Playing for the Same Team

by wosobsessed159

Summary

When two of the best young female soccer players are forced to room with each other, they're not too happy about it... but a lot can happen to Mallory Pugh and Jessie Fleming in six months.

Notes

While I love Mallory Pugh and Jessie Fleming, I honestly don't see them ever getting together and think Mal is straight but I'm going to write this because who knows? Maybe Messie will happen.

If you saw how long this was and didn’t feel like reading this anymore, that’s okay (I feel the same way) but the chapters aren’t super long and I tried to make this fun to read.

I've been working on this story for awhile and hope you enjoy it as much as I've enjoyed writing it. I've put a lot of time, effort, and research into making this as accurate as possible. I've also approached this story in a futuristic and humorous way to try to make it more accurate and enjoyable. Anyways, I hope you enjoy reading this and don't think this ship is too weird!
"Hey LA" by Ryan Beatty

"Are you sure you don't wanna come with us?" Anika asked Jessie for the third time in the span of one minute.

"Like I said before, I need to finish some homework," Jessie answered for what felt like the hundredth time.

"So?"

"I went out with you guys two days ago, isn't that enough?" Jess asked, slightly annoyed.

"But you love museums," Anika argued back.

"I also don't wanna fail out of college."

"Ugh, fine," the other girl said in defeat.

"See you later," Jessie said victoriously as she opened the door to her dormitory while Anika walked to her upperclassman building. After a tough workout session in the fitness center with her teammate, Anika, she decided to climb the stairs back to her room to get a little more exercise in. She found herself going to the gym during her free time more often than not. It was a stress reliever and, as a Canadian women's soccer national team member, it was somewhat of an obligation.

When Jessie opened the door to her room and set her bag down as the door closed behind her, she wasn't surprised to not find her roommate in the room. Mallory Pugh is a much different person than Jessie and even though it's been a month since they started rooming together, they still barely speak to each other. The American rarely comes into the room and the only activities she seems to do are sleeping and changing clothes. The only time she sees Mal is when they get up in the morning and whenever they have a soccer related obligation. They're convinced they're really different from each other so they never speak unless absolutely necessary.

First off, Mallory is American while Jessie is Canadian, which isn't a big deal but there seems to be an invisible wall between them. While Mallory plays as a forward, Jessie plays as a midfielder. Mallory has a loud, extroverted personality while Jessie prefers to stay quiet and keep to herself. Mallory likes meeting new people and going to parties while Jessie only likes to go out with a few friends on occasion and hang out in her room the rest of the time, if she's not working out. In just the month that the extroverted Mal has spent at the university, she has already become friends with a good twenty percent of the 30,000 undergraduates on campus while the introverted Jess has made about twenty friends outside of her team in a semester and a month. For all Mal and Jess know, they're complete opposites. Considering Baby Canada and Baby America (the names given to them by their fans) rarely ever speak to each other, they know more about the other than either one of them expects. For example, Mal thinks Jess likes photography a lot (judging from her Instagram page) while Jess is pretty sure Mal is failing Principles of Oral Communication (and she only believes that because they're in the same class). Since they both do so many interviews and
will likely become sports commentators after the whole soccer thing, their academic advisors thought it'd be a great idea to put them both in Communications Studies 1: Principles of Oral Communication, which they're both terrible at.

The first time Jessie Fleming played against Mallory Pugh on the pitch, they both were young sixteen year olds playing for their respective countries in 2013. Even back then, they both knew they'd be seeing much more of each other on the field- both being very smart on the field, extremely fast, incredibly skillful, and having powerful, accurate shots. Now nearly three years later, they're both starters on their senior national teams and the women's soccer team for the University of California - Los Angeles (a college choice they both couldn't be happier with). When Mallory arrived back in January, the coaching staff and captains had the ingenious idea to put the two together as roommates. Jessie's previous roommate, Australian International Teagan Micah, was taking the semester off, leaving the Canadian roommate-less. Jess would've been fine being alone, because she couldn't see anyone else be a perfect fit for the shy Canadian, but the university and her coaches wouldn't allow her to be by herself.

"I'm failing my communications class," a stressed out Mal sighed as she pummeled into the room, setting her backpack on the ground. Jess had been sitting at her desk doing homework and first let out a small laugh because she was right about Mal failing.

"Okay," was all Jess responded to Mal's cry of disappointment and distress; she didn't even look up from her physics homework.

"I won't be able to play if I fail," Mal continued to explain.

"Mhmm," Jess mumbled while using her calculator.

"Help me, Canada, you're in my class," Mal begged, she had given the other girl the nickname "Canada" for obvious reasons, mostly because saying "Baby Canada" was too long to say and too weird since she was younger than Jess by a little more than a month.

"I'm surprised you even knew I was in your class," Jessie gave a snarky reply.

"It's an oral communications class, we both have to speak in front of the class, so I know everyone in the class," Mal reciprocated while rolling her eyes. She then sighed and added, "I know that I like never speak to you and that I'm never in this room and I'm sorry. I'm just trying to make up for the semester I missed. And while you probably think I know nothing about you, you're probably right but I do know that you need help with that American government class of yours because Canada is weird. Please help me here, you know how hard it is to be a student athlete at a school like this."

"You wouldn't be so bad at public speaking if you knew what you were saying, you never memorize your speeches and you'd have an A if you actually memorized them. And I'm doing just fine in American government, I have an A and you're not even in my class. Also, Canada is not weird, take that back," Jessie said as she defended her country. Maybe Mal doesn't know as much information about Jess as she thought she did. The Canadian then added, "Don't insult my country like that."

"Whatever. Anyways, please help me. We both know that failing a class would be really bad."

"This is the most you've spoken to me," the midfielder pointed out.

"I know and I'm sorry, let's change that and get to know each other," Pugh suggested, putting her hands up in defeat. "Please, we're stuck with each other."
"Fine," Fleming said as she closed her physics textbook, giving her full attention to the American. She then innocently gave a suggestion of her own, "We could play twenty questions."

"Woah, we have a fuck boy over here, didn't know that's how you were," Mal joked which prompted Jess to roll her eyes at her.

"Would ten questions sound like a better name?" Jess asked, annoyed.

"Yeah, I guess... or we could just ask each other questions like normal human beings and not count how many," the American said with a laugh as she took her pre-wrap and hair tie out of her hair. As she smoothed her naturally curly hair out, she commanded, "Ask away."

"Where are you from? And tell me about your family."

"That's two questions."

"They correspond and technically that was one question then one demand," Jessie said rolling her eyes.

"Highlands Ranch, Colorado, United States. I have a mom and dad and an older sister. You?"

"London, Ontario, Canada. Mom, dad, an older brother, and a younger sister."

"Why don't you have a British accent then?" Mallory asked with a laugh but Jessie just looked back at her blankly, very confused. "Since you live in London... it's a joke."

"How am I going to live with you until June? It hasn't even been more than a month yet," Jess sighed as she finally understood the terrible corny joke. She put her head into her hands, sighed, then shook her head in disgust.

"Oh, you'll love me in no time," Mal said laughing as Jess let out another sigh.

"Favorite soccer player?" Jess asked, ignoring the other girl's comment. As she asked, she closed her eyes and massaged her temple, as if she was getting a headache from Mal's unbearable corniness.

"Myself," the American said and the Canadian looked back up then gave her an 'are you serious?' look and sighed once again. Mal added, laughing, "I'm kidding, I'm not that vain. On the men's side, Messi and Neymar, of course, and on the women's side, probably Syd or Tobin and Christen since they're my parents, Alex is pretty cool too."

"I didn't think Americans were this weird, especially compared to Canadians," Jessie commented.

"We're not that weird. We don't have bagged milk and our money doesn't smell like maple syrup so we're definitely not weird. Anyways, who's your favorite?"

"Tanc, Sincy, Pelé, Iniesta, and Coutinho. Also, our bagged milk is great and our money is amazing, you're just jealous," Jessie defended. "Wait, why are you called their child?"

"Some fans think I look like and act like their child. It's cute," she answered with a shrug.

"I think you're more like Sydney Leroux," Jess explained.

"I aspire to be her."

"Does she like you though? You kind of stole her jersey number and her college."
"Of course she does. She even forgave me for stealing it when I told her how bad I felt and then I got the number 9. She didn't really care, plus, she likes me even more because I go to UCLA. I met her son and dogs and they love me so basically I'm another Dwyer. I really do aspire to be her. I want cool tattoos like her."

"You like tattoos?" Jess asked.

"I only talk about it like every single day in the locker room," Mal replied sarcastically.

"Oh, I didn't know that."

"Well, you're in your own little Canadian world 24/7. What about you?"

"I guess, I mean, they're art and I like art."

"Yeah, I can tell. Your Instagram is like a hipster paradise with white borders," Mal joked which caused to Jess to roll her eyes.

"Hey shut up, photography is cool and my layout looks great," Jess defended. Then she added with a sly smile, "You're not much better since yours is a perfect example of any other teenage girl's."

"Wow, gee, thanks," the American said, pretending to be hurt. "Anyways, maybe we'll get matching tramp stamps one day since we both like tattoos."

"Are you trying to make me not like you? Because you're doing a really good job at it."

Mallory just laughed yet again then said smirking, "You'll love me in no time. So, single?"

"Very very single."

"That makes two of us then. Why so harsh on yourself?"

"I'm not particularly one to date anyone nor get anyone's attention. I'm just friends with everyone, less drama that I already have no time for. I'm definitely not the prettiest either, I look like I'm 12."

"I think you're pretty," Mal retorted nonchalantly. "I would say you're pretty cool too but we barely know each other."

"You have nice teeth," Jess responded, not completely conscious of what she was saying before it was too late, although the statement was true. On the pitch, one can see Mal's smile from the other side of the field; her pearly whites shine whenever she flashes a smile.

"Wow, what about the rest of me? That one hurt," Mal said, faking a scowl on her face.

"No no no, that's not what I meant, well you do have nice teeth but you're pretty too, like really pretty. I'm surprised you're single. You look like an actual model. Plus, you kick butt on the soccer field too," Jess said, redeeming herself. Mal responded with a smile that she reserved for special moments, like after scoring a really good goal. "And we're getting to know each other, slowly but surely. Right now, it's a start."

"Well Jessie Fleming, it was nice to get to know you," Mallory said as she held out her hand to shake Jessie's. They shook each other's hands then Mal added, "I'd love to get to know you better, why don't we do this again some other time this week?"

"Why not now?" Jess questioned.
"I'm tired and I need to wake up early so you can help me with my oral communications class," she replied.

"What if I had something to do in the morning? Also, I'm just as bad at public speaking as you are."

"You don't have anything because I know your schedule and soccer schedule. You're also not as bad as you think you are either. Plus, you can just help me when we go on a morning run and do a weight session together tomorrow," Mal said confidently.

"How do you know my schedule?" Jessie asked.

"You have it taped to the back of the door, how could I miss it?" Mal replied, matter of factly.

"Fine, whatever. It was nice to finally get to know you then. Goodnight," Jess said. And with that, the two separately got ready for bed then dozed off. The two hour practice they had earlier that day followed by their own individual daily workout sessions had finally caught up to them, causing the both of them to be exhausted.

"Wait, I have a question," Mal suddenly as once the lights were turned off.

"What?" Jess mumbled, eyelids heavy with exhaustion.

"Never mind, I'll ask you later," Mal said and Jess groaned in response before letting sleep overcome her.
Chapter Notes

To say I was surprised with the initial amount of hits on the first chapter would be an understatement. Thank you so much for reading! While I have received some very mixed reviews and considered not continuing to write this, I spoke with one of my friends and she told me to just keep writing. As I have already spent so much time and effort into writing this story, I'll continue it! I am fully aware that this ship is frowned upon but I hope I can change your mind haha (even my own, I still think this ship is going to be nothing more than a friendship). Anyways, please enjoy and I hope the humor helps this ship to be more bearable!

Helping Mallory Pugh with "oral communications" at six in the morning while on an early morning run was much more difficult than what Jessie had expected. Jess didn't know what to expect but she definitely didn't expect the American forward to stop saying her speech every few seconds to say hi to every single person they ran past all while the midfielder desperately tried to give her some pointers. To top onto the difficulty of tutoring the American, Jess is not much better of a speaker than Mal and she didn't understand why she had asked her for help. She herself often stumbles on her words and doesn't elaborate enough, although she had visibly gotten better over the past year. They both are decent at speaking, both very poised and well-spoken, but they both still need some help. They have the same problems- neither one of them enjoy all the attention, they're both kind of unemotional during interviews and rarely smile, and they both like to try to get the interviews over with as soon as possible by not elaborating enough, which not only angers their parents but their team publicists.

"Why would you ask me to help you with this class when I'm no help at all and when you know I'm just as bad at public speaking as you are?" Jessie asked as the two made their way to the weight room. Every morning, they always go on a run then to the weight room together because their trainers order them to do so. In the past, they would just run in silence and only talk to each other in the weight room when they needed help with something or needed a spotter. They had gotten used to this rhythm of not speaking over the course of the month but after last night, they both felt obligated to converse more.

"Because I'm somehow failing while you're not, even though if you put our interviews side by side, it'd look like someone was interviewing the same person," she replied.

"But how are you failing?"

"I don't memorize my speeches at all, and I never know what I'm talking about, that's why I was saying hi to everyone out there this morning, I couldn't remember like eighty percent of the speech
"I wrote," she answered truthfully.

"But you literally wrote it, it can't be too hard for you to remember. If only you put the same effort into that class as you put into soccer," Jess said which resonated with Mal who had nothing to say to defend herself.

After finishing their morning training session, they headed back to their dorm room to get ready for the rest of the morning which consisted of showering, finishing some last minute studying while eating breakfast at the dining hall, then going to their classes directly after. The rest of the day would include going to more classes, studying, going to practice, eating dinner, then probably more practice. The spring season has yet to start, however, both of them have been called into national team camps and games since the beginning of the year so they have to work extra hard along with the spring practices.

"Hey, you wanna go practice a little more?" Mal asked Jess as they both were still in their team's practice attire from earlier that day, having not yet showered. Ever since the U.S.A.'s stunning loss in the quarterfinal of the Olympics, Mal had been working twice as hard as before and trained as much as she could. She had dominated so well in the U-20 World Cup, even amongst her team's shaky performance, that her disappointment had washed away and been swept clean by her fantastic playing. While Jessie Fleming had won an Olympic medal and dominated the collegiate level, Mallory Pugh became one of the best soccer players in the world.

The two were in their room after eating dinner, having just finished studying and doing homework for two hours. Both could tell that the other was itching to get back outside with a ball. They always wanted to do more and expected the best from themselves as well. With the exception of Mallory being much louder and more out there than the soft-spoken, introverted Jessie, the two are more alike than not; both of them are bound to become the best soccer players in the world, they both dislike public speaking, they both find the fame they've received so strange, and the fact they both decided to go to UCLA makes them more alike than not.

"Sure," Jess replied with a shrug, then they were off to the practice field that was conveniently close to their dormitory. Through the pitch black darkness of the night, they both carried their soccer bags on their backs and a water bottle in their hands. When they reached the brightly lit empty field, they put their cleats on then jogged around the field once, not saying a single word. They were used to this, used to this silence. They had gotten into this groove of just doing but never saying. This practice of not speaking to each other had built up a wall of awkwardness as each passing second in silence created an invisible barrier between them.

"You know, we can't not talk to each other forever," Mal said, breaking the silence as they began to juggle and pass the ball to each other.

"Yeah, you have a point."

"Then talk to me."

"You were gonna ask me a question last night right before we fell asleep, what was it?" Jess asked curiously, recalling the strange interaction the night before.

"Oh yeah, what's your favorite color?" Mal asked casually.

"Are you serious?" Jess asked in disbelief.
"What?" Mal said cluelessly.

"That's it? You were just wondering what my favorite color was? I thought you were gonna ask me something more interesting."

"It's an important question."

"How so?" Jess asked in disbelief.

"It tells a lot about someone."

"Sure, whatever."

"So what is it then?"

"Oh, I don't know," Jess replied casually. Right at that moment, she had accidentally kicked the ball past Mal, resulting in the American giving the Canadian a death glare.

"Are you serious? I'm not getting that," Mal sighed, visibly annoyed.

"You're the one who wanted the extra practice," Jess said with a knowing look and sly smile. Mal sighed then jogged over to get the ball while Jess was in her own little world as she looked up to the clear night sky. Jess was so clueless about what was around her that Mal thought it would be a perfect opportunity to kick the ball at her face for fun since she was being so difficult. Unfortunately, or fortunately (depending on how it's looked at), Mal has great aim and the ball hit the Canadian square into her face causing her to fall back onto the ground. Mal laughed but when Jess wouldn't stand back up immediately, she stopped laughing then ran over to check on her.

"Oh my gosh, I'm so sorry, it was supposed to only be funny because you were being so difficult," Mallory apologized, then her eyes went wide as she realized Jessie's nose was gushing with dark red blood. She leant down to where Jess was sitting, eyes still wide, to get a good look, making sure she hadn't broken the other girl's nose. After examining Jess's nose, she concluded that the Canadian was just bleeding.

"I'm fine, you're really annoying, but I'm fine," the other girl responded while trying to shoo Mal away, not yet aware that she was bleeding.

"No you're not, your nose is bleeding."

"What?" Jess questioned which led her to put her hand to her nose where she found out that she indeed was bleeding.

"Here, I have no tissues in my bag so take this," Mal said, taking off her shirt to give to Jess. Jessie hesitated but took it and put it up to her nose, quickly applying pressure to try to stop the bleeding. Her eyes couldn't help but look at the American's well-defined abs for a second but she quickly looked elsewhere and diverted her attention to trying to stop the bleeding. Mal helped her stand up then they went back to the side of the field to their bags. Along the way, Mal helped to steady Jess, not once letting go of her arm nor taking her hand off of her back.

"I'm fine, I can stand and walk perfectly. I bet I can even run too," Jess said as her nose had stopped bleeding while she was feeling very cautious about Mal's intrusive behavior.

"You might pass out because of the loss of blood and the impact to your head, drink water," Mal argued.
"But-," Jess began to protest.

"Now."

"Yes ma'am," Jess complied and Mal smiled, satisfied. Jess took some sips out of her water bottle while Mallory continued to feel bad for inflicting the cause of the bleeding.

When Jess was done and she felt like she'd be able to continue practicing without bleeding everywhere, Mal put on another shirt she had conveniently sitting in the bottom of her bag then stood up and helped the other girl get up. They continued with a short, easy practice of just the two of them passing, juggling, and shooting with minimal speaking then headed back to their room. They showered, changed into clean comfortable clothes, and proceeded to go to bed. It had been a long day, especially since they both used more energy to talk to each other. It had been an even longer day when they decided to ask each other some more questions right before going to sleep.

"Why are you so into photography?" Mallory first asked while both of them laid in their own beds staring at the ceiling. Jessie was caught off guard by the question, she was expecting a question about soccer or her classes instead.

"Photographs capture beautiful moments in time that only happens once and I think that's pretty cool," Jessie replied coolly, shrugging her shoulders.

"Wow, deep," Mal said with a laugh. "I like art too. You know, I was in an art show once."

"Oh really?" Jessie asked, her eyebrows going up. She slightly turned her head to look at Mal.

"Yep, I had this weird picture of a lion that I drew when I was little and some people liked it so it was put into an art show."

"Impressive. So is drawing your secret talent then?"

"Absolutely not," Mal said, not missing a beat. "Soccer's my thing and my only thing."

"Why'd you start playing?"

"My older sister played so I played and I loved it. My parents were big into running but we weren't as much. I enjoyed it but soccer has my heart."

"I love running, I used to be pretty good too but then I turned all of my attention onto soccer. My best friend runs for the Canadian National Team, I could've followed in her footsteps."

"Then why didn't you?"

"I love soccer too much," Jess said.

"Well, that makes two of us. Maybe we should run a race together, like when we become real friends."

"Yeah, that'd be cool, as long as you don't make us get matching tramp stamps after," Jess said.

"Aw man, I was hoping we'd run a marathon together then get matching tattoos of those mile numbers," Mal joked which prompted Jess to close her eyes then sign again. "So running's your secret talent?"

"Well, it's not really secret. There's an interview out there of me talking about running while in middle school. What's your secret talent then if it's not drawing?"
"Singing."

"Really?" Jess asked as her eyebrows shot up.

"No, not really. I suck but it's fun to sing even if I suck."

"Oh."

"Yeah, my favorite singers are Canadian. Drake and Justin Bieber have my heart."

"Eh."

"Oh, are there any other Canadian terms I can make fun of you for saying?"

"No, that's all I really say. It's more the spelling of things," Jess explained. Mal noticeably got less excited and was slightly disappointed because she was looking forward to making fun of the Canadian but now she had no real reason to. Thankfully for Jess, there were other internationals for her American teammates to tease.

"So what's it like?" Mal suddenly asked with no context.

"So what's what like?"

"To have an Olympic medal."

"It's great, it's cool to see all that hard work finally pay off. Especially for the veterans, it was nice to see them finally get the recognition they deserve. I've never been more proud to represent my country."

"What's it like to be one of the best young soccer players in the world?" Mal asked with a small giggle.

"I don't know Baby America, you tell me. You're the one who scored a beautiful goal in the Olympics and the one who has been to two youth World Cups. You are literally the future of women's soccer," Jess responded.

"But you have an Olympic medal."

"If you think success is measured by accomplishments then you're very wrong. That's like judging someone by their test scores or grades, not by the amount of effort they've put into studying. If you compared two people simply by their list of impressive accomplishments or grades, then that'd mean I'd actually be much better at public speaking than you are and we both know that's not true at all."

"You've got a point," Mal said shrugging, then added, "That would also mean that you're one of the best young players in the world too."

"How so?" Jess asked.

"Well, judging from how you play, it's pretty obvious."

"And you saying "too" would also mean that you admit that you're one of the best young players in the world as well."

"I'm sorry to cut this short but I'm getting tired and need my sleep," Mal said as she yawned which caused Jess to laugh, she knew she was just trying to get out of the awkward situation she had put
herself into.

"Goodnight, Mal," Jess said smiling.

"Goodnight, Jess," Mal said, ignoring the mischievous grin aimed her way.

*Maybe this won't be as bad as I thought it would be, Jess thought to herself as she closed her eyes.*
Running Into Friendship

Chapter Summary

Some things just have to run its course....

"Runaways" by All Time Low

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

It's been two weeks since Jess and Mal decided to change their approach to any interaction between them and they're somewhere in between acquaintances and real friends. They've at least emerged into workout buddies, specifically running buddies because they both were star runners before investing all of their full time into soccer.

"So what are your aspirations in life?" Jess asked while she and Mal sat at a picnic table. They had been running all Saturday morning, just the two of them, around campus. Every week they cut about one to five seconds off their mile split times, being the only two on their collegiate team to be true elite athletes, it's crucial for them to train and be physically fit. Every week, after about thirty-five minutes into their run, they rest for a little bit at this one secluded picnic table they found the first time they went running. It's tucked away behind an academic building and they always stop to sit for ten minutes to just talk and rehydrate.

"What type of question is that?" Mal asked with a laugh.

"If we keep being petty towards each other like this, we're not going to end up as friends," Jessie replied, rolling her eyes.

"Um, okay fine. I aspire to be Sydney Leroux, I already told you that."

"I'm being serious, c'mon Mal."

"Well, I don't know. I guess to have a successful career in soccer. I kinda just go with the flow."

"That's kind of disappointing."

"Well, you asked," Mal gave a snarky response. "What about you?"

"To become the best soccer player in the world."

"Wow, isn't that a little over the top? I mean, you could someday, but still."

"You never know."

"Well good luck with that, especially when there's me around. It's a shame we're the same age," Mal said smirking.

"I wouldn't mind you being around if you were one of my actual friends," Jess barked back.

"Will you be my friend then?"
"What type of question is that?"

"I literally just asked you the same thing and you told me we need to stop being petty towards each other yet here we are."

"I'm sorry, I'm sorry. I'll be your friend. Gosh, every single interaction we have is so awkward," Jess said as she put her head into her hands.

"Yep, well friend, we're about to have so many more awkward moments since we're real friends now," Mal said smiling, fully aware that she was being a pain in the ass. "I'm glad you said yes because that would've been really awkward. I would've had to unfollow you on all social media. We should hold hands to seal the deal."

"You're so annoying, I'm leaving," Jess said as she stood up from the picnic table and started to run back to their room while Mallory just laughed. She didn't wait for Mal to get up because she didn't want to be around her when she was this annoying. Mal had a big smile on her face as being obnoxious around Jess was beginning to be pretty funny and entertaining to her; she could get used to this.

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"So how's college?" Lindsey asked Mal. She, Mal, Moe, Rose, Emily, Sam, and Jane all laid down on two of the beds in Mal and Rose's hotel room. After a long day of tough training at national team camp, they were all too tired to go out so they opted to watch a Champions League game on mute while taking turns putting on leg recovery pumps. After they all grew tired of looking at their phones, Lindsey decided to start the conversation and asked the only question that could come to her sleep deprived mind.

"It's good, you know," Mal said then hesitated and added, "Well actually, never mind, you wouldn't know."

"Shut up," Lindsey, the girl who skipped college to go pro, said as she threw a pillow towards Mal's face, causing the others to laugh.

"But yeah, it's fun. I love the team and the school, I love it all. I think my roommate hates me though. We've been pretending to be real friends for three weeks but everything's still awkward."

"You mean Jessie Fleming? I thought you two would get along, you're like the same person," Jane pointed out.

"You think? I don't really see it. Besides us both being bad at public speaking, we're good at soccer and being really chill and sarcastic and that's about it. We get along just fine on the field but off the field it's kinda bad. We're like lingering somewhere in between friendly acquaintances and actual friends."

"Have you tried cracking some jokes with her?" Emily, of course, asked curiously.

"That's literally all we do. We just joke all the time to the extent that we annoy each other. We're both so sarcastic and we're too chill to really do anything that annoys the other. We workout and play on the pitch together but that's it."

"Get a dog," Rose suggested.

"Yeah, when Syd was at UCLA she got Boss," Morgan added.
"She got kicked out of the dorms though, did you all really think only UCLA would let me have a dog?"

"Oh, so I guess I shouldn't transfer to UCLA just so I can bring Wilma then," Rose realized, incredibly disappointed.

"Why would you transfer with two months left at Wisconsin?" Mal asked.

"I'd do anything for Wilma."

"You guys are so stupid," Sam said while shaking her head.

"You could get a fish, then she'd think something's fishy and start talking to you more because she'd think something was up," Sonnett suggested smiling, waiting for the others to get her joke. People refer to her as "Daddy Sonnett" and she sure lives up to the name by cracking some terrible dad jokes all the time.

"Why would she think something's fishy?" Mal asked while rolling her eyes at the corny joke.

"I don't know," Emily shrugged.

"Oh, I have an idea!" Morgan said as her face lit up.

"And that is?" Mal asked, eagerly waiting for her response.

"You could try to be nice to her!"

"I thought your idea would be better than that and I'm already nice to her," Mallory said, disappointed.

"No, I mean like be extra nice to her. Maybe she'll warm up to you if you warm up to her," Moe explained.

"Like be overly nice to her? That's weird," Mal argued.

"Well, if you were overly nice to her then maybe she'd feel bad and be nice to you back. Give her gifts and notes of encouragement, draw something for her."

"What would I even draw?"

"Another one of those lions," Rose suggested while laughing along with the others, causing Mal to throw a pillow at her face as she sighed loudly.

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Mallory actually took her teammates' advice and drew a picture for Jessie while the Canadian was out. It was the day of her nineteenth birthday so she wanted to do something for the birthday girl who was not expecting anything from her; Jess was surprised Mal even remembered her birthday. Mal had a Google image up on her laptop to copy while she had a pen in her hand to draw with. When she was done copying the image by hand onto a piece of paper from the screen, she closed her laptop then started using some colored pencils to color the piece of art. The artwork looked like a five year old had drawn it but she was hoping Jess would like it, especially since it was going to be a surprise. As the door to their room opened followed with Jess walking in, Mal quickly stood up with the drawing in her hands behind her back. The timing of Jessie's arrival was perfect as Mal had just finished her masterpiece.
"I have a gift for you since it's your birthday," Mal told Jess while grinning then she took her hands from behind her back and gave the drawing to Jess who gave her an uneasy, questioning look.

"Oh, wow," Jess said surprisingly. With wide eyes, she was speechless but not exactly for the right reasons. "Um, thanks for thinking of me on my birthday, I wasn't expecting anything.... You really do love Colorado and California, wow."

"What do you mean?" Mal asked, confused.

"You drew a marijuana leaf."

"That's supposed to be a maple leaf since you're Canadian," Mal said.

"Oh my gosh, I'm so sorry," Jess said and her eyes went even wider while her cheeks were red just like the maple leaf.

"I was trying to do something nice and friendly for you for your special day. I didn't know my drawing skills were that bad," Mal said chuckling.

"I'm so sorry, I feel so bad now," Jessie continued to apologize while Mal didn't even care, she was just laughing now. "Thank you though, that's really sweet of you."

"You're welcome and don't worry about it," Mallory replied.

"I'll do something for you, I promise. I'll let you nutmeg me in practice or something, I feel so bad now," Jessie said.

"It's fine, it's your birthday... and now I have a great story to tell. Wait until I tell the rest of the team," Mal said with a grin. "Plus, now you know that drawing really isn't my hidden talent."

Chapter End Notes

I know I said I already have a lot of this story written but I'm indecisive when writing so I'm sorry this took me a little longer to post. Plus, I was super busy. Anyways, I appreciate all the feedback and kudos! Just to let you know, if you continue to read this, you're in for a long ride haha, buckle up!
Jessie and Mallory each took one hundred shots on goal before they returned to their room. It was Friday night and as the sun was setting, they trained like any other night under the lights with the crisp March breeze attempting to disrupt the accuracy of the shots. They always did this now, taking turns shooting and blocking each other's shots every Friday night after eating dinner— they usually failed at not letting the other score. It had become a ritual to do one hundred shots and even on the rare occasion that it would rain, they always did it. They would finish their shooting at around eight at night then they'd head back to their room.

This gave Mal enough time to shower before going out to parties. It even gave her enough time to spend an hour trying to find a costume for the themed parties which involved Jessie just constantly rolling her eyes at her roommate who would frantically come up with a costume, occasionally asking their hall mates for help. Jessie herself wasn't too into partying, she'd enjoy going to one every now and then but she preferred staying in her room to watch replays of European professional games from earlier that week instead. Mal invited her to go partying the first time she had gone to one but when she had said no three times after, she stopped. So whenever Mal did see Jess at a party, she was surprised but figured it was her life and she could do what she wanted. However, tonight, Mal had a different idea in mind.

"It's Friday, come hang out with me and some of the team," Mal ordered Jess.

"Why?"

"Well, you rarely get out of this room unless it's soccer or school related, sometimes you go see friends or family members," Mal explained. Jess opened her mouth to protest but quickly closed it when she realized Mal was right.

"Ugh, fine," Jess said defeatedly.

"Okay, great! Meet me downstairs when you're ready," Mal cheered and was about to turn to leave the room when Baby Canada gave her a skeptical look in response. "We're going to a party."

"I don't feel like it tonight though," Jess replied as she put her freshly washed hair into a ponytail. She was just fresh out of the shower and wearing sweats.

"So what? I don't think you've gone to a party in like three weeks and it's time for you to experience partying with me. Plus, it'll be team bonding. Now meet the rest of us downstairs after you change into party clothes," she demanded as she exited the room. Arguing with Mallory Pugh can be extremely exhausting, almost worse than playing against her, and Jessie was in no mood to pick a fight at this time of night. Jess closed her chemistry textbook that she had just opened, changed out of sweats into a plaid flannel shirt and jeans, then made her way downstairs as she asked herself,
What have I gotten myself into?

A handful of their teammates filed into two cars and made their way to a frat party not too far away. Jess was unsure what she was getting into because these girls can get a little crazy, which is an understatement. The second she stepped outside of the car, she wanted to turn and run back to her room, which was probably a few miles away, but Mal gave her a death glare and shook her head no, as if reading her mind. As soon as they got inside, Mallory got the first alcoholic drink she could find, downed it, then went to dance with a football player twice her size while taking shots out of shot glasses on a nearby table. Meanwhile, Jess migrated to a corner by herself but a teammate of hers quickly dragged her to a group of people she didn't know while shoving an unopened beer can into her hands. Jess hesitated on opening it but with all of the people around her, she decided to open it then took a long sip to relax her uneasiness. After an unknown amount of time and an unknown amount of alcohol consumed, Mal and Jess had managed to reconnect and join the rest of their teammates.

"We're trying to get to know each other better," Mal announced a little too giddily while her arm was around Jessie's neck, her giddiness revealing that she was slightly drunk... actually very drunk.

"Oh, yay! Let's play truth or dare then!" One of the girls said laughing while sipping something from a red solo cup, she was probably just as drunk. "The last game of truth or dare we played at a party was pretty lit haha, round three here we goooo!"

Amongst the alcohol in their bodies, Mal and Jess were very aware of what was going on and neither one of them looked thrilled about playing this game. But with alcohol in everyone else's bodies, they both figured that the pain of embarrassment wouldn't be terrible. With the varying degrees of drunkenness, some of their teammates probably wouldn't even remember anything from the party once the night was over.

"Okay Mal, truth or dare?" Their teammate Marley asked.


"Would you date Christian Pulisic?"

"What type of lame question is that? And I don't know, depends, probably not," Mal said giggling, a little too much as a result of the alcohol.

"Truth or dare, Jessie?"

"I hate this game," the Canadian replied.

"We're all playing here. Truth or dare?"

"I don't know, dare," she answered, very unenthusiastically while taking another sip from her beer can to help boost her morale.

"I dare you to lick the bottom of my socks," Chloe dared. Jess was disgusted but licked the gross sock then immediately spit out whatever taste had remained in her mouth. *If this is how this version of this game was going to be then I think I might be okay, there's nothing truly embarrassing,* Jess thought to herself. The game went on like that, harmless truths and dares, for a good fifteen minutes.

"So, truth or dare?" Anika asked Mal.

"Dare."
"Make out with Jessie."

*Never mind, forget I said I'd be okay and that this wouldn't be embarrassing,* Jess thought to herself. Her eyes went wide and she was so close to getting up and running out of the house but some of her teammates had already surrounded her, basically trapping her. Jess had had her fair share of embarrassing dares over the years but nothing compared to this and she hadn't kissed anyone in years after a bad first experience when she was ten years old. Meanwhile, Mal just laughed then shrugged and said okay, although she was much more drunk than Jess was. Anika had an evil grin painted on her face that made Jessie want to slide tackle her, studs up.

"I don't want to, it's not a good idea," Jessie complained to Anika.

"You have to, Jessie, you can't back out now," Anika said.

"I'm being peer pressured and you guys are bullies."

"It's just a game of truth or dare. How about this, I dare you two to kiss right here for ten seconds," Anika said, which didn't really make it any better, like at all. Mal was already getting closer and closer to Jess while Jess tried to back away.

"I don't even know Mal that well," Jess protested but she was losing this battle. She was being pushed closer to Mal while the American reached for her face—Mal wanted to get this over with sooner rather than later. Jess tightly shut her eyes and waited for Mal's lips to press against hers.

Even with her clouded drunk mind, Mal could see Jessie's face turn red as she slowly approached. Mallory has noticed how Jessie's face always gets red when she's nervous or worked up and she finds it adorable, she looks like a worked up puppy with apple cheeks. The American just laughed as Jess tried to escape from what was about to go down as the most awkward moment between them ever but Mal just shrugged. She likes to consider herself a pretty good kisser, she's definitely had some experience here and there. However, kissing her roommate that she only slightly knew was not something Mal wanted to do, not now anyways. In order to get this over with as quickly as possible, Mal closed her eyes then reached for the red faced girl and gently pressed their lips against each other's. Then she silently counted to ten in her head, even amongst her current state of mind.

Mallory noticed that Jessie had relaxed a little bit and could tell that her eyes were not shut as tightly as before. She realized Jessie's lips were really soft and tasted like peppermint Chapstick which Mal concluded was because Jess missed the coldness of Canada and she didn't blame her, she missed the coldness of Colorado too. As their kiss continued, Mal could've sworn the heat had been turned up and the alcohol was getting to her more and more by the second, causing her mind to go all over the place. Right before they pulled apart, Jess returned the kiss in the slightest way that Mal couldn't even tell if that last part had happened or not, especially since she was drunk. When they pulled apart, Jessie's cheeks were still very red. Mal smirked then she realized what had happened and suddenly panicked, the alcohol was really playing with her mind and emotions.

"I can't believe I just did that, never talk about this ever again," Mallory said, wide eyed as the others started laughing at the awkwardness. "Wait, why are you all laughing?"

"Well, we took a picture of you two for our tenth year reunion," Marley laughed. Both of the young phenomenons' eyes went wide.

"If that photo ever gets out, I might hurt you," Mal said, half-jokingly. She's already seen some of Kelley O'Hara's old photos and videos and she did not want to become the next frat daddy. After taking a sip of alcohol, she wasn't as panicked as before as her mood began to change and she...
added, "Well, I sure got to know her a little better."

"Okay, truth or dare?" Anika asked Julia. Julia said 'dare' then was dared to do body shots off of Marley which resulted in a lot of hollering and a crowd surrounding them. Jessie didn't really pay much attention by then, she was still flustered from kissing Mal but was thankful their kiss would probably not be the story of tomorrow and that the body shots episode would be instead. She had underestimated that her teammates only get a little crazy when they actually get very crazy.

Jess deliberately avoided getting in a car with Mallory, she only drank half of a beer and a few sips of a mixed drink while Mal had at least three beers and six shots of tequila. Even when they left, Mal took one more tequila shot while walking towards the door to leave, her teammates not stopping her because they themselves were too drunk to. Jess was successful with avoiding Mal for the rest of the night until she had to bring Mal back to their room. Mal was extremely drunk and going crazy while constantly talking and laughing.

"You're really cute, just like a little child," Mal said giggling as Jess helped her into their room. The Canadian had helped set the American down on her bed while she attempted to take care of her as quietly and efficiently as possible, making sure not to wake up anyone else on their hall.

"Shhh, drink this," Jess commanded as she offered her a bottle of water that she had rushed to get from the small refrigerator they had in their room. After, she went to Mal's dresser to find a change of clean clothes for the drunken mess before her.

"You're like Diane Matheson," Mal continued, giggling.

"Diana," Jess corrected then handed her drunk roommate the first clean shirt and athletic shorts she could find. "Here, put these on."

"Yeah, you're like Diana but much younger and hotter," Mal explained after taking a few sips of water while beginning to take off her shirt, not caring about privacy whatsoever. Even though she was a little buzzed from the alcohol, the comments made Jessie blush. To Jessie's advantage, Mal's shirt had gotten stuck on her head and she couldn't see the blushing mess she unknowingly caused. This sudden problem for Mal lead her to lightly scream as she couldn't see.

"Shhh, Mal," Jessie said with a hushed voice while she helped the American take off the rest of her shirt. Jessie was used to witnessing drunk people because Canadians don't really care what age you are and after winning the bronze medal at the Olympics, she had seen some of her teammates at their worst. Mal had come back to their room drunk multiple times but never like this, Jessie felt like she was taking care of a five year old.

"How did you get to be fluent in English? You're an international," Mal asked, giggling.

"I'm from Canada."

"They speak French there," Mal argued and Jessie just let out an annoyed sigh.

"Only in Montreal and even there, they speak English," Jess explained, even though she knew Mallory wouldn't care and that this knowledge would go through one of Mal's ears and right out the other.

"I don't wanna wear any clothes," Mallory pouted as Jess offered her the clean shirt and shorts again, completely dismissing what her roommate had just explained to her; her drunken self unconsciously changing the subject. Jess was about to protest Mal's announcement of not wanting to wear clothes, but before she could say anything, Mal quickly took off her pants then got under
the covers of her bed. She also didn't want to argue with this very drunk Mal as it could wake everyone else up in the building and cause a huge disruption at two in the morning, which no one would like, so she let it be. Plus, the small amount of alcohol she had was only just starting to really kick in and she was growing very tired very quickly.

"Go to sleep," Jess said sleepily as she began to feel a little lightheaded.

"We should go do more shots!" Mal exclaimed as she began to get out of her bed, but thankfully Jessie stopped her.

"No Mal, you've already had seven tequila shots," Jess warned.

"No, that's not what I meant, silly," Mal replied as she drunkenly rolled her eyes at the girl sitting besides her. "I meant we should go to the field and do one hundred shots."

"It's too late and you're drunk," Jessie stated.

"I'm not drunk, I'm Mallory! Right? My name's Mallory, right?"

"Yes it is, Mallory," Jess said, this time it was her turn to roll her eyes as she let out another big sigh.

"Wait, did we forget to do our shots?!" Mal asked, panicking, suddenly sitting up.

"No Mal, we did them earlier," Jess assured her, sighing again as she gently pushed Mal back down. "Now go to sleep."

"What if I wanna make out with you?" Mal asked with a goofy smile, slurring out her words while her eyes were beginning to close. While Mallory's physical appearance revealed just how drunk she was to Jessie, the randomness of the things she said was also an indication of just how intoxicated her roommate was.

"No you don't," Jess assured her, trying desperately to hide her rosy cheeks from the American laying in the bed beside hers. She kind of wanted to but knew better, especially since she herself had a little alcohol in her system. She was secretly thankful that Mal was this drunk because she would likely not remember any of the events from this night when they wake up in the morning, or when they wake up in any morning in the future for that matter.

"Someday then, someday you'll give me a shot at it," Mal mumbled then she finally relaxed in her bed and on her pillow, closed her eyes, and was soon sound asleep. Jess let out a deep breath that she hadn't realized she was holding in, finally able to not have to worry about Mallory then she herself closed her eyes and fell into a deep slumber. Jessie was too tired and full of alcohol that she didn't even stop to think about what Mallory had just told her.

Chapter End Notes

"Shots" by LMFAO

So just a note, pay attention to the chapter titles haha. Not all of them will have significant meaning but others will. :) 

On another note, I hope you're all enjoying reading this! I love all the feedback and
kudos, it's motivating me to continue updating and writing this. I've actually done so much research for this story it's kind of sad. There's not too much about Mallory Pugh and Jessie Fleming so you bet I literally looked through most of their social media accounts and have been very attentive, also most stories in this fandom are backward looking, in an alternative universe, or there's enough information to come up with future details while this story is entirely forward looking. I try to make everything as accurate to real life as possible (well, not absolutely EVERYTHING but you get the point), you'll see later in the story just how much research I've put in just to know about the locations where I've set the story.
It's been a solid month since Mal and Jess decided to change their approach to friendship. Ever since that game of truth or dare, they've gotten much closer. They've progressed from just roommates and teammates to actual friends. Since that kiss that neither one has brought up, probably because Mallory doesn't remember that night too well, they've started speaking to each other on a daily basis. They even do loads of laundry together since they realized they could combine their dirty loads into one big load and just take turns paying every other week.

As they actually talk to each other now, they notice little things they do on the field, which helps a lot. After practice or during water breaks, they'll tell each other where they need to improve and offer suggestions. They're always the first and last two people at practice, getting in some extra shots, extra running, or extra drills before and after practices. They realized they were stuck with each other so, why not make the best of it? Not many people can say they practice every single day with one of the best young soccer players in the world. Many people already consider them world class players, excelling the skill sets of players who are competing in elite leagues and are much older than them. However, Mallory and Jessie themselves do not think so, they don't even think of themselves as elite when they can barely make it through a week without complaining about their college classes.

"So you know how I said I was failing my communications class like a month ago and you helped me?" Mal asked Jess as they made their way back to our room from a long day of practice. While they gave each other pointers about soccer, how to do laundry, and about which dining halls on campus had the best lunch menu on Thursdays, they never gave each other pointers when it came to academic work. Although they had two classes together and struggled in classes that the other excelled in, they hadn't gone to each other for help since Jessie's failed attempt until now. After Jessie witnessed Mallory being a stuttering mess while doing an impromptu speech exercise during their public speaking class, Mal knew she really needed to seek out Jess for at least a little help.

"Yeah, well you didn't really let me help you. Anyways, are you not failing anymore?" Jess responded, hopeful.

"Haha no, well, technically yes. I have a C+ but I really need to get it up and I desperately need your help," she explained.

"It's not like I'm any better at public speaking than you are," Jess reiterated what she had told her roommate and teammate weeks ago. To be fair, when she had said her impromptu speech in their public speaking class, she may have said "um" more than the amount of times she went off into tangents, which was a lot. If someone compared any of the young American's and young Canadian's interviews, he or she would notice the striking comparisons. However, Jess somehow still had a better grade in the class, maybe because of the extra experience in the interview field due to her old career in running.
"Please," Mal begged as the door shut behind them once they entered their room and set their bags down. Mal was desperate and was on the verge of doing anything for Jess to convince her into helping her.

"Fine," the Canadian mumbled and the American cheered then headed to the bathroom to shower, nearly forgetting her towel and shower caddy in the process.

"Ready to help me now?" Mal announced enthusiastically as she came back from the bathroom having showered, only wearing a towel while carrying her dirty clothes and shower items. Jessie was expecting the other girl to put pajamas on or at least some type of clothing, especially since the shower was in a communal bathroom down the hall, but the American just sat on her bed looking for her speech on her laptop with her wet hair dripping all over and a towel wrapped around her body.

"Um, aren't you gonna get dressed?"

"Oh I thought saying my speech naked would help me boost up my confidence level," Mal said in all seriousness. The young, innocent Canadian's eyes widened and her face turned red. Once Mal saw the reaction, she started laughing, "Oh my gosh, I'm kidding. I just wanted to pull my speech up on here for you to look over and edit while I change into clean clothes since I'm stupid and forgot to bring a change of clothes to the bathroom with me."

Jessie sighed out of relief as she was handed the laptop. She took a seat at her desk to read it over, her back facing Mal so the American could change in privacy.

"So, what do you think?" Mal asked, startling Jess as she came from behind and set a hand on her shoulder; causing Jess to nearly jolt away while Mal simply laughed.

"Um..." Jess started as Mal nearly distracted her from her thoughts because her body was lightly pressed against Jessie's back. "Uh... it's good. Yeah. I changed like a word or two and a couple of grammar and punctuation stuff. It's good, I can tell you did a lot of research, the outline is how it should be."

"Great, thanks. Now time for me to practice saying it aloud, but go take a shower first while I do a practice run-through," Mal ordered and Jess was grateful as she escaped Mallory's soft touch.

"Yeah, definitely," the midfielder responded, making her way to the bathroom to shower, with her shower caddy and change of clean clothes in her hands.

"Help me," were the first words Jess heard once she returned from the bathroom, clean with fresh clothes on. She rolled her eyes as she watched Mallory standing on her bed across from hers where she had set out a couple of stuffed animals as an artificial crowd. She had her favorite monkey blanket tied around her neck like a cape and a pair of sunglasses over her eyes. It was absolutely adorable, especially with her naturally curly hair, but Jess was not in the mood to admire her adorableness considering she was exhausted and just wanted to go to sleep. Upon Jessie's arrival back to their room, Mallory quickly jumped off her bed, ran over to the freshly showered Canadian, then took her hand and dragged her over to her bed, having her sit down right next to the stuffed animals. Jess slightly blushed at Mal's touch but her face quickly went back to normal as soon as Mal stood back up on her bed, laptop in her hands.

"Is this all really necessary?" Jess asked Mal, referring to the stuffed animals and her makeshift cape as well as the sunglasses she wore. Jess couldn't help but laugh and record her for her Snapchat story.
"Yes, confidence boost," she replied seriously.

"Well, is it working?"

"Um no, not really."

"Just a sec," Jess said, going over to her soccer bag to get a whistle, a yellow card, and a red card. "Okay, now speak."

"Where'd you get all that stuff from and what's it for?" Mallory asked, suspiciously.

"It was a gag gift from a friend and just wait and see," the clever Canadian said as a smile crept onto her face.

"Whatever," Mal said then started speaking. She wasn't even two sentences in when Jess lightly blew her whistle. "What did I do?"

"Foul number one for mumbling," Jess responded seriously, referring to her half audible introduction.

"I was not mumbling," the American argued defensively.

"Well, I couldn't hear you, speak louder," Jessie replied and so Mal did. After she made it through the first paragraph, Jess blew her whistle again. "Foul number two. You have like no emotion when you speak. It's like you're just talking for no reason behind it. And more eye contact. Eye contact is key. You're not even looking at Sir Fluffy, Bounce the Kangaroo, or Winnie the Pooh, let alone me. You need to give everyone eye contact."

"It's not like you're any better," Mal gave a snarky reply. "And I'm giving great eye contact, if Sir Fluffy, Bounce, and Pooh could speak, they'd tell me I'm doing well."

"But they can't speak because they're stuffed animals and it's not about me, it's about you. You're the one who asked me for the help," Jess explained. The stubborn striker rolled her eyes then continued with her speech. Jessie kept listening, but while Mal was sounding a little better, her eye contact was still not quite there, so she blew her whistle again then raised a yellow card. "Yellow card for consistent infringement."

"What?! Are you serious?! I was getting better!"

"It's not good enough," Jess simply stated. "Eye contact. Eye contact is key."

"Then what do you want me to do then? A yellow card was not the right call," she protested.

"Too late. A call is a call. And just continue what you're doing but do it better, maybe actually think about what you're talking about and eye contact is key," Jess said with a straight face, trying to piss the American forward off. It definitely was pissing her off, which was very entertaining, as Mal progressively got angrier with each passing second.

"You're so annoying," Mal said, though smiling, as she threw a soccer ball right at Jessie's face. In response, the Canadian blew her whistle and gave Mal a red card.

"Red card for hitting the referee," Jess said as she pretended to write her up in her fake referee book. She was then tackled by Mal to the bed, causing the both of them to laugh. Mal gripped onto Jess as she was weak from laughter and Jess tried to get out of her grip but she herself was too busy laughing to try an actual attempt at escaping her.
"It was an accident!" Mal argued, though laughing.

"That was definitely intended and since you tackled the referee, you're suspended from being my workout buddy for the rest of the week."

"In all seriousness though," Mal said, once they settled down, looking straight into the Canadian's warm brown eyes, "Thank you. As petty as that was, that helped me a lot and now I know what to work on."

"I guess Canadians are just extra cool," Jess said with a smirk.

"Or you just hang out with a lot of weird, older Canadian teammates."

"Your team is just as weird."

"We Americans are just really special, runs in the youth teams too," Mal defended herself.

"Touché," the Canadian said with a sly smile.

"Whatever," Mal said. Then she said with a warm smile that made Jessie melt inside, "Anyways, thank you though, it really does mean a lot. I'm actually not that scared about saying it tomorrow in class now."

"You're welcome, anytime," Jess said, smiling up to her. There was a brief silence and Jessie's eyes quickly flickered up to Mallory's but darted away just as quickly. Before anything could happen, whether Mallory saw it or not, Jessie broke the silence by saying, "Wow, that scar on your forehead really does look like a ghost. It reminds me of the Snapchat ghost haha."

"You're mean and annoying," Mal said as she narrowed her eyes, giving Baby Canada a fake death glare. "Also, were you serious about not being my workout buddy for a week?"

"No, but I will go a little harder on you," Jessie responded. Baby Mal then got off of Jessie and the bed while saying she was going to brush her teeth then go to sleep because she was exhausted from Jessie's bad referee calls. Before Jess could argue, Mal was already out of the room, heading to the bathroom.

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"So you know how I told you I had a C+ in Oral Communication?" Mal asked Jessie as they passed a ball at practice during the warmup.

"Of course," Jessie said smiling as she remembered her "refereeing" role two nights earlier.

"I have an A- now, thank you for helping me. It really did help," she said, very appreciative.

"I got you," Jess said with a warm smile. "I must admit, when you did your speech in class, it was so much better than the one before."

"Thanks, you're a great friend, roommate, teammate, and workout buddy," she said, suddenly sounding sappy.

"I know," the Canadian said with a smug smile while shrugging her shoulders, then kicked the ball past her. "Oh, whoops."

"Really?" She asked, giving her an "are you serious?" look. "I take that back. You're not that great."
Chapter End Notes

I have no clue how I thought of this but it's pretty cute haha. Thanks again for all the kudos and feedback. Hope you enjoyed this chapter as much as I enjoyed writing it!
It's been a solid spring preseason for the UCLA women's soccer team, especially with Mallory adjusting so incredibly well. Even without her in the previous fall, UCLA played well and had a great run in the NCAA tournament— their journey was stopped short when they lost to West Virginia in a game in the frigid snow. While Jess was the one who scored and gave her team another chance in the final minutes of regulation, she didn't feel too terrible; she was happy that her Canadian national teammates advanced because they deserved it after having such a great season, she just wished they hadn't lost to USC in the final.

With Mal having joined in January, UCLA was unstoppable and they had won all of their spring games thus far. Plus, with Ashley Sanchez and Anika's sister, Karina, coming in over the summer, they would likely dominate in the upcoming fall season and the next three years following. With fantastic recruiting, they were hoping to have a successful next couple of years. One last preseason game in the month of March against the Portland Thorns would be the final testament to determine just how talented this collegiate team really was. To say Mal and Jessie were excited during the days leading up to this game would be a huge understatement. In fact, they had been looking forward to this all week and hadn't stopped talking about it to the rest of their teammates; they assumed that the others probably hated them by now (their teammates didn't, it's the freaking Portland Thorns for crying out loud). They couldn't help being so excited, they had great friends on the team and Mal was so close to playing for the Rose City instead of going to college so this was a special game.

"I've played against some of my Canadian teammates before in collegiate games but it's gonna be weird playing against Sinc," Jess said as the two passed a ball to each other. In a matter of just four months, they had gone from not communicating to each other at all to becoming extremely close friends and as a result, it showed on the field. The chemistry Mal and Jess share on the field is unparalleled, most professionals aren't even on the same caliber and they have yet to showcase their shared talent in a setting as intense and competitive as today's game against Portland.

"No, not really. I don't think so. She's probably gonna shove me because she's mean," Mal said.

"Mal, shut up, I promise she's actually nice. She's just aggressive on the field. She's like the quiet grandma off the field. Plus, now that I'm thinking of it, she might not play that much because it's just preseason."

"Still, I'm not very big," Mal added. "If she runs over me, Rose, Lindsey, and Emily will tease me for the rest of eternity. We already tease each other enough when one of us slips and falls."

"You play against Becky Sauerbrunn and Christen Press in training and there could be worse, you could get nutmegged by Tobin," Jess explained but Mal just laughed.
"Jess, that happens to me all the time. Actually, that happens to everyone all the time, sometimes I don't even know it happens. It probably even happens when I'm asleep, who knows. Tobin is Tobin."

"I don't want it to happen to me though," she said as her face got red from nervousness and Mal couldn't help but smile.

"If we as a team just do what we've been doing, we might not lose by three goals," Mal changed the subject, laughing at how ridiculous yet honest and hopeful she sounded. "On another completely different side note, I'm so glad Rose got drafted to the Thorns."

"Who's that again?"

"The one who's obsessed with her dog," Mal replied casually, not missing a beat.

"Wait, I thought that was Christen."

"No, the other one."

"What does she look like again?" Jess asked.

"She's the pale one," Mal reminded her.

"Oh yeah, her, and why is that? About her being drafted to the Thorns?" Jess replied.

"Her name is Rose and Portland is the Rose City and they're called the Thorns. It's just a perfect marketing concept," Mal explained as they did a light jog to warmup (Author Disclaimer: I wrote this awhile ago before Rose was drafted to and signed by the Breakers; I will probably add something later in the story so she'll be with Boston! ... Author Disclaimer Update: Anyways, the Breakers will forever be in my heart, but also go Spirit! She will be a Spirit player later on!). "Anyways, I really hope we don't lose too badly."

"Well, let's go play this game then," Jess said, pumped as the whistle signaled the nearing of the kickoff. They joined their teammates in a team huddle then quickly gave each other high fives and proceeded to high-five the rest of their teammates as they jogged onto the pitch.

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"If I tackle you, I'm not saying sorry," Emily told Mal as they waited for the whistle to blow to signal kickoff. Mal just rolled her eyes while letting out a small laugh.

"I'd feel sorry if I were you. You look ridiculous with that nose brace on, you shouldn't have broken it... again," Mal joked.

"Shut up," Emily shot back but the both of them laughed while Rose and Lindsey, who were on the other side of the field, were left out of the conversation and talking amongst themselves, eyeing the other two. Once the whistle blew, neither one of them were laughing nor smiling anymore.

In the first thirty minutes of the first half, the game was at a leveled playing field as both teams had the same amount of goal opportunities and errors. This was a surprise to both teams; the Thorns had expected this game to be a challenge, but not this challenging, while the UCLA girls were surprised they were keeping up so well with arguably one of the best professional women's soccer teams in the world. However, the new cockiness that UCLA had developed was quickly destroyed at the thirty-second minute. Tobin Heath embarrassed six UCLA players by dribbling through and around them, including nutmegging Jessie in the process. When she got through all of them, she
passed the ball to Christine Sinclair who shot the ball into the back of the net. The UCLA team was jumbled for the rest of the first half but luckily held onto a one goal deficit until the whistle blew signaling halftime.

"Everyone needs to loosen up and just have some fun, that's when we play the best. I honestly think we have a good chance of beating them. That sounds crazy but I think we do," Coach Amanda preached while in the locker room during halftime. "Okay, captains, do your thing."

"Alright ladies, we got this! On three, one, two, three, BRUINS!"

"If you push Sinc down, I'll give you five bucks," Jess chuckled as she and Mal walked out together.

"Okay, that's a bet. I'll give you five bucks if you nutmeg Tobin," Mal responded laughing.

"You know, if neither of us are successful, we won't owe each other anything," Jess realized.

"True," Mal said then they both went their separate ways on the pitch. The whistle was blown and the second half began. From the start of the second half kickoff, the UCLA gals were playing much better and it was beginning to scare the Thorns, the college players were almost playing too well. Another UCLA player, Sunny, almost scored but was just wide by no more than three inches. The college players quickly regained possession of the ball after their near goal and headed toward the opposite goal to score. When Jessie had complete control of the ball just past the midfield, Tobin was running at her to defend her. Jessie did a scissor then easily nutmegged Tobin and kept running down the field with the ball. Some loud cheers and howls from the sidelines could be heard but Jess was in the zone and paid no attention. In the corner of her left eye, she saw Mal running down the sideline and could hear her calling for the ball. She made a beautiful cross to Mallory who then dribbled around two defenders. Christine Sinclair came from behind to try to get the ball but Mal pushed back, causing the Thorns captain to fall down onto the ground. There was only the goalie in between her and the goal so Mal struck the ball with her right foot directly into the upper ninety, tying the game at the seventy-sixth minute. When Mal realized she had scored, she had the biggest smile then immediately ran over to Jess while her other teammates surrounded them to congratulate them both.

"So I guess we don't owe each other any money since we both won our bets," Jess said into Mal's ear as they walked back to centerfield, both laughing. After the next kickoff, the UCLA gals had high pressure on the Thorns for the rest of the game and it paid off. At the eighty-ninth minute, Mal was on a fast break past the midfield. When Allie Long came to defend her, Mal rainbow-ed the ball over her then did a Maradonna around Emily (Tobin Heath and Marta who?). Right when the keeper dove towards her for the ball, she back-heeled the ball to Jessie who had been running behind her as support. Jess calmly passed the ball into the back of the net, scoring another goal for the underdogs. After Mal and Jess realized what happened, they turned towards each other in shock then jumped into each other's arms while their teammates joined them. Once the final whistle blew signaling the end of a surprising 2-1 win for UCLA over the Portland Thorns, the college players were ecstatic. Not only did they beat one of the best teams in the world but they beat them with a fantastic style of play and teamwork as well as scoring two beautiful goals that many teams, both men's and women's, around the world wish they could have scored. Before celebrating the win with their UCLA teammates, Mal and Jess quickly shook the opposing teams' hands and said quick hellos and goodbyes to their national team teammates. After a brief celebration huddle with their team, the two young phenomenons were then forced to do an interview together. Before Mal arrived to Westwood, it was always just Jess or a senior but now with the both of them playing, they were always forced to be interviewed together because their team publicist insisted. Their publicist had told them that she wanted them to publicly show how
friendly they were together to eliminate any strange rivalry invented by the media, even though the way they had just played on the pitch together was proof that they got along quite well.

"I'm with Mallory Pugh and Jessie Fleming of the UCLA women's soccer team right after their win against the Portland Thorns in Westwood. Mal and Jessie, how does it feel to have upset one of the best professional teams in the world?" The interviewer asked.

"Um, it feels great. I think we played well and, uh, it's cool," Jess explained. When Mal elbowed her to say more, she added, "I'm surprised we won. It was cool to score too, especially like the way I did. It was all good teamwork."

"What about you, Pugh?"

"Yeah, it's amazing. I love the Thorns so I was surprised and, um, it was cool to play some of my national team teammates. My UCLA girls have, um... developed into a really great team. I was just hoping we wouldn't lose to them by more than three so this is all really cool," Mal said with a smile. Jessie intently watched her and wondered how she could still look so pretty after playing a full ninety minute game.

"What's it like to say you've nutmegged Tobin Heath in a game?" The interviewer asked Jess laughing.

"Satisfying. Mal bet me to do it so I did," Jess said casually, shrugging.

"And you, Mallory, not only had a beautiful goal and assist but also shoved Christine Sinclair to the ground, how does that feel?"

"Cool, I guess," Mal laughed lightly. "I usually am pretty physical plus, Jessie bet me to do it. We both won our bets so I guess we're even then."

"Now seriously, your connection on the field is unparalleled to likely any other pair on the soccer field in the history of the sport. How have you guys become so great together?"

"Well, um, we didn't really like each other at first but since we were forced to be roommates, we kinda have to be around each other like all the time. Now we do everything together. We train together a lot, there's a lot of free time when we're not in class or studying," Mal explained, her voice showing little to no emotion.

"On the international stage, the United States and Canada play each later within the next year or so, how do you feel?" The question wasn't directed to a particular person so Mal nudged Jess to answer.

"I'm excited. It's gonna be a good game, they're a great team. Mal has gotten much better so that's gonna be tough in itself," Jess joked, although she wasn't lying. She then licked her lips, which she always did in interviews, it was a nervous habit of hers. Mal was staring at Jess as she spoke and couldn't help but notice how adorable she was. She knew the Canadian well and could tell that Jessie was nervous because she kept licking her lips and her cheeks were bright red.

"Thank you for stopping by," the reporter concluded the interview and the two went to join their teammates in the locker room.

"You're complete shit at interviews," Mal said honestly as the two walked through the tunnel.

"I know but I still have a solid A in that oral speaking class," Jess defended. "I've gotten better though and you're still really bad."
"We both suck."

"Yeah, we do," Jess sadly agreed.

"But at least we don't suck at soccer," Mal added.

"True, you've got a point."

Chapter End Notes

I came up with Mal and Jessie's ship name! It's "Messie" since it sounds better than "Jallory" and also sounds like Messi and it just works out really well. So, Messie it is.

I hope you've enjoyed reading this and please continue to leave feedback, the compliments I've received are so wonderful and I deeply appreciate them. Also, feel free to find me on tumblr if you so desire, it's wosobsessed159.tumblr.com!

I've been writing a lot of this story and there's a possibility that this might be insanely long as it will go pretty far into the future. However, I might consider splitting this whole story into two or more parts. If you're like me, I don't like super long stories, only ones that I can really get into. So, what do you think I should do? Should I have this be a super long story or split this into two or more stories?
Mallory and Jessie's daily extra training sessions progressed from simple hour long runs to adventurous expeditions. They've become such close friends that they literally do everything together. On free days or just whenever they have nothing to do, they pick a place to explore that involves a great workout in the process. Every now and then, some of their teammates tag along but since they're both so ambitious and go on long excursions as often as possible, not everyone can keep up with them.

On this particular, rare free Saturday in the Los Angeles area, they decided to go on two hikes then to go surfing (just call them overachieving elite athletes). To say that they will be hiking is an understatement, they will straight out be running the whole entire time because they're the type of athletes who do that... plus, their personal trainers told them to do so.

"So, do you know where we're going?" Jess questioned Mal as they stepped out of the car that they had parked on the side of the road. It was approximately six in the morning and the weather was perfect, not too hot and not too cold, probably about 65° Fahrenheit. Mallory carried a drawstring bag full of bottled cold water and some snacks while Jessie carried a small backpack with a camera inside.

"Um, follow all the people," Mal commanded.

"That's pretty vague, especially since it's six o'clock in the morning and there's like no one here," Jessie pointed out knowingly.

"It's not that hard, it's the Hollywood sign. If we don't see it then that means we're going the wrong way," Mal explained with a shrug. And so they began to hike up the famous trail to the Hollywood sign from their parking spot close to the Griffith Observatory. Neither one of them had done this hike before and as they both were exercise enthusiasts, they were extremely excited. They might've been a little too excited because they both started off in "slow" sprints.

