the lobby and wandered out into the blazing Atlanta midday sun.

“Well, you are,” she said, wrapping her arm around his waist. He wasn’t going to lie, he was lapping up the attention.

“You’re only six months younger than me.”

“Yeah, but you’ll always be older, Sebastian.”

He creased up laughing, adjusting his cap over his eyes. “I remember your 30th in Bora Bora. I’ve never seen anyone more miserable to turn 30 than you,” he recalled thoughtfully as she cringed. “The only way we got you through that week was keeping you drunk the whole time.”

She gave a small laugh. “That is true. It was a traumatic time for me. My older sisters were all married and getting pregnant. I just felt like my biological clock was ticking so loudly. But my life isn’t like theirs...”

“No,” Sebastian agreed, raising an eyebrow at the biological clock comment. Random.

“I can’t imagine settling down like they did. And I refuse to settle for anything less than what I want whenever this guy turns up.”

“What are you looking for then?” he dragged her into the market and put a basket in her hands as he stalked the aisles for chips, dips and other various snacks.

“I don’t know. I guess I know when I see it,” she shrugged. “I guess I do hope one day it’ll all happen at once, you know? When I least expect it?”

Sebastian looked back at her over his shoulder, tossing chips into the basket. “I suppose. Are you even looking though?”

“No,” she admitted, adjusting the items Sebastian had dumped into the basket neatly.

“Well, I guess when it sneaks up on you, you’ll just know.”

“I hope so,” she shrugged before straightening. “I just don’t want to miss out on it, you know?”

“You won’t,” he kissed her temple. “Here,” he took the basket from her as it got heavier and added various spirits to it. “Look, if we’re both 40 and still embarrassingly single, we’ll just marry each other and pop out beautiful Romanian-Australian babies, our gene code would break the mould. Simple, really.”

She laughed, blushing. “Sure. Simple.”

“You don’t think so?”

“Nope,” she said, nonplussed. “Our friendship is too good to ruin with marriage and children.”

He looked at her and blinked slowly. Holy shit, was he just inadvertently friendzoned?

“Huh,” he said, clipped.

“You don’t think so?” she continued pressing. Just push the knife in, baby.

“You’re probably right,” he focused on the cold carton of beer in his hands and walked to the cashier. “You and I together? Confirmed disaster.”
“Yup,” she continued, tugging at his t-shirt and hugging him again.

“You okay?” he asked. It hadn’t escaped him how clingy she had been that day. He wrapped an arm around her and smoothed her hair, a soft, concerned pout on his lips. The cashier gave him the amount, which he paid and pulled the beer into his arms as she carried the bags of snacks and they continued to Chris’s place.

“Yeah. Biological clock just started ticking again. I don’t know where that came from,” she admitted, beginning to dawdle. "Maybe it never really stopped. I just got too busy to acknowledge it."

“For real?” Sebastian gave a small giggle, wandering ahead of her.

“You know, I didn’t really want kids or marriage, but joking about it just then brought everything into screaming focus again,” she confided. "I'm not getting any younger."

Sebastian stopped and put the beer on the sidewalk. He took the bags from Sasha and put those down too. "You okay?" he dared ask.

"Am I that undesirable, Seb?" she asked.

Oh, sweet Jesus. She was the most desirable woman Sebastian had ever laid eyes on. He held her face, crushing her body to his. “Sash, don’t buy into the bullshit. You know as well as I do that the guy of your dreams isn’t far away and will just walk in one day and knock your socks off.”

“What the actual fuck? Is there something in the humidity in Atlanta that makes me a sob fucking story?” she cursed herself, pathetically blinking back tears.

Sebastian had to agree. She rarely cried and in the space of 12 hours, she’d broken down in front of him twice.

He laughed quietly and kept her body to his as she resisted against him. “It’s okay, sweetheart,” he enveloped her tightly. “You don’t have to pretend you don’t want any of that stuff. It’s nice to want a good husband and wonderful children. You’ll be a great wife to some lucky motherfucker and this amazing mom to some gorgeous kids. It’s just not time yet. But fuck, when it happens,” he whispered in her ear. “You’re going to be the best.”

She lifted her sunglasses. He sighed, seeing the tears spill. He padded them away.

“What are we going to do with you, Benzo?”

“I’m such a fucking mess,” she hissed, hiding her face in his t-shirt, leaving watery marks. “I’m crying on a suburban street!”

“You’re okay, I got you,” he kissed her hair as Mackie poked his head out the front door. "I've always got ya," Sebastian hadn’t realised they were at Chris’s place. Mackie gave Sebastian a confused look as he shrugged and gave a small thumbs up. “We’ll be right in.”

“Oh, shit,” Sasha said, looking over her shoulder and blushing terribly, noting they weren't alone. “We here?”

“Yeah, you distracted me and I didn’t realise,” he told her, using his thumbs to wipe away the rest of the tears. “Are you sure you want to go in? We can just got back to my place and watch movies all afternoon.”
“Just get me really drunk, okay?”

He nodded. “It would be my privilege and honour.”

“Thanks, Seb. I’ve never had a friend like you.”

“No shit,” he scoffed as Sasha frowned at his curtness before he forced a fake laugh. He bent over and picked up the bag for Sasha then the carton of beer for himself as Chris opened the door with a wide grin.

“Hey, you two, we were wondering if you were lost,” he joked as they wandered in. “Hope you brought your swimsuits!”

“Nice to see you again, Chris,” Sasha smiled. “May I use the bathroom, please?”

“Of course, just down the hall to the right,” he took the bag from her and she disappeared. “She okay?” Chris asked, concerned.

“She'll be fine,” Sebastian muttered.

“Same question to you then,” Chris raised an eyebrow.

“Fantastic.”

Chris took his queue and opened a beer for Sebastian, who accepted gratefully. "Everyone is outside."

“Right,” Sebastian muttered, walking out.

“What I miss?” Sasha reappeared, brightly. Just like nothing had happened. “Can I help with anything?” she asked Chris as he pottered in the kitchen.

“Actually yeah, can you help me take some of this stuff outside?” he pointed out some salads and various condiments.

“Absolutely,” she smiled.

“Seb okay?”

“Never better,” Sasha assumed, chomping on a few chips as she followed him from the house to the table set up in the yard. "Why?"

"He just seemed a little agitated before he headed outside," Chris said quietly.

Sasha shrugged. "No idea. He just pulled me back from the ledge, but that's not unusual."

"Are you okay?"

“Yeah,” she sighed, accepting the glass of champagne he handed her. "I don't know where I'd be without him, sometimes."

"That's sweet," Chris told her sincerely. He raised his beer. "Cheers, huh?"

"Yes, absolutely," she toasted him.

"Lemme introduce you to everyone."
Later that evening, Sebastian sighed as he attempted to keep Sasha off the road as he lead her back to his apartment. She was extremely woozy after too many glasses of champagne in the heat. He wrapped an arm around her waist as she pushed against him to give her space.

“І can walk,” Sasha muttered, squirming in Sebastian’s arms. He took Sasha’s hand, not letting go.

“You doing okay?”

“Yeah, I’m okay,” she said although he knew she was anything but.

“Morning,” Sebastian smiled a little warily, holding his coffee cup to his lips the next morning.

“How’s the head?”

She raised a hand and wobbled it. “Too soon to tell,” she admitted, somewhere between awake and wanting to go back to bed, on the verge of hungover or not. She sat on the stool opposite him.

“Have you been to the gym already?” she noted his shorts, tank top (biceps for days, don’t get her started on the shoulders) and ball cap. She was still in her nightshirt. He’d seen her worse.

“Yup, was awake at six. I was going to have the day off, but I figured you’d sleep in and after all that beer yesterday, I felt awful. Weights session helped.”

“Sure it did,” she said, her tone not at all believing as he laughed loudly.

“You want coffee?” he offered, going for a coffee cup, already slurping on one for himself.

“Please.”

As Sebastian prepared one in his little coffee machine, she could not help the way her eyes seemed to have a mind of their own. He was like a fine wine, just getting better with age. From bare feet, her eyes travelled up his muscular calves to his thighs that had seemed to take the brunt of the gym work. His slim waist, his back and how his chest expanded into solid shoulders.

Jesus Christ, was she drooling? Pull yourself together, idiot, she cursed, wiping her mouth with the back of her hand as he turned around and put the coffee cup before her.

“If this acting thing falls apart, Seb, at least we know a good barista,” she said thoughtfully.

He grinned. “I’ll keep that in mind. Was thinking...

“Hmm, did it hurt?” she purred, attempting her first sip at her coffee. She relaxed instantly.

“Watch it, you,” he muttered, pointing her her. “I held your hair back while you puked everywhere last night. Then cleaned up after you’d passed out.”

She dropped her head, partially mortified. “Sorry. Thank you.”

“It’s fine,” he said with a small laugh.

“What were you thinking?” she slowly raised her eyes to meet his.

“I thought we could go to the aquarium then go get dinner somewhere later tonight? Easy day.”
“To anyone else, it sounded exactly like a date. Two these two, it was a regular Sunday. “That sounds like fun,” her face lit up, forcing Sebastian to smile himself.

“Awesome, so we can have a quiet day?”

“Yes, I would love that.”

“Movies on the couch?”

“Perfect.”

---

After a day of very little, junk food on the couch and a few cat naps during various movies, Sebastian and Sasha found themselves walking through the park after dinner, both quiet as the sun set. They found a spot on the grass, shoulder to shoulder and looked up at the sky. It was a lovely clear night although the humidity was high, covering them both in a light sheen of sweat.

“It’s nice out here,” she turned her head, resting her chin on his forearm, big eyes looking up at him. Her Sebastian. His wild, untamed dark hair he just didn’t understand how to maintain now it was too long for him, his face unkempt for his role. Those soulful eyes and those perfect, full lips. It was supposed to be easier by now. She was supposed to be over this. Why did he have to look like that? Why did he have to smell as good as he did? Why was he the most beautiful soul she had in her life? Maybe she didn’t actually realise she was one of the lucky few he did happily spent his time with.

Worst crush ever.

“What?” he smirked. “You’re looking at me all weird.”

“I’m just looking at you,” she smiled, brushing a single piece of hair that was just a bit too short behind his ear. How she wanted him too be all hers. It would certainly help when she went back to New York and wouldn’t have to see him every day. It was just too hard now.

“Sash, I’ll always be there, you know that, right?” he tore at some grass, not looking at her. “No matter what happens, no matter who we’re with. I know who my family is. And I’ve got my Mom, but you? No one compares to what we have.”

She wanted to kiss him so desperately. She wondered if he knew. She wanted to tell him that she was in love with him and in her dreams, he would tell her the same thing desperately and it would be perfect and beautiful. They would kiss and fireworks would explode in the sky. But this was the real world. All of those things were swallowed down as she inhaled sharply, failing again to contain herself.

She sighed and fell back on the grass, moving herself to rest her head on his thighs. “I know.”

He smiled down at her. “Ești frumoasă,” he twirled her hair around his long fingers, enjoying the silky strands.

She blushed – she knew what that meant. “Seb?”

“Yes, Benzo?” he looked up to the stars.

“You know how you joked that if we’re still huge single losers when we’re 40, we’d get married?”
He belly laughed – what a beautiful, dorky sound, she realised. “Uhh, you rejected my extremely unromantic proposal, if I recall correctly. That shit hurts, Benzo.”

“Well, it wasn’t a real proposal without a platinum diamond sapphire engagement ring or you down on one knee,” she teased.

“Oh, that’s where I went wrong...” he giggled quietly. “I’ll remember that when I propose for real.” Really. He would.

“I take back my previous answer.”

“Okay,” he nodded, still smiling. “Only if we’re huge single losers at 40 though,” he mocked her. “Does this mean we’re engaged?”

“Secretly. Only if no one else comes along,” Sasha stipulated and continued with a smug grin. “Do you want to tell your mother that?”

He pulled a face, shaking his head empathically. “Noooo.”

She laughed louder. “Oh, poor Ana.”

“Seriously, she’s obsessed with settling me down at the moment,” he muttered. It was then Sebastian realised just how different a path their lives had taken. He just wasn’t ready for what she wanted, it all made sense now.

“I think it’s cute.”

"Are my life choices so bad if she's that desperate to marry me off?” his tone changing to much softer, quieter.

"No, you know that's not the case. She loves you. She just wants to see you happy, Sebastian."

He shrugged. "I'm just happy living my life right now."

"You can only do what pleases you," Sasha reminded him.

He looked down at her and nodded, a little forlorn. "Guess so."

"Don't get into your head," she pressed into his chin cleft. "Not tonight."

"Sorry," he admitted. "Tell me a secret," he changed the subject abruptly. "Tell me something no one else knows."

Sasha gave a light giggle. "You know everything about me."

"I know that's not true."

"What do you think I'm keeping from you?"

"Love."

She raised an eyebrow, heart rate rising. "Huh?"

"When was the last time you were in love with someone?"

"Too long ago to bother discussing," Sasha sighed. You, she knew. When I realised everything was
about you. "Same question."

"Lily," he shrugged. It wasn't a complete lie. "Do I know this guy, is that why you won't tell me?"
Sebastian continued.

"No comment," she replied, face flushing as he lowered his torso to hover over her face, squinting.

"Tell me," he ordered, attempting domineering, but mostly just coming across as a cute, demanding puppy.

She inhaled sharply. "You don't wanna know," she replied, a hint of heat in her tone.

"Try me."

"Seb, please."

He laughed. "So, I know him," he figured, raising his arms and cracking his knuckles before settling back again.

Sasha covered her face with her hands as Sebastian laughed again. "Stop..."

"No, I want to know. Okay, let's try it another way. Was it worth it? Or you won't tell me because it was shitty?"

"It wasn't shitty, it was good," she said meekly.

"Just good?" he asked skeptically.

"Great, he knew what he was doing. Kept me very pleased. I hope he could say it was reciprocated."

"Well, good for him," Sebastian grinned. "Tell me who it was!" he practically shouted.

"Seb!" Sasha sat up and covered his mouth with her hands as passers-by gave them strange looks. "Shut up, crazy."

He laughed, pulling her hands away. "I'm sorry, if you just told me, there would be no issues."

"There are no issues."

"There is, you're keeping a secret from me. Friends don't do that."

"I don't recall me ever putting the hard word on you like this," she frowned.

"I tell you everyone I've had sex with," he shrugged, like it was no big thing. And with a lot of the girls, it really wasn't.

"Have you considered I'm not entirely interested about your sex life?" she bemoaned. "That maybe you overshare?"

He let out a wolfish grin. "Never," he pushed her off him tenderly and moved over her body in a prone stance on the grass over her, his hands caging her under him. She watched his hands before meeting his eyes. "Are you good?"