"Yo, we should slow down a little," Jess warned after four minutes, even though neither one of them were out of breath; they had probably ran three quarters of a mile by then. Their sprints slowed to a jog which alone was probably faster the average person's sprints. "We still have a long day ahead of us."

"Yeah, we do. And wait a second, I need to get my phone out real quick," Mal said so the two stopped to get their phones out of their bags and take quick sips of water. After their brief break, the two started to run again with their phones ready for Snapchat worthy content. There was a minute long silence as the two admired the beautiful view surrounding them with only the sound of their feet hitting the ground and the natural ambience as the soundtrack. "We should play music-wait! I have a better idea! I should sing!"
"Oh no, please don't-," Jessie begged.

"I hopped off the plane at L.A.X. with a dream and my cardigan. Welcome to the land of fame excess (whoa), am I gonna fit in?" Mal interrupted Jessie's protest and began to playfully sing, filming herself for Snapchat while doing so. This caused Jess pain in her ears and motivation to run a little faster to get away from the American while Mal just laughed and kept singing.

"I'm running faster now so I can run away from you," Jess grumbled as Mal got her phone right in the Canadian's face.

"Jumped in the cab here I am for the first time! Look to my right and I see the Hollywood sign," Mal continued to sing then looked to her right at the Hollywood sign and directed her phone that way as well. Jess rolled her eyes, looking very annoyed, although she secretly she found Mal's goofiness adorable. In fact, she was finding Mal to be adorable a lot of the time. She kept noticing things that she hadn't noticed before, like how Mal always set four alarms and finally got up only when Jessie's own alarm went off, how Mal never ate candy, how she always sang really badly when she was in a good mood, how she always ended up buying more groceries or clothes than she originally intended to buy, how she always used yellow emojis and rarely capitalized anything in her Instagram captions, and how she could always tell Mal arrived back to their dorm because she seemed to always make a lot of commotion and noise in the hallway. They were all little things that Jess seemed to notice were common occurrences but Jess found them adorable. There was something about Mallory that made her different to Jessie but the Canadian couldn't quite figure out what it was nor why.

"Well that was really fast and short," Jess said slightly disappointed as they had already made it to the Hollywood sign in about ten minutes.

"That's why we're going on another hike," Mal reminded her, then she walked closer to the sign and took in the view of the city. Jessie smiled to herself as she quickly got her camera out and snapped a photo of Mal in her element. Suddenly, Mal turned around and struck a pose which caused Jess to once again roll her eyes but she happily took another picture, suppressing a big grin in the process of doing so. When Jess looked back at the first photo she took of the American, she realized how perfect it was. The sun was rising right above the city causing Mallory to look more like a Greek goddess rising from the heavens with light surrounding her than an eighteen year old soccer player who is really bad at singing.

"Please back away from the cliff, I don't want you to fall, be careful," Jess warned.

"Huh? What was that?" Mallory joked as she jerked forward, pretending to begin to fall.

"Mallory, just come here," Jess said, slightly annoyed. Then, as she showed the photo to Mal, she said, "You look like a Greek goddess, not boring Mallory Pugh."

"I'm not boring," Mal said in her defense while looking at the photograph, playfully giving the photographer a small shove. "I must admit, I do look pretty dope in this."

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"So, do you know where we're going this time?" Jess asked as the two were about to start their second running hike of the day, all before ten in the morning. On their hour long drive over, they had stopped at Starbucks to get breakfast then got back on the road. While Mal drove, she had to suffer through Jessie insisting that Tim Horton's is better than Starbucks. Mal tried to simply roll her eyes and ignore her but when Jessie said that everything in Canada is better, that's when Mal
began to argue. They argued for a good forty minutes about which country was better but as soon as they stepped out of the car, their conversation had been quickly forgotten.

"I knew where I was going last time, what are you talking about?" Mal answered defensively.

"Whatever helps you sleep at night. Anyways, do you know where we're going?" Jessie asked once again.

"Um nope, not really," Mal stated as they began to run on a trail in Malibu that they hoped would loop back to the parking lot where they had parked the car.

"There was a map right by where we parked," Jess reminded.

"Life is an adventure."

"And if we die, it's your fault."

"Wow, thanks Jess."

"Do you even know the name of the trail we're hiking?"

"Nope," Mal replied, not missing a beat.

"It's called Solstice Canyon," Jessie answered her own question. "We're gonna die."

"Don't be so down on me. You can't spell canyon without can so we can do this," Mal assured her which resulted in Jessie rolling her eyes at the American's corniness. She found herself rolling her eyes because of something Mallory said or did more often than not.

They ran through a trail the second time that day, however, Jessie stopped to take photos almost every other minute. This resulted in Mal being annoyed and causing her to not wait for "Photographer Jess" most of the time and leaving her in the dust.

"Well, I don't wanna die alone but it looks like I might," Jess said through gritted teeth as she caught up with Mallory again.

"Huh?"

"I have no clue where I'm going and you keep leaving me alone."

"You'd be fine by yourself," Mal replied, shrugging. "Plus, there's civilization surrounding us."


"Reminds me of home," Mal said, quickly changing the subject, reminiscing as they both slowed down a little bit. They slowed down to a jog as they descended the mountain and approached a forested area.

"You lived in the mountains?" Jess asked. They were quickly passing other runners on the trail which made those poor people look bad. They were slowing down and having a conversation without being out of breath nor breaking a sweat while the other runners were drenched in sweat and breathing very heavily.

"Well, my high school was called Mountain Vista, I could see the mountains outside the window from where I sat in my AP Calc class," Mal said knowingly. "And it's Colorado, what do you expect?"
"You never know, names can be deceiving. I live in a place called London that isn't in England."

"Woah, look at this place," Mal said as she looked up, becoming distracted, causing her to ignore whatever Jessie had said. They had crossed a tiny little creek, which was mostly dry as a result of the drought, to a small area where they found old ruins of a house just yonder.

"This is so cool," Jess said, her eyes lighting up as she took her camera out of her bag. Mal giggled at Jessie's excitement then jumped up to explore the ruined, abandoned house that was marked with graffiti. She began to get so into looking at the graffiti that she didn't realize Jess had taken photos of the ruins and her. Together, they read the plaque that explained what exactly this place had formerly been. Finally, Jess took one more picture, put the camera back in her bag, and they were off running again, hoping they would get back to the parking lot. They did briefly stop twice when Mal saw a cool tree that looked like a willow tree and when she spotted a hallowed out tree that she could fit her whole body in; she begged Jessie to take playful pictures of her with both. The photographer complained but secretly did not mind at all because it was Mallory and the photos were actually pretty cute too. After no more than ten minutes later, they had found their car. Once in the car, Mal drove them to the beach which was just a short drive away.

Before going to the beach to surf, they made a quick stop at Chipotle to get lunch and change into their bathing suits. Well, Mal decided to make the stop since she was driving and as a Colorado native, she was no stranger to Chipotle. They both ate their food so quickly that by the time they got to the beach parking lot that was fifteen minutes away, they were done. Once they were done eating and had parked, they made their way to the beach with a bag in each arm as well as a board and wet suit.

"So, um, I've never surfed before," Mal finally spoke up.

"Why wouldn't you tell me earlier, especially before you decided to pay the money to rent the board?" Jess shot back.

"Okay, I'm lying, I have surfed before but it wasn't like super legit, it was a team bonding thing so it was pretty quick. I've always wanted to learn how to like really surf so why not now?" Mal said cheerfully, ignoring Jessie's question.

"Fine, I'll try to teach you but you'll owe me big time," Jess mumbled.

"Thanks Canada, you da best," Mal said beaming then quickly ran to stake out a spot on the sand to set their belongings down while Jess followed slowly behind.

"Okay, let's start with the basics first," Jess said once they both were in wet suits. She then commanded Mal to lay chest-down on the board then quickly stand back up.

"But we're not in the water," Mal protested, not yet getting down.

"So? Haven't you seen the movies? You always start on land," Jess sighed while rolling her eyes, realizing that this surfing lesson was going to be a difficult one. "My younger sister is a better listener than you."

Mal grudgingly did what she was told and to the Canadian surfing instructor's surprise, Mallory did it very quickly; she is an elite athlete after all. Jessie told Mal to do this exercise again and again and after about ten times with the same fluency and speed as the first, Jess said, "Alrighty, you're picking up really quickly, let's go surf, dude."

Jessie easily swam out on her board to where other surfers were and was expecting Mallory to be
much slower but to her surprise yet again, she was only about a couple of feet behind. 

"Okay Mal, try a small wave first but make sure you don't steal someone's wave or at least don't get in anyone's way. Your first wave might be the one where you wipe out but since you're picking up so quickly, it probably won't be," Jessie explained. Mal nodded in response and before Jess could even try to ride a wave herself, Mal was already up. With elegance, Mal had somehow rode a wave perfectly, not falling or wobbling once. Jess caught the next wave and rode it to where Mal had jumped off.

"How did you-?" Jess began.

"That was fucking amazing!" Mal cut off Jess. They both were surprised at how good she was, especially for someone who had just learned how to surf twenty minutes ago. "That was so exhilarating and I have no idea how I did that. Let's do it again!"

They kept surfing for a good thirty minutes and with every wave they rode, they both kept getting better and better. Mallory's riding got smoother and smoother while Jessie tried out some difficult tricks and surprised herself by doing them all extremely well. Exhaustion finally caught up to them and they collectively decided to go back to the shore and rest.

"Hey dude, you're really good, you should try surfing in a competition," a guy casually mentioned to Jess, causing both Mal and Jess to laugh.

"Hahahaha, I have no time but thanks," Jess replied simply, not wanting to explain that she was an elite soccer player (because that's how she is, extremely humble). When they got back to their belongings, they took off their wetsuits revealing their bikinis. Jessie's eyes almost immediately flickered down to Mallory's toned abs and Jessie thought to herself, *Gosh, she's gorgeous*.

"My abs hurt so bad," Mal whined, as if knowing Jessie was checking her out. Jessie quickly looked away then replied, "Yeah, mine too."

Mal was oblivious to the fact that Jessie was checking her out and that her voice went up an octave. To try to escape from the awkward situation she had just created, Jess looked down at the ground to situate her towel while Mal lied down on hers to sunbathe but quickly shot up.

"We need to put more sunscreen on," Mal demanded as she put her sunglasses on and dug a bottle out of her bag that her mom had sent her. Jess nodded in agreement and took some in her hands.

"I didn't know you had a tattoo. I'm your teammate and roommate and I've never seen that before," Jess said as she lathered herself with lotion.

"Are you for real? I have one on my wrist too," Mal said, as if her tattoos were obvious facts. Before she could embarrass Jess anymore, she turned around then asked, "Do my back please?"

Jessie complied and tried to lather the forward's back as quickly as possible. Mallory was still oblivious to the now blushing Jess but was entertained by how shy and uneasy she was. When the Canadian finished, she looked away and to her advantage, saw a few people playing a game of pickup soccer on the sand.

"Hey, let's go play with them!" Jessie exclaimed, diverting her attention from Mallory's tan muscular back to a group of students who looked their age kicking around a ball. Luckily, the sand at the beaches of Malibu were hard and packed, minimizing the likeliness of spraining an ankle.

"Well, sure, I guess," Mal shrugged and they both stood up then walked over to the beach soccer playing group, completely abandoning their plans of sunbathing and taking naps.
"Hi, mind if we join?" The normally shy Jessie asked the group.

"Woah, you're Jessie Fleming," a girl who was probably their age, if not a year or two older, pointed out.

"And you're Mallory Pugh," the other girl said. The guy with the two girls looked confused and was completely oblivious. One of the girls told him that they were "like the best young women's soccer players in the world" and the guy's eyes widened.

"Yeah, I guess that's us. We prefer just being called soccer players though haha. We just came to play," Mal said simply. Both her and Jess were totally unfazed by the whole ordeal and honestly, just wanted to play because soccer is their life.

"I'm Sarah and this is Lauren and Josh, we play at Pepperdine right up the road," one of the girls explained. She added with a laugh, "Go Waves!"

"Oh, I remember playing you guys," Jess realized, now remembering how fast and talented the two girls were, even though the Waves had lost to the Bruins 3-0.

"Yeah, I think I've seen you two girls before on Instagram," Mal said. Then they quickly divided into two teams; Mallory and Jessie on one while Sara, Lauren, and Josh were on the other. They traced a small field in the sand that was equivalent to the size of a basketball court. Mal and Jess were pleasantly surprised when they found out just how good the Pepperdine players were. While it was a great competition, after about twenty minutes of play when they collectively decided to end the game, the UCLA duo were up 5-3. After Jess took a quick "basic" picture of Mal with their new Pepperdine friends, they all exchanged numbers in hopes to play beach pickup soccer again. Of course, as all of them were collegiate athletes, none of them knew off the top of their head when they would next be free. Plus, Malibu is still a bit of a drive from Westwood.

"That was a lot of fun," Jess said once she and Mal got into the car.

"I think I'm gonna sleep all day tomorrow," Mal stated. Before starting the car, Mal got distracted when Jess took out the ponytail she had had tightly in since the morning.

"Um, why are you staring at me like that?" Jess questioned, slightly weirded out.

"You look really pretty with your hair down. You should wear it down more often," Mal stated with a soft smile causing Jessie's cheeks to turn that famous red of hers. Mallory just shook it off then started the car and started driving back to campus.

Chapter End Notes

Me: *waves* hello!

Haha hope you enjoyed this chapter! With my first semester of college done and a month of break, I'll probably be writing and updating more. I've decided that I'll make this one super long story (that's what everyone told me to do haha). Thank you for all the kudos and feedback, I love it!
Chapter Summary

"Crush" by David Archuleta

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The Canadian Women's National Soccer Team conveniently decided to have camp during Jessie's spring break. Unlike her fellow collegiate national team-ers who played on the east and had a different academic calendar, she was the only one not able to have fun on her break. Her family went on a "family" trip without her to Italy while she was stuck at camp in Portugal, which she's not complaining about at all but she just really wanted to be with her family. She missed her family whom she hadn't seen since December, which was four months ago. But nonetheless, she was happy to be able to play the sport she loves at the highest level. Additionally, she was able to spend quality time with her second family, her national team teammates, whom she only gets to see every couple of months, unless she plays against them during the collegiate season. During this specific national camp, she was roomed with Erin McLeod and while they've been playing together for a few years, Jessie still gets a little nervous around her because she's Erin Freaking McLeod.

"I watch that one gif of you embarrassing that girl on Florida in your first college game every single day, ya know. Way to impress those boys in the stand too," Erin confessed, winking when she added her last comment. It was nearing the dead of night as they walked back to their hotel room after having had a team meeting and to say they were exhausted from the events of the day would be an understatement. Jessie blushed from embarrassment and rolled her eyes. "But that one clip of you and Mallory Pugh against the Thorns is the best thing ever, especially when Sinc is pushed down."

"Thanks Erin," Jess appreciated, her heart skipped a beat when Erin mentioned Mal's name.

"You're gonna be the best player in the world someday," Erin assured her as they made their way inside their hotel room. Jess was too exhausted from the long day of practice to reply so they both laid down on their beds in silence.

"Can I ask you something personal?" Jessie asked Erin seriously, having willed just enough energy to start another conversation.

"Me?" Erin asked then snorted jokingly. "Why not go ask one of your Fab Five friends or whatever you call your young squad? You're closer to them than I am."

"This is a very personal thing that they'd laugh at then never stop reminding me of it and I think you'll be better at answering this question than them," Jess calmly argued. Erin's eyebrows went up, curiosity suddenly taking over her.

"Okay fine, ask away," Erin said with a small laugh. "I guess I can be your national team camp counselor."

"How'd you know you were into girls?" Jess asked embarrassed.
"Girls are really pretty."

"That's not a good explanation."

"Yes it is, why are you asking me this?"

"What's it like to like one of your teammates?" The nineteen year old continued to ask, ignoring her role model's question.

"Does Baby Canada have a crush on one of her girl teammates?" Erin asked with a devilish smile as she wiggled her eyebrows at the young midfielder. Jessie simply just turned bright red and tried desperately to look away, suddenly wishing she had never asked. The older goalkeeper took that reaction as a "yes" to her question and started smirking. "To answer your question, it was strange for awhile but I'm glad I wasn't afraid to crush on a teammate. Look where I am now."

The younger girl just slowly nodded her head in response. She admired Erin and Ella's relationship and wished she could have something like that.

"So who is it? Someone on the Canadian team or someone at UCLA? Oh! Is it Deanne? Or is it someone older? Oh my gosh I bet it's Rebecca, isn't it?" Erin asked too excitedly. "If it's someone who's like thirty that'd be pretty fucked up though, sorry."


"Wow, feisty, I've taught you well. But who is it? It has to be Rebecca."

"Ew, no. She's my best friend on the team. She's like my sister," Jessie barked back, glaring at the goalkeeper. "She has a girlfriend."

"Then who?" Erin asked, excitement not leaving her voice nor face. "And you never know about straight girls, no girl is 100% straight."

"You don't need to know right now. It's just a small crush. Also, it's not someone on this team."

"Wouldn't it be funny if you liked Mallory Pugh?" Erin laughed but when Jessie didn't laugh along and just went silent as her cheeks turned red, she realized her teasing was a reality and stopped laughing. Her eyes went wide when she said, "Oh my gosh, you like Mallory Pugh."

"It's just a small crush, it's nothing really," Jess said nonchalantly.

"Yeah sure, believe what you want. When I'm at you and Pugh's wedding in like seven years, I'll tell you that," McLeod said laughing which resulted in a very annoyed Jessie throwing a soccer ball at her face. Luckily, the goalkeeper caught the ball before it could hit her.

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After a good long week of national team training camp and playing in international games, Jessie and Mallory were finally back at UCLA together. Mallory was back a few days earlier as the U.S. and Canadian national team camps started a few days apart from each other and overlapped. In the days that Jess wasn't there, a lot had happened with Mal. But before Mallory could tell the oblivious Canadian anything, they eased back into their training regimen again.

"So, how was camp?" Mal asked as the two were on their morning run.

"It was good. Same old, same old. The games were good too, I scored so that was nice. What about
you?" Jess replied casually.

"Oh, that's cool. Mine was good. Some more new players have been called up and some players didn't get called up, the usual. Jill's being Jill. I got some more assists and a goal so that was cool," Mal replied, equally as casually.

"What'd I miss in the week that I was gone?" Jess asked curiously.

"I was only here for half of it. And not much," Mal half lied. Nothing dramatic or interesting really happened for the team or on campus but for Mal personally, a lot had happened. About a month ago, before they had left for their national team camps, they had begun to give each other a little more space. They had needed a break from doing absolutely everything together.

"What did I miss at practice?"

"We didn't really do anything more than the usual. We learned like three set plays but you'll learn them in no time," Mal replied quickly. There was a long awkward silence that had built up while they were running back to their dorm room. An awkward silence like this between them hadn't happened in months.

"What's wrong?" Jessie asked, realizing something was off with Mal. Jess isn't much into getting into other peoples' business nor getting emotional but she could sense something was up.

"I'm lying. I've been keeping stuff from you, I'm sorry. I've been dating someone for a month and I've been approached by two big sponsors and I only have a little time to decide if I wanna go pro next year or not," Mallory ranted.

"Who's the guy?" Jess asked curiously, slightly hurt that her roommate, who had become more like a best friend, didn't bother to tell her about her personal life sooner.

"I'm sorry I didn't tell you earlier. Nobody really knows about him except for my closest friends and my parents and sister. You're a close friend too, don't get me wrong, but I didn't want to distract you while you were preparing for national team camp. Plus, we wanted to see if we would last a month first."

"Why didn't I know about Jason earlier?" Jess asked curiously, slightly hurt that her roommate, who had become more like a best friend, didn't bother to tell her about her personal life sooner.

"I'm sorry I didn't tell you earlier. Nobody really knows about him except for my closest friends and my parents and sister. You're a close friend too, don't get me wrong, but I didn't want to distract you while you were preparing for national team camp. Plus, we wanted to see if we would last a month first."

"So no Christian then?"

"Hahahaha, no," Mal replied while laughing hysterically.

"Oh."

"I like him as a friend but he's definitely not my type," Mallory said a little too harshly for that poor guy. Then Mal asked with a mischievous grin, "Why are you asking? Do you like him?"
"Uh, no," Jessie responded.

"Are you sure? Because I bet he'd like you back," Mal continued, smiling as she wiggled her eyebrows.

"No, I don't like him like that, I don't like Americans," Jess quickly added which was a flat out lie.

"That's complete bs!" Mallory exclaimed, laughing as Jessie nervously laughed along, desperately hiding any hint of jealously or awkwardness she was feeling internally. She was hoping Mal was oblivious and was hoping this Jason guy was a good guy.

Chapter End Notes

I'm so sorry this whole story is going so slow but you'll understand why later haha. Thanks for all the views, kudos, and comments; feedback is much appreciated!
Jason and Jealousy

Chapter Summary

"Jealous" by Nick Jonas

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Jason is a good guy, in fact, to Jessie's disappointment, he's a really good guy and incredibly attractive. When Mallory first brought him back to the room just to hang out, he introduced himself to Jess and shook her hand before Mal could even say anything. To the Canadian's surprise, he was actually a big fan of hers. He knew that Jess was a fantastic soccer player who played on the Canadian national team and won a bronze medal in the Olympics, which was shocking because most people at UCLA don't care enough to know that. Whenever Jason invited Mallory to a track meet, he also invited Jessie. Jessie always declined because she felt like she was intruding, even though she loved and missed running and enjoyed watching it. She was trying to distance herself away from Mal more and more because when she saw how happy Mal was with Jason and how sweet the kisses they shared were, she couldn't stop herself from becoming jealous.

When Mallory wouldn't stop begging Jessie to go to a specific outing with her, the midfielder finally obliged and agreed to go, for Mal's sake. She knew that the outing was a track meet but that was it, she didn't even know who the opponents were. As a former track star herself, Jessie was looking forward to it, even if she didn't look forward to third wheeling Mallory and Jason.

"Is all that really necessary?" Jess asked Mal as they walked to the track across campus. She was referring to the large poster Mal was holding that had Jason's face on it and a large "RUN JASON RUN" written in blue and yellow sharpie, Bruins colors.

"Gotta show my man some fan love," Mal said smiling widely. Jessie just rolled her eyes and hid any hint of jealousy the best she could.

Once they got to the track meet, they met up with some other of their teammates who were interested in the attractive guys on the team. Jess was only interested in the running but Mal and Jason had a different idea in mind as Jason walked over to them.

"Hey Jess, I want you to meet my best friend and roommate," Jason said as he walked over to the two. He motioned to a guy who was standing next to him and introduced him to her.

"Hi, I'm Will," the six foot tall, blonde hair, blue eyed, lean runner said as he extended his hand to shake Jessie's. The Canadian had to admit that this guy was pretty attractive, almost beautiful, but not as attractive nor as beautiful as she found Mallory to be. "I'm a big fan of yours. I try to come to as many soccer games as I can and when I do, you absolutely crush it out there."

"Thanks, um, it's nice to meet you," Jess awkwardly responded as she shook his hand. She now understood why Mal had begged her to come to this track meet. Mallory gave Jason a quick good luck kiss then she and Jessie rejoined their soccer friends in the stands to watch the meet. They only stayed long enough to watch Jason and Will's events. Whenever Jason was running in an event, Mal screamed for him while Jess pretended to not know her, embarrassed by the loud
American. When they went back to their room, upon arrival, Mal almost immediately demanded they were going out with Jason and Will. Jessie attempted to reject Mallory's demand but she was unsuccessful when Mal threatened to throw away the stock of Tim Horton's ground coffee Jess had.

"I'm trying to get you with him, just please at least give him a try," Mal said as the two drove to the Santa Monica Pier.

"Who said I was looking for someone?" Jess asked.

"Just give him a try, it's a double date."

"Fine," Jess said, defeated. "And it's not a double date, it's just a get together. I don't even know this guy besides his name."

"Yeah yeah, call it whatever you want and you know more than his name, you know he runs track at UCLA."

Any girl could fall in love with Will but Jessie wasn't just any girl. Throughout the night of going on rides, playing arcade games, and getting boardwalk food, she would find herself staring at Mal instead; her eyes always seemed to make their way over to her without her realizing it. Part of her felt bad because Will was a very nice, very attractive guy who Jessie herself thought was way too good and attractive for her. She learned that he was from Huntington Beach and was a psychology major whose hobbies included surfing and photography. He told her that he used to play soccer on a club team before he turned all of his attention to running. His favorite team just so happened to be her favorite team, Borussia Dortmund. They learned a lot about each other and Will was awestruck when Jess told him about her life; he was particular awestruck when Jess told him about going to the World Cup and the Olympics. He told her he wanted to go to the Olympics in 2020 but humbly said he probably won't make it (but he's the 500 meter American Record and 1000 World Record holder so he's just humbly selling himself short). Will was perfect for Jess but somehow she just couldn't see herself with him; she could only see him as a really good friend, maybe even best friend.

"To be quite honest with you, I don't think either of us really wanted to go on this double date," Will finally spoke up as he and Jessie just sat on a park bench that overlooked the boardwalk.

"Am I really that bad? I'm sorry," Jess said with a laugh, blushing from embarrassment.

"Haha no you weren't... okay, maybe a little but I was just as bad," Will responded, laughing along. "Jason was right, we would be perfect for each other and I think you're really pretty and really cool. We have so much in common but we both can tell this whole dating thing won't get us anywhere. It was kinda like I was hanging out with my sister."

"Well, it was nice to get to know you," Jess said, attempting to find something positive out of this. "And I hope your sister is as cool as me."

"Oh she is, I love her, she's the best big sister I could ever have," Will said proudly which only made Jess feel even guiltier. Will was not only extremely attractive, smart, athletic, and kind but also very loving to his family, especially his sister; he was the whole package deal... which made Jess feel all the more guilty. "I think we would be great friends. Plus, we could make fun of Jason and Mal together."

"Yeah, just friends, I like that," Jess said relieved. "If you ever want to like model, I can be your photographer."
"So you think I'm hot?" The California boy asked with a cheeky grin.

"There's just something about California boys that make them look like models," Jess said with a simple shrug and a laugh.

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"So how was your date?" Mal asked curiously as she and Jess got back to their room.

"It wasn't a date," Jess replied.

"Are you sure? Because it sure looked like you were having fun and you two were laughing and smiling a lot."

"Have you ever thought that normal friends could be like that? Because we're just gonna be friends. I think we're gonna be great friends actually."

"Friends, ha, that's what they all say," Mal answered smirking, not letting Jess live the simple life the Canadian wanted to live.

"Shut up.... So how was your date though?" Jess asked, trying desperately to get Mal to stop being annoying.

"It was good, a lot of fun. We made out the whole time we were on the Ferris wheel though so I don't remember that ride," Mal replied with a smile but there was something a little off, Jessie could tell, but she didn't say anything.

"That's nice," Jess replied nonchalantly, hiding the small ping of jealousy she felt. She was happy that Mal seemed happy but she was jealous of Jason for being with her. The small crush the midfielder had on her teammate was slowly growing into something bigger which confused her. The American soccer phenom who quickly captivated many Americans was quickly captivating this Canadian.

"What's your type then?" Mal asked, not letting go of this subject of Jessie's dating life.

"I don't really have a type," Jess said shrugging. "I mean, no one really likes me since I look like I'm 12."

"Sure you do and you don't look 12, I'm sure there's people dying to be with you."

"Yeah, whatever helps you sleep at night. The only people are the weird creepy guys on the internet and the occasional fan," Jess said laughing. "And I don't know. Someone who's attractive, has a nice body, athletic, smart, funny, loves their family, is adventurous, and can speak English."

"It sounds like Will is perfect for you then," Mal said, still not understanding why Jess didn't want to date Will because he looked like a model and why would anyone not want to date someone like him? He is the whole package. What she didn't understand was that the person Jessie was vaguely describing was Mallory herself.

"Um, he's not my type. He's too perfect," Jess responded. Jessie had never really thought about what she identified as because she never really got crushes on anyone but right now she found Mal to be very attractive and wouldn't mind kissing her again like they had during that one drunken night months ago.

"I'll find you someone," Mal insisted, not giving up.
I already did, Jessie thought to herself.

Chapter End Notes

I'm just gonna come out and say this... I really wish there were more Mal x Jess fanfics/one shots or honestly any story with either of them, hint hint... (please lol).

Anyways, I'm sorry this story is so slow but you just wait, as I said before, this story is probably going to be a long one so it'll be worth it in the end!

Also, I decided to add somewhat of a playlist to this story! I put names of songs in either the beginning or the end notes of each chapter that describe the chapter, I just really love music haha.

On a completely different note, thanks for all the kudos and kind feedback, please keep them coming!
"True Friend" by Hannah Montana

This chapter ended up being extremely long by accident, sorry! I could've split it into two chapters but then both of those chapters would've been too short for my liking haha.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Even though Jessie felt a little awkward around Mallory, their chemistry never faltered on the field and their friendship continued. They were both playing so well in their last couple of spring games that they kept alternating between winning student-athlete of the week at UCLA, even though it wasn't even the real soccer season. Together, they made an excellent duo that people were comparing to that of Messi and Neymar which the two found funny because they believed that they weren't of the same caliber at all. The two play sequences they had when scoring against the Portland Thorns had made Sportscenter's Top Ten Plays which quickly elevated Jessie and Mallory to even more fame. They still found people asking to take pictures with them strange but when they were together, they managed to survive big crowds; they wore a lot of hats and sunglasses and always kept a Sharpie with them. Luckily for them, a lot of UCLA still don't know who they are nor really care to know so they continue to live normal college lives, well, normal college student-athlete lives (student-athletes definitely don't have normal college lives).

Whenever Mal and Jess had free time, they would still go on little adventures but they would bring Jason and Will along with them as well. Mal kept insisting the outings were double dates but neither Jess nor Will agreed. Jessie even tried to like Will but that whole idea lasted a good ten seconds, maybe less. She found herself taking more pictures of Mallory than Will but she made sure to post a cool photo or two of Will instead. Of course, when she posted a shirtless photo of Will laughing while at the beach on her Instagram, she got a lot of comments asking if that was her boyfriend and a lot of comments from her friends asking for his number. She ignored them but unfortunately all of her teammates, her UCLA and Canadian teammates alike, teased her about them dating, everyone except Erin who simply never said anything. The small friend group of four found themselves at the beach more often than not, surfing waves and playing soccer as often as possible. When they had decided to make the trip out to Malibu, they even played soccer with their good ole friends from Pepperdine. Jason was terrible at soccer which made it so much more entertaining, especially when they played boys against girls and poor Josh and Will had to put more effort into their play. The four girls always won and always reminded the guys, never letting them catch a break.

The fabulous friend group of four was possibly the best thing to happen to all of them. Jessie found herself outside hanging out with her friends more often than staying in her room doing nothing. Will had quickly become one of her best friends and they would watch Borussia Dortmund games together and go on midnight excursions to In N Out and skateparks on a weekly basis, sometimes they would even go on late night runs together. Jess always felt safe when she was with Will because he was so tall and muscular and someone you wouldn't want to mess with so she never hesitated when he'd text her late at night and ask to go do something. She would invite some of her
other teammates as well but they’d rarely join them because they all thought they would be third wheeling. Although she was an ocean away, Teagan still remained one of Jessie’s best friends. They would talk everyday and she was the only person, besides Erin McLeod and her best friend Charlotte, who didn't think Jess and Will were dating. Everyone else on the other hand, was still convinced the two future Tokyo Olympians were dating to the point that both of their own parents insisted they were meant to be. Mal too wouldn’t let up and was still convinced they were a couple.

"You told me you like photography because it captures a beautiful moment and you posted that photo of Will so does that mean you think he's beautiful?" Mallory asked Jessie with a smirk. Jess rolled her eyes and let out a big sigh.

"Yeah, he’s pretty attractive," Jess admitted.

"So you like him then?"

"I can't find someone attractive but not like them? That’s like finding David Beckham attractive but not liking him like that since he could be my dad."

"So is that a yes or a no?" Mal asked, completely ignoring Jessie’s explanation.

"I like him as a friend, nothing more," Jess stated for what seemed like the thousandth time.

"Yeah yeah, whatever," Mal responded, brushing her off yet again.

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It only took a matter of time before Jessie started getting the text messages from Mallory. While Jess was out minding her own business, she would suddenly get a text from Mal telling her to not come back to the room. Jess would politely understand and would let Mal and Jason have the room for at least an hour. She’d always come back to Jason saying a cheerful hello as he walked out of the room while Mallory was putting a shirt back on and desperately trying, and usually failing, to cover up any hickeys. The innocent looking Canadian had quickly gotten used to it, although a spark of jealousy was close to turning into a fire inside of her. She was jealous that the hickeys Jason gave Mal weren’t given by her. Jess had finally admitted to herself that the small crush she had on Mal was definitely an actual crush but she let the forward do whatever she wanted to do (and she would probably never tell the other girl that she likes her as more than a friend). Plus, she had nothing against Jason, he was a great guy she was lucky enough to call one of her own friends.

"You have a lot of makeup," Jess stated the obvious as Mal rushed to cover up a hickey by putting layers of makeup over it. She had about twenty minutes to get to her next class which was ten minutes away on the opposite side of campus and to say she was rushing would be an understatement.

"This girl’s gotta look good on the field too ya know," Mal said quickly as she decided to put a fresh coat of mascara on too.

"Please tell me you're not one of those girls," Jess said, rolling her eyes, an action she found herself doing a lot after something Mal said or did.

"I'm just messing with you, at most I put some mascara and eyeliner on," Mal said with a laugh as she picked up her backpack. "And even that stuff is special makeup for working out. You obviously see me straighten my hair sometimes too."

"Thank God," Jess said with a sigh of relief. She never quite understood why some athletes, even her own teammates, wore makeup while playing in games. Who is there to impress? The ref?
"They're more likely to get a red card than a compliment on their red lipstick."

"Do I look okay?" Mal asked right before she rushed out the door.

"You look fine," Jess replied with a shrug. "You look good all the time, it's unfair."

"Shut up. I mean, do I look presentable?"

"When do you ever look presentable? You wear sweats everyday."

"Shut up and you just told me I always look good, make up your damn mind," Mal responded with annoyance in her voice.

"Okay, fine. You look good, I can't see any marks from where I'm standing. Now go or you'll be late to your class," Jess said. It was Mal's turn to roll her eyes at Jess as she headed out of their room to her class. Just to be safe, she wore a UCLA hoodie with the hood up as she practically sprinted across campus.

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"I think I'm gonna invest in a pair of Heelys," Mal announced as she and Jessie walked to practice.

"What?" Jess asked with a laugh, extremely confused.

"I'm tired of having to walk and run everywhere, I want something to liven up my day more."

"Why not be a normal person and buy a skateboard or scooter or bike? Plus, you'll probably injure yourself like everyday from Heely-ing to class. That's worse than those people who don't wear shoes."

"That's too basic and I'm not a normal person and Heelys are so fucking cool," Mal responded as they both set their bags down on the ground then sat down to put on their cleats.

"If you were really that late today to class, then get a longboard, it's California for crying out loud," Jess suggested. They do live in Southern California, possibly one of the only places in the world where there's more skateboarders and longboarders than bikers.

"You would say that."

"Say what?"

"You would recommend getting a skateboard 'cause if you got one then Will would be able to teach you how to ride one."

"Oh my gosh, will you ever just let the whole me and Will thing go?" Jess asked as she finished tying her boots up.

"No, probably not."

"Well, you better or I myself will Heely out of here," Jess said then she got up to get a head start on running a lap around the field.

"Is that a threat?" Mal chuckled lightly as she caught up with the Canadian. "Would you really Heely out of here?"

"It's probably a good idea if we don't find out," Jess replied in the most serious tone she could
summon, which absolutely failed and lead to Mal stopping what she was doing then lie on the
ground laughing.

"I can't take you seriously," Mal said once she was finally settled down.

"That guy is totally checking you out, Jess," Anika said, leaning in closer so only the people sitting
at their table could hear. Jessie was, once again, sexiled from her room so she decided to go out to
eat with Anika, Julia, and Marley. They were sitting at a table at Ramen Yamadaya talking about
anything and everything while eating, from anything about soccer to the classes they were taking to
the guys they were talking to. Jessie told them countless times that she was not dating Will but that
didn't stop them from asking if she was interested in any other guys.

"What?" Jessie asked, looking up from her food.

"Oh, I see him," Marley said. "Are you sure he's not checking me out? He's hot, damn."

"I have no clue what you're talking about," Jessie continued, still unsure what the guy they were
referring to even looked like and where he was located.

"Over there," Julia said, motioning her head to where a guy was indeed staring right at Jessie,
smiling when Jessie looked over.

"He looks like an absolute tool," Jessie inquired with a shrug, then looked back at her bowl and
took another bite of food. She was completely not interested and the other girls could not
understand why.

"He looks really cute though and that other guy he's with is really hot," Marley said as the other
two girls looked over that way with her.

"Oh my gosh, he's coming over now," Julia squealed as the guy who had originally been looking
over at Jessie was making his way over after his friend gave him a pat on the back. "Do I look
okay? Maybe he's checking me out, not Jess."

"You guys are ridiculous," Jessie sighed, rolling her eyes at the other girls who were quickly and
not-so-subtlety fixing their hair.

"There's not many times you can say you're in the same restaurant as an Olympian haha. Feels like
I just won a bronze medal," the guy said which made Jessie cringe while the other girls continued
to look at him with admiration in their eyes. He flashed a smile to try to win Jessie over but his
perfect teeth, dark eyes, and jet black hair couldn't win her over that easily. Jessie wouldn't say he
wasn't attractive, he most definitely was, but he also looked like a tool who starts off twenty
questions asking what your favorite sex position is and she also had her heart set on someone else.
When the guy stuck his muscular arm out to shake Jessie's hand, he added, "I'm Mateo."

"It's nice to meet you," Jessie responded as politely as she could as she shook his hand. "I'm-

"Jessie Fleming. Canadian Women's National Soccer Team Bronze Medalist. UCLA. I know who
you are," he said smiling, now Jess felt like he was borderline stalker-ish. Sure, a decent amount of
people know who she is and ask for a picture but it's rare when a guy her age does.

"Um, well," Jessie hesitated. Then she turned to her friends who had been quietly watching the
encounter and introduced them, "These are my friends, Anika, Julia, and Marley."
"It's nice to meet you, Jessie's friends," Mateo said with that smile Jessie couldn't stand. The other girls were now practically drooling over him, in awe of how attractive he was as he wore a muscle shirt revealing the indentation of a six pack.

"Uh, how did you know who I was?" Jessie asked, not really sure what to say as she was now very uncomfortable.

"I play for the Canadian U-20 team," he replied. "And I play at UCSB."

"Oh," Jessie said, now really hoping one of her friends would say something and turn his attention away from her.

"You're really good," he said, now filling in the brief awkward silence. "I've seen you train and I've watched you on TV. You're number seventeen and twenty-one on the field, number one in my heart, and maybe the next number in my phone?"

Okay, now this guy is too much and worse than a tool, he's a power tool, Jessie thought to herself.

"I don't have a phone," Jessie blurted out as an excuse. Now the other girls had finally turned their attention away from Mateo and onto Jessie, all three of them giving her weird looks. Jess wanted to kick herself, he would know that she has a phone, he's not stupid. "I mean, I don't have my phone with me right now, it's getting fixed and I'm going to go pick it up later." Smooth, Jess, real smooth.

"You know, if you don't want me to have your number, you can just tell me that," Mateo said with a kind smile, although there was a little hurt in his eyes.

"Am I really that bad?" Jessie asked. "I'm so sorry."

"Not as bad as my pick-up lines," he replied with a laugh. "Can I get a photo with you though? I mean, when I tell my Canadian friends that I met THE Jessie Fleming, they're gonna want photo proof."

"Yeah, of course," she said with a kind smile. He looked and acted like a tool but at least he knew when to not push it. Mateo then handed Marley his phone and asked her to take a photo of them, which she happily obliged to.

"Thank you so much," Mateo graciously said to Jessie, with a twinkle of excitement in his eyes. Then he retrieved his phone and said to Marley, "Thanks for taking the photo and I'm not gonna lie, my friend over there thinks you're hot."

"Well, maybe your friend should have come over instead," Marley said with a smirk. This earned an eye roll from Jessie while Anika and Julia were still staring at Mateo.

"We're playing UCLA tonight, maybe you can meet him then," he said with a smile. Then, right before he walked back to his friend, he added, "We actually gotta get to the field in twenty minutes. Thanks again Jessie, it was nice to meet you. Maybe I'll see you around."

"Yeah, maybe," Jessie positively replied with a kind smile. Jessie was being serious though, maybe they could become friends in the near future, he could definitely use some pointers from Jess about how to not flirt with girls.

"Why would you turn him down, Jess?" Anika asked once he left. "He's a total babe, hot as fuck, and he's Canadian."
"So he's probably not really amazing at soccer," Jessie replied. She loved her country and was proud to be Canadian but she couldn't help but be embarrassed of the men's Canadian national team sides, they rarely ever qualified for tournaments that were supposed to be easy to get into and compete in.

"That's a low blow, Jess. Even me, an American, is hurt," Marley scowled.

"Just because he's hot doesn't mean I have to say yes to him," Jessie argued.

"So you think he's hot," Julia said with a smug grin. "Because he's muy caliente."

"Yeah, just like how I think Will is hot even though he's just a friend. And that guy's pick-up lines made me cringe so hard, I had to refrain from making a disgusted face," Jessie explained. "And why didn't any of you help me? You all were drooling over him and didn't help with the awkwardness."

"Your awkwardness keeps us entertained," Marley said with an evil smile.

"Teach me your ways, Jess," Anika begged. "One of your best friends is one of the most beautiful guys in the world, the guy you just got hit on by is probably the hottest Canadian men's soccer player ever, and last week you got hit on by that really hot surfer dude with abs of steel, gorgeous blonde hair, and dark blue eyes. Yet here you are, turning them down in the clumsiest ways possible. I don't have a phone, really?"

"Yeah, you're lucky both of those guys who flirted with you were so nice after you told them you were basically not interested. You're lucky they turned out to be so sweet," Julia explained.

"I was nice to them. I mean, I wouldn't mind being friends with either of those guys," Jess said with a shrug.

"Then you would be friends with not only the most beautiful guy in the world but the three most beautiful guys in the world," Anika exclaimed. "And to think that two of them were interested in dating you and you friend zoned them."

"Maybe you all should date them instead then," Jessie suggested.

"But why don't you?" Marley asked.

"Maybe I don't like guys," Jessie confessed, not realizing those words had come out of her mouth until the other three girls were staring at her with wide eyes and their mouths agape. She tried to cover her confession by quickly adding, "Maybe, I don't know. And I just didn't like any of those guys like that. Maybe I just haven't found the right guy."

"I knew you were gay!" Anika exclaimed.

"I never said that I was gay," Jessie bit back.

"You just wait, it's only a matter of time until a girl tries to hit on you," Marley said laughing, wiggling her eyebrows at Jess.

"You should kiss a girl to see if you are into girls," Marley recommended.

"Yeah, you should kiss me!" Anika said excitedly.

"No," Jessie quickly replied. She didn't need to kiss a girl to prove anything... but she definitely
wanted to kiss Mallory again. Of course, she didn't confess that aloud for her friends to hear.

"Aw, why?"

"Because I don't like you like that. Why are you so eager?" Jessie asked.

"She's just mad she couldn't turn me gay when we made out," Julia said which earned all eyes to look at her.

"Wait, what?" Both Jessie and Marley asked in unison as both Anika and Julia were blushing as they looked down at their bowls of food.

"Um, nothing," Anika stuttered out as she looked up. Then she quickly changed the subject, "We should totally go to the men's game tonight."

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All four of them- Jessie, Marley, Anika, and Julia- decided to go to the men's game that night. They had plenty of friends on the men's team and since it was a home game and they happened to have a bye week, a majority of the rest of the team came along. Jessie sat in between Mallory and Marley as the two teams warmed up prior to kickoff. When Mateo spotted Jessie in the stands and received a wave from the smiling opponent, she happily waved back. This would, in turn, earn some heavy reading from the other girls. Mallory, of course, gave Jessie a smug look as they had not yet had time to talk about the encounter from earlier.

"Don't even think about teasing me, Pugh," Jessie said, through gritted teeth, right as Mal had opened her mouth to say something.

"You're no fun," Mal pouted. "So, who is he? He's hot."

"Just some guy I met earlier today," Jessie replied with a shrug.

"More like some guy who hit on her since he recognized her because he's Canadian and plays for the U-20 Canadian team. His name's Mateo," Marley elaborated. "But of course, Mal awkwardly turned him down. He tried to get her number but she said she didn't have a phone."

"Classic, Jess," Mal said laughing, clearly amused. Marley was about to say more but Jessie glared at her, silently asking her to shut up.

"Yep, but Marley really just came to see one of Mateo's friends and teammate who she thinks is hot," Jessie explained, giving a jab at Marley.

"Mateo said his friend thought I was hot too," Marley confirmed, not letting the jab at her affect her at all.

"Oh, get it girl," Mallory said, high-fiving Marley as Jessie rolled her eyes. "Jess, when are you gonna let one of these guys have a chance? Between Will, that surfer dude Tyler, and this guy Mateo, you have some pretty good options."

"I don't know," Jessie shrugged. Marley was about to say something when Jessie lightly elbowed her and she immediately got the hint, nodding her head in understanding when Mal's attention was on the field.

"I'm going to the bathroom real quickly, anyone need to go?" Anika asked as she got up from her seat next to Jacey. It was about twenty minutes into the first half and the game was going
relatively slow and a little boring, considering both teams were pretty good.

"I'll go with you," Jessie said. Anika knew exactly what Jessie was doing and immediately regretted asking anyone and wished Jessie wasn't the only one who needed to go. At the same time, however, she didn't want to go alone.

"Anyone else?" She asked, hopeless by then. When no one else got up, she left with Jess.

"So, you made out with Julia?" Jessie asked once they were out of earshot of anyone else.

"Let's not talk about this," Anika grumbled, although she was blushing, her cheeks red.

"Why wouldn't you tell me? I thought we were good friends," Jessie continued.

"Since when did you become interested in other people's personal lives?"

"Since Mallory happened," Jessie said honestly.

"Oh, true."

"So I'm guessing it was at a party and you two were drunk, why is this such a big deal?" Jessie voiced. When Anika didn't say anything, Jessie realized it probably was a much bigger deal. "Oh dang, what happened then?"

"Promise to never tell anyone, okay?" She asked as she looked around them to make sure none of their friends were around, they had stopped walking and were now just standing to the side of the walkway. Jessie quickly nodded her head, a silent promise. "So we're roommates this year. One day we were bored so we listed all of our girl crushes. Then I told her she was one of my girl crushes and of course she laughed. But we were so bored that we decided to make out to see what would happen."

"So what happened?" Jessie asked, now incredibly curious.

"Nothing," Anika replied, too quickly.

"You're lying."

"Okay, well maybe I realized I kinda like her as more than a friend."

"But you didn't tell her."

"How do you know me so well?" Anika wondered aloud. "I just jokingly told her, "did I make you gay?", and moved on when she said no."

"And she jokingly said no," Jessie replied. Then she jokingly added, "Or she didn't understand you because she's Spanish."

"What?" Anika was confused now.

"The way the both of you blushed, there's no way you didn't make each other gay," Jessie casually pointed out. "How long ago was this? Like when did it happen?"

"February."

"You've been hiding your feelings for that long?" Jess was surprised as it was now May. Although, she shouldn't be so surprised, considering how long she's liked Mal. "You should tell her how you
Maybe Jessie should take her own advice.

"But how will I know she likes me back?" Anika asked.

"Make out with her again," Jessie suggested with a shrug.

"That sounds like a terrible idea."

"I'm kidding," Jess awkwardly laughed, honestly unsure what to suggest. "Just talk to her, see what she says and does."

"She's my roommate."

"So?"

"Do you know anything about liking your roommate and your roommate not liking you back?"

"No," Jessie painfully lied. Oh she knows, she knows all about liking a straight, taken roommate who would probably never ever consider liking her back. "She likes you though, I can tell by the way she looks at you. Talk to her tonight."

"Fine," Anika finally accepted. "Let's go to the bathroom before anyone thinks we drowned in the toilets."

That night at the men's and women's soccer mixer party after the game, Jessie had expertly gotten Anika and Julia alone. She had made sure neither one of them consumed any alcohol then practically locked them in a vacant room. She left them to join everyone else back downstairs. With Mal out with Jason, Marley out with the guy from UCSB, and the two sophomores upstairs, she didn't have much to do. So she conserved with some other players, quickly glancing towards the stairs every few minutes, awaiting any sign of either Anika or Julia. When she saw the two come back down, she noticed just how closely they were dancing to the music and how they couldn't stop looking at each other. She, Anika, and Julia were the only sober people there and everyone else was too drunk to notice. When Anika gave Jess a thumbs up, that's when she knew everything worked out. The title, "successful wing woman," could be added to her long list of accolades.

She should really take her own advice.

Chapter End Notes

1. So that was a bit of a roller coaster! I'm sorry it was such a long chapter but if I had split it up into two chapters, they both would have been too short for my liking haha.

2. As I mentioned before, I try to make my stories as realistic as possible and spend hours doing research. I think I've learned more about UCLA than my own university haha. Anyways, the point is, the guy, Mateo, I used is a real guy! I looked him up on the Canadian U-20 National Team and saw that he goes to UCSB. When I found him on Instagram, it was a coincidence that he is actually really attractive. Also, a disclaimer, I have no clue what he's like in person in real life so what I wrote about him is completely fiction!
3. The names of the other UCLA women's soccer players are names of real people on the team! Yet again, however, this story is completely fiction and what I wrote is not true at all (well, as far as I know haha).

4. I'm sorry this story is so slow but I used to be one of those writers who went way too fast and I didn't like it. I like to build up to a climax and whatnot- it's nice to have a nice, long background story. Plus, what's the fun in not having some suspense?

5. Thank you all for all the views, kudos, and feedback! I really appreciate it and encourage more! All the compliments make my heart so happy, especially as I've been going through a stressful time haha.
The UCLA women's soccer season concluded for the Bruins five weeks ago. After several practices and friendlies in the spring, the 2016-2017 season was finally over and as of two days ago, the 2016-2017 academic school year for UCLA finished as the last final exams had taken place.

Unfortunately, Mallory was one big mess for two weeks straight. When Jason unexpectedly broke up with the American soccer phenom, Mal was caught off guard. Although everyone around her could tell the relationship was going nowhere and was going to end sooner than later, the forward was still surprised and devastated. Even though Mallory herself knew the relationship was going nowhere as their sleeping together had gone from a frequent occurrence to not happening at all and conversations became more rare, a small part of her had hoped that she would be able to fix the relationship and she had hoped that she would fall for him eventually. The signs were all there, Jason would opt for group outings instead of dates, the conversations they had were usually about classes and that's it, and the kisses they shared became increasingly shorter. Jason cared about Mal and didn't want to lead her on so he first distanced himself away from her a little then finally broke it off. There were tears from the both of them when they broke up but deep down they both knew it would not have worked out anyways. They mutually agreed to be just friends because they both valued their friendship, but they also both agreed that they needed some time and space apart. Mallory, however, still cried over him for two weeks straight.

As her roommate, Jessie was stuck with a moping Mallory and she did not know what to do, but at the same time, as one of her best friends, she knew she needed to find something to calm the other girl and needed to console her. During the first two days when Mal exiled herself to her room to cry when class or practice was not in session, Jess was unsure about what to do so she simply brought her food, tissues, and comforting words (well, attempts). But to up her game, on what was supposed to be the second to last day leading up to their summer vacation, she bought her and Mallory two plane tickets.

"Exams and the school year are over yet I am the most stressed out I've ever been all year," Mallory said sadly, on the verge of tears yet again, for the tenth time that day. Almost everyone on campus had gone back home, besides the students awaiting their graduation then Mal, Jess, and a handful of others. Since Jessie was an international student, they were able to stay in their dorms a little longer, even though the spring preseason had ended and nothing was holding them back from going home after their last final exams. However, over the past two weeks Mallory had been buried
in her books while coping with a break up and the need to decide whether or not to go professional and accept the sponsorship deals she had been offered lingering over her head so she was in no state to travel back home alone. When Mal was done with exams, she wouldn't come out of the room at all and Jess had to bring her food to make sure the distraught American wouldn't pass out. "I have to decide if I wanna go pro or not in two weeks."

"But isn't it in the middle of the season?" Jessie asked.

"Any team will still want me and I have to decide before the next quarter starts."

"We're going on vacation," Jessie suddenly stated, changing the subject and catching Mallory completely off guard.

"What?" Mal asked confused, making sure she heard that correctly.

"You heard me, we're going on vacation, just the two of us," Jess confirmed.

"What do you mean?"

"Pack your bags, we're going to Portland for three days," Jessie said firmly.

"But how? And why?"

"You need it. I need it. We both need to get away from here. It's summer and you need to stop moping around all the time. I bought two tickets to Portland and we're leaving tonight so start packing," the usually shy Canadian commanded. "After, I'll fly back to my home and you'll fly back to your home."

"I was gonna go home tomorrow night and I thought you were too."

"I already told our parents. Your parents love me so it's all good," Jess said with a smile. "We can go explore the city and go to a Thorns game so you can make up your mind. Now go pack!"

"Um, okay," Mal obliged then began to pack a suitcase full of her clothes. "What about all of our stuff? Aren't we supposed to bring all of our stuff back home from our dorm room?"

"Some of our teammates who live nearby are gonna bring all of our stuff to one of their houses, including your car," Jess explained.

"How did you convince everyone to do all of this?" Mal asked, very surprised that the quiet Canadian had orchestrated such big plans.

"Bribery... no, I'm kidding. They just all know that you're going through a rough time and your parents letting us go and our teammates getting all of our stuff alleviates the stress."

"Wow, I'm surprised you didn't get too awkward and just not do anything," Mal said with a small laugh.

"Shut up," Jess said, rolling her eyes. For the first time in two weeks, Mallory was joking around and was in generally high spirits.

After packing their bags for their trip, including soccer equipment, because you never know, they took an Uber to Los Angeles International Airport. Thankfully, to them, they were only recognized and stopped for pictures about four times. They've both been playing soccer at a high international level for awhile yet the fame that comes along with it still surprises them, nonetheless, they're
always happy to take pictures with fans and sign autographs. The most surprising person they found in the airport was not a fan but rather one of Mal's national team teammates.

"What are you doing here?" Mallory asked the woman wearing a Nike t-shirt, athletic shorts, a backwards hat, and flip flops. But Mallory didn't need to have the woman reply, she knew exactly what Tobin Heath was doing here, or rather who she was doing here, especially since she knew that the Chicago Red Stars had a bye week this week.

"I'm just in town for a night, business stuff," Tobin replied casually. "I have to get to Portland for the game later this week."

"Sure, business stuff," Mal snorted which caused both her and Jessie to snicker.

"Don't talk to your elders like that," Tobin mocked disgust. Then she turned her attention to Jessie and stuck her hand out saying, "You must be Jessie Fleming, nice to meet you. I'm Tobin."

"Nice to meet you," Jess said shyly as she shook her hand, she already knew who she was and had played against her before but she had never formally met her.

"I apologize for Mal being so rude and not formally introducing me to you," Tobin said as she shot Mal a glare. Mallory just rolled her eyes. "I raised her better than that."

"Just because you're one of my national team moms doesn't mean you raised me," Mal argued. "Plus, you've already met her before and she knows who you are, you've played against her."

"Anyways, what are you two doing? Where are you going?" Tobin asked.

"Portland," Jessie replied.

"Yeah, we're gonna explore the city then go to a Thorns game," Mal added excitedly.

"Oh, you need tickets then?" Tobin offered.

"Oh no, we're all set, thanks though," Jess said.

"Sorry kids but I gotta go, it was nice to see you two young ones and I guess I'll see you on Saturday," Tobin said after checking her phone as she pulled her suitcase along with her. "My ride's here."

"You mean Christen?"

"Yep."

"I'm sure you'll have a great ride tonight then," Mal mumbled under her breath just loud enough for only Jessie to hear, causing both of them to giggle at the sexual innuendo.

"Sorry, what was that Mal?" Tobin asked, genuinely unsure what Mal said.

"Nothing, just say hi to her for me," Pugh said with a kind smile then they went their separate ways.

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"Wake up," Jess whispered while nudging Mal in the seat next to her.

"What time is it? How long have we been asleep?" A very sleepy Mal responded.
"I don't know but it feels like it's been awhile, like too long."

"Yeah, this plane ride was supposed to only be like two hours long. It feels like it's been six."

"Maybe the pilots got lost," Jess wondered aloud.

"No Jess, they wouldn't," Mal said, rolling her eyes. "Not for four hours."

"Then what else could it be?"

"I don't know, you're the one who thought of this whole idea in the first place and bought the tickets," the now fully awake Mal explained.

"Good morning passengers! We are going to land in Chicago, Illinois in about fifteen minutes. We hope the flight was smooth enough for you! Welcome to the home of deep dish pizza and the Bean!" The pilot spoke over the plane's intercom.

"You're so stupid," Mal said as both her and Jess were shocked about what they were hearing. "Chicago? I thought we were going to Portland, Oregon."

"I thought so too..." Jess responded then she quickly got the tickets out of her backpack to look at what the tickets said. In bold letters, the tickets did indeed say, From: Los Angeles, California. To: Chicago, Illinois. "But I definitely got tickets to Portland."

"Why do you have two sets of three different tickets then?" Mallory asked, gesturing to the six tickets Jessie was holding in her hand. They both looked at the tickets together and to their disbelief found three sets of tickets; one was from Los Angeles, California to Chicago, Illinois, the next one was from Chicago, Illinois to Newark, New Jersey, and the last one was from Newark, New Jersey to Portland, Maine.

"So that's why it was so much money...."

"You're so fucking stupid. Portland, Maine? Didn't you at least read the details about the flights?" Mal asked. "Wouldn't you think something was up if you had to print so many tickets?"

"I was kinda busy taking care of you and all the dorm stuff so I couldn't really pay attention to exact details," Jess replied, emphasizing the you part. "Anyways, time to explore Portland, Maine since I paid a lot of money for these tickets. I heard it's a pretty cool place."

"What are we even gonna do?"

"I don't know," Jess said with a shrug.

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"So, where to?" Mal asked Jessie as they exited the fourth and final airport they had been to that day.

"Well, we should probably find somewhere to stay," Jess said as they both stood in the middle of the sidewalk.

"So park benches then?" Mal asked.

"Sure," Jessie shrugged in reply.

"I was kidding."
"Oh," Jess said, slightly dejected. She would've been just fine with sleeping outside on a solid wood bench, she's always up for new experiences.

"I know we're both poor college students but if I got hurt somehow while sleeping on a park bench, that'd be really bad. It'd be really bad if either of us got hurt like that. Our parents already told us we're pretty stupid for not checking the tickets, I don't want them to think we're even stupider than that," Mal explained.

"I guess you're right."

"Here, I'll look up cheap places on Airbnb. You look up cheap places to go eat," Mal commanded.

"McDonald's?" Jessie asked, before even looking at her phone.

"No, even you wouldn't wanna go there," Mal replied as she scrolled through her phone. Not even a minute later she looked up and said, "Okay, found one for $39 a night and I can book it same day. Oh yeah, either we're gonna have to share a bed or you're sleeping somewhere else like on the floor or couch because the bed is tiny."

"Wow, why not you on the floor?" Jessie asked to hide how appealing her sharing a bed with Mallory was in her mind.

"You're the one who fucked up," Mal replied jokingly. Then she continued to explain, "It's a cute little apartment and it looks really nice from the pictures. It's an absolute steal."

"Okay, let's get it," Jess said as she got her wallet out.

"I'll pay for this, you bought the tickets," Mal said, putting her hand out to stop Jessie from taking her credit card out.

"Deal," Jess agreed because to be completely honest, she was still slightly regretting spending so much money on plane tickets.

"Now I just need to call this number and figure out logistics without making a fool out of myself."

"Ha, good luck with that, hope your public speaking skills work," Jess scoffed as Mal put the phone to her ear, giving Jessie the middle finger in response to the snarky comment.

Chapter End Notes

Merry Christmas and happy holidays to all!

Hope you all enjoyed it as much as I enjoyed writing this! Just an FYI, this Portland trip will be a couple of chapters long. Hope you all have a great holiday- happy Hanukkah and Kwanza and whatever else I may be missing (sorry!) and may there be love and happiness for all! Thank you again for the kudos, views, and all the kind words, - please continue giving me feedback!
"Get up," Jessie said, softly nudging Mallory's lazy body. Before going to sleep the night before, Jessie insisted on sleeping on the couch while Mallory slept in the bed. Mal had protested but when Jessie wouldn't change her mind, she let it be and was honestly too tired to put effort into letting the other girl have the bed.

The day before was so hectic and exhausting that they were unable to explore the city. They were too tired from jet lag and their own hour and a half training session. After they had settled into the quaint place they would be calling home for a few days, they went on a short run to a soccer field that was only half a mile away. When their Uber driver was driving them to the apartment, they both had noticed that they had passed a run down grassy field. They didn't care that it was run down though, they were just thrilled there was a soccer goal and a decent enough field (with not too many bumps or dirt spots) within walking distance. Surprisingly, they had the whole field to themselves and managed to get their usual session in. When they walked back to the apartment, they briefly stopped at a seafood place to eat. Even though it was only nine by the time they got back to the apartment, six at night California time, they were exhausted and quickly fell asleep after taking showers. Jessie, compared to Mallory, was a much different sleeper than the American as she could easily wake up, even after not too much rest. On the other hand, it took Mallory forever to wake up and right now, to Jess, it felt like she was taking forever and a day to open her eyes.

"Hm?" Mal replied, still sounding sleepy as her eyes were still shut.

"It's eight in the morning. If we wanna explore the city, we should start really soon. Get up," Jess explained and Mal groaned.

"It feels so early," Mal whined as she stretched and slowly opened her eyes, yawning while doing so.

"You're on west coast time and you're jet lagged," Jess reminded her.

"How did you get up so early then?" Mal asked as she started to stand up.

"I set my alarm and went on a run to wake myself up."

"Without me?"

"You looked too peaceful while asleep and I figured you really needed the rest so I waited until the last possible second to wake you up," Jess replied. She wasn't kidding when she said Mal looked so peaceful while asleep, in fact, she looked angelic. With her monkey blanket to tuck her in and natural curly hair a mess, Jess couldn't help but think how beautiful she was. Even though they had
been roommates for awhile, it wasn't the same this time. They were always too tired or busy to see how the other looked like while asleep during school, plus, they always woke up at the same times every day and never bothered to watch each other sleep because that would be weird.

"So, what'd you make for breakfast?" Mal asked half-jokingly to Jess because she knew Jess couldn't cook to save her life and also knew they didn't bring anything to make anyways. Mallory came out of the bathroom, refreshed and wearing her "Be A Good Person" t-shirt with jeans and a blue UCLA hat on then sat down on a chair in the kitchen.

"A Kind bar," Jess replied as she handed one to her, while wearing a pair of jeans and a plain grey hoodie on top of a UCLA shirt.

"Did you make it yourself?"

"Shut up and eat," Jess said slightly annoyed as she packed her backpack with two water bottles, some snacks they had brought from LA, her camera, and both her and Mallory's wallets. Even though Mal was tired and jet lagged, she still had enough energy to make jokes in the morning.

"That's not very kind of you," Mallory replied as she ate the bar and drank some water from a water bottle, earning a roll of the eyes from Jess.

"Here, I'm going to say it in Canadian now, shut up and eat," Jessie said and Mal just laughed.

"Yes, ma'am," Mal chuckled as she kept eating. "So, where to? What are we doing today?"

"Well it depends on what you wanna do. I figured we'd both still be tired so maybe just checking out some of the museums and walking by the water would be good enough, we could do some shopping. You know, the touristy stuff, and go walk by the port. Then tomorrow we can go do outdoorsy stuff, maybe even go to another museum. There's a lot of cool things to do but luckily not a million and one things to do like back in LA, three days is enough time," Jessie explained which left Mallory impressed. Even though there weren't actual set plans, the plan was still pretty thought out... considering Jessie made them, who's someone that never makes plans. If this plan was made by Christen, Mal knows Christen herself would be disappointed with her lack of descriptions.

"So we're just kinda gonna go with the flow then?" Mal asked.

"Yep."

"Well, let's go then," Mal said cheerfully as she put on her sunglasses and the pair exited the small apartment.

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"So I definitely wanna go to the Portland Museum of Art and the Art District. I did wanna go to the Portland Science Museum but it costs and the art museum costs too but it's cheaper," Jess explained, this time with an actual plan. "We'll walk by all the shops and streets and marinas so we can stop whenever."

"Haha of course you would, what a dork," Mal said with a laugh.