"Yeah," she said uncertainly.
"Me too," he breathed, licking his lips.

"Yeah?"

"Really good," he nodded, nudging her nose with his and letting out a gentle hum, dropping to his knees either side of her thighs. "You're very beautiful, Sasha."

**WAS HE GOING FOR IT?!**

Sasha blinked a few times, her skin visibly flushing under his gaze. "Seb -"

He breathed deeply. "Do you ever consider..." he began, before chewing his lower lip, an obvious nervous trait. "That maybe... everyone is right about us?" he carefully ran a warm hand down the side of her face, his stony eyes boring into hers.

"Seb - " Sasha tried to hide her panic.

"What?"

"Taylor," she told him quickly. "It was Taylor."

Sebastian frowned. "What about him?"

"The last person I had sex with," she said meekly. "We were seeing each other for a while."

"Oh," he swallowed, his pulse sped up. Shit. He pushed himself back and moved to the side of her, a frown masking his handsome features.

"Taylor and I were sleeping together," she clarified.

"Huh," Sebastian replied monotone, running his hands through his hair, another nervous tick. He kinda wished he didn't press it now. "Are you still seeing him, Benzo? Is that why you're telling me? Is that why you don't want -""

"No," she cut him off, furiously shaking her head. "It's not happening anymore."

"Were you guys dating?"

"No."

"Just fucking when he was in town." It wasn't a question. Just a cold statement.

"Yeah."

"Well, I guess you have needs like everyone else."

"It was a bit of comfort too, I guess."

"Why did it stop?"

"I don't know. Didn't feel right. I meant, it felt great – ""

"I do not need the details of you and Kitsch fucking, Sasha," he side-eyed her, pulling his knees to his chest and wrapping his arms around them.

"I just thought you should know," she finished, quietly, turning her face away.
Neither said anything for a long time. At some point, Sebastian offered Sasha his hand and they walked back to his apartment silently, taking turns to lead the other, rarely walking together. They didn't say much to each for the remainder of her trip. For a few months afterwards, things were terse. No one asked any questions - they knew at some point things would come good again between Sebastian and Sasha and of course, they eventually did.

Chapter End Notes

I hope you enjoyed the wee little flashback, you crazy kids! Don't hesitate to leave me some comments, I love hearing what you think about the story, its progression/regression whichever. Thank you as always for those who left comments, kudos and dropped in to say hi in Tumblr. You are all such gems to stick with me. I know I'm not a regular poster but you all make me want to be so much better than I am.

---

Interested Bystander writes on Tumblr.
Splish Splash

Chapter Summary

If she’d learnt one thing in all the years she’d know him, it was that he always managed to make her feel new and exciting ways of hating how much she cared about him.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Another fantastic class, kids. And remember we’ve got full dress rehearsal at the theatre this Saturday morning for our Spring concert, starting at 10:15am, so parents and carers,” Sasha looked over at them as the gathered their children’s belonging, one half looking up from their varying mobiles devices, the others not so much. “Please aim to have the kids there a little earlier to ensure we’re running strictly to time. Please make sure you bring your costumes as well your shoes and I will see you all then!”

The 10 year olds dispersed excitedly around Sasha to collect their gear as she waited patiently for the room to clear out before taking in a deep breath – she was so excited herself. Not for the concert, although yes, she was thrilled for it but it was still a few days away, but Sebastian was arriving home from Europe while she was teaching her evening class and waiting at home for her… or so his texts suggested.

Hearing one of the girl’s hiss, ‘that’s the Winter Soldier again!’ was enough to garner Sasha’s attention towards the door. A small amount of hysteria had broken out as Sasha could hear Sebastian’s quiet laugh outside. Quiet, nervous laugh, his voice next as he said hello.

Sasha’s heart jumped in her throat, he had come to surprise her! Still, after all this time, the butterflies returned and she couldn’t wait to kick everyone out and lay the biggest cuddle and kiss on him she could muster.

“Miss Benson?” one of the mother’s asked lowly, approaching Sasha. “Is that your partner the kids are getting so enthusiastic about?”

“I think so,” Sasha blushed. “I will confirm if he shows his face,” she added jokingly as the mother grinned brightly.

“Well done, sweetheart, well done!” she continued, gripping Sasha’s wrist pleased before calling her daughter and leaving.

Sasha went to the door and leaned up against it to see Sebastian surrounded by children and parents, signing autographs, bobbing to his knee and taking bright smiley selfies. Sebastian flashed her a smile that screamed, ‘help’ as she grinned and kept an eye on the scene as the hallways started to finally clear out. So handsome, Sasha thought a little dreamily. How she possibly could forget the beauty of the man she loved, she wasn’t sure, but it sure knocked the wind from her sails when he reappeared after being away for a while.

“Hi, welcome home,” Sasha grinned as Sebastian made his way over to her, pulling her into his strong arms, lifting her off the ground gently as he took in her scent, allowing it to centre and ground
him. He buried his face in her neck, inhaling deeply.

“God, I missed you,” was all he said into the crease of her neck, his hot breath tickling her skin and leaving a gentle peck on her warm, soft skin. Home was all he recognized.

“I wasn’t expecting you to come and meet me here,” she said quietly, giving his hair a gentle tug.

“I couldn’t wait to see you,” he admitted, looking up to kiss her lightly. “I knew you wouldn’t be home when I got back, but the apartment didn’t feel right so I came here instead.”

“I’m glad you’re home,” she told him, pushing his dark hair back from his stony, albeit extremely tired, bloodshot eyes (he didn’t sleep on the plane, she figured). “How was your flight?” she dared ask.

“Good,” he shrugged. “Uneventful. But fuck that, I’m home now,” he broke into a grin. “Please tell me that your last class? That’s what the timetable said…”

“Yup, last class for the night,” she confirmed, pulling him with her with a clutch of his woolly jacket and leading him back into the studio. “Let me tidy this place up then we can head home,” she told him, nodding towards the few chairs that were kept on site for the parents that hung around for classes. He took advantage and threw himself in a chair, yawning loudly as Sasha started pulling off her dance shoes and pottered around barefoot. “Ready to go?” she asked a while later, sneakers on, snuggled into his oversized Knicks jumper as Sebastian looked up from his phone with a dopey grin.

“No.”

“No?” she frowned, putting her backpack on her shoulders.

“No,” he repeated, pushing himself to his feet and unzipping his coat and brushing it off and letting it hit the ground, leaving him in his navy-striped t-shirt that was, as usual, possibly a size too small. “Drop the bag, Benzo,” he instructed.

“Seb, what are you doing?” she asked with an uneasy giggle as he walked to the door and closed it over, shifting the lock and trapping them inside. Whatever he had cooking in his pretty little head, it was had him moving decisively.

“We’re going to bless the studio. It’s perfect, mirrors, the acoustics are fantastic…” he told her, backing her up to the mirrored wall, his hands snaking under her top and caressing the bare skin on her sides, pressing her into the barre, holding her by the ribs, his thumbs tracing the underside of her breasts. “We should have done it a while ago,” he continued, his mouth moving to her neck as she crumbled under his palms.

“We’ll probably do that, baby, but we won’t be the first people to do that,” Sasha giggled as Sebastian nudged her legs apart to push himself between them, giving them both a little friction. He frowned, a little disheartened, Sasha noticed. “Yeah, sorry. Eva beat you to it, bub. Well before the first classes were running,” she added with another giggle.

“Yeah, I know,” Sebastian sighed, easing off her a little, a gentle pout gracing his fetching features.

“Sorry, sweetheart,” Sasha shrugged meekly, resting her hands on his shoulders, index fingers twirling the ends of his soft hair. His head lollled back, eyes flitting closed. “Why don’t you take me home and fuck me all over our apartment instead?” she asked suggestively as he raised an eyebrow, scratching his stubbly chin in contemplation, an amused grin playing on his features. "Against the bedroom window, overlooking the City maybe?"
“Not an all together terrible idea,” he acknowledged, rubbing his chin pensively. "Very descriptive too. How long has this little idea been cookin'?"

"Little while," she admitted bashfully.

Sebastian chewed his lower lip. "I'm in. Figuratively and literally."

Sasha rolled her eyes, exasperated. “Oh, fuck you,” she pushed him away as he chuckled. “I'm so glad you're home, baby,” she told him faintly as she watched him pick up his jacket, sliding it back over his shoulders and smile back her. He collected her backpack.

“Ha, you missed me,” he taunted, though happy he as he’d missed her as much.

“Yeah, I did. A lot,” she confided as he held his hand out to her.

“Take me home and make me forget about everything 'cept us, huh?” he offered as she linked her fingers through his. She locked the studio and wandered the chilly Spring New York evening to follow him home.

---

“So,” Sebastian said later that night after a bottle of wine he’d brought back from Europe and pizza on the couch that turned into very lazy sex to reacquaint themselves with the other. “I got the contracts for We Have Always Lived in a Castle couriered to me today,” he said, sitting in between Sasha’s legs in their bubble bath, both realising early into the bubble bath it not entirely made for two.

He sipped his champagne, Sasha giggling behind him, pulling his hair into a bubbly Mohawk. She carefully reached for her phone and took a sneaky photo of the ridiculousness. He knew she was up to something behind him, but loved having his hair played with so he paid her snickers no mind.

“Let me guess,” she sighed, popping a bubble on his muscular shoulder. “They’re moving production up to tomorrow?” her voice laced with sarcasm.

He gave a soft laugh. “No, no,” he massaged her thigh with his free hand reassuringly. “Definitely still August. And definitely Ireland too.”

“Fuck,” she muttered a little dissatisfied as he leaned back, resting his head back against her shoulder. The production plans hadn't changed but there was a suggestion the filming dates would change and that didn't appear to now be the case. “So, France is officially off the table, huh?”

Sebastian sighed. He knew this news would come as disappointing to Sasha, but knew she’d understand. They’d re-evaluate and see what else they could do to work around his commitments, simple. “Yeah. I think so. Probably. That okay?”

“Shit,” Sasha said, inhaling against him. “It is what it is, I guess.”

“Sorry, baby. I know how excited we were about that trip.”

They had started formulating a plan to spend about a month or so in France, including the capital for their anniversary (including Sebastian possibly proposing just like he'd planned). Bordeaux, Lyon, Nice, Marseille were also on the list. Sebastian wanted to leave some time open to possibly get to Vienna for a few days. If he was lucky to swing a few extra days, which was now appeared impossible, he wanted to attempt to get home (though he hadn't told Sasha, he'd pushed Romania to the back of his mind. While he was initially keen to go back to where he'd grown up, recently
reflecting on his time there had put him in the shrink's chair and he wasn't as excited to get back as he thought he was) too.

“So, I still come visit you,” she shrugged. “I’ve never been to Dublin.”

Sebastian cheered up at her sudden change of heart. He knew she wasn’t sold, but she was at the table to negotiate - it wasn't something she was entirely notorious for. Best possible case scenario at this point. He’d take it. “And Bray.”

“And Bray,” Sasha reiterated. “Will it be okay if I come with you? You’ll be working the whole time.”

Sebastian laughed. “I try to get you to come with me everywhere I travel to and you always find an excuse to leave me high and dry. Why would this be any different?”

She cleared her throat. “Selective memory there, bub,” she reached forward to chew his earlobe as he shuddered against her, snuggling back into her again. His head lolled back against her shoulder as she left soft kisses and licks down the vein in his neck, a low growl came from Sebastian, now completely at Sasha's will.

“Are you implying my tricks to keep you on my beck and call aren’t working in all these beautiful places I force you to join me in?” he pondered.

“I always enjoy myself when I get there, I’m just useless with surprises,” she protested quietly.

“No shit!” Sebastian cried, grinning to himself. “Sasha Benson, I want you to come to Ireland with me. Please don’t make me beg you, my old knees can’t take the punishment.”

“Gee, dramatic. Okay, I'll come for a weekend,” she joked. “Just to appease you.”

He groaned, turning to look back at her. He gently held her chin in his pruned hands. “Has anyone told you today you're trouble? A complete pain in the ass?”

She grinned, chewing her tongue. “Not today, no. Was that telling you I am?” she bopped his nose as he rolled his eyes.

“Absolutely,” he shook his head. “Just come to Ireland. Let's avoid the fight for once.”

She grabbed his cheeks and mashed his lips together, giggling quietly at his smooshy face. “I have the time off anyway,” she reminded him. “The kids will be on hiatus, which in theory says –”

“You’re unemployed until the next semester. And that makes you mine, mine, all mine!” he managed to cut in as Sasha manipulated his pliable face in her hands, giggling to herself at how his face contorted before her as long as he allowed it.

“Guess so,” she rubbed his stubbly face back to its usual handsomeness with a contended sigh, a burst of giggles still poking through as she spotted her red fingerprints left on his cheeks.

“Are you a little tipsy right now?” he asked, a bit humoured as he took her hands and sat back, wrapping them around his chest.

“Could be, yes. I wasn’t sitting here, drinking a bottle of pinot on my own every night while you were gone, iubiţel. I mean, I could have been. But I didn’t. I’m outta form without you around.”

“Well, if you're insisting on a night of drunk sex,” Sebastian picked up the bottle of champagne on
ice, sitting of the floor of the bathroom. “You’re on.”

Sasha licked her lips eagerly for the champagne and the thought of another round with Sebastian. She eagerly handed her glass to him. “I don’t need to be drunk to have an amazing time with you, bub,” she reminded him as he smirked over his shoulder at her and carefully handed back her glass. She took a sip of the chilly bubbles, closing her eyes in contentment. “I love you, Sebastian Stan.”

He shook his head with a contented smile, easing a light kiss on her lips. “I know, Benzo. I love you too.”

“Had a thought.”

“What might that be?” he asked as Sasha wrapped her arms around his shoulder, leaving a trail of wet kisses down his neck, Sebastian turning to mush under her touch, sliding a little further into the cooling water.

“We can have a bath anytime.”

“True.”

“So why don’t we dry off and put our California King to good use, hmm?”

Sebastian hummed, feigning consideration. “I see where you’re going – ” he jumped as Sasha delicately bit into the sensitive skin at the base of his neck, forcing a hiss out of him and noticeable goosepimples on his back, shoulders and down his arms. “Jesus woman,” he said softly. “I’m beginning to think you actually did miss me a little,” he stifled a chuckle as her lips continued across his shoulders.

“Just a little,” she played along. “What do you think?”