"What?" Jess asked defensively.

"Art stuff and science stuff, basically your two favorite things besides soccer and eating," Mallory explained while Jessie simply shrugged.
"It's cool to learn stuff."

"Yeah, I guess so," Mal agreed as they walked through the cute little New England city.

"And you should be glad I decided against going to the science museum, you hate science."

"For the right reasons," Mal said. "Like, why would you ever willingly take chemistry again?"

It took them awhile to walk to their first destination, which was the art museum. With Jessie stopping to take photos every ten steps as a result of Mallory wanting photos of her taken, it took them a little longer. Plus, they had decided to make a quick stop at a cute little café that everyone on Yelp raved about, getting food a little more substantial than a Kind bar. To add on to it all, Mallory had decided to make it her mission to take as many photos of the city and small animals surrounding them and send them to her other friends via Snapchat. This, of course, caused Jessie to roll her eyes too often to count.

"Why'd you decide to become an engineering major? Most athletes who know they're most likely gonna go pro pick easy majors," Mallory asked. After paying the admission fee, they had made their rounds through the museum in about an hour, only speaking to each other occasionally. It wasn't until they had gotten to the last exhibit that included a piece by Pablo Picasso that Mal decided to start a conversation.

"I like engineering," Jessie answered simply. Although they had shared a room and became close friends over the course of six months, they still didn't know why the other had picked their intended major.

"But why? It's math and science," Mal asked, slightly disgusted. They were now observing an art piece by an obscure artist neither one of them knew. The museum wasn't too crowded but not too empty so they could easily have a conversation.

"You know, some people actually like math and science and want to build stuff. I want to be an architect."

"And build what? Some stairs to the first place podium?" Mallory asked jokingly with a smug smile across her face. Jessie playfully shoved Mal, causing her to almost knock into the painting in front of them.

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"I can't believe you got us kicked out of the art museum," Mallory said as they walked down the boardwalk, still laughing at the horrified look that was on Jessie's face when a worker told them they should leave.

"Well, technically you did since you're the one who almost knocked into the painting," Jessie corrected her.

"But you're the one who shoved me."

"And you're the one who said something that made me shove you."

"But it's true," Mal argued.

"Yeah, just a reminder, who actually won a medal at the Olympics last year?" Jessie reminded her. They never spoke or bragged about their accomplishments on the pitch but since they both knew they were joking, they continued with the childish banter.
"Okay, I guess that's fair," Mal said with a light laugh, putting her hands up in the air defenselessly. "And I'm totally kidding. I think it's cool, that you wanna be an architect. You're so artsy and have a cool artistic mind. You're pretty brave too, taking all those math and science classes. I could never."

"I'm kidding too, I know you worked so hard last year. Maybe you need some new coaches," the midfielder said, causing the both of them to laugh. "What's your major again?"

"I don't know yet, I'm still undecided," Mallory claimed. "I'll probably major in communications though."

"You should major in engineering with me," Jessie recommended, though a smile on her face indicating she was half joking.

"I'd rather not die," Mal replied with a laugh as they continued to walk through the city. Jessie kept stopping to take photos of absolutely everything while Mallory chased every single animal in sight to try to get closer, Jessie swears Mal is five.

"I love this city, it's beautiful, but there's not too much to do for people our age," Jessie said once they sat on a bench that overlooked the ocean.

"Yeah, it reminds me of Denver," Mal agreed.

"How?"

"There's nothing to do."

"Wow, Mal."

"But it's really beautiful, you should come visit me some time," Mal offered.

"Only if you come to London," Jess responded.

"Is it pretty?"

"Sure," Jessie shrugged.

"So no."

"You'll just have to see for yourself. It's not as pretty as Toronto, which is only like two hours away from London, but it's okay, it's just another city. You could come to our lake house too."

"Our next trip should be to London, but I'll buy the plane tickets and make sure they're not to London, England," Mallory joked, resulting in a playful shove from Jessie. "Woah, watch it. You don't want us to get kicked off this park bench now, do ya?"

"There's a soccer game going on, let's go to it," Jess said as they walked past a field with players warming up and loud music playing, with the voice of an overly excited announcer ringing from the speakers. After purposely getting lost in the beautiful city and finding the cheapest places to eat lunch and dinner, they had decided to head back to the apartment; then they accidentally got lost for real. Twenty minutes, five arguments, and three conversations with locals later, they were finally headed into the direction of the apartment. It was only seven when they started heading back so they both had been on the lookout for something else to do. When Jessie saw a soccer
game going on in a somewhat big stadium, she suggested they go to it. There was a decent crowd in the stands so they could tell it was definitely not just a pick up game.

"Really? Seriously?" Mal asked. When Jess simply nodded in all seriousness, the American gave in. They were supposed to be going to a soccer game in Portland, Oregon anyways, this will make up for it.

"So I guess it's a professional game," Jess said as she and Mal sat down in front row seats in the bleachers, having paid a five dollar entry fee. She took a program along with her too because neither one of them had any clue who they were watching.

"I didn't even know the Premiere Development League existed," Mal said as she looked at the program along with Jessie. "Why would they call themselves the Portland Phoenix if they're not even in Phoenix, Arizona?"

"Mallory," Jessie said, giving her an "are you serious?" look.

"What?! It doesn't make sense," Mal continued while Jess simply shook her head laughing.

"Excuse me," a sweet young voice asked, catching their attention. They both looked next to Mallory where a young girl, probably ten years old, with a Portland Thorns jersey stood besides someone who must've been her dad. The young voice then asked, "Are you Mallory Pugh?"

"Yes, yes I am," Mal replied with a sweet smile.

"Can I get your autograph?"

"Of course you can," Mal said, still smiling. Jessie quickly got the Sharpie they always carried with them out of her backpack and handed it to her. "Do you want me to sign your jersey?"

The little girl shyly nodded.

"What's your name?" Mal asked as the girl turned around so she could get her back signed.

"Hannah."

"Do you play soccer too?"

"Yes."

"Are the Portland Thorns your favorite team?"

"Yes."

"Well Hannah, I hope to see you playing for the Thorns someday," Mal said as she signed her jersey. When she realized she was signing a Tobin Heath jersey, she asked, "Is Tobin Heath your favorite player?"

The little girl once again nodded shyly.

"She's one of mine too. I'll tell her you're her favorite the next time I see her," Mal smiled. Then she asked, "Do you like Christine Sinclair?"

"She's my other favorite," Hannah said excitedly, finally saying more words with her shy demeanor slowly fading.
"Well, this one here," Mal said as she nudged Jess. "Plays on the Canadian national team with her. You should ask for her autograph too. Her name's Jessie Fleming and she's pretty cool."

Jess gave Mal a look that subliminally said "you didn't have to do that" but she happily obliged as the girl asked for her autograph as well.

"What position do you play?" Jess asked as she signed her name next to Mallory's.

"Midfield," Hannah answered.

"Good choice. That's where I play, it's the best position," Jess replied as she finished and Hannah turned around. Then she leaned in closer to her pretending to leave out Mal, whispering, "Don't tell Mal though."

"Hey! I play midfield too!" Mal said in her defense.

"Don't listen to her, she's just trying to be as cool as us," Jessie continued and sent Hannah a little wink. Mallory just rolled her eyes, although a smile came across her face because of the joking nature.

"Do you all mind if I get a picture of you two with her?" Her father asked.

"Of course," Mal said delighted. Then as she handed her phone to him, she asked, "Actually, if you don't mind, can you take a picture of us on my phone too?"

"Of course I can, no problem," he said happily as Hannah stood in between Mal and Jess to take photos with the field in the background.

"Thank you," Mallory said as he handed her phone back to her.

"No, thank you," her father said. "You girls just made my daughter's life."

"It's our pleasure," Jessie said with a kind smile.

"Do you come to games here often?" Mallory then asked.

"Season tickets were only $25 so we come to all of them. She loves them. I wish there was a women's team but it's Maine, the closest we can get is Boston. I'm not complaining though, Boston is still not too far and the Portland Phoenix is not top level soccer but it's something and we're just lucky there's even a professional team up this way. We found out there's a women's team in Portland, Oregon and we figured we could bandwagon fan off them since we live in another city called Portland. I try to take her to as many high school and college girls' games while my wife takes our son to hockey games. Hannah loves it all. She's a really good player too. Her club coaches keep telling me she's a special player, the best they've ever coached, even though she's only ten," her father explained, grinning proudly. Mal and Jess never quite understood the fame they received until now. They were just two young girls who loved playing soccer and looked up to the greats of their respective countries. They had finally realized that the fans and young girls who look up to them are reflections of who they were years ago. "So, if you don't mind me asking, what brought you girls to Maine? Portland's not a big city for people to vacation to."

"We were supposed to go to Portland, Oregon but Jessie accidentally got plane tickets to here instead," Mal explained, laughing as Jessie's cheeks went red from embarrassment.
"Oh wow, that's quite a story," Hannah's father said, laughing along. "Anyways, we should get going, thank you so much. Hannah, what do you say?"

"Thank you," Hannah said cheerfully then quickly gave Mal and Jess hugs before she left with her dad, smiling from ear to ear as she could not wait to tell her soccer teammates and coaches what happened at the Portland Phoenix game.

"For someone who's so bad at public speaking, you're pretty good with talking to kids and parents," Jess said as they turned their attention to the game that had just begun. She couldn't help but admire Mallory throughout the whole interaction, she really was so good with kids.

"You were surprisingly pretty good too... and I've volunteered to help young kids before, it's easy for me to interact with them," Mal said with a shrug as she looked down at her phone. "And being nice to parents isn't hard, it's just like acting around teachers and coaches."

"Also, you didn't have to tell them who I was, I would've been fine letting you have the spotlight," Jess said as she watched the home team skillfully pass the ball down the field then shoot it, narrowly missing the goal as the ball went sailing just inches above the crossbar.

"People deserve to know who you are," Mal said shrugging, still looking down at her phone. Then she looked up with a goofy smile saying, "Do you like the photo I posted? I think the caption is the best one yet."

Mallory held her phone out so Jessie could see the photo that was posted onto Instagram. The photo was of them with Hannah while the caption said, portland, or ≠ portland, me #thanksjessie.

"Shut up," Jess said as she lightly shoved Mal who was now hysterically laughing.

"Are you trying to get us kicked out of this soccer game now, too?" Mallory asked laughing. Jessie just rolled her eyes.

"I hate you," Jess muttered. She, however, couldn't be mad for long and a smile broke out on her face because the whole situation was pretty funny. Plus, there was something about Mallory's laugh that Jessie loved- she could never actually hate her.

After the game had concluded with the home team winning 4-0, the UCLA duo managed to only get lost once while walking back to the apartment. It was only nine when they got back and they would have gone to play some soccer but neither one of them was in the mood to at that time of night, especially with a storm brewing outside. Instead, they opted to watch some replays of the Women's Euro games from earlier that day. They ended up not having to argue about who would sleep in the bed because they both had dozed off by the time they were on their third game. Jessie isn't one of those people who cuddles with their friends but here she was because she's afraid of thunderstorms (she wouldn't let Mallory know that, not yet, she would become too vulnerable). She enjoyed the closeness to Mal but when she woke up sleeping next to an adorable, snoring American, she slightly freaked out. Even though she really wanted to kiss her right then and there, she knew she didn't want to risk anything. And when Mal subconsciously reached to pull Jessie back while still asleep, it made it all the harder for Jessie to get up and go to the bathroom. She knew better and she knew these feelings were definitely one-sided, so it was better for her to stop before she got hurt.

Chapter End Notes
Hello all! I've been a little busy so sorry for the somewhat late update. Plus, it's nice to post a new chapter on Christen Press' birthday haha. Anyways, I hope you all enjoyed this chapter and please continue giving feedback, viewing this story, and giving kudos- it's much appreciated and I love it!
"We skipped training yesterday so today we're going on a hike and then going canoeing," Mallory stated as she and Jessie were eating trail mix they had bought the night before; they made a brief stop at the 7-Eleven that was a block away from the apartment to buy bottled water, Gatorade mix packets, trail mix, Cheez-Its, more Kind bars, bananas, bug spray, sunscreen, and waterproof mascara (for Mal). Since Jessie had facilitated the plans the day before, she let Mallory make the plans for today.

"Will you not get us lost?" Jessie asked with a knowing smile.

"I've never gotten us lost before, what are you talking about?"

"You got us lost when we hiked through Solstice Canyon."

"That doesn't count since there was a trail that was easy to follow, we didn't really need formal directions," Mal argued.

"You got us lost when we tried to get to Will's house in Huntington Beach."

"It was Will's fault, he was the one who had given us the wrong address," Mal said.

"You got us lost when we tried to find Ellen Degeneres' house in Beverly Hills."

"It was the Ellen Degeneres' house. I had to pretend we were lost so we wouldn't look suspicious."

"Fine, whatever, let's go," Jessie said, letting Mal have her way, as she finished packing her backpack. Then, as they left the building and walked down the street, she realized, "Wait, where are we even going? And how are we gonna canoe if we don't have one?"

"Did I say canoeing? I meant swimming," Mal replied with a straight face.

"Mallory," Jessie sighed, turning so she could give Mal a death glare while they continued to walk.

"I'm kidding!" Mallory said, laughing.

"But seriously, what are we even gonna canoe with?"
"Patience, just follow my lead. I have everything planned out," Mallory replied calmly. "I'm not that stupid."

"How are we gonna canoe with patience? Don't we need some oars and a canoe?" Jessie joked.

"Shut up, Jessica, you know what I mean," Mal rolled her eyes.

What Mallory failed to tell Jessie was that their "hike" was actually just the thirty minute walk to the canoe rental place. However, when Jessie had come to her senses and realized the trickery, Mal pinky promised her that they would be able to go on a real hike after- knowing that they both had enough stamina to withstand a busy adventurous day.

"So... where to?" Jessie asked as she sat behind Mallory in the canoe. They each had an oar and were just pushing off from the dock.

"Let's go to the lighthouse," Mallory suggested as they began to paddle their way through the water towards the striped structure in the near distance. The weather was perfect as the sun was shining brightly across the clear blue skies, with a small chilly sea breeze blowing through water, causing small currents to slightly move the canoe forward. It was typical New England summer weather and, even if they didn't say it aloud, perfect soccer weather. Jessie surely would have wanted to play soccer instead but she let Mal choose their plans and she did not want to ruin them, she didn't want to ruin anything for Mal. For twenty minutes straight, they had gotten into a pattern of taking turns paddling through the water. It was a peaceful silence, no awkwardness lingering in the air as only the cadence of the paddles dipping in and out of the water could be heard with the chirps of birds and ocean gracing the background. What had originally been a fun activity had turned into a difficult workout after thirty minutes. Their arms had grown tired because they both had started off at a pace well above the normal, slower pace that they should have started at.

"Can we take a little break?" Jessie finally asked.

"Oh good, I was waiting for you to say something. My arms are killing me," Mal reluctantly responded as she turned to look back at Jessie, halting her paddling.

"Never skip arm day," Jess replied with a grin, intending to get Mallory annoyed. Just as Mal was about to give a snarky response, the canoe began to tip over and, before they knew it, they had capsized.

"We gon die!" Mallory screamed as they let the waves carry them to the shore where the canoe had washed up on.

"We're fine, Mal," Jess said, rolling her eyes at the exaggerated statement. They were lucky to have been wearing life jackets, been out of site of the public (for the sake of anyone witnessing their embarrassing scene), and not been in extremely shallow or rocky areas of the water. They were also lucky none of their friends were there to see them, their friends would have taken their phones out to record the debacle whilst laughing instead of helping them (they would also be teased for the rest of their lives). Jessie gave herself a pat on the back when she had remembered that her backpack was waterproof and insulated inside- her camera would be safe.

"We almost died!" Mallory exclaimed as she stood up in the water to help Jessie drag the canoe further up on the shore.

"You're over exaggerating," Jessie retorted. Mal, though, had already pulled her phone out and was
animatedly retelling how she and Jessie had capsized and "almost died" for her Snapchat story.

"Take a photo of me after my near death experience," Mal begged. Jessie rolled her eyes for the thousandth time but obliged as she pulled out her camera and took photos of Mal who was posing on the sand, pretending to have just washed up on the shore. Jessie wouldn't admit aloud that Mallory looked perfect and, in her opinion, prettier than any mermaid in the sea. After Mal was satisfied with her little photoshoot, they climbed back into the canoe and paddled the rest of the short distance to the lighthouse. While they explored the lighthouse and took more photos, Jessie made a note to never go canoeing with Mallory again.

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"So, I think we're lost," Mallory stated. After their canoe trip and a brief lunch at a cheap, small restaurant, they had decided to go hiking (actual hiking this time). Mal had found two really cool places to go but when she found out one was two hours away and the other was four hours away via car, she changed her mind; so they opted for a hike at a local park. When Mal wanted to be a little more adventurous on the simple trails of Oak Nuts Park, and begged Jessie to go off the trail they had been hiking, they had lost track of how far they had gone. Next thing they knew, they were lost in the middle of the woods.

"About time you finally admitted to being lost," Jessie said as she put the lens cap back onto her camera.

"I'm serious, Jess," Mal said, her voice slightly trembling. They had been hiking for two hours now and of the two, it had taken an hour for her to finally admit that she had no idea where they were going. The American wore fear in her eyes as she realized they hadn't come across any signs of civilization or human life in a good hour and a half.

"It's fine, Mal. We'll be fine," Jessie assured her, trying to calm the other girl who was now shaking.

"We gon die, Jess!" Mallory said for the second time that day. Jessie would've rolled her eyes again but there was some truth behind her expression, she herself had no idea where they were nor where they were going. All she could do was pull Mal into a comforting embrace and gently rub her back at an attempt to calm her. In response, Mallory instantly calmed down- there was something about Jessie's touch that always calmed her (and she didn't know why). She was afraid and feared for her life but at least her nerves had calmed down and she wouldn't go crazy and panic.

"We have food, water, and our phones, we'll be okay," Jessie continued, rubbing the scared girl's back. "We even have bug spray too. Let's just keep walking, I'm sure we'll find the trail again."

"Okay," Mal said quietly with a nod as she detached herself from Jessie's comforting arms and they began to walk again. Mallory had mindlessly held tightly onto Jessie's hand, it felt so natural and Mallory didn't know why. Mallory also didn't know that the blush in Jessie's cheeks had appeared as a result of the physical contact between the two and not from fear or exhaustion. All Jessie could focus on was trying to hide her blushing face while all Mallory could focus on was not getting hurt while exploring the vast unknown of the Maine wilderness. Unlike their usual hikes that involved them running through the entirety of the trails, they had to stop when the terrain turned into fallen tree branches and rocks and had become too dangerous for them to risk getting injured. Mallory's heart was still internally racing with fear, even amongst the comforting touch from the Canadian, so she asked, "Can I sing? I know you hate it but it'll help to calm me down."

"Sure," Jessie answered casually. She wouldn't admit how adorable Mallory was when she was
scared and there was no way she could say no to Mal's request when Mal was this scared. She also wouldn't admit that she actually loved it when Mallory sang - she enjoyed her unimpressive singing voice and hilarious antics. When Mallory put on some music and sang along, the American's fear had somehow disappeared with every out-of-tune note sung. After thirty more minutes, they had almost gotten trapped in a rocky area but they managed to climb on top of it, where they could overlook a waterfall. They climbed down from the rocks to the side of the river where they both knew they could at least follow to find civilization - they were no longer lost. They would later find out that they had somehow crossed over into another section of the park called the Presumpscot River Preserve.

"We didn't die, Jess!" Mal exclaimed as she got closer to the bottom of the waterfall. Jessie took out her camera and took photos of the waterfall. Of course, Mal wanted some photos of herself as well and posed for her personal photographer.

"Yeah, thank God," Jessie said, once they were finished with taking photos and continued to walk closer to the river. When they had reached the water, Mallory started to take off her clothes. As Jess was putting her backpack on, after she had zipped up her camera again, she asked, "Um, Mal? What are you doing?"

"I'm hot and sweaty and really just wanna get in the water," she replied as she took off her UCLA soccer shirt, revealing a bright red sports bra. Part of her also wanted to see Jessie's reaction, to see if Jessie was impressed with her body because she spent so much time exercising to get her bangin' bod.

"Are you actually getting in?" Jessie asked, trying her best to not stare at the well-defined abs on the American - Mallory was amused and laughed at the reaction, Jessie was definitely impressed.

"Um, yeah?" Mal responded, like it was a stupid question.

"Don't drown," Jess said in an attempt to hide how her thirsty self was really feeling.

"Gee, thanks," Mal replied sarcastically. Then she demanded, "Get in."

"What?"

"I said get in," Mallory repeated.

"But what if I don't want to?"

"Then I'll make you," Mal replied as she aggressively pulled Jessie in.

"Mallory!" Jessie yelled once her head popped back up from under the water. All the American could do was snicker at the now drenched Canadian. Jess stood back up then set her backpack down on the shore and started to take her own shirt off to reveal her neon yellow sports bra. She muttered, "I hate you."

"No you don't," Mal said with a knowing laugh.

"Oh yeah?" Jessie challenged as she balled her soaked shirt up and threw it at an unsuspecting Mal.

"Oh, it's on Fleming," Mal challenged back as she splashed water at her. They chased each other through the knee-deep river, kicking and splashing water at each other, laughing the whole time. Mallory hadn't been this happy in awhile and she thoroughly enjoyed the smiling Canadian's presence and the joy she was spreading. When they had gotten towards the middle of the river, Jessie had finally gotten close enough to tackle Mal. As both of their heads resurfaced, they were
still laughing- Jessie was practically laying on top of Mal. When Jessie's eyes flickered down to Mal's lips for a brief second, that's when she knew she needed to get up. She splashed Mal in the face one more time then got up, receiving a playful slap from the forward in return. She mocked hurt but honestly didn't mind, Mal could cause Jess to tear her ACL and Jess would still probably not mind (okay, maybe not but still). Jessie realized she was head over heels for this girl because she would never have had done this with anyone else. Mallory, on the other hand, had no idea why she felt so comfortable and excited around the other girl; all she knew was the she was happy, really happy.

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To finish off the day, they found themselves walking along the boardwalk eating ice cream. Although they had to pay for an Uber to get there and pay an entry fee to the amusement park and pay to do anything within the park, they both agreed that they deserved it. Plus, they wanted to compare this one to the one back in Santa Monica.

The boardwalk was crowded with couples on dates, groups of teens and young adults, and families on vacation everywhere which made both Mal and Jess sad and nostalgic. They both wished they were going on dates and they dearly missed their wonderful friend groups from back home. The groups of friends laughing around them also made them miss their UCLA friends and teammates, especially the weekend excursions and team bonding activities. During their final weeks of the quarter, they had both desperately wanted to leave school to go home and go on vacation but now they couldn't wait to go back. They of course, still dearly missed home and missed their families.

"Let's go ride a ride, just to say we did it," Mal suggested after they had both finished their ice cream.

"Wait," Jess said with a smile. "You have some ice cream on your face."

"I do? Where?" Mal asked, reaching up to touch her face and feel around. Jessie just let out a light laugh as she wiped the small amount of strawberry ice cream off of Mal's face. Mallory would never admit that she found Jessie caring for her adorable. When the Canadian finished, the American said, "Thanks, Mama Fleming."

"Okay, where to?" Jessie asked as she disposed of the napkin into the trash can.

"The roller coaster, obviously," Mal answered then they headed to the moderately short line for the ride. Jess wondered how old the ride was which prompted Mal to say, "Oh no, if it's like super old, we gon die!"

As they got buckled into the seats of the coaster cars, Jessie got a hold of the bottom of Mallory's t-shirt. Mal was enjoying the ride too much to realize that Jess had been tightly holding onto her shirt the entirety of the ride. Mallory loved roller coasters, she loved anything that was exhilarating and made her feel like she was flying- sometimes that came with a price as she broke her arm when she was younger. There was also something about being around Jessie like this that was exhilarating for her, it felt like she was flying- like she was on cloud nine.

"That roller coaster wasn't as good as I thought it'd be," Jessie said, disappointed, as they walked down the wooden boardwalk.

"Oh, please, you were practically holding onto my shirt for your dear life during the whole entire ride," Mal scoffed as she took her hair out of a ponytail.

"I wasn't scared though, I just needed to hold onto something for emotional support," Jessie argued
but her face turned red and Mallory could tell she was lying.

"That's bullshit," she said, shaking her head. "But I'll let it go because this sunset is killer and I want you to take pics of me."

"I'm literally your personal photographer," Jessie grumbled as she took out her camera. The sunset was beautiful though and the way Mallory stared off into the distance across the ocean with her hair blowing was even more beautiful.

"Hey, turn around," Mal commanded then she rummaged through the backpack to get a specific object.

"What're you doing?" Jessie questioned.

"Okay, look at me and pretend I said something really funny," Mal replied.

"What?"

"Just laugh, okay?" Mal begged as she took out her Polaroid camera and put it up to her face. She snapped a photo then looked at the photo after it loaded, satisfied with her work and impressed with how pretty Jess looked, then showed it to her little Canadian model.

"This actually looks really cool," Jessie admitted as she examined the "candid" of her laughing while the sunset and the sea were behind her.

"Photography is my passion," Mallory stated as they began to walk back to the land.

"You literally only took one good photo."

"Way to kill my dreams, damn," Mal said, faking hurt, and Jessie rolled her eyes.

When they walked back to land, Mal begged Jess to take photos of her under the pier. Jessie was tired and just wanted to go back to the apartment but Mal's puppy dog face was impossible to say no to so she gave in. The photos turned out to be beautiful, as always, and the Canadian photographer was secretly glad she had given in to Mal (but she would never admit that to Mal, just like how she would never admit to telling Mal that she loved being her personal photographer).

Chapter End Notes

Happy New Year!

Thank you for all the support for this story! I really do appreciate the kudos, kind words, and views. I hope you all continue to enjoy reading this as much as I continue to enjoy writing this. Also, please listen to the songs I've put in the chapter summaries, they're songs I love and songs that I believe fit the mood of the chapters.

Also, I have no clue why the italics aren't showing up. Maybe the fact that I write everything in the notes section of my phone (it's a habit, I just always have, even after I got my own laptop a few years ago haha).

Cheers to a new year!
As soon as they arrived back at the apartment that night, Jessie had collapsed onto the bed and quickly let sleep overcome her—causing Mallory to sleep on the couch. The fact that Jessie willingly took the bed without Mallory having to convince her to was a small victory for the American and she couldn't help but sleep with a smile on her face. The next day was full of laziness, except for an early morning two-hour training session at the nearby soccer field. Their checkout time was eleven in the morning but both of their flights were in the afternoon—Jessie's at five and Mallory's at four thirty—so they had nothing to do for a majority of their leftover time. Once they had checked out of the apartment after recovering from their training and taking showers, it was too early to go to the airport but too late to go on another big adventure. They had to find something to do and someplace to go where they could easily bring their bags along with them. So, to kill about an hour and forty-five minutes, they found themselves eating at a small restaurant right by the water. They had chosen it because it was small and cheap... and also had great reviews on Yelp. It was a big plus though, when they found out the restaurant was showing the Women's Euros on TV. This would be somewhat of a problem because Jessie was more intent on watching the game than eating her food or having a conversation.

"Jess, eat," Mal urged the Canadian who hadn't even touched the chicken Caesar salad she had ordered.

"Yep," Jessie replied mindlessly, the words Mallory told her going into one ear and right out the other as she didn't even budge. Mal, of course, was watching the game as well but she wasn't quite as intense as Jess. She enjoys watching as many top tier professional and international games as she can but she doesn't try to watch every single major game, men's or women's, as possible. She most definitely does not pay more attention to a game more than food.

"I'm serious, Jessica," Mal said as she set her half eaten sandwich down and picked up Jessie's fork. She got a bite of Jessie's salad on the fork and brought it up to the soccer-loving midfielder's face. Then she commanded, "Open your mouth."

"Huh?" Jess asked, oblivious to the food that was right by her face, her attention distracted by the game.
"Open your mouth, you need to eat," Mallory demanded as Jessie turned to look at the forward.

"But this game is really good, it's France against Spain!"

"Eat or you'll regret not eating in a couple of hours," Mal said, not letting her guard down. "And if you get sick or you have some health issue, I'll tell all of our coaches."

"Yes, mom," Jess grumbled as she took a bite, being fed by Mal like a young child.

"Good," Mal said satisfied. Then she handed the fork back to her and said, "Gosh, sometimes it feels like you're five. Now feed yourself."

"Yes, Mama Pugh," Jessie said, taking more bites and sipping from her water glass. Her eyes were still glued on the screen that displayed the game, very visible from their table right by the bar area.

"Oh, that was a good tackle," Mal said as she continued to watch the game with Baby Canada.

"She totally should've passed the ball! She had someone wide open to her left," Jessie exclaimed as Marie-Laure Delie shot the ball powerfully at the goal from a good ten yards outside of the eighteen.

"Amandine was offsides," Mal noted as the screen showed a replay.

"Oh," Jess replied as she took another bite.

"The goalie shouldn't have come out," Mal stated as Spain had surprisingly slotted a goal easily into the back of the net.

"She couldn't help it, she had no one else to help her. The nearest defender was far too high."

"Oh," it was Mal's turn to give a dejected reply. They went on like that for awhile, pointing out missed opportunities both teams could have had and correcting each other when they were wrong. They were also taking mental notes about how specific players were playing and the team's style, studying for future games against either team and remembering specific moves and strategies to practice.

"We should do this more," Mallory said as the whistle blew, signaling a free kick after a blatant foul called against Spain.

"Do what more?" Jessie questioned as she finally fully turned her attention away from the TV screen and towards Mal.

"Watch more soccer games together," Mal advised. It's not that they don't already watch games together, they just don't watch games while being this focused and into it.

"Why?"

"Because then I'd be able to give you my wisdom," Mal explained. She wouldn't admit that she just likes spending alone time with Jess (she also doesn't know why though).

"What wisdom?"

"When someone shouldn't pass the ball because the other person is offside," Mal continued with a smug grin on her face.

"That's not wisdom," Jess retorted.
"It's truth."

"I literally just had to give you some of my 'wisdom' too," Jessie reminded her.

"Still."

"You're annoying," Jess said as she lightly shoved Mal.

"Hey, you don't wanna get us kicked out of this restaurant now, do ya?" Mal snickered.

"Shut up," Jessie said, though smiling, as she turned her attention back to the game.

"Thanks for this little vacation, thank you times a million," Mal said as they waited for their flights. Jessie was off to London while Mal was off to Los Angeles as she still needed to retrieve some of her belongings from their friends' houses. They only had twenty-five minutes left with each other as Jessie's flight was on time while Mal's flight had gotten delayed twenty minutes.

"I had a lot of fun," Jessie replied with a smile as she sipped her Starbucks.

"Yeah, even if we almost died."

"Hey, at least we're alive though!"

"I'm not sure if I can trust you and go on another trip with you."

"I don't blame you," the girl, who had managed to get plane tickets to the wrong place and contributed to getting kicked out of an art museum, replied earnestly. "But I'm not sure I can go on another trip with you either, we managed to capsize and get super lost in one day."

"Shut up," Mal replied with a laugh as she lightly shoved Jess.

"Hey, you don't wanna get us kicked out of the airport now, do ya?" Jessie smiled.

"I really did have a lot of fun... bbbuuuttt... back to reality," Mal said to lead their conversation to a more serious tone, causing Jessie's shoulders to slump. "I still don't know if I should go pro yet. I just don't know what to do."

"Don't go," Jessie said as she shifted in her seat to face Mallory better. "You haven't even played a real season of college soccer yet. With how little you'd get paid and the uncertainty of the league, it's a good idea to stay in college. UCLA is one of the best schools to go to and you need to enjoy being a college student. Some of your best friends are at college with you, like Marley and Anika. Just wait until Karina and Ashley come, we're gonna get that College Cup. But also, like I said before, don't let the whole professional sports market make you a product of theirs yet. Wait it out on the money and sponsorships."

"I would be getting paid well above the average NWSL player though and I could always go to France or something, they pay really well."

"Just please stay, I wanna see how we play together in the fall season, especially with the star freshmen coming in," Jess pleaded. Then, as she slowly moved closer to Mallory, she whispered, "Is this a good enough reason to stay?"
"Is what a good enough reason to-," Mal asked but was cut off by Jessie's lips against hers. Mallory was frozen in shock, her eyes wide open, while Jess herself was shocked she even had the guts to make such a move. They stayed like that for no more than five seconds before Jessie panicked, opened her eyes, then pulled away.

"I'm-I'm so sorry, I don't know what that was," Jess mumbled when she quickly leant away. Her cheeks had turned bright red and she attempted to look anywhere but at Mal. She got out of her seat and stood up, not once looking at Mal who was speechless and confused. Without saying a word, not even a simple "bye", the apple cheeked Canadian took her bags and hurriedly rushed off to go to her boarding gate. She didn't know if that was the last time she'd see Mal as a UCLA Bruin but she was too embarrassed to turn back and say a proper goodbye, or any goodbye for that matter.

Chapter End Notes

Sorry this took me a little longer to post! I hope you all enjoyed this and I hope you continue all this lovely support and not hate me too much haha. Thank you all again for the reads, kudos, and wonderful feedback!
Chapter Summary

"Dear No One" by Tori Kelly
"My Best Friend" by Weezer
"I Won't Let You Walk Away (feat. Madison Beer)" by Mako
"Without You (feat. Usher)" by David Guetta

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

A month and a half of summer vacation was more than enough time for Mallory to make a decision regarding if she should stay at school or go pro. After several conversations with her parents, sister, friends, teammates, and coaches, there was one teammate she never contacted. A month and half was the longest amount of time Mallory and Jessie went without communicating to each other in any form since becoming roommates, they didn't even like each other's posts on Instagram (unbeknownst to either of them, they had each other's push notifications on). Instead, they both waited for the other to reach out but neither one did. They were both oblivious to the fact that they had preoccupied each other's minds and invaded each other's thoughts throughout the whole summer. When they were training- whether it be for their national team or just private training, they couldn't help but think about how their main training buddy wasn't running alongside them.

It took five seconds for Mal to decide to stay in college. The short, sweet kiss she shared with the nervous Canadian had been the deal breaker, even if she herself didn't know what it meant for her, what it meant for them. She couldn't sleep while flying back to LA because she kept wondering just how long Jess had liked her as more than just a friend. She wondered when Jessie's friendly feelings turned into other types of feelings. She couldn't believe she was so blind as the realization began to set in and she looked back on the past couple of months. She had realized that that's why Jessie didn't like Will as more than a friend and that the person the Canadian had described as her "type" was Mallory herself. Plus, nineteen year old college students who are jobless don't spontaneously decide to go on a vacation for anyone- at least not Jessie.

Mallory was less confused about everything going on in her life except for Jessie. She didn't know if she could ever like the midfielder like that but she, at the very least, wanted to continue having a great friendship with her. She wanted to stay in college to grow as a player and earn a college degree. She knew deep down that she still wanted to stay at college but she just needed some good convincing and that's exactly what she got. Throughout the summer, she kept wondering what would have happened if Jess hadn't pulled away so abruptly during that kiss in the airport. She wondered if she would have kissed her back and if the thick tension between them now would cease to exist. She was confused as to why she was wondering these thoughts too.

On the other hand, Jessie spent her summer vacation worrying. She worried if she had ruined her friendship with Mallory because of her "stupid" feelings. She worried that Mal had decided to go pro over the summer and that she wouldn't be able to play on the same team as her ever again (by
then, there would've been sports reports but Jess didn't really check soccer news and she made an effort to avoid such news this summer). She worried that Mal would hate her and she worried that for the rest of her life, she would be kicking herself for displaying her feelings and losing a great friend. She wondered if her liking Mal from afar wouldn't have ruined anything because she wouldn't have minded watching the person she liked so much fall in love with someone else if that meant she was happy, at least she'd be able to continue to talk to her.

Jessie still couldn't believe she had made such a bold move, especially in a public airport in broad daylight, and that in itself also scared her- she never does crazy things like that. She wanted to know what Mal was thinking when their lips were on each other's for five seconds but she never once texted nor called her in the time they were apart; she was truly scared that Mal would hate her. In fact, she was pretty sure Mal hated her and thought she was weird and would refuse to speak to her ever again because she never heard from her. Of course, a small part of her was hoping that the striker she liked so much liked her back but she was so sure the American would never. She thought the other girl was way out of her league and probably the straightest girl on her UCLA team, which they joked was "the flirtiest team in the NCAA"- she truly believed she didn't stand a chance.

Upon arrival back to UCLA, Jessie was both eager and scared to see if Mallory would be back. Jessie was back to rooming with Teagan, something the two internationals had agreed upon back in March. Unbeknownst to the Canadian, Mallory was rooming with Marley so they didn't see each other until after their move-in day. Even though they all had coincidentally requested to live in the same residence hall and were placed in the same hall on the same floor, their check-in times were different.

When Jessie saw Mallory on the first day of training, she panicked and avoided her at all costs. She did not want to confront her because she was too scared. So, for the next week, Mallory would always find herself looking for the Canadian and when she did, she'd shoot a kind smile towards her only to receive a look of panic and loss of eye contact from the other girl in response. Mal was disheartened at the response and made it her mission to talk to Jess and figure out what was wrong. On the Friday of that week, Mal had had enough of Jess avoiding her and managed to get Teagan to let her into her room right as she was leaving.

"Hey," Mal said as she stood by the doorway. Jessie jumped at the voice that was not Teagan's and looked up from the book she was reading to find Mallory's almond eyes staring right at hers.

"Oh, hi," Jess replied unenthusiastically then went back to reading her book. Mal sighed loudly then walked over to sit next to the midfielder on her bed.

"Jess, you can't keep avoiding me," Mal explained.

"Mhmmm," Jess hummed in response.

"Look, Jess," Mal said, calmly taking the other girl's book out of her hands, causing Jess to look at Mal, giving Mal her full attention. "Why do you think I'm here?"

"What?" Jess sighed.

"Why do you think I'm still here playing at UCLA and not playing professionally?" Mal explained.

"I don't know," Jess replied quietly with a shrug.

"I'm here because of you."
"Okay, I told you to stay so you did, that's good I guess," Jessie said as she reached to get her book back.

"No," Mal retorted harshly as she pulled the book away. She closed her eyes to think about what to say as she took a deep breath, then calmly continued, "That's not what I meant."

"Then what do you mean?" Jessie asked with an edge in her voice as a thick silence ensued.

"You're one of my best friends, Jess," Mal explained after a brief pause that felt like it lasted forever.

"Yeah, I was, then I kissed you and I messed everything up," Jess said, looking away as her cheeks burned that fiery red they always do. Jessie could feel her throat closing and tears beginning to well up in the corners of her eyes.

"Jess," Mal said, reaching over to comfort the Canadian. "You didn't mess anything up. We can still be friends. Okay?"

"Why didn't you text me or call me or anything?" Jessie chastised, anger boiling underneath her skin while tears begged to fall. "I thought you hated me all that time over the summer. I felt like I lost you. I really thought that I'd never be your friend again."

"I needed time to think and I'm sorry I didn't contact you," Mal sadly apologized, actually feeling terrible that she hadn't done anything to reach out to Jess over the summer. "I could ask you the same thing but let's leave that all behind. We're still friends, okay?"

"Okay," Jessie replied quietly, silently admitting to herself that her lack of communication had contributed to the break down between them. Mallory embraced Jessie in a tight hug, it took a few seconds for Jess to give in and hug her back, but she did and she melted in her arms- they were still good friends after all.

"I still ily bff," Mal said with a telling grin as she knew Jessie hated it when she used acronyms while speaking. Then as she stood up, she suggested, "Let's go do some training. You're still my training buddy after all."

While Jessie was slightly disappointed that Mallory didn't want to be more than friends, she was happy they were at least still friends because she really thought that she had lost her. She was happy that she could still be friends with her training buddy, whom she happened to awkwardly kiss twice. She was too happy to have Mal back in her life to wonder if Mal would even consider being with her, let alone a girl. Even if Mallory had failed to contact her, resulting in an internal crisis, she couldn't stay mad, not at Mal.

"Yeah, I guess I'm stuck with you," Jess replied with a weak smile.

"Oh shut up, I'm still your favorite training buddy," Mal laughed. Jessie rolled her eyes but didn't deny the statement because it was true, even if she had never admitted it.

"You're still super annoying," Jess joked as they started to walk out of the building which earned her a shove from Mal. She was happy she could still be friends with Mal and joke with her, even if her heart skipped a beat every time she heard her favorite training buddy laugh. When they had gotten outside, she started to run and as she turned her head to look back at Mal, said while laughing, "Race you to the field!"
I FINALLY posted the much anticipated chapter! Sorry for keeping you all hanging (actually not really lol, super suspenseful cliffhangers are a writer's best friend haha). But actually though, I accidentally posted this a tiny bit later than I had originally intended to. I just started my second semester of college and I have 5 classes on Monday and Wednesday and 4 on Friday (which means Tuesday and Thursday are study and workout days) so updates are going to be a little more scarce.

Anyways, on a completely different note, Mal is finally at UCLA! I had a feeling she would be rooming with Marley since they both didn't start classes until now and, while I would've loved to be more accurate, I'm not re-writing this story just to have Marley be Mal's first roommate and not Jessie haha. Also, three Canadian WNT legends are retiring! I wish the best of luck to Nault, Tanc, and Rhian and appreciate all they've done for women's soccer (even if Tanc was a dirty player lol, still love her though).

This was a long note but I felt like some things were necessary to address haha. Thank you all for being so patient and kind! I continue to appreciate the views, kudos, and comments. This spring semester is going to be extremely busy (I also might be getting a job and I also run two non-personal social media accounts) but I'll try to update as often as possible! Thanks again!
Racing

Chapter Summary

"Mercy" by Shawn Mendes

"Fall" by Justin Bieber

"I Don't Wanna Be Alone" by James Meyers

Jessie and Mallory found themselves racing to the field to practice every single day. It had become a daily ritual; race to the field, train for an hour or go to team practice, then race back to Jessie or Mallory's room- depending on their mood and what homework they needed to finish. They would also race to the library and even race to see how many water bottles they could drink in a day. It was all childish, especially since they both had at least one semester of college under their belts and should've been more mature by now, but they enjoyed it.

The new college soccer season came along with new players coming in while others left (either due to transferring or graduating), the occurrence of more injuries, and an abundance of new drama. With the addition of Ashley Sanchez to the top with Mallory, the frontline was unstoppable. The first couple of games were shaky, as they only barely beat Pepperdine 1-0, lost to Stanford 3-0, and drew Arizona 1-1, but they managed to learn from their mistakes and rebuild. The expectations that had been set by the media and fans were extremely high, especially since the people on the outside didn't care to factor in the time needed for the team to transition with its new players and find its niche. When MacKenzie sprained her ankle and both Kaiya and Jacey got concussions, the success of the team was set back a little bit but they managed to work around it (they were just glad no one had torn their ACL early in the season or worse). And of course, there was drama- they're girls in college, what do you expect? There had been a few breakups, a few new relationships, a couple fallouts with friends, multiple hook ups, and the fear of failing out of classes, but these were always discussed off the field. They all loved the game so much that all the drama and stress from their personal lives was left behind and soccer was their form of relief where they could let out any anger. There was, however, one personal issue that couldn't be kept off the pitch.

About three weeks into the season, Anika and Julia revealed that they were an item to the rest of the team. This came as a shock to everyone except Jessie as she knew the two were definitely lingering somewhere in between friends and more than friends going into the summer break. Even Karina, Anika's own sister, was shocked. It was a surprise but everyone was happy for them, they were actually pretty cute together and the relationship worked out so well- they were perfect for each other. Of course, the lovebirds were countless teased by everyone, especially Mallory, Marley, and Karina. Anika now had wished she hadn't gone to college with her two best friends and younger sister because she was constantly teased about the way she looked at Julia like she was the only person in the world and was always pegged about spilling the details about dates. Anika didn't care too much about the pestering though, she really liked Julia and told them, "Hey, it's Julia's fault for looking so beautiful all the time, I can't help it."

"They're painfully adorable," Mal mentioned to Jess, looking in the direction of Anika and Julia who were just laying down and doing nothing but looking up at the sky. Practice had yet to begin and players slowly filed onto the field where Mal and Jess had already been passing the ball for the
previous twenty minutes.

"They're literally not doing anything right now," Jess replied as she chipped the ball so Mal could head it back to her.

"They're still cute together," Mal stated.

"Yeah, they are," Jess agreed as she looked back towards the two juniors who were literally trying to get a quick nap in before practice. Jessie herself wished she could do that, lay on the field next to Mallory, but she knew it wouldn't happen in a way where she'd be more than one of Mallory's best friends.

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Jess and Mal still hung out with Will, they were a great trio. It was difficult for all of them to not include Jason in their plans but they all knew better and knew that Mallory still needed some time. The trio managed to still go on outings but nothing near to their hiking and surfing excursions back in the spring. With the season in full-effect as well as national team camps, Jess and Mal were incredibly busy and were lucky if they could even see Will once a week. All of their friends had known that Jess and Mal were close friends and had gone on vacation together but no one knew about what had happened at the tail end of it.

When just Will and Jess were hanging out in Will's room while watching the Borussia Dortmund game, Jess told him that she might not be straight. Then, Will, as the great friend he is, was respectful and supportive and asked if there was anyone on her team that she liked. She quickly changed the subject to the person who Will had a major crush on (spoiler: her distraction would not work in the long-run). More attention was going towards their personal issues than the game they were watching.

"You're not really good with hiding your crush on Ash, ya know," Jessie said, laughing as Will was blushing.

"What?" He asked in disbelief.

"Ashley, you like Ashley."

"Ashley who?"

"Oh shut up, you know exactly who I'm talking about," Jess said. "Ashley Sanchez."

"What are you talking about?"

"Whenever you're with us and Ashley's with us, you can never stop staring at her," Jessie explained. "You're literally drooling over her and always trying to stand or sit next to her. You always hold the door for her, tell her she's pretty, and tell her really corny jokes."

"I'm just being nice!" He retorted, although he was furiously blushing. This is why all the girls on the team loved having him around, he was an all around good guy. He wasn't a fratty douchebag, he was respectful to everyone, had great relationship advice, was witty, and also was extremely smart. He wasn't one of those guys who complained about being the nice guy who "all the girls friend zone" nor someone who hooked up a lot. He was one of those guys who waited to find someone who he truly wanted a relationship with. He was one of those guys who would talk about his problems but also listen to everyone else's problems. Sure, many of their guy friends were just like him, but they all seemed to be taken or not compatible. He was hot, an athletic California surfer with abs of steel, blonde hair that was sided to the right and not too long but not too short
either, and dark blue eyes that made you feel like you were lost at sea. After he was featured multiple times on Jessie's Instagram and on Mallory's a couple as well, he received a pretty big following. He had become somewhat of an Instagram famous model and had thousands of girls all around the world drooling over him (most of those girls hadn't even realized that this guy would most likely be a future Olympian). He remained humble though and didn't let all this strange new attention get to his head. The whole UCLA women's soccer team admired him for that. He had become good friends with the whole team but Mal and Jess were, no doubt, still his closest friends-Ashley was a different type of friend. When mixers between the men's and women's soccer team occurred, he was the one non-soccer player or non-boyfriend/girlfriend of a player who was invited.

"Just stop pretending to be so oblivious," Jess replied as she rolled her eyes. While Will wasn't like those douchebags, he was also very much another guy who couldn't tell that the girl he was crushing on was waiting for him to make a move. "Ashley clearly likes you back."

"Wait, what?" Will asked, completely dumbfounded.

"She laughs at all your stupid jokes, like that stupid one you told her yesterday about the chicken running across the road."

"Hey, that was funny!" Will defended himself.

"'Because a car was coming' that's terrible," Jessie rolled her eyes. "Anyways, she always tries to get your attention. She's so flirty around you but it's like you're blind and deaf. The way she flirts around you makes me want to cringe. She's close to giving up on you, she's just waiting for you to make a move."

"You think?" Will asked seriously, examining what Jessie had told him.

"I know."

"How?" He asked.

"I literally just told you," Jess replied.

"But maybe she's just being nice."

"Oh my gosh, you're such a guy," Jessie sighed.

"Why wouldn't she just tell me?"

"Why are guys like this? That's not how it works," Jessie replied with another sigh.

"So I should ask her out?" He clarified.

"Well duh."

"Thursday then, after your game."

"About time," Jessie said, relieved.

"You're not so good with hiding your crush either," Will said with a smirk.

"What are you talking about?" It was Jessie's turn to blush.

"Are you serious? You hang out with Mal all the time and you look at her like she just single-
handedly won the World Cup, found the cure to cancer, and won the Nobel Peace Prize. Plus, you took her to Portland," it was Will's turn to roll his eyes.

"How'd you know that?" She asked, now embarrassed and wondering if anyone else could tell.

"I'm a psychology major who also happens to be very observant and friends with a lot of girls," he answered with a shrug. "Plus, I'm just really smart."

"You're still a jerk for being dumb enough to not realize Ashley likes you back," Jessie came back.

"Don't say anything if you haven't said anything to Mal."

"Oh, I have."

"When were you gonna tell me this?" He asked as he leaned in closer and maintained eye contact, now more interested in where the conversation was going.

"I wasn't. Mal and I agreed to just be friends," Jessie replied, a hint of sadness in her voice.

"So she knows?"

"Yep," she answered.

"That's rough."

"Hey, I'm just glad we're still friends," Jessie said defensively.

Screw the idea that Jessie was happy about still being Mallory's friend. As Mal's friend, she would be one of the first people to see the incredibly attractive outfits Mal wore to parties that she always looked stunning in. Sometimes she'd even help Mal zip up her dress for a formal date party and she could've sworn Mal knew the effect she had on the midfielder because her fingers were always trembling and the Canadian's face would turn red. All the while, Jessie wouldn't admit that she was so incredibly jealous of the guys who would take Mallory to parties. She also wouldn't admit that Mal's perfume and body spray gave off an aura that made Jessie dizzy, making her high off the sweet scent of her; Mal had a special effect on Jess. It also didn't help Jess that Mal would flirt. Mallory had always been flirty, it was just a part of her personality, but now Jessie couldn't help but slightly blush at the things she said. The casual "I gotchu baby" or "love ya" or "you look cute" was enough to set Jess on edge. Half of the time, Jessie felt like Mallory knew exactly what she was doing because she was still well aware of the midfielder's crush on her, but during the other half, she blamed Mal's casual yet extremely friendly and flirty personality. Even Mallory's hugs would make Jessie's head spin. With every touch, Jessie would progressively fall for the star forward more and more and the already major crush grew. She would find herself staring at Mal's lips every now and then and she'd have to will herself to look away or look at the American's warm almond eyes instead. That was a mistake though because every time she looked into her eyes, she couldn't help but think about all the things she liked about Mallory.

Will would always catch Jessie staring at Mal like she had the world on her sleeve and he would simply smile an annoyingly sly smile which would earn him a death glare from the Canadian. He would make fun of the way Jessie would literally throw herself at Mal and joked that she'd even become an American citizen and play on the United States Women's National Team just because of Mal. In response, Jessie would try to start beef with him but usually failed since she could no longer tease him about Ashley now that the two were finally dating and were sickeningly cute and possibly the hottest couple at UCLA.
Jessie couldn't help herself from falling deeper into her feelings with every passing day. Mal would talk in depth about "The Bachelor" that intrigued Jessie in a way that made the Canadian enjoy such a show that she would have never have been interested in before. The way Mal would passionately argue with Jess about who won their water drinking and juggling contests were so convincing that Jess would almost let the other girl have the full bragging rights (almost, she's not that weak). Even when Mal would smirk out of victory when realizing that more guys flirted with her than with Jess, she was captivated by how Mal was so entertained with this subject and would forget to be jealous. Everything was a race between Jessie and Mallory but they weren't the only ones racing, it was Jessie's heart too. Whenever Mal said her name, told her to wear a sweatshirt because it was a little chilly out, passed the ball to her on the pitch, told her not to order the fish from the dining hall because there was a possibility it was poisoned, or laughed at anything, Jessie's heart would race.

It was only a race until either Jessie's crush would disappear or Mallory would start feeling the same way.
"So, what's up with you and Pugh?" Melissa asked.

"Huh?" Jessie asked. Melissa Tancredi was conveniently in Los Angeles and had called up Jessie to get lunch. Not one to say no to catching up with a former teammate nor one to say no to free lunch, she made time in her schedule to meet up with the older player.

"You and Pugh," Tanc reiterated.

"What are you talking about?" Jessie asked, pretending to be oblivious as she wore the best poker face she could.

"Are you telling me there's nothing going on between you two?" Mel asked in disbelief.

"Um... there's nothing," Jess said quickly.

"That's bullshit. You definitely like her," Mel continued.

"How'd you know? Did Erin tell you?" Jessie finally caved in.

"Ha!" Tanc exclaimed, her eyes full of excitement. "That was actually a totally random guess. Erin wouldn't betray you like that, only I would."

"Wait, what?" Fleming asked, now incredibly confused.

"I'm not dumb."

"Well you're a doctor so I'd hope not."

"J Flems, that's not what I meant," Mel rolled her eyes. "You post photos of her more than anyone else besides that one model guy and you look at her like she hung all the stars."

"How would you know that?"

"Sometimes I watch live streams of your games and I'm smart, I know stuff."

"Am I that obvious?" Jessie whined.

"Only to some of us. I'm pretty sure Erin and I are the only two people who've cracked the code."
"And Will."

"Will?" Mel gave a questioning look.

"My friend Will, the guy I post photos of. He's a psychology major and one of my best friends so he figured it out," Jessie explained.

"Oh, him, Hollister model dude," Tanc said. "Does anyone else know?"

"Yes."

"Who?"

"Mal."

"Wait, Pugh knows you like her?" Dr. Tancredi clarified and Jessie nodded her head. "Oh damn, you're in some deep shit then."

"Geez, thanks for the kind words, Captain Obvious," Jessie snapped.

"Don't talk to your elders like that and I like being called Captain Tancredi instead," Tanc replied. "Anyways, I'm sure there's some chemistry between you two off the field since there's definitely some on the field."

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Jessie had tried to hide her feelings for Mallory the best she could, her choice. She had tried so hard to act like a normal friend around Mal but after a few weeks, she gave up and since Mal already knew about her crush, she didn't really care. She always found her eyes lingering on the American star longer than they did on other people. She couldn't help but laugh at every clumsy thing Mal did or roll her eyes at every corny joke she made (and probably stole from Emily Sonnett or Rose Lavelle). She couldn't help but notice every little thing Mallory did. She noticed how she and Mal were always double teamed in games, along with Ashley. She noticed how good Mal was at soccer, sure she always knew Mal was one of the best players in the world, but to play on the same team with her against other players their age, it was something special. She loved being on the same team as her; Mal's skills, humor, and humility were wonderful assets and she couldn't help but admire her for those attributes. She was stunningly beautiful too, which really did not help Jess because she found herself staring at the other girl to an extent she herself even found creepy.

As they continued to be best friends, they continued to do their loads of laundry together (they also figured out that they could bring laundry to the locker room for the soccer managers to do if they were sneaky enough). They also continued to help each other with homework, Mal helping Jess with English while Jess helped Mal with math and science. They shared clothes with each other, everyone on their team did, but to Jess, it felt all the more special. Even if they were just sharing a pair of socks, Jessie wore Mal's with pride. There were no signs of her crush faltering and she couldn't not stare at Mal whenever she looked good- which was, in her opinion, all of the time. Mallory was well aware of Jessie's crush on her but she took it in stride and was chill about it.

Then Mallory realized that maybe they weren't meant to be just friends and teammates... and that maybe they were meant to be something more than that. It took her awhile but everything finally clicked.

It all started slow. Mallory had always thought Jessie was pretty but now she felt like she was even prettier. She realized that all those times she felt so incredibly happy, comfortable, and excited around Jess were because she liked her in a foreign way she had never liked anyone before. She
realized how beautiful a sight Jessie's freckles dancing on her face when laughing were. When Jess would help her with homework, particularly science homework, she would be so articulate and Mal loved that about her. Jessie would scrunch up her face and close her eyes tightly whenever she was trying to remember a specific detail of information and Mallory found it adorable. The way Jessie was so artistic also intrigued her, causing her to consider enrolling in an art class for spring semester, even though it wasn't necessary for her to take. They would watch soccer games together on TV or on one of their laptops and Mal admired how Jessie got so into the games and analyzed everything. She was thankful they were both fans of Barcelona, so they didn't have to bicker, and Jess had even managed to get Mal to become a passionate fan of Borussia Dortmund (okay, maybe the fact that Christian Pulisic plays for them helped as well).

When Mal would casually change while Jessie was in the room, she was well aware of the eyes staring at her. Mallory was well aware that Jessie couldn't help her staring and Jessie was well aware that Mallory knew since she had given up on trying to avert her eyes long ago. Jessie, however, wasn't aware that Mallory felt the exact same way and that she had the same effect on the other girl. Jess would casually get dressed with Mal in the room and she'd either be too focused on getting dressed or too lost in thought to find the American's eyes stealing quick glances at her. To Jessie's knowledge, she thought the feelings were one-sided.

"Wait, so how do you do this?" Mallory asked for the third time. To be honest, she had gotten lost in Jessie's eyes and didn't hear a single word she had said.


"Sorry," Mal replied, her cheeks slightly blushing. Luckily for her, Jess was already looking back down at the physics book they had been looking at to notice.

"This isn't that hard," Jessie said, looking back up at a now calm and collected Mal.

"Easy for you to say," Mal huffed, although she must admit, this particular assignment was pretty easy. She just liked learning from her favorite engineering major's in depth explanations.

"Okay, do you remember the equation for velocity?" Jessie quizzed Mal.

"Which one?"

"The change one."

"Change in velocity over change in time?" Mal answered, unsure. She honestly got this particular equation mixed up with another one and wasn't sure if she was correct.

"No dummy, that's acceleration. You can't have velocity as a component of the equation if you're trying to find it," Jessie explained.

"But I thought there were some equations of velocity with velocity?"

"Those are equations of motion and it's different," Jess clarified.

"Hey, at least I was close," Mal said. "At least I didn't say rise over run!"

"Oh my gosh," Jessie sighed as she put her head into her hands, visibly done with the other girl's absentmindedness and joking. Mallory was laughing hysterically, amused by Jessie's reaction. "I'm gonna rise and run outta here, I need a break from this."
"Wanna go play?" Mal asked as she stood up from her desk and picked up a soccer ball, still chuckling at Jessie's reaction.

"Yes please," Jessie said, relieved as she too stood up.

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"If I kicked this ball at eight hundred miles per five seconds, what would the velocity be?" Jessie asked as she and Mal were doing some dribbling and shooting drills. She was hoping that a change of scenery and a hands-on experience would help Mallory learn physics better.

"Well, that's like impossible," Mal replied knowingly.

"Theoretically," Jessie rolled her eyes.

"One hundred-sixty miles per second," Mal stated.

"See? You don't suck at math and science as much as you think you do," Jessie assured her.

"Who said I think I suck at math and science?"

"I thought you did... but I guess not since your ego is so big," Jess scoffed, earning her a hard slide tackle in response. Actually, it wasn't even a slide tackle, it was a full on American football tackle. "Hey!"

"I'm good at chemistry," Mal aggressively argued as she was laying on top of the Canadian.

"Oh really?" Jessie asked, raising an eyebrow. She was trying her best not to stare at Mal's lips and lean up to kiss her. Even just the weight of Mallory on top of her made her head spin. On the other hand, Mal couldn't help but smile and laugh at the effect she had on the girl underneath her. She took a quick glance at the other girl's lips but immediately looked away - she didn't want to kiss her here, not on a soccer field at four in the afternoon.

"I have great on field chemistry with you," Mal replied smugly as she started to get up. Jessie could've sworn there was a suggestive tone in her voice but she was convinced she was just imagining it (she wasn't). "And I'm not that bad at chemistry, I know how to calculate molecular mass and I know that water is dihydrogen monoxide."

Mallory realized that the chemistry they shared on the field was unstoppable and she soon wondered if they had any real chemistry off the field as well. She kept wondering for four weeks until she realized it was worth a shot to see if they did have any special off field chemistry, if it would work out.

Chapter End Notes

Another chapter in just two days, wow! Haha I feel bad for dragging this whole story out so much so I decided to update a little quicker than usual. I appreciate you all for everything, I can't stress enough how thankful I am for all of your support and feedback - please keep it coming!
Life of the Party

Chapter Summary

"House Party" by Sam Hunt
"We Got The Party" by Hannah Montana (lol)
"Life of the Party" by Shawn Mendes
"Love Drunk" by Boys Like Girls
"Stranger" by Jay Hayden & KingVodka

Chapter Notes
See the end of the chapter for notes

"I'm surprised that you're actually coming to a party with me,” Mallory said with a smirk. "Plus, you're wearing your hair down!"

"Don't act so entitled, you're not the only one I'm going with," Jessie shot back. "Teagan and Marley are coming with us."

"But you have your hair down."

"I wear it down a lot," Jess argued back.

"Whatever you say," Mal sarcastically replied, knowing very well that Jess almost never wears her hair down. They tried to catch up to their other two friends who were a good ten steps in front of them—no signs of them slowing down to let Mal and Jess catch up. Teagan was eager to meet up with her girlfriend, Erica, while Marley was low-key sulking about not being with her boyfriend at UCSB (yes, that same guy)... she also may have pre-gamed in her and Mal's room a little too much which would explain her odd behavior. After Mal drove herself and the other three to a house party in the outskirts of campus, they found it incredibly crowded. It was so crowded that they had to park a whole block away from the house and walk the rest of the way. Mallory could already tell it was going to be an interesting night because of Marley's already tipsy behavior, because of the fact that this was a party at Pike and the fact that Jessie came along; she regretted thinking all four of them going out tonight was a good idea.

"Just make sure I don't do anything stupid, please," Jess said as they all entered the already crazy house. Being girls had its perks because they got into the party free of charge, all they got was a black mark drawn on their hands by the guy acting as the bouncer.

"Of course," Mal laughed.

Making sure Jessie didn't do anything stupid was proving to be a much more difficult task than she had originally expected. Between making sure Teagan and Erica didn't tear off each other's clothes in the middle of the crowded living room to providing emotional support for Marley to reassure her that her boyfriend couldn't be there because he had a game and not because he didn't like her anymore to making sure Jessie didn't drink any cups of mysterious liquid, it was a mess. She was
too busy monitoring what her friends were doing to even notice any of the guys who attempted to approach her, they always lost their opportunity once Mal would either be dancing with Jessie or be running over to one of her carpool girls saying, "No, don't do that!" Jessie was too intoxicated to notice the handful of guys approach her, plus, those guys were quickly turned off when they realized how close she was dancing to Mal (if she hadn't been so drunk, she would have appreciated the closeness more and would have realized that Mal was letting her be that close). Mal herself would have enjoyed dancing with Jess more if she hadn't been worrying so much. Although a couple of her other friends and teammates were there too, they were either too drunk or too preoccupied to ask her if she needed help with controlling the three people she had regretted inviting. By the time Mal was on her second, and what she had personally deemed her last, mixed drink of the night, Marley was drinking out of a beer bong with the help of Jacey whom had met up with them there—she had arrived with Kaiya and Sunny who had gone to play beer pong. Mallory had gotten a comfortable buzz that was far much closer to sober than drunk and she could have easily drank more but she knew better, she was the DD after all. Jessie, on the other hand, was a lightweight and was extremely tipsy just by her second mixed drink. By the time the Canadian had drunk two mixed drinks, a shot of tequila, a shot of Fireball, and a Natty Light, she was far too wasted to necessarily understand what exactly was going on—luckily Mallory had stopped her from drinking any more. After having to coax Erica (who was closer to Mal's soberness than any of the others) into going back to the dorm, literally prying the bong away from a crying Marley and taking ahold of her, and giving Jessie a piggy back ride (she was too drunk to walk and Mal was already tightly holding onto Marley's hand), she was able to get them back to the car. Jessie wondered if the black mark on her hand was a tattoo and was worried that she had gotten another one without telling her parents but Mal assured her that it was just a mark from the bouncer and that she could wash it off. Meanwhile, Marley was now crying about how unfair it was that her family had decided to get a dog after she left for college and was complaining about how dogs deserve to live longer. Mallory struggled to get Jessie and Marley to listen to her and had to personally buckle their seat belts. She was thankful she had invited Erica who somehow tamed the much drunker Teagan. The American forward managed to miraculously get all of them into the elevator of their residence hall, have them quietly walk to their rooms, and was able to unlock the door to her room. She had given Erica the task to redirect Teagan to her own room down the hall but that failed when Teagan decided to lay down on Mallory's bed. Before being pulled down by Teagan, Erica gave Mal an extremely apologetic look but Mal just gave a small assuring smile in response. Marley was already knocked out on her bed upon the second her head met her pillow, too drunk and knocked out to be bothered by the couple that had instantly torn off each other's clothes once their backs hit the bed—Mal said a silent prayer to herself in hopes that Marley wouldn't wake up while the couple were going at it. Jessie was now just Mallory's problem. After quietly, but quickly, closing the door to her room (she herself didn't want to see Teagan and Erica going at it), Mal carried Jessie down the hall.