“I think I can reach the towels from here,” he told her, taking both their champagne flutes putting them on the vanity before reaching out, grabbing on to both their towels before carefully standing in the tub, bubbles coating him from the hips down as he wrapped the towel around his waist, giving Sasha his hand and helping her to her feet, tossing the towel over her shoulders, before wrangling his arms around her waist, pulling her close.

Dragging one hand painfully slowly up her side until he was able to grasp her cheek, he laid one of those painfully slow kisses on her, leading with his tongue. Slow and terribly sexy was his forte and right now he was curling her toes. She held his shoulders tightly, fearing her knees would go on her and his grip tightened instinctively – he knew how she reacted to his kiss. “Come on,” he slowly pulled back, eyes opened, the colour barely visible and Sasha only seeing black.

He stepped from the bath and carried her over the ledge precariously, not letting her feet hit the cold tiles, forcing her to use her strength and curling her legs around his waist. The towels were a waste as they kissed again, both towels loosening on the walk back to the bedroom, trailing them before collapsing to the carpet altogether.

Sebastian lowered Sasha back to the bed and eased her onto it, refusing to break the kiss as he knelt on the bed, damming the overpriced cream 1000+ thread count sheets (they were going to ruin them at this rate anyway). His kiss was what dreams were made of.

He nudged her knees apart and kept her calves tucked into his lower back, his body lowering gently on hers, hips to hips, as she lost her fingers in his hair, gripping the wet locks in her hands, forcing more aggression into their kiss as she nibbled his lower lip. His moan turning her on more than she thought possible as he moved a hand between her thighs, knowing the time in the bath wouldn’t help
the cause to get her wet for him but the kiss would and as the pads of his long, slender fingers circled her clit. She relaxed into the bed, a sigh escaping as he smiled against mouth, his tongue lapping hers. Her hips rising to meet his, needing the friction.

“Tell me what you want,” he begged, moving his lips to Sasha’s cheeks, sweeping around to her forehead. “Anything.”

“Do not change a thing,” she demanded breathlessly as he crushed her lips with his again. He was killing her slowly, she realised. This was how she was going to die. She was going to die with Sebastian Stan between her thighs. The headstone would be a treat though! ...well, maybe there was worse ways to go, she thought, pulling his face back to hers and kissing him deeply. “I want you,” she told him in no uncertain terms. “Now.”

“Yeah, baby,” he told her, adjusting himself, his tip teased her now-warm slicked entrance. A small grunt greeted escaped him as he pushed his way in. “Love you,” he kissed her, rolling his hips into her hips that meet his, a soft rhythm developing.

“Love you,” she replied, linking her fingers with his and he restrained them with his muscular arms above her head. “Jesus,” she muttered as he kissed her chin and moved to her clavicle, forcing a shudder to flow through her. “Deeper, please...” she managed as Sebastian used a little more force, his hips speeding up just enough to rub her in just the right spot. “Right there,” she could hardly make out as he released a hand to grip her hip and lower his mouth to her enthusiastic nipple. “Seb,” she begged quietly.

He hummed, unable to verbalise as her warmth fluttered around him, reminding him she was close but he had plans to drag this out. Why rush? Neither was on the clock. Grasping the hand he held, he pulled her up and onto his lap, beads of sweat and remains of the bubbles from the tub slicking their skin together. Sitting her right where he could get deeper, Sasha gasped, sinking onto him as he moved her hips and she rolled above him, lacing her fingers into his wet, matted hair. “I’m so glad you’re a dancer and know how to use you body,” Sebastian strained to mutter, kissing between her breasts, before resting his forehead on her shoulder, bodies moving in synch. “Your body was made for me.”

Sasha’s heart fluttered, it was about the sexiest thing she’d ever heard him utter and he was always complimentary. She snatched his chin to hers and kissed him again. His kiss made sex 100 times more exciting. He knew just how to work his lips and tongue to make her putty in his hands. “It was,” she agreed. “No one has ever made me feel this – ” she moaned as Sebastian keened with a deep roll of his hips. “Good. Ever,” she managed to add as he managed a grin back at her. “Fuck,” she murmured.

“You okay?” Sebastian asked, grasping Sasha’s hips as she bared a nod, he clawed at her soft skin before he laid himself back against their pillows, watching Sasha take advantage on top of him. He liked it here – he was in no way feeling lazy, but fuck, if he didn’t admire the way her body moved. He chewed his lip as Sasha’s eyes closed in pleasure. Sebastian pulled her body down to his, leaving a lasting wet kiss on her mouth as she smiled against him before creeping out of his grasp to sit up again. Sebastian’s hand tickled Sasha’s shoulder, trailing down her middle before landing on her clit. She sucked in a breath as her thrusts fumbled above him, above to lose her nerve. “Come on, baby,” Sebastian urged, hip ramming a little more forcefully finding that sweet spot inside that would trigger a chain of events that brought him just a step closer to heaven on earth.

“Fuck, fuck,” she muttered, her body flooding with heat as she fell apart, body pulsating to its own beat as she came, her fingers joining Sebastian’s in desperation to drag out her orgasm.

“Jesus, gurită, you feel so good,” he strained out, trying in vain to hold back. “You’ll make me
come, baby.”

“He shook his head, not ready to give in. “This feels too good. Can you go again? ...please?”

She gave him a helpless shrug, trying in vain to regulate her breathing as she moved to lay across his chest, their bodies stilling. “Where do you want me?” she kissed across his Adam’s Apple.

“Get on your side,” he demanded, rolling to his as she collapsed off him, body spent as Sebastian snatched her leg back over his thigh, bodies pressed together Sebastian’s chest to Sasha’s back. He gently pushed himself in again, knowing how sensitive she would be. Sebastian moved again, cursing to himself at the marvel of Sasha’s body, still tight and thoroughly wet all because of him. “Jesus, Sash. Baby...” he leaned forward to kissed her shoulders, trapping her in close as his big hand pressed into her tummy, keeping her glued to him. “Again. Again, please?” he begged as his fingers traced to her clit and started running furious circles again.

Sasha’s body clenched, grinding back into Sebastian, a devious mix of torture and the sweetest pleasure he could provide. She reached back to slap his thigh, telling him she was close yet again. “I know, baby. You’re doing so good,” he whispered. “Come on, sweetheart. You got this,” he encouraged, straining as her heat dragged him closer and closer before she finally called out, her nails digging into his skin as she came again, a string of curses escaping her as Sebastian guided her through it, his body losing its control and slamming into her as he came. “So good,” he relished coming himself as her body dragged his with hers. “Fuck,” he grunted, his body spent and both of them finally stilling, panting wildly. Sebastian gently massaged Sasha’s shoulders, helping her rigid body loosen up again. “You ’kay?” he breathed.

A reply came in the form of a weary hum, her nails no longer used as weapons but to traced the claw marks she’d left on his thigh. Sebastian chuckled against her skin, gently nuzzling the nape of her neck as she shivered. “Stop,” she begged, twitching away. “Sorry,” he apologised, but didn’t remotely mean it. “Christ,” he panted, spent.

“You okay?” she referred the question to him.

“Better than,” he told her. “I missed every part of you, but I missed this a lot too,” he confided, trying to stifle his yawn.

“Let me tidy up then we can hit the sack, okay?” she told him, looking back at him as well as she could. She gave him a gentle smile, trying not to giggle. Post-love making Sebastian Stan was a sight to behold. His flushed skin, wild dark hair, chapped lips. Perfection.

“Okay,” he nodded, he kissed her gently. “You sure you can move?”

“We’ll find out imminently,” she told him as Sebastian grinned like the cat that got the cream, rolling away and stumbling to the bathroom, legs not prepared to work just yet, closing the door after her.

---

“I don’t know whether I say ‘break a leg’ or ‘good luck?’” Sebastian watched Sasha as she tossed some fruit into her backpack with a water bottle, prepping herself for her day. Sebastian had just gotten back from a run and was munching on some avocado and poached eggs on toast. He hadn’t seen much of Sasha since he got home with her dance school’s recital rehearsals but today was the day: the little school’s inaugural Spring concert and he’d been watching Sasha bounce around the
apartment nervously since before their alarm.

Yes, Sasha woke up on her own volition before an alarm. Sebastian had guessed from her tossing and turning most of the night (he was a shitty sleeper at the best of times so he knew she was awake most of the night) before that she was pretty anxious. She gave up on sleep pretty early and got to a 6am yoga class, knowing she’d interrupted his sleep more than enough.

It was Sunday.

Who was this woman and what had she done with Sebastian’s Sasha Benson?

Sasha grinned up at him as he rested his frame against the bench in the kitchen, pushing some avocado that slipped from his breakfast onto his stubbly chin into his mouth. “Since I’m not technically dancing, maybe ‘good luck’? ” she offered.

He finished the last of his toast, shovelling it less than gracefully in his mouth, Sasha tried to hide her repulsion and failed – the only time he was less than sexy, when he was shovelling food into his face. He occasionally ate like he was eating his last meal – this was one of those times, clearly ravenous after his trek around the park. “’ood luck, ‘aby,” he said between chews and a large final swallow before dusting himself of crumbs, a cheeky smile on his face.


“If you’re going for ‘hotter than all the moms and bringing the dad’s who don’t want to be at the concert to the knees’,” he gave a thumbs up. “Then you’ve nailed it.”

She blushed, hiding behind her hands. “Sebastian, no.”

He laughed and shrugged. “Then dunno what you’re after, baby. ‘Cause that is what you’re cooking.”

“Do I at least look semi-professional?”

“Oh,” Sebastian winked. “Yes, completely. You look beautiful, as always,” he promised, taking her wrist and pulling her in close. “Good luck, I’m so proud of you and what you’re done this year. But I’m super happy that I get to have you all to myself as soon as this concert finishes,” he laid a gentle kiss on her pulse, his hands running up and down her sides.

“Yeah, that bit works pretty well for me too,” she admitted. “I feel bad that I’ve been so busy since you got home. Sorry, honey,” she gave him an apologetic kiss and a meek smile.

“It’s okay,” he shrugged. “I’m just happy to watch you succeed, sweetheart.”

“You sap,” she couldn’t resist muttering as he chuckled quietly, with a modest shrug. “I’d better go.”

“Okay,” he nodded. “Good luck, I’ll see you there.”

“Okay,” she inhaled sharply the first obvious signs of her nervousness creeping through.

“You’ll be amazing,” he swatted her ass gently as he helped her put her backpack over her shoulders. “Let me know if you need anything, okay?”

She nodded, wide eyed. “Okay.”

“Relax. I love you, now get the fuck out of here or you’ll be late. That would be unprofessional,” he hinted with a smirk. She checked the time and gasped, pulling away from him.
“Love you too,” she said a little panicked. “See you later, bub.”

“Bye, baby,” he giggled to himself as she rushed out of the apartment, the door slamming after her.

---

Sebastian stood back as he watched Eva and Sasha laugh happily a little while after the recital, each clutching the other’s wrists happily. The kids had taken their final bows and had swarmed both ladies with bouquets of flowers. Sebastian was shocked at the gift baskets around their feet and a pile of familiar blue boxes and the matching white ribbons.

Eva noticed Sebastian first and nudged her head for Sasha’s attention. Sebastian gave a simple wave and a kind smile, as Eva returned his wave and excused herself, telling Sasha she’d see her at the bar for a celebratory drink later. Sasha beamed and dashed into his arms as he held her tightly.

“This kids were fantastic,” he told her. “I am so proud of you right now, you have no idea.”

“Thank you,” she said, kissing his fuzzy cheek, not wanting to let him go.

“Check out this swag,” Sebastian pointed around them. “This from the parents?”

She nodded. “Oh, it’s not all mine,” Sasha reassured him. “Some of it is Eva’s, too.”

“How are we gonna get all this home?! I didn’t think to drive the AMG if we were hitting up a bar!” he exclaimed. “ Seriously, where are we gonna put all these flowers and stuff?” he chuckled incredulously.

“I don’t know,” Sasha admitted with a giggle, a little overwhelmed herself. “So, you survived?” she had to smile. A bunch of kids dancing probably wasn’t the way Sebastian preferred to spend a Sunday afternoon, but he arrived with his mother and Olivia just prior to the curtain rising (he got there as late as possible, not wanting to steal any of Sasha, Eva or the dancers’ thunder. After the success of Civil War, he was being more and more frequently spotted around the City, so he made sure he picked his timing as well as he could before taking his seat) and Sasha could not ask for more from him.

“Yeah,” he chuckled quietly. “You did good, baby. Real good.”

“The kids were so excited,” she told him, beaming again, Sebastian could hardly contain himself when she was so motivated like this. “They were so happy, I’m so glad I could be a part of it.”

“I am too,” Sebastian gave her a wide smile. “You are so beautiful right now, I can’t get over this smile,” he thumbed her lower lip. “So after the bar with Eva, I had made plans to take you for dinner, but all I can really think about is getting you home and forgetting all that other stuff,” he admitted selfishly.

She gave him a small grin. “Dinner sounds nice though, I haven’t had time to eat today.”

“All right, let’s get this stuff home then. Few drinks, dinner. Then bring you home and we’ll see what happens,” he shrugged casually. He knew exactly what was happening when they got home.

“Oh, things will be happening,” Sasha confirmed. “Lots of things.”

Sebastian smiled, letting Sasha go and pulling out his phone. “Booking an Uber SUV and we’re getting outta here,” he winked as she giggled and started sorting through bouquets and gifts.
“Jesus, this is ridiculous,” she told herself. “Completely surreal.”

Chapter End Notes

God, I feel shit that time between posts is getting larger and longer. Time seems completely out of my hands and I've kind of lost the passion for this story. Probably because I expected it to be over ages ago. I think we might only have a few chapters to go and then hit up some one shots. As most of you know, I'm nearly 8-months pregnant so my "free" time is becoming less and less. I hope you understand and I appreciate those who take the time to review, leave kudos or subscribe. You are true gems xoxo

---

Interested Bystander writes on Tumblr. Find my Bucky fic there, TOFWYA inspo and pretty pictures of Seb that encourages this story.
“Sara, it’s Sash. I just got out of the airport. Sorry I missed your calls, immigration was a bitch. A few flights arrived at the same time, I guess,” Sasha apologised as she juggled her luggage to the waiting driver out the front of International Arrivals at Dublin Airport, he gave her a friendly smile, helping her with her gear and ushering her to the backseat. “I’m just about to jump into the car,” she said, doing so. She gave the driver a smile of appreciation.

“Hey, Sash, I am so happy to hear your voice,” Sara, Sebastian’s assistant, replied. “Sebastian is filming as we speak.”

“You are my angel,” Sasha said. “And the birthday boy has no idea I’m here?”

“No,” Sara laughed. “He’s convinced he’ll be picking you up on Friday morning from the airport. Can’t stop talking about it, in fact.”