"Jess, where's your I.D.?" Mal quietly asked as she set Jess down and leant her against the wall. Jessie mumbled an inaudible sound in response while her eyes were half closed and patted the front left pocket of her jeans. Mallory quickly felt around for Jessie's student I.D. then got it and unlocked the door. She carefully brought Jess to her bed and sat her down. When she realized that Jessie's face wore discomfort and was a little pale, she rushed to get a trash can. She put the trash can in front of Jessie's face just in time for the Canadian to throw up in it. Mal sat back down next to the unwell girl and held her hair with one hand and gently rubbed her back with the other as Jess threw up much of the alcohol she had consumed earlier that night.

"Stay over," Jess said with a soft smile as she looked over her shoulder at her caretaker. Mallory wouldn't admit that she had become flustered with the way Jessie was looking at her, in such a soft way that made Mal want to kiss her... but she knew better. Jessie was incredibly wasted.
"Here, drink water," Mal changed the subject as she opened a water bottle for the other girl and handed it to her.

"Stay with me, please, don't leave me," Jessie pleaded after she had downed half of the bottle. She twisted the cap back onto the bottle, set it on the ground, then started to lay down on her bed as she tugged at Mallory—begging her to lay down next to her.

"I think you should get some rest," Mal replied.

"Please?" Jess whispered and Mal caved in then laid down next to her and pulled her closer to her chest.

To be honest, Jessie didn't need to beg so much to have Mal stay with her, in fact, she didn't need to beg her at all. Mal had never realized how much she actually liked Jess, even when she was wasted and a pain in the ass, until she was caring for her and she herself wanted to stay, she liked this foreign feeling that made her heart smile.

Mallory really liked her.

She liked the way Jessie would awkwardly dance with her when she was drunk off just one mixed drink. She liked the way Jessie had put so much trust into her. She liked the way Jessie wanted her to stay, the girl who didn't like too much physical touch wanted her to sleep next to her. She liked the way Jessie was comfortable with being so unguarded and free whenever she was around. She liked the way her heart was so happy while laying next to Jessie. She liked the way that she was slowly falling in love with her.

She liked Jessie, a lot.

Chapter End Notes

I've been extremely busy with school (I do not recommend taking 5 college classes on Monday and Wednesday and 4 on Friday) as well as other things. Thank you all for the wonderful feedback and BIG shout out to "anonymoususer10" on Tumblr for shouting this story out! I honestly didn't even expect anyone to like this story in the first place so the overwhelming support is much appreciated and I can't thank you all enough.

On a completely different note, I might wait a little longer to post the next chapter, I have a feeling you guys will like the next one... it's been much anticipated.... :)
Oblivious

Chapter Summary

"If I'm Lucky" by State Champs

"Kiss Me Slowly" by Parachute

"Desire (Hibell Remix)" by Years & Years

The much awaited chapter is FINALLY here (even though it was literally only like six days since the last update haha).

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

"You posted this picture of me, why?" Mal asked, showing Jessie an Instagram post where Mal was smiling after scoring a goal during one of their many beach soccer games. A week had passed after the whole drunk party debacle and, to both Mallory and Jessie's surprise, there was no awkward mention about how they ended up waking up in the same bed together the next morning. Neither one of them said anything about it so just let it be, although they both knew deep down that they would have to confront each other about it someday. Now they were sitting alone on Jessie's bed while Jess was doing her chemistry homework and Mal was taking a break from reading her English homework to check her social media. After Marley went out to go visit her boyfriend at UCSB and Teagan went out with Erica, they found themselves alone and bored so they decided to have a little study hall together.

"It was a beautiful moment."

"But why me?" Mallory knew why, she just wanted to have a little fun.

"And a beautiful girl," Jess replied, blushing.

"You think I'm beautiful?" Mal asked with a cheeky smirk, playfully nudging Jess.

"Um, yeah, yes you are," Jessie stammered shyly as her cheeks and the tips of her ears turned red.

"So is that why you always take photos of me?" Mal asked with a knowing smile as the puzzle pieces suddenly started to fit together.

"What?" Jess asked as her cheeks turned a darker shade of red.

"Don't pretend to be so oblivious. You told me you like photography because it captures a beautiful moment," Mal said, giggling as she turned to look at the blushing mess in front of her. "And you're always taking photos of me so one plus one equals two, it all adds up."

"Um, yes."

"And I'm guessing you've had a crush on me for awhile then because you've taken pictures of me for awhile."
"I don't know what you're talking about," Jess denied, looking away.

"Jess, stop," Mal said as she put one hand on top of Jessie's, causing Jess to give her her full attention. "You've always taken pictures of me. How long have you liked me? Was it before we went to Portland?"

"Well, I kinda had to like you so you would be my friend," Jessie replied as she looked back down at her chemistry homework, embarrassed, trying to push the subject Mallory was bringing up away as she picked up her pencil again.

"Jess, you know what I mean," Mallory said, nudging Jessie and giving her a look. Mal's eyes were begging to get Jessie's full attention once again.

"Fine," Jess sighed as she looked up again, dropping her pencil and moving her homework to set it down on the desk next to the bed. "I don't really know though and it doesn't matter, we're just friends."

"Jessie," Mal said quietly, but seriously, as she noticed the other girl's face fall as she had emphasized the friends part. "How long have I been breaking your heart?"

"You haven't been breaking my heart," Jessie quickly shot back. "I just happened to get a crush on my beautiful teammate. It's nothing."

"It's not nothing," Mallory replied seriously, she knew how deep Jessie's feelings for her were not only because she herself had told her but because she could see it. She could tell it was more than just a little crush. She could see how Jess rarely took her eyes off of her and how they would occasionally flicker down at her lips. She noticed how Jess would laugh at anything funny that she said or did, even if it was a light chuckle followed with a roll of the eyes and shake of the head. She noticed how Jess would always search for her to be a partner in a drill at practice and when someone else was already her partner, she saw the sad look in Jessie's eyes, even when the Canadian said it was fine and that she would find another person. She could tell it wasn't nothing because Jessie always wanted to spend time with her and would drop whatever other plans she had. Jessie would sometimes be one problem or one page away from finishing an assignment but as soon as she got a text from Mal asking if she was free, she'd stop and do it later. Mallory added, "I can tell it's not nothing."

"I just want you to be happy, you're still one of my best friends," Jessie dodged the question.

"Well, as one of your best friends, it would make me happy if you would just tell me," Mal dictated with a sly smile as she crawled a little closer to Jess then sat next to her, crossing her legs criss-cross-applesauce.

"Ugh, fine," Jessie finally caved in. "It started out slow. I always thought you were so cool and gorgeous and amazing at soccer. Then we kissed at that party but I don't think you remember it."

"I remember it," Mal interrupted.

"Well, I guess that's kinda when it started. After that, I just started noticing things about you that I found adorable. It was really nothing then you started dating Jason and I got jealous. I liked Jason, he was a great friend but I liked you more. I didn't really realize how much I liked you until then but you seemed happy so I just let it be and pushed my feelings aside. I wanted to keep my feelings a secret but then you were suddenly single and we went to Portland and I really really liked you. Every day during that trip, there would be something new I'd learn about you that I would admire and I wanted to kiss you but I didn't want to make it awkward. I was never going to kiss you in that
airport but I did because you have this effect on me that's so different and exhilarating and makes me do crazy things and so I kissed you," Jessie explained, now rambling. She could feel herself growing sad with each detail because she was almost completely sure these feelings were one-sided. After a brief pause, she added, "I'm sorry I'm telling you all of this, you're my friend."

"No, don't be sorry, I'm the one who asked," Mal said as she leant in a little closer to comfort her favorite Canadian.

"I'm sorry I kissed you," Jessie apologized.

"You don't have to apologize."

"But I crossed the line and it was wrong and I screwed up."

"You didn't screw up. What makes you think it was wrong for you to kiss me?" Mal implored.

"Because I'm your friend and you're straight."

"I thought you were straight too, sorry for being so annoying about you and Will and those other guys."

"It's okay," Jessie replied, still sad about most likely never being able to be with Mallory as more than a friend.

"What if I'm not straight? What if I wanted to kiss you too? I remember that drunken night, I asked you if I could kiss you. I don't know why I asked you that then but now I think I do," Mallory explained as she slowly moved closer to Jess.

"What are you talking about?"

"Can I try something?" Mallory asked as her face inched closer to Jessie's, just a mere inch apart. The feelings she had developed over the past month were finally coming to the surface. Jessie's breath was hitched in her throat, stunned at how close Mal was to her, especially how close she was to her face. All Jessie could do to respond was to slightly nod her head.

Jessie's heart was racing as Mal's lips lightly pressed against hers and unlike the first and second time they kissed, it had an intimate feeling, even though it only lasted a couple of seconds. The Canadian had always dreamt of this and now it was becoming a reality. Unlike the other times that were so brief, Jessie could appreciate just how soft Mal's lips were. It all felt like a dream that Jessie never wanted to wake up from.

"What are you doing?" Jess asked as she pulled back and opened her eyes, a shy smile painted across her face.

"Something I should have done awhile ago," Mal replied with a soft smile as her eyes were still closed, memorizing the taste of Jessie's lips that were still lingering on her own, they still tasted like peppermint. Then she opened her eyes and added, "The last time you kissed me you asked me if that was a good enough reason to stay and I do think that's a good enough reason to stay, like a really good reason to stay."

Jessie's eyebrows furrowed, surprised and confused at the answer she received because she had never expected a girl like Mallory to want to kiss her while sober. In response to the adorable confusion painted across Fleming's face, Mallory decided to kiss it off and it felt like a warm fire had sparked inside them.
"Are you sure?" Jessie clarified as she pulled back again, her cheeks a dark shade of red.

"I'm positive," Mal assured her with a smile as she leant in to kiss the Canadian again.

"I'm sorry I ran away like that after I kissed you in the airport," Jess apologized once she regretfully pulled away again, instantly missing the feeling of Mallory's lips on hers. She recalled the last time they kissed in the airport, incredibly embarrassed, and wanted to apologize.

"Just don't do it again," Mal said with a light laugh as she looked into Jessie's eyes- she loves brown eyes. "And you don't have to apologize. I'm the one who should be. I'm sorry I was breaking your heart all that time."

"You weren't breaking my heart," Jessie defended once again.

"Well, I don't want to break your heart again, regardless of what you say," Mallory said before leaning in to press their lips together yet again. She wished she hadn't been so blind because the way Jessie kissed her made her forget all the other times she had kissed other people—Jessie's lips were soft and applied just the right amount of pressure. The kisses they shared both had Jessie make Mallory breathless but also feel like she was breathing in fresh air. It was an exhilarating feeling she could get used to but she wanted more so she pressed her lips to Jessie's with a little more force. Then Mal lightly bit down on the midfielder's bottom lip, causing the other girl to shutter. In the process of shuttering, Jess opened her mouth just wide enough for Mallory to smoothly slide her tongue into the Canadian's mouth. When their tongues slowly explored each other's mouth, Mallory felt like she was on cloud nine. She could probably do this for hours, it was just so exhilarating. Their hearts were racing so quickly in excitement, like when their hearts beat when they're seconds away from winning a game against a tough opponent.

They didn't make out for hours but it sure felt like it (and they probably could have). After thirty very enjoyable minutes, Jessie finally pulled away.

"Are you serious though? Because if you just wanted to kiss me to figure out things, that's okay," Jess said with a sad look, continuing the conversation from thirty minutes earlier. "Like if you wanted to make out with me just for fun, that's okay, just tell me. You can make out with me just for fun if you want."

"Why do you underestimate me so much?" Mallory questioned as she ran one of her hands through Jessie's hair.

"What do you mean?"

"I wouldn't play with your feelings like that and just kiss you for fun, I care too much about you to be hurt. I wouldn't just kiss you if I didn't want to or if I thought it wouldn't go anywhere," Mal explained. "What I'm trying to say is I like you, like really like you. You're beautiful inside out and have a heart of gold. It took me awhile to realize my feelings for you but I'm so glad I did. I feel like I took too long to kiss you, after I realized that I liked you."

"You... like me?" Jessie choked out, taken by surprise because she had never in a million years would have thought Mallory would ever tell her that.

"Yeah, yeah I do," Mallory replied with a smile then pressed a light kiss on Jessie's blushing red cheek. "Why else would I kiss you, dummy?"

"I don't know," Jess replied, her cheeks a dark shade of red.

They kissed the rest of the night away, exploring every corner of each other's mouths. Both of their
lips were swollen and bleeding but that didn't stop them. There were tugs at their lips and tugs at their hair and soft moans that were music to their ears. With each lip bite and motion of the tongue, they were overcome with excitement and serenity—a strange combination that made them feel like they were flying, breathless and soaring with the butterflies they had in their stomachs.

Chapter End Notes

So that was the much awaited chapter! I kept getting pestered to update so I finally caved in, even though it was literally only like five days since my last update haha.

Anyways, I was just thinking about how embarrassing it would be if either Mal or Jessie read this, or like any of their teammates or friends. If they are, well, hello, sorry this is such a strange story but I hope you're enjoying reading this haha. Luckily I keep my identity a secret on here and on Tumblr (oh, imagine if I end up famous or working with one of them, that's going to be so awkward- good thing I'm such a private person lol).

Thanks for being patient (more like impatient hahahaha, just kidding... kinda), for reading this, for providing feedback and compliments that I love and value so much, and for being you. I love and appreciate you all and hope you continue reading, this chapter is only just the beginning. ;)
In N Go Out with Me?

Chapter Summary

"First Date" by Blink-182
"Roman Holiday" by Halsey
"Believe In Me" by Michelle Williams
"Beautiful Soul" by Jesse McCartney

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

"What are you doing tonight?" Mallory asked as she sat next to Jessie on the bed, not even a minute after arriving to her "second room". It was Friday night and Teagan had gone out with Erica while Marley had gone out to do something with Jacey so the two were alone.

"Well, I was doing some homework to get ahead," Jessie began to explain, causing Mallory to roll her eyes because it was Friday and they didn't have a game over the weekend. Once Jess saw Mal's reaction, she added, "But I don't really need to."

"Good, we should go out," Mal stated. It had been a week since the two confessed their true feelings for each other and after a busy week of classes, practices, games, and stolen kisses in between, Mallory was eager to do something with Jess... just the two of them.

"I'm not going partying, I don't feel like it tonight."

"No, that's not what I meant, silly," Mal laughed as she remembered the first party they went to together.

"Oh, good," Jess answered, relieved. "Then what do you mean?"

"Go to In N Out with me?" Mal asked.

"Are you asking me out on a date?" Jess asked with a small smirk, which caused Mallory to blush.

"Umm, maybe," Mal replied nervously. Jess was amused, she had never seen Mal like this before, even when she was dating Jason.

"Let's go then," Jess said, smiling as she got up to get her wallet and put her shoes on. Right before they left, she gave Mallory a light smiley kiss on her cheek.

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"Seriously?" Jessie asked the hungry Mallory who had decided to order a Double-Double and two orders of fries.

"What?" Mal asked.
"It's eleven o'clock at night and that's a lot of junk food."

"So?" Mal asked, not seeing a problem at all. "I'm hungry and we had a game yesterday. I'll just run it off tomorrow."

Jessie smiled, adoring the way Mallory sometimes didn't care about her diet and knew exactly what she wanted. She also knew that if she argued, she would lose.

"Are you not getting anything?" Mal asked as she was about to pay.

"Nah, I'm good thanks," Jess replied. She would've offered to pay but since she wasn't getting anything and knew how stubborn Mal was and how she would've refused her offer, she didn't even bother to get her wallet out.

They found themselves parked by a soccer field, naturally, even though it was pretty late at night. They got out of the car and sat on the grass under the bright lights that helped illuminate the dark sky. Jessie had brought a soccer ball with them while Mallory brought her food.

"That's why I got two orders of fries," Mallory explained with a mouth full of food as she looked down to see Jessie reaching for some of her fries. "I knew you'd eat a lot of mine."

"What?" Jessie asked innocently, as if she wasn't caught red-handed.

"You've eaten half of my fries," Mal continued as she motioned to one of the now nonexistent orders of fries- a direct result of Jessie.

"How'd you know I was gonna steal your fries?" Jessie asked as she continued to eat more fries, now moving onto the second order.

"You're always hungry and you love In N Out fries almost as much as you love Tim Hortons," Mal said.

"Almost," Jessie agreed. "You're right, I do. The fries just looked so good so I had to eat them."

"Don't get sick," Mal warned.

"Look who's talking," Jess snorted. Mallory playfully shoved Jess who just laughed at the reaction. Then she poked fun at a fond memory that they shared, "Hey, you don't wanna get us kicked off this field, do ya?"

"Shut up," Mal replied, rolling her eyes, although a smile came across her face- she would love to go back to Portland with Jessie again and relive that adventure again anytime, even if they had almost died then.

"Make me," Jess challenged with a smirk. As the competitive nature ingrained into Mallory kicked in, she wouldn't let Jess win whatever game they were now playing. The only way Mallory could shut Jess up was by tackling her and smashing her lips onto Jessie's so that's exactly what she did. Their lips fit so perfectly together and it was as if they were sharing a secret that made them both so indescribably happy.

"Sorry, I just really like kissing you," Mallory blushed as she pulled away, looking down at the girl she wishes she had kissed back earlier.

"Don't apologize," Jessie smiled as she reached up to play with one of Mallory's curls. "I really like kissing you too."
"Good," Mal replied, smiling as she began to stand up. She reached her hand out for Jess to take and asked, "Let's work this junk food off now, eh?"

"Ah, you're speaking Canadian already," Jessie beamed as she took Mal's hand and stood up.

"I literally just said eh," Mal retorted.

"Whatever you say," Jessie said as she casually nutmegged the American.

They decided not to do too much of a workout as it was so late at night (in other words, the equivalence of a normal recreational player's practice). Upon the fall quarter and start of the season, they had gotten out of the habit of doing their shots every Friday night. So tonight, after jogging around the field once and passing the ball to each other, they finally did their shots against each other again. Mallory had made more than Jessie and she wouldn't stop bragging about it- Jessie couldn't be annoyed for long because the way Mallory ran around the field screaming "I beat Jessie Fleming!" was absolutely adorable. They ended their short little workout session by laying in the middle of the field, looking up at the stars as they just talked.

"So, when did you realize you liked me back?" Jessie asked curiously.

"Kinda like how you realized you liked me, it was all slow. It was probably a month ago when I started noticing how much I liked you," Mallory replied. "Now that I think of it, I think I liked you before I even knew it. Like when we were in Portland, you made me so happy and comfortable but it was a different type of happy and comfortable, it was special."

"Are you sure you like me?" Jessie asked.

"Jess," Mal said as she sat up to look down at Jess. "Why don't you believe me?"

"It's just, I've liked you for so long and it's so surreal. Thousands of people would love to date you and you're beautiful, you look like a model. I thought you were straighter than all of the straight girls on our team. You're just- you're just you and I'm just me," Jessie explained. "I just can't believe you actually like me."

"I'll try to make you believe then," Mal whispered as she closed her eyes then leant down and softly pressed her lips against Jessie's. It was a calm kiss, no hunger in either of their lips, but it was a kiss full of meaning. It was a kiss to prove that the sparks and butterflies and warm feelings weren't one-sided and that they were indeed mutual. As Mal pulled away and laid back down next to the girl that made her blush so much, she asked, "So what are we?"

"What?" Jessie replied.

"Like we're definitely more than friends but we kinda only just started dating and it's only been a week since we started us."

"We're good best friends," Jessie answered.

"Good best friends?" Mal repeated, turning to look at Jess again as she smiled at her silly suggestion.

"Do you like 'my favorite training buddy' instead?"

"Either one works, I like both," Mal smiled as she turned her head back to look up at the sky.

They continued to just talk, about everything from soccer to drama to classes. They were still very
much friends and acted like it, able to easily hold a conversation. Even the dull moments weren't full of strange awkwardness. It wasn't until Jessie leaned over to kiss Mallory that they both had remembered they were more than just friends now, whatever that may be- good best friends or best training buddies.

It was a perfect first date and to end the night off, Jessie walked Mallory to her room. Mal said that she'd be fine with walking back up to her room that was literally right down the hall from her date's but Jess insisted and wouldn't take no for an answer. When Jess had stopped in front of Mal's door, waiting for her to open it, she couldn't help but stare at Mal's lips. In response, neither could Mal so they both just silently stared at each other, waiting for the other to make a move. They probably would've spent the rest of the night, or morning, staring at each other like that if Mallory hadn't spoken up.

"You wanna kiss me goodnight, don't ya?" Mal asked with a shy voice, though she wore a knowing smile.

"Umm... uhhh," Jessie replied blushing, flustered by the way Mallory was smirking at her.

"Kiss me," Mal begged, her voice just above a whisper. Jessie looked around uneasily, unsure if anyone was walking down their hall. "It's okay, it's late even for the really drunk people to come in."

"Are you sure?" Jessie asked and instead of Mallory replying with a "why do you still not believe that I like you?", she closed her eyes and softly pressed her lips against the Canadian's.

"Thanks for tonight, that was the best date I've ever been on," Mal smiled as she pulled away.

"Thank you making it such a great date," Jessie smiled back.

"No, thank you," Mal said with an even wider smile. She sensed that the near perfect night was coming to an end and, as much as she didn't want it to, she knew she needed to get some sleep. "See you in the morning."

It took Mal a couple of tries to get her student I.D. to slide in correctly and unlock her door because of the girl that made her nervous was in such close proximity to her, even though she could hear Jessie's footsteps become more and more distant with every step.

Chapter End Notes

I apologize for the longer than usual wait between this update and the last! Anyways, much love to all of you readers and thank you so much for all the feedback- I love it; please keep it coming!
Chapter Summary

"Rollercoaster" by Bean

"Fearless" by Taylor Swift

"The Ocean (feat. Shy Martin)" by Mike Perry

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Two weeks passed and Mallory and Jessie finally had time to go on another date. Mallory's second and last class of the day, which was a fifty minute class at ten in the morning, was a history lecture that her professor decided to end thirty minutes early. So for the rest of the day, she found herself alone in her room, in the gym, and on the soccer field. The team didn't have a game over the weekend and had an early morning Friday practice, letting a lot of the players escape campus for the weekend. With no major sporting event taking place on campus, the crowds were beginning to thin out. Jessie, unfortunately, had a three hour physics lab. Even though it was her only Friday class and her professor always let the class out at least an hour early, she dreaded it. Mal was aware that Jess had a long class and was eager to see her but waited patiently for the future engineer to finish at two. After not even a minute of Jessie being back in her room, Mal was already knocking on the door. She ordered Jess to get her phone, camera bag, her student I.D., and her wallet then come with her. Jessie was puzzled but obeyed and followed Mal. They made a quick stop at one of the dining halls to get take out boxes for dinner then they made their way to Mallory's car. Jessie didn't ask any questions, trusting that Mal wouldn't accidentally get them lost and that she wasn't kidnapping her. Plus, they both were so hungry that they could only pay attention to eating and enjoying the mediocre dining hall food that they both were normally sick of. After sitting in what seemed like and probably actually was an hour of traffic, they finally got to the destination Mal had planned on going to. When Jessie realized where they were as they unbuckled their seat belts and exited the car, she couldn't help but smile.

"Why'd you take me to a pier?" Jessie asked Mal, although a smile crept onto her face because she loved piers and had an idea about what the answer was going to be.

"You know why," Mal replied as she interlaced her hand with Jessie's. The Santa Monica Pier was far too crowded on a Friday afternoon for them to be recognized, especially when both of them wore hats, hoodies, and sunglasses.

"I know but I want to hear it from you," Jess smiled as she lightly squeezed Mal's hand.

"This is where we came when I was completely oblivious to you liking me and when I forced you to go on a date with Will. Also, you love piers and I do too, and they remind me of our trip to Maine," Mal smiled back. All Jessie could respond with was a quick kiss to Mal's cheek.

They only went on one ride which was one of the roller coasters. Jessie held tightly onto Mallory the whole entire time and Mal just smirked at her once the ride was over. The Canadian tried to cover up the fact that she was slightly afraid of roller coasters but Mal could see right through her
lie, especially because Jessie was blushing.

"You can't lie to save your life," Mal stated as the two walked down to the end of the pier where they passed multiple street entertainers and tourists.

"Lying is a sin anyways," Jess replied.

"Pffft, still," Mal rolled her eyes.

"Okay, maybe I'm really bad at lying."

"Good job, acceptance is a great first step," Mallory applauded her.

"Shut up," Jessie grumbled as she took her camera out.

"Okay, I'll stop teasing you because I want my personal photographer to take photos of me right now."

"Is that all I am to you? A personal photographer."

"Um, yeah... I'm kidding, babe," Mal joked. The 'babe' had mindlessly slipped out of her mouth before she could stop herself. She blushed as Jessie's face wore a faint blush along with a smirk.

"Babe?" Jessie teased.

"Just take pictures of me," the American said as the Canadian continued to smirk. Jessie took some great photos of the girl she still couldn't believe she was dating and maybe she's biased because she thought that every single photo of Mal turned out amazing.

"Wait, we should do one of those cute couple pics of me holding your hand as you look out at the ocean," Jessie said, pausing to take her camera away from her face.

"That's so cheesy... I love it," Mal agreed and so Jessie took a photo of her holding onto Mal's hand as the forward looked out at the ocean.

"This is pretty cute," Jessie smiled as she and Mal looked at the photo.

"Yeah it is, you're pretty cute," Mal said, smiling as Jessie blushed. "Here, give me the camera, I wanna take some photos of you."

"What, why?"

"You always take photos of everyone and everything else but there's none of you," Mal explained as Jessie carefully handed the camera over.

"Do you even know how to use this?"

"You underestimate me, Fleming," Mal responded. "I do know how to use this, thank you very much."

"Okay, Pugh, what do you want me to do? Ha, that rhymes."

"Just look out at the ocean," Mallory replied as she put the camera to her face. She then crouched down and aimed the camera up.

"Oh, fancy," Jessie laughed at Mallory's antics.
"I should add "professional photographer" to my résumé," Mal said as she showed the photo to Jess, satisfied with how it came out.

"You literally just took one photo."

"You know what? I'm never taking photos of you again unless it's of you doing something embarrassing. I don't take photos of people who insult my work."

"Okay, I'm sorry, I take it back," Jessie quickly retorted as she gave her new personal photographer a kiss on the cheek. "And I never insulted your work, the photo looks amazing."

"Good, because I think I could actually be pretty good at this, it's cool."

"Ah, looking to steal my title of "artsy photographer" now, eh?"

"I thought that was Sunny," Mal said.

"Just because she has a photography account doesn't mean anything."

"Whatever you say."

"Truth or dare?" Jess asked. The two were sitting on the beach, having brought a towel in Jessie's bag to sit on- the towel still didn't stop either one of them getting sand in their hair. The game of choice was a silly game to play but Mal was unconventional and was always looking for more entertaining (and usually embarrassing) ways to learn new things about Jessie. Plus, they both have such a competitive nature that the game was so fitting.

"Hmm... truth," Mal replied, her body leaning back into Jessie—Jessie's legs on either side of her—as her eyes were intently watching a small child chasing birds through the sand. Even though the night was nearing, they both still wore sunglasses. With the autumn chill and ocean's breeze, it made the ambience of the California sunset all the more cooler. For a California October night, it was cold, but for the Coloradan and Canadian, it was nothing; however, they both were wearing hoodies- trying to make themselves less recognizable.

"What's your favorite number to wear?"

"I have a lot of favorite numbers," Mal said as she watch the sky turn into a fiery red and blue, the sun setting and beginning to make its way behind the Pacific. "Like nine, two, and seventeen."

"Well, if you HAD to pick one, what would it be?"

"Probably number nine. Women's soccer legends wear the number nine."

"Oh, I was hoping it'd be seventeen," Jess lightly laughed.

"Is that because it's your number?" Mal asked as she rolled her eyes, turning her head so she could look up at Jess.

"Well you didn't say twenty-one was one of your favorites so...."

"It's also Tobin's number. I mean, between you and Tobin, who would you think I would be more inspired by?" Mal asked. "In case you were wondering, not you."

"Ouch, that hurt, way to hurt my self-esteem."
"Sorry babe but it's true," Mal snickered as she leant up behind her and pressed a soft kiss on Jessie's cheek.

"It's okay, I don't blame you," Jess shrugged. "She seems chill and she's got some killer moves."

"So... truth or dare?"

"Dare," Jessie responded and she immediately regretted it when she saw the devious smile Mal had suddenly worn upon her response. "Oh no."

"Oh yes," Mallory smiled as she stood up from her comfortable seat. As she offered her hand to help Jessie get up, she said, "I dare you to do the traveling rings."

"Ughhh," Jessie said as she stood up and began walking back to the outdoor gym area. Mallory quickly picked up the towel and bag then followed the Canadian.

"Wait," Mal said right before Jessie reached up for the first ring. Mal got her phone out then said, "I need to record this."

"This is another workout for today, you suck," Jessie huffed as she reached up. Her arms were straining as she pulled herself up and swung her body.

"Working out is good!" Mal exclaimed with a smile as she recorded Jess, who was painfully yet smoothly doing the task Mal had dared her to do. Once Jess had gotten to the last one and jumped down, Mal cheerfully said, "Hey, that wasn't that bad."

"My arms and abs ache," Jessie whined. Once the pain had ceased to exist, she asked, "Truth or dare?"

"Dare."

"Good, you're getting payback," Jess explained.

"What could be worse?" Mal laughed.

"I dare you to run into the water, going all the way in, shirtless."

"But-" Mal began to protest as they were already walking back towards the water.

"A dare is a dare."

"But it's cold," Mal finished. Sure, for the both of them, the weather itself wasn't that bad—it was about fifty degrees in late fall which was nothing compared to their native homes of Colorado and London, Canada—but that didn't mean the water's temperature would be as warm. At this time of night, the water temperature would probably be near freezing. Plus, with a breeze picking up as dark clouds were rolling in, it was becoming progressively colder.

"You have to," Jess said as she gave Mal a quick tender kiss on the cheek.

"Do I really have to take off my shirt?" Mal whined. Jessie contemplated letting Mal off the hook on the second part of the deal but after analyzing their surroundings and realizing that it was too dark and too empty for anyone to really stare, she stuck to her word. She also knew that Mal was wearing a sports bra, since they hadn't changed out of their work out clothes from earlier, so it wouldn't be too bad.

"Yep."
"I hate you right now," Mal said through gritted teeth as she began to take off her UCLA sweatshirt and grey Nike t-shirt.

"I hate is a strong word and I know you don't actually."

"Still," Mal replied as she shivered, the cool air colder than she had expected.

"Hey, it'll be dry when you get out of the water," Jess smirked as her eyes roamed over Mallory's well-defined abs and strong arms.

"You better like record this or something or else it won't be worth it."

"This is going on Snapchat."

"At least people will see me doing this. So when I tell the story to everyone, I have proof," Mal explained as they both walked closer to the shore. They had set Mal's phone and clothes, Jessie's camera and bag, and their socks and shoes down right next to where Jessie stood.

"It sounds like this isn't that bad of an idea to you anymore."

"Oh, I still despise this but it'll make for a cool story," Mal said as she stopped right by the edge of the water, quickly feeling the water with her toe. It was cold, bone chilling cold. Upon seconds after first making contact with the icy ocean, she looked back up at Jessie, pleading for another dare.

"A dare is a dare!" Jessie yelled back as the wind had begun to pick up. The Canadian wore a devilish smile as she held her phone up, recording the whole scene.

"Fuck you!" Mal yelled, half seriously, as she sprinted into the ocean. She jumped in then quickly got up and went back over to Jessie.

"So, how was that Mal?" Jess asked, laughing as she held her phone's camera up to Mal's face.

"I fucking hate you," Mal said through gritted teeth as she lightly shoved Jessie's phone away while water was dripping from her freezing body.

"Hey, it wasn't that bad," Jess said, still laughing as she turned her phone off and set it down on her bag.

"Easy for you to say," Mal scoffed. "I'm cold."

"I can warm you up," Jess kindly offered as she tightly wrapped her arms around Mallory's shivering body.

"You think you really can get off the hook like that? Daring me to do that then act all innocent and offer warmth?" Mal asked, her arms were holding tightly onto Jess and her head was on Jessie's chest.

"Um... sorry?" Jess replied halfheartedly as she gently rubbed Mal's back.

"Mhmmm," was all Mal said, her tone as cold as her body, still not caving into Jessie's fake attempts at being sorry.

"Hey, look at me, babe," Jessie said, a seriousness in her tone. Mal looked the one inch down at the other girl as Jess said, "I'm sorry."
"Good," Mal said as she leant in to kiss Jessie's lips. Almost immediately, she felt warmer. Their lips lightly pressed against each other's then Mal decided to bite down on the shorter girl's bottom lip, causing the midfielder to open her mouth. They were so caught up in the kiss that neither one of them had realized that they were standing in the cold, wet sand. When Mal did, she got an idea.

Jessie was too lost in the kiss to notice that Mal had a devious plan up her sleeve. She was so lost that she didn't notice Mallory's shift in her demeanor nor did she realize that Mallory had expertly guided them closer to the water. Right when the two pulled away for air, Mallory pushed Jessie into the water.

"MALLORY!" Jessie squealed as she resurfaced from underneath the water and began to stand up. Mallory was already doubled over with laughter to help Jess stand up. "You little shit!"

"Now you feel my pain," Mal smiled, once she had finally contained her fit of laughter.

"You suck!" Jess yelled as she began to chase Mal. Mal was too slow to react and was tackled hard into the sand. They laid there entangled for a few seconds before Jess said, "I would've tackled you into the water but I don't want either of us to get wet again, it's cold."

"Told you so," Mal said knowingly as they both began to stand up again, shivering in the cool air while brushing sand off of their clothes.

"Coach would also kill me if you got hypothermia or something."

"I'm from Colorado, it wasn't that bad," Mal simply shrugged as she put her t-shirt and sweatshirt back on.

"Wait, what? Are you saying you pretended it was cold so you would make me feel bad?"

"No, it was cold and I could get sick but it wasn't like Colorado cold and I said it wasn't that bad, that doesn't mean it wasn't bad at all."

"You're something else," Jess said, rolling her eyes as she wrapped a towel around her and Mal. They had picked up their things and were making their way back to the car, walking back shoulder to shoulder, hoping to keep each other warm.

"You know, you're a pretty good kisser," Mal said out of the blue as she started the car then turned to look at the girl in the passenger's seat. Jessie blushed that signature blush of hers as Mal smiled.

"Thanks I guess," Jess responded with a nervous smile. The way Mal was looking at her with heart eyes made her feel like she was on cloud nine. She leant over the console and gave the driver a brief but passionate peck on the lips. As she pulled away, Mal's eyes still closed as she tried to memorize the way Jessie's lips felt on hers, she added, "And thank you for the best second date ever."

"No, thank you," Mal smiled once she opened her eyes again. "You reek of salt water though right now."

"Touché."

"Are you implying that I smell bad?"

"Let's go," Jess urged, ignoring the question with a laugh. Mal let the subject go and started to drive out of the parking lot. Once they got back onto the main roads, Jess took one of Mal's hands in hers while Mal's other hand was steering them back to campus.
I never quite understood how famous people can go unrecognized when they just wear sunglasses and a hat or something. Like I'm not famous yet all my friends can recognize me even when I'm wearing a hat, sunglasses, and a hood! Anyways, thanks for all the love and thank you for more Jess/Mal fics (please write more)!
"It's gonna storm, about time!" Mallory exclaimed as she looked out the window while they drove back to their residence hall.

"Uh... yeah," Jessie said quietly, the opposite of thrilled. She doesn't like storms, not ones at night anyways. She doesn't mind them during the day but at night, she can't fall asleep whenever they happen. She can't help it, she's never been good with storms at night and simply needs comfort. She would always go to her parents' room for comfort when she was little but it got to a point where they couldn't do it anymore and were tired so they trained their dog to sleep in Jessie's room every night, regardless of the weather. Her dog helped her stay calm at night as a loving, caring companion. As long as she wasn't alone at night during a storm, she was fine. One of the reasons she chose to go to UCLA was because she knew storms were scarce. It's been awhile since she's had to sleep during a storm and she's not too happy because she knows that Teagan won't be coming back tonight and that she'll be all alone without her dog.

"Why so down? You okay?" Mal asked as they walked into their residence hall. Just then, there was a crack of thunder and a flash of lightning as rain began to pour.

"I don't like storms," Jessie replied quietly as they climbed the stairs.

"Wait, what?"

"I don't like storms at night when I'm alone, I just never have. I never grew out of it, just had my dog as my companion. And when I'm not home, I'm always rooming with someone so I don't get scared. But now tonight, Teagan's not here so I'm all alone," the Canadian explained.

"Oh," Mal replied as she gave Jessie's hand a quick, comforting squeeze. Then she asked, "Teagan's not in the room tonight?"

"Nope, she's with her girlfriend all night and tomorrow morning," Jessie replied just as thunder cracked again, causing her to slightly jump.

"I can sleep with you," the words rolled out of Mallory's mouth too quickly for her to register what she had said. When she did, her eyes went wide as she said, "No, that's not what I meant-wait, yeah
it is, just not like... you know."

She took a deep breath.

"What I'm trying to say is that I will comfort you tonight if you want me to. Marley's not here tonight either," Mal clarified. They were right outside of Mal and Marley's room as Mal waited for a response.

"That would be great," Jess smiled as Mallory slid her student I.D. into the door to open it.

"Are you shivering?" Mallory asked as they entered the room and closed the door behind them.

"Um... y-y-y-e-s-s-s," Jessie chattered out while she held her arms close to her chest as Mallory quickly got some clean clothes for her to change into.

"Here, put these on," Mal ordered as she handed Jess a UCLA long sleeve shirt and sweatpants.

"Thanks," Jess answered as she quickly disposed of her damp clothing and put Mal's clothes on.

Mallory tried her best to not stare at Jessie's half naked body but she couldn't help it. Luckily for her, Jessie was too engrossed in changing and too worried about the weather outside to notice the brown eyes locked on her body.

"So, who do ya wanna sleep with? Sir Fluffy, Bounce, or Pooh?" Mallory asked, shaking herself out of her trance once Jessie was in clean clothes.

"You," Jessie mindlessly replied as another crack of thunder shook her up, causing her to nearly jump out of her skin.

"Besides me, which one do you want to sleep with?" Mal rolled her eyes, although she found it adorable.

"Oh, uhhhh, Sir Fluffy," Jessie answered as she awkwardly stood in the middle of the room whilst Mallory began to get her bed ready, setting her monkey blanket out on the bed. Her cheeks were red but so was her nose, which was not a good sign.

"Babe, are you feeling okay?"

"I'm cold."

"Your face and nose are red," Mal pointed out. She placed the back of her hand on Jessie's forehead and realized that her forehead was warmer than it should've been. "Oh my gosh, I think I got you sick."

"No, I swear I'm fine," Jess stubbornly argued. "Just a little under the weather and a bit scared of this storm."

"Here, you sit down. I'm gonna go shower real quickly, do you think you'll be okay alone?" Mal asked as she got a towel and a fresh pair of pajamas. Jessie slightly nodded her head as she sat down on Mal's bed, assuring she would be okay.

Jessie was not okay.

When Mallory came back to her room, Jessie was already under the monkey blanket and covers, tightly hugging onto Sir Fluffy as the storm was in full force outside. Mal smiled at the adorable
sight before her then hung up her towel and made her way to the bed. The bed was pretty small but that only meant she'd be able to cuddle closer to Jessie.

"Sorry, I would've asked to get in but I needed some type of comfort; plus, I was cold," Jessie said quietly as Mallory got closer to her.

"It's okay Jess," Mal smiled as she pulled Jess closer to her and put her arms tightly around her. Jessie's head was comfortably laying on Mallory's chest while Mal softly rubbed her back. "I got you."

It was storming like there was no tomorrow outside. The lamp next to Mallory's bed flickered multiple times as each crack of thunder caused Jessie to shudder. The rain poured down like it was raining cats and dogs while each flash of lightning caused Jessie to grip onto Mal tighter. It was extremely late at night but neither one of them slept. Jessie couldn't sleep because of the storm, which was the worst and longest one she had ever witnessed in a long time, while Mallory couldn't sleep because she wanted to comfort Jess the best she could. When the storm finally ceased, the two just laid next to each other in silence as the soft pats of rain were all that could be heard.

"Are you sure about this?" Jessie finally spoke.

"About what?" Mal asked as she shifted so she could look directly at the other girl, eye level.

"About this," Jessie clarified, pointing to the both of them as she looked straight into Mal's brown eyes, referring to whatever they were now. "Like, we've only been dating for two weeks, well we've been together for three. I really like you but are you doing all of this in spite of me? You don't have to pretend to like me and kiss me in spite of my feelings."

"Why are you so negative?" Mallory asked as her hand reached over to play with Jessie's brown locks.

"Why would you ever like me back? You told me about when you realized you liked me but why do you like me?" Jessie asked.

"You're beautiful," Mal replied without missing a beat, knowing exactly why she liked the midfielder. "You have a passion for photography and soccer that I admire so much. Your smile could probably cure cancer. Your laugh makes your freckles dance and it's adorable. You're so articulate and open with me. You know how to cheer me up. You tell me how things are, not sugar coating anything—like how you're asking me why I would ever like you back. I like you and please don't think I'm doing this just to make you happy. I am, don't get me wrong, but I'm doing this because it makes me happy too. You make me happy. I never would've thought that I would like my best friend like this but I do, I like her a lot."

"I guess I'm pretty lucky then."

"You? Lucky? More like me, I'm lucky. I'm lucky you let me have so much time to think about us."

"Us?" Jessie asked as one of her eyebrows went up.

"Yes, us," Mallory reassured her with a smile.

"Don't you think we're going a little fast?"

"Considering we've been such good friends since March, you've liked me for awhile, I've liked you for a little over a month, and we've been dating for two weeks, I don't think so," Mal explained.
"Are you sure?" Jess asked.

"I'm sure," Mal assured as she kissed Jessie's forehead.

"What are we then?"

"Will you be my girlfriend?"

"Are you sure?" Jessie asked again, although a smile peaked through.

"Wow, I was not expecting to get turned down like that."

"Hey, that's not what I meant. It's just, did you really ask me that?"

"Yes, yes I did. Here, I'll ask again. Will you be my girlfriend?" Mal asked once again.

"Yes."

"Good."

"Are you sure though? Because I'm really annoying and not really good arm candy or anything."

"Oh my gosh, shut up, I'm positive. If you ask me 'are you sure?' one more time I'm going to tickle you," Mal said which caused Jessie's eyes to go wide in horror. Mal smiled then added, "You're the most beautiful girl in my eyes but yeah, you can be annoying though."

"Hey!" Jess exclaimed.

"You're the one who said it, not me," Mal defended.

"Okay, so... girlfriends?"

"Girlfriends."

"I like that... as long as I still get to cuddle with you when it's storming at night and I'm alone," Jessie said as she laid her head against Mallory's chest again.

"You can cuddle me even when it's not storming," Mal said as she left a sweet kiss on Jessie's cheek. "Now get some sleep, it's late."

Chapter End Notes

Oh my gosh I feel so bad, I had wanted to update on Valentine's Day but for some reason I had thought I hadn't had this chapter written already and was working on the one after this. I'm so sorry this took so long to update too (I spoil you all on here, like on Wattpad I'd often update once every couple of months or years lol). Anyways, happy belated Valentine's Day! Much love and appreciation for you all.

Serious question, if I were to some sensual scenes, how graphic/detailed should they be? Like there's definitely going to be some sensual content in future chapters but these scenes can be so uncomfortable to write. (Especially uncomfortable for this pairing lol I still highly doubt Mal and Jess will ever get together.)
Team Mom

Chapter Summary

"Everywhere" by Michelle Branch
"Competition" by Little Mix
"S.O.S." by The Jonas Brothers

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

There are twenty-three freckles on Jessie's face. Mallory counted. Twice... and then again three times after. Part of her felt creepy for staring at Jess while she was sound asleep but the other part of her didn't care. She was happy and she loved watching her girlfriend sleep (not trying to sound creepy). The wide smile she wore at the sight of the beautiful soul sleeping next to her was brighter than the sun that was beginning to shine outside. And she didn't know that the calm, even breaths Jess lightly let out could be music to her ears. She was kicking herself for not realizing that Jessie had had a crush on her back when they were rooming together. She wondered what would have happened if she hadn't been so blind for so long, then she could have woken up to the soft vibes Jess gave off much sooner.

As the sunlight peaked through the blinds into the small room, Mal's phone alarm was about to go off. Right before the alarm sounded, she quickly turned it off before it could let out a scream. She didn't want to wake up Jessie, not that way anyways.

"Jess," Mal whispered as she began to stroke Jessie's head and ran a hand through her hair. "Wake up."

"Mmmm," Jess grumbled, her eyes still closed as she turned to put her head against Mallory's chest.

"Babe," Mal whispered as she began to pepper Jess with soft kisses on her face. That seemed to do the trick. Jessie's eyes slowly fluttered open, her eyes still full of sleepiness.

"What?" Jess asked as she rubbed her eyes and began to wake up.

"Good morning to you too," Mal sarcastically replied and Jessie just rolled her eyes.

"Good morning," Jess mumbled. "What time is it?"

"It's nine in the morning."

"On a weekend, why am I up?"

"Because your girlfriend wants to go get food," Mal explained. Jessie blushed when Mal referred to her as her girlfriend, she was flattered.

"Aren't you going to work out with your national team teammates soon with Dave?"
"Not until this afternoon."

"Can't we just stay here and get food later? Brunch lasts from ten to two, most places aren't even open yet," Jess whined as she leant over and planted a firm kiss on Mal's lips.

"No," Mal replied as she pulled away, sitting up. Then stood up and walked over to her dresser to change. "And I wanted to go to Cavel which opens in twenty minutes."

"Ugh, fine," Jess sighed as she too got up. Mal smiled at her small win as Jessie sauntered out of the room and said, "I'll be right back, I'm gonna go change."

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Mallory loved spending time with one of her many national team moms, Christen Press. There had been a connection between the two that was unique to any other relationship Mal and Christen had with other teammates—it was so much like a mother-daughter relationship. They could deeply understand each other in a way that often scared their other teammates. Sure, they both were incredibly close with everyone on the team, some closer than others, but this was different.

Mal and Christen had just gotten back from a training session with Beast Mode Soccer, a.k.a. David, along with Alex Morgan—Mal's other mother figure on the team—and Sydney Leroux who Mal was still awestruck when training with her. For once, during the offseason, Christen wasn't in Portland, or somewhere else in the world with Tobin, and was back at home. Christen didn't usually train with David but when Tobin had gone back to Portland and there was the presence of fellow national team-ers in the area, she had decided to capitalize on the opportunity to train with fellow teammates. Plus, she loved the competitiveness—from the nature of the play to trying to get Cassius to choose his favorite auntie during water breaks to competing for the title of "Mal's Official Favorite Team Mom" with Alex and Syd. Mal was thoroughly entertained by the bickering between the three older players and laughed at just how competitive they all got and was impressed with the arguments all three of them had. Alex argued that she was Mal's favorite because their nicknames were Baby Horse and Baby Mal which both included "Baby" in it while Syd argued that Mal was a mirror image of herself who was also a fellow Bruin while Christen argued that she was Mal's favorite because she assisted her first senior national team goal. Mal chose to keep quiet and let the bickering go on. She wondered how chaotic it would've been if Kelley, Emily, Moe, and Lindsey had been there to argue for the title too. It wasn't until she was alone with Christen after practice that she revealed her favorite. Christen had invited Alex and Syd back to her house as well but Alex had to get to a commercial shoot while Syd had to bring Cassius back to their hotel.

"You can't tell Alex and Syd but you're my favorite team mom," Mal said as the two pulled into Christen's driveway.

"Really?!" Christen asked, her eyes lighting up with excitement as she turned to face Mal after having turned off the car.

"Haha yep," Mal laughed at the bewildered face looking back at her. Christen looked like she had just scored a goal in an important game.

"Oh my gosh, I'm honored, thank you," Christen exclaimed, talking quickly as she hugged Mal who continued to laugh.

"You can't tell Alex or Syd though, I enjoy watching the bickering between you three. Plus, Alex and Syd are competitive as hell and probably would be mad at both of us," Mal explained as they both got out of the car and started to walk to Christen's entrance.
"Okay, I won't say anything," Christen replied, pretending to zip her mouth shut. "Wait, what about Tobin? Does that mean she's your other favorite team mom?"

"Well you guys aren't married yet."

"Hypothetically speaking, we're still in a serious relationship so, is she?"

"I guess?" Mal said. "Like she's one of my other favorite team moms but it's not the same as the connection you and I have."

"Oh, okay."

"But I guess you two are a package deal so yeah," Mal added.

"And that makes Lynn your sister, right? Since she's my other daughter?" Christen asked.

"Sure, I'm still getting to know her but we vibe well," Mal said as they stepped into the quaint house.

"I hope you don't mind how dirty my house is," Christen said, changing the subject upon arrival inside her Manhattan Beach home.

"Your house is literally spotless," Mal responded as she looked around the inside of the beautiful beachside home. If the pristine, clutter-free house was dirty, then her room must be a freaking landfill.

Mal looked around at the beautiful hardwood floors, the leather couch that gave off a comfortable vibe, the pale walls, the fancy furniture that complemented the view of the ocean, and the many photos framed from various memories of Christen's life. There were framed photos decorating the house, many of just Christen and Tobin, as well as soccer trophies, medals, awards, pictures, and jerseys. The touch of Christen's personal life helped make the picture perfect beach house that looked like it had come straight out of an IKEA catalogue look more like a home. Just as she became familiar with the house, two dogs came running up to her. She immediately knelt down to greet and pet them, happy to be in the presence of dogs.

"Mal, meet my sisters, Morena and Khaleesi," Christen introduced Mal to the dogs she had seen in so many social media posts before.

"Your sisters?" Mal asked as she looked up at Christen.

"Well, I have two more sisters too and you'll probably meet them someday but here's two of them," Christen continued in all seriousness. Mallory decided not to question her, knowing that Christen wouldn't feel like she was being judged because she loves her dogs so much. When Christen sensed that Mal found the whole situation weird, she laughed and asked, "You don't call your dog your sister?"

"No, I just call her Roxy," Mal replied with a shrug. "Wait, don't your dogs live with your parents?"

"Yeah but sometimes I miss them a lot so they occasionally stay over here," Christen explained. "Anyways, let's go clean up. There's a shower in the guest room you can use."

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Christen and Mal found themselves sitting on benches by the beach. After having eaten a super healthy but delicious home cooked meal of salmon, rice, and green beans, the two had embarked
on the fifteen minute walk into the busier part of town. As the sun was starting to set over the ocean, they were eating açaí bowls by the beach with the dogs sitting happily on the concrete besides to them. The weather was perfect and the view was amazing as it started to get cooler. The sunset over the water was so beautiful that Christen had to take a photo of it to send to Tobin.

"So, which house is yours? The one here or Tobin's condo in Portland?" Mal half joked.

"You forgot the one in Chicago."

"But aren't you getting traded to the LA team once it's announced?"

"Shhh," Christen said, looking around to make sure no one overheard them.

"No but seriously, do you and Tobin just have a home in Portland and one here? Like you two are inseparable."

"It's called being in love," Christen argued.

"Whatever," Mal said, rolling her eyes. "Do you two like pay the bills and mortgage together?"

"No, we don't share payments but we basically live at each other's home."

"And with the new LA team, you and Tobin won't have to go to Chicago anymore."

"Yeah, the trade they're gonna announce once the team is officially announced is crazy. Sounds like it's gonna be just as crazy as Alex's to Orlando," Christen said.

"I hope I get to play with you here in L.A."

"I hope so too."

"But only if there's not a Colorado team by the time I graduate," Mal clarified with a smile.

"Who says I wouldn't go play for a Colorado team?"

"You hate the cold and you love Los Angeles almost as much as you love your dogs. Plus, you're gonna be captain here and unless it's a crazy fiasco like the one the Washington Spirit had, you won't be traded anywhere. Even if you and Tobin got married, she'd prefer playing here."

"Yeah, you're right," Christen replied. "You've really thought my life through, wow. Anyways, enough about me. What about you?"

"What about me?" Mal asked, not sure there was anything else for them to talk about since they had spoken about soccer, the NWSL, college, and dogs.

"Dating anyone?"

"Um," Mal hesitated. "I prefer to keep my personal life private."

"That's BS," Christen replied. "Do you have a boyfriend?"

"No," Mal said truthfully.

"So single?" Christen, of all people, assumed Mal was straight.

"I've gone on dates," Mal replied. It wasn't a total lie but not the full truth either. She hated lying
even the slightest about something so important but considering she and Jess had only just become official yesterday, she knew that lying was necessary. And it was true after all, she had gone on dates, but she didn't elaborate. She felt bad though because she also trusted Christen the most on the U.S. National Team and knew one of her role models would not only be accepting of her but would also encourage her.

"So if that attractive shirtless guy who's walking towards us starts flirting with you, I can be your wing woman?" Christen asked.

"Uhhh," Mal replied but she couldn't say anything more because the guy had approached her and was within hearing distance.

Mal must admit that this guy was attractive. Having come from one of the beach volleyball courts, he had a well-defined six pack and muscular arms. With the colors of the orange sun gleaming against his skin, his tan body glowed as his clean cut dark hair soaked in the sunlight and his dark green eyes were set on Mal. He looked like a swim suit model; too perfect, no flaws, even perfect teeth when he smiled. He was attractive but that was it because Jessie's lips were fuller and more kissable than his, Jessie's abs were more attractive than his, and Jessie's eyes she could fall for every single day. This guy was attractive but Mal only had eyes for Jessie.

"Hey," the guy said as he walked closer and put his hand out. "I'm Jesse."

Of course his name had to be that name, of all names.

"Um, hi, I'm Mallory Pugh," Mal replied uneasily as she politely shook his hand.

"Haha, I know, I'm a big fan of you both," Jesse said. He quickly introduced himself to Christen as well and shook her hand. "You both are USWNT legends."

"Well, we're not legends, but thank you," Mal humbly responded.

"Whatever you say," Jesse laughed. "Actually, my sister is what got me interested in you gals. She'd kill me if I didn't get a picture with the both of you so, if it's not too much to ask, can I please get a pic with you two?"

"Sure," Mal shrugged as she and Christen stood up then got on either side of Jesse and smiled widely as he took a selfie of the three of them.

"Thank you so much," the guy said, delighted that he just met two of the best players in the United States and the world.

"No problem," Mal said coolly.

"Now I know you go to UCLA but go Trojans," Jesse smiled. "I go to USC."

"Ah," Mal lightly laughed. "I'm supposed to hate you." 

"At least I'm not at Berkeley. You should be glad about that too, Christen," he replied, looking over at Christen, trying to include her in the conversation. They all agreed on that.

"You're lucky Alex Morgan isn't here or she'd be passive aggressively arguing with you," Christen laughed. She slightly nudged Mal while laughing, trying to get Mal to start flirting.

"Oh, I wouldn't have said that if she was here," the guy laughed. Just then, his phone began to ring. "I'm so sorry but I have to go. Thank you again for the photo!"
"Mal!" Christen said, lightly slapping Mal on the arm once the guy was out of earshot.

"Ow!" Mal whined, startled by the physical contact. "What?"

"You could've easily flirted with him!"

"But neither of us flirted and neither of us were interested in each other like that," Mal replied.

"You don't know that, maybe he was just being shy," Christen argued. "He's honestly the package deal and he even mentioned his sister so he's a family man. Like he's really attractive, he said he goes to USC so that means he's probably really smart, even if it's USC, and he was so polite."

"Sure mom," Mal rolled her eyes. "Some guys can be attractive, really nice, and not be into you. And if he actually was into me, well, I'm not interested. That guy was definitely not flirting with me though, believe me, I've been flirted with a ton before."

"So you're saying this happens to you a lot?"

"It happens on occasion," Mal shrugged.

"Do girls flirt with you too?"

"Umm," Mal hesitated, not wanting to tell Christen that yes, a girl had flirted with her before and that that girl was Jessie. She also didn't want to tell Christen that she flirted with Jessie back.

"Because I can totally teach you how to flirt back," Christen said before Mal could formulate a real answer. The older forward wiggled her eyebrows and gave a devilish grin.

"I'm good thanks," Mal responded and it wasn't because she didn't want to be taught how to but it was because she already knew how to. Well, she believed she already knew how to judging by the way she always caused Jess to become a blushing mess.

"You're no fun," Christen pouted.

"I'm just trying to live life worry-free and trying to pass my classes. Ya know, just chilling and playing soccer," Mallory explained cooly.

"You're so much like Tobin, sometimes I forget you're not our actual child. You can always ask Tobin for advice for flirting with girls too. Although, I'm better," Christen smirked. Mal rolled her eyes. If this is how Christen acted when Mal said she was single, then who knows how she'll act when Mal tells her about Jessie.

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"So guess what happened?" Mal said as she and Jessie sat down in one of the cafés. After Mal had gotten dropped back off at her residence hall by Christen, Jessie was hungry and had been bored for most of the day so the least Mal could do was go on a little date to the café.

"What?" Jessie questioned as she started to eat her blueberry muffin. There were crumbs everywhere and she was an absolute mess but Mal found it adorable. Her neat freak self got the best of her though and she had to hand Jess a napkin.

"Christen tried to get me to flirt with a guy."

"Really? But she's like straighter than a soccer ball," Jessie replied as she took a sip of her coffee.
"Well I couldn't exactly tell her the truth. Like this is still new to the both of us. We're only official as of yesterday," Mal said as she handed Jess another napkin to wipe off the little bit of coffee that was on her chin.

"Yeah, I see," Jess nodded in agreement as she finished her muffin and last sips of coffee.

"It was just really awkward," Mal said. Then she laughed, "Guess what his name was?"

"What? Justin? You love Justin Bieber."

"No, silly."

"Then what?"

"It was Jesse."

"He stole my name and was trying to steal my girl," Jessie half joked.

"He never flirted with me though. He was just nice."

"Well, regardless, was he attractive?" Jessie asked as she carefully folded up the napkin she had been using. She was trying to fold the crumbs up but was doing the exact opposite and had gotten them all over the table. Mal would've laughed at Jess having to clean them up again but she was also too engrossed in the conversation.

"Not as attractive as you," Mal smirked. It was the truth, even if Jess was low key an absolute mess.

"Mallory," Jessie rolled her eyes, her cheeks turning red. "I'm serious."

"I'm being serious too," Mal replied. Jessie gave her a look. "Why do you want to know?"

"I'm just curious. Like why would Christen try to get you with him?"

"Okay fine, he was pretty attractive. You're right, Christen thinking he was attractive says something. Anyways, he goes to USC though so like we can't even really be friends. Plus, there was something off about him."

"What do you mean?" Jessie asked as the both of them stood up and began to head back to their dorm.

"He got a phone call and I saw his caller I.D."

"Okay, and?"

"It was... different."

Chapter End Notes

Cliffhanger, whoops.

Anyways, apologies for the late update once again. I've just been so busy. However, it was my 19th birthday today and the best gift in my opinion is the gift of giving so me
giving you all this update is a gift haha. I actually had one of the best birthdays I've had in awhile and have been happy like all day so I'm trying to spread the good vibes.

Thank you all for the continued support!

P.S. It was no coincidence that Christen showed up in the twenty-third chapter haha.
Halloweekend

Chapter Summary

"Monster Mash" by Bobby Pickett
"Come Get Her" by Rae Sremmurd

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

After a busy week of classes and a tough away win at UVA on Friday, Mal and Jess were thankful that they had the weekend off. With Halloween on the upcoming Monday, the undeclared collegiate holiday of "Halloweekend", which was notorious for being a weekend when college students could dress up in cheap costume and get completely wasted, was very much alive all throughout campus. After spending four hours in the library earlier that day, Mal and Jess had finished all of their homework... on a Saturday (which was a major accomplishment for the both of them). They still had a little more studying to do but that's just an ongoing process so neither one of them were too worried. Jessie didn't even want to participate in the Halloweekend festivities but after much persuasion from Mal, she obliged—she also had no excuse to not participate since she had finished her homework.

Most of the team had already had a matching group costume set up which involved both Mallory and Jessie wearing LA Dodgers jerseys and hats with Jacey, Marley, Sunny, and Kaiya. Jacey had managed to have her brother send some over—a major perk of having a brother who plays on the team. Jessie didn't want to but when everyone else on the team was in either a couples or group costume, she felt left out, and Jacey had already gotten her a jersey so there really was no backing out. Plus, Mal kept teasing her about her sorry excuse of a costume last year. Jessie begged to differ and thought her last minute nerd costume was amazing but when everyone else agreed with Mal, she accepted defeat.

The jerseys were way too big and it was a style that Jessie didn't quite understand but went along with anyways. When she had put on the jersey and wore a short pair of black shorts underneath, she thought she was being a little scandalous since her shorts were barely visible. Then she saw Mal in just the jersey that hugged perfectly onto every curve of her body, sitting dangerously high on her thighs, and it was then that she understood why the jerseys were so big and she wasn't complaining, not with Mal looking like that.

"You look hot," Jess attempted to sound casual as she left the residence hall with Mal and Marley. Marley was on the phone with her boyfriend, giving him directions to the party they were headed to so she could meet up with him—yes, he drove all that way from Santa Barbara after a home game to stay the night with his girlfriend. She was too distracted and a few steps ahead of Mal and Jess to know what was going on behind her.

"You're not so bad yourself," Mal smirked as she looked at Jessie's body, eyeing her up and down, causing Jessie to furiously blush. Luckily for Jessie, she was able to contain her blushing by the time they got downstairs and met up with the others.

"Woah! We have some hotties here!" Sunny exclaimed, far too much excitement in her voice, as
the six of them caught up together and began walking to the address Kaiya had been sent. She went over to Mal and put an arm around her, "Ya know, Mal, it's a shame you don't like candy because the rest of us five are some eye candy."

Mal must admit, they all were eye candy but she only had her eyes on Jessie. In response, she raised her eyebrows and glanced at Kaiya, waiting for an explanation.

"We pre-gamed in our room," Kaiya said, regret in her voice as she watched Sunny holler at a group of shirtless guys walking past them.

"Ah, I can tell," Mal replied.

"I probably should've stopped her after two shots but she kept going until five."

"You're the one who's stuck rooming with her so good luck," Jacey butted in, snickering at Sunny who was now skipping down the street.

Once they had arrived at the address of the party, they could tell this one would be one for the books. The house was bustling, music filling the air for a good half a mile with the smell of beer and weed. There was a guy in a banana suit standing on the roof, being urged by a group of guys in monkey costumes to jump into their arms. There was a girl in a skimpy pirate costume walking barefoot around the perimeter of the house with a bottle of Fireball in one hand while her shoes were in the other. Then there were couples making out on the front porch, various degrees of sensuality being displayed... and this was all happening outside of the ginormous frat house, they hadn't even set foot into the house. Usually parties were in houses that had its windows and doors covered and only allowed partying in the backyard.

When they stepped inside, they realized that what was happening outside was just a tiny reflection of what was happening inside. The house was packed with sweaty bodies and reeked of alcohol. There were about a hundred different sexy versions of costumes and some that no one knew existed (someone was wearing a "Sexy Soccer Ball" costume). The music was so loud that it masked the noisiness of the crowds standing and dancing around. There were a few games of beer pong going on in the back of the house, a "dance floor" that involved people grinding incredibly close, people standing on tables, people having chugging contests in the kitchen, and body shots, a lot of body shots. Most of the parties they attended weren't nearly this crazy. Usually parties had more of a social atmosphere with some bits of craziness, but this party was full on crazy. There were Halloween decorations on the floor, the hosts having attempted to make it festive.

Before even five minutes after they had arrived, Marley was already whisked away by her boyfriend to a room upstairs, Sunny was heading to the bottle of Hennessy, and Jacey was already challenging a football player, who was also a good friend of hers, that she could chug a Natty Light faster than him. That left Mal, Jess, and Kaiya standing by the front door with cans of Mango-Rit-As in their hands that they had found in an ice bucket.

"I regret agreeing to come with you all!" Jessie had to yell into Mallory's ear, just so Mal could hear. The three were walking to the beer pong tables as they all took sips of their cold drinks.

"I'm glad you came! Because the way some of these guys are looking at us makes me uncomfortable!" Mallory replied as she referred to the half shirtless guys looking at them lustfully. Jessie nodded her head in agreement because the way one guy made eye contact with her and licked his lips made her cringe into another dimension.

"You'll be my teammate for this, right?" Jessie asked as they got to a beer pong table where the cups had just newly been set out again.
"Of course, I'm the best beer pong player at UCLA," Mal said with a smile. Jessie rolled her eyes at the exaggeration because at the last party they went to together, Mal lost to Jacey in ten minutes.