“I can’t believe you were able to organise this to surprise him, Sara. Thank you again.”

“He was always going to upgrade you to First, so it made it easier for me to change the flights.”

“You're the best. Seb’s a sweetheart, hopefully he’ll be happy to see me.”

“Oh, my God,” Sara scoffed. "Of course he will be!"

“Is he complaining that it’s his birthday? He hates his birthday.”

“No,” Sara laughed. “He hasn’t mentioned it and neither have I. I think he’s just happy it's appearing under the radar to everyone else. I think the director has organised a massive cake for the end of the day too, he’ll hate it!”

Sasha laughed. "Perfect."

It was always a recurring thing of just how much Sebastian disliked his birthday, no one really understood why (Sasha had an inclination it might have had something to do with his father, but he’d never dared elaborate on it). Sasha always wanted to ask, but Sebastian rarely spoke about his dad and she definitely wasn’t going to attempt to coax it out of him if he wasn't willing to share on his own terms. He’d been seeing his therapist pretty regularly again and hadn’t gone into any depth as to why. When she’d asked him after she’d woken her up one night to go to the bathroom and found him wide awake beside her, he only shrugged and replied, “stuff from when I was a kid” before rolling over and forcing himself back to sleep. She’d just assumed it was something to do with his parents, snuggled into his back until she could feel the tension ease from him and go back to sleep.

They had grown up so differently, Sebastian living in Europe until he came to America with his amazing single mother and she married Sebastian’s step-dad and all of a sudden having step-siblings, all very overwhelming for an only child who only ever relied on his mother. His childhood was okay, but he always felt the outcast whereas Sasha would have given anything to have had any kind of space. One of five girls, her father joined them all at the dinner table every night (when he wasn’t travelling for work), Sasha took as much space as she could when she decided to give dancing a go in America.
She had no regrets of that choice. Her decisions to leave her life in Australia seemed to have paid off to this point. In no world would she have ever thought she’d be a principle dancer in some of Broadway’s biggest and best shows; that she’d make some of the best friends she’d ever come to know and eventually have fate turn her way to fall in love with the man of her dreams… and that he’d actually feel the same way.

…she suddenly wanted the driver to put the foot down and get her to Sebastian’s hotel as soon as humanly possible, she contemplated going directly to set but didn’t want to make a scene or embarrass him (nor spoil the surprise). While she thought they were getting better with the extended time apart they’d been begrudgingly spending, when they were finally in the same city again, neither could stand being without the other. It was desperate and both would hate to admit out loud, but how Sebastian Stan and Sasha Benson learned to rely on each other over the years and how much they needed the other now, it scared them both.

...not that they’d ever admit it, to each other or anyone else for that matter.

“I don’t know how to thank you,” Sasha said, taking in the sights as they drove. Sasha was in Ireland! She hated beer but couldn’t wait to get a Guinness down her throat. Sebastian had seemed to be enjoying his time there and Sasha was looking forward to a night at the pub with him.

“Seriously. It’s all good, it was easy to pretend nothing was happening. This is what I do,” Sara laughed a little longer than Sasha expected. Sasha stared at the phone with a grin before putting it back to her head, amused.

“Well, you deserve an award, my dear. I can’t thank you enough.”

“It’s no trouble,” Sara reassured Sasha. “But I gotta go, Seb’s calling me.”

“No problem. I’ll see you in the next few days or so.”

“Absofuckinglutely.”

“Bye.”

“Wir sprechen uns bald,” Sara hung up.

---

Sasha was relieved Sebastian wouldn’t be at the hotel for a while. She’d just gotten her hands on the extra key Sara had left at the concierge for her and made her way to his room. She wanted enough time to shower, make herself over like a goddess (or try to before the jetlag from the redeye JFK-LHR-DAA kicked in and she was comatose and no good to anyone) and be ready for her gorgeous man to come back for his birthday surprise. It was good timing, their first anniversary was only a few days after (that is what they’d planned she fly in for and go to Paris for the weekend to celebrate since the France trip was more or less off the table now, much to their disappointment).

Wandering into his bedroom after grabbing a bottle of water from the minibar, Sasha grinned. Bless his cotton socks, he was attempting to be neat. Or attempting to do so in his way. She noticed the baseball cap on the end of bench and a photo of them on his tallboy (it was from her bedside table from the Civil War premiere, he is whispering in her ear with a small smile as she nuzzled into him shyly). She knew he’d stolen it, but didn’t think he’d put it up while here). The room smelled incredible. That Sebastian Stan smell. Fresh, clean and sexy, his cologne. She missed him so much.

Sara said she’d text when she’d Sebastian was done and on his way back. Not knowing if she had five minutes or five hours, Sasha decided it best to shower before she ran out of time. She unpacked
some of her toiletries and wandered into the bathroom, turning the water on before she eagerly stripped - she needed to de-plane herself.

Oh, how excited she was to see her amazing man. It has been three weeks. Three long weeks of no touching, kissing, making love at all hours of the day. No waking up to his annoying 6am gym alarm (maybe she didn’t miss that too much), binge watching shitty TV on Netflix, sharing a bottle of wine and laughing at stupid things. She was pleased getting in early to surprise him had gone off so well. With the time difference and Sasha making some excuses that she would be unavailable at times that morning, she’s arrived in Dublin without so much as a grouchy text from Sebastian demanding to know why she wasn’t answering her phone.

She had texted him the whole time on board her flight while waited on hand and foot by the gorgeous flight crew in her First Class seat Sebastian had upgraded. He had made it even easier for her to change his flights without alerting him but didn’t want to be one of those assholes on the plane on a flight talking either. If there was a flight announcement, all surprises were lost. Thank you on board wifi for making connecting people surprising their other half on their birthdays almost too easy.

She would see him imminently and it made her giddy at the thought. Tying her hair up, she ducked under the hot water, glad to be getting 8+ hours of airplane off her. After a good thorough wash, she jumped out and looked at herself in the mirror. It wasn’t all bad, she reckoned. She put on Sebastian’s snuggly hotel robe (how he’d become so obsessed with them baffled her, but this one wasn’t so bad she could admit. He certainly occasionally enjoyed the finer things in life) and ditched the towel, prepping herself for the evening.

Hearing her phone, Sasha dashed to the bedroom where it was charging and saw Sara’s name.

Sara: *He’s done for the day and on his way back to his apartment, still no bday talk, HA! But he begrudgingly blew out candles on an obscenely big cake and blushed and was all adorable with the focus on him, about to send a pic x*
Sasha: *Thank you, sweet Sara. You are amazing! Is he in a good mood?*
Sara: *Tired, but his usual polite self.*
Sasha: *Fantastic, thank you again xo*
Sara: xxx

Not a minute later, she got a text from Sebastian himself, telling her he was finished and would call her when he got back to the apartment.

Dashing back to the bathroom, Sasha finished her make up, leaving it minimal. She knew Sebastian hated when she over did it, like her old stage days. He always felt like he wasn’t seeing her, and as soon as he knew the freckles on existed on her nose, he preferred make on her even less. She’d touch it up before dinner that Sara had organised for them at one of the city’s Michelin-starred restaurants and give herself a more evening look.

“Where is that fucking bodysuit?” she hissed, sifting frantically through her luggage. Once found and securely in place, she took her hair out and gave it a few quick flicks. Sebastian couldn’t be far, she knew.

She hung Sebastian’s robe back up and sprayed on some perfume. Last step was those heels he loved her in while they made love then got comfy on his bed. Only a few minutes later, she heard the front door open and Sebastian conversing in Romanian. Clearly his mother on the phone, wishing him a happy birthday. He was laughing.

His whistling got louder as he made his way to the bedroom. As the bedroom door opened, Sebastian yelped (yes, yelped) and jumped back, holding his heart. “Jesus fucking Christ!” then broke into a huge grin, still clutching the doorframe (his knuckles turning white), attempting to collect himself without looking as completely overwhelmed as he felt. “Well, well, well. Look what customs and immigration let in the country? They'll just let anyone in, huh?” he chewed on his lower lip, eyes scanning Sasha’s hardly-covered body. “Gee, you look good.”

“How are ya, birthday boy?” she winked, trying and failing to hide her giggles at scaring him.

“Umm, little shocked,” he stalked to the bed and his eyes went from bright blue to black and lustful in seconds. He pushed her knees apart so he could slide between them and pulled her into his strong arms. “This is a lovely surprise. A beautiful woman on my bed in some beautiful wrapping,” he gently kissed her, his fingers tracing the panels on the bodysuit that was glued to her. “Hello. Are you really here? I’m not dreaming, am I?”

“Hi, bub,” she kissed him deeply. “I’m here. This is definitely not a dream.”

He laughed, pleased. “I’ve missed you so much, you have no idea,” he licked his lips, his eyes travelling down her body. “Arăţi splendid.”

“What? This old thing?”

“This old thing,” he repeated mockingly. “You look incredible.”

“I think I believe you,” her fingers travelled to his jeans and cupped his hard on. “You just can’t hide that reaction from me,” she whispered as he blushed, his forehead falling to her should bashfully. “So why don’t you unwrap your present and see what’s in this pretty, little package?”

“I should go in for a shower,” he said apologetically - he almost couldn’t believe what he was saying. “It’s been a long day.”

“Are you sure that’s what you really want to do?” she asked with a squint. “You’re just going to get dirty with me too…”

“Jesus,” he gave a low giggle, kissing her roughly before rubbing his face. “It’s been three weeks, I’m desperate,” he gently bit on her nipple through the flimsy material as she squealed and pushed him away. He grinned and gave her a long kiss, all mint and coffee, his fingers travelled over the material and he eased back, grasping her leg, fingers walked to where he desperately wanted to be. “Ooh, look, handy little clips,” he smiled, unpopping the clasps and it rose to her hips. “Hello,” he whispered but not in greeting to Sasha’s face, planting a small, open mouth kiss on her inner thigh.

“Sebastian…” she moaned with a giggle as he looked up seriously.

“What?”

“I dunno, you’re being silly.”

“Are you about to deny this man his birthday cake?” he asked innocently, he actually batted his lashes at her. Who did he think he was and how did he honestly think he’d get away with that face? Goddamnit, he knew exactly whom he was and that faux innocence on his face dragged her in.

“No,” she smiled. “Guess not.”

“Good. Now you,” he looked up at her seriously. “You just relax and let me eat.”
“If you insist,” she replied as Sebastian refused to hesitate, leading eagerly with his long tongue. “Jesus Christ, Sebastian,” Sasha inhaled sharply, hardly given time to be eased into it as Sebastian pinned her hips down to avoid her coming off the bed. His exceptionally skilled mouth licked, sipped and sucked her clit while his long fingers crept lazily to her heat and plunged two fingers into her easily. He lazily pumped in and out of her and she gently pulled his dark and caramel locks (a lovely little addition to the blonde that had remained after bleaching his hair earlier in the year), encouraging him as she writhed beneath him. He dearly loved his hair being pulled. “Keep doing what you’re doing, baby.”

Teasingly, Sebastian pulled away and Sasha groaned in sheer frustration, immediately regretting her words. He slid up her body with a cheeky, wet smile. “Arms up,” he urged, pulling at what had already crept up her body of the lingerie. Sasha rolled her eyes a little petulantly, the flutter in her core disappearing sadly as he removed the bodysuit and turfed it over his shoulder. “Don’t worry – do you think I’m not going to let you come?” he shook his head before kissing her gently, Sasha able to taste herself on his lips. “We are just getting started, guriţă.”

“It’s been a tough three weeks,” she defended herself and pouted as Sebastian chuckled quietly, lips cascading from her pulse and slowly making their way down her throat, his hands dragging up her sides, thumbs circling her breasts before enjoying the weight in both hands. “I’m completely naked and you’re still wearing everything including you sneakers,” her breath hitched as he nodded and lapped his tongue around a nipple.

“Just torturing myself a little,” he explained.

“You weren’t the one just denied an orgasm,” Sasha muttered as Sebastian cackled a little louder. “Relax, we have time. You’re in such a hurry,” he shook his head in a gentle scold.

“I am, you may not know this about yourself,” Sasha huffed. “But you’re incredibly sexy and after not seeing you for three weeks, a girl – ”

“Woman,” Sebastian corrected, his lips travelling down her ribs.

“Woman, whatever,” she sucked in a breath.

Sebastian raised an eyebrow. “Do you have a point?” he pulled her knee over his shoulder, kissing her inner thighs again, but staying away from where Sasha wanted him.

“Yes, I’m horny and I would like you to be inside of me now, please,” she demanded as he grinned, shook his head and revealed his tongue, keeping his gaze on her, taking her with it again. “Jesus, fuck me,” Sasha grunted, head falling back in frustration in the pillows. “Okay, that works too.”

Sebastian adjusted himself, cock straining in his jeans. Maybe he wasn't exactly as cool and calm as he wanted himself to be - Sasha was right, it had been a long three weeks. But he wasn’t getting undressed until Sasha had come and he knew from the pressure on his fingers that she was extremely close and he could push her over the edge at anytime which he did in spectacular fashion as he increased the pressure on her clit, her body exploding for him. He kept up his ministrations as she whined under his touch and rode out her orgasm against his mouth, feeling her body ebb under him. “Hmm,” he smiled in satisfaction and licked his lips, raising his index finger. “That’s one!”

“Have you been practicing? That was amazing,” her head fell back in the pillows before looking up sharply, hitching herself up on her elbows. “You’d better say no.”

He looked up with a juicy smirk. “Only in my mind. I know it’s my birthday, but my intent is to
make you come,” he kissed above her pubic bone. “And come,” he kissed her hip. “And come,” he pinned her under him. “Look at your little rosy cheeks,” he mocked, before dragging a finger down her throat. “And this sweat. Work you up, did I?”

“You’re very cheeky today,” Sasha raised a curious eyebrow, smacking his hand away bashfully. "Is this what happens when men turn 34?"

"It is when I turn 34," Sebastian grinned broadly and rested his chin on Sasha's belly. “I’m just happy to have you here on my birthday.”

“You’re infinitely cuter on your birthday,” she twirled his hair around her finger.

“Maybe,” he shrugged modestly.

“You’re still fully dressed, I’m 100 per cent naked.”

“Yeah,” he grinned, his fingers walking from her hip to her shoulder then down her arm, causing goose pimples. “I like it.”

“Get undressed, please,” she instructed. “I’ve missed that body,” she pulled him to his knees and raised his arms, pulling off his t-shirt. “I have to send Don a muffin basket. Jesus Christ, Sebastian…” her voice trailed off. It was the arms. Those smooth biceps and forearms. This was the explicit reason they never went the gym together. After watching him rip bicep curls in the gym one morning, all sweat and grunts, she refused to let him finish his work out and dragging him all the way back to his apartment for a much more exciting morning… though Don didn’t agree.

He grinned, humoured by her awe of him. “All right?”

“My timing is amazing, look at those abs,” she traced the smattering of freckles across his pale tummy. “You don’t get older, you just get sexier,” she muttered. "You're impossible."

Sebastian laughed loudly. “Are you dead?”

“Close to heaven, yes,” she smirked as she pulled on his necklace and he hovered over her, licking his top lip, exceptionally humoured. “Can we fuck now please?”

“Absofuckinglutely,” he kissed her roughly as he kicked his sneakers and socks off. He paused to slide his jeans over his hips and drop them to the floor. “I got you,” he whispered, running the sensitive head through her wetness. "Jesus Christ."

“I know, bubba,” her eyes closed and she moaned as he entered her, but it wasn’t remotely as guttural as the sinful sounds Sebastian was making.

“Three weeks is far too long, fuck me,” he grunted. “We need to make better arrangements in future.”

She whimpered as he changed his rhythm and she struggled to find it again. Her hips rose to meet his. “Way too long,” she managed.

“I’m not going to come until you do again, but baby, this is a little too much for me,” he strangled over as her lips licked and nibbled as his clavicle. “You feel amazing though,” he whipped his mouth back to hers as he reached between them and thumbed at her clit gently, knowing she’d still be sensitive from their previous activity.

“Yup, right there,” she whimpered as her next orgasm started from her feet and rose quickly. She
pulled her to him, gripping his hips to hers as she saw stars. He groaned for her as he couldn’t control his movements any longer and slammed into her as he came quickly after her. He collapsed on her after his last few thrusts and tried to collect his breathing.

“Sorry,” he apologised meekly.

“What for? I just had two orgasms!” she reminded him incredulously, a weak, blissed smile on her lips that he couldn’t resist kissing hungrily, resting his heavier frame on hers, kissing across her shoulders.

“I can perform a little better than that,” he said a little shyly as her jaw dropped. “Feel like an out of control teenager,” he shook his head, dismally.

“Hey,” she said softly, lifting his chin to meet her eyes. “Get out of your head, bub,” she ran her fingers through his hair as he scooted away a little to lay beside her, wrapping a leg and his arm across her tummy.

He lifted his eyes with a small smile. “I’ll make it up to you.”

“You have nothing to make up,” she kissed him, hoping to reassure him. "And neither should you."

His smile grew. “It won’t be,” he reached over to kiss her gently.

“Happy birthday, sweetheart,” Sasha said, a true affection in her voice as she watched him scrunch his face up.

“Thank you. I can’t believe you’re here. This is an amazing surprise, the best present.”

“I wouldn’t miss your birthday. Never.”

“You tried to weasel out of drinks last year, and on my actual birthday, you almost forgot it,” Sebastian reminded her with a yawn, a cheeky grin forming on his lips, all bright eyes, dimples and gleaming teeth. "That was only last year."

“I turned up to your drinks – ”

“Fuck, you looked amazing,” Sebastian recalled. “I think I was hard the whole night. I’m pretty sure the dress is what told me to get my shit together and convince you to come to Berlin with me.”

“I can’t even remember what I wore,” Sasha wriggled, the slick between her thighs starting to make her feel a little uneasy. "You have a better memory than me."

“It was white, sorta to the knee, and your tan. Fuck, your tan was surreal. I searched all night to find a tan line, it was impossible in that dark bar.”

Sasha laughed. “I worked hard on my tan last year. It was the only upside to my fucking knee…”

“Coming to Berlin must’ve been on your list,” Sebastian forced a pout. “If you were working, it never would have happened and we’d never have Paris.”
Sasha sighed. “True,” she smiled and cupped his smooth cheek. “I have to move,” she awkwardly rolled from Sebastian’s grasp and teetered to the bathroom, closing the door after her.

Sebastian grinned to himself, feeling a little smug. He kind of thought Sasha might have made her way to Dublin early as he knew her classes were over and she’d had a few days on her own before the dates they’d agreed she travel, but of course he was surprised it actually happened. Hearing the toilet flush and the sink turn on, he smiled wider. It was still him that was going to surprise her – next weekend, they would be in Paris. And with the engagement ring he had brought months before, he was going to ask Sasha Benson to be his wife. And she was going to say yes and they’d live happily ever after.

Sebastian frowned, hmm. Maybe in a perfect world it would be that easy.

Sasha reappeared a minute later, shivering as she ducked back into the cool hotel room. “Bub, I need to put my passport in the safe before I forget – ” she started for it as he sat up in shock.

“Huh?”

“The safe. My passport,” she announced with a tease. “I don’t want to lose it. Is the password your usual?” she asked, pulling the t-shirt Sebastian was wearing before he whipped it off over her shoulders, the chill on her body evident with her goose pimples and tucking her arms over her chest.

“Uhh, no,” he said, pushing himself from the bed as Sasha retrieved her passport from her handbag.

“No,” he cleared his throat. “I changed the password,” he lied, holding his hand out. “Passport? I’ll do it, babe,” he offered as Sasha frowned, a slight giggle escaping from her lips as she handed it over.

“Here, weirdo,” she mumbled, ducking back under the covers to warm up again as Sebastian forced a shrug and went to the safe, pretending the code wasn’t the same as usual, lying when he said, “Oh, fuck, wrong password,” he feigned annoyance as he changed the password from what was his old favourite to a definite new one. Sasha was far enough away without her glasses to see he was purposefully fucking up. The safe door opened and Sebastian tossed in Sasha’s passport with his quickly… next to the cushion-cut sapphire engagement ring that was waiting patiently for them and Paris.

He’d move it the second she was out of eyesight and give it to Sara for safe keeping.

Putting another password in, the door closed and the new password was secure. Sebastian looked back at Sasha, who was motioning for him to come back to bed ASAP. He grinned, he was hopeful it didn’t appear as apprehensive for his lucky shave as it did.

“Get back in this bed immediately,” she urged him, patting the mattress. “I’m ready for you to back up those orgasms and gimme a third,” she winked, knowing there was nothing sexy about what she was doing as he crept over to the bed and pushed the blankets off her so he could tangle himself between her legs, dick twitching again in anticipation.

“Yes, guriţă. I’ve got you right where I want you,” his tongue swept against her lips and pushed into her mouth, fiercely, happy for the quick distraction. Not wasting any time, Sebastian pulled Sasha’s legs around his waist and his body told her in no uncertain terms it was time to buckle up. They had time to make up for.

“I missed you,” Sasha told him, running knuckles across his cheek, needing his attention for just a second more. Sebastian chewed his lip, a dimpled smile appearing on his handsome face.
“Not remotely as much as I missed you, baby.”

“La mulți ani, Sebastian Stan.”

He groaned with a smile, giving her a begrudging thank you, kissing her deeply and again, reassured this woman before him was the woman he was going to spend his life with.

"And where is this cake Sara said you had on set?"

"How’d you know?" Sebastian raised an eyebrow. He sighed in defeat. "She knew all about this, didn’t she?"

"How’d you think I got in here?" Sasha grinned. "You owe that woman a pay rise."

Sebastian nodded. "She's got it."

Chapter End Notes

And that's it, my loves. I'm officially on hiatus/mama fan fic writer leave. BabyInterestedBystander (aptly titled by OMOWatcher) will be here immanently so... I guess I say thank you to all of those amazing readers who leave comments, kudos and added my to their subscriptions. I will be back, but from other fan fic mamas experience, I know that it may not be as easy as I hope it is to post. --- Interested Bystander writes on Tumblr. Find my Bucky fic there, TOFWYA inspo and pretty pictures of Seb that encourages this story.
Going Back to the Start

Chapter Notes

If she’d learnt one thing in all the years she’d known him, it was that he always managed to make her feel new and exciting ways of hating how much she cared about him.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Sasha: I love Dublin <3 Are you far, bubba? I’m getting hit on left, right and centre at the moment. PS – I mean, it feels nice, don’t get me wrong. I’m not gloating. Just missing you.

Sasha: Nothing makes you jealous these days, does it? I figured if it did, you may be replying.

Sasha: There are Aussies everywhere FYI! I haven’t heard this many accents from home since I was last there. We’re talking footy (real footy, not the American rubbish), I wanna take you to a game when I finally get you to Australia. You’ll hate it.

Sasha: I’ve now finished 2 Guinesses on my own – where are you? God, they’re awful, but when in Ireland, right?

Sasha had been at the pub waiting for Sebastian close to his hotel and he was nearly an hour late. She figured he was still filming or talking shit (and being his generally lovely self by thanking everyone for their help etc) as it was his wrap day but he always had his phone in his hands, he could have texted at least with an ETA.

Saying that, two Guinesses were not really Sasha’s thing. She was tipsy, a little lightheaded and pretty sure at this point she would not be making it to the cast dinner if Sebastian’s pretty little face didn’t turn up shortly to rescue her from her third pint. She’d been chatting to a group of young Aussie girls who were on a bus tour around the UK and Ireland, causing Sasha’s homesickness to kick up a gear. It had been nearly 18 months since she’d been home and although they’d decided they were going to Melbourne at Christmas, Sasha’s pangs of missing her family were in full effect.

Feeling familiar calloused hands tenderly massage her shoulders in warm palms, Sasha moulded back into Sebastian’s chest as he leaned down and kissed the side of her neck in greeting. “I’m so fucking sorry, I had to pay the food truck guy,” he gently grasped Sasha’s face and turned her to face him before kissing her lips before licking his own, amused. "Now which asshole was hitting on you?"

Sasha nodded over her shoulder at the poor lad whose shoulders slumped dejectedly at Sebastian’s appearance, his mates now pasting him. He ordered him a pint for his effort.

"Cruel," Sasha murmured, nuzzling into Sebastian as he gave a low laugh.

"Generous," he corrected as she giggled, her face reddening thanks to the hilarity and booze. “Hmm, you have been slamming back the Guinness, haven’t you?” he said with a grin. “Little drunk, guriță?”

“Getting to the point I’m a lot drunk,” she admitted as he chuckled and took the stool beside her, sliding the pint before him instead before a deserving mouthful.

“I’ll take that,” he suggested as she eagerly nodded.
“Last day went well?” she asked, pushing the bill of his cap back to see his tired stony eyes and he nodded, a shy smile on his face. He’d been recognised a lot the last few weeks and had been feeling a little self-conscious about it. Sasha had done what she could to try and appease his anxiety but he was feeling like he couldn’t leave the hotel room when he wasn’t working. Social media had revealed where he was staying and each time he or Sasha had left, they were followed (the production crew had suggested security for Sebastian but he laughed pretty hard at that idea). He was especially sad for Sasha who wasn’t great with Sebastian’s rising fame as it was. He was at least relieved that fans had been kind and respectful to her when they were together, or on his own. Last thing he wanted was to have to say something about it. He didn’t go out of his way looking for bad press but it was getting more difficult to fly under the radar these days.

He was concerned though. Sasha didn’t want to bother him with problems his fans brought along, but she’d recently quit Instagram (something he wanted to do himself, but had been asked by his people to retain and post only every once in a while). Sebastian understood, it was a part of the job. But in the next few days, he was asking Sasha to marry him and while he was flattered for the attention he was currently receiving, the last thing he wanted was Sasha to be victimised.

“Real well,” he confirmed, stealing a bar snack before her.

“Everyone loved you?”

He shrugged modestly. “It’s nice to be nice,” he reiterated, crunching on the nuts.

Sasha giggled quietly as she watched him sip his draught, his shoulders slumping as he relaxed. She leaned into his side, sneaking a hand in between his strong, muscular thighs. There was nothing sexual about it, she just needed his warmth close and to loosen him up a little too. “I can’t wait to get to Paris tomorrow,” she whispered, loud enough for him to hear in the loud pub.

Sebastian hummed, a small grin on his face as he found Sasha’s palm and linked their fingers. “Me either, we deserve a vacation after this year. It’s been a big one.”

“Definitely,” she agreed. “I can’t wait to get to the beach either.”

“Yeah, few days by the water will be amazing. You need some sun, moon tan,” he joked, inspecting the paleness of her usually darker completion.

“How was I going to get a tan in Ireland?! ” she exclaimed as he laughed, leaning down to kiss her.

“I love you, baby. More than anything,” he mumbled against her lips, the hand that grasped his beer now cupping her chin. He watched Sasha blush. Even after a year of hearing those words, he still knew exactly how to make her melt.

“I love you too,” she said as he kissed her again for good measure. When she pulled away, she lurched back with a start, noticing the girls she was chatting to earlier staring at Sebastian across the bar. “You have been recognised, Mr Stan,” she told him as he sighed and looked in Sasha’s direction. The girls faces lit up as they calmly approached.

“Hi Sebastian,” they chorused with wide grins and giggles, the usual response women expressed around Sebastian.

“You didn’t mention this was the boyfriend you were waiting for,” one of the girls chastised Sasha as Sasha shrugged.

“Don’t often lead off with Seb being my boyfriend,” she retorted as Sebastian gave a gentle warning tug to Sasha’s hand still in his. They held up their mobile phones, silently asking for a photo. Who
was the Selfie King to deny his adoring public? He gave a polite smile and nod. “I’ll take it,” Sasha spoke up. She always preferred to not be in any fan photos with him. Even after all this time, the vitriol she received from people who thought they knew her still stung.

The girls crowded around Sebastian as Sasha pulled back and took a few snaps.

“Say, ‘Aussies love a good Irish pub’ – no, I’m kidding. Just say ‘cheese’,” Sasha said behind the phone as ‘cheese’ was repeated and Sebastian grinned like he was at a professional photoshoot. He was impossible, she sighed attempting to hide the dreaminess that threatened to reveal itself. She understood what these girls saw in her gorgeous man. He was a dreamboat and she was just as under his spell as everyone else, she was just closer to him most.

“Thanks, Sebastian,” the girls thanked him as he grinned a little wider and gave them his farewells.

"You guys are really sweet together," one of the girls spoke up.

"I know, right?" Sebastian said cheekily as Sasha rolled her eyes at him. Sasha went back to her seat at the bar beside Sebastian and he wrapped an arm around her shoulders.

“I’ll never get used to this,” she told him with a sigh.

“What?”

“You, getting as famous as you are,” she admitted. “I’m so bloody happy for you, you have no idea,” she told him sincerely.

“Butttt?” he smirked.

“You can’t go anywhere anymore, can you?”

“It is getting harder,” he admitted. “And I know it’s annoying for you.”