Two complete fuckboys challenged Mal and Jess to a game. The two guys were trying to hit on both of them during the whole game, causing both Mal and Jess to hold back laughter at their really bad flirting. They were definitely attractive but they also looked like the epitome of fuckboys, both of them wearing vests with no shirts underneath them, jeans that rid way too low on their waists, Ray Bans inside, and gold chains that they both probably bought with their daddies' money and we're super drunk. It was comical because they actually thought they had a chance and were not letting up. So when Mal and Jess beat Fuckboy #1 and Fuckboy #2, they were a bit rowdy when celebrating, as if they had just scored a game winning goal on the soccer field. The two guys laughed and came closer to the other side of the table, hoping to get the numbers of the girls who just destroyed them in beer pong- they didn't even get two cups and they were actually trying.

"Fuck it," Mal said, a bit tipsy, as she turned to face Jess and kissed her hard. Jessie was shocked at first and didn't know what to do because they were still a secret but when her eyes darted over to see the guys' reaction, she closed her eyes, smiled, then kissed back. Jessie was expecting the kiss to be short but Mal had a different idea in mind. She had had much more to drink and was doing everything on a whim. When Mal decided to bite down on Jessie's bottom lip, the Canadian's lips parted, giving Mallory access. They were making out in front of two thirsty fuckboys just to give the guys a message to fuck off. Jessie would've been more cautious about making out with Mallory at a party but she was drunk and so was everyone else. All of their teammates and friends were nowhere within eyesight of them. Plus, no one would remember this and if they did, they probably would think two girls were just making out for fun.

"We should go," Jessie stuttered out as they pulled apart, she was still feeling high off their making out. The two guys had already left and found two new girls to try to impress.

They were unconsciously holding hands as Mal lead the way. Jessie liked this, she liked how they were actually acting like a couple in public. Sure, they displayed affection in public but they were careful and wore disguises and weren't in the vicinity of anyone they were friends with. Jess knew that this was a one time thing for now though and that they were only showing affection because they were in an overly crowded house of people who probably won't remember anything about this night tomorrow. Mal liked this too but they both knew that it would be awhile for them to get to this point sober, maybe even years.

Once they were out of the crowd and had found one of their teammates, they let go of each other's hands. They found Sunny doing body shots off some guy with an eight pack who looked like he was about to pounce on her any second. Right before the guy took a hold of her, Mal had rescued her before she would become a victim of regret.

"Hey! That guy was hot," Sunny argued.

"Yeah, he was, but he also looked like he was about to pounce on you," Jessie explained. Sunny just shrugged, quickly forgetting the guy, as she became distracted by a couple girls who were pole dancing (some of the weirdest and most random things can be found in frat houses).

"I wanna do that!" Sunny exclaimed, her eyes lighting up as she spotted a vacant pole. "I've always wanted to be a stripper."

"That's not a good idea," Mal replied but she was too late. Sunny had already ran off (but luckily kept her clothes on... for now).

"You go watch her and make sure she doesn't do anything even more stupid, I'm gonna go check
on Jacey and Kaiya," Jessie said and Mal nodded her head as she followed "Sunny the Stripper". Jacey somehow had gotten coaxed into arm wrestling a basketball player who Jessie was pretty sure was a big deal; she only knew that he was the same year as them and remembered that she had had a couple of casual conversations with him before. She didn't know that Jacey was arm wrestling with THE Lonzo Ball. Jacey, being the stubborn and super competitive person she is, would not stand down and insisted on arm wrestling even when Lonzo was joking (she's the youngest child and has three older brothers, what can she say? Not to mention, all three of her brothers are super athletic and competitive). Jessie was about to go up to her and stop her from taking up the challenge because this guy's bicep was about the size of Jacey's neck but when she had realized that Jacey was more than a little drunk, she decided against it because she knew Jacey's beast mode turned on whenever she was drunk. Plus, she had spotted Kaiya talking to a guy who looked like he was trying to find someone or something to get him out of the one-sided conversation and wanted to go rescue the poor guy. When Jessie had approached the two and was within earshot, she could hear what Kaiya was talking about. Kaiya was so caught up in a feminist rant, her voice combative and eager to make a point, that she didn't realize that the guy she was talking to was really nice and agreed with everything she said. All the guy wanted to do was have a nice conversation but he couldn't get a single word in. When Jessie came to rescue the poor guy, he gave her a thankful look as he sauntered off. Kaiya was ranting and all Jessie could do was nod her head while she brought her over to where Jacey was somehow still arm wrestling.

Mallory seriously wanted to fight Kaiya for letting Sunny pregame and drink so much tonight. Sunny was wild, which was quite rare for the usually more calm and more sober girl. Mallory is actually pretty sure she's never seen Sunny drink more than two drinks or a couple of shots before. Tonight, Sunny had definitely drank much more than the usual and had decided that it would be a good idea to unbutton her jersey.

"Sunny!" Mal exclaimed as she stepped closer and attempted to stop the other girl from undressing any more.

"What?" Sunny asked dumbfounded.

"Keep your clothes on," Mal commanded.

"No," Sunny replied firmly as she continued to unbutton her jersey then slid down the pole. Mallory let out a big sigh and gave up as there were no signs of Sunny stopping. Sunny suddenly reached her arms out and pulled Mal closer then seductively whispered, "What's the point of stripping if I don't have someone to tease?"

"You have plenty of options," Mal replied, motioning to the group of guys who were watching and drooling over Sunny whose shirt was wide open, revealing her fit body.

"They all look like knock off versions of Justin Bieber who decided to become Bob the Builder tools," Sunny said. Mal would've laughed at the joke if Sunny hadn't been half naked and under the influence of a lot of alcohol in public.

"Those girls over there are drooling over you too," Mal said, referring to a group of girls who had decided to do a group costume based on "The L Word" (which was fitting as they were in Los Angeles).

"You think if I take off all my clothes one of those girls will come over?" Sunny asked.

"You are NOT taking off any more of your clothes."

"Aw, why? Then I won't get a cute guy or girl."
"You're drunk and you're in public."

"I'm not THAT drunk," Sunny said.

"What's five times seven?" Mal asked, testing her.

"Thirty-five," Sunny answered. It was a stupid question, Sunny is really smart even when she's drunk. "I could always just dance on you since you're right here."

"No thanks," Mal protested but she was too late. Sunny was already grinding up against her. Mal closed her eyes and prayed for patience then prayed for understanding when she opened her eyes and saw Jessie looking at her wide-eyed. She was in deep shit.

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"You okay?" Jessie asked, trying to remain as casual as possible as she walked over to Sunny and Mal, hiding her slight jealously. Meanwhile, Jacey and Kaiya were sitting on the ground playing with a dog they had found.

"Help me," Mal pleaded through gritted teeth, her eyes screaming for help.

"I'll try to," Jess lightly laughed. Luckily Jessie understood the predicament that Mal had been forced into and, in return, Mal was incredibly grateful.

"Oh! Now I can dance on two people!" Sunny exclaimed.

"No Sunny!" Jessie commanded as she pried Sunny off of Mal and walked her over to where Jacey and Kaiya were still playing with the dog. That managed to work because Sunny almost immediately ran over to pet the dog.

"Thanks Jess," Mal said as she and Jess slowly followed the other three who they were babysitting.

"Anything for you," Jess smiled. "Although I'd rather be grinding on you than letting Sunny."

Mallory blushed and her mouth was agape, in shock that Jessie had just said that.

"Let's go meet up with the others and make sure they don't do something to the dog," Jessie said. All Mal could do was nod, still taken aback by Jessie's sudden confidence. Her normally reserved girlfriend really had just said that.

"Um, yeah," Mal quietly replied.

"Why is there even a dog here? It's dangerous."

"Dogs have nine lives."

"Cats have nine lives," Jessie corrected her. "How drunk are you?"

"Drunk enough to want to kiss you again right here but sober enough to know I shouldn't, not now anyways."

"As much as I'd love to, we have to babysit these idiots," Jess said as she motioned to their three friends that both Mal and Jess had regretted coming with. Kaiya was now dancing with the dog in her arms while Sunny had somehow gotten Jacey to sit down and was giving her a lap dance, like a full on lap dance—her jersey's buttons undone, her legs on both sides of Jacey, and her hands tangled in the other girl's hair. To add onto that, Jacey was drunk enough to let her and enjoy it.
"We should probably get them and leave," Mal recommended. "If we let things escalate, not only are we going to regret stopping them but they will too when they're sober."

"Yeah, definitely. I'll get Kaiya, you try getting Sunny and Jacey."

"That's cold, Jess," Mal replied. "You picked the easier option."

"Not really. Kaiya is attached to that dog and I have to separate them while Sunny and Jacey are already attached so you just need to make them get up and go to the car."

"You've got a point, they're literally like attached. Oh gosh, we can't let them go any further."

"Yeah, Sunny looks like she's about to take off all her clothes."

"I fucking hate Halloweekend."

"Hey, at least we don't have to go to the hospital."

"Yet."

"Don't jinx it," Jess warned as she went over to convince Kaiya to put the dog down so they could leave.

"Happy Halloween!" Sunny yelled as Jessie and Mallory escorted the three drunken messes out of the frat house.

"Hey guys, you need help?" A familiar voice cheerfully asked. Jess and Mal turned to look at the voice and were thankful that Marley had perfect timing. With Marley's boyfriend, Luke, standing right next to her, holding her hand, they both looked as if they had been laid. Judging by the smudged lipstick on Marley's face and Luke's slightly messy hair, they most likely did go at it. They both were sweaty but it wasn't because of alcohol in their systems.

"Yes please," Mallory replied.

Chapter End Notes

Apologies for the delayed update but I was incredibly busy and stressed this past week but now it's spring break and my roommate search for next year is over (finally!). Also, this was a bit of a filler chapter and I took a little longer to upload it. Plus, I was busy catching up with all of the women's soccer on this week (wish the Algarve Cup was streamed ugh)! Anyways, this content we've been getting from US Soccer is also A+; God bless Allie Long's Instagram takeovers.

Next time I update, it will have been after I see the USWNT right at home for me in RFK. Thank you for all the support and feedback; love you all!
"How was last night?" Will asked. After an extremely eventful night, the three friends had decided to go on a hike early in the morning. Mal and Jess had regretted agreeing on going on this hike at seven in the morning but they hadn't been on an outing of just the three of them in awhile and after months of being busy, hadn't had time to go on any hikes either.

"Kaiya is now best friends with the dog at Sigma Nu, Jacey arm wrestled Lonzo Ball, Sunny became a stripper for a night and gave Jacey a lap dance, and Jessie and I beat two fuckboys in beer pong. So it was okay," Mallory explained as the three hiked up Runyon Canyon with music blasting from Mallory's iPhone. Surprisingly, the three of them had decided to walk on this trail, ironically the one time they decided to walk, the place was called Runyon.

"Wait, you guys were at that party too?"

"Yeah, Mal, Jacey, Kaiya, Marley, Sunny, and I were wearing LA Dodgers jerseys. You and Ashley went? We didn't see you guys," Jessie said.

"Oh, Mal should've been Winnie the Pooh. Because Pugh and Pooh," Will said laughing, earning a scowl from Mal. "And yeah, we left after like fifteen minutes. It was too crazy so we went out and did some freaky stuff."

"We didn't need to know that," Mal cringed.

"That's not what I meant," Will rolled his eyes. "You have a dirty mind. We just went to a cheap haunted house then went back to my room and watched 'Get Out'."

"I need me a freak like that," Mal said.

"Sorry I'm not good enough," Jessie quietly joked, so only Mal could hear.

"What was that?" Will asked as he continued to lead the way to the top. Mal turned around as they continued walking, smirking at the blushing mess walking behind her.

"Nothing," Jessie quickly replied, her cheeks red. Luckily for her, only Mal could see that she was blushing.

"Oh," Will said as he continued to walk, completely unaffected by and oblivious to how Jessie was reacting.
"Can I tell him?" Mal whispered as she and Mal walked side by side.

"Are you sure?" Jess whispered. Will was too busy singing along to "Don't Look Down" by Martin Garrix to realize that the two girls behind him were talking amongst themselves.

"I'm positive," Mal smiled.

"Then I guess you should."

"We're like ten steps away from the top, I'll tell him there," Mal said.

"Okay," Jessie nervously replied.

"But in case you guys were wondering, we did freaky stuff after," Will continued once the song had changed.

"Okay! We seriously did not need to know that!" Jessie said as they got to the top.

"Hey, have you seen her body? She was literally sculpted by the gods. Plus, we both have really good stamina and are really athletic," Will snickered. Mal and Jess were best friends with Will because he was so nice, caring, smart, chill, and had good advice but every now and then he'd say shit like this and they would be reminded that he was just like so many other college aged guys.

"Oh my gosh, you're gross," Mal whined as Will continued to snicker. They all sat down on the dirt, taking a break to enjoy the view of the city. A comfortable silence ensued as they listened to the wildlife and cool breeze while observing the high rise buildings in the distance. Jessie had taken out her camera and was taking photos.

"Um... Will," Mal began to say. She looked at Jess real quickly, earning a small nod in return, then continued. "Jessie and I have something to tell you."

"What?" Will asked, turning to face the both of them.

"Jess and I are dating." "Jeez, what took you so long to tell me?" Will replied casually.

"How did you know though?" Jessie asked.

"I mean I knew Jess liked you for awhile and then I noticed that you liked Jess back, even if she hadn't even realized it. Actually, I doubt you even realized it at first. Then I noticed you two were hanging out more. And there's a pep in both of you alls' step so I could tell something was up," Will explained.

"We've been official for a little over a week but we've been dating for three weeks," Jessie explained to her and Mal's best friend outside of soccer and back home.
"So you're not a wuss after all, Jess, congrats," Will laughed, which earned him a slap on the wrist from the Canadian. Sometimes it felt like Will was more like their annoying brother than one of their best friends; however, Jess must admit her own brother and sister are more annoying.

"What?" Mal was confused.

"I told Will that I had a crush on you a little while back," Jess blushed.

"Well it's good I developed one on you back," Mal smirked as she kissed Jessie's cheek.

"No PDA please," Will begged.

"It's not like you and Ashley don't make out as much as possible wherever you two are," Jessie scoffed.

"Yeah, just for that begging, I'm going to make out with Jess right now because fuck you," Mal joked, although she was pulling Jess in to kiss her on the lips.

"Oh! You can take cute couples pics of us!" Jess exclaimed, quickly handing her camera over to Will just before her lips met Mal's.

"Why?" Will groaned but neither Mal nor Jess paid attention to him as they were engrossed in other matters... like sucking each other's faces off. Will unwillingly sat behind them and took photos of the couple that he probably wouldn't admit was adorable. When the two finally decided to breathe for air, the two smiled as they stared into each other's eyes—it was a perfect candid moment that Will was lucky to be able to capture. He then snapped a perfect photo of Mal leaning her head on Jessie's shoulder. With the sun just beginning to shine over the city, the background was perfect and their skin had a tan hue as a result of the orange sky. "Wow, this is actually a really good photo."

"That's going in our scrapbook," Mal declared as she and Jess took a look at the photo. "Like on the front page since it's perfect."

"Scrapbook?" Jessie asked, raising an eyebrow.

"I'm gonna make you a scrapbook," Mal reiterated.

"You are?"

"Yeah, someday."

"So like never? Since you're the queen of procrastination?" Jess asked, causing Will to snicker.

"Hey!" Mal replied. "I'm not that bad!"

"Sure," Jessie sarcastically rolled her eyes, highly doubtful that Mal would.

"Way to ruin the mood, it's a cute idea," Mal said.

"Well, when you have it finished, I'll be waiting."

"You two are so annoying," Will spoke.

"Hey!" Mal and Jess both said in unison, looking at Will.

"Take that back," Mal replied.
"No," Will firmly said. Then he changed the subject, "So when was your guys' first kiss?"

"Apologize then we'll tell you," Jessie said, standing her ground.

"Okay, whatever, I'm sorry," Will rolled his eyes. "So when was it?"

"It depends," Mal responded, earning a quizzical look from Will.

"What's that supposed to mean?"

"Like we kissed before our real kiss," Jessie said.

"The first time we kissed it was because of a dare and we were both drunk. The second time, Jessie kissed me in the airport then ran away. And the third time, was our actual real kiss," Mal clarified. "And that was four weeks ago."

"You should be glad we trust you so much because you're the first person to know about us," Jessie said.

"Wait, really?" Will asked.

"Yep, not even Marley nor Teagan know," Mal said. "None of our friends know except for you because you're both Jess and I's best friend, you're not on any of our teams or room with us, you're not hundreds of miles away where our other friends won't understand our dynamic, and you're a guy so you're more chill."

"Wow, I'm honored... But how long are you guys gonna keep this a secret?"

"We're still new to this so maybe a little bit," Jess said.

"I know I'm a guy who's super chill but I'm also a close friend who wants to look after the both of you. So like have you two thought about being together? Like what if it doesn't work out? You're teammates after all. How is your relationship going to affect your game? I just don't want either of you two to get hurt. Like I can tell you both like each other a lot and I can see you two being together for awhile but what if it doesn't work out between you two?"

"I'm kinda regretting telling you about us because you ask so many questions but also I'm glad we did because you're absolutely right and honestly, neither Jess nor I have really thought about it," Mal truthfully explained.

"I'm just looking out for you two. You guys look out for me and help me with Ashley so I wanna look out for you both back," Will replied. In this moment, Jessie and Mallory were so incredibly thankful for befriending such a great guy.

"Thanks for looking out for us. We honestly don't know what we'd do without you. You're such a good guy and we're so lucky to call you our best friend," Jessie said.

"It's just the right thing to do," Will shrugged.

"But yeah, we haven't really thought about all that stuff," Mal referred to the questions Will pestered onto the both of them. "Like not that in depth. We obviously took forever to get together in the first place so we've always been cautious and didn't start dating just because. We're just taking everything in stride and focusing on the now, ya know? And it's so early in the relationship that we haven't really thought about what would happen if we were to break up. Like if we were, I'd hope we would still be friends and that our break up would be a result of something after college. I just
hope we don't break up, not now, not ever."

"Good," Will smiled. "I can tell you two really like each other."

"Yeah, I like her a lot," Jess said as she looked into Mal's eyes with a small smile gracing her lips. Mal smiled back at her and gave her a chaste kiss on the lips.

"So what was your first date?" Will asked.

"We got In N Out then went to picnic on a soccer field and played until the wee hours of the night," Jess said.

"She means that I got the food then she proceeded to steal half my fries," Mal scoffed. "That's why I got two orders. I'm a genius."

"Oh shut up," Jess rolled her eyes.

"Mal, you don't even know the difference between trigonometry and geometry, you're no genius," Will stated jokingly.

"That's not true! I do so," Mal defended herself.

"So first time?" Will asked, changing the subject.

"First time what?" Jess asked innocently.

"We haven't," Mal responded, Jess still unsure what Will was talking about.

"Oh, I was gonna ask what your favorite position was," Will snickered.

"You're a good guy 95% of the time then every now and then the fuck boy inside of you comes out," Mal said, playfully slapping Will who continued to laugh. "You can be gross and immature."

"What? I was gonna say midfield," Jess said.

"Jess, that's not what he meant," Mal replied, rolling her eyes at her girlfriend who so often could be completely oblivious.

"I was talking about sex," Will casually clarified.

"Oh," Jess said, dumbfounded. "We haven't had sex."

"Yet," Mal added with a small smirk that caused Jessie to furiously blush and Will to go into hysterics.

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"Hey Jess?" Mal asked as the two were snuggled into Jessie's bed, getting ready to watch a horror movie. Teagan was in Erica's room and after the text message Jessie received from her roommate explaining that Erica's roommate was staying at LMU for the night followed with a smirking emoji, Jessie understood that she would have the room to herself tonight and that basically her roomie was getting laid.

"Yeah?" Jess asked, tilting her head up so she could look at Mal.

"I was thinking about what I said when we were hiking with Will earlier today and I think we're
going at a good pace. Like we don't need to rush and do any of... you know, that stuff, yet. I don't think either of us are ready to do that stuff quite yet. And he was right about us needing to think more about us but I think we've both been careful."

"I agree. Thanks Mal Pal, you're the best Gal Pal," Jess said as she lightly kissed Mal on the cheek.

"Okay, that was a terrible rhyme," Mal replied.

"Hey, it was pretty creative," Jess responded with a smile.

"Whatever," Mal rolled her eyes then turned her attention to her laptop. "Now let's watch this movie."

Jessie snuggled into Mal as her girlfriend clicked on the movie "Hush" in Netflix and waited for the movie to begin. There was a long comfortable silence before Mallory began to hold a little tighter onto Jessie.

"Jess?" Mal asked right before the opening scene began.

"Yeah?"

"I don't like scary movies," Mal responded as she tucked her face into Jessie's shoulder.

"Why wouldn't you tell me that before?" Jessie questioned, repositioning herself so she could look at Mal. "We can watch something else."

"You were so excited about finally having time to watch this, especially near Halloween, and I don't wanna ruin your excitement. I want to watch it with you," Mal replied.

"Aww babe, we don't have to," Jess said. "It's not a big deal."

"No. We're going to watch this. I'm just going to cling onto you for dear life," Mal said.

The first few minutes of the movie were fine for Mal but she did add some commentary. She couldn't get over how dumb it was for a deaf girl to live alone in the middle of the woods in the middle of nowhere. Jessie laughed at Mal's critique and agreed that it honestly was pretty dumb to begin with. As the movie progressed, Mal couldn't help but add even more commentary. Then the movie intensified and became scarier and Mal's commentary turned into little yelps. When the scenes had gotten incredibly gory and full of blood, Mal tucked her head into Jessie's chest and averted her eyes. She was literally shaking as the movie progressed and when the serial killer was breaking into the house, Mallory could've sworn her heart was going to jump out of her chest- it was beating so fast. When Jess had realized just how scared Mal had become, she reciprocated the tight hug and gently rubbed Mal's back. Just moments before the movie had concluded, there were small tears rolling down her cheeks.

"It's okay Mal," Jessie whispered as she squeezed Mal even more. She kissed Mal's temple and ran a hand through her hair, soothing her as the ending credits rolled.

"I don't even know why I'm crying," Mal whispered. "Like it was one of the scariest movies I've ever seen but it still doesn't deserve tears being shed. It wasn't that bad."

"It's okay Mal, you're okay."

"I think I'm just scared I'm gonna end up like her but not be as ridiculously smart as her and end up dying a gruesome death," Mal continued.
"That won't happen Mal," Jessie assured her. Then she justified her argument, "First off, you won't live alone in the middle of the woods nowhere. Second of all, you're smart and you'd be able to live. Third of all, you have me."

"Thanks, Jess," Mal smiled, her mood lightening as she shared a sweet kiss with her girlfriend.

"You should've told me you were so scared of horror movies, I wouldn't have even brought up this idea of watching one in the first place."

"It's okay Jess, I was fine."

"You were shaking, almost crushed my chest from holding onto me so tightly, and you were crying—you were not fine," Jess replied.

"Maybe you're right," Mal confessed. "But you should've told me that you were scared of roller coasters and storms sooner."

At that, Jessie didn't have a good reply with her mouth frozen agape. All she could do was stay frozen while watching the girl across from her smile at her knowingly.

"Just please don't injure me while you're scared—don't squeeze me too hard. All of my coaches will probably kill you," Jessie begged.

"Look who's talking," Mal rolled her eyes. "You literally clung onto me for your dear life when we went on those roller coasters and then again when it stormed."

"You held onto me tighter. I should get my body insured just in case," Jess joked.

"Oh c'mon, I wasn't that scared!"


"Imma go to the bathroom real quick," Mal said suddenly as she unraveled herself from Jessie's embrace. "Brb."

Once Mal left to make her way to the bathroom, Jessie quickly checked her phone. When she saw that there were some messages in the UCLAWS group chat, she scrolled through and read the messages then put her phone to sleep—not in the mood to check social media. After just sitting on her bed for a couple of seconds, she wore an evil smile when an idea came across her mind. Since she could hear that Mal was still in the bathroom, she had decided to hide. Quickly, she decided to hide in the closet that was right by her bed. Once she heard the bathroom door open then Mallory's steps come closer, she remained quiet until she could hear Mal looking for her.

"Jess?" Mal asked, confused as to where her girlfriend was. Jess had to bite back laughter and didn't move until she could tell Mal was right by the closet. Then Jessie got her phone out and started to record. When Mal's voice was a little muffled and Jess could tell she was turned away from the closet, she jumped out onto Jessie—coming out of the closet (haha pun intended).

"Boo!" Jess yelled which lead to Mal letting out a loud yelp as the horrified look on Mal's face was priceless, causing her to laugh hysterically. Without realizing, Mal instinctively punched her in the face out of self defense. Right after, the recording on Jessie's phone stopped. Mal looked at Jess with wide eyes in shock as Jess couldn't stop laughing, especially after she had been punched in the nose.

"Oh my gosh, I'm so sorry," Mal said, apologizing as Jess continued to laugh.
"It's fine, I'm the one who should be saying sorry. It was an evil move from me," Jessie replied.

"Yeah it was," Mal agreed. "But like, you're bleeding. Your nose is bleeding."

"It is?" Jessie questioned as she put her hand up to touch her nose and was met with a little bit of blood oozing out. Just then, Mallory started to chuckle. "What?"

"One of the first times we got to know each other, I hit you in the face," Mal laughed.

"Yeah, I guess that's our thing," Jess joined in on the laughter. She got a tissue from her desk and applied pressure to her nose to stop the bleeding. "Your punch is weak."

"What?" Mal asked, offended.

"You didn't break my nose."

"Maybe I didn't want to," Mal said. "Your nose is pretty adorable."

"Sure," Jess rolled her eyes, although there was a faint blush on her cheeks. "You weren't even sure if I was the one who scared you. The adrenaline can kick in while you're scared and it can cause you to hit someone before you can figure out who it is."

"I'm just a nice person, I don't like hurting people too hard."

"That's complete bs," Jess replied. "You don't care when you're on the soccer field."

"Okay, can we watch a happy movie now?" Mal said, knowing Jessie was completely right but not wanting to admit it.

"Haha, yes babe," Jessie said with a knowing smile.

Chapter End Notes

Does anyone actually read the end notes? Like when I'm reading other peoples' stories, I skip right over them and do not haha. I don't blame you if you too skip right over these. I'm going to try to keep these shorter and actually went back and shortened all of the other ones.

Mal and Jess finally played in a game together and I'm so excited to see more of them. Also, I try to get the details in this story to be accurate but sometimes it's tough like I spent a solid hour looking at the UCLA Housing page to make sure I was accurate and still am not completely sure I was haha.

Thanks again for all the love and feedback!
Chapter Summary

"That Girl Should Be Me" by Cimorelli

"They Don't Know About Us" by One Direction

"Think A Little Less" by Michael Ray

"Selfish" by David Correy

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Going out to eat before a home game has become a ritual for Mal, Anika, and Marley. The three besties cherish this time because they are often so busy with other parts of their lives that it's rare for all three of them to just have quality time together. They've been good friends for years and every time it's just the three of them together, they're reminded of why they became close friends in the first place. While they obviously don't share everything about what's going on in their lives, they do share the latest drama or story from the week before. They usually find themselves laughing, nearly crying, when they're done. To conclude their outing, Marley will update them on her family's dog.

It's after the game, though, that they look forward to even more. After most of their home wins, a handful of the team will go out to eat together. So after beating Santa Clara 3-2 in overtime courtesy of Mal's head and Jessie's perfectly placed lobbed pass, a group of the team was excited to eat some quality food to celebrate. Mal, Anika, Marley, Jess, Teagan, Ashley, Julia, Jacey, Bella, and Karina filed into Napa Valley Grille after having showered and changed into fresh clothes. This was definitely one of the nicer restaurants nearby Westwood and they wanted to look decent and not get kicked out. The ten of them took up three small tables in close proximity to each other and were thankful the wait to be seated wasn't too long because they were hungry.

"I'm so hungry," Anika quietly whined once all three tables had ordered food. She was sitting with Julia, Karina, and Ashley.

"Shut up," both Julia and Karina replied.

"I'm hurt that my girlfriend and sister just told me to shut up," Anika said. "Ash, help me out here."

"No," Ashley simply responded as she quickly glanced up from looking at her phone then glanced back down.

"Fine, I'm gonna go sit at another table," Anika half joked as she began to get up.

"Lo siento, lo siento," Julia quickly said as she reached up to pull Anika back down onto her seat.


Meanwhile, Bella and Jacey had decided to sit at the smaller table together and were currently
laughing their heads off over something that no one else understood. Whenever they tried to stop laughing to tell the others what they were laughing about, they'd just break out into laughter again. It was okay though because no one really cared about what they were laughing about anyways, the others figured it was probably something stupid that only Bella and Jacey would find funny.

Teagan, Marley, Mallory, and Jessie sat at the table in between the other two. With Teagan and Marley sitting across from Mallory and Jessie, it took all of Mal's might to not reach over and take Jessie's hand in hers. Jessie looked really good tonight, she always did in Mallory's eyes but tonight her girlfriend had worn a red and black flannel complemented by black ripped jeans and her hair down. She looked so good and Mal was thankful that their table had decided to play a game, causing her to be distracted and not stare at her beautiful girlfriend the whole time. Even though they were all hungry and exhausted, they somehow had the energy to play a game that consisted of drawing pictures on Snapchat and judging the most creative ones. Jess created a masterpiece that put all the others' to shame, easily winning the competition and a complaint from Marley saying it wasn't fair.

"Hey Jess," Teagan said.

"Yeah?" Jessie replied.

"That girl has been staring at you for awhile," Teagan said, subtly looking behind Jess at the aforementioned girl. Mal quickly looked behind herself and Jess to see that the girl indeed was staring at Jess. Then Teagan added with a smirk, "She's really pretty too."

"Oh shit, she's coming over," Marley said, following where Teagan's eyes were.

"You guys are weird," Jessie said.

"Are you Jessie Fleming?" The girl said with a kind smile. She was pretty, with her long dark hair, piercing green eyes, a tattoo on her forearm, and fit physique. She looked around their age, if not a year or two older.

"Yes, yes I am," Jess casually replied, slightly blushing. Mallory was carefully eyeing this girl because she was drop-dead gorgeous... and had caused Jessie to blush.

"Can I get a picture with you? I'm a big fan," the girl smiled.

"Um, sure," Jessie said awkwardly.

"Can you please take a picture of us?" The girl asked as she handed her phone to Mal. Mal was internally boiling with jealousy and possessiveness as she quietly nodded, took the phone, then snapped a photo. In the photo, the girl had an arm around Jess and tried to get close to her. Mal had to will herself to not throw the girl's phone out the window and instead handed it back with a fake, polite smile. The girl took her phone back then turned to Jess and said, "Thanks, I don't usually see famous Canadians while on vacation."

"Oh, I'm not famous," Jessie quickly countered.

"So you're really good at soccer, artsy, hot, and humble haha, the whole package," the girl laughed.

"Where are you visiting from?" Jessie ignored the comment, blushing once again—by now Mallory was fuming.

"Vancouver."

"Oh, cool," Jessie casually replied.
"It's a shame I live so far away from Ontario," the girl said with a flirty smile.

"Yeah, Ontario's pretty cool," Jessie said coolly. Mallory, on the other hand, was not cool and seemed to notice this girl's flirting and had to bite her lip to prevent herself from doing or saying anything.

"Being close to you would be nice," the girl smirked as she bit her lip.

"Yeah, I guess," Jess nervously laughed.

"Well I gotta head back to my friends, it was nice meeting you and thanks for the picture. Maybe I'll see you around, eh?" The girl said.

"Yeah, maybe," Jessie replied with a small smile as the girl retreated back to her friends who were eagerly waiting for her.

"I'm gonna go to the bathroom before the food comes," Mal quickly excused herself from being near Jessie after that encounter. Once Mal had gone off, Teagan and Marley just stared at Jessie like she had missed a wide open shot in practice.

"What?" Jessie asked cluelessly once she turned to see the looks she was being given.

"That girl was totally flirting with you and she was really attractive," Teagan said. "Dude, how oblivious are you?"

"Yeah, I'm straight and have a great, really attractive boyfriend but that girl was hot. She looked like Megan Fox and Scarlett Johansson's lovechild," Marley explained.

"That explanation sounded pretty gay to me," Teagan said, narrowing her eyes at Marley. Marley just shrugged.

"She was pretty," Jessie admitted.

"If you count the stuff you said to her as flirting back then you need to step up your game, girl," Marley said.

"She was not flirting and I wasn't interested either way," Jessie clarified. When it had finally sunk in that Mal had abruptly gotten up to go to the bathroom, she sensed that she should probably go after her. "I'm gonna go to the bathroom."

"Oh, hey," Mal quietly said as she fixed her hair while Jessie washed her hands after coming out of one of the stalls.

"Are you okay?" Jess asked once she threw away her wet paper towel. No one else was in the bathroom so she was comfortable.

"You were flirting with her," Mallory stated with a sharp edge in her voice, turning to look Jessie in the eyes.

"I was just being nice to her, she was a fan," Jessie clarified.

"A really pretty one."

"Is that why you're mad at me? You thought I was flirting with her? Why would I flirt with her?"

"I don't know," Mal shrugged. "She was stunning and you just let her flirt with you."
"I didn't even know she was flirting with me until Teagan and Marley pointed it out," Jessie said truthfully in defense.

"But you were blushing."

"Out of embarrassment. I'm still getting used to being recognized by people in public, especially people our age. It's weird and I was nervous that I'd accidentally act poorly, leading to a disappointed fan."

"You're something else," Mal smiled, lightly shaking her head.

"I didn't even realize that I was flirting back or blushing."

"You are literally so oblivious," Mal laughed, her mood becoming lighter as Jessie wrapped her arms around her jealous girlfriend.

"You're the only girl I flirt with," Jess clarified as she kissed Mal on the forehead. "And sure, she was pretty but I don't care because the prettiest girl I've ever seen is you."

"Your flirting sucks," Mal said, biting her lip as a wide smile started to form across her face.

"That's not true!" Jessie argued as she leaned back to take a look at Mal. "I've made you blush multiple times due to things I've said to you."

"Maybe that was out of embarrassment because you're so bad," Mal challenged, completely joking. Jessie mocked a shocked look on her face.

"I'm not that embarrassing."

"Whatever you wanna think," Mal rolled her eyes with a laugh. "We should go back to the table. Our food's probably ready by now."

"I don't wanna."

"What, why?"

"Marley and Teagan are gonna continue to tease me about that girl."

"You have a reinforcement, it'll be okay," Mal assured her.

"Who?"

"Me, duh."

"Oh."

"Okay, now let's go back out there, I'm hungry. Ya girl needs to eat."

Luckily for them, upon arrival back to the table, their teammates weren't suspicious about anything going on between the young American and Canadian phenomenons. Instead, they were met with consistent teasing towards Jessie about being a terrible flirter. Teagan kept wondering why her roommate could get anyone but had terrible game and Mal had to pretend that she wasn't hurt from that comment so she laughed along. Marley, on the other hand, was counting how many people had flirted with Jessie. By the time Marley had gotten to double digits, it took all of Mallory's might to not punch her best friend in the face. Jessie rolled her eyes while Mal chewed on her lip, hoping she wouldn't accidentally act out and cause anyone to catch those hands of hers. She had
never realized how possessive and jealous she was over any mention of Jessie being with someone other than her until now. In response, Jess would send Mal a small smirk whenever none of their friends were looking. Jessie could tell how jealous Mal had become and she was quite amused.

Seeing Jessie so satisfied irked Mallory though so she took it in her own hands to do something about it, literally. Since she was sitting right next to Jess, she decided to have a little fun. While all four of them ate and conversed, Mal gently set one hand on Jessie's thigh. The Canadian constrained herself and didn't flinch but she side-eyed Mal, giving her a confused look. Jessie was able to remain unbothered as far as anyone else could see, although her girlfriend's hand on her thigh felt like it was burning her skin. She could feel the slightest blush come across her face and drank long gulps from her water glass. When Mal was disappointed with the lack of a reaction, she decided to do something about it. Jessie was wearing ripped jeans, some of her skin peeking through. Conveniently, there was a rip right on her thigh, exposing a smooth part of skin. Mallory gently rubbed circles on this part of Jessie's skin, which earned a squirming, blushing mess next to her. All the while, Mal was pretending to be oblivious and was actively a part of the conversation Marley and Teagan were having.

"Hey, you okay?" Teagan asked, noticing the shift in Jessie's demeanor.

"Yeah, I'm fine," Jessie lied through gritted teeth. Mallory gave her a quick smirk, neither Marley nor Teagan seeing it, as her hand had stopped moving but was still sitting on Jessie's thigh. "I just have a cramp from the game."

"You can't do that," Jessie said. She and Mallory had decided to walk to a small park that was nearby after eating.

"Do what?" Mal asked.

"You know exactly what you were doing," Jess replied as she looked at Mal, her eyes darkening.

"What was I doing?" Mal said, although she knew exactly what Jessie was talking about and was just enjoying being difficult.

"You can't do that thing with your hand on my thigh, especially in public," Jessie explained.

"Oh, you didn't like it?"

"I liked it, a lot actually, that's the problem. It's just—it made me go crazy."

"You're crazy for me?" Mal smirked.

"I didn't say that but yes, I am," Jess said truthfully as the two sat down on the grass of De Neve Square Park—a tiny little park (more like a small area of grass) about a mile away from campus. It was eight at night with the sky darkening, leaving the park to be empty except for Mal and Jess.

"Good," Mal replied with a satisfied smile. She leant over to kiss Jessie passionately, biting down on her girlfriend's lip as she forcefully pushed her favorite Canadian back onto the ground. As she was on top of Jess, their kissing seemed to intensify. Mallory was so caught up in the moment that she didn't realize her hand had found its way under Jessie's shirt and on her abs. Her lips had found its way on Jessie's jaw, daring to move to down onto the Canadian's neck.

"Mal," Jess said breathlessly, pulling away as Mallory continued. "Mal, I-I think-I think we should stop."
"Oh my gosh," Mal said as she sat up and looked down at the girl whose face was red. Her eyes went wide as she realized what she had been doing. As she continued to saddle her girlfriend, she said, "I'm so sorry. I didn't even realize what I was doing. I just got so caught up. I'm so sorry."

"It's okay," Jessie smiled as she looked up at Mal and gave her hand a reassuring squeeze. "I just don't want to do that here. We'll just wait for the right time."

"Okay," Mal smiled back. "I'm really sorry. I was just so jealous of you back in the restaurant. I don't know when I got so possessive of you."

"It's pretty cute," Jessie smirked. "Jealous Mal is pretty hot."

Mallory rolled her eyes as she maneuvered herself so she was laying next to Jessie on the grass. They sat in comfortable silence for a few minutes, looking up at the stars. The ambience of the city in the distance was the only soundtrack.

"I love the stars," Jessie finally said as she put her head on Mallory's abs. "I also love your abs."

"Me too," Mal replied as she continued to stare up at the sky, one of her hands gently running through Jessie's hair.

"That's pretty vain of you, to say you love your abs too," Jessie laughed.

"Jess, I was talking about the stars," Mal rolled her eyes, even though she knew Jessie couldn't see her.

"But I'm not wrong, you love your abs."

"Okay, maybe you're right. They took awhile to sculpt so I have every right to be proud of them."

"Sure," Jessie laughed.

"But I really do love the stars. I just love space. I wanna go to the moon some day."

"Really?" Jessie asked, amused.

"Yep. I've always wanted to and I just think space is so cool."

"I never really thought about going to space. I just love the sky and the stars because they're always there. Like I can be in Spain and if I just look up at night, I'll see the same stars that can be seen back home. And stars are so constant and calming. I don't know, looking up at them can be so therapeutic," Jessie explained. Mallory couldn't help but wear a big smile as she was enamored with the way Jessie spoke so highly about the stars. "I love the stars."

And Mallory could feel herself falling in love with Jessie.

Chapter End Notes

I am SO sorry that this took so long to update! I've just been incredibly busy and exhausted lately. Thanks for waiting though!

On a different note, I've been working on a super long Preath one shot that has a stars
theme for awhile but I just don't know what to write. Should I just try to incorporate the theme into this story instead?

RIP to Jessie's twitter lol.
In honor of their one month anniversary, Mal and Jess had decided to go to an art museum. While one month of being together wasn't much, it felt like it had been judging from how long it took them to actually get together. They were excited to finally go on a real date again after a busy couple of weeks. Plus, they were absolutely thrilled when they realized that their one month fell on a Saturday when they neither had a game nor international duty. And, to top it off, Jessie absolutely loves museums and anything to do with art so she was extra excited. So after an early morning practice with the team and quick showers, the two international phenomenons found themselves walking to the Hammer Museum that was right on the outskirts of campus.

"You know, for the longest time I thought the Hammer Museum was a museum about the history of hammers or something about actual hammers," Mallory spoke as the two walked towards the entrance of the museum, their hands "accidentally" brushing against each other's.


"What? It made sense!" Mal argued.

"Sure," Jess rolled her eyes. The two walked into the building and picked up a map, pleased to find out that the admission was free.

"So, where to?" Mallory asked.

"Let's just walk through this first exhibit then explore whatever interests us," Jessie shrugged while they walked into the exhibit closest to them.

"Okay," Mal smiled as she got closer to Jess and held onto her arm. Jessie sent Mal a questionable look, considering how close they were while in the public eye. "I'm just making sure you can't push me and cause us to get kicked out of this art museum too."

"You're never going to let me live that down now, are ya?" Jessie asked, rolling her eyes.

"Nope," Mal replied, not missing a beat. "Plus, you have nice arms too."

The two walked through the museum with smiles painted onto their faces, making comfortable small talk about the exhibits they observed. Mallory thought the various pieces of artwork were interesting but she didn't quite appreciate them as much as Jessie, she doesn't have the same artistic eye. She thought all of her art was cool but sometimes she didn't quite understand the artistic
beauty of some things and would laugh and just ask why art can be so weird. But on the rare occasion when Mal was more enthralled in a piece than Jess, Jessie would stand behind her and take photos of Mallory studying the piece in deep concentration. Jessie was amused that Mallory could look so effortlessly beautiful doing anything.

"Isn't this piece cool?" Mallory asked, still staring at a collage that said SPACE and had other letters on it.

"Yeah, it's pretty cool," Jessie replied as she stood closely next to Mal and finally got a good look of the piece.

"Maybe we'll see one of your pieces in here someday," Mal said as the two began to head to the exit. They had spent a solid hour and a half exploring the museum and now were exhausted.

"I don't know. I'm not an art major and my photography is probably not good enough," Jessie shrugged.

"I think your photography is amazing and any art museum would be privileged to feature your work," Mallory smiled genuinely. "Like I'm serious, you have a beautiful outlook on life."

"You're making me blush," Jessie said with a nervous laugh.

"Good. Now let's go," Mal decided as she took ahold of Jessie's hand in her own and lead them back outside. The sun was just beginning to set, accompanied by a nice California autumn breeze. They walked back to their residence hall slowly, savoring every precious second they were able to spend together without being bothered. As they got deeper into campus and approached their residence hall, they let go of each other's hands. "Thank you for today."

"Thank you for being you," Jessie exhorted as they stood right outside of their destination. Sunlight was beaming off of Mallory's face in the perfect place, causing Mal to look even more angelic than she already did. In the sunlight, her brown eyes were warm and full of life. Jessie just couldn't stop staring at the girl she still couldn't believe was her girlfriend, enamored by the way Mal could be so effortlessly beautiful all the time. Without realizing it, she blurted out, "I love you."

Mallory was stunned. Stunned that Jessie had confessed those three special words. She was at a loss for words. The words had slipped off of Jessie's tongue so quickly, taking Jess a minute to realize what she had just said.

"Oh my gosh, I'm so sorry I said that," Jessie cursed herself when Mallory didn't say anything back. "Like I do love you but if you don't love me back then it's okay."

"Jess-"

"I'm-I'm gonna go back to my room," Jessie quickly stated, her cheeks were red and her eyes were starting to water as she quickly turned away and ran back to her room.

"Jess, wait!" Mallory shouted after her but Jessie was too fast and was already in the building.

Chapter End Notes

I know I said I wanted to keep these extra notes short but given recent events, this one's going to be a super long one. I think this note might be longer than the actual
First off, I'm so sorry this took me forever to write! I wanted to make this perfect and didn't want to give you guys a bad chapter. Unfortunately, this chapter ended up not being that good and also ended up being way too short for my liking. I felt so bad for making you guys wait so long though so I felt obligated to post this chapter sooner than later.

Second, Mallory Pugh is going pro! I'm very excited for her and wish her the best; I feel like school wasn't really her thing and why put yourself through so much stress at college when you don't have to? (If I didn't have to go to college, I wouldn't because college is exhausting and stressful and FYI that's why it took me so long to write this chapter.) While I'm sad she won't be playing at UCLA with Jessie and that she probably won't go to the Spirit (my hometown team) or the NWSL at all, I can't wait for her to join PSG (I hope haha, it's just the best fit overall; player/team/position-wise, money, and Lindsey). Is Jessie next? While John would love for her to be, probably not, I think she's set on getting her engineering degree (but maybe she's expediting her college education and trying to graduate early?). For now we'll just continue to eat popcorn while we watch the drama unfold.

Third, so how will Mal's decision affect this story? Well, I wrote this story by looking forward into the future rather than writing in the present or past (which usually happens in this fandom) because that's just how I had to do it to make it more realistic. Now that Mal won't be at UCLA anymore, I'm going to change some things she does in future chapters- her decision actually made my life a little easier when it came to writing this haha. So instead of Mal leaving UCLA in 2017, she'll be leaving in 2018 within this story. I have some ideas about clubs she'd go to within the story but I'm indecisive and would rather just wait until she announces her decision. I'm still very much invested in writing this story and will also try to still make this as realistic as possible. That was a lot of stuff I just wrote but I hope you all understand!

Fourth, I guess the small hope I had about Jessie and Mallory developing a closer relationship or friendship at least is gone. Maybe they'll play at a professional club together someday. So this ship will probably sink (I never really thought it would ever sail) but who knows?

Thank you all for being so patient, I really am so sorry that it took me so long to update. It's nearing the end of my freshman year of college and it's been extremely hectic.

Thank you for all the support!
The three simple words had escaped Jessie's mouth before she could stop herself and once she realized what she had said, her eyes went wide while her cheeks turned red. Before Mallory could say or do anything, Jess quickly ran back to her room. For a brief moment, Mal was frozen, speechless and flustered, but she didn't hesitate too long and followed Jess from close behind.

Jess put the key card into her room's door then let the door close behind her, shutting her eyes as well to hold back tears. She thinks the door closed but she was too lost in her thoughts to pay attention and didn't realize that Mal had managed to push it open just before it closed. Once the door closed behind the both of them, Mal reached out to get Jessie's hand. Jess tried to pull away, visibly embarrassed and scared to know what would happen next- she blinked away small tears threatening to fall. She and Mal had only been dating for a month and she was worried that she had confessed her love far too soon. While the confession was true to her heart, she regretted it.

"Jess, c'mon, please look at me," Mal commanded softly as they sat next to each other on Jessie's bed, Mal now holding tightly onto Jessie's hand. The midfielder continued to keep her gaze downcast onto the ground, avoiding Mallory's almond orbs that could easily hypnotize her. "Please look at me, Jess."

"What?" Jess said annoyed, finally looking up, her eyes glassy.

"Why do you always do that?" Mal asked, Jessie a bit surprised that Mal had asked such an unexpected question.

"Do what?" Jessie asked, furrowing her eyebrows.

"You always run away before I can do or say anything," Mal explained, causing Jess to become guilty. "You ran away after we kissed in the airport too and you ran away from me during that first week back from the summer break."

"I'm scared you'll never like me the way I like you," Jess confessed, looking away again. "I still wonder everyday if us being together this past month has just been a figment of my imagination."

"Why do you still not think I actually like you?" Mal asked, in disbelief that Jess would ever think that. Her heart had dropped at Jessie's response and there was a look of sadness painted across her girlfriend's face. Jessie simply shrugged a sad shrug as she took her ponytail out and ran a hand
through her long brown curly locks. "Look, Jess, I can tell you love me and that's perfectly fine."

"Really?"

"Yeah, the way you look at me is enough of a reason, you look at me like I'm the only person in the world. You always tell me to be safe and check up on me after you know I've had a big test or project. You'll drop anything to hang out with me. You kiss me with so much passion, I knew you loved me after we really first kissed. And-

"But do you love me back though?" Jessie nervously interrupted, her cheeks flaring red.

"That's why I love you," Mal finished. Jessie looked at Mallory with surprise written across her face, a smile forming. She bit her lip to contain her excitement as Mal kissed her cheek.

"You love me?" Jessie choked out in disbelief.

"I love you," Mal recited as she pulled Jessie in closer to her and left a light but meaningful kiss on her girlfriend's lips. Once she pulled away, she confessed, "I love you. I love your eyes. I love your lips. I love how good you are at soccer. I love how you love art and architecture so much. I love how you're so smart. I love when you concentrate on something and how you wear an adorable look of confusion on your face. I love the way you fit so perfectly in my arms. I love the way that you are you. I love how I've fallen in love with you a little more every day."

"Are you just saying that?" Jessie questioned.

"Who hurt you, Jess? Why don't you believe me?"

"No one hurt me. It's just- no one's ever dated me before. I've always been so cautious and then I let my guard down when you came along. I just don't want to get hurt, you know?" Jessie said uneasily, embarrassed. "I love you, I really do. But I don't want to fall and end up hurt."

"Yeah, I understand," Mal smiled. "I don't want to get hurt again either."

"Thanks for understanding," Jessie graciously replied as she left a kiss on Mallory's cheek. "Now let's do our homework and study then go to the gym."

"Ugghhhhh," Mal let out a groan. "I don't wanna."

"I know you haven't started that psychology paper yet so you're going to work on that."

"I should've never told you about that," Mal hissed.

"And what would've happened if you didn't? You would start it the day before it's due and not do well on it."

"You don't know that. I've done well on assignments I've done the day before it's due in the past. Remember when I started and finished reading that one book that was like 200 pages long then wrote a five page paper in two days? I got an A on it."

"You nearly cried five times and had a headache the next day from drinking too much caffeine," Jessie quickly replied. At that, all Mal could do was stay silent.

"Okay, fine," Mal surrendered. "I'll go get my backpack then we can go to the library or a study room."
"Why did I agree to go work out with you?" Mal questioned, regret evident in her voice as she set her water bottle and student I.D. down so she could begin exercising.

"Because you love me," Jessie smiled as she started to set up a lifting machine.

"I confessed my love for you today and you're already using that confession against me, wow."

"You took a solid hour to read two pages from your communications textbook. So you deserve to be kicked in the butt by a hard workout."

"Or what? You'll spank me?" Mal asked with a suggestive look on her face.

"Shut the fuck up," Jess hissed, cheeks red, as she lightly pushed her smirking girlfriend.

"I swear, if you get us kicked out of the gym," Mal eyed Jessie.

"Well start acting more mature then."

"Babe, you're the one pushing me like a child everywhere we go."

"So I've decided it's arm day," Jessie ignored Mallory's statement. She sat down on the machine and began to pull the handles, lifting fifty pounds with each arm. All Mallory could do was watch, not only because she needed to wait her turn but also because she really admired Jessie's arms. As Jessie was on her fifth rep, she noticed that Mallory was just standing next to her silently, the only sound was music playing from her phone. Jessie smirked when she realized that Mal was practically drooling over her but decided to dismiss it. "Are you just gonna stand there? We can make this arm, leg, and abs day. How about you do a minute plank?"

"What?" Mal asked, realizing that Jess had said something whilst she was in a daze.


"I am," Mal replied as she straightened up.


"Yes," Mal simply replied with a shrug. "You have nice arms."

"I'm flattered but you should really be working out too. It's good for mental health."

"Fine," Mal grumbled as she got down on the ground and started to do multiple different ab workouts. When she had briefly paused in between a flutter kick and plank exercise, she looked up at Jessie to see that her girlfriend had been staring at her. Jessie was caught staring at Mallory's ass like a deer in the headlights. "Wow Jess, touché. Staring at my ass now."

"Um," Jessie gulped. "Let's trade places."

"So you can stare at my arms now?" Mal joked.

"No, so you can stare at my ass now," Jess replied without skipping a beat. Mallory was left speechless as Jessie snickered and stood up from the machine to trade places. Right when Jessie stood up and walked over to the open space on the floor, she wiped her sweaty face with the bottom of her shirt, revealing her abs right in Mal's view. She knew exactly what she was doing and was satisfied when she saw Mal biting her lip. To add to the fun, she picked up her water bottle, licked her lips, put the bottle to her mouth, then tilted her head back and drank out of it. With her neck fully exposed, Mallory was way too turned on than she should have been. When Jess had
finished and saw that Mal was still sitting down and staring at her, she smirked and said, "You want some water too? You look pretty thirsty."

"This is so unfair."

"What is?" Jess asked innocently.

"You're so hot," Mal whispered so only Jessie could hear, even though no one else was in the gym. Jessie's confidence seemed to have gone out the door at that because she turned into a tomato. She's been with Mal for a month and yet she still is in disbelief that Mal thinks she's hot.

"No I'm not but you're hot."

"I didn't ask for your opinion," Mal playfully snapped back. Jessie rolled her eyes. "But in case you were wondering, it is getting hot in here."

"Water?" Jessie offered her water bottle even though Mallory's was sitting on the ground.

"I have water, thanks. I was thinking of a better idea though," Mal said as she quickly took a sip of water then set her bottle down. She stood up and took her shirt off, revealing her well-defined abs and a neon yellow sports bra, then set her shirt down next to her water bottle and student I.D. "Ah, that's better. It really is hot in here."

Jessie was at a loss for words, her mouth kept opening to say something but nothing would come out. Mallory was amused by Jessie's reaction and couldn't help but smirk. She started doing some arm reps on the machine and when she looked up to see that Jessie was still frozen, staring at her with her mouth agape, she just snickered, "Thirsty?"

Chapter End Notes

Apologies for the slow updates but it's been hectic lately. Good news though, I'm officially done with my first year of college! Thank you for the continuous support and I'm hoping I'll be better with updates now.

Also, happy birthday Mallory Pugh! It's past midnight here but it's still April 29th on the west coast haha. She's now my age again so yay!
Ms. You

Chapter Summary

"Make You Miss Me" by Sam Hunt
"Lately" by Dan + Shay
"On My Mind" by Cody Simpson
"Kids in Love (feat. The Night Game)" by Kygo

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Mallory was happy to be called up into national team camp again. It's an honor for her to represent her country at the highest level and she loves playing alongside the women she calls her role models and teammates. She was thrilled to be playing two friendlies against Vietnam in North Carolina and Atlanta. With large crowds poised to be in attendance at both venues, she was excited. Plus, she's excited to be going into camp with Ashley. After over a year and a half since the first time Ashley was called up into senior national team camp, she was finally getting another look.

Mallory was excited but she was not a big fan of having to be so far away from Jessie for a week and a half. She hadn't realized how whipped she was for the Canadian until jealousy got the best of her in that restaurant and now with the prospect of being so far away from Jessie as she was set to play friendlies in Switzerland. It took the both of them an hour to pull apart from a heated "good-bye" make out session, the only reason they stopped was because Marley had sent Mal a text while on her way back from class asking if Mal needed anything for her trip. Mal quickly replied no and almost started right where she and Jessie had left off until she became disappointed when she noticed the time. The interruption was probably a good thing because both Mal and Jessie needed to head to the airport in less than an hour with Ashley and Kennedy.

"I'm really going to miss you," Mallory sadly whispered into Jessie's neck as the two savored a few more minutes together before Jessie had to go to her terminal. As Will drove the four of them to the airport, Ashley had stayed back to spend a little more time with her boyfriend while Kennedy decided to venture off to find something to eat, leaving Mal and Jess sitting alone next to each other in some uncomfortable airport seats.

"It's only a week and a half," Jessie said in a not-so-convincing manner, probably trying to convince herself more than Mal. "We can text and even FaceTime if you want."

"Yeah, that's true," Mal agreed.

"We've gone even more time apart and it's only going to get worse if either of us are in a big tournament, go pro, or are on break. We've got this."

"I know I know," Mal grumbled. "You'll watch my games though, right?"

"I'll do everything I can to," Jessie assured with a smile and a small squeeze around Mal's shoulder.
"Me too," Mal grinned back. "I'll try to score a goal for you, okay?"

"I'm flattered," Jessie laughed. "But don't feel pressured to. Just play like you usually do, all carefree, that's when you play the best."

"I will babe, I will," Mal replied. A comfortable silence came over them as they sat on the uncomfortable airport chairs and watched bustling crowds walk by. With each person passing by, they knew their time together was coming to a close so they held onto each other tightly and prolonged each second together. When Jessie's phone's alarm went off marking the moment they were dreading the most, Jess had to give all her might into detaching herself from Mallory's side. The two quietly stood up and started to get their bags together.

"I love you, be safe," Jessie whispered as she gave Mallory one more hug before they had to go their separate ways.

"I love you too, kick some Swiss ass for me," Mal responded as she gave Jess one more squeeze around her waist.

"I will," Jessie lightly laughed. Then she put her backpack on and took ahold of her suitcase and quickly pecked Mallory's cheek before she made her way to her terminal. Mal sadly watched Jessie saunter away to join Kennedy then got her own bags and went to find the nearest Starbucks to get her and Ashley drinks.

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"Did you two seriously have a quickie in the car?" Mal laughed at Ashley as the two sat down in chairs by their gate, both of them sipping on their Starbucks as they waited.

"What are you talking about?" Ashley asked, dumbfounded.

"I'm not stupid. That hickey on your neck and your messy appearance didn't just happen out of nowhere," Mal rolled her eyes as Ashley's face soon turned red. "Plus, you looked much more presentable when we left from UCLA."

"Is it really that obvious? I thought I covered the hickey well enough with concealer and do I seriously look like a complete mess?"

"As one of your close friends, yes. But honestly, no."

"What's that supposed to mean?" Ashley questioned as she began to straighten herself out more.

"Since I know you well and know Will like the back of my hand, I know that you two decided to have sex in his car in an airport parking garage in like fifteen minutes."

"Well, when you say it like that, it sounds bad. It wasn't, actually, it felt really good. And we've had sex in weirder places before."

"I did NOT need to know that, gosh, you're just as bad as Will when it comes to not knowing when to stop talking about that stuff," Mal cringed. "And also, as I was saying, to the other players who will be on this plane with us, they probably won't bat an eye."

"Oh shit! I forgot Christen, Lynn, and Alex were traveling with us!" Ashley panicked as she hurriedly took out a small makeup mirror then some concealer and quickly applied it to her neck. The three older players were flying out of LAX with them as they each had family, friends, and business to catch up with while the NWSL was in the offseason.
"Way to have a good impression for them," Mal snickered. "If anyone's going to give you shit about it, it'll be Alex or Christen. Lynn won't say anything but Alex and Christen might, Alex is more likely to say something upon greeting you because, well, she doesn't give a fuck."

"Way to make me nervous."

"Speak of the devil," Mal said as she looked up and saw Alex walking over.

"Baby Mal!" Alex exclaimed as she embraced Mal in a big hug.

"Hey mama Alex," Mallory said happily as she hugged back.

"And hello Miss Ashley, or Ash-laid," Alex smirked, causing Ashley to turn red yet again.

"Alex! That's not how you greet a young one!" Christen criticized one of her fellow strikers as she made her way over, walking right behind Alex. Lynn had been walking next to Press and looked like she was trying to hold in laughter.

"Sorry, but she's possibly worse than you and Tobin, which says a lot," Alex scoffed. At that, Christen playfully hit Alex who just continued to laugh while Lynn was now laughing along too, unable to hold it together.

"Anyways, sorry about her, it's nice to see you both again," Christen said as she gave Mal and Ashley hugs. "I'm sorry that you probably feel super uncomfortable and awkward because of her. You're another one who probably feels personally victimized by the Alex Morgan and I'm so sorry about her, especially considering you're young and still don't know her too well yet."

"Now you're just making me look bad," Alex rolled her eyes. "Ashley, I'm sorry, I truly am. I shouldn't be seen as a monster, I should be seen as someone you can look up to and talk to."

"That's better," Christen said with a smile, satisfied.

"I'm Lynn," the other forward finally spoke up, extending her hand out for Ashley to shake. "I promise I'm not as immature as Alex."

"It's not too hard to be more mature than Alex," Christen pointed out. "Actually, I take that back. Half the team is worse than Alex."

"Yeah, if you thought I was bad, just wait until Emily or Kelley get one look at you," Alex laughed.

"Maybe you and Will shouldn't have had a quickie in the car, Ash," Mal smirked as Ashley gave her an annoyed look then continued to put more concealer on her neck. Mallory also made a mental note to always check herself in the mirror after getting laid and to make sure she looked presentable with no hickies visible. She couldn't help wonder what getting a hickey from Jessie would feel like, causing her to ever so slightly blush. Luckily for her, the others were too engrossed in a conversation about the weather to notice Mal's cheeks go red for a split second.

"Mal," Christen said, slightly nudging the younger forward.

"Huh? What?" Mal asked, dumbfounded as she shook her head to get out of her thoughts and blushed a little- as if the others knew what she was thinking about.

"Do you need anything? Lynn and I are going to find something to eat then go to the bathroom."
"I'm good thanks," Mal replied coolly. Luckily for her, the two left, already talking about how excited Lynn and Tobin were to be back in North Carolina while Ashley and Alex were talking about how they grew up only thirty minutes away from each other in suburbs outside of LA. Ashley, being the chill yet talkative person she was, was easily having a conversation with one of her idols whom she had just been scared of moments before, even sharing stories and some laughs. Mallory decided not to butt into the conversation and instead took out her phone to check her text messages and social media. She had already gotten five texts from Jessie, two from Marley, one from her mom, and twenty-four from the UCLAWS team group chat. Without hesitation, she immediately opened Jessie's texts, even before her mom's.

JFlems: I miss you
JFlems: Kennedy's being annoying help
JFlems: She's rapping and people are staring
JFlems: Too bad you're not Canadian, then you'd be traveling with me :)
JFlems: Okay, I gotta go ily miss u

Mallory smiled at the texts, typing out a response that she knew Jess wouldn't see until she landed in New York for her connecting flight.

Mal Pew: ily baby score for me *kiss face emoji*

After sending the text, she opened up her other texts. Marley had sent her a relatable meme while her mom made sure her youngest daughter was at the airport, she responded to both then quickly scrolled and skimmed through the group chat full of nonsense. She then opened up Instagram and quickly liked almost every photo on her feed and commented on her closest friends' posts. Once she had liked every new post since the last time she was on, she put her phone on sleep then looked out the window of the airport.

The airport seat she sat in felt even more uncomfortable than earlier, probably because she now wasn't sitting next to Jessie. The sunlight was peaking into the building as airplanes painted the clear blue sky overhead. Mal mentally counted how many gates away Jessie's was from her own. She then searched for the plane that carried her girlfriend and, even though she knew Jessie was quite a distance away and either already up in the air or about to take off, hoped the Canadian could see her (okay, maybe not so much in her 'I'm-desperately-missing-you" state). She was wishing that Canada's connecting flight had been out of Atlanta- it was the busiest airport in the country after all- instead, giving her the whole plane ride with Jess, but the Canadian manager had decided that flying out of New York would be better. It wasn't better, for Mallory anyways.

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Usually Jessie was extremely excited whenever she had a game in a foreign country with the Canadian National Team. She's usually floored to be representing her country and thrilled to explore the area. She's also usually excited to take cool photos and make new unforgettable memories. This time, however, she wasn't nearly excited. The prospect of playing with the national team in the beautiful country of Switzerland alongside her wonderful teammates and possibly captaining the squad again was exciting but she wasn't as excited as she should've been. She wasn't excited about being away from Mal for so long. It would be the longest time they would be apart since they had started becoming serious. During the last FIFA window in October, neither the U.S. nor Canada played.

Jessie tried to distract herself from missing her girlfriend. She conversed with Kennedy for an hour and a half, listened to music, did homework, read some of the book she needed to read for one of her classes, and even watched some game tape, but they were all temporary distractions. She
couldn't help but wonder if Mal was eating and drinking enough, if Mal was on her plane safely, if Mal was doing her homework, and if Mal was missing her just as much. Jessie looked out of the airplane window and wondered if Mallory was too. She eventually closed her eyes and fell asleep but even her dreams had found themselves focusing on Mal.

The first dream she had was simple. It was just of her and Mal playing soccer together at Drake Stadium in the middle of the night. They were just practicing, passing to each other then doing a little one-on-one and ending with some finishing. It was so simple and so familiar, the dream being a small reminder to Jess about how normal and frequent these practice sessions of just the two of them became. Within the dream, Jessie was smiling at how Mallory had tackled her to the ground so the two could look up at the night sky with a few stars popping up behind the urban haze. Also, within the dream, she could feel her heart beating quickly because they weren't supposed to be there and also because Mal was laying on top of her The dream then dissolved into a new scene before Jess could fully appreciate the perfectness of it.