“I don’t mind,” she shrugged. “But you’ve changed your number twice in the last few months.”

“Yeah, that’s shit,” he agreed, taking another sip. “It’s what I always wanted. To become successful. And I guess that’s happening now.”

“I’m glad it hasn’t affected you,” Sasha admitted.

His grin widened. “What did you expect from me?”

She shrugged, humming and taking another sip of the beer. “I dunno – that you’d get really huge, your ego monstrous and realise you can have other woman in this place… let alone the world. You pretty much are the full package, you know.”

He cringed. “Completely untrue - you just handle my neuroses better than most.”

"I’ve never met anyone more deserving of all of this than you. You work hard and you are so giving. I can’t tell you how much I want to tell these fans to fuck off and give you some peace but you just take it in your stride, like it’s no big thing.”

He shrugged. “I just want to keep my rep clean,” he explained as if it was the most obvious thing. “As long as they aren’t being rude to us, I don’t mind signing autographs or taking a photo. You understand that, right?” he asked warily. He knew she wasn’t overly thrilled when they badged them at dinner, or if people took photos across the street. It creeped her out.
Sasha put her chin in her palm, watching him and that gorgeous face as she leaned against the bar.

He was such a beautiful distraction, somehow she didn’t know how she got things done some days (not including those days his face was a complete distraction and he could convince her to stay in bed with him in various states of undress). Like right now in his black ball cap, his blue reflective Wayfarers slung into the collar of a holey blue t-shirt (he knew what colour worked on him), his low slung jeans, Calvins and sneakers. “You’re the most giving person I know, I just want you to know that it’s really special, Sebastian. These people are really lucky to look up to you.”

He chewed his lip, with a small smile. “Thanks, I guess.”

“Why?”

“I dunno, you just make me see different perspectives on things.”

“Such as?”

Sebastian faked a huff, then laughed, rubbing his tired eyes. “We are not getting into this now in a pub when we’re due for dinner for the wrap party.”

Sasha sighed and stretched, tracing along his nose as he gave her an amused smile. The Guinness was well and truly wearing into her system, he recognised the way the alcohol made her weary in a second. “Tell me again that you love me?”

Sebastian stood and pulled his credit card from his wallet to pay for Sasha’s beers then tugged her to him tightly by her jeans pockets. “You’re the best fucking thing that has ever happened to me,” he growled, playfully. “And I love you more than anything else in this world – nothing will ever change that. Even when you come to your senses and realise you’re far too good for me,” he roughly groped her ass as Sasha blushed and laughed into his strong, broad chest as he dragged her from the pub. “Now, giggler, we have to go before we miss the party.”

“What if that was my plan all along?” she asked as she wrapped both arms around his tummy and they made their way to the restaurant.

“What else did you have in mind?” he chuckled, tucking an arm round her shoulder. She reached up and whispered in his ear, stopping him abruptly in his tracks. “Holy shit, baby. That is…” he exhaled taken aback. “Hot. Like… really fucking hot.”

“You keep that in your pretty head until we get back.”

“Fuck the party – ” he tried as Sasha grinned, more than a little smug and started off again, leaving him behind as he contemplated what she had just told him. “That offer better be on the table when we get back later!” he ordered after her as she threw her hands up in a playful shrug, still walking away with a defiant sway in her hips before he jogged after her and caught her in a deep kiss, not caring that they were in the middle of a busy Dublin street at peak hour.

“I didn’t know it was that great an offer,” Sasha told him, chuckling.

“I don’t know why I never thought your suggestion would sound as good as it did.”

“I took lessons,” she informed him. “Not that I needed to, but I did.”

His eyes widened as an attendant opened the door for them, entering the restaurant marked ‘Closed for a Private Function’. “When?”

“When you flew out,” she shrugged simply. “Was fun actually.”
“You are the best,” he said with an entertained giggle. “How am I supposed to make it through the night?”

“No one said life was easy, Sebastian. I expect it will be hard for you.”

He nodded pensively, rubbing his chin in contemplation. “And I assume your mission tonight is to make me as uncomfortable as possible?”

She feigned surprise, squishing his face between her palms. “Baby, I’d never do that to you.”

“You’re notorious for making my life miserable when you’ve got something wicked on your mind,” he chastised her as they were lead through the restaurant to the private dining room.

“Purposefully? I’d never do that to you purposefully,” she corrected him, conceited as hell. “I just thought it would be nice to leave Ireland with a bang. Of sorts.”

“You’re such a fucking minx,” Sebastian had to laugh. “A bang of sorts…” he repeated in a perturbed mutter.

“You love it,” Sasha finally laughed, needing to break the sexual tension.

He sighed, composing himself. “True. And can’t wait to get you back to the hotel.”

“Remember, we have to be at the airport early in the morning.”

“Eager for Paris, baby?” Sebastian couldn’t resist asking.

“Yeah,” Sasha said softly, taking their seats together as the cast and crew greeted them pleasantly, Sebastian protectively wrapping his arm around her shoulders and she snuggled into his chest.

“Te iubesc,” he whispered, discreetly kissing her earlobe.

“You say that to me so infrequently in Romanian,” she sighed, her eyes glassy from the alcohol but maybe because she was in love with him too if the way she gazed up at him had any say.

“Well, you’ll be hearing it for a long time, baby,” he promised.

“I hope so. I love you too,” she told him as he kissed her again.

“I know, sweetheart. I know.”

---

Sebastian had to laugh at the manic, wide smile on Sasha’s face as the plane taxied at CDG. Her nails rattled impatiently at the armrest on the chair before reaching across and smacking a loud kiss on Sebastian’s lips. “We’re here!”

He rolled his eyes playfully. “After leaving late, the airline almost refusing to put our luggage on board and then the delays, I didn’t think we’d get here at all,” he admitted as the plane approached its bay and the fasten seatbelts sign dimmed.

“I’m so glad you have that face,” she told him. “Without it, I doubt we would have flown today.”

He blushed gently, licking his lips in modest reflection. “Well, I did wash today.”

“Chin was pretty messy before you showered.”
His eyes widened, hoping no one heard her but unable to resist a giggle. “Sash, babe. Please.”

She laughed quietly. “Oh, so now you’re shy,” she patted his cheek and pinched his jawline teasingly. “Blame the champagne,” she added flippantly.

“Sure,” he finally chuckled as he stood up to retrieve their carry ons from the overhead locker.

“Monsieur Stan, Mademoiselle Benson, if you would please follow me?” the crew leader offered them a bright smile as Sebastian took Sasha’s hand and followed them off the plane first.

“There are some perks to your rising fame,” Sasha admitted to him as Sebastian laughed.

“I will take you directly to Immigration then baggage claim, your luggage will be unloaded first then your driver will take you to your accomodations. Is this your first time in Paris?”

“No, we were here about the same time last year,” Sebastian replied as they made their way through the airport. “We love it here.”

“It’s a beautiful time of year. Are you staying long?”

“Few days,” Sebastian pulled his hat over his eyes, hearing his name in a hushed whisper, knowing it wouldn’t be longer before he was recognised. “Then we’re spending some time in a few other places,” he didn’t feel the need to fill in the rest as the crewmember smiled, ushering them through Immigration without issue before baggage claim.

Sasha’s appeared as expected. Sebastian’s – well, no. Not quite.

“My luggage is still in Dublin?” Sebastian rolled his eyes a little while later as the plane’s luggage carrousel continued an empty rotation sans his Louis Vuitton bags. “Our bags were together, bay-bee,” he whined to Sasha as she pushed forward to speak to the baggage claim attendant and rattled off some basic French (much to his surprise. He knew she spoke minimal, but not enough to have a discussion), asking what time Sebastian’s things would arrive to their accommodation although the attendant responded in English. She took his passport and gave the rest of the details.

“We can’t do much about it, bub,” she told him as he spun her luggage around on its base wheels, annoyed. He was taking it much worse than expected, she realised before going back to finalise the process as Sebastian texted furiously.

“Gotta pee,” Sebastian said before storming off.

“Okay?” Sasha said after him, a bit surprised at his annoyance. He usually was much more patient than that, she had no idea what was his problem.

Sebastian: Are you able to confirm with the airline that my bag gets on the next Dublin-Paris flight?
Sarah: It didn’t turn up?
Sebastian: Didn’t make the flight. Sasha’s did, mine didn’t. We were late.
Sarah: Ridiculous. I’ll get it sorted ASAP. You packed the ring in your carry on though, so no issues.
Sarah: RIGHT, Sebastian?!
Sebastian: I was worried it might get searched so I put it in my luggage.
Sarah: Sebastian Stan :’-<
Sebastian: My anxiety is going through the roof.
Sarah: I’ll sort it and text when all confirmed. Good luck!
“As much as I love Plaza Athénée, this Air BnB was well and truly the best option, look at this view!” Sasha exclaimed with giddy bounce on her heels as she and Sebastian people watched the street below them from their balcony, his arms wrapped around her waist and he snuggled in behind her and chin resting on her shoulder, occasionally kissing her slender neck. “I want to move here. Or at least Summer in Paris.”

Sebastian sighed. “You love New York too much.”

“I could move from New York anytime. I should move you to Melbourne but your mother would kill me.”

“She would,” Sebastian agreed. “She can’t handle even it when I go to L.A.”

“Let’s agree to never move to L.A.”

“Well and truly agreed,” he said, enjoying the sun on his back, his hands moving to grasp her thighs before crawling back up to her waist. He smiled at the sigh she breathed that he barely heard.

“Would you ever move to Melbourne?”

He hummed, the vibration from his chest rumbling into Sasha’s back. “I’d like to visit Melbourne,” he offered.

“So, no,” she figured with a sigh. “That was a no.”

He laughed easily. “Don’t put words in my mouth. You bitch about how long the trip takes, you left an impression. But I would love to spend some time there. We can take some time at Christmas, like we planned.”

She rolled her eyes. “Good thing I’m committed to New York, Sebastian.”

“Just New York?” he smiled against her neck, biting the soft skin.

“Don’t flatter yourself,” she feigned a sigh, unable to resist him any longer and wrapped an arm back around his neck, pulling at his short locks very much enjoying his caress. “I loved New York before I loved you.”

“You’re so cold to me sometimes,” Sebastian chuckled.

“You can’t even remotely entertain going to Melbourne?” she turned around, her back against the balustrade and looking into his eyes. She held his stubby cheek in her palms, blinking innocently. “Not even for me?”

“I’d go anywhere for you, don’t you realise that yet?” he shrugged simply, moving forward and trapping her legs between his, holding her around the waist, his body tight against hers. He didn’t need to fall for the big eyes and pout she was putting on for purely jovial purposes only. “Is that what you really want?”

Her eyes widened, surprised at his admission. “Really?”

“Baby,” his nose nuzzled hers. “An apartment is just an apartment. Home is wherever you are.”

Sasha bit her lip then licked them, feeling the change the air. “Anyone told you that you always know the right things to say?”

Sebastian broke into a wide grin. “Sometimes,” he leaned forward and kissed her. She pulled away
and took his hand. “You okay?”

She nodded, dragging him gently back into the apartment, closing the door after her. “Let’s just stay in tonight.”

“We have reservations – ” he tried quickly.

“Fuck ‘em,” she cut him off with a grunt, launching at him and kissing him hungrily. He willingly caught her in his strong arms, making a beeline for the bed. “And just fuck me.”

Sebastian dumped her on the mattress, eagerly whipping off his shirt as his phone started ringing. His shoulders slumped with the disruption as Sasha glared back, daring him not to ruin the moment. “I have to get this.”

“You really don’t,” Sasha told him, going for the buttons on her blouse, watching him grab the phone from his front pocket and groaning, exasperated. She fell back on the pillows, before pulling one over her face. Ahh, a tell tale sign she was not impressed, he realised.

“Hello?” Sebastian sighed, watching Sasha’s dejection. Poor timing, but it was a French number and he had to answer it as he sat on the bed.

“Monsieur Stan, just confirming that your baggage has arrived.”

Sebastian smiled at Sasha, crawling to her. “Merci,” he ended the call, before grasping her ankles and moving between then to slide his hips to hers. Next he removed the pillow. “Now you,” he stated, bopping her on the nose. “Don’t move. I’m going downstairs to get more champagne and collect my bags that just arrived then you and I are not leaving this bed until breakfast, you hear me?”

A shiver ran up Sasha’s spine and she nodded. “I hear you.”

“Be right back,” he lifted her blouse and kissed her tummy before dashing from the room. “Love you,” he called over his shoulder as Sasha could only nod.

Chapter End Notes

Did you think I had left for good? tee tee Nah, def not the case. I’d miss this story, and more importantly, you amazing people who have taken the time to read it. Sidenote, I have been publishing on my Tumblr too (not TOFWYA), Lance Tucker and of course, my one true love, Bucky Barnes. Considering bringing them here. Let me know if you think I should or of course, come say his there. Hope you guys enjoy. Life going swimmingly with Baby IB, I wish you could all see how friggin' adorable he is hehe

---

Interested Bystander writes on Tumblr. Find my Bucky fic there, TOFWYA inspo and pretty pictures of Seb that encourages this story.
Big Blue Diamonds

Chapter Notes

If she’d learnt one thing in all the years she’d know him, it was that he always managed to make her feel new and exciting ways of hating how much she cared about him.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

“Baby, just say yes,” Sebastian said, smiling hopefully from his position on bended knee before Sasha as she sat at the mirror in the apartment in her stunning blue/black bra and panties set as she attempted to get ready for dinner that night. He squeezed Sasha’s left hand that was in his warm, albeit clammy, grasp.

The light hit Sasha just right, almost ethereal – Sebastian could not have picked a better moment. He couldn’t wait any longer and felt like he could burst with nervous excitement. His heart was thrumming with intensity. The ring had burnt a hole in his pocket since he’d gotten his hands back on it. He had to ask and he had to ask now before he managed to spoil everything somehow.

He pulled the ring box from his slacks pocket and opened it, watching her face contort from surprise to utter shock, a brilliant diamond Tiffany setting yellow gold ring. “Oh, Sebastian,” Sasha said, clutching her heart, dropping the make up brush that was in her hand and it clattered to the tiles. “It’s so...”

“Sasha, marry me,” Sebastian urged, pulling the ring from the box and taking her hand, inching the band along her perfectly manicured left ring finger, stopping short when she remained silent. He looked up to see tears welling in her eyes and the funny way she shook her head. Disbelief, he figured. “What’s wrong?” he asked, moving closer to her. “You don’t want to marry me?” he choked a giggle as she continued shaking her head and eyeliner drew inky, onyx stains down her cheeks, hitting the corner of her mouth before she used the back of her hands to anxiously wipe them away.

"I knew this was coming, I knew it," she said to herself with a desperate gasp through tears.

Something felt very wrong. The moment, the ring, Sebastian could feel Sasha’s apprehension and it was not veiled by surprise. Confusion started to wash over him as he realised that shaking her head was telling him what he wasn’t understanding.

No.

No, Sasha Benson did not want to marry Sebastian Stan.

“What?” Sebastian said, suddenly, his hand dropping hers like she’d burned him. “I thought you wanted this. I thought we both did,” he got to his feet and leered down at her. “Sasha, say something.”

“No,” she finally said, a dull, empty tone in her voice, eyes blank.

“No?!” he searched her face desperately.

“Sebastian, I’m don’t think I’m in love with you,” she said with a small shrug, it was all she could
offer in her numb state. He could hardly hear her as the blood pumped in his eardrums, deafening him. “I can’t marry you feeling the way I do. It wouldn’t be fair.”

“You don’t love me?” he asked, feeling like the ground was about to fall out from under him as she pathetically shook her head, brushing more tears away and leaving sick smudges across her flushed cheeks. “My God, nothing has changed, has it?” the rage of rejection – something Sebastian was so unfamiliar with these days – washed over him and he snatched the ring back from her, snapping the box shut and lobbing it towards the bar, catching a wine glass and knocking it to the floor floor with a smash. “Jesus Christ, you’re still a fucking commitmentphobe, aren’t you? You’ve never really wanted to be with me, you just enjoy the fuckin’ game.”

“What do you want me to say?” she asked, standing to move before him, grabbing him by the waist desperately as he pushed her hands away, she know longer had the right to touch him as far as he was concerned. “I tried, Seb. I tried so hard to be everything you wanted me to be but I’m not made for this. Your career is skyrocketing, you’re too good for me, you know you are, you’re part of this charade too. I never thought you would ever be the marrying type. Why did you even buy a ring?”

All her questions seemed so foreign to him – who was this woman? Why was she pretending she didn’t understand where she stood with him?

Sebastian ran his hands through his hair and tugged harshly at the ends before going to the kitchen and ripping the screw top from the whiskey, taking a generous slug as he stared hard at Sasha. “I brought a motherfuckin’ ring because I thought you wanted one. I thought you wanted a ring, a wedding, kids - like it needed to made official somehow. I thought you loved me!” he yelled, accusingly.

“I do,” she said back meekly. “I mean, I thought I did,” she added. “But I can’t have it with you.”

“Not with me?” he scoffed with a bitter laugh. “Je-suss,” he took another harsh shot and let the liquid run down his lips, chin and on to the white dress shirt he was wearing to dinner as it burned, hissing down his throat. “So, basically you’ve just been fucking with me. Using me this whole time –”

The sun had risen and was flooding the bedroom when Sebastian awoke with shock and sprang up from his warm pillow, sweat dripping from him profusely. He whipped his head back to see Sasha still fast asleep beside him, clutching her pillow as she did every night in her sleep though now slowly waking after his jolt bounced the bed. She groaned quietly.

“Bub?” she yawned, barely able to open her eyes. Not answering, Sebastian rubbed his face with both hands and forced his dark, damp hair from his eyes. When he remained quiet, Sasha pushed herself up and rested her cheek on his bare, tanned shoulder before kissing it tenderly, sensing he was a more than a little spooked at something. “Bad dream?” she whispered.

“Worst,” he answered, rubbing his eyes before pinching the bridge of his nose. “Fuck,” he took in a sharp inhale and released it shakily.

“How about I ask….” she allowed her voice to trail off.

“I asked you to marry me,” he sighed, flopping back on the pillows. Sasha eased back on her palms and watched down on him as his hard body remained tense, muscles rigid and defined, the Egyptian cotton sheet hovering dangerously low around his hips. “You said no. Destroyed me. Think I forced myself awake before we really got into it.”
“Sounds horrible,” Sasha laid back down and across Sebastian’s chest, kissing his clavicle, tasting his sweat on her tongue. She felt his shudder gently as he kept his hands to himself. His dream had clearly scared him if he couldn’t yet touch her.

He only hummed in reply.

She crept her hand across his torso from belly button to lips as they watched her hand wander. “Good thing that couldn’t be further from the truth, huh? You have such great taste, baby,” she sighed dreamily, spying the Harry Winston cushion-cut sapphire micropave engagement ring on her finger. It all still seemed surreal, Sebastian had asked Sasha to marry him the prior evening, it wasn’t a dream turned bad. They were to be married as Sasha could hardly hide her excitement. “This is just exquisite.”

Sebastian chuckled, finally taking her left hand in his, kissing her ring finger before holding it to his chest tightly. “I do have great taste,” he agreed, admiring her long finger and the colours that now adorned it. “You sure you’re like it? We can change it – ” he tried hurriedly.

“Sebastian, no,” she cut him off, horrified. “My God, I love it. I wouldn’t change a thing,” she grinned, wriggling her finger enthusiastically, watching the morning sun catch against the surrounding diamonds. “Though it’s a smidge big.”

“We’ll get it re-sized properly in New York, it’s a little big for you,” he showered her, wiggling the loose ring precariously.

“This is insured, right?” Sasha asked, suddenly panicked as Sebastian laughed and nodded. “You know me so fucking well. God, this is stunning.”

“Just have a good memory,” he told her with a smirk. “You were very specific when we had that discussion,” he told her as she shrugged, clearly not remembering the conversation. “I honestly wanted to kiss you so bad that night. We were in Atlanta, filming Cap 2. In the gardens. It was so fucking hot, I was thisclose,” he pinched his thumb and index finger together. “This fucking close to laying one on you.”

“Why didn’t you?” she asked, confused.

Sebastian laughed, loudly. “Are you serious right now?”

“Yeah, why didn’t you kiss me?” she asked softly. She honestly couldn’t remember, her face said it all.

Bless her, he thought. He calmed himself and kissed her temple, hoping to soothe her. “You completely cockblocked me. The worst friendzoning ever that night.”

“I did?” she was surprised by the notion. “I was crazy in love with you – what did I do?”

“You told me about Taylor,” he said softly. “My tongue was practically in your mouth and you almost yelled that you had been sleeping with Kitsch.”

Sasha blushed horribly as the image of a sweaty, sexy Sebastian Stan perched over her came flooding back. She felt like she had repressed the memory as the evening came back to her swiftly but she had no idea Sebastian had intended to kiss her. “Oh, my God. You were going to kiss me? That’s why you stopped talking to me…”

“Well, yeah. I mean, I needed space, I was upset and embarrassed. I needed some time to try and figure out what next. But then I went to Hungary, so that helped.”
“Oh, great,” Sasha sighed, digging her face in his armpit. “You only needed to go to Europe for space after I fucked you up.”

“To be fair, I was working. It was just good timing,” he replied. “And you didn’t ‘fuck me up’. Just needed some space and realise that maybe it wasn’t what you wanted and I dealt with that.”

“True.”

He nodded, pouting. “Yup. So you didn’t, per se, scare me away.”

“Oh, fuck,” Sasha sighed. “Bubba, I’m so sorry. I guess I was scared.”

“You definitely panicked,” he gave a small laugh. “But it’s okay because we’re naked as we have this conversation, it makes up for it,” he replied cheekily, gently rutting against her. “But anyway,” he cleared his throat and nuzzled Sasha’s neck, muttering sweet words into her skin.

“Did you honestly ask me to Germany as a friend? Did you think what happened ever would?”

He chewed his bottom lip. “Well, you weren’t having a great time. I missed your beautiful smile and help brighten you up a bit, I stand by that. It was a spur of the moment thing, I just went with it. We had a great time.”

“When you told me you wanted to kiss me, what would you have done if I said no?”

Sebastian laughed nervously. “I dunno. You said yes, so…”

“We had so many moments that I wanted to tell you how I felt.”

“Me too, don’t get in your own head though. We’re here now and you get to wear a big, floofy white dress –”

She scoffed. “Christ, it’s like you don’t know me at all.”

He grinned. “No, don’t want to be a cake topper bride?” he teased, tickling her as she giggled and smacked his roaming fingers away. “Nah, I could never imagine you in one of those awful frou frou things.”

“Good, because I am not a princess-y bride.”

“I don’t want to know any more about it, I wanna be surprised when I see you. This is something to talk to Ollie and your sisters or whoever about,” he admitted. “We have lots of new plans we have to make. You, me, some luxurious Australian private island, some close friends and lots of cocktails. Say ‘I do’ to each at some point?”

“You’re so cool and calm about all of this,” she was amazed. "Though that all sounds amazing.”

“What do I have to worry about? I get to marry my best friend. How many people say they can do that? I mean, we always knew we’d get here eventually, I know I wasn’t ready at the start, but I’m here now and you’ve been so patient. We’re just taking another step. We’re practically married anyway,” he shrugged simply. Sasha liked this Sebastian. Her tummy fluttered excitedly.

“Well, that’s not true,” Sasha scoffed a laugh. "But this will help me stay in America on a more permanent basis.”

He laughed. “Yeah, let’s just get married so you can be an American finally,” Sebastian kissed Sasha’s knuckle again, bringing her attention to the ring.
“You did good, Sebastian Stan,” she exhaled, still a little astonished, patting his stubbly cheek affectionately.

He laughed. “You were very specific, Benzo. And besides, don’t women want a guy that listens or something?” he made a face.

“Just can’t get anything past you. Even the ridiculous stuff.”

“Especially the ridiculous stuff – that’s my favourite part,” he grinned, easing up on his elbows to kiss her. “I fuckin’ love you.”

“I love you too,” she said as he kissed her jaw again. “But I’d really like you to prove it, if you don’t mind?”

“My God, you could kill a man,” Sebastian huffed, parting her thighs so he could rest his thigh. “Insatiable.”

“You have a problem with that?” she raised an eyebrow. “Because if you foresee this as a problem going forward, we should just end everything now,” she feign an attempt to escape the bed as he grabbed her hips and pinned her beneath him.

“Fuck, no,” he rumbled softly, a wolfish grin gracing his features. “Can we stay in bed all day today? I really feel we should celebrate our new arrangement.”

Sasha giggled and repeated, “Arrangement,” as he kissed her chin and started moving down her body. Licking, kissing and nipping her throat as she groaned, arousal quickly flooding her senses, loosening her fingers in his hair.

“Over and over and over and over,” Sebastian continued, kicking away the sheets, exposing them both. He ran an open palm from her breast down to stop at her belly button and lavishing wet kisses from one hip to the other. He took the back of her knees and wrapped them around his hips before he moved back up her body in a slow drag. “I wanna take this really slow,” he confided, kissing her lips as he sat his cock at her wet entrance, she groaned, teasing them both. Sasha could only nod.

“Slow.”

“Turn you inside out.”

“What do you call everything up to this point?” she wondered as he met her lips and smiled against them, he slowly thrusted in.

“Practice.”

Sasha managed a giggle through her gasp. “I like that.”

“Hmm, me too,” he buried himself within her. It had been a very intense evening to that point the following morning. “Are you sure you can go again? Not sore?” he asked, nuzzling his nose to hers, grinning as she shook her head. “Then kiss me,” he begged as their lips met and he linked their fingers before pinned her arms above her head.

“Fuck me, Seb,” Sasha said with a blissed sigh, though not a demand.

“I am,” he joked quietly. “Good?”

“Fuck,” was all she managed again.
“Will take that as a yes,” he kissed her again, his tongue slowly tracing around her lips before slipping in and massaging against hers, his hips not ceasing their painstakingly slow, steady movements, bodies tightly contorted to the others as his hair slipped into his dark eyes.

“How do we not fuck like this more often?” she wondered aloud.

Sebastian’s hips flicked as he forced himself deeper. “No time?” he suggested with a moan. “You are so wet, it’s so fucking good,” he buried his face in his her neck as he released her hands to hold her ribs, angling his hips to fill her to the hilt.

Sasha racked her fingers through Sebastian’s hair to bring his desired gaze back to her and her mouth to his. He groaned as she quaked under him, her body well and truly building to orgasm. “Bubba, you are so good,” she uttered, her hips meeting his and speeding up, forcing him to increase his movements to meet hers.

“Can you come again?” he wondered, urgently licking his long fingers before reaching between their bodies to rub excruciating circles on her now well-abused clit. Sasha winced but didn't give in. “Baby, you’re so warm and wet. You gotta come so I can,” he continued his merciless assault as their actions started to increase with intent to get the other off. He moved his mouth to her nipple and she was done for, coming loudly as her body vibrated and gripped around his cock as he grunted in pleasure.

Coming with Sebastian working hard to hit her in that sweet spot, she held him closer so he could feel everything her body was reacting to as he threw his head back, movements speeding up as he mumbled that he was coming, hips snapping like pistons. Panting, he slumped further into her, pressing kisses against her scorching skin, tongue sliding against whatever skin he could reach as she giggled, completely spent.

“Oh, Sebastian,” she breathed. “I don’t know where you get the stamina.”

He raised his eyes to meet hers, a slight giggle slipping. “I don’t see you complaining.”

“Baby, you are an aphrodisiac in every possible way, all day, every day. I am engaged,” she grinned, muffling a yawn behind her hand, expended. “To one of the sexiest men on the planet,” she giggled harder, now in disbelief as he blushed. “How is this my life, seriously?”

“That the only reason you’re with me?”

“Your good looks? ‘Course,” Sasha joked as he rolled his eyes. “Have you seen how gorgeous you are?”

He groaned and rolled off her, Sasha unprepared and the proof of their lovemaking left in smears across her thighs in retaliation. She made a face as he put his hands behind his head and smirked. “You’re so full of shit.”

“Wanna know why I’m with you? Honestly. You are great looking, almost make believe handsome,” she paused while he scoffed. “But you have the most amazing heart, it’s what I love the most about you. You make me feel so incredibly safe all the time. That means so much more to me than a spectacular smile and some amazing biceps.”

Sebastian sighed, blushing gently. “Baby, I know how you feel,” he said, as she rolled over and rested her chin on his chest.

“You are everything to me. I just want you to know that.”
He sighed, exhausted. “I do love you, baby. More than anything. Don’t ever doubt that.”

She held her hand up and grinned at the sparkles. “I think I believe you.”

Chapter End Notes

Getting pretty terrible at updating these days, hey? I apologise profusely how long it is taking me to add to this. Other plot bunnies are constantly running through my head and am distracted doing Mum stuff too, I am so appreciative for those who have stayed and hung around! Hope this chapter fills the void. Good news? You'll get the proposal in a few days as it's mostly written xoxo I'll be back to edit this (grammar, not content). Please don't be too offended with lack of editing - story of my life these days.