The second dream was a nightmare. It had started off so nicely, giving a pleasant façade in the beginning—deceiving Jess. It had started off with Mal leading Jessie through forest, hiking the terrain. Jessie was following closely behind her, taking photos and smiling at how excited Mal was to pull her girlfriend around. They then reached an ocean where a boardwalk sat waiting for them, abandoned with no one else in sight. Mallory lead them out to the end of the pier, letting go of Jessie's hand as she approached the edge. Mal was admiring the beautiful surroundings, everything looking too surreal as the sun shone brightly ahead, no clouds in the sky, a rainbow in full sight, and the temperature absolutely perfect. Jessie couldn't help but smile and take a million photos of her girlfriend, laughing at the ridiculous poses she did. Everything in the dream was perfect, too perfect. Before Jessie knew it, the pieces of wood Mal was been standing on had broken off. As Mallory was drifting off, she began to quickly sink. Mallory kept trying to get up and swim back to the pier but she couldn't, she was frozen and couldn't stop herself from drowning. All Jessie could do was watch helplessly as she also couldn't move, she couldn't even open her mouth. When Mal had disappeared underwater, Jessie jolted awake. She woke up sweating, panting, and thankful that it was only just a dream.

"You okay?" Kennedy slightly raising an eyebrow as she questioned her fellow Canadian who sat beside her.

"Um, yeah, I'm good," Jessie flat out lied. She closed her eyes and took a deep breath to calm herself down. Once she opened her eyes again, she typed out a text to her favorite American that she would send as soon as she landed.

JFlems: Hope you have a safe flight. I really miss and love you

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Jessie didn't score any goals against Switzerland in the first game but she played incredibly well, per usual. Mallory had left her a voicemail to pump her up which honestly was the reason why Jessie completely dominated, assisting a goal, having a goal line clearance, and making five clean tackles. To top it off, she captained the team for the last fifteen minutes. They won the game 3-0, which was slightly disappointing considering Canada had played so well but they were content-Switzerland had recently improved a lot, even more so after playing in the Euros over the summer.

Mallory really wanted to watch Jessie's game but she was busy amongst her own game and training sessions. Unfortunately, there wasn't even a live stream to broadcast the game anywhere, not one that Mal could find anyways. Not to mention, the time difference was a major factor too and she didn't want to look too suspicious to the others so she couldn't even hover over her phone to update
the Canada Soccer Twitter every second. It was literally impossible for her to watch the game, which made Mal feel guilty. All she could do was subtly peak at updates on Twitter and send Jessie good luck texts. She would've enjoyed sending Jessie texts that critiqued her play instead, because she wouldn't want to be a useless girlfriend, but she settled for what she could do.

In response, Jessie was gracious for Mallory's effort and totally understood how difficult it was for Mal to follow along. But it was also fun for them. It was fun to support each other thousands of miles apart. It was fun for both of them to sneak away so they could be alone to quickly FaceTime each other every day at midnight for Mal and six in the morning for Jess. It was fun for them to send each other "I miss you" texts five times a day and goofy Snapchats of shenanigans with their teammates; occasionally they'd send each other selfies with those Snapchat filters that made you look really good, which would result in both of them hyping each other up. It was also fun for Jessie to secretly watch a stream of the U.S. games on her laptop when her roommate was asleep, not being afraid to commend, criticize, and tease Mal whenever she touched the ball. Jessie would blow up Mal's phone with a hundred texts that she knew Mal wouldn't see until after the game, but she also knew that Mal would read every single one. No one else was as open with Mal about her play than her girlfriend so Mal gladly took the compliments, critiques, and teasing (okay, the teasing maybe not so much but she would just roll her eyes at her phone and accept it). It was fun for both of them routing for each other, although both of them swore they were only routing for each other only and not the rest of the team. Mal had a hat trick in the first game against Vietnam and Jessie was proudly beaming to the point where all of her Canadian teammates looked at her oddly and asked her what had gotten into her- she just quietly shook her head with a stupid smile across her face. And when Mal was fouled pretty badly and wouldn't get up for a minute, Jessie sent Mal a paragraph-long text highlighting how mad she was at the person who fouled her girlfriend- the text including a message along the lines of: WHO THE FUCK HURT YOU? I WILL LIGHT THIS BITCH UP! I WILL FIGHT HER.... Mal found that specific text paragraph pretty funny after the fact, and also found it endearing and kind of hot. Mallory was amused with the play-by-play analysis from her girlfriend and closely studied the critiques and advice. She just wished she could have done the same for Jess.

The sneaking around was fun, it felt like they were always sneaking around, whether it be together at UCLA or separately while they were thousands of miles apart. Their relationship was their little secret, with the exception of Will knowing about them. They were very much still in the honeymoon phase of their relationship and were happy to be. Even amongst the constant cellular contact between them, they still dearly missed each other. A week and a half felt like it went quickly when they were with their team but when it came to being apart from their girlfriend, it felt like a week and a half was forever and a day.

So when they came back to UCLA after both Canada and the United States swept their opponents, they were ecstatic to see each other again. They had missed each other so much and now had a lot to celebrate....

Chapter End Notes

I finally updated! Thanks for bearing with me, I've been busy and am only getting busier (I'm sorry!). Remember when I would update three times a week? Ah, those were the days haha. Also, do you get the play on words in the chapter title? Anyways, the next chapter is going to include some *interesting* content... just warning you all. ;)

What Rhymes with Corny?

Chapter Summary

"Lights Down Low" by MAX
"Down" by Jay Sean
"Love Me Like You Do" by Ellie Goulding
"Show Me Love (feat. Kimberly Anne)" by Sam Feldt

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

"I missed you, like a lot," Mallory confessed, even though Jessie already knew that. The two were in Mal's room, finally reuniting after their flights had came in at different times. Their roommates were gone because the team had an away game at Utah, leaving only the four of them. After a week and a half apart, Mal and Jess were eager to see each other and were going to use the opportunity to sleep together in Mal's bed. They were exhausted from the long plane trip where they had spent the entirety doing their homework so they could chill when they got back on campus. When the two had finally gotten back together, they were about ready to go to sleep—even though it was only nine o'clock at night. The couple were laying down next to each other, cuddling closely together on Mal's bed.

"Just how much did you miss me?" Jessie teased, smirking up at Mal who now had positioned herself above her favorite Canadian. Mallory leant down and kissed the smirk away with fiery passion. Jessie reciprocated the action, tugging lightly onto Mal's hair. They both were so far gone that the kiss had escalated quickly, Mal's knee now wedged in between Jessie. Mallory's fingers were mindlessly dancing on Jessie's abdomen underneath her shirt, causing Jess to squirm under the touch. Right when Mal began to attack her lover's neck, Jessie spoke.

"I've never done this before," Jess whispered to Mal. Mallory turned her attention and gaze to Jess, a cautious look in her eyes. The warm feeling of Mal's lips lingered on Jessie's as her breathing became more unsteady.

"I'm so sorry, I didn't mean to. It just—it just kinda happened. We don't have to if you don't want to," Mal nervously stuttered out, furiously blushing.

"No no no, I want to do this," Jessie quickly clarified. "But do you want to?"

"Well, duh," Mal responded, as if it was obvious.

"You're annoying," Jessie rolled her eyes at her.

"You love me though," Mal smiled as she leant back down and resumed where she left off. They captured each other's lips and tongues as Mal's fingers casually danced right below Jessie's abs.

"I've never done this with a girl before but we're a team. We'll do this together then," Mal whispered as she sat up to take off her shirt and unclasp her bra. Jessie was left in awe at the
beautiful girl in front of her, the girl she claimed was the most beautiful girl in the world. She still found herself asking Mal if she still liked her, always in disbelief that a girl as beautiful as her actually wanted to be with her. Right when the forward attacked the Canadian's neck with her mouth, she added something that made Jess shutter, "Plus, practice makes perfect."

"Mal," Jess moaned as Mal bit and sucked on Jessie's neck, leaving a bruised mark. She slowly kissed her way down Jessie's body while unbuttoning the moaning girl's flannel, exposing more and more of her skin. Jessie's fingers were tangled in Mallory's hair all the while.

"Shh," Mal whispered, smirking at the reaction she received. She then paused to take the rest of both of their clothes off.

"Are you sure you wanna do this?" Jess asked, still in disbelief. Her face was now a deep shade of red and her breathing was a little uneven.

"I've never wanted to more," Mal whispered truthfully back, then immediately went to kiss right above Jessie's core. But the Canadian had other ideas. She flipped the American so she was on top, and was suddenly in control.

Jessie didn't know what she was doing but she wanted Mallory to know just how much she loved her, she wanted to show her. So she did what she was hoping gave Mal the most pleasure. She slowly kissed and licked the American's well defined abs that she seemed to never be able to take her eyes off whenever Mal took her shirt off. Jess was unsure if she was doing everything right but from the way Mal squirmed under her and took sharp intakes of breath, she could tell she was doing something right. With her hands holding the sides of her girlfriend underneath her, her fingers gently rubbing circles over one of Mal's tattoos, she slowly kissed lower. Her mouth was now ghosting over the insides of Mal's thighs. She very slowly pecked warm wet kisses until Mallory tugged on her hair—her hands had been entangled in the Canadian's brown locks—and begged her to touch the place she wanted to be touched the most. Jessie nodded at Mal's plea but that didn't stop her from continuing to tease as she bit down hard onto a spot on the American's thigh that was dangerously close to her core. She bit down then expertly swirled her tongue around, creating a bruise on the inside of her thigh.

"Jess," Mal moaned. Jessie looked back up at her, seeing the way Mal was begging for her—her legs squeamish, her abs clenched, her hands tightly holding onto Jessie's hair, her back arching, her head leaning back, and her eyes closed. Her new favorite song was Mallory's moans. "Stop teasing."

"Mmm," Jessie replied as she turned her attention back onto the thighs she was kissing. Her lips inched closer and closer to the place Mal was begging to be touched. Jessie's lips finally met the destination that was dripping for her. She didn't know what to do so she slowly licked her tongue on the wet folds in between Mal's legs. When she felt Mal's grip on her hair become tighter, she quickened her pace. She didn't know if she was doing this right but by the way Mallory cursed under her breath in between her moaning Jessie's name was an implication that she was. She had always thought Mallory was beautiful but when her girlfriend came undone, Mal somehow became even more beautiful. All she could do was kiss Mallory again because the way her lips felt against hers was one of her favorite things.

The rest of the night Mallory memorized where all of Jessie's freckles were and made sure to remember the way Jess said her name in a sweet yet begging tone. Meanwhile, Jessie was finally the reason for leaving hickies on Mallory's body.

"You're beautiful," Mal said smiling as Jess looked at her with her eyes lids half closed and face fully red. "How did I get so lucky?"
"I ask myself the same question every day," Jess replied out of breath in a hushed tone. With one last sweet kiss, they fell asleep, exhausted as their hearts were heavy, full of love.

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"I didn't know you were so dirty," Mal said with a smirk as she began to get dressed in clothes that had been previously thrown onto the floor the night before.

"I'm Canadian, like you said a long time ago, I play dirty," Jess said, reciprocating her smirk, then pulling Mal back down onto the bed so she could kiss her again.

"But that was your first time," Mal said, pulling her mouth away from Jessie's. "How were you so good?"

"I wanted to show you just how much I love you," Jess said as she traced a heart on Mallory's collarbone with her finger as she laid on her girlfriend's chest and listened to her heartbeat.

"Well, I love you too, babe," Mal said with a smile. "But seriously, where did you learn how to do that stuff?"

"Was I really that good?" Jess asked, looking up at Mal, the smirk still on her face. Mal would've rolled her eyes any other time but she was still on cloud nine, even after all this time.

"You were the best. That's the best sex I've ever had," Mal replied honestly.

"Are you just saying that to make me feel better about myself since that was my first time? And you're so upfront about it too—are you lying?"

"No, I'm serious. I've never had an orgasm that good before."

"You were the best," Mal said, pressing a soft kiss to Mallory's lips. "That was only the first practice and practice makes perfect."

"What is that supposed to mean?" Mal asked, wide eyed. "That was already perfect. I could barely hold it together and you were amazing. If you get any better I'm not sure how I'll survive."

"You didn't hold it together at all," Jessie smirked. Mallory opened her mouth to protest but it was true. All she could do was stare, mouth agape, at a smirking Jessie.

"When did you become so dirty?"

"Since you came," Jess snickered.

"Did you seriously just make a pun out of that question?" Mal rolled her eyes although she couldn't stop herself from blushing at that remark. "You're so corny."

"I couldn't help it," Jess shrugged as they both stood up and began to get dressed so they could go get breakfast together.

"Ya know, scoring a hat trick with the national team was cool and all but this was even better."

"Look who's corny now," Jessie laughed.

"I feel like I'm an overachiever since I scored three goals AND scored a hot girlfriend."

"Wait what?"

"Since you were under me...."

"Oh my gosh, you're insufferable," Mallory rolled her eyes as she threw a pillow at her laughing girlfriend.

Chapter End Notes

Well, there's the much awaited chapter. That was so awkward to write but I tried my best lol, I didn't want it to be seen as smut but rather a "love making" scene, ya know? Sorry it was short but it would've been weird for me to write more. Anyways, thanks for reading!

P.S. Did anyone figure out the chapter title? (Lol sorry, I just had to.)
Bru-WINS

Chapter Summary

"It's Time" by Imagine Dragons
"Battlefield" by Jordin Sparks
"All I Do is Win" by DJ Khaled

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

There was an extra pep in both Mallory and Jessie's step that was quite visible to the others but no one else could understand the reasoning behind why and didn't bother to ask. They were incredibly happy, leading them to being better in all aspects of their lives. Both of them were more social, deciding that they had been acting like they were connected at the hip, so they met up with their friends outside of soccer and Will. They were doing well in their classes, both of them motivating each other and studying together. They each FaceTimed their parents once a week—catching up on the latest news—and communicated with their siblings as often as possible. They both joined an activity outside of soccer and school, Jessie joined a photography club while Mallory joined a spirit club. They were thriving and most importantly, they were thriving on the soccer field.

The couple had a strict "hands off" policy between them during the NCAA tournament so they could focus more on the games. Their rule proved to be successful. They breezed through the early rounds of the NCAA tournament after beating Pepperdine 3-0 in the first round. Mallory and Jessie had scored a goal a piece, having played so well in the first half that nearly every single player on their team was able to get some minutes. In the second round, they beat Oregon 2-0 and they had played with so much grit that their lack of scoring and assisting in the game was overlooked. They were truly thriving and playing so incredibly well, with so much heart.

It wasn't until the third round that their games became more difficult. When they found out they had to play Clemson, they were less than thrilled. Although Clemson did not have Kailen anymore, they were still a spectacular team that UCLA had lost to in overtime during the regular season. With the few days of preparation, the whole team was locked in. They were focused and had practiced even harder than before. So when they beat Clemson 2-0 and had dominated the game from start to finish, they were surprised. But celebrations were short lived because then they found out they were playing UNC in the quarterfinals.

Advancing to the College Cup is sweet, but advancing after beating a historically top team in PKs is even sweeter when your team lost in PKs the year previous. So when UCLA beat UNC in PKs, the girls of Westwood were ecstatic. The game made it worth it for having to miss Thanksgiving with their families—not like they would have been able to travel back home had they been free. Plus, the UCLA Women's Soccer Team was a family, some feel like each other's sister and others feel like each other's wife. And to make the win even sweeter, they only had one day of preparing and adjusting to the time difference.

Then Stanford came along for the semifinal. Amongst the excitement of reaching the College Cup, UCLA was particularly locked in on beating Stanford. The Cardinals had been ranked in the top
ten in the nation all throughout the season. UCLA had lost to them in the regular season 1-0 and 2-1 in overtime, so they were considered the underdogs. They had been hoping they wouldn't have to face Stanford until at least the final. Their Pac-12 rival was exceptionally good this year and even though the Bruins were too, they were not too excited about playing them.

"We need to beat Stanford tonight," Mallory said as she, Jessie, Teagan, Kaiya, and Marley all were studying in one of their hotel rooms in Orlando.

"You're supposed to be doing your homework," Marley scolded her best friend, even though she had been scrolling through Instagram for the past fifteen minutes. "Coach will kill us if she finds out we're not studying during study hall."

"Oh come on, do you really think Anika and Julia are studying right now?" Mallory rolled her eyes.

"Ew, that's gross," Kaiya responded with a look of disgust. "I really hope they're not having sex in the room next to us right now."

"That's not what I meant, we have a game later," Mal explained herself. "They wouldn't do that. I'm pretty sure they snuck out and went to Julia's old school since it's only an hour away- I wasn't supposed to tell you guys that whoops."

"Lips are sealed. Anyways, yes, we do need to beat Stanford. Like we had to beat every other team to get here. But why did you bring this up? I know they're one of our rivals but still," Jessie said, turning the attention back to soccer.

"Jane and Andi will literally never let me live. Like if Andi scores tonight, I'm never not going to hear about it for the rest of my life. Jane and Andi are super competitive and love participating in banter towards me," Mal articulated, way too dramatically.

"It's not the end of the world," Teagan replied with a small laugh.

"Bragging rights are on the line!" The American phenom argued.

"Whatever, let's just win this game and the whole damn thing so we can go to Disney World after," Kaiya said, turning her attention back to her books and laptop.

"Are you serious?" Marley questioned Kaiya.

"Disney World is the happiest place on earth. It'd be awesome if we could win the College Cup so then I'd be happy when we go there. I wouldn't want to associate it with losing and then have it be the saddest place on earth for us," Kaiya explained.

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"Are you ready to kick some Stanford ass?" Mallory asked Jess. The two were walking back to the locker room after having warmed up with the team, their teammates conversing amongst each other in pairs. They were pumped and ready to play, especially after having seen the big crowd in attendance.

"You're like really really determined to beat the Christmas trees," Jessie pointed out how Mal was literally fuming with determination.

"Sorry, I just really want this season to be memorable, in case it's my las—in case we don't get this far next year. We lost to them twice in the regular season and I don't want to lose to them again."
"It's okay, you worked up like this is kinda hot," Jessie smirked. "Although, you do need to chill."

"I'm just really excited. I usually am pretty chill whenever I play but for some reason I'm just super worked up for this game. You know me, the only times I get worked up are when I'm stressed due to school or when you do something that makes me want to tear off your clothes."

"Mallory!" Jessie lightly hit her girlfriend in the arm.

"Ow! What was that for?" Mal whined. Jessie quickly looked around them, letting out a sigh of relief when she realized no one was within listening distance of them.

"Someone could've heard that," Jessie said quietly through gritted teeth so only her girlfriend could hear.

"It's true," Mal nonchalantly shrugged.

"Let's just go have our team pep talk then go beat Stanford," Jessie said.

Playing Stanford proved to be just as competitive as was predicted. In the beginning, Stanford had dominated the game. They had gotten four shots on goal in thirty minutes, keeping high pressure and barely letting UCLA even get past midfield. The Bruins' defense and midfield were have trouble controlling the ball and getting it up top, partly due to Stanford being so good and partly due to the Bruins just not playing their best. With the fantastic line-up and subs UCLA had, they should've been playing much better. UCLA had only gotten one shot on goal during the whole first half and it wasn't even on target. It was a frustrating first half for the Bruins because they weren't playing well and a frustrating first half for Stanford because they had totally dominated the first half but the game had remained scoreless. If it hadn't been for Teagan's acrobatic saves, the Bruins would have been losing by two at halftime.

"You guys need to take a breath and relax. Enjoy playing the game, have fun. I know you girls know that you're not playing well and I'm not going to yell at you for that. We just need to relax. Don't rush the game, just remember to communicate with each other on the field. Don't rush your passes and be smart with your runs and be smart with the ball. Don't let Stanford scare you. We can win this if we just relax and play the game that we have so much fun playing. We got this. Remember, as my fellow UCLA coach John Wooden said, "It's not so important who starts the game but who finishes it." Okay captains, do your thing."

"Let's do this girls, we got this!" Their co-captain enthusiastically yelled as the others became inspired and pumped to play.

"Bruins on three," their other captain began to chant. "One, two, three- BRUINS!"

With that, they then returned to the field, hyped as ever with determination vibrating throughout every single one of their bodies. A decent crowd of 5,000 in attendance helped make the ambience of the game more exciting, especially with the presence of some senior USWNT and other professional players present. UCLA and Stanford are two exception women's soccer programs that produce some of the best players in the world with a rich rivalry so it was no surprise that some famous players who had no affiliation with either team were in attendance. Luckily for the crowd, the game did not disappoint, especially during the second half.

From the second the whistle blew signaling the start of the second half, there was a completely different vibe for the Bruins. They were playing much better, the best they had played throughout the whole season. Their formation was perfect, their passes crisp, their communication superb, their footwork phenomenal, and their shots were already much more on target than before.
Stanford didn't know what was coming and it would only be a matter of time until they wouldn't be able to keep up—it was as if the Bruins hadn't played a full first half. UCLA was playing their second half the way Stanford had been playing their first half.

After shots narrowly missing the goal or barely being saved by the goalie, UCLA finally got one in at the sixty-third minute. Mallory and Ashley up top together is a deadly combination, the two being so good and having played together for years. With Jessie and Anika in the center-midfield right behind them, it's almost unfair just how good they are when they're all playing at their best. The chemistry between the four in the center and forward position is just so good and tonight, they had quickly ran their opponents out. When Anika had been dribbling in the middle and gotten two Stanford defenders to come to her, she was able to pass the ball to Jessie who had been open out wide. She quickly dribbled down the flank, effectively using creative footwork and breaking one girl's ankles along the way, then cut in when another player came to defender her. When she looked up, she saw that Mal was making a run just right of her. Jessie perfectly placed the ball while Mallory perfectly timed and executed her run. Once Mal got the ball, she used her quick speed to outrun her defender and dribbled towards the end line. She crossed the ball to Ashley who one-timed the ball and volleyed it out of the air into the upper ninety with so much power that it was impossible for the keeper to save it. It was an amazing goal and team effort that would ultimately be their ticket into the final. An insurance goal scored off a header in the eighty-eighth minute by Marley helped seal the deal and was well-deserved after the way the Bruins had been playing.

"I'm really glad we're playing on the same team," Mal said to her girlfriend as the two walked together from their hotel rooms to the team bus that would take them to practice.

"Me too," Jessie smiled.

"Because I wouldn't want to be embarrassed like the way you embarrassed that Stanford girl. She's probably going to have nightmares about you breaking her ankles like that, she literally fell onto the ground."

"I can always do that to you during an international game...." Jessie reminded her with a laugh.

"Oh shit, that's right," Mal scowled.

"And luckily for me, I have that opportunity in a month."

"Oh shit, that's next month? I forgot!" Mal said, suddenly frazzled.

"Chill babe, don't worry about it right now, we still have awhile. We first need to focus on beating Florida in the final," Jessie said. Then she added with a smirk, "Then we can focus on Canada beating the United States."

"I would kiss that smirk off your face if I could but our teammates are right there."

"Sounds like a personal problem," Jessie scoffed with an evil smile as they neared the lobby where their teammates had begun to crowd.

Chapter End Notes
Fun little anecdote that's kind of random that you don't have to read: One time about 8 years ago (so I was 11), I went to dinner at a family friends' house. They were good friends of my dad's but I didn't really know them- their four kids were older than me. So I hung out with the youngest kid, who was just 2 years older. I was super shy but this girl was super nice and played with me, trying to get me out of my shell haha. It was then discovered that she was really good at soccer and that's when I finally opened up so she began to show some skills and that's when I realized I wasn't as good at soccer as I thought- she was really good and I literally said, "Woah, she's good". Anyways, that girl was Andi Sullivan lol. Funny that my 11 year old self could understand real talent in a 13 year old at that young of an age.

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Thanks for reading this fic and patiently waiting! For someone who loves playing and watching soccer so much, I didn't have much soccer content in this story until now. Anyways, I've been super busy and I realized I made some errors within my timeline of events (since I want to make this accurate) and will have to change and add some chapters so please bear with me. Go watch some soccer while I work on this story haha.
Chapter Summary

"Smash Into You" by Beyoncé
"Stressed Out" by twenty one pilots
"Sweet Escape (feat. Sirena)" by Alesso
"In Case You Didn't Know" by Brett Young

Chapter Notes

There is a minuscule amount of time in between the NCAA semi-final and championships game. Players only have two days to prepare for the big game, not giving them enough time to recover—physically or mentally. To add on to the difficult competition, all of these college players have a million other things going on in their lives as well. They can't simply just focus on playing the beautiful game that they already dedicate much of their lives to. Although club youth tournaments were sometimes two games in a day, it was different in college because the level of play is much higher.

Unfortunately, Mal was one of those people who had the misfortune of being stressed out the night before the College Cup Final. She usually isn't stressed about games, or anything really. She's one of the most chill people in the world and she never gets nervous prior to a game. When she played in youth World Cups and in the Olympics, she hadn't even been nervous. And yet, here she was, nervous for the College Cup Final. She was suddenly stressing about everything, from the nerves about the big game to her schoolwork to her sister’s wedding to the prospect of going pro sooner rather than later. She couldn't sleep so she got out of bed and made her way over to her favorite person’s room across the hall.

She very quietly knocked on the door, hoping her girlfriend would open the door instead of Sunny. Mal loves Sunny but she also knows that waking up Sunny in the middle of the night before a big game would be a big no-no. When Jessie tiredly opened the door, she was thankful.

“Hey,” Mal smiled.

“What are you doing? It's one-thirty in the morning,” Jessie begrudgingly mumbled, her eyes half closed.

“I can't sleep,” Mallory simply stated. “Can we please go somewhere? I'm like super nervous and stressed and I never am.”

“I would say no and go back to bed but you're never like this,” Jessie replied. “I'll be right back.”

Mal nodded her head in response. Jessie quickly went to get her hotel key card, her phone, her infamous UCLA hoodie, and some shoes. When she came back and quietly closed the door behind her, she took Mal’s hand in hers and gave a small comforting squeeze—Mal’s nerves had already settled down a little at the simple gesture.
"Where are we going?" Mal questioned, her eyebrows furrowing while her nerves slightly died down when Jessie's fingers became intertwined in her own.

"Somewhere where we can calm your nerves down."

"And where would that be?" Mal asked.

"Well, where do you want to go?"

"I don't know," Mal shrugged. "Let me think about that."

And so the couple quietly walked around their floor in a comfortable silence, hoping no one would be able to hear them. Just being in Jessie's presence had helped calm Mal's nerves down, her heart wasn't racing as fast but she still wasn't tired yet.

"Let's go to the roof," Mal suddenly suggested.

"Um, what?" Jessie asked, not sure if she heard that correctly, wondering if she was just really tired.

"I said let's go to the roof."

"Oh, that's what I thought. I thought I was losing my hearing but instead you're losing your mind."

"Babe, please?" Mal asked innocently. "It'll help me fall asleep."

"Babe," Jess said exasperated. "How will we even get up there? And what if we get caught? I do not want to be arrested, especially tonight."

"You worry too much," Mallory rolled her eyes.

"I'm serious! I regret even asking you where to go."

"We'll be fine," the American replied as she pulled her girlfriend along towards the stairs. Jessie was now the nervous one, her head on a swivel as she constantly checked her surroundings to see if anyone was watching them. Meanwhile, the girl who had been too nervous to sleep was now happier than ever and excited about the prospect of going on the roof. Then Mal mustered up the best puppy dog face she could and asked, "Pretty please, can we go to the roof?"

“Fine,” Jessie grumbled.

“Thanks babe,” Mal said excitedly as she quickly pecked Jess on the cheek. They then made their way up the stairs, climbing to the top story. Jessie’s head was on a swivel, making sure they wouldn't be caught- even looking for security cameras. It seemed that the stress Mal had shifted over to Jessie but for other reasons.

“If we get caught, I swear,” Jessie’s tense self whispered as Mal opened the door that said “ROOF ACCESS” in bold letters. Mal excitedly pulled Jessie along, the Canadian being a nervous mess.

“We’ll be fine,” Mal assured.

“We shouldn't be up here,” Jessie said uneasily as the two walked towards the elevated edge of the building. In response, Mal did the one thing she knew would make Jessie calm down. She firmly pressed her lips against Jessie’s and caressed her girlfriend’s cheek in her hand, lightly stroking her face.
That seemed to do the trick.

“How do you do that?” Jessie asked as the two pulled away.

“Do what?” Mallory questioned as she sat down on a chair that was lying idly by the edge, pulling Jessie next to her so they could share.

“Make me fall in love with you over and over again,” Jessie replied.

“Way to be sappy,” Mal laughed. The two then took in the sight before them. It was pretty unamusing, their hotel not being closer into the city. They could see the city lights and some airplanes flying above but that was it. But there was an upside of being further away from the urban area, there was a quiet ambience instead of the bustle of busy streets. Mallory and Jessie remained quiet for some time, just taking in their surroundings and thinking.

“You look cold,” Jessie stated as she watched Mal shivering.

“I’m fine,” Mal said, not very convincingly.

“Here,” Jess said. She took off her sweatshirt and gave it to Mal.

“No no no, I'm fine. I don't want you to be cold,” Mal stubbornly refused the kind gesture.

“I'm not even cold,” Jessie shrugged. Mal couldn't come up with an argument and she really was cold so she put her girlfriend’s favorite sweatshirt on then snuggled up to Jess.

“Thank you, babe,” Mallory replied.

The two just sat in silence again. The distant ambience of the city and the nearby wildlife were all that could be heard. Internally, a million thoughts were loudly racing in their minds. There were so many things going on in their lives.

“What are you thinking about?” Jessie finally broke the silence, she could sense some very serious thoughts were swarming in Mallory’s mind.

“What if I stopped going to college and went pro?” Mal blurted out.

“Well, it's up to you. Whatever makes you happy and the best player and person you can be.”

“I just—I just don't know what to do,” Mal sighed. “Everything has been so crazy lately. Like this final game, national team call-ups, my sister’s wedding, then this whole prospect of going pro.”

“I can't do anything to relieve you of all this stress and I can't make a decision like that for you but I can be by your side,” Jessie said with a smile.

“I know babe, I love you,” Mallory replied as she leant over and kissed Jessie on the cheek.

“So what are your reasons for wanting to go pro?”

“Well, school is obviously not my thing. I'm maintaining decent grades and all but I still have no clue what I want to major in. I love this team, my best friends and girlfriend play right beside me. We are such a good team too. And I've had an unforgettabley amazing time at college, it's been so fun. I love playing at UCLA, don't get me wrong, it's just, why stay in college when I could be making thousands of dollars playing professionally right now and traveling to new places? Like I'm in my prime and people keep telling me I have so much more potential. Why would I stay at UCLA and not really develop when I could easily go to any pro team and get even better? I’m not
trying to put down playing in college whatsoever, I just think I should take good opportunities that come to me. Ya know?"

“It sounds like you already know what you want to do,” Jessie laughed.

“I just don't want to leave you or anyone else at UCLA. UCLA is home for me. I just don't know what to do.”

“Don't worry about it now, babe. Just let life take you where it wants you to go. Take a deep breath, inhale then exhale,” Jessie instructed and so Mallory did as she was told, her nerves disappearing with each calm breath she took. Soon enough the both of them were back in their naturally chill states. They comfortably sat in silence as they looked up at the sky and tried to count the stars.

“What do you want to do as a career?” Mallory quietly asked.

“I want to be an architect.”

“I know that but how do you want to get there? You're even better at soccer than I am and John even said he would rather you go play professionally instead of playing in college. But I also know that becoming an architect is no easy task. I know that once you pass that engineering test you're basically guaranteed a well-paying job. You also need an internship and need to go to school for even longer than four years. How are you going to do that?”

“It'll take me awhile but it'll be worth it. I want to start an architecture firm with my brother. He's older than me so he'll have a head start. I'll try to do all of my schooling over the course of the next seven years. Since I do want to go play professionally, it's obviously going to take me longer to graduate and get my certification. Wherever I play, I'll find a university to study at and will temporarily transfer. I'll do an internship during my last quarter of school where I'll go back to UCLA during my offseason. If I get called into national camp during my internship, then I'll just have to opt out of camp- it'll definitely be during an off year. By the time I'm a fully certified architect, I'll be settled on a pro team and will be able to start a firm with my brother. If I'm one of the founders and co-CEOs, then my schedule will be more flexible and it'll all work out.”

“Wow, all my sister and I ever wanted to start was a lemonade stand when we were little,” Mal responded, dejectedly.

“If it makes you feel any better, neither my brother nor sister ever got to play on a youth national team like your sister did.”

“It's just, you have everything planned out so well. I don't even know what I'm doing for winter break.”

“It's okay, Mal, everyone has different goals. Everyone's different,” Jessie assured Mal as she lightly squeezed Mal into a hug.

“I know but still—I just feel so behind with everything,” Mal whined.

“Who cares? There's only one Mallory Pugh and you can do whatever the heck you want to do. Don't worry about the future, enjoy the present. Let life guide you.”

“How are you always right?” Mal asked as she laid her head on Jessie’s shoulder.

“It's the Canadian blood,” Jessie laughed as the two settled down into another comfortable silence.
“Let’s dance,” Mallory suddenly suggested as she shifted in the chair.

“What?”

“Let’s dance,” Mallory repeated as she stood up and offered Jessie a hand. Jess hesitantly took it and let herself be guided by her girlfriend.

“I can’t dance,” Jessie said.

“Oh please,” Mal rolled her eyes. “You’re like the Canadian female version of Messi who dances with the ball all the time and you dance on me when you’re drunk.”

“Mallory!” Jessie said through clenched teeth as she lightly hit Mal at the remark.

“It’s true!” Mal defended herself as she laced one of her hands in Jessie’s then laid the other hand on her girlfriend’s backside. “Just follow my lead.”

“Ugh, fine,” Jessie said.

“We need music,” Mallory stated. “Let me sing.”

“I think we’re goo—”

“Gas pedal, gas pedal—”

“Could you at least sing something that’s not meant for girls to drop it at the club?” Jessie suggested, rolling her eyes.

“Okay, fine,” Mal giggled, knowing Jessie was probably 200% done with her by now. “How about country? You know I love country.”

“As long as it’s appropriate and not too twangy.”

“Okay, here goes nothing,” Mallory said as the two slow danced under the stars. “In case you didn’t know,
Baby I’m crazy ‘bout you
And I would be lying if I said
That I could live this life without you
Even though I don’t tell you all the time
You had my heart a long long time ago
In case you didn’t know
You’ve got all of me
I belong to you
Yeah, you’re my everything.”

They shared one short but passionate kiss and suddenly all of Mallory’s nerves were completely gone.

“You’re a terrible singer,” Jessie joked as she pulled away, her eyes sparkling with love and a smile as bright as the city lights.

“Way to kill the mood, I felt so romantic there,” Mal rolled her eyes.

“I can’t let your ego get too big,” Jess laughed.

“Oh shut up,” Mal scoffed. “You may think I’m a terrible singer but you still love my singing
because it's me who's singing.”

Jessie opened her mouth to protest but no words came out and her cheeks turned red, Mallory knows her too well.

“That’s what I thought,” Mal smirked.

“How do you know me so well?” Jessie asked and Mallory just shrugged with a smug look painted across her face. Then she quickly looked at the time at her phone and changed the subject, “Babe, we should probably head back to our rooms. It’s two-thirty in the morning.”

“Just fifteen more minutes, please,” Mal begged as she leant her head against Jessie’s chest. Jessie was about to protest but Mal looked up at her with puppy dog eyes that she could absolutely not argue with. The two then stood in each other’s arms in a comfortable silence as they looked up at the stars, savoring the comfortable silence and serendipity. With a cool breeze blowing, it was perfect weather to cuddle in.

“We’re going to win this College Cup and you’re going to be right beside me when we lift that trophy, okay?” Jessie suddenly said. “If this does end up being your last college game, then you better go out on top.”

“Hopefully we’ll be celebrating where I’m on top of you.”

“Do you seriously have to make everything inappropriate? Was that really necessary?” Jessie rolled her eyes.

“Sorry, I couldn't help it,” Mallory chuckled. “But yes, we’ll go win the whole damn thing. Wait—I don't wanna jinx it though so I actually take that back.”

“Okay fine, we’ll just try our best,” Jessie responded.

“I kinda wish this night wouldn’t end. It’s been perfect,” Mal said.

“Any night I get to spend with you is perfect so I don't blame you. I just wanna stay out here with you. Although, I’d prefer not sneaking up on the roof and instead go somewhere else where we are allowed to be,” the Canadian replied. “Speaking of which, we should probably go. It's really late and we need to sleep.”

“I guess we should,” Mal agreed. The two walked back inside, hand in hand. As they were descending the stairs from the roof, they heard a door open. Mal and Jessie froze and looked at each other, holding their breath as they silently waited for the door to close. When it did, they let out a relieved breath and continued to go down the stairs. They made it onto the top floor with ease except they weren't exactly allowed to be on the top floor—a ballroom—so their hearts were still racing. Just as they closed the door to the roof access stairway, they heard another door open followed by the voice of a hotel staff member talking on her phone. They quickly but quietly hid behind a big curtain and waited until the voice and footsteps of the woman were gone. Once the coast was clear, they sprinted to the stairwell and made their way back to their floor. When they were safely back on their floor, they could finally relax and laugh about the whole situation.

“I love you but I hated that,” Jessie quietly told Mal, making sure not to wake anyone else.

“I know but that sure does make for a fun memory,” Mal laughed.

“Goodnight, babe,” Jessie rolled her eyes then quickly pecked Mallory’s lips.
“We’re going to kick some ass, sleep tight. Love you,” Mal smiled. The two went their separate ways and entered their rooms. It wasn't until Mal was back laying in her bed when she realized that she was still wearing Jessie’s beloved UCLA hoodie. She smiled at the realization and enjoyed the scent of her girlfriend as she fell into one of the best sleeps of her life.

Chapter End Notes

Apologies for the long wait but a lot of things have been going on so it's been difficult. Good news though, I found all of my notes on my phone so those 20+ chapters I thought I had lost aren't actually gone!

Anyways, thank you for being so patient and so incredibly nice and understanding. I haven't been in the best place mentally this summer but your kind words have been helping me so much. Thank you for being amazing!
Seventy-seven. That's how many minutes it took for a team to finally breakthrough in what had been a deadlock. The game had been showcasing both of the talented sides very well, players using their skills and teamwork to put on quite a show. With a star-studded crowd to entertain and a crowd of 12,000 people in attendance, the attendees made sure their presence was known. With every crazy shot, near goal, good save, physical play, fancy move, and questionable referee call, the crowd was animated and very into the game. Plus, with UCLA playing against Florida in the final in Orlando, Florida, there were some pretty rowdy fans in the stands. So when UCLA scored in the seventy-seventh minute, the crowd erupted. There were some happy cheers and some booing but no one on the UCLA team really cared, all they cared about was that they were up with a few minutes left in the game. To have Teagan head the ball into the goal off of Mallory’s corner kick made it all the better for the Bruins. If you listened closely, you could hear the U.S. and Australian National Team players who were present losing their minds.

“Okay ladies, FOCUS! We have to finish this up!” Coach Cromwell yelled from the sideline. The Bruins had dogpiled on top of Teagan to celebrate but they quickly refocused and turned their attention back to winning it all. “Pretend it’s zero-zero. Don’t stop fighting and don’t be lazy. Just keep playing. You got this girls!”

That wasn’t the end of the game, not even close.

Thirteen minutes left in regulation was a long time. An eternity in soccer time. They were the longest thirteen minutes that either team had experienced. Not even two minutes after the Bruins scored, they were making their way down towards the goal again. Mallory ran through the middle of the field, dribbling the ball around two defensive midfielders. At the last second, she passed the ball out wide to Anika who one-timed it to Jessie down the right flank. Jessie crossed the ball into the box where Marley let it bounce once then volleyed it. She powerfully shot the ball towards the right inner side of the net and anticipated it to go in… except it didn’t go into the back of the net. Florida’s keeper saved it and quickly punted the ball out to one of her midfielders who was already sprinting down the field. The counterattack by Florida was fast, too fast for UCLA’s liking. In the blink of an eye, the Gators had expertly gone down the length of the field. Before they knew it, the Gators had equalized with a goal that was so beautiful that Teagan didn’t stand a chance to save the curling ball whizzing into the upper ninety. And just like that, it felt like the game was zero-zero once again.

When the final whistle blew signaling the end of regulation, both teams were exhausted and not looking forward to having to play even more. Nearly everyone was bruised with their hair mangled and nearly falling out. In a game that felt like it was going on forever, there was still a forever amount of time left to play. The coaches gave pep talks while the players just wanted to get back
on the field and win the game.

“We’ll lift that trophy up together, okay?” Jessie whispered to Mal as the two made their way back onto the field.

“Don’t jinx it,” Mal quietly laughed back.

The center official blew the whistle and Florida kicked off. Once the game began again, it was as if it had picked up right where it had left off. The game continued to see end-to-end action, both keepers making incredible saves. Both teams were visibly getting more tired and passes and shots that should’ve been easy were lazily blotched. After having lost in a heartbreaking way in the third round last year, the UCLA girls had a chip on their shoulders and a lot to prove. They were throwing themselves at their opponents (they were lucky that Florida was being just as physical and that the referees were too tired to call everything) and shooting when they shouldn’t have. The whole thirty minute extra time period went like that, both teams being overly physical and trying too hard. Right before the whistle blew signaling the end of overtime, Claire gave a last ditch effort into scoring from right outside of the eighteen. The ball was easily saved and then the final whistle blew.

As the players came off the field, they were absolutely exhausted and most of them wondered if they even had enough energy to survive penalty kicks. The coaches announced the penalty kick order and told their girls to breathe and relax. Even though the girls were tired and their bodies ached, they were not relaxed at all. Going into penalty kicks is stressful and the nerves were definitely getting to everyone.

“The order is going to be Claire, MacKenzie, Zoey, Jessie, then Mallory. If there’s more, we’ll have Chloe, Anika, Ashley, Marley, Gabrielle, then Teagan go,” Coach Cromwell announced. The Lady Bruins nervously nodded their heads as they tried to calm down in between sipping their water and energy drinks.

The Bruins were lucky enough to win the coin toss and elected to shoot second. The referee signaled for the players to get ready. Teagan shook her arms back and forth to get loose as she walked over to the six yard box. She got onto the goal line, took a deep breath, then got into position.

The Florida player stepped up and put the ball in position. She avoided eye contact with Teagan, making it difficult for the Aussie to guess what side the shooter was going to go. Nonetheless, Teagan guessed correctly but she was a millisecond too late and about a foot off. She had to watch the ball go back into the net as she was just out of reach. She wanted to punch herself for not getting it but her teammates were telling her to shake it off and to keep her head up. Florida 1 - UCLA 0.

Claire stepped up to the penalty spot and shot the ball so calmly and quickly into the inner right side of the net that Florida’s keeper couldn’t even move to attempt to save it. The other Bruins let out a breath they didn’t know they were holding and cheered on Claire. Florida 1 - UCLA 1.

Mallory and Jessie were standing next to each other as they watched from the midfield. They were subconsciously clenching onto the back of each other’s jerseys as they watched the next Florida player go up to shoot. Teagan kept her eyes on the shooter and this time the shooter kept eye contact. The Bruin goalkeeper could read the Gator’s mind and guessed the right side the ball was going at the right time. She saved the ball and the UCLA players and fans erupted into cheers. Teagan screamed and clenched her fists in delight. The Florida shooter walked back to her teammates and looked like she was about to cry. Florida 1 - UCLA 1.
MacKenzie was a defender, which meant she was usually a very calm player, getting aggressive only when she absolutely needs to. This time, however, she wasn’t as calm as she usually was. This was her last competitive soccer game ever. As a senior, she was set to graduate in the spring and already had a job lined up for after college. She had every right to be nervous, this was her last game. She didn’t let the nerves get to her shooting though. She had been a forward before getting moved to the backline last year so she knew how to get goals. She forcefully shot the ball into the left upper ninety, leaving the Florida keeper look silly- having guessed the wrong side. As MacKenzie jogged back to her cheering teammates, she made a facial expression that meant “yikes” knowing that if the ball had been placed just a couple inches more to the left, it would’ve hit the post and not go in. Florida 1 - UCLA 2.

The next Florida shooter shot the ball low and hard into the back of the net. If Teagan hadn’t guessed the other side, it would’ve been an easy save. All she could do was shake it off and look forward. Florida 2 - UCLA 2.

Zoey marched up to the spot and set the ball down, picking a spot on the ball to kick. She decided to have a little fun with her shot and bounced a couple of times, ran up to the ball, quickly paused-causing the keeper to dive to the right side, then calmly shot the ball right down the middle. After watching the ball hit the back of the net, she did a small fist pump then jogged back to her teammates. Florida 2 - UCLA 3.

When Teagan got into position in goal, she just hoping all of her teammates would score. She was tired and knew that the likeliness that she would save another penalty kick was very low. She was correct; she couldn’t save the next shot. The ball had been perfectly placed into the inside of the net, she didn’t stand a chance. Florida 3 - UCLA 3.

Then it was Jessie’s turn. Mal had given her arm a small squeeze, hoping that would help Jessie in any way. Jessie coolly walked up to the spot, setting the ball down and avoiding eye contact with the keeper. She decided that she would run up to the ball from a little farther than usual to confuse the keeper. It didn’t confuse the Florida keeper too much because she had guessed the right side. However, the keeper hadn’t lunged high enough and the ball went right over her, the ball dipping behind her into the back of the net. After being satisfied with watching the ball hit the back of the net, Jessie turned around and jogged back to her spot next to Mallory. She gave Mal a wide smile. Florida 3 - UCLA 4.

Teagan knew that if she saved this next shot, then the game would be over. She also knew that she probably wasn’t going to. Florida’s star player and best goal scorer was up next. She could simply just stand and not even try to save the shot and hope that Mal would score or she could try to save it because you never know what’s going to happen. She chose the second option because this was her team after all, they were her family and she wasn’t a quitter. She didn’t quit but she also didn’t save the shot. The Florida shooter curled the ball into the right corner and gave the Gators some hope. Florida 4 - UCLA 4.

“You got this, babe,” Jessie whispered into Mallory’s ear right before the American phenom went up to take her shot.

It was now all down to Mal. She was feeling the pressure as she slowly walked up to the spot. But she was Mallory Pugh, one of the most chill soccer players in the world. She didn’t let the nerves get to her too much, at least that’s what her demeanor seemed like.

The official handed her the ball and she set it down on the ground, placing it in the position she wanted. She picked a spot to hit, a place on the ball right above one of the brand’s name. She slowly walked backwards at an angle, calculating in her head how she’ll kick the ball. When she
deemed she was at a good distance away from the ball, she closed her eyes and took a deep breath. She opened her eyes then ran up to the ball.

Chapter End Notes

Sorry not sorry for the cliffhanger, suspense is a writer's best friend haha. Also, I wanted a clever chapter title and this was the only thing that came to mind, sorry lol. Anyways, thank you again for all the support!
Mallory would remember this game forever. She would remember how the game was the most physical game she had ever played in. She would remember how she had assisted her goalkeeper. She would remember the brutal one hundred twenty minutes of playing in a game that felt like it would never end. She would remember the crazy saves Teagan had made all throughout the game and into penalty kicks. She would remember her girlfriend scoring a beautiful penalty kick that was almost as beautiful as the Canadian herself. But most importantly, she would remember her penalty shot being placed perfectly into the inner right side of the net and the Florida keeper stretching out to try to save a ball that was way past her fingertips. She would remember how beautiful her winning penalty kick was.

The crowd went wild and Mal went into shock. Her face wore excitement and disbelief as she turned back towards her teammates, who were already running at her. Her teammates tackled her onto the ground and dogpiled on top of her. A third of the Bruins were crying, another third were in complete disbelief, and the last third could not stop squealing in delight. The Bruins had done it, they had won the College Cup. Florida 4 - UCLA 5.

“I can’t believe we fucking did it!” Anika yelled as she was clinging onto her girlfriend who was in tears. Karina, Kennedy, Ashley, and the other freshmen were jumping up and down like lunatics, letting out hit-pitched squeals and cheers of “BRU-INS” that could probably be heard from outside the stadium. Teagan, Kaiya, and Sunny were still on the ground, holding onto each other tightly as all three of them were in hysterics. Meanwhile, the seniors were sobbing as they held the trophy. Everyone, players and coaches alike, was giving each other hugs. It was difficult to give “good game” handshakes, for both the ecstatic Bruins and heartbroken Gators, but both teams managed to be good sports.

Jessie wanted to kiss Mallory senseless but she knew that she would have to wait. She couldn’t help but run around hugging all of her teammates, coaches, staff, and managers, even though she was exhausted and her cheeks were still red from playing her heart out. But the stupid smile she was wearing was because she was so damn proud of Mallory- her girlfriend scored the winning penalty kick. Even though Mallory was still uncertain about continuing her college career or going pro, Jessie couldn’t help but think that if this was her favorite American’s last college game, then there was no better way to go out. The Canadian wanted to at least tightly hug Mal but before she knew it, Mal was roped into an interview.

“How does it feel to be College Cup CHAMPIONS?!” Julie Foudy enthusiastically asked Mal. Mallory was still letting everything settle in, the realization that her team had just won the highest collegiate competition kicking in.
“It feels amazing. I'm just—wow. I can't believe that just happened. I give so much credit to my team. We just kept fighting through and it paid off. Like Teagan’s goal was insane. Every single person affiliated with this team has just been phenomenal this whole season. We’ve had awesome support and through the highs and lows throughout the season, we’ve just continued to not give up. It's so great to see all the hard work pay off. Thank you to all of the teams we played this season for making our games so difficult and entertaining. Florida, you were excellent opponents and I applaud you for giving it your all,” Mallory spoke with a smile. Then she added, “But I'm so proud to be a Bruin and I'm so proud of this ruthless team that I have the honor to call my family. This is just so amazing.”

It was probably the best interview Mallory had ever done and will ever do. Watching from afar, Jessie was such a proud girlfriend and with a big smile painted across her face, she thought to herself, I guess those public speaking tips helped after all.

Marley and Anika then slowly crept behind Mal, both wearing devilish grins as they carried a large Gatorade cooler full of ice cold water. Right when Julie was about to thank Mal for doing the interview, Marley and Anika poured the ice cold water on Mallory who immediately jumped.

“AHH! Oh my GOSH!” Mal squealed as Marley and Anika snickered while running away, both knowing that their best friend would try to hit them in response. Mal was now shivering but she couldn't help a smile forming on her face. She just smiled as she slowly shook her head.

“I can see that your teammates are very happy about you scoring the winning penalty kick,” Julie laughed.

“We’re family. We won this together,” Mallory said with a big smile.

“Alright Mal, thank you for taking the time to be interviewed by us,” Julie thanked the Bruins’ hero.

“My pleasure,” Mal replied and then the camera turned just to Julie and Mal was free to go celebrate with her teammates. She immediately searched for Jessie but then realized that she and Claire were doing a press conference with Coach Cromwell. She instead went to celebrate with Marley and Anika who were running around like maniacs, even though both of them had played a majority of the game. After taking photos with her two best friends, she found some of her family in the stands. She went over to hug them, her dad gushing about how proud he was of her and her mom crying, overcome with happiness. Her sister was crying, also overcome with emotions, as Mal’s niece cheered in delight. Even her sister’s fiancée made it to the game since it was the baseball offseason. Mallory was ecstatic with joy but exhaustion was quickly taking over. She knew her teammates were going to celebrate tonight but the only thing she wanted to do was climb into bed and sleep for twenty hours straight with her favorite Canadian cuddled up next to her. But she knew that she wouldn't have the freedom of doing that. There was already a planned trip to Disney World tomorrow then they were scheduled to take a red eye back to LA where final exams were lingering.

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Sneaking out to go to a party at UCF was the last thing Jessie wanted to do. Even Mallory didn't want to go either but here they were, standing amongst a group of fellow college students sipping cheap beer out of red solo cups, having been peer pressured (or beer pressured lol) into going by their teammates. One of the girls on the team had a friend who was in a frat at UCF and given that this school was considered one of the biggest party schools in America and they had something big to celebrate, a majority of the girls wanted to go. Mal and Jess tried everything they could to get out of going but their hotel roommates, Sunny and Kaiya, practically dragged them along.
So here they were, trying to enjoy themselves amongst a hundred college students who they didn’t know and would likely never meet again. Jessie really just wanted Mallory to herself tonight but that wasn’t happening. Mal was famous enough to get recognized but luckily for her, college students know when to not overstep it and no one made a big deal out of it. The Canadian knew that not many people would pay attention to her and Mal if they made out right in the middle of the house but there was also a chance that someone could and that someone would take a picture of them. Instead, she had to painstakingly watch her girlfriend exchange friendly small talk with random college students while she shyly stood next to her, staring at how beautiful her favorite Bruin was.

“Isn’t that right, Jess?” Mal asked. Jessie shook her head and blinked her eyes, shaking herself out of her trance.

“Um, what? Sorry....” Jessie replied, hoping her face hadn’t turned red. “It’s been a long day, sorry.”

“I was telling them about how lit UCLA parties are, especially since random famous people go to our school and we see them every now and then,” Mal explained. To Jessie, she very clearly did not want to be at this party and she looked like she really just wanted to go to bed and not talk to anyone for a week. “Don’t you agree?”

“Definitely. That time Jacey arm wrestled Lonzo Ball was pretty funny,” Jessie laughed.

“You’ve met Lonzo Ball?” A guy with brunette hair wearing a Curry jersey asked in disbelief, Jessie had to admit that he was pretty attractive.

“Yeah,” Jessie shrugged. “UCLA athletes get to know each other pretty well.”

“Wow, that’s so cool. We don’t have big famous people like you guys at our school,” a blonde girl wearing a crop top and ripped jean cut-off shorts said, she too was pretty attractive.

“Yeah we don’t have any current students who are also Olympians,” another girl, who was wearing a large UCF sweatshirt and possibly no pants said. She too was really pretty and had brunette hair the same color as the guy’s hair.

“Wish we had a Jessie Fleming though, it'd be cool to have an Olympic bronze medalist on our women’s soccer team,” the guy said. Jessie was surprised they even knew who she was. Mal sent her a little smirk.

“Well, the coach won the World Cup with the United States so I'd say that's pretty cool,” Jessie replied, so humble that she redirected the attention to someone else.

“It's not the same,” the girl in the tight crop top said before she downed her beer. “She's not as hot.”

“Kara! Don't hit on her when I'm right here!” The other girl scolded her.

“I'm not! I'm just telling the truth!” The girl, Kara, said in her defense. At that remark, Jessie blushed as Mallory suddenly became a little possessive. “Don't you agree that they're both pretty hot?”

“Okay, you've got a point there,” the other girl said as both Jessie and Mallory wore surprised looks on their faces while their cheeks became red.

“Here I thought I was gonna have to prevent you two from tearing each other’s clothes off but
instead I'm witnessing this,” the guy said.

“Oh shut up, Jake,” the girl in the sweatshirt said, rolling her eyes. Then she said to Kara, “Do you think I'm hot too?”

“Of course I do, babe,” Kara replied as she leant in to kiss the other girl. Jessie and Mallory were surprised at what was happening before them and had only then realized that these two girls were together and that this guy was just their friend.

“I wish I hadn't gone to the same school as my twin sister but here I am,” Jake said to the two Bruins who were still processing everything. “I also regret inviting these two to this party. I'm cool with all my frat brothers but having my sister here was a mistake. Anyways, we never did introduce ourselves to you, did we? Wow, I feel like such a dick. Anyways, I'm Jake and this is my twin sister Jordan and her girlfriend Kara.”

“Um, nice to meet you,” Mal smiled kindly, still incredibly confused about what just happened.

“We’re probably freaking you guys out with how weird we are. I'm so sorry. I promise we’re not usually like this. We just took a lot of shots before we got here,” Jordan apologized.

“You guys are totally fine,” Jessie assured them, even though she was a bit spooked. This day would definitely be a day to remember.

“We should go before we embarrass ourselves even more,” Kara said as she was definitely a bit tipsy. She reached for Jordan’s hand then said, “It was nice to meet living legends like you guys.”

“Yeah, I hope you remember me when you guys get like super famous,” Jordan said excitedly.

“I hope not, not like this anyways. You guys probably think we’re so weird,” Kara added.

“We won't forget you,” Mal replied, not denying the fact that they were weird. This was definitely another party story to add to the books.

“I have to do some drinking challenge so I’m heading outside,” Jake said. “Nice to meet you guys.”

Then Mallory and Jessie were alone for the first time all night, although they were surrounded by tons of people.

“I definitely won't forget them,” Jessie told Mal with a laugh.

“Did that seriously just happen? Like what? I'm so confused. Am I real? Am I drunk? I could've sworn I only have been sipping out of this cup for the past hour though. Has today just been a dream? It sure was a wild dream if so,” Mallory ranted on.

“You're so dramatic,” Jessie rolled her eyes.

“Is this real life?” Mal asked as she looked directly at her girlfriend, her eyes wide in disbelief. “Did we really win the College Cup and did I really score the winning penalty kick? Did we really just have that weird encounter with those people? If this is a dream then why haven't I been able to celebrate with you in bed?”

“MALLORY!” Jessie furiously blushed. Luckily for them, the frat house was far too crowded and loud for anyone to notice them.
“What? I’m just saying.”

“This will make sure you’re not dreaming,” Jessie said. Mallory closed her eyes and waited to be kissed by her girlfriend but instead was met with a hair tie being launched at her face.

“Oh! What was that?” Mal asked as she opened her eyes.

“Evidence that you’re actually awake,” Jessie snickered.

“Ugh, I just want to go back to the hotel then go to Disney World tomorrow,” Mal whined.

“We could sneak out of here and take an Uber back to the hotel,” Jess suggested.

“Okay, let’s do it,” Mal suddenly perked up.

“You text some of the girls that we’re leaving and I’ll order the Uber, let’s try to get out of here,” Jessie said as she began to make her way out of the crowded frat house, Mallory following close behind.

Dodging in and out of sweaty college students’ bodies proved to be more difficult than expected. In the amount of time it took for them to get out of the house and onto the sidewalk, their Uber had arrived. The two were completely exhausted from all of the day’s events and were about ready to pass out right on the sidewalk. They both had only had one drink and their Uber driver probably thought they had had much more because they really looked like they were about to pass out any second. The Uber driver greeted the two then began to drive.

“Are you two college students?” The Uber driver asked after a couple of minutes of silence, looking into the rear view mirror to look at the Bruins who were slumped in their seats. Jessie would have sat up front like usual but Mallory pulled her to the back seats and she was too tired to argue so she made her way next to Mal.

“I know we look young but yes,” Jessie said politely.

“Oh that’s not what I was thinking,” the Uber driver laughed. “Are you two UCF students?”

“We would never. We go to UCLA,” Mallory chuckled, forever loyal to Westwood.

“Ah, that’s my daughter’s favorite women’s college soccer team,” the man responded.

“Really?” Jessie nonchalantly questioned.

“Yep, she's only twelve but she already wants to go play at UCLA,” he explained.

“Oh, what position does she play?” Mal curiously asked.

“Midfield, she’s a feisty little one but she’s good. I actually drive Ubers so I can earn some extra money to pay off her club fees.”

“Wow, I applaud you. Parents are the best,” Mal said.

“Thank you, my Victoria is my everything, especially since it’s just us two,” he said with a wide smile. “So, do you two play soccer?”

“Both of us have played since like forever haha,” Jessie replied with a light laugh. Both of the girls were too humble to explain that they didn’t just play soccer, it was their life. Neither of the girls enjoyed having much attention so they were going to try to avoid talking about their soccer careers
with this Uber driver for as long as possible. They also didn’t feel like talking about what had happened earlier in the day, they were exhausted after all.

“Do you girls play for the UCLA team?”

“We actually do,” Mal said, continuing to be reserved.

“When we get to your hotel, can I get a picture with you two? My daughter would ground me if I didn’t get a picture with you two, which says something considering I’m the parent,” the Uber driver said.

“Of course!” Mallory said, all three of them laughing. As they arrived at the hotel, both Mal and Jess were thankful to be back. The three of them took a selfie with the Uber driver’s phone and thanked each other, Mallory and Jessie thanking him for the ride while he thanked them for taking a photo with him for his daughter. What the Uber driver didn’t know is that he had just taken a photo with two of the most talented young players in the world and that his daughter will be ecstatic when she finds out her father met THE Mallory Pugh and Jessie Fleming.

“Looks like you have another girl to be on the lookout in like ten years,” Jessie joked as the two walked through the nearly desolate hotel lobby and made their way to the elevator.

“What?” Mal was dumbfounded.

“Remember that girl we met in Maine? Now there’s another girl you need to keep on the lookout for. Hannah and Victoria.”

“How do you know that this Victoria isn’t Canadian though? Maybe you’re the one who should be on the lookout too,” Mal pointed out.

“Well kudos to Canada if she ends up being really good. We’ll be pretty lucky to have her then.”

“True,” Mal replied with a huge yawn. They walked down the hall in a comfortable silence, too tired to have a conversation. Right before Mal turned to enter her hotel room, she said, “I would invite you into my room but I’m not sure who would kill us first if we were found to not be rooming with the right roommates, Kaiya or our coaches.”

“Right,” Jessie tiredly replied. She mumbled a nearly inaudible “love you” then made her way to her own room. Both of them were spent from the day’s events and sleep was the only thing on both of their minds. Usually, with days as memorable as today was for them, they wouldn’t want the day to end, but this time, they didn’t care. Maybe it was the fact that they were so exhausted or maybe it was the fact that they both had grown to love every day... and maybe that was a result of them knowing that they spent nearly every day with the love of their life.

Chapter End Notes

Hey guys! Sorry I don't update very frequently. A lot of things have been going on (like a crazy amount of a lot haha) so I haven't been able to write too much. Please bear with me though, even amongst my absolutely crazy schedule I still have time to write and there's still like 20+ chapters left haha. Anyways, thank you for patiently waiting and for all the support; I hope you enjoyed this chapter!
The Happiest Place On Earth Is With You

Chapter Summary

"One Time" by Justin Bieber
"Feel Good (feat. Daya)" by Illenium
"Video Games" by Lana Del Rey

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Disney World is considered the happiest place on Earth. Full of rides, good food, and various fictional characters, a day spent at the Orlando theme park usually goes down as being the best day of anyone’s life. For Mallory and Jessie, it definitely was one of the best days of their lives. Both having been blessed with winning multiple accolades and experiencing wonderful memories in their lives, this was another day to add to the “Happy Memories” chapter of their books of life.

The team stayed together in the park for the most part and by most part, that means for only fifteen minutes. They said they would all stay together but as soon as they finished taking a team picture in front of Cinderella’s Castle, everyone had dispersed into groups of no smaller than two but no larger than five. Before Marley and Mallory could even consider asking Anika to join their group, she was whisked away with Julia- even turning back to wave goodbye and stick her tongue out just to be obnoxious. That left M Squared with Jessie and Teagan, none of them really caring that it would be just the four of them.

“Do you really have to have that right in my face?” Jessie complained as Teagan had her GoPro recording everything.

“My fans are counting on me for providing them with content of the Canadian Olympian,” Teagan replied. Jessie rolled her eyes and was very close to pushing the Aussie.

“What fans?” Jessie joked.

“Shut up,” Teagan bit back.

“Kids, behave,” Marley said, barging into the bickering.

“Look who’s talking, you’re literally wearing a Minnie Mouse shirt, hat, socks, and fanny pack. You look like a five year old,” Teagan snapped back.

“Take that back, bitch,” Marley’s jaw dropped and she looked like she was about to fight.

“Girl, there are actual kids around, watch your language,” Mal said to her best friend sternly, looking around to make sure no one was paying attention- luckily, no one was. With that, the four ventured off into the magical world of Disney. Jessie rolled her eyes every time she had to take a super basic photo of Mallory and Marley while Teagan documented every single minute. They went on nearly every themed ride, much to Jessie’s content because she really didn’t want to go on any roller coasters. When Jessie and Marley were teamed up against Mallory and Teagan while
riding the Buzz Lightyear ride, Teagan made sure to brag as much as possible in front of their opponents when she and Mal scored more points. Jessie was so close to not having to worry about riding one of the more thrilling rides until Marley suggested they go on Space Mountain and Big Thunder Mountain Railroad. Right before going on the rides then going to get lunch, they took a brief detour to check out Tom Sawyer Island.

“You okay?” Mallory asked her girlfriend who looked ever-so-slightly nervous, only someone who truly knew her would notice.

“What?” Jessie replied as she watched Marley and Teagan racing each other ahead of them.

“Do you not want to go on the rides? If you don’t want to then I can hang back with you and not go on them.”

“That’s sweet but I’ll be okay,” Jessie smiled. She got a little closer to Mal as they followed their crazy roommates and whispered in her favorite American’s ear, “Thank you for being the sweetest girlfriend.”

“That’s my job. I’ll at least sit next to you,” Mal smiled back and then they caught up with the other two.

Jessie held onto Mallory during the entirety of both rides and Mal had to bite her lip from smiling at the adorableness of her girlfriend. Jess was so stealth about being scared while riding the roller coasters that no one except Mal noticed, which saved her from being embarrassed by her friends. Luckily for the Canadian, her cheeks turning red was a normality so no one batted an eye. Jessie returned to her photographer self as she took photos of everything and everyone. There was one time though when she let Mal become the photographer for a little bit. Jessie had befriended an adorable little girl who was wearing Minnie Mouse ears with the Canadian flag on it while donning a Mulan costume and shoes that had light up soccer balls on them. The girl was around the age of two and she was tiny but had a smile that illuminated the park even more than it already was and the cutest laugh. She gave off so much happiness that her bald head made everyone forget the harsh reality of the life the girl was battling. Jessie connected with her so well and even held her and gave her a big hug, Mallory capturing every second of the interaction with the camera. The little girl asked Jessie if she would win the World Cup for Canada and Mal found it so adorable that it didn’t even bother her that that would mean the United States wouldn’t win. Jessie laughed and told her that she would try her best. It was the best way to reply and Mal couldn’t help but admire how beautiful Jessie’s heart was. I love her so much, Mallory thought to herself.

For the rest of the excursion, the group ventured off to find the characters to take photos with them. Marley nearly cried when she took a picture with Minnie. Teagan was ecstatic when she found Kanga in the Winnie the Pooh attraction, claiming that Kanga represented Australia in Magic Kingdom. Jessie didn’t show much emotion throughout the rest of the trip, most likely because she was still exhausted from the events of the day before. All she did was take photos with her camera, a lot of them. Mallory also felt like she was going to pass out any second but she hung in there and managed to keep her spirits high. When the day at Disney World finally concluded, Mallory and Jessie were relieved. They loved “the happiest place on Earth” but they also loved being well-rested and were ready to sleep for a day or ten.

“You’re amazing,” Mallory said. She was walking besides Jessie, both of them not within earshot of anyone else. Mal wasn’t happy just because she was at Disney World with some of her closest friends but more so because she was able to spend an unforgettable day with the girl she loved. She witnessed her girlfriend be a scaredy cat on the roller coasters and she was captivated with how
great she was with one of the cutest kids in the world. For a girl who doesn't show her emotions often, she was so gentle and genuine with one of her biggest fans. Jessie even had to hold back tears when she had to say goodbye to her new little best friend.

"For what?" Jessie questioned.

"For being you," Mal answered.

"You're making me blush."

"Good," Mallory said. "Disney World is the happiest place in the world, after all."

"You're my world."

"That's the sweetest thing anyone's ever told me," Mallory was nearly choking up.

"I literally just quoted Justin Bieber," Jessie rolled her eyes. Then she realized that that was why Mallory was reacting the way she was and she wanted to roll her eyes even harder.

"Okay but seriously, thank you for making Disney World all the more special."

“My pleasure... but I’m surprised we didn’t get kicked out,” Jessie lightly chuckled as she walked next to her girlfriend. They were walking to the monorail that would lead them to the parking lot.

“Well we weren’t drinking and we weren’t in Epcot so it’s fine,” Mal replied, alluding to one of her national teammate’s recent incidents.

“That’s not what I meant,” Jessie laughed. “I was talking about Maine.”

“Oh,” Mallory responded, shamefully blushing. “Don’t tell Alex that I said that.”

“I don’t even know her,” Jessie said.

“I guess that's a good thing then.”

Spending a long day at Disney World the day after a big, exhausting game and celebration was not a good idea. Going straight to the airport to spend two hours waiting for a redeye to LAX made it all the worse. Not even fifteen minutes into waiting at their gate and half of the team was fast asleep, laying all over the floor and seats. Twenty-five percent of the team was exploring the airport or on their phones, another fifteen percent were conversing with each other, and the last ten percent was studying or doing homework. Jessie, of course, was in that last ten percent and was studying.

“Are you seriously studying right now?” Mallory sleepily asked. Her eyes were closed and her question sounded more like mumbles than words. Her head was leant against a pillow that was against Jessie's shoulder and she was drifting in and out of sleep.

“Becoming an engineer doesn’t happen overnight,” Jessie answered.

“What a nerd,” Mal whispered as she drifted into sleep again. Jessie smiled to herself, took a quick look at her adorable girlfriend sleeping against her, then went back to reading her textbook and taking notes. Then Mal suddenly asked, with sleep still laced in her voice and her eyes still closed, “Sit next to me on the plane?”

“Of course,” Jessie smiled. “Everyone else is too annoying.”
“I’m annoying.”

“Yeah, you are, but it’s different with you.”

“Love you,” Mal whispered so only Jessie could hear.

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Mallory’s nap while waiting for the plane proved to be a restful one because upon boarding, she didn’t have an ounce of exhaustion in her anymore. She surprised herself and pulled her laptop out to start typing a paper that wasn’t due until next week. Jessie had quickly fallen into a slumber as soon as the plane took off and it was her turn to rest her head on a pillow that was leaning against her girlfriend’s shoulder. After Mal had finished her physics homework, unusually not needing to ask for Jessie’s help, the Canadian began to stir. It was late in the middle of the night but there was still a couple of hours left in the flight.

“Did you finish your homework?” Jessie quietly asked as she rubbed sleep out of her once tired eyes.

“Yes, literally just five seconds ago,” Mal replied as she packed her books and laptop back into her backpack.

“I’m so proud of you, you didn’t need help with your physics homework,” Jess smiled.

“It wasn’t even that hard. Physics isn’t that bad.”

“Are you saying that you made me tutor you just because you wanted me to? Were you trying to get my attention?”

“Umm, what are you talking about?” Mallory blushed.

“That’s pretty cute,” Jess laughed.

“Let’s watch a movie,” Mal changed the subject as she took out her earbuds and put them into the headphone jack. She handed one earbud to Jess while she put the other one in her ear.

“What movie?” Jessie asked as she took the earbud and placed it in her ear. Mal was scrolling through the selection of movies that were made available, not having a particular movie in mind.

“The Last Song,” Mal replied.

“I would argue that I don’t want to cry but I’m too tired to and I love it anyways,” Jessie yawned. Mal hit play and the movie began. Jessie snuggled up a little closer to her favorite American and they held hands, thankful that it was too dark for anyone to see.

“I’ve had ”She Will Be Loved” stuck in my head for awhile and it always reminds me of the perfect scene in the movie where they sing it.”

“Let’s recreate it when we get back,” Jessie smiled and then turned her attention to the movie.

Chapter End Notes
I'm so sorry that this was such a short chapter but it's a filler chapter and I didn't know what else to write. I'm also so sorry but taking so long to update, life has been absolutely crazy lately. I'm not going to bore you all with just how crazy and busy it's been but please bear with me. Thank you all for being patient and for reading this!
“What are you doing?” Jessie asked as she looked up from her spot across Mal as they sat on her bed. She was met with a clearly distraught Mallory who had had her nose stuck in a notebook, textbook, and her laptop, hoping she could absorb the knowledge.

“My best,” Mallory groaned as she let her head fall and slam down on her laptop.

“You got this, babe,” Jessie assured her girlfriend as she sat down next to her and pulled Mal into a hug, her hand gently rubbing her back.

“I don’t know anything,” Mallory whined as she tucked her head into Jessie’s neck. “I don’t retain knowledge well. It’s so annoying because I can study for hours but still fail.”

“I’ll help you, what’s the class?” Jessie offered as she shifted so Mal could sit up next to her.

“But you’re an engineering major, your classes are so much harder than mine.”

“Difficulty is relative. I think the communications classes you’re doing well in are hard.”

“Why is school so hard? Why is it so stressful? Why do we only care about grades and not learning? Just UGHHHHH!”

“Here, let’s help each other study. I’ll help you for an hour and then you’ll help me for an hour, and then tomorrow we’ll go out and have some fun, deal?” Jessie facilitated.
“Okay,” Mallory sighed. And so the two helped each other study for the next two hours, and it proved to be productive. Mallory could successfully remember the vocabulary terms and facts to know for her hardest communications class while Jessie could finally memorize the formulas and functions she needed to know for one of her engineering classes. By the time they called it a night, they both were too tired to do anything else. Jessie went back to her room and neither her nor Mallory cared that they wouldn’t be staying the night together, even though both Marley and Teagan were gone for the weekend. For the first time in awhile, they would be able to have their rooms to themselves and they both needed their alone time. They both fell asleep the instant their heads hit their pillows, and had one of the most peaceful, uninterrupted nights of the fall quarter.

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Mallory didn’t think Jessie was actually serious when she had said that she wanted to recreate the famous scene from The Last Song but Jessie Fleming doesn’t joke about things like that. She was serious. So when Saturday morning rolled around, Jessie knocked on Mallory’s door and told her to get ready for an adventure.

“It’s seven in the morning,” Mallory stated, half asleep.

“Yes, it is seven in the morning.”

“Yes, and I have plans for us.”

“You never make plans,” Mal mumbled, still half asleep.

“Okay, now that’s a lie.”

“Fine, whatever. Where are we going? I need to study for finals,” Mallory groaned as she sleepily followed her girlfriend, not knowing where they were going at all.

“Are you trying to convince me or yourself that you were actually going to study? Plus, we studied last night, and you’re probably not coming back to college anyways.”

“You've got a point, but I'm still hella tired. This week fucked me and it's just been a really long week and I'm tired.”

“The only one who should be fucking you is me,” Jessie nonchalantly replied in a low voice. That seemed to wake Mallory up.

“We can always go back to my room, Marley’s gone until Sunday night, she went to see her boyfriend.”

“No babe, I have today planned out. We’re gonna stick to my plan,” Jessie replied as the two made their way outside to Mal’s car. “It's our four month anniversary and I'm driving you somewhere.”

“Well happy four months, babe,” Mal smiled. “But, you can't drive.”

“Yes I can.”

“You only have a Canadian driver’s license.”

“Yeah but I can drive.”

“Sure you can drive but that doesn’t mean you're allowed to. It's illegal.”
“Only if I get caught.”

“Jessie!” Mallory gasped. “I’m telling your mom, she loves me so it won’t be a problem for me to get you in trouble.”

“You love me more than you love my mom though so you’re not. Plus, you’re the one who made me sneak onto the hotel roof last week. This’ll make us even,” Jessie shrugged, then she unlocked the car and got in. Mallory opened her mouth to protest but Jessie was right so all she could do was shut up and follow her girlfriend into the car.

“You better drive safely and not get us pulled over, and this better be an epic adventure,” Mal huffed as Jessie turned on the ignition. The Canadian hooked up her phone onto the radio, scrolled through her music on her phone, then clicked play on a playlist. As Jessie started driving, the sound of soft guitar music began to play in the speakers. It was a familiar tune and Mallory’s eyes lit up when she realized what Jessie was doing. “I didn't think you were actually serious when you said we would recreate the scene from the movie.”

“I always sing along to She Will Be Loved but to have someone special to recreate the famous scene from The Last Song is even better,” Jessie smiled as she rolled down the windows. It was a beautiful day out, the skies clear and sun shining brightly above- even if it was forty-five degrees. The normal busyness of LA was reinvigorated as the city began to wake up while the sun began to rise but everything seemed to dissolve into the background, Mallory and Jessie didn’t seem to pay attention to the city ambience surrounding them. It was December and a little chilly but they didn’t care about the cold temperature because them singing at the top of their lungs was radiating warmth throughout their bodies. Their hearts were so full and whenever one of them was so into the song, the other would just stare at their girlfriend in admiration, wondering how they got so lucky to fall in love with someone so beautiful in every aspect.

The playlist Jessie had created was so good that both of them were singing along to every song. Mallory was so invested in singing that she didn't even know or care where they were going, all while Jessie nearly missed her turns (luckily Mal didn't notice). The usually cold Jessie seemed to not be cold, even though she only had a hoodie and a pair of thin Soccer sweatpants on. They were just so happy to be with each other, just the two of them, alone. After the NCAA tournament and the last two busy weeks of classes, they deserved a break and they deserved some alone time.

“You never did tell me where we were going,” Mallory pointed out, once they were stopped at a stoplight, and the song “ILYSB (Stripped)” by LANY was softly playing.

“I know,” Jessie shrugged.

“Are you going to tell me?” Mal questioned.

“No,” Jessie chipperly replied.

“So how do I know you’re not kidnapping me?”

“Well, I’m sure you wouldn’t mind being handcuffed,” Jessie smirked as they drove on, right when a rather explicit song by Trey Songz came on.

“JESSIE!” Mallory furiously blushed as she lightly, and playfully, hit her girlfriend. “I will get out of this car.”

“Love you too,” Jessie laughed. “We’re almost at our first destination.”

As Jessie pulled into a parking garage, Mallory was completely clueless about what her girlfriend
had planned, and was beginning to wonder if the Canadian was actually kidnapping her and bringing her to some weird dungeon in the parking garage.

“Your face gives away what you're thinking. Don’t be worried, we’re literally just getting food,” Jessie assured her skeptical girlfriend.

“Oh,” Mal replied. “I was kinda hoping you were actually going to kidnap me and bring me to some weird dungeon in this parking garage.”

“This isn’t Fifty Shades of Grey,” Jessie laughed as the two exited the car.

“Oh my gosh,” Mallory admonished as her cheeks turned red once again. “That’s not what I was thinking! I was thinking more of an escape room type of thing.”

“Whatever. Now let’s go eat, I’m hungry and I’ve never been to Grand Central Market so let’s do this,” Jessie said as she grabbed Mal’s hand and lead her to where crowds of people were walking. It was a quarter to eight and the busy market was just about to open. The smell of warm baked goods and fresh produce was in the air, and both of the UCLA phenoms’ mouths were watering.

“It sucks that we both missed celebrating Thanksgiving with our families,” Mallory pointed out as she took a bite of her ham and cheese croissant sandwich. The couple sat at a table outside, eating their breakfast and drinking coffee- the coffee being the only thing that stopped Jessie from shivering. Mallory had paid for their breakfast, arguing that the least she could do was pay for their food, considering that Jessie always paid for their food. The friendly Canadian tried to refuse but Mal was persistent, and pointed out that Jessie was paying for gas, had gone through the difficulty of planning the day out, and wasn’t about to be getting paid thousands of dollars to play soccer next year.

“I actually didn’t mind,” Jessie shrugged.

“Really?”

“Well, I couldn’t have gone to see my family anyways. Plane tickets are expensive, and Thanksgiving is only a couple of weeks before the quarter ends so it wouldn’t have been worth it. Plus, we’re Canadian, we don’t even celebrate American Thanksgiving.”

“You still missed Canadian Thanksgiving,” Mal reminded her.

“Yeah, but oh well. The wait will just make us being reunited in December all the better.”

“Still, it sucks to be away from family for so long.”

“You’re absolutely right, but I wouldn’t have wanted to spend Thanksgiving any other way.”

“Why’s that?” Mal questioned as she took a bite of the pastry they were sharing.

“I got to spend Thanksgiving with the team, and together we’re a family. And it paid off because a week later, we became National Champions. Plus, I got to spend Thanksgiving with the girl I’m so incredibly thankful for—you.”

“Wow, I didn’t know you were capable of having feelings and being sappy,” Mal joked, although she was touched by Jessie’s confession.

“I was trying to be sweet here and you go say that, wow,” Jessie said, less-than-thrilled, as she took a sip of her coffee and rolled her eyes.
“I’m kidding, babe,” Mal redeemed herself as she quickly kissed Jessie’s cheek. “I feel the same way. It was the perfect way to celebrate Thanksgiving. We ate delicious food, laughed until we cried, bonded even more, and made some unforgettable memories. Plus, I’m seeing all of my family at my sister’s wedding in two weeks but you guys—the team, that was probably the last time I’ll be spending time with you all as a part of the team. Oh gosh, now I’m sad.”

“It’s okay Mal,” Jessie reached over to squeeze Mallory’s hand as she gave her a weak smile, although she too was sad. The prospect of Mallory leaving UCLA saddened her, and although she wanted nothing but the best for her girlfriend and would support her through thick and thin, she didn’t want to be away from her.

“Hopefully we’ll be spending the rest of our Thanksgivings together,” Mal smiled.

“Unless I go play professionally in Europe or Australia,” Jessie replied.

“Here I was trying to be sweet and you had to ruin it,” Mal huffed. “I guess we’re even now.”

They finished their food and drinks then disposed of their waste, and Jessie pulled Mal along to their next destination. The sun was getting higher in the sky as it was nearing nine o’clock. As they were walking down the sidewalk, Mallory was about to ask Jessie where they were going to next but they were already at their next destination before she could even ask.

“The Bradbury Building... why am I not surprised?” Mallory said as the two walked into the building that was considered an architectural masterpiece.

“I’ve always wanted to come here and I’ve never gotten to it. So when I found out that Grand Central Market was across the street, I had to make the most of this date,” Jessie explained.

“Yes,” Mal smiled. “I’m surprised you didn’t have us go to the Museum of Contemporary Art since that’s close by.”

“We both have been there before, maybe not together but I didn’t wanna take you somewhere that we’ve gone to. Although, you’re probably going to be bored going to the Bradbury Building.”

“I’m actually pretty interested in this building.”

“You? Interested in an architectural masterpiece?” Jessie was surprised.

“They filmed some of the 500 Days Of Summer movie in here,” Mal stated.

“So you’re more interested in some chick flick movie than the engineering behind the architecture.”

“I did not say that. I mean, I do think it’s cool that they filmed such a great movie in here but I also think this architecture is pretty cool. It’s so pretty in here, and the stairs and elevators and honestly everything is really cool,” Mal said as they walked around, and the both of them gazed at the building’s interior. The innovative structure had captivated both of them, and surprisingly, Mallory was fascinated with the architecture. “Wait, I thought you liked the 500 Days of Summer movie. I made you watch it with me when I had to watch it for one of my classes, and I’m pretty sure we both cried at the end. Plus, the guy’s an architect.”

“You’re right, that was a good movie,” Jessie agreed.

The two walked hand in hand back to the parking garage, enjoying each other’s company. With their sunglasses and hats on in the busy city, they were able to revel in their time together, not
having to worry about any fans seeing them. They both had been documenting their adventure, taking photos and videos of each other, and taking photos and videos of both of them together. It was only half past nine in the morning when they got into the car and drove to their next destination, but it was already one of the most memorable days of their lives. Mallory didn’t bother to ask where they were going, and instead sang along to the music that Jessie was playing from her phone. They pulled into a parking garage that was closer to the touristic area but Mal didn’t care— if she were to be a tourist in her own city with anyone, she’d want to be a tourist with Jessie.

“A record store?” Mal asked as Jessie held her hand, and lead her to the famous landmark. “This is like peak hipster for you.”

“It’s an iconic place. I knew you would want to visit it,” Jessie shrugged. “And I know how you love music so much.”

“I’ve actually always wanted to go to Amoeba Music,” Mallory smiled at Jessie’s thoughtfulness. She had thought their previous dates had been amazing but this one was the best one yet. Jessie was a simple, thoughtful person; she was quiet but charming with a big heart. And Mallory loved these characteristics of her girlfriend so much.

They walked into the iconic music store, and began browsing the records. Neither one of them had a record player nor had any intentions of buying one of the products, but that didn’t stop either one of them from feeling like they were kids meeting their soccer idol. When they would find a record that they knew the other would like, they would wear a knowing smile then nudge their girlfriend to look at what they found. They kept finding treasures, even taking pictures of some of the records to send to their parents.

After spending an hour in the music store, Jessie lead her favorite American further into the touristic area. For once, they were actually glad that they looked like tourists. Given how crowded the Walk of Fame was, they were glad they could blend right in. They were wearing nice casual clothes with no hint of UCLA apparel.

“You said you love stars,” Jessie simply stated.

“You’re right... but you did too,” Mal replied. “Although, I think we both were talking about the stars that are in the sky.”

“This is a total tourist trap.”

“Exactly. Why are we here?”

“I’ve always wanted to come here. We were in the area, so might as well check it out. When else would we come here?”

“That’s fair,” Mallory nodded her head in agreement. They both took touristy pictures, just so they could have proof that they went, then proceeded to walk back to the parking garage where the car was. As they walked down the sidewalks of the tourist-crowded streets of Hollywood, they picked up some tacos from a taco truck then went back to the car. Once they got back to the car, they started to drive to their next destination. Mallory was too enthralled with her food that she didn’t bother to ask Jessie where they were going.

“It’s nap time,” Jessie said as she pulled into a free parking lot.

“Nap time? What are we, kindergarteners?” Mal asked with a light laugh.

“We’re college students, so just as tired as them,” Jessie shrugged. She then reclined her seat, and
made herself comfortable. As she yawned, she added, “We still have a long rest of the day ahead of us. Now get some sleep.”

Mallory smiled as she watched her girlfriend close her eyes then fall into a deep slumber. Jessie looked so peaceful, completely unbothered by anything else (for once), with her adorable baby hairs loosely sticking up. Mal would’ve stared at her girlfriend in admiration forever but exhaustion was catching up to her, and before she knew it, she too fell into a deep slumber. And just like that, they had fallen into an hour nap that resulted in the both of them being the best rested they had been in a while.

“Babe,” Jessie whispered as she gently nudged her sleeping girlfriend.

“Hmm?” Mallory grumbled in response.

“Time to get up,” Jessie replied as she softly kissed Mal’s cheek.

“What are we doing?” Mallory questioned as she yawned and stretched, also rubbing her eyes to get rid of sleep.

“We’re gonna explore a cave.”

“Is it safe?”

“I hope so,” Jessie shrugged.

“Wait, you actually told me what we’re doing.”

“I guess I caved in and told you,” Jessie snickered as the two started walking to the said cave.

“Shut up,” Mallory said for the millionth time that day.

“This is where they filmed Batman,” Jessie said as the two hiked up the mountain.

“We’ve basically just have been going to different places where movies were filmed today,” Mal realized.

“It’s Hollywood, what did you expect?”

“I was expecting to see someone famous, not see famous places.”

“Hey, you did see someone famous,” Jessie pointed out as they approached the entrance to the cave.

“What? Who?” Mallory was confused.

“Me.”

“You don’t count,” Mal rolled her eyes, and lightly shoved her girlfriend.

“I’m pretty sure I deactivated my social media because of the fame.”

“I’m pretty sure you told me that you deactivated so you could stay focused on school and soccer,” Mal scrunched her eyebrows in thought. “Are you just trying to change your reasoning to line up with your argument that you count as someone famous? You’re insufferable.”

“Umm… maybe,” Jessie blushed; she was caught.
“That’s what I thought,” Mal smirked.

“I’m going to get you back,” Jessie said through clenched teeth as they entered the cave, hand in hand, their voices echoing. They were surprisingly the only ones exploring the man-made creation.

“Sure,” Mal laughed. The two continued to explore, and they took photos of each other and of themselves together. Jessie just about rolled her eyes back to Canada when Mallory insisted that she pose as Batman for a photo. Mal looked ridiculously serious as her arms were spread out, her attempt at copying the Batman logo looking silly. The midfielder could not believe that she was actually taking such a ridiculous picture for her girlfriend so she decided to have a little fun, and avenge Mal for making her look like a fool.

“Oh my gosh,” Jessie gasped.

“What?” Mallory was cautious as she examined her surroundings.

“Did you see that?” Jessie asked as she was intently staring at the ground.

“There’s something crawling around and stalking us,” Jessie said worriedly. “It was big.”

“Are you scared? I can walk in front of you as we walk back to the car,” Mal offered. Jessie innocently nodded her head. Mal then walked in front of the Canadian, whose scheme was working.

“Boo!” Jessie yelled, scaring Mal.

“Fuck!” Mallory screamed as she jumped and turned around. Instinctively, she punched Jessie in the nose. Jessie was laughing too hard at Mallory’s reaction to notice that blood was already falling down her face. “Jessie! What the fuck was that?! I was actually scared!”

“I know,” Jessie was in hysterics. “Oh my gosh, you should’ve seen your face.”

“Well you should see your face. Your nose is bleeding,” Mal pointed out once Jessie finally settled down.

“Again? Why do you always hit me in the nose? One of these days you’re gonna break it,” Jessie laughed, not cleaning up her nose yet because napkins were in the car, and a bathroom break was needed anyways.

“Well, maybe if you weren’t so annoying….”

“It’s totally worth it, every single time,” Jessie smiled as they got back in the car.

A short drive and bathroom stop later, and they were once again back where the tourists were. It was approximately 4:25, and the sun was about to set in twenty minutes. Jessie parked the car, then they walked over to the Griffith Observatory. They took turns taking pictures, Mallory actually wanting to capture the beauty of the sky, landscape, and her girlfriend. As the sun was going down and the sky was getting darker, everything around them just seemed to become quieter and slow down. Or maybe that was just how the two of them felt, standing next to each other as they watched and took photos of nature’s spectacle. Right when the sun met the ground, Mallory had quickly devised a cute photo idea.

“We should make a heart with our hands with the sun in the middle of it, like my hand is one half of it and your hand is the other half,” Mal said quickly, excited with the prospect of a really cute couple picture. Jessie couldn’t say no to the cute photo idea nor to her girlfriend’s excitement.
Mallory opened her front-facing camera on her phone, then she and Jessie put their hands up together to make a heart, with the sun shining right through. She decided to hold down one of the volume buttons, putting her phone on burst mode. As the camera took photos, Mallory and Jessie looked at each other like they hung the stars. When they realized that they were staring at each other with equal admiration, they smiled and let out a laugh. Their hands were still forming the heart, and somehow neither one of them were complaining about their arms getting tired. By some love connection, they both leaned in and shared a passionate, chaste kiss. It was an absolute perfect moment, and it was all captured on camera.

“I really love you,” Jessie said as the two walked hand-in-hand back to the car; it was now dark.

“I really love you too, thank you for helping me fulfill my preteen dream of having an LA adventure kinda like the one from the movie Starstruck, minus all that other drama- so even better.”

“I’m going to pretend that I knew that that was your preteen dream,” Jessie laughed as they got back into the car. “I have two more destinations then we’ll go back to campus, and eat dinner using our meal swipes so we can save money.”

“I like how you think,” Mal responded. They went on a short drive to a location right on the outskirts of Griffith Park.

“It’s already so dark so this place won’t be as cool to see but oh well,” Jessie explained as they pulled into a parking lot.

“The Old Los Angeles Zoo? Of course this place would be one of today’s destinations. I don’t know why I didn’t think of it earlier. Isn’t it abandoned and full of graffiti? So like an artsy hipster’s favorite place?” Mallory joked as they got out of the car.

“If you’re trying to make fun of me, you’re failing because you’re right about everything and I’ve already accepted that I’m an artsy hipster. And the joke’s on you because I’m your artsy hipster, you’re the one who still associates yourself with me.”

“I don’t mind, your photos of me are pretty bomb dot com slash cool,” Mallory shrugged like it wasn’t a big deal.

“You’re such a dork,” Jessie rolled her eyes. Mal opened her mouth to say a snarky response but Jessie beat her to it. “Don’t even think of saying “but I’m your dork”- please just don’t.”

“You beat me to it,” Mal sighed. The two then took turns taking photos of each other, mostly of Mal. The American dramatically posed in front of old walls, cages, and stairs that had been graffitied. Jessie, of course, rolled her eyes every single time but she loved being Mal’s personal photographer. Mal took an amazing shot of Jessie sitting on the steps of a graffitied staircase. It was so good that Jessie couldn’t believe that her girlfriend had taken it.

After being satisfied with their artsy photos, they ventured off to their final destination. They drove just down the road to the newer Los Angeles Zoo, and when Mal realized what they were going to be doing, she couldn’t help but smile.

“I’ve always wanted to go to one of these,” Mal smiled as the couple walked hand-in-hand into the zoo. “How’d you even get tickets to this? The ZooLights are pretty hyped up, and neither you nor I have too much extra money to spend.”

“I know people,” Jessie shrugged.
“What’s that supposed to mean?” Mallory was skeptical, her eyebrows furrowed.

“I may or may not have bribed a fan who works here with tickets to the Canada versus United States game next month in San Jose.”

“Jessie!” Mal scolded her girlfriend. “Why would you do that?! You’re so bad!”

“Love you too,” Jessie huffed as she rolled her eyes at her girlfriend’s disbelief and scolding. “It was a win-win situation, and nothing was illegal.”

“Fine,” Mal replied. “I should enjoy this cool outing with you while I can.”

“That’s what I thought. Now let’s get lit,” Jessie said.

“That’s not how it’s supposed to be used,” the American rolled her eyes and shook her head. “Let’s just stop talking and enjoy the lights.”

The two slowly walked through the zoo, taking in all the colorful, festive lights. Jessie was in awe of how beautiful the displays were, and was enamored by the light sequences that went along to music. Mallory was particularly excited when she saw an elephant shaped light display—her favorite animal—and made Jessie take a photo of her with it. The two basked in the beauty of the lights display, and closely held onto each other as the temperature was getting colder. Jessie was notorious for always being cold, so she was extremely happy to have Mal’s body heat help warm her up. They had gone through the whole zoo in just forty-five minutes when their stomachs were growling and their bodies were cold. They made their way back to the car then drove back to the UCLA campus.

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“Thank you for today, it was absolutely amazing,” Mallory gushed to Jessie as the two got to Mal’s room, coming back from eating dinner in one of the dining halls.

“I’m glad you had as amazing of a time as I did,” Jessie smiled.

“Why’d you plan all of this for me? I know it was our four month anniversary but today was something else.”

“I can’t treat my girl like the queen she is? Whenever I want?”

“Oh shut up,” Mallory rolled her eyes, although she did blush. “Our first date was to In N Out and a soccer field. Most of our dates have been just to one place at a time. Today you went above and beyond, with us going to multiple amazing places.”

“You’re leaving UCLA,” Jessie replied sadly.

“That’s right.”

“We won’t see each other every day. We’ll be miles and miles apart, and I won’t be able to take you out on cute dates very often. Today’s epic date counted as all of the dates I won’t be able to take you on once you leave.”

“We’ll still be able to visit each other and go on dates,” Mal tried to sound positive.

“True, but realistically, we won’t be seeing each other very often.”

“I shouldn’t go pro next season,” Mal stated as she sat down on her bed, distressed.
“No no no,” Jessie said as she sat down closely next to her girlfriend. “You want to go pro and I’m not going to stop you from that. Whatever makes you happy and content will make me happy and content. And we’ll get through it together.”

“I don’t deserve you,” Mal quietly whined.

“Hey, that’s my line,” Jessie snickered.

“I love you,” Mal said as she looked into her girlfriend’s eyes, hoping her eyes could convey just how much she was in love with Jessie Fleming.

“I love you too,” Jessie softly smiled.

“You know,” Mallory whispered as she stared down at Jessie’s lips. “I never got to kiss you today.”

“That’s totally not true. You kissed me on the cheek like five times today and we kissed during the sunset,” the Canadian protested, half joking. Before Mal could even roll her eyes or argue, their lips had met each other’s. The kiss had turned passionate, and before they knew it, Mallory was pushing Jessie down on the bed.

“I just remembered something,” Mal said as she abruptly pulled away from Jessie, the midfielder visibly upset that her girlfriend had decided to halt their makeout session. Mal smirked at Jessie’s reaction, leant back down, then seductively whispered in her ear, “We never did get to celebrate winning our National Championship.”

Jessie’s breath hitched in her throat as goosebumps went down her back. With Mallory on top of her, saying things like that, she was ready to matters into her own hands and flip her girlfriend over and pin her down herself. After today being so perfect, it was only right that they would finish it off with a little celebration.

“I think I said something about celebrating while I’m on top of you,” Mal continued to whisper as her lips found Jessie’s neck. “Isn’t that right?”

“Ummm.... yeah,” Jessie replied in a high-pitched voice when Mal had bitten down on her neck and given her a love-bite.

Mal smirked, satisfied with Jessie’s reaction and satisfied with knowing that the Canadian underneath her would have a hickey on her neck tomorrow for the whole world to see. She continued her ministrations as Jessie squirmed beneath her.

“We forgot to workout today but this can take its place, right?” Mal wore a devilish smile as her mouth made its way down Jessie’s body. “We also haven’t celebrated you for all of your accolades and nominations. Not many people can say that they’re dating one of the best soccer players in the world.”

“Babe,” Jessie whispered as Mallory’s tongue licked down her body.

“Not many people can say they’re doing her either,” Mal was complacent as she took some of Jessie’s skin in between her teeth.

“Oh, fuck,” Jessie gasped. Mallory just hummed in response as her mouth then made its way further and further down the midfielder’s body.

“You’re wearing too many clothes,” Mal said in a hushed tone, smirking. Her eyes connected with
the Canadian’s as she unbuttoned Jessie’s jeans, then slid them off along with Jessie’s underwear. When her mouth met her destination, she never lost eye contact with the red-cheeked Canadian. Her tongue had found Jessie’s entrance, and the normally cautious Canadian was far too gone to ask if she was pulling Mal’s hair too hard. Mal slowly worked Jessie to climax with her tongue and fingers but abruptly stopped right before Jessie was at her tipping point. When Mal had realized that Jessie’s reactions were coming too quickly for her liking, she decided to stop, and sit up.

“Mal,” Jessie groaned as she watched Mallory bite back a smile.

“I’m wearing too many clothes,” Mallory smirked as she took off her clothes tortuously slowly, making the pool in between Jessie’s legs get bigger.

“This is torture,” Jessie whined.

Forty-five minutes and a lot of orgasms, curses, and hairtugs later, and Jessie was completely spent. She couldn’t even move because she was exhausted from Mallory deciding that causing her girlfriend to orgasm once wasn’t enough.

“Wow, I have no game,” Jessie said breathlessly as Mallory laid down next to her. “I didn’t get to please you.”

“Oh shut up, you do have game,” Mallory rolled her eyes. “Like remember that time you went down on me so hard that I couldn’t even get up to go to the bathroom? You had to carry me.”

“Okay, now you’re making me sound like I have too much game,” Jessie blushed.

“Well, you don’t need to repay the favor to me.”

“But I want to and I feel bad because it’s going to take me awhile to recover before I can do anything,” Jessie replied as her body was still shaking from Mallory’s ministrations.

“You treated me so well today, this was my thank you.”

“Well, I should treat you well more often if this is how you thank me,” Jessie laughed. Then Jessie suddenly got on top of Mallory, her hips rolling into the American’s as she positioned herself, causing the forward’s breath to hitch in her throat. She held Mal’s hands down on the bed then said in a husky tone, “But I still want to hear you moan my name tonight.”

“You said that so casually like it didn’t just turn me on, a lot,” Mallory said as she was incredibly hot and bothered. Her hips were squirming into Jessie’s as the Canadian was going painfully slow.

“The night is still young,” Jessie smirked.

Chapter End Notes

You probably thought I forgot about this, and I don’t blame you if you did. After taking 18 credits, working 4 jobs, and being involved in 5 clubs, finding time to write was extremely difficult lol. I’m so sorry for keeping y’all waiting but I tried to make this chapter longer than usual; I also recommended more songs for this chapter so it could be a short playlist. Anyways, thank you for being patient and for continuing to support my work!
Finals week proved to be taxing. Throughout the week of late nights of studying and drinking a lot of coffee, Mallory was reminded as to why she hated school, and why she was leaving. All the while, Jessie too was suffering but she was so motivated, knowing that the end result of becoming an architect would be rewarding. The American miserably went through hell week while the Canadian had to remind the both of them to keep pushing because it would be worth it in the end.

“I hate school. Like I love learning and communicating with people, and some professors are great, but I hate exams and projects that seem to give us more stress than valuable knowledge,” Mallory stated as she and Jessie ate lunch together. They both were done with exams for the day and needed a study break, so here they were. Their university’s reading day was tomorrow so they were happy to finally have a little break. They were planning on going to play a little soccer right after lunch then take a nap.

“That’s pretty wise of you to say,” Jessie replied, slightly nodding her head in agreement. “Hate is a pretty strong word though.”

“Okay, maybe I don’t hate school. Maybe I just don’t enjoy it. You remember when you were little and you’d be so excited to go to school and learn about stuff? Like you would be so curious and enamored with everything, and ask a million awesome questions? What happened to us? We care more about memorizing knowledge than retaining and actually using it. All final exams should be replaced with something else. I think even projects and papers are better than actual tests.”

“You’re pretty hot when you get all intellectual like this,” Jessie casually said as the two stood up from the table. Mallory held their clear bags and a soccer ball, walking next to Jessie as she took their now vacant dishes to the dish conveyor belt.

“I’m not even being that intellectual. I don’t even know the difference between geometry and trigonometry. And what about when I’m not like this? Am I not hot?”

“You’re hotter than when you mix sodium chlorate and sugar then add a couple drops of sulfuric acid,” Jessie smiled.

“You really think I’m going to know what you’re talking about?”

“It means you’re hotter than fire.”

“Am I hotter than the sun?”

“Well since you’re always my sunshine, I think so. Except you don’t burn me to death if I get too
close, although it does feel like it. I mean, have you seen you? I die whenever I see you, you’re so hot.”

“Okay, smooth talker,” Mal rolled her eyes, although she was blushing. “Romantic much?”

“Just making sure the prettiest girl knows she’s the prettiest,” the Canadian smiled.

“You’re going to use up all the compliments and I won’t be able to use any on you,” the American fake pouted. “For the record though, that compliment absolutely sucked. Like that whole thing you said was so bad.”

“You blushed though.”

“You could call me ugly and I’d still blush.”

“Someone’s whipped.”

“Look who’s talking,” Mal argued.

“You’re not wrong,” Jessie simply shrugged.

“Okay, but now onto serious topics,” Mal began. Jessie groaned in response. “We need to talk about me.”

“I feel like we’re always talking about you,” Jessie scoffed.

“Babe, I’m serious,” the American rolled her eyes. “I think I should talk to my parents first about dropping out of college.”

“You haven’t spoken to your parents yet?” The Canadian questioned.

“No, not yet. With Bri’s wedding going on, I didn’t want to bother them. Their minds were already preoccupied with so many things. And I didn’t want to have this discussion on the phone. Once the wedding is over, I’ll sit down and tell them. Plus, I wanted to talk to them in person about a couple of things. There’s the whole me dropping out of college, then the whole me wanting to go pro, and then most importantly, you.”

“What do you mean?” Jessie was quizzical.

“I want to tell them about us.”

“R-really? Are you sure?”

“Why do you always doubt me? They deserve to know about my significant other.”

“Well,” Jessie blushed. “If you tell your parents, then I’ll tell mine.”

“I can’t wait to meet your parents,” Mal smiled.

“You’ve met them before.”

“Yeah, but I met them when they were Jessie’s parents not my girlfriend’s parents. There’s a difference,” the quick thinking American replied. Jessie blushed even more, suddenly getting shy.

“I love you,” Jessie said.
“I love you too.”

“Now, let’s get back to studying. We gotta take our finals or else we’ll be telling our parents about how we failed our classes instead of telling our parents about us.”

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“So I’ve been thinking, maybe I’ll come back at the start of the next quarter. I just want to make sure going pro right now is what I really want to do. Plus, I want to talk to our coaches before I make a final decision. Although I’ll be wasting some of my scholarship, I feel like just leaving would be even worse,” Mal said as she helped Jessie pack. They had just finished packing up all of Mal’s things, after finishing their last exam. Both of them weren’t leaving until tomorrow, so they had one last night together. Marley and Teagan had already left as their last exams were on Thursday, so that left the couple to some nice alone time—possibly the last time they would be alone as students at UCLA.

“Are you sure this is what you want?” Jessie questioned as she folded a sweatshirt and set it into one of her suitcases. She could tell that Mal had been thinking about this for awhile, her girlfriend was unusually quiet when they packing up the American’s things. But for good measure, she still questioned her, “I’m not against it but are you absolutely sure? We just packed up all of your things. We’ve been talking about you going pro since the summer. If I’m the reason for you wanting to stay at UCLA, then don’t let me hold you back. If you want to go play pro right now, then go play.”

“It’s not you, Jess. I love you and I do want to stay here to be with you but we both know that me going pro is a dream for me to fulfill right now. You’re not holding me back. It’s more about me not having spoken to my parents or coaches. I need to work out all of the logistics with them. My main intention is still to go pro this upcoming season, I’m not backing out of not going pro yet.”

“I’ll take your word for it then,” Jessie replied. “I just want you to be doing what’s best for you.”

“I know, and I love you so much for that,” Mal smiled as she kissed her girlfriend.

“So, where should we sleep?” Jessie asked once they pulled apart. “Your bed or mine?”

“Since we’re here, yours.”

“Alright, I’m going to go change into pajamas and get ready for bed. You can pick out something for us to watch on Netflix.”

“I need to brush my teeth though,” Mal replied.

“Really? Do you really need to?”

“Yes, I take hygiene very seriously now with the whole flu epidemic going on.”

“Well, I don’t have an extra toothbrush.”

“I can use yours.”

“But germs, and didn't you just say you were worried about getting sick?”

“I misspoke. I’m no science expert. I actually meant I’m worried about getting cavities, since I have a dentist appointment over break. Plus, I’ve had much dirtier things of yours in my mouth before. It’s not a big deal,” Mal shrugged. Jessie blushed.
“Fine. Go ahead and use the bathroom first. I’ll look for something to watch on Netflix,” Jessie shooed her girlfriend.

After the two finished up in the bathroom, they got settled into Jessie’s bed. They both were exhausted from everything, finally able to just breathe and relax for the first time in months. Having finals so soon after the NCAA tournament was not ideal for either of them. Once Jessie had turned the light off and the couple snuggled into bed, the two were too tired to watch Mal’s favorite show, The Office. Their eyes were closed and they had quickly dozed off before either of them could even tell each other goodnight.

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Jessie woke up to Mal’s head in between her legs. She had an orgasm before her eyes were even open.

“Hey babe,” Mal smiled softly once she crawled up and laid down on her girlfriend’s chest.

“What has gotten into you? I was barely awake.”

“Ya know, a simple good morning would have sufficed,” the striker rolled her eyes. “It’s my last day with you before break. I wanted to wake you up in a special way. You really think I would let this room to ourselves go to waste?”

“Well, I’m not complaining. There are definitely much worse ways to wake up.”

“Fuck, I’m going to miss you,” Mal said as she tightly hugged Jessie.

“It’s only a few weeks. This will help us for when you do go pro. It’ll be even longer periods of time when we won’t be able to see each other.”

“Don’t remind me,” Mal grumbled into Jessie’s neck. The two just stayed there holding tightly onto each other, enjoying their time together while they still could. After what seemed like hours but was actually just five minutes, Mal realized where her face was and smirked. She lightly peppered her girlfriend’s neck with soft kisses then slowly deepened her kisses until Jessie was moaning and squirming underneath her. She then placed her lips on the girl’s underneath of her, and they made out as if it was their last. Jessie rolled them over so she could be on top.

“It’s my turn to make you miss me even more,” Jessie whispered in a seductive tone. She pushed Mal’s shirt up and kissed down on the abs she loved so much, going lower and lower. As she found Mal’s core and it was her turn to pleasure her girlfriend, the American pulled on the Canadian’s loose, brown curls.

The two were thankful that their flights home weren’t until the evening.

Chapter End Notes

You’d think that a five month hiatus from writing would mean this chapter would be longer and not a filler, but here we are. Sorry for taking so long to update! My spring semester was absolutely crazy, somehow even busier than last semester. But I’m back now for the summer, although I’ll probably be on another hiatus in July as I’ll be in Europe and honestly, I have no idea if I’ll actually update any time soon lol. Anyways,
thank you for being patient and for supporting my work!
The wedding was just two days after Mal had gotten home, and Mal found herself to be even busier with wedding things than when she was at school. Nonetheless, it paid off, because the wedding was perfect. Mallory’s sister was stunning and her new brother-in-law looked as handsome as ever. It was the wedding Mal’s sister had always wanted, with gorgeous decorations, a beautiful service, the perfect amount of guests, and an epic reception. As her sister’s sister, Mal did a sweet speech about the girl she’s always looked up to whom she’s lucky to be blood related to. Adding a short funny story of their shenanigans from back in the day, her speech was everything it needed to be and more. And of course, Mal herself looked gorgeous, and Jessie made sure she knew when the Canadian sent a hundred heart eye emojis after the American sent her a mirror pic. It was a wonderful wedding and a wonderful distraction for the distraught soccer star. But once it had been six days after she had gotten home and four days after the wedding, she needed to talk to someone about herself.

She’s one of the most humble people in the world and she was so happy for her sister, but she had been going through an internal crisis as soon as she got off the plane from school and desperately needed to tell someone about what she was going through. She couldn’t bring herself to face her parents with the big news quite yet so she talked to the only other person who would get her, her sister. She felt terrible that she would have to bring all of this news upon Bri after her happy marriage, but no one knew Mal better and Mal needed someone who knew her well.

“So what’s this big news you have to tell me? It must be really big if you locked me in your room with you, less than a week after my wedding on the day I got back from my honeymoon,” Bri skeptically said to her sister.

“Oh my gosh, I don’t even know where to start,” Mal let out a long sigh as she sat down next to her sister on her bed.

“What’s up? I know you better than anyone and I could tell something was up as soon as you got home from school. You’re usually so happy about being done and I know the wedding happening as soon as you got home was stressful but I can tell something else is up. Are you pregnant?”

“No! No, I’m not pregnant.”

“As much as I’d love my little Marley to have a cousin within three years of her in age, I don’t think that’s a good idea for you right now considering your soccer career.”
“I’m not pregnant, at all.”

“Then what is it?”

“I literally don’t know where to start. There are two big things that I need to tell you and mom and dad but I just don’t know how to tell you guys,” Mallory started to cry. She never cries, not for something out of the ordinary at least. Bri could tell that whatever was up was really big. “Just, please don’t judge me.”

“You’re my sister, I’ll always judge you, but in that loving sibling way,” Bri joked, causing Mal to let out a small, yet nervous, laugh.

“You remember Jessie Fleming?” Mal asked softly.

“Your UCLA teammate and former roommate? Yes, of course. She was great. Super smart, nice, funny, good at soccer, and pretty cute, basically great all around. She brought you to Maine last summer. Not sure how she managed to mess up Portland, Oregon with Portland, Maine but she’s still great.”

“Yeah, she’s pretty great,” Mal smiled.

“Why? What about her?”

Mallory took a deep breath.

“Did she do something to you?”

“Yeah, she made me fall in love with her,” Mal quickly sputtered out. “She’s my girlfriend.”

Bri sat next to Mal, staring at her in shock with her mouth agape and eyes wide open.

“We’ve been together for four months.”

“What didn’t you tell me earlier? You would always tell me about your ex-boyfriends right after your first dates. I’ve been missing out on this big part of your life for so long.”

“You’re-you’re okay with it?” Mal barely got out.

“Of course I am. As long as my sister is happy and being treated well, then I am happy. I mean, she surprised you with a trip to Portland. It may have been the wrong Portland but no college student who doesn’t have too much money does that for just anyone. She does make you happy and treats you well though, right?”

“She treats me so so well, I’m spoiled by her. I don’t know how I got so lucky to fall in love with her.”

“That’s all that matters,” Bri smiled as she gave her sister a tight hug. “What was the other big thing you were gonna tell me about?”

“I think I’m gonna drop out of college and go pro.”

“That’s a very big decision,” Bri said surprised.

“I know, and I’ve thought about it a lot, like for-the-past-two-months-every-day a lot. I think it’s the best decision for me right now.”
“What about Jessie?”

“We’ve talked about it a lot together. Back in the summer, she told me not to go pro yet. But now, she has encouraged me to. She wants me to do what’s best for my career and I think this is the best option. We can figure out long distance later. Now, we all know that I hate school, and I don’t think that my soccer career will develop any more if I stay at UCLA.”

“You’ve grown up more than I thought,” Bri smiled proudly at the girl who will always be her little sister.

“I still don’t know how to tell mom and dad these things. I’m too scared.”

“What’s there to be scared about? Mom and dad love you and will support you no matter what, unless they think what you’re doing is harmful or illegal, but they’ll be crazy if they think what you’re doing is harmful or illegal. Plus, I’m here if you need anything.”

“Thanks, Bri. I’m sorry I had to tell you all of this right after your wedding,” Mallory apologized.

“I’d rather have my sister calm than stressed. I know the past couple of months were tough for you and you were so busy. I want you to be able to chill. You’re my sister, I want you to be happy.”

“I love you sis,” the younger Pugh sister as she hugged her forever role model.

“So, when’s the wedding?” Bri snickered, causing Mal to shove her off the bed.

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“What’s going on, Mal? You never sit us down so you can talk to us. You’re the calmest person we know. You didn’t tell us you made the Olympic roster until I asked and you casually said yes. Are you failing out of school? Are you sick? Are you pregnant?” Mal’s mom lightly admonished. Mal sat across from her parents at their kitchen table, their dog laying underneath it. After dinner, Mal had decided it was time for her to tell her parents her important personal news.

“Oh my gosh, no,” Mal sighed. She took a deep breath, her insecurities and fearfulness had been washed away with the help of her sister earlier, so she wasn’t going to break down again. “Okay, here we go…. So first things first, I have a girlfriend. Like not just a friend who’s a girl, but a girlfriend, whom I love, a lot actually. We’ve been together for four months. She makes me so happy and I’m really going to miss her this upcoming quarter because I’ve decided to go pro. It’s taken me awhile to figure out if I wanted to go pro or not but after winning the College Cup, realizing that the college level of play wouldn’t really help me develop any more than it has, and being reminded that school isn’t my thing at all, I’ve come to the conclusion that I should go pro now. I’ve thought long and hard about it and why give up the opportunity now? If I can get top pro team offers right now and develop to be an even better player, I don’t really see the point in continuing in college. Nothing against the college level, it was very competitive and a great experience, but I’ve had my share and I was blessed to have won the biggest trophy at that level with an amazing team, but I just want more. I can always go back to college later, I can even start taking online classes after I get more adjusted with pro life—I still want that degree, but if I get an injury that’s really bad, that could be the end of my soccer career. Of course, there’s the money and I know I could make a ton and that’s really cool but I’m more about playing. Now, I’ve talked this over with my girlfriend a lot, and although we wouldn’t be able to play together in college anymore, she’s actually been the one encouraging me to make this move. So basically, I’m dating a girl and I’ve decided to go pro, but only after I go back to school for a couple of weeks to talk to my coaches, teammates, and friends, and pack all of my things. That’s what I wanted to tell you guys.”
“Wow,” Mr. Pugh was perplexed. “College really changed you.”

“I’m sorry if I’m a disgrace, I can go catch a plane back to LA right now,” Mal said sadly as she began to stand up from her chair.

“Mallory, you’re not a disgrace at all,” her father replied, disgusted that her daughter would even think that. “You’re our daughter, whom we love very much, no matter what. College changed you for the better. You’re so wise now and it makes me so proud, it makes both your mom and I proud.”

“You’re your own person, and you’re the one who’s in charge of your own life. We will support you going pro now because we love you and because we can tell you’ve really been thinking about this a lot,” Mrs. Pugh explained. “We’re here, of course, if you ever need any guidance or anything. We’re your parents, and we will always be there for you forever. You could go to jail and we’d bail you out.”

“Eh, depends,” Mal’s father added in.

“Horace!” Mal’s mom shot her husband a death glare.

“I’m kidding, we would do anything for you and Bri. We love our daughters and we support your decisions, as long as they’re not illegal or morally wrong. But you get the point. We will always be there for you,” Mr. Pugh smiled as he and Karen took Mal’s hands in theirs and gave them a comforting squeeze.

“I love you guys,” Mal said, getting a little choked up at how much her parents loved and supported her.

“Okay, enough with the sappy stuff, what’s your girlfriend’s name?” Karen asked.

“And she needs to know that if she breaks your heart, she messed with the wrong girl’s dad.”

“It’s one of your teammates, because you said you won’t be able to play with her in college again. But which one?”

“Okay, settle down now, you two,” Mal rolled her eyes. “It’s Jessie Fleming.”

“Ha! I knew it! Pay it up Horace!” Her mother said laughing. Her father wore a face of defeat as he reached into his wallet to give his wife a twenty dollar bill.

“What?” Their daughter was quizzical.

“Right after we met Jessie for the first time, after we moved you into your dorm, I bet your father twenty bucks that you would end up dating her. I could just tell.”

“But how? We didn’t even like each other the first month we lived together, then I had a boyfriend for a little bit, and Jessie and I didn’t even start dating until September. Only one of my guy friends even knows about Jessie and I, we haven’t told anyone else yet.”

“A mother knows best,” her mom smirked victoriously.

“I can’t believe you guys made a bet over my love life,” Mal trailed off as she began to question everything.
“So, I told my sister and my parents everything. They’re cool with it all,” Mal said into her phone to her girlfriend via FaceTime. It was one in the morning for Jessie but she didn’t care, it was winter break, she had nothing scheduled with friends until the following night, and she would do anything for Mal.


“Yep. It was tough but once I told my sister and she was so supportive, it was easier to tell my parents. They could tell I wasn’t making a random decision and that I had thought about it for awhile. We agreed that I’ll come back to school and talk with our coaches, tell the rest of the team, and pack everything. Then after that, I’ll get an agent then we’ll figure out what team I should sign for and what sponsorship deals are the best for me. I feel kinda bad that I’ll be coming back and starting the quarter knowing I won’t be finishing, I’ll be wasting all that scholarship money.”

“Hey, they’ll earn that money back when you go pro and be a super successful pro athlete, so it’s okay.”

“Thanks babe,” Mal smiled into her phone.

“How did your family react to us though?”

“Pretty well. I was surprised. I was expecting them to disown me and make me pack my bags but they were so chill. So loving and supportive. My sister asked when the wedding is,” Mal snorted.

“We’ve only been together for four months though,” Jessie’s eyebrows furrowed.

“Oh don’t worry, I shoved her off the bed we were sitting on, half-playfully. And my parents, they were all loving and supportive like parents should be. Although, my mom won a bet over us.”

“What?”

“After she first met you when she and my dad moved me into school, she bet my dad twenty bucks that we would end up dating. My dad had to give her twenty bucks. So now I’m wondering what my life even is.”

“And I thought my parents were weird,” Jessie said quietly, mostly to herself.

“What happened?”

“So I was starting to tell my family about you and then when I said that my girlfriend was a fellow UCLA student and teammate, my mom halted me and told me, ‘Wait, don’t tell us yet. We’re coming to visit you in January right after the Canada versus U.S. game. Surprise us. Bring your girlfriend to dinner with us so we can meet her.’ So now all they know is that I’ve been dating someone for four months but they wouldn’t let me tell them that it was you. Anyways, can you get dinner with us then?”

“It looks like our moms would get along really well. And yes, I should be able to. I can’t wait to see your family again!”

“They’re going to embarrass me so much though,” Jessie quietly whined.

“You already do that by yourself. There’s nothing to worry about. Now, San Jose is far from LA. Is your family planning on coming to LA after the game? And I assume it’s just going to be your parents and sister there?”
“Maybe I can talk them into just going to San Jose. I could tell them that my girlfriend is coming to watch me with some other teammates, and that she can just meet them there. And yes, my brother will be at school. I already told him and my sister, they were cool with everything. You’ve met them both, you know how chill they are.”

“Yeah, you’re right. And I mean, I will be watching you… lose to us, from the opposite side of the field,” Mallory smirked.

“I would be mad at you but I miss you and you look cute through this screen so I can’t be,” Jessie smiled back.

“Wow, Jessie Fleming does have feelings and emotions, and can be a total sap.”

“Oh shut up,” the Canadian rolled her eyes. “I’m not a robot. I just love you a lot.”

“Me too. I hope this honeymoon phase of our relationship never ends,” Mallory beamed. “You know how I have a group of super close friends back here at home?”

“Of course, I’ve met some of them when they came to visit you in LA.”

“They already know that you’re my best friend at UCLA and they know that I spend a lot of time with you. Would it be okay if I told them about us? I’m hanging out with them basically during the whole rest of the week. I want them to know about you as my girlfriend, not just as my friend.”

“Really?” Jessie was surprised. Mallory was just… Mallory, the girl who seemed to be that typical straight college girl who had the perfect life. Of course, Jessie knew that that wasn’t the case at all but that seemed to be Mal’s façade. Jessie still wondered how she wooed Mal into falling in love with her.

“Only if you’re comfortable.”

“Of course I am. Go ahead. I’ll tell my friends about you too, if you want.”

“Yes,” Mal smiled. “Then when we get back to school, we’ll tell everyone else.”

“I miss you. How are we going to do long distance if I miss you this much already and I know that I’m going to see you in like a week?”

“Ugh, I know, I miss you so much. Just pretend all of your stuffed animals are me, and keep your phone nearby so you can contact me and see me on your phone.”

“None of them can kiss me though,” Jessie retorted.

“When we get back to school, I’m going to kiss you so much that it’ll make up for all the days when we’ll be apart.”

“I’m looking forward to it,” Jessie giggled, just as her dog walked in.

“Is that your dog?” Mal’s eyes lit up as she saw the four-legged creature come into view on her screen.

“No, it’s my pet dinosaur,” Jessie replied sarcastically.

“Jess,” Mal rolled her eyes.

“Yep, this is my doggy,” Jessie said as she began petting her furry companion. Then started talking
to her dog, “Hey, look at my girlfriend. Isn’t she pretty?”

Mallory blushed as the dog looked into the screen and its tail began to quickly wag happily as the golden retriever wore a smile.

“Your dog loves me,” Mal laughed.

“I don’t blame her,” Jessie replied as she bit her lip.

“I love you too,” Mal smiled.

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The rest of the winter break proved to be just what Jessie and Mallory needed. Although they both missed each other dearly, being so far away from each other for more than a week was good practice for them for later. They were able to spend precious time with their family and friends, which they cherished because they knew they wouldn’t be able to again for a while.

Mallory and her friends were drunk when she first told them about everything. So for good measure, she told them everything again during brunch the next day. She even sent a message into all of her friend group chats explaining everything. Many of them were shocked at first but after some time hearing Mal so excited about her future and gush about her girlfriend, they were happy that she was happy. Since all of her friends already knew Jessie as such a great person and knew that she was such a close friend of Mal’s, they weren’t as skeptical or unsupportive as Mal thought they would be. Of course, they were curious to know if Jessie was treating their best friend well but the way Mal was on cloud nine when talking about her was enough to convince them that the Canadian was treating her more than well. After Mal’s big reveal, her friends acted like it wasn’t a big deal. She thought they would scoff at her but they were fine, and she could tell that their reactions were genuine. They shared laughs and smiles, like they always did together. They hung out and talked about everything they usually did, gossiping about people they knew in high school, sharing college party stories, talking about their future, talking about relationships, and everything in between. Mallory was ever-so-thankful that her friends were so good at making things seem normal for her, even when things hadn’t been in years for her. Between playing for a very competitive ECNL team and youth national team call-ups, she hadn’t had a normal life since middle school. Her friends, however, were good at making things seem so effortlessly normal for their famous friend.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the continent, Jessie had gotten together with some of her old high school friends to play some late night pond hockey. With a mix of boys and girls on both teams, they played a game of seven-a-side on a tiny pond which meant most of them stood on the ice and waited for the puck to get to them. All of them were a bit rusty and Jessie and Charlotte were extra cautious as they were athletes, but what mattered most was that everyone was laughing and having fun. It had been awhile since most of them had seen each other and although so many things had changed in the year since they all had last been together, it felt like old times.

After just forty-five minutes of playing, they were all too exhausted to keep going. They walked back to one of the friend’s house that was just a block away, with all of their legs feeling like jello. Once they settled into Veronica’s backyard, sitting around a small bonfire, they began talking about everything that was going on. All of them were sipping on beer to get themselves a little warm amidst the cold, snowy night as they swapped stories, one by one (coffee, hot chocolate, and tea reminded all of them of finals week so they opted for the drink that they had much better memories with). With one of the guys lightly strumming a guitar, it felt like it was the first time any of them had relaxed since coming home from college for winter break. Although there was fourteen of them, the group felt smaller and more intimate as each one of them listened, laughed,
and commented on each other’s lives. Every now and then, one of the guys would say something inappropriate as the girls rolled their eyes but it was all in jest.

When it got to be Jessie’s turn to share her story, she paced herself. She complained about how hard being an engineering major was, spoke of playing at UCLA and winning the biggest title in college sports, recalled how crazy Halloweekend was, and told them that playing with the national team was going well. It was a pretty standard update about her life, much like the others. When she casually revealed that she had a girlfriend she had been dating for four months, Charlotte said the loudest “WHAT?!?” she had ever heard. She was trying to be casual, as some of the others had revealed they were seeing special someones and it wasn’t too big a deal, but her best friend not knowing this news was a very big deal. The others wore shocked faces, not at the fact that Jessie had a girlfriend but rather at the fact that her best friend didn’t know.

“Who is it?” One of her guy friends asked.

“Mallory Pugh,” she answered in the softest voice as all eyes were on her.

“Oh nice. She’s hot as fuck,” he replied with a nod of assurance.

“She’s more than her looks,” Jessie rolled her eyes as she took a handful of snow, made a snowball, and threw it at him.

“Just stating the obvious,” Brian shrugged, causing Jessie to throw an even bigger snowball at him.

“I can’t believe you didn’t tell me!” Charlotte exclaimed as she threw a snowball at her best friend.

“We’re really sneaky. None of our teammates know about us,” Jessie explained softly, not really wanting to go any more in detail.

“Snowball fight!” Patrick exclaimed as he began throwing snowballs at everyone. Although her fingers were numb and she was freezing, she was thankful that Patrick could sense the awkwardness. As a snowball fight ensued between all fourteen of them, their laughs and snowy messes became a memory that Jessie would cherish forever, especially after what she had told her friends right before.

It was one in the morning when everyone left Veronica’s house. As Jessie left with Charlotte, they weren’t planning on going straight to drop Jessie off at her house. They both had wanted to go see the Christmas lights in Victoria Park, and they both knew that Jessie had some explaining to do.

“Sorry I didn’t tell you that I had a girlfriend,” Jessie felt guilty.

“Not just a girlfriend, a really attractive teammate of yours who plays for your country’s rival. She’s supposed to be the one who you’re pitted up against for the rest of your soccer career and the rest of your life in general,” Charlotte said slightly bitter as she drove on. “And you’ve been together for four months.”

“I’m sorry, I’m sorry,” Jessie put her hands up in defense. “I would’ve told you earlier but the both of us had a pact to not tell anyone else, besides our friend Will, until a couple of days ago. We don’t want to cause a fuss and the both of us like our privacy. Plus, the first month we were together we wanted to see if we could even work.”

“You know I’m just messing with you, right?” Charlotte smiled as she stopped at a red light. “Of course I’m disappointed that I didn’t know earlier but I can tell you really like her and she must really like you too if you guys made a pact like that. As long as she makes you happy, I’m happy. We’re best friends for life.”
“Thanks,” Jessie smiled, then Charlotte put her foot on the gas and they proceeded on their way to see the lights.

“Tell me everything about you two,” Charlotte squealed in delight. “Were you two sleeping together when you were roommates?”

“It looks like I’m gonna have to tell you the unabridged version of the story of Mallory and I,” Jessie sighed, rolling her eyes at her best friend as they got out of the car.

“I’ve got time,” Charlotte smiled as they began walking around the park.

Chapter End Notes

Does anyone read fics anymore? In the past six months, I haven’t read many due to losing interest and being crazy busy so I don’t blame you if you don’t lol. To those who still read this, thank you for all the support! I’ve been contemplating whether or not to end this fic soon but I put so much effort into planning the rest of the story out so I’m not lol. I may not have the energy or time to write as much but my heart is still in this!

Also, I hope you all enjoy the Men’s World Cup as much as I will!
Sylla-bye Week

Chapter Summary

"We're All in This Together" by High School Musical

"Bye Bye Bye" by NSYNC (lol)

"Future" by Transviolet

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Syllabus week is a strange week. A quarter of your friends are excited for classes to begin again, another quarter are studious but also wish break was longer, another quarter are partying because there’s no work to do, and the other quarter aren’t even back from vacation yet.

On the women’s soccer team, there were players in all four categories. Some players, like Jessie, were excited about classes beginning again. Other players wish break was longer but we’re content with needing to be studious because taking more classes meant another quarter closer to graduating. Then a couple players were partying, but on the down low because they were athletes and were mindful of what they should be doing. Then there were a couple players at youth national team camp, which was basically another vacation.

“I should’ve just dropped out already,” Mal whined as she collapsed onto Jessie’s bed.

“You just need to stay for a few more weeks then you’re done,” Jessie replied as she got out of her desk chair to start getting ready for a team lifting session. She already had some engineering homework to do but being her, she had finished it.

“Ugh, I know I know,” Mal sighed. “I just want to get outta here. I love you, everything about the team, and UCLA, but I just hate school.”