---

Interested Bystander writes on Tumblr. Find my Bucky fic there, TOFWYA inspo and pretty pictures of Seb that encourages this story.
The Night Before

Chapter Notes

If she’d learnt one thing in all the years she’d know him, it was that he always managed to make her feel new and exciting ways of hating how much she cared about him.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Fuck," Sasha muttered, as she fell off Sebastian and he giggled quietly beside her, a little out of breath himself. Sasha snuggled into Sebastian's chest, yawning. "I'm completely fucked. That was amazing."

He grinned, pleased, turning to his side to wrap his arms around her warm body, brushing some hair from her eyes. Flushed and blissed out, it made Sebastian was to roll her over and fuck her all over again. She was so incredibly beautiful like this. "Come again?" he teased. Of course she had. He felt every pulse of her body against his. She just can't hide reactions like that to his body.

"I need a break," she admitted. "I'm not built like you."

"And what's that?"

"A machine. Athletic," she said as he kissed her with a hum. "Strong. Stamina for days, if I'm really honest."

"A machine," he repeated. "I'll take it," he admitted, shrugging smugly. "You're okay, you aren't sore?"

"No," she smiled. "I'm good. I'm exhausted, but I'm good."

"Why don't you go have a shower or something? Release those well used muscles," Sebastian suggested.

"Not a bad idea," she yawned. "Wanna join me?"

"You know what will happen if I do," he reasoned with her as she blushed.

Sasha shook her head. "You stay here," she insisted, kissing his swollen lips and made a squishy dash across the room, disappearing behind the bathroom door. Within a millisecond of the shower turning on, Sebastian kicked himself off the bed and straight to his luggage. Sifting through his suitcase furiously, he sighed in desperate relief as he found the box exactly where he’d stashed it. He opened it just to make sure the ring was still there and alas, it was. Safe and sound. His shoulders slumped as he finally relaxed, the adrenaline coursing through his veins waning instantly.

So, proposing after a crazy expensive, romantic anniversary dinner went out the window, he realised, because they were both as insatiable as the other one and hadn’t left the hotel room for anything except champagne. Who was he to argue? He’d spent the majority of his first afternoon in Paris in his girlfriend, a fancy dinner could wait for another night even though it had thrown his proposal plans into sight disarray, his creativity failing him and leaving him a little lost as to where next.

Sebastian sighed, taking in the state of the apartment. The bedroom was a mess, floor was a disaster
and littered with their discarded clothing as they had undressed the other in a frenzy to commence
their intense evening of lovemaking. The place needed to be seriously aired out, he decided, opening
the balcony door to let some of the cool evening air in.

“Bub?” Sasha called from behind the closed door, the shower ceasing.

Snapping the box shut quietly, Sebastian went to the safe and added it to their passports and travel
documents, panicked she would appear before he'd hidden it - he had to stop tempting fate, there had
been enough close calls in the last few days. “Yeah, baby?” his fingers working furiously.

“Think we’ve missed those reservations?”

Sebastian laughed quietly to himself, placing the box in delicately and closing the door after it.
“Yeah, baby. Would be pretty sure;” he confirmed, checking the time. “It’s nearly midnight.”

“Oh, didn’t realise,” she said a little disappointed as the door opened and his much neater girlfriend
reappeared, pulling her air into a messy bun. Snuggly in a bathrobe, Sebastian broke into a grin in
spite of himself as she fell on the bed, still clearly pooped.

“You’re hungry?”

“Always,” she reminded him, patting her belly.

“You weren’t complaining before,” Sebastian wriggled his eyebrows before giggling quietly as
Sasha rolled her eyes before blushing.

“Wanna go for a walk?”

“That sounds good, we’ve been cooped up in here all evening,” he said, picking up his t-shirt from
the crumpled mess on the floor where it was discarded earlier and slipping it over his shoulders,
before pushing his unkempt hair from his eyes.

She sighed. "And you're dressed again."

"Sorry to disappoint you," he grinned.

"Do you often see me complaining when you’re naked?"

He scratched his chin. “Never, actually,” he pointed between them. “Same goes, just for the record.”

Sasha collected her clothes and slipped them back on while Sebastian neatened himself up and
slipped his leather jacket over his broad shoulders, pocketing the apartment keys before Sasha
pulled her cardigan on and held out her hand which Sebastian willingly took as they left, linking his
warm hand with hers and made their way out to the cool summer night. “I will never get sick of this
city, Seb. What a beauty.”

“I know,” he kissed her temple as they watched the Eiffel Tower light up a few blocks away and
across the river for a few moments.

The city was still crawling with people, they noticed, passing a few bars and late night bistros, one of
which Sasha stopped in front of to take in the menu. “Croque Monsieur, *monsieur*?” she asked him
cheekily. He chuckled with a shrug.

“Sure,” Sebastian held the door opened as the maître d showed them to a booth near the window and
handed them a menu each. There was only a half dozen or so people inside including employees.
Sebastian sighed with relief. A late night autograph request after an evening of sex in a multitude of different positions and his appearance a little dishevelled was never the impression he wanted to put out there. Since they’d arrived, he had been stopped a total of zero times and it felt wonderful. The trip was about him and Sasha and he wanted to keep it as intimate as possible. “Merci. Well, we already know what you’re having.”


“Of course,” Sebastian laughed as the waiter brought over water and Sebastian ordered them both a glass of house wine they knew they’d hate.

“Puis-je prendre votre commande?” the waiter continued. They both ordered, Sebastian going with steak frites and the waiter disappearing again.

“A little different from our night in Paris the last time,” Sebastian commented as he sipped the wine, his lip curling as he predicted. Awful.

“True. You tried to fatten me up with the best meal I’ve probably eaten in my entire life.”

“You worked off the calories,” Sebastian said without a beat as Sasha laughed.

“True.”

“So, what do you want to do tomorrow?”

“Louvre?” she suggested before continuing bright-eyed, a second wind kicking in. “Sacré-Cœur, Montmartre, Fondation Louis Vuitton? I can go on.”

“All sound good,” Sebastian agreed. “I booked Le Cinq as well.”

Sasha took a sip of her water and chewed her lip. “You don’t have to do that, you know,” she said quietly.

Sebastian raised an eyebrow at her voice dropping. “Do what?” he frowned.

“I’m just saying,” she told him gently, reaching across the table to fiddle with his black watchband. “You never had to. I’m happy to just spend time with you.”

Sebastian gave a half smile, rolling his hand over to take her hand in his. “Can you let me spoil you just a little more then I promise, I won’t bother ever again.”

Sasha laughed, shaking her head softly. “How did I get so lucky with you?”

“I dunno but you’re getting soft, Benzo. Don’t get all lovey dovey on me now,” he accused with a sneaky tease, breaking into a wide smile as his steak was placed before him and Sasha’s crepe following. “It’s not your style.”

She nodded. “Guess not,” she huffed a laugh and watched Sebastian cut a slice of his steak and cram it into his mouth, chewing open mouthed. In all the years she’d known him, it was always a treat to watch him eat. He was an absolute animal at the best of times. She shook her head and giggled quietly to herself, taking a bite her supper. “Hey?”
He hummed, looking up with a mouthful. She had to laugh again, partially repulsed at his lack of bashfulness as he failed to hide the half-chewed steak in his mouth.

“I love you, you know that?”

He chewed quickly and forced his food down before breaking into his infamous megawatt grin. “I love you too, baby,” he tenderly caressed her hand and dragged it to his lips, leaving a light kiss. “So much.”

“Even if you eat like a caveman.”

“I know it turns you on,” he wriggled his dark brows and winked, munching on a frite. Sasha laughed and nodded, reaching across and stealing one for herself, he raised his hand and teasingly threatened to smack her if she continued to steal his food. “Hey, you have your supper,” he reminded her.

“There is nothing truly sexier than watching your man eating like it’s his last meal, really gets my engine running,” Sasha continued, the hint of humour in her eyes as he wiped his mouth with his serviette.

Sebastian laughed quietly. “How’s your crepe?”

She had almost forgotten it was before her as she watched him. “Um, fine,” she shrugged. “Was distracted.”

“Can tell,” Sebastian took a deep breath, giving Sasha a look she couldn't read and left his side of the booth to slide in beside her. Wrapping an arm around her shoulders and the other around her front to grip her ribcage, he kissed her gently. “Got a silly idea to run past you, gurîţă. We go get ourselves married,” he said against her lips.

Still coming to from his kiss, Sasha tried to regain her senses. “What?” she blinked a few times, confused or unaware, Sebastian wasn’t sure. He realised quickly that his presentation wasn’t exactly conventional and it certainly wasn’t what he had planned. The puzzlement etched on Sasha’s face told him needed to be a little clearer. But at the same time, he prided himself in kissing her so well she probably forgot her own name.

He poked her gently on the chest. “You,” he redirected his index finger to his strong chest. “Me. Married. Making this official.”

“Are you asking, Sebastian?” Sasha asked, feeling her pulse rate spike, her nerves kicking in as her hands started to get clammy. Sebastian smiled, anxiety fading and a new found confidence taking its place as her body trembled under his touch. It felt so unbelievably right, he knew had nothing to fear.

“This wasn’t how I planned to ask you,” he confided. “But I love you so much and I don’t see anyone else I could ever love the way I love you so why miss another moment? My future is you, Sasha. Us, a dog, tripping over a couple of really gorgeous kids.”

It wasn’t overly romantic, Sasha knew. Romantic wasn’t something Sebastian usually was, not without a lot of thought. His quiet, reflective nature made a lot of his actions appear heartfelt and this, as he proposed they get married in some quiet after hours bistro in Paris, was exactly him. She tried to bite back a small smile but failed, that bright smile that was only for Sebastian on full display.

“What do you say?” he asked as he raised the hand on her ribs to cup her jaw and forced her eyes to his. He licked his lips to hide his amusement as he saw the tears Sasha was trying to blink back. “Oh, baby. I am not taking you to the gallows, just wonderin’ if you’d like to be my wife for the rest of
our lives. Whattaya say?”

“Yes. Of course,” she sputtered out as the tears spilled. “Oh, my God,” a bubble of laughter escaped her lips in disbelief and just like that, they were engaged, as informal as it all appeared to be. "Yes."

He smiled and tenderly wiped her warm tears away before kissing her deeply. “I have a ring and everything, it’s just not on me right now,” he explained. “It’s really nice though. I hope you like it,” he continued before kissing her again, unable to resist.

“I’m positive I’ll love it,” Sasha smiled as Sebastian kissed her hard again and a couple of glasses of champagne miraculously appeared up on the table regardless of the lack of gesture. Maybe his proposal wasn’t as low key as he thought.

“Merci,” they said in unison to no one in particular as they both retrieved a glass and toasted each other. They obviously had an audience and neither of them fucking cared.

“Salute!” an older couple a table away raised their glasses as Sebastian and Sasha blushed and thanked them. “Toutes mes félicitations pour tes fiançailles.”

“Merci,” Sasha said again as Sebastian continued smiling although he knew he had no idea what was being said. “They’re congratulating us on our engagement.”

“I mean, I figured,” he smiled, taking another sip and smiling at the couple again. Sasha giggled quietly, with a shrug. “My God. I have the best girl,” he grazed her cheekbones with his knuckles. “I can’t believe you said yes.”

Sasha smiled shyly. “Seb...”

“You’ve made me the luckiest motherfucker in the world.”

Sasha managed a full grin, the kind that always made Sebastian smile a little wider as well, if possible. “I think it goes both ways. I hope you know how much I love you, Sebastian. No one could ever make me happier. You just... get me,” she shrugged, not knowing how else to express herself. “I don’t know how I got so lucky to have you in my life.”

“You’re the one,” he told her simply with a light shrug as she rested her forehead on his chest and he held her to him, kissing her hair before pulling out his wallet and leaving a generous wad of Euros. “Let’s get outta here,” he took her hand and waved to the maître d, who nodded and dragged Sasha from the bistro into the evening. He gently pulled her into his arms. “Tu ești dragostea vieții mele, Sasha. You are the love of my life,” he held her face tenderly and simply kissed her with everything he had. “You’ve made me, my life, exponentially better.”

“Right back at you, bubba,” she tugged his hair in affection.

“Thank you for loving me,” he added softly.

“Believe it or not, baby, you are so easy to love. You always have been,” she told him as he dragged her off the street and against a brick wall in a laneway, pinning her as another couple wandered past, giggling at them. He gently pulled her into his arms. “Tu ești dragostea vieții mele, Sasha. You are the love of my life,” he held her face tenderly and simply kissed her with everything he had. “You’ve made me, my life, exponentially better.”

“I’m ready,” he whispered to her. “For everything. We’re already living together. We’re committed to each other. Let’s think long term. I’ve probably been more aware of moving forward since we talked about it Christmas, but all I can think of is how amazing you’d be with our babies,” he said calmly. “As my wife and the mother to our children.”
She searched his face, looking for a clue, to see him waiver. When it didn’t come, she could only kiss him. “Let’s go back to the apartment.”

He kissed her again and smiled confidently, holding her face in his calloused hands. “Te iubesc din toată inima. I love you more than I ever thought I could love anyone.”

“Inima mea îţi aparţine.”

“I know,” he grinned as she skipped away from him and held out her hand to him to catch. “Girl, I’m a wife you,” he called behind her, recalling a line from New Girl he recalled her laughing hysterically when they first saw it. She laughed wildly again.

She stopped and he caught her, she pretended to faint in his arms. It probably looked terribly dramatic to anyone else, but fuck them, and she kissed him again. “I love you. Take me home, fiancée.”

Sebastian cackled. “You wanna see the ring, don’t you?”

“Desperately,” Sasha replied, tugging at his wrist and moving again as he continued giggling and following.

Chapter End Notes

hehe you didn't think I'd forget this chapter, did you? xoxo

Admission time. I have plenty more written about this story but I honestly do not know whether I can dedicate myself to the rest. TOFWYA might be done, kids. I have a bit to think about.

To those who’ve read this, I appreciate that you have taken the time from your busy lives to read something that I have worked hard on, not only for you guys, but myself too. I started this well over a year ago (you can blame Sebastian and that fucking man bun - why the start of the story commences that glorious time) and it NEVER meant to expand into 40 chapters, 150K or so words, 13K+ hits but that's indeed how it worked out. I love these characters like my own fictional children, so it's not the end but this part of their story is over. I'll continue this as one shots or maybe even another a fic, who is to say? I hope you keep in touch and lemme know what you think xoxo---

Interested Bystander writes on Tumblr. Find my Bucky fic there, TOFWYA inspo and pretty pictures of Seb that encourages this story.

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