“I know babe,” Jessie said as she gave her girlfriend a quick kiss before putting her sneakers on. “Enjoy your last bit of time as a college student while you can though. Even if you do decide to go back to school, it won’t be the same.”

“You know how you don’t realize how much something means to you until it’s gone? That’s probably how I’m going to feel about college once I leave. I’m going to miss everything and everyone here but right now, I just can’t wait to not have to take anymore classes or do anymore homework,” Mallory explained. “Jessie, will you come with me to talk to Coach tomorrow? I can go by myself and I’m not nervous about telling her about everything but having you there right beside me would be really nice.”

“Of course I will, but on one condition.”

“And what’s that?”

“You don’t blow off your classes. We both know your grade won’t matter since you won’t be finishing them but you’re here on a scholarship, you’re not drowning in student loan debt and get
to go to school for free. The least you can do is try.”

“Fine,” Mal grumbled. “You’re right. I should be more grateful about being at one of the top universities in the world on a scholarship.”

“Sometimes I feel like I’m your mom when I remind you to humble and take care of yourself.”

“More like my daddy,” Mal smirked, giggling her head off.

“Shut up,” Jessie blushed, rolling her eyes as she gently pushed the striker. Changing the subject, she stood up and said, “Let’s go lift.”

“I don’t want to,” Mal whined again.

“Looks like you need to lift up your spirits along with the weights.”

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“Coach Cromwell? I’m sorry if I’m bothering you but can we please talk?” Mal asked as she stood at her coach’s doorway.

“You’re never a bother. Of course you can,” Amanda smiled as she gestured to a seat opposite of where she was seated at her desk.

“Jessie came with me too,” Mal said as Jessie slowly peeped her head in then followed behind the American.

“If this about you two dating, you have my blessing,” Amanda said with a light laugh. The two young players sat across from her with their mouths wide open in shock. “The coaching staff isn’t that oblivious. We know.”

“How did you all know?” Jessie was quizzical.

“We’re coaches. We’re observant,” their coach shrugged.

“But not even our teammates, who are also our closest friends, have picked up,” Mal said.

“They’re not coaches. They don’t have the same observation qualities,” Amanda smiled. “Is that all you two came to speak to me about?”

“Well actually, that wasn’t even what we were initially going to talk about….” Jessie said. “I was supposed to be here just for moral support.”

“I’ve been thinking a lot about my future,” Mal began. “I’ve been thinking about my soccer career, in particular. After much thought and consideration, I’ve decided to go pro. Since last semester was so great when we won the biggest trophy at the college level, I felt like there’s not much else for me to play for. I love playing for you and I love playing with this amazing staff and team but I don’t think I can be challenged any more at the college level. I think going pro now would improve my play. Also, we all know that school isn’t really my thing. I might go back to school later but that would only be for earning a college degree and I’ll cross that bridge when I need to. In the meantime, I’ve decided to drop out and go pro. I’ve spoken extensively to my family and Jessie about this and we’ve all agreed that this is the best choice for me. I’ve loved playing for you, Coach, and I’ll always be a Bruin and UCLA will always be home, but right now, it’s time for me to explore my options for playing professionally.”
“Wow,” Amanda said. “You’ve really thought this out.”

“She’s been thinking about this since the summer,” Jessie added.

“I was really on the fence for awhile but after really thinking about it and expressing my opinions about why I should go pro now, I not only convinced myself that this would be a good idea but convinced my family and Jessie,” Mal explained. “They would have been more critical if I hadn’t been so thorough with my reasoning. I hope you understand my reasoning too.”

“I completely understand and I don’t want you to hinder your development if you think you won’t develop any more here,” Amanda said. “I want all of my players to succeed, whether that be on the pitch, in the classroom, or in the workforce. I want you to be the best player you can be. I will always be cheering you on. You’ll always be one of my players. If you ever need anything, let me know. You’re always welcome back here to visit. I’ll always be your coach.”

“Thank you Coach,” Mal smiled widely.

“So what’s next for you then?”

“I’m not sure. I wanted to let all of my immediate family, coaches, and friends know about my decision first. I haven’t told the rest of the team yet, which is surprising. They know I’ve considered going pro before but they don’t know that I’m actually going to go pro this time. I’m planning on staying here another for a few weeks, so I can get everything sorted with my academic files so I can officially “drop out” of college. I’m hoping to eventually get my college degree, so I’m not just quitting school. I go into national team camp next week so I’m going to wait until after, so I can tell Jill too. Then I’ll come back here and pack everything. I’ll probably meet with some agents soon, pick one, then go from there. If you have any advice, please let me know.”

“I can give you the numbers of some agents I know pretty well so you can contact them, I’ll e-mail them to you.” Amanda said as she went onto her computer and quickly found the numbers and sent them. Once they were sent, she looked back at Mal and said, “I know you’ll do well. I’m excited for you. Now, I’m sorry to cut this party short, but I have a meeting in fifteen minutes.”

“Thank you again Coach,” Mal said as she and Jessie stood up to leave, shaking their coach’s hand.

“That went well,” Jessie said to her girlfriend as they both walked out of the building.

“Yeah, I was expecting that to go well. I maybe wasn’t expecting that to go that well. I’m just scared about telling the rest of the team. Anika and Marley don’t even have an inkling of an idea that I’m leaving to go pro, and they’re two of my best friends,” Mal replied. “Telling my friends and family back home went incredibly well, so at least I have them in case they disown me.”

“Oh my gosh, they’re not gonna disown you. They’re probably going to be more mad at you about why you didn’t tell them sooner.”

“That’s worse,” Mal shivered with a shrug.

“Oh shut up,” Jessie rolled her eyes at her dramatic girlfriend. “I’ll be there with you to tell them, if you want me to. Teagan still doesn’t know and I know that she is going to give me so much shit about not telling her sooner. Everyone already knows that I might like girls. It won’t be as hard if we come out to the team together.”

Chapter End Notes
Sorry this took awhile to update, I've been incredibly busy! Sorry this was a short chapter but please bear with me.

Also, just a reminder, this story is completely fictional but based on real people and events. I'm obsessed with making so many details as accurate to real life as possible but also please remember that I don't know everything about the people I'm writing about because that would be weird and I value privacy. Also, please remind yourself that there are things that have already happened in this story that we all know are complete fiction.

Anyways, thank you for being patient with me and thank you for all of the support!
Mac Cosmetics and Mac Hermann

Chapter Summary

"Beautiful" by Bazzi
"We Can Be Beautiful (ft. Ruby Prophet) [Nolan van Lith Remix]" by Thomas Hayes
"Congratulations (feat. Quavo)" by Post Malone
"That's My Girl" by Fifth Harmony
"Dirty Little Secret" by The All-American Rejects

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“I hate to be a diva but I didn’t even realize we had to be here. I thought it was later,” Mallory told Jessie as they both got dressed into nice clothes in their hotel room.

“I didn’t even realize we both were finalists either, you’re not alone. Luckily Coach reminded us,” Jessie replied.

“I feel so bad though. Being a finalist for the Mac Hermann Trophy is a big deal. It’s like the Ballon d’Or of college soccer. And yet, we both didn’t even realize we were finalists.”

“We both have been preoccupied. It’s okay. We’re probably not even going to win anyways.”

“Way to be optimistic,” Mal said as she lightly put some foundation on her face.

“I don’t want either of us to get our hopes up too much, only for us both to lose.”

“I’m really happy that we’re both here but we did have to skip our Friday classes to be here then we’re getting on a plane to go back to LA tomorrow in the early morning. We’re going to be exhausted this weekend.”

“It’s not too bad,” Jessie responded as she finished brushing her hair. “We have the distinguished honor of being named as players in the top three of all women’s college players, we get to celebrate whether we win or lose, we get a fancy dinner, we get to see Christen Press again, and I get to see you dressed up. Plus, you’re dropping out soon, it doesn’t matter that you’re missing class.”

“You’re right,” Mallory gave in as she did one last touch to her makeup with her lipstick. “I am so thankful for this experience, I just wish it had come at a better time. Also, regardless if either of us win the trophy or not, we’re still winners because we get to look at each other in dresses all night. Can I do your makeup?”

“I wasn’t gonna wear makeup but feel free to if you want,” Jessie shrugged. “I can’t do makeup.”

“How is that possible?” Mal asked as Jessie sat down in a chair in front of her and she began to do her girlfriend’s face. “You’re such an artsy person. You like to draw little pictures on your body.
“How do you not know how to do makeup?”

“How do you not know how to do makeup?”

“Because when I tried when I was younger, it was messy and would end up looking really bad.”

“Why don’t you try again then?”

“I’m too scared.”

“Don’t be. Were you scared the first time you went up to win a header in a game?” Mal asked as she blended the contour.

“Well, yes. I was young.”

“Do you go up for those 50-50 balls now though?”

“Now, yes.”

“Then you should try doing your makeup again. It’s the same type of concept.”

“You’ve got a pretty good point,” Jessie shrugged. “I think wearing makeup for photo shoots and special events is fun. I like it when other people do it for me, it looks better.”

“I think you’re beautiful with or without makeup. I’m not going to pressure you into learning how to do your own makeup if you don’t want to. I understand it’s time consuming and expensive.”

“Thank you,” the Canadian replied with a smile as Mal finished up doing Jessie’s face by putting lipstick on her.

“You’re the artsy and creative one in the relationship but I think I did a decent job on doing your makeup,” Mal smirked. Then she pulled her girlfriend up from where she was sitting to a mirror on the sliding closet door, “Here, take a look.”

“Wow, you did an amazing job,” Jessie smiled at the mirror, making eye contact with Mal’s reflection. “Now I look like someone who can at least escort you to the award ceremony and banquet, you still look much better than me.”

“Oh shut up,” Mal rolled her eyes. She then turned to face Jessie, put her hands on either side of her girlfriend, then said, “Don’t be so harsh on yourself. You look stunning. You’re beautiful. Now repeat after me, ‘I am beautiful. I am stunning. Mal loves me.’”

It was Jessie’s turn to roll her eyes.

“I’m serious, Jessica, you’re going to repeat after me,” Mal said with a matter-of-fact tone.

“I am beautiful. I am stunning. Mal loves me,” Jessie said, the words barely audible as she was mumbling and looking anywhere but at Mal’s eyes staring intently at her.

“Babe, you gotta do better than that.”

“Ugh, fine,” Jessie grumbled. She said the same thing again with a tiny bit more conviction but she still sounded like she was saying it with one of those fake customer service voices.

“If I kiss you will you say it with more conviction? I want you to believe in it just as I do.”

“Fine,” Jessie huffed as she closed her eyes and leant in to kiss Mal. She was expecting a reasonable kiss but all she got was a quick peck. “What was that?”
“You’ll get a better kiss only if you say it correctly.”

“Okay, I’ll say it,” Jessie said. She took a deep breath then said, in a way that finally convinced her that it was true, “I am beautiful. I am stunning. Mal loves me.”

“Yay! Great job babe,” Mal squealed in delight. “You’ll get your better kiss later, when the night ends. I worked hard on our makeup and I don’t wanna mess it up.”

“Wow, I’ve been bamboozled.”

“I promise that your kiss later tonight will be much better,” Mal promised with a wink.

“Hey, you can’t tease me like that when we’re both about to go to an event where we have to be on our best behavior.”

“Just know that you can be on your bad behavior later,” Mal smirked.

“You’re the worst.”

“You love me though.”

“Yeah, you’re right,” Jessie’s said with a soft smile. “I do.”

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The event proved to be more enjoyable for the both of them than they expected. Neither one of them really liked being the center of attention, but since they were there together along with Deyna Castellanos, it wasn’t too terrible. The three of them stuck together throughout the whole night.

This was one of the few events in soccer that put the same amount of attention on the women’s side as the men’s. For Mal and Jessie, that meant they were finally getting the recognition they deserved on the collegiate level, and not just being recognized for their international play. They felt like top college football or men’s basketball players. They were getting interviewed all over the place and had cameras on them at all times. It basically felt like what the FIFA Awards were supposed to feel like for women’s soccer players, with the large amount of attention and praise towards them. It was nice for all three of them.

When Mal was asked about going pro, she kept her answer as vague as possible but with little room for people to read in between the lines. She didn’t want to reveal her decision here, not until everyone she needed to tell before knew. Then when she was asked about her game-winning penalty in the NCAA Championship, she would appreciated the praise but try to deflect the praise and give credit to her amazing team and coaches. She would also try to bring up how amazing of a player Jessie is and how happy she was to play with her. Of course, she could’ve talked about how amazing Jessie is in general but she decided to just stick with the soccer stuff.

All three women’s college players were handling the media well. By now, they were all pros. Deyna has been in the spotlight for quite some time and she’s a natural. Jessie was handling all of the attention much better than she expected, she still felt uncomfortable but she was doing better than she would have done a year ago. With her girlfriend giving her heart eyes and looks of genuine pride of her, the Canadian was feeling good. She honestly didn’t care if she won this prestigious award or not, she was truly enjoying herself.

“There has been speculation that you’re going to leave UCLA to go pro early, is that true?” A member of the media asked Mal. Luckily for her, Jessie had come up to tell her that they needed to find their seats and get ready for the press conference announcing the winners.
“Thank you for that,” Mallory said to Jessie as they walked to the bathroom.

“For what?”

“You saved me from having to answer a question about leaving UCLA early to go pro.”

“Oh, no problem. I got you…. What would you have said though?”

“I’m not really sure. I haven’t told the rest of our teammates or anyone related to the national team yet so I probably would have had to lie. Which I would have felt terrible about. The women’s soccer media don’t deserve a white lie like that.”

“I’m really glad I saved you from that,” Jessie responded as they each went into a bathroom stall, they were the only ones in the bathroom.

“What will you say when you win?” Mal asked her girlfriend once they both got out of the stalls and started washing their hands.

“Haha, I won’t win,” Jessie laughed.

“Don’t be so harsh on yourself. You didn’t write a little acceptance speech or anything?”

“No, I’m not going to win, you’re going to win,” Jessie stated so surely. “Why would I write something that I know I won’t need?”

“Usually I would agree with you but this is an award, not some class assignment. You’re the best under twenty-three women’s soccer player in the world right now.”

“Maybe top twenty, you’re the best though.”

“You’re just saying that because I’m your girlfriend,” Mal rolled her eyes.

“I like to consider myself reasonably smart when it comes to knowing the game of soccer,” Jessie continued, sounding like a soccer intellectual. “I know that you’re the best right now. I also know that once you go pro, you’re going to transcend to an even higher level. I hope you planned a little acceptance speech.”

“I didn’t.”

“You’re dropping out of college. You could’ve spent time writing one instead of doing homework.”

“We both know I hate doing homework but I’m actually still doing homework that’s due, because if I do end up coming back to UCLA and have some of the same professors again years from now, I need to have a good reputation for them and I don’t want them thinking that I don’t care about my classes,” Mallory explained.

“Alright, that’s fair.”

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“I am pleased to announce that the winner of the Mac Hermann Award for the 2017 women’s college soccer season is Mallory Pugh,” Christen Press announced, smiling like a proud mom when she said Mal’s name. All the while, Jessie was beaming from ear to ear while Deyna excitedly congratulated her. Mal was taken by complete surprise, but she managed to keep her composure.
“I told you,” Jessie whispered with a wide, proud smile as Mal went up to accept the award.

“Are you sure?” Was the first thing out of Mal’s mouth as she approached Christen.

“I’m sure,” Christen laughed as she handed the younger striker the trophy.

“Wow,” Mal said as she took the trophy in her hands then turned to address the crowd. “Thank you so much. I honestly wasn’t expecting to win this award as both Deyna and Jessie are phenomenal players and had amazing seasons. I want to thank God, my loving family, my amazing coaches, my wonderful teammates, and UCLA. Without the mentorship of my coaches and the combined effort of my teammates, I wouldn’t be the player I am today. Thank you for again for this award.”

Once Mal was done with her short acceptance speech, Deyna and Jessie got onto the stage to take a photo with all three of them. Jessie made sure to be right next to Mal with an arm around her, wearing a proud smile, in the photo. Mal then took a photo with Christen and the men’s winner. After what seemed like a long photo-op, they finally went to sit down to have dinner and then take in the banquet program.

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“Your acceptance speech was amazing, it was short and sweet. Are you sure you didn’t rehearse it?” Jessie asked once the two finally got back to their hotel room after a long night.

“It just kind of happened, the words just flowed out,” Mal shrugged as she started removing her makeup. Both of them quickly went to the bathroom and brushed their teeth then changed out of their dresses.

“You were great babe,” Jessie said as she gave her girlfriend a quick kiss on the cheek.

“Thanks to all of that public speaking tutoring from you,” Mal smiled as she changed into her pajamas, which consisted of an old t-shirt and a pair of comfortable shorts.

“You’re so quick to deflect any compliments about yourself and give credit to other people, why? Why don’t you see that you’re so amazing?”

“Touché,” Mal said as she got into one of the beds. “When we were getting ready, wasn’t I the one that had to have this whole conversation with you?”

“You got me there. I guess that’s something we both need to work on,” Jessie sighed as she finished putting her pajamas on then crawled over to Mal. Her voice suddenly got dark, “Speaking of that, I think you promised me something.”

“What was that again?” Mal smirked, pretending to be oblivious.

“I think you promised me a kiss,” Jessie said as she was holding herself right above her girlfriend, her eyes trying to make eye contact with the girl’s underneath her.

“Is that so?” Mal asked, trying to avoid the gaze that she knew she would melt right under. She wanted to get Jessie worked up as much as she could. After all, she promised her that she could be on her worst behavior.

Mal took one glance at Jessie and that was enough for her to lean up and kiss her girlfriend senseless. Mallory made sure that this kiss and what followed was what she had promised earlier. They celebrated Mal’s achievement the best way either one of them could have hoped for. One of the beds in the room was well used while the other was never touched.
Chapter End Notes

Anyone still reading this? If so, thank you for the support!

Also, I switched some of the songs around for each chapter, adding a lot here and there. You don't have to look at the changes but I did add some of my favorite songs. :)}
"So, have you met anyone special yet?" Christen asked smirking as she wiggled her eyebrows. After the event last night, Mal and Christen got on a flight straight to national team training camp in Seattle. So here were Mal and Christen, in a hotel room together as roommates for camp.

"Um, yeah," Mal answered casually.

"I'm guessing not that guy we met in Manhattan Beach or I would've heard something about him."

"I think your gaydar is broken, Christen," Mal replied.

"What?! I have a fantastic gaydar!" Christen debated.

"Well that guy we met is gay."

"Wait... what?"

"Yeah, I came across his Instagram one day through mutual friends and followed him. I looked through his posts and he has a really hot boyfriend. Plus remember when his phone went off? His lock screen was of him and the guy I saw in his Instagram photos."

"But... I was so sure he was into you," Christen said, defeated.

"Yeah, your gaydar's broken, sorry to break the news to you," Mal said. "Maybe you can try to get it fixed at Lowe’s Gay Improvement."

"Who even am I anymore?" Christen asked, more to herself than to Mal. She was having an existential crisis and Mal hadn't even told her the other reason why her gaydar was broken yet.

"It's okay Christen," Mallory laughed.

"Anyways, back to you," Christen said, collecting herself. "What's his name?"

"Jess."

"But that guy’s name was Jess. Are you messing with me?"

"No."
"So like Jesse McCartney? You're the type of person who'd tell me you're dating him just because you had a dream you did once and you'd probably convince yourself that you actually were," Christen suggested with a big goofy grin, believing she was cultured and hip to the younger ones on the team.

"Oh shut up, no!"

"Then who? Jessie Usher? He's like six years older than you though."

"Who's that?"

"Oh never mind. Just tell me."

"More like Jessie Fleming. Her name is Jessie Fleming."

"Wait, what?!" Christen asked, practically yelling, eyes wide and no longer a smile gracing her face but a look of genuine surprise and disbelief instead. She had dropped the folded shirt she was in the middle of putting back into her suitcase onto the floor.

"Um, yeah, she's my girlfriend," Mal said nervously as her cheeks went bright red. If Jessie had been there, she would've pointed out how Mallory's cheeks had gotten even redder than how the Canadian's would get. "That's also the other reason why your gaydar is broken."

"Why didn't you tell me earlier?! I was there with you last night, you could have told me then," Christen asked. "So many people have been waiting for this to happen, you don't understand! Like we all joked about this happening and hoped it would but we honestly never ever thought it would ever happen."

"Sorry mom," Mal said chuckling. "We just started dating."

"Define 'just started' please."

"Four months."

"That's a pretty good amount of time and a long time to not tell anyone, longer than Kim Kardashian's marriage with that NBA guy."

"We've just wanted our privacy."

"That's not 'just now' but okay. Tell me everything then," Christen demanded as she came to sit right next to Mal on her bed, causing the teenager to roll her eyes. "When did you start liking each other? When was your first kiss? Is she a good kisser? What was your first date? Does she like dogs? Or is she a cat person? When's the wedding? Can I be the maid of honor?"

"Christen!" Mal said as she lightly shoved the older woman.

"What? I need to know everything!"

"Okay, first of all, don't tell anyone. We're holding onto our privacy for a little longer, not even our teammates and friends at UCLA know, you're the first person to know besides only some of our friends, our immediate families, and our coach. We're probably going to tell them once we get back from these games. Second of all, well, here's the story...."

"Oh my gosh, I can't believe Baby Mal is telling me this. You're growing up!" Press said excitedly, her eyes growing wide in excitement.
"Mama Press, I'm trying to tell you the story," Mal continued and Christen immediately shut up. "Okay, so first I was getting over a break up over my ex-boyfriend."

"Oh no, that can never be good. I bet Jessie was crushing on you for months then if you were dating someone else," Press said sadly.

"How'd you know that?"

"Personal experience," Christen said in a hushed tone, as if flashbacks about her and Tobin were coming back into her mind. "Anyways, please proceed."

"Well, Jessie had a crush on me but never really showed it because she's shy like that and really good at hiding her feelings, even though we were really good friends. We like hated each other for the first month we roomed together but by the end of the quarter, we were best friends. Anyways, when I was going through my breakup, I was also taking finals and trying to determine if I wanted to go pro or not so that week was absolute shit. After we both finished our exams, Jess surprised me by spontaneously getting us plane tickets to Portland and she planned for us to go to a Thorns game and explore the city and everything."

"You're rambling and telling me way too much unnecessary background information but whatever. Anyways, why did I never see any pictures of you two at a Thorns game then? Tobin even told me she didn't see you two at a game after bumping into you both at LAX," Christen realized.

"Yeah sorry and that's because Jess accidentally got us tickets to Portland, Maine," Mal responded.

"Well that's one way to show you've got a crush on someone, accidentally get lost with them," Press said cracking up with laughter.

"We ended up having the best vacation ever though! We explored the city, went to a museum, went hiking and canoeing, went to a soccer game, and even played some soccer," Mal explained. "We got lost at least five times and almost died twice but it was fun."

"So I'm guessing this is where you two fell in love then?" Christen asked.

"Well... it's complicated," Mal hesitated, not sure how to explain just how complicated it was. "So since Portland, Maine was so close to where Jess lives, she had decided to get a ticket straight home from there. Meanwhile, I had to get back to LA to get some things before going home. So we were just chilling in the airport waiting for our separate flights, talking about random stuff. Then I started talking about if I should go pro or not because I had to tell the federation the week after. Jess was trying desperately to tell me not to go pro yet but I wasn't completely convinced."

"Why are you telling me all this? It seems a bit unnecessary."

"No, it isn't, just wait Christen, patience," Mal explained and Christen rolled her eyes. Sometimes it didn't feel like they were nine years apart and instead just two teenagers. "So anyways she asked me, 'is this a good enough reason to stay?' and I was confused at what she was talking about so then she kissed me."

"Oh my gosh!" The older forward squealed in delight.

"Yeah then she pulled away shocked and left to go board her flight without saying another word."

"Please say you ran after her," Christen asked, hopeful.

"Um, well, I was shocked too and kinda frozen in place and couldn't move so no, I didn't."
"Mallory!" Press scolded.

"What?!

"You're supposed to go after her and profess your love to her and kiss her then both miss your flights because you're too busy spending time with each other."

"I can't believe you, of all people, are telling me we should've missed our flights," Mal told the girl who planned her day minute by minute. "Anyways, we didn't see nor talk to each other for a month and a half. I didn't even know then if I liked her back, it took me awhile."

"Why wouldn't you come to me for help?"

"I just needed some space and time to think."

"So what happened then?" Press asked curiously.

"Well obviously, I went back to school and Jess was surprised to see me on move-in day but she kept avoiding me, even though we were literally living right down the hall from each other and training all the time together."

"Wait, you didn't even text her or anything? Oh gosh, you're almost as bad as Tobin when it comes to communication, no wonder people call us your parents."

"As I was saying," Mal continued, raising her voice and glaring at Christen who simply just shook her head in disappointment. "I just needed time to think so I gave myself the summer break."

"Did you talk it out with anyone?"

"Um... no," Mal replied.

"Mallory Diane Pugh, do you not know what a text message is? You could've easily sent me one. It's a pretty simple concept to do in the twenty-first century," the older girl who majored in communications said.

"I just needed a lot of time to think by myself, okay?" Mallory repeated for the third time.

"What'd you do once you got back then?"

"Well, she kept avoiding me for a week and it was awkward between us so then we were back where we started, not really talking to each other," Mal explained.

"Oh gosh, you're terrible," Christen mumbled, making sure Mallory could hear her.

"Then on that first Friday back, a week after moving in, I went to her room and confronted her. She thought I hated her."

"Makes sense, she had every reason to," Christen mumbled.

"Anyways," Mal said, glaring at Christen yet again. "I told her I just needed time to think and told her we could still be friends."

"Wait, so you're telling me you totally blew off the fact that she had a crush on you?"

"Um, yeah."
"You're worse than terrible."

"Thanks so much for the kind words," Mal joked.

"You deserve it," Christen affirmed. "So... when did you realize you liked her back?"

"Umm, I don't know. I just kept thinking about everything she had done with and for me and realized she was perfect and that the feeling I felt around her was special since all my other teammates only felt like my teammates and friends. Plus, I always thought she was gorgeous which she laughed at and would reply with a "you're just saying that" but I was always serious. We kinda kissed at a party too back in the spring but I was really drunk and don't remember it too well. But even when I realized how pretty she was, I didn't realize I liked her back. It took awhile."

"Mallory, you're a child. You should not be partying," Christen scorned, dismissing everything else Mal said.

"What? It's not like you didn't party when you were in college. I know for sure Kelley dragged you along more often than not and I'm sure you did some things that you're glad Kelley was too drunk to remember to tell me," Mal said with a sly smile. Press opened her mouth to protest but failed to say anything as the kid sitting before her was right. Mal smirked, "That's what I thought."

"Okay, whatever," Christen rolled her eyes. "What did you do then?"

"Well, we were just friends for a month then I started to realize things, like more than that she was really pretty and just an all around good person. I started to realize I liked her as more than a friend. I started to realize that I found her gorgeous for a reason. It took me awhile to finally admit to myself that I liked her. I was well aware she still liked me so one day, for fun, I asked her when she first started liking me."

"That's like torture."

"Hey, you didn't let me finish," Mallory scorned. "She told me how it just kinda happened over time but she wanted me to be happy so she tried to set her feelings aside. She kept apologizing but I told her it was fine. And then I finally kissed her, like a real kiss."

"What did she do? Obviously she must've reacted well."

"Yeah, she did. Our first two kisses sucked ass so I made up for this one. She was in disbelief so to make her believe I was for real, we made out for like thirty minutes straight," Mallory explained casually.

"What the hell, Mal? Dang girl! Is she a good kisser?"

"The best," Mal replied as a wide smile broke out across her face.

"Oh my gosh! This is so exciting! So what was your first date?"

"We went to In N Out later that night."

"Oh," Christen said, slightly underwhelmed, expecting something more glamorous than that.

"Hey, it was cute. At least we didn't hook up a couple times then get together years later," Mal protested and Christen visibly put a little more space in between them, feeling called out as as she remembered the first time she and Tobin got together. "And it was actually one of the best nights ever, we hung out at a soccer field for an hour then just drove around the city."
"Fine, I guess I'm not one to judge plus your date does sound pretty nice, I'm sorry," Press apologized.

"Exactly," Mal replied. "And she wasn't really hungry that night but she didn't argue when I asked her to come with me. She stole my fries though but I knew she would so I got two orders."

"Aww that's so cute! She was already treating you like a queen on the first day, that's relationship goals," Christen said smiling while Mal chuckled at Christen's use of "relationship goals" because she had taught her "adopted soccer mom" that term.

"Actually, she had always treated me like a queen but I was completely oblivious," Mal realized. "She had always taken photos of me whenever we went somewhere. She has a thing for photography. She loves art."

"I know."

"How would you know that?"

"I've seen her Instagram."

“But she deactivated awhile ago."

“I still saw her account."

"Oh my gosh, did you follow her? Do people know something’s going on between us? I know how fans can get suspicious," Mal asked, suddenly worried. "I don't want anyone to suspect anything, not this soon anyways. If you followed her then people would’ve seen and wondered why you followed her."

"Mal, stop, you don't have to worry about anything. I didn’t follow her, I only looked at her account like once a year ago and that was it," Christen said with a reassuring smile. "Believe me, I know better."

"Thanks mom," Mal replied with a small warm smile.

"I got you. Now next time I'm in LA though, I need to meet her. Like I've obviously met her before but not officially, not as your girlfriend. We could have dinner together, just the three of us, or something. You guys could come to my house in Manhattan Beach. Oh! I could bring Tobin with me and we could have a double date, that would be so cute!" The older forward exclaimed which caused Mal to roll her eyes.

"You're getting way too ahead of yourself, Chris, and going on a double date with you and Tobin would be like me bringing Jessie with me to dinner with my parents and that's just... no. You guys would be just as embarrassing as my parents," Mal explained.

"Fine, but I'll try to come to one of your games some time and I'll take you two out to dinner," Christen settled. "Or even better, I'll make dinner."

"Yeah sure, thanks," Mal shrugged. "Free food is always good."

"Okay, so what else should I know about her?"

"She's perfect."

"That wasn't the question," Chris replied, elbowing Mal. Just then, there was a knock on the door
which indicated Tobin had arrived and meant Mal was bound to go hang out with Lindsey and Morgan.

"Maybe you just need to officially meet her then."

"Wait, Mal, tell me more about her!" Christen said, rushing to stand up but Mal was already out of the room, laughing as Christen followed. Tobin stood at the door to find Mal practically running away from the older forward.

"She's all yours, Tobin," Mal said giddily. "She talks too much, please shut her up."

"You brought all that stuff upon yourself, Mal," Christen protested but Mal just shook her head and left.

"Kids," Tobin said with a laugh, referring to the girl who was skipping down the hall, as she quickly kissed her girlfriend.

"Our baby is growing up though," Christen said sadly as she closed the door.

"What do you mean?" Tobin asked as she laid down on Christen's bed so her girlfriend could massage her head on her lap.

"You can't tell anyone but she's dating someone," Christen began.

"Okay, that's weird because kids these days post about their relationships on social media all the time but okay," Tobin said.

"It's more about who she's dating that makes it more of a big deal," Christen said.


"No no, she swore she'd never date him, it's Jessie," Christen answered.

"Jessie Fleming?" Tobin asked, sitting up to look at her girlfriend with shock across her face, causing Christen to nod. After a brief moment to let the new information in, Tobin laid back down and pretended to not be so surprised and said, "I knew something was up! I could totally tell something was up when I ran into them at the airport in L.A."

"Sure, babe," Christen rolled her eyes, knowing damn well that her girlfriend was just trying to pretend that she knew there was something going on between the young American and young Canadian soccer phenomenons.

"What?"

"They weren't even together then," Christen replied.

"Oh really?" Tobin raised an eyebrow. Then Christen told everything Mallory had just told her to Tobin, they are her national team parents after all.

Chapter End Notes

I haven’t updated this often in two years. Who even am I? Haha but actually, I’m as
busy as ever but I’ve just finally caught back up to some of the chapters that I wrote in advance.

Again, thank you all for the support!
"So Mal, how's Jessie?" Tobin asked with a knowing smile as she, Mal, Rose, Sam, Morgan, and Lindsey were in the ice bath. Mal quickly glared at Christen who was sitting in another ice bath; Christen immediately looked away and busied herself with talking to Julie and Crystal.

"Oh, she's doing well," Mal said as casually as she could, she was thankful the coldness from the ice hid any possibility of a blush coming across her face.

"Do you two get along now? Did my roommate suggestion help?" Moe asked.

"Your ingenious suggestion of being extra nice to her?" Mal joked. "Yeah, I guess so, we get along well."

"Really well now," Tobin mumbled under her breath, just loud enough for only Mal to hear. Mal glared at her which only caused Tobin to let out a little laugh.

"Did you draw a picture for her?" Rose asked.

"I drew a maple leaf for her because she's Canadian but she thought it was a marijuana leaf so that backfired," Mal recalled, causing the others to burst into laughter.

"How was Portland?" Tobin asked, now really pushing the subject.

"You came to Portland and didn't even let me know?" Lindsey asked, completely and utterly appalled.

"Yeah but we accidentally went to Portland, Maine though," Mal said, still remaining calm, although she secretly wanted to deck Christen. "I posted something on Instagram when I was there, don't you remember?"

"Oh yeah, I guess so then," Lindsey replied as she vaguely remembered Mallory's post.

"How do you accidentally go to Portland, Maine?" Moe asked while she herself was trying to figure out how such a mistake could happen as she wore one of her signature Bean™ facial expressions.

"I don't know, ask Jess. She's the one who bought the tickets," Mal replied casually. "We were supposed to go to Oregon and see a Thorns game."

"But obviously that didn't happen," Sam said. "I will say, New England is the best."

"Yeah but we ended up having a fun time in Maine, we almost died while hiking and canoeing but
"it was chill," Mal said, being careful with what she told them. "We were supposed to go to a Thorns game but instead went to a Phoenix game. Who knew there was an even lower tier to the MLS than the USL?"

"Thankfully you didn't die or we wouldn't have you and it's good Jessie Fleming didn't either because then you all wouldn't be able to play against her. Time's up ladies, now go shower," one of their athletic trainers said. Mallory was thankful there was an interruption so she could get out of the ice cold bath and get out of having to cover for what's really going on between her and Jessie. Before she went to catch up with Press, she shot Tobin a death glare which resulted in the Nutmeg Queen just showing off a devilish smile and letting out a small laugh.

"You told her," Mal said harshly to Christen as the door of their hotel room shut behind them.

"Who? What are you talking about?" Christen asked, pretending to be oblivious.

"Tobin, you told Tobin about me and Jessie," Mal replied.

"We're basically your parents, I had to tell her. And how could I not? I needed to share the exciting information with someone," Christen said defensively.

"Fine, but please don't tell anyone else," Mal pleaded.

"I might've told Allie," Christen replied. Mallory's eyes went wide which caused the older woman to laugh then say, "I'm kidding, I would never. We both know she'd tell everyone in a matter of days, heck, she'd even tell the hotel staff. I'll let you tell everyone else when you're ready. But please know that they'll be respectful no matter what. I know you're close with some girls closer to age, and I know you're close with Kelley, so I’d tell them first. Just know that I’m here for support in case you’re nervous about telling everyone. I’ve been through it before. Although it was more of a relief than a surprise when Tobin and I told everyone. But nonetheless, I’m here as your team mom.”

"Thank you, Christen,” Mal smiled.

"So, is she good in bed?" Christen asked, wiggling her eyebrows.

"You're gross. How’d you go from a heartfelt conversation to that? I'm taking a shower," Mal said, rolling her eyes with a loud sigh as she headed to the bathroom. But right before she shut the door behind her, she stopped, turned around to face Christen, smirked, then said with a wink, "But, in case you were wondering, yes, she's really really good in bed."

"Baby Mal is growing up!" Christen exclaimed as her eyes and mouth went wide open.

"Yeah, Jessie may look all innocent and everything but she's not."

"Okay, that's all I needed to know!" Christen said, causing Mallory to chuckle as she faced towards the bathroom again, walked in, and closed the door behind her.

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Meanwhile, just across the U.S. border, the Canadian Women's National Team was diligently training and studying game footage, having set up camp in Vancouver. With a friendly against the United States in just two days, they were working incredibly hard. After a long day of two practices, a recovery session, and a game of 'Duck-Duck-Goose' which was a "team bonding activity" and a sprinting exercise in one—that may have temporarily ruined some friendships, Jessie found herself in her hotel room with Janine. She was happy to be rooming with Janine
because Janine usually wasn't too crazy and didn't do nor say anything too outrageous, besides her occasional desire to annoy the younger girl as much as possible. Janine was one of Jessie's closest friends on the team and was already asking Jessie about what was going on at college.

"So, have you met anyone yet, Jeffrey?" Janine asked with a playful smirk, calling Jessie by the CANWNT’s nickname for her.

"What?" Jessie asked, taken completely off guard as Janine's previous questions were about the classes Jessie was taking, comparing party life at UCLA with the party scene at Texas Tech, and how spring training was going for soccer. This sudden turn found Jessie stuck in a conversation she no longer wanted to continue.

"Like have you met anyone special yet?" Janine continued.

"Ummm..." Jessie tried to buy some time in order to figure out what to say in response as she blushed. She really wasn’t in the mood to talk about her personal life but at the same time, she probably would never be… and Janine would be persistent and ask her for as long as possible. So, it was better to just get this awkward conversation out of the way now. She would need to eventually tell the rest of the team anyways, and starting with Janine then Rebecca was a start.

"So I take that as a yes," Janine said, her face lighting up as she smiled at the now red faced Jessie. "So what's her name?"

"How'd you know it was a girl?" Jessie asked.

"I didn't, that was just a test to see if you were lying or not. I knew you would either ask that or correct me and say it's a guy instead," Janine explained as Jessie's mouth was agape. "And maybe I can tell you're not the straightest person on the team."

"You're like the straightest person on the team," Jessie joked.

"Nah, Shelina might be. Plus, maybe I'm not as straight as I think I am, who knows. This team is pretty gay," Janine begged to defer. "Anyways, what's her name?"

"It's a secret," Jessie replied, although she knew Janine wouldn't buy that.

"Girl," Janine said sternly. "Do I have to ask you twenty questions?"

"Yes," Jessie responded.

"Okay, fine. So is this just a crush or are you actually with this girl?"

"She's my girlfriend."

"Ah, okay. Congratulations for not being forever alone," Janine said, which earned her a shove from the younger girl in response. "So is this girl on your team at UCLA?"

"Yes."

"Does she play for a national team?"

"Yes."

"Is she the same year as you?" The older girl asked.

"Yep."
"What position does she play?"

"It depends."

"Jeff, c'mon," Janine sighed.

"I'm serious! It depends on what team she's playing on," Jessie explained, it was true, especially with Jill Ellis as the head coach of the USWNT constantly playing players out of position.

"Okay, fine," Janine accepted the response. "Where's she from?"

"The United States."

"What state?"

"Well, that'll just give it away."

"Jeffrey, please," Janine begged.

"Okay, I'll give you a major hint. She played for the same youth club as you and is from the same town and I think you know her."

"Wait," Janine said as the playfulness that had been painted across her face turned into shock. "It's Mallory Pugh!"

"Shh!" Jessie shushed her, hoping the hotel walls were soundproof. "You're the only person who knows besides Mal, our friend Will, Erin, Mel, our immediate families, and our close friends back at home. We don't wanna come out to everyone else quite yet."

"Oh my gosh, I can't believe this. I played with her sister and Mal would go to a lot of our games too, like I know her really well. I mean, I'm just a little shocked but not in a bad way. It's just surprising. But hey, you've got game girl. She's lucky to be dating you."

"Well, thanks," Jess chuckled at how Janine was talking at a million miles per hour. "I'm pretty lucky."

"It's just so surprising. Like no offense but you two are so different and I wasn't expecting Mal to be going out with a girl."

"That's okay, I still can't believe it either and I guess opposites attract."

"Why would she date you though? Like out of all the girls at UCLA and on her soccer teams, why you?" Janine added.

"Gee thanks, way to take a hit at my self esteem," Jess replied, mocking hurt at Janine's playful banter.

"I'm kidding, anyways, so how'd it happen?" The older girl asked with a sly smile, her shocked daze disappearing.

"Well, I liked her a lot."

"No shit. Tell me the juicy details."

"I mean, I liked her for awhile but she was dating this really great, attractive guy who I was also friends with but then they broke up. It was like right before finals so she was a mess for the last
two weeks of the quarter. So then I accidentally took her to Portland, Maine and at the end of the trip, I accidentally kissed her."

"How do you accidentally go to Maine and how do you accidentally kiss someone?" Janine interrupted.

"The tickets were supposed to be for Oregon but I messed up and we were in the airport just talking about stuff and I kissed her."

"Did she kiss back?"

"No, I ran away before she could even try to."

"Weak," Janine scoffed.

"Hey!" Jess was offended.

"Okay, whatever, so what happened then?"

"We went back to school and were just friends for a couple months. Then we kissed again and started dating and the rest is history."

"You're really bad at giving me details," Janine pointed out. “You go to one of the best public universities in the United States. Aren’t you supposed to be smart and good at giving details?"

"Well, what do you want to know then?" Jessie asked, realizing that Janine would probably pester her for more details anyways.

"First date?"

"In N Out then we went to a soccer field, that was four months ago."

"Not surprised," Janine laughed. "First real kiss?"

"Like a week before our first date. We were chilling in my room, talking, then we kissed."

"First time?"

"Umm," Jessie replied uncomfortably, shifting on the bed she was sitting on.

"Oh, have you not done it yet? Sorry," Janine said nonchalantly.

"No, we have. It's just, why would I tell you?" Jessie clarified.

"Yeah, I did sound like a creep right then, sorry."

"Um, yeah. But in case you actually wanted to know, two months ago."

"Actually, I didn't need to know that. I liked it when I thought you were small and innocent better."

"Well, you asked," Jess laughed.

"First time you said 'I love you'?"

"A month into dating at an art museum."

"Of course," it was Janine's turn to laugh. "You and your artsiness. Let me guess, you've taken like
"A million photos of her?"

"Only one thousand seven hundred eleven," Jessie blushed.

"Same thing," the Coloradan shrugged, rolling her eyes. "So what do you need to know about Highlands Ranch?"

"What?" Jessie asked, completely caught off guard by the offer.

"If you want to like make a surprise visit to see her in Colorado during your break or something you'll need to know everything about the area."

"Wow, you've really thought that out, and I literally just told you about us."

"Hey, if I had a significant other, I'd love it if they made a surprise visit to see me while I was at home."

"Okay then," Jessie said. "What do I need to know?"

Chapter End Notes

I literally couldn’t think of a better chapter title so “Ugh” is the best I could do and it’s a total mood.

I’m trying to update quicker but I really am so busy. Anyways, thank you for the continued support!
The rivalry between the United States Women's National Soccer Team and the Canadian Women's National Soccer Team has a relatively short (compared to that of the men's teams, like the one between Argentina and Brazil) but rich history. While many of the players on both teams play with each other and are great friends off the field, it disappears as soon as they step onto the pitch. It's brutal, on both sides, and it has always been. The rivalry is evident in the style of play, from games in the Olympics to games in the CONCACAF tournament to friendlies, the meetings between the two teams are always expected to be highly competitive, and they always are. The physicality and intensity of play is always 110% on both sides and it always comes down to who is able to get through their talented opponents to score.

Mallory and Jessie have grown up with the United States versus Canada rivalry, even translating to the youth national team level as many games even then were determined by a little mistake or miscommunication. So, when they both were called up for the friendly in Seattle, they were more than excited. It would be the first time they would play against each other on the senior level as Jessie had been on the bench the first time. They couldn't wait to kick their girlfriends' butt.

This particular game was definitely living up to the hype. As Seattle was a huge soccer loving city in itself, there was also the fact that the Canadian border wasn't too far, bringing a decent crowd from the North. The crowd was electrified from the moment the whistle signaling the kickoff blew. Every near goal and brutal foul earned loud gasps and yells from the stands, with the American Outlaws leading chants that felt like they echoed throughout the whole city. Whilst many of the fans in the stands and all the commentators knew Mal and Jessie played at UCLA together, the whole rivalry was only intensified. Everyone loved the rivalry between the two young veterans and many actually believed the two really hated each other because of the way the media pitted them against each other, much like the whole Ronaldo-Messi rivalry... however, they were FAR from hating each other, in fact, the exact opposite.

The first thirty was rough, with many scoring opportunities on both sides as well as challenges that could have been called as fouls. Everyone in the stands were on the edge of their seats, a good 25% hoping Canada would score while the other 75% cheered on the home team. There hadn't been any challenges between the UCLA duo until Becky sent a perfect pass into the air in the midfield where Mallory and Jessie were, both of them jumping up to head it. They both had jumped too high and were unable to regain their balance after missing the ball and they both went tumbling down. Mallory fell on top of Jessie, her arms on either side of the young Canadian. Their faces were
inches away from each other, causing both of them to gather as much willpower as possible to not kiss right then and there. When Mal got up, she had to suppress a smirk—opting to bite her lip instead—while Jessie pretended to not care and simply fixed her socks as she argued to the referee, hoping for a yellow card to be given to the girl she’d get a Green Card to stay in the U.S. for. (Author’s Note: I hope everyone has a good sense of humor lol). Christen sent a suggestive look at Mal, one of her eyebrows going up, which caused Mal's expression to immediately change to a glare, causing Christen to let out a light laugh. Luckily, Jessie was too busy arguing with the referee about how Mal didn’t get carded to notice.

It didn't take much longer for Mallory to realize that the Canadians had ordered Jessie to mark her for the entirety of the game. The Canadians figured that since the two young phenomenons play together at UCLA, Jess would know Mal the best (if only they knew just how well she knows her). At half time, when Jill realized the tactic the Canadians were using, she decided to have the young player do the same to Jessie. For the remainder of the game, it was pretty much Mallory versus Jessie in an intense physical battle. They somehow always ended up with the ball and were progressively getting more and more frustrated as they got past each other, with fancy footwork and quick touches, but were always stopped at the last second by great defense from the other. When Mal had had enough, she slide tackled Jessie. The tackle was so nasty that it was a yellow card and could have been a straight red. She would have protested along with her teammates who were surrounding the referee but she herself knew the tackle was brutal because Jessie was still on the ground, clutching her leg—she could visibly tell that Jessie wasn't faking pain, even if it wasn't too much and would wear off in a matter of seconds.

"Hey, you okay?" Mal asked as she kneeled down to Jessie's level, setting a hand on her opponent's back.

"What are you doing?" Jessie asked as she slowly stretched out and sat up to adjust her socks and shin guards, the painful sting finally going away.

"Asking if you're okay."

"You never do though. Even when you broke that one girl's nose in that game against Oregon you didn't. You never do," Jessie remembered as she re-tied one of her shoelaces.

"She was being a bitch so she deserved it," Mal replied.

"And I'm not? I've been covering you all game like a guard dog."

"I know but you're different," Mal said with a small smile, earning some heart eyes from Jessie. "You're more of a little shit instead."

"Shut up," Jessie said, rolling her eyes, the mood completely ruined by Mal's comment.

"Here, let me help you up," Mal said as she offered her hand out to help her girlfriend up.

"I can get up myself," the Canadian snapped back confidently.

"I'm literally just helping you get up, it's good sportsmanship," Mal said and Jessie gave her a look, still not buying it. "Now get up or I'll break your nose and not be sorry."
"Ah, there's the Mal I know," Jessie said with a smile as she reluctantly took Mal's hand and stood up.

"You never answered me, are you okay?" Mal asked as the two started running again.

"I'm fine, it's just a little bruise on my leg, it's nothing," Jessie replied. Everyone's eyes were on them at this point, especially their teammates', but the two lovebirds didn't seem to notice nor care.

The game continued to be a bloodbath, per usual, as every United States versus Canada game was. It wasn't until the sixty seventh minute that the scoring began. Mallory had a fast break down the right flank and sprinted past Jessie who just could not keep up, especially since she was nutmegged—Mal made a mental note to herself to tease her about that later. When Rebecca was about to corner Mal, the young American crossed the ball to Lindsey who volleyed the ball into the upper ninety. Mal quickly went over to Lindsey to celebrate along with the rest of her team.

The celebration was short-lived because Canada scored three minutes after. Mal was caught hanging behind, causing Jessie to easily dribble down the middle of the field. She then lobbed a pass to Janine who was running right outside of the six. Janine took three touches then passed the ball into the right corner. About twenty minutes later, the final whistle blew signaling the end of the game. It ended in a 1-1 draw and neither Alex Morgan nor Diana Matheson got injured or trampled so it was overall a success. To make it all the better, Mal and Jessie both got assists (although, they both were disappointed that their teams couldn't come out of the game with a win). Of course, they both expected more out of themselves but they were satisfied enough and it was a friendly so neither team had any reason to beat themselves up over the results. It was a hard fought game on both sides so there really wasn't anything to complain about, even the referees, surprisingly, weren't to blame as they were actually fair and consistent for both sides.

Before going back to their respective team's locker rooms, the UCLA duo stayed on the pitch to converse and stretch together. They tried their best to look like friends so Mal brought Lindsey along with her while Jessie brought Janine. The two older Colorado natives and the current UCLA teammates all conversed like normal friends. Mal and Jessie were trying to get into a conversation with the other two but they were too busy laughing at something that only the older two understood. When Lindsey and Janine were told they had to go meet with the media, Mal and Jessie decided to go sign some autographs. They stuck closely together, even though they were on different teams and were supposed to be big rivals who hated each other. The two made their rounds and kindly greeted fans of all ages. When Mallory had realized more people were asking for her autographs than Jessie's, she told them that they should get the Canadian's autograph too.

"Thanks for all the support but you all should totally get Jessie's autograph too. She's probably gonna become one of the best players in the world. She's like a young Iniesta. A little architect on the pitch who also wants to be a real life architect," Mal said and Jessie just laughed. Mal had given at least thirteen autographs while Jess had only given a mere three, and the striker thought that was a problem. However, what the American said worked and more people happily asked for the Canadian's autograph too.

"She's just being nice, you don't have to get mine too," Jess said humbly.

"Her autograph is going to be worth a lot, not as much as mine though, but a lot," Mal joked which caused Jess to roll her eyes.

"Hey, can I please get a selfie with the both of you?" A girl who was wearing a Tobin Heath jersey and looked around the UCLA teammate's age asked her.

"Um, sure," Mal said casually. She then tugged on Jessie's jersey to get her attention saying, "Yo,
"What?" Jess replied as she brought her attention to Mal after signing an autograph for a young girl in a red Canadian jersey.

"She wants a selfie with us," Mal said, referring to the girl in front of her who had asked just a minute before. The girl in front of them looked like she was starstruck just being in the presence of the two Bruins.

"You know how bad I am with selfies," Jessie said, nearly forgetting it wasn't just her and Mal. "Especially next to the Queen of Selfies herself."

"Jess, c'mon," Mal rolled her eyes at her girlfriend.

"Okay, fine."

"I'm sorry about her, she's... Canadian, and they're weird, sorry," Mallory apologized to the girl who just laughed. Then they got situated and Mal took the girl's phone in her own hands as she was in between the girl and Jessie. Right before they snapped a photo, Mal told Jessie, "Try not to look ugly."

She was kidding, of course, Jessie could never look ugly in Mal's eyes.

Chapter End Notes

I don't think I've ever had this long of a run of updating so frequently. Enjoy it while it lasts because after the next 3 chapters or so, there is a whole 3+ years within this story that I have barely even started writing anything about lol.

Thank you again for the continued support!
“I’ve gotta say, that whole architect thing you said the other day when we were signing and taking pictures after the game was pretty cute,” Jessie said as she and Mal sat across from each other while drinking coffee. They were now in San Jose during a rare time when they both were free to get coffee at a café. After a travel day then a full day of training, they finally had some down time.

“Thanks, I thought of it on the spot,” Mallory replied, beaming. The teammates Mal normally hung out with were a little suspect when she said she had plans and couldn’t hang out with them, but they didn’t look too much into it. Meanwhile, Jessie got caught and had to spit it all out. “So, I got your text about telling the team about us, what happened?”

“Janine happened,” Jessie sighed. “Actually, it wasn’t really her fault. She just mentioned that I was going to get coffee with someone and when people asked her who I was going with, she would say it was none of their business. You know Janine, love her but man, sometimes she can be annoying. Anyways, her saying it was none of their business sounded real bitchy and I felt bad so I just casually told them all that I was going to meet my girlfriend, Mallory Pugh.”

“And what happened after?” Mal asked curiously.

“They were pretty chill,” Jessie shrugged nonchalantly. “No one really cares who you’re dating as long as they’re not super crazy. I mean they joked about fraternizing with the enemy but it was all in good fun. They did threaten you though. They said if you ever hurt me in any way, they will hurt you. It’s okay though, I told them to shut up.”

“I mean, your team is already super physical and tries to hurt me. How worse could it get?”

“Likewise,” Jessie lightly laughed.

“True,” Mal replied. “Well thank you for being in my defense, babe.”

Mallory watched Jessie sip her coffee, the midfielder’s fingers wrapping around the cup tightly as she lifted the cup up to her lips. The Canadian always took long sips, no matter how hot her drink was, and would take moment after taking a sip to savor it. After taking a sip, she would take a deep breath then take another sip. Mallory had memorized Jessie’s routine because she thought it was so
adorable. There was no other person in the world who enthralled Mallory with everything they did as much as Jessie did. There was no one as beautiful as her either.

When Jessie looked up at her girlfriend while taking a sip, she smiled when she realized that Mallory had been staring at her. She smirked as she finished her routine then set the cup on the table in between them. Once she set her coffee down, she leant her elbows on the table and held her head up—it was her turn to stare at her girlfriend in admiration. Mal blushed, caught red-handed with staring and tried to cover it up by taking a long sip of her own coffee. While Mal sipped her coffee and tried to hide her blushing while in public, Jessie decided to have a little fun. She bit her lip as she eyed Mal like she was about to makeout with her right there.

“Babe, you can’t look at me like that in public,” Mal whined as she set her coffee down.

“Like what?” Jessie asked, pretending to be oblivious and innocent. She had a slight smirk painted across her face as she took another sip of her coffee.

“You know what you were doing,” Mal rolled her eyes. Just then, someone came up to Mal.

“Excuse me, are you Mallory Pugh?” The “someone” asked. Mallory turned to the person asking for her. The person was a gorgeous blonde girl who looked like Mal and Jessie’s age. She was wearing black framed glasses, a pair of black ripped jeans, a white graphic t-shirt with “SAVE THE TREES” written across it, and an apron indicating that she was a worker at the super hipster-y café they were at. A gorgeous worker.

“Yes, I am,” Mallory smiled in response, suddenly getting a good idea for payback on Jessie. She straightened her posture and put on the flirtyest demeanor she could muster.

“I watched you play on TV the other day, you’re even prettier in person. You played so well, so I thought giving you a coffee on the house would be the least I could do to thank you for beating Canada,” the girl winked. Then she handed over a coffee with “Alyssa <3 (646) 926-6614” written on the side. This girl looked like one of those gorgeous lesbian models you only see on the Internet and acted like one straight out of Hollywood. The girl had game. “Maybe this coffee will convince you to go on a date with me?”

“Oh, you’re bold. Kinda like how my coffee is bold too,” Mal giggled flirtatiously, obviously playing along so she could piss Jessie off. Jessie cringed at the remark and her presence shifted. She suddenly became possessive, wanting so badly to sit on Mal’s lap, kiss her senseless, then tell this other girl to “fuck off” because Mal was hers, and only hers. But Jessie knew better, she is far too nice to do that and also didn’t want to make a scene in public, especially considering her and Mal’s semi-celebrity profiles. Mal could tell that her favorite Canadian was pissed so she continued and decided to respond with a jab at her girlfriend, “The last girl that confessed her feelings to me ran away before I could say anything.”

Jessie just stared, her mouth agape, in disbelief that Mal was going that low. Her cheeks and the tops of her ears were red, and she looked like she was about to fight someone.

“You’re really hot,” Mal stated, causing the girl to blush and get shy. Then Mal introduced her girlfriend, “Oh yeah, this is my friend Jessie.”

“Hi,” Jessie barely got out with her cheeks red. She was eyeing Mallory, boiling with suppressed anger. It had felt like she was invisible during the whole interaction, Mal barely acknowledging that she was there. She knew that her girlfriend was doing this just to get a reaction out of her, and it was working.
“Girls are great,” Mal laughed. She then paused, looking between the two blushing girls in front of her, and decided to end this entertaining little scene for the sake of not wanting to lead on this girl anymore and for not wanting to make Jessie any more jealous. “And I’m flattered that you asked me out, but I’m seeing someone right now who I really like. Thank you for the coffee, and thank you for supporting the USWNT. Please know that whoever you end up with will be one very lucky person.”

“Wow, thank you for being honest,” this Alyssa girl responded. Although she was slightly dejected, she still genuinely smiled. Right before she got back to work, she added, “Good luck at your next game, I’ll be rooting for you.”

“That wasn’t fair,” Jessie pouted once the girl was out of sight and earshot.

“Life isn’t fair, sweetie,” Mal said with an evil grin. “I didn’t lead her on or get you too jealous though.”

“You had me pretty jealous.”

“Good, that was my goal. Since you never realize when someone is flirting with you and don’t realize how jealous I get, that was payback.”

“But you really had to call me out in front of my face like that?”

“Well, yeah. Duh. Your reaction was priceless,” Mal snickered as the two got up from the table to leave.

“It’s good that we’re together because I would’ve been so jealous and would’ve had to keep that jealousy to myself and it would’ve absolutely sucked. Shit, I was still pretty jealous but I would’ve been even more jealous,” Jessie explained. “I’ve gotta say, she was pretty hot. I’m surprised she doesn’t have a girlfriend yet.”

“I’m sure we could find someone for her….”

“See, that’s what we’re not gonna do. We’re gonna let her live her life while we live ours.”

“Who on our team do you think would be good for her?” Mal asked, totally ignoring what Jessie said. She was now in deep thought, “I mean, I do have this girl’s name and number now. I could give it to someone.”

“I’m making you throw away that cup once you’re done so you don’t give it to someone and make everything even weirder,” Jessie said.

“Fine,” Mal sighed defeatedly, taking one last sip then throwing the cup away.

After a day of practices and preparing for the game tomorrow, the USWNT was finally done for the day. When there was some down time when pretty much everyone was resting in their rooms, Mal had gone to meet with her coaches. She told them about her intentions of going to play professionally sooner rather than later, also seeking advice about whether or not this was a good idea and advice about what she should do. The coaching staff was incredibly supportive and encouraged her. They gave her contacts of some people who could help her. She also told them about her relationship with Jessie. The coaching staff doesn’t really care who you’re seeing, dating, or marrying, as long as the significant other is not too problematic. So, they were incredibly chill because the only bad thing they had heard about Jessie Fleming was that she was a really good
player who played for the enemy.

Once everyone was all together at dinner, Mal decided it was time to reveal her secret. It was right after they had eaten, when the setting was much more casual when she decided that would be the time. She stood on a chair then cleared her throat so everyone could hear and said, “I have two important announcements to make.”

“Is this a dare? Did Sonnett make you do this?” Becky asked, looking up from the game she was playing with Alyssa and Julie, eyeing Emily who genuinely looked confused and innocent.

“I swear, I have no idea what’s going on,” Emily said, putting her hands up defensively.

“This isn’t a dare,” Mallory chuckled, because that is totally something Emily would have her do. She took a deep breath, looking at Christen and Tobin who both gave encouraging nods to continue on, then said, “Well… I’m going pro! Like in a couple of weeks! I’ve talked with my family and all of my coaches and now is the time for me to go pro.”

“Congrats, girl!” Crystal said as she quickly looked up from her phone then looked back down at it.

“You’ll go to PSG, right?” Lindsey asked.

“I’m not sure yet. I need to get an agent and everything. I’ve got some offers all over the place. We’ll see what happens.”

“Well you better,” Lindsey laughed. “No but seriously, if you need any advice, I’ve got you. Just text me or whatever.”

“Thanks Linds,” Mal smiled.

“What’s your other announcement?”

“Oh yeah, I’m dating someone,” Mal said nonchalantly.

“Okay, people date,” Kelley shrugged.

“No, like I’m in a full on relationship.”

“Why wouldn’t you tell us earlier?” Rose asked.

“Life is hard,” Mallory shrugged.

“That’s fair. So who is it?” Lindsey asked.

“The best young female soccer player in the world,” Mallory said proudly.

“Wait, you’re into girls? Since when?” Rapinoe asked, suddenly interested in the conversation.

“Why would you date a soccer player? Why not go for someone who’s a CEO? Or a doctor? Or like a college football coach? You gotta make money some way,” Emily said, shaking her head.

“So you’re dating yourself? Why would you make this such a big deal?” Lindsey joked.

“Oh my gosh, first of all, I’m not into labels but I like this girl. Second of all, I’m not a golddigger. Third of all, I’m not that vain,” Mallory rolled her eyes while explaining.
“Mhmm,” Allie narrowed her eyes at Mal.

“So who is it?” Abby asked.

“Oohhh lemme guess… Deyna or Delphine? I know Delphine, she’s great. But how would you know her?” Alex wondered aloud.

“Is it a youth U.S. national team player?” Julie asked. “Or someone on your UCLA team?”

“Oh my gosh, you all are insufferable,” Mal sighed loudly. “Do you all want to know or not?”

Everyone was finally quiet, all ears.

“Jessie Fleming is my girlfriend.”

“Of course, that’s why you were nice to her at the game. Like I know you guys go to the same school but still, you two were too nice,” Alyssa said as a matter of fact with a shrug, going back to doing her crossword puzzle.

“Didn’t you almost break Fleming’s leg?” Lindsey asked.

“She had it coming.” Mal shrugged.

“I’m sure her soccer playing wasn’t the only that had her coming,” Rapinoe laughed along with Ashlyn. Mallory threw the first napkin she could find right at the older woman’s head.

Chapter End Notes

I’m trying to update frequently but it’s been tough because sometimes I go into creative overdrive where I have a lot of creative ideas across many mediums (including ones for this fic) but it’s overwhelming and I end up working on a little bit of everything instead of focusing on finishing one thing at a time... all in between my crazy schedule.

Anyways, I’m busy but not too busy to thank you for all of the support!
Family is Spelled as Embarrassing

Chapter Summary

“Family (feat. Janet Mock)” by Blood Orange

“Family” by Muppet Babies

“Family” by Rodney Adkins

“Keep the Family Close” by Drake

“Family (feat. Otis & Suge)” by E-40

“Family (feat. Dora and Dolly)” by Young Thug

Yes, I understand the diversity of music genres these cover.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

To say the game in San Jose was close would be a lie. Although the score was only 2-0 in favor of the United States, the women in red, white, and blue dominated the game from start to finish. Even though they weren’t playing their best, the Americans seemed to have better possession, better shots on target, more calls by the referees in their favor, and just a much better game than the Canadians overall. Jessie was by far Canada’s player of the game but her play was equal to the tenth best player for the United States, who was Mallory. While Jessie was fouled and thrown all over the place, everyone seemed to have an utmost respect for her. All of Mal’s teammates would be so nice to Jessie that Mal could tell that half of the reason was because of Mal’s recent reveal to her team and the other half was because well, why would anyone want to hurt Jessie? She isn’t overtly physical on purpose, unlike some of her teammates, and she’s such a smart and pure player that no one can hate her.

Once the game was over, the United States were content, though not entirely satisfied, with their play and happy to start the year off with a win, especially against their rivals from the North. The team was incredibly thankful for all of the fans who showed up, and they stayed around to express their gratitude by trying to sign autographs for and take photos with as many people as possible. When Mallory turned back and was about to tell Jessie that she should stay with her to sign autographs, she realized that the Canadian was nowhere to be seen. She sighed, knowing that Jessie probably wanted to cool down from the disappointment of losing before having dinner with her family. Mal signed some autographs and took some photos with fans then made her way to the mixed zone.

After showering and speaking to the media, it was finally time for Jessie’s family to meet Mal—as the Canadian’s girlfriend—at dinner.

“I know I’ve met your family before and I know they like me but I’m still pretty nervous,” Mal said to her girlfriend as the two started to exit the stadium. Mallory tried to look a little nice, wearing a pair of black jeans, a plain white shirt, a jean jacket, a dangling cross necklace, and little
gold hoop earrings. All the while, Jessie was wearing sweatpants and one of her UCLA hoodies with her hair tied up in her usual ponytail. She still looked great but Mal felt like she was overdressed. It was at the moment that she realized they basically were Christen and Tobin 2.0, she was Christen and Jessie was Tobin.

“There’s nothing to be worried about. They already know and love you. And they know that the girl I’m having them meet is absolutely amazing because if she was able to sweep me off my feet, then to them she has to be pretty amazing because that’s not easy. Plus, I always gush about you to them without naming you and they see how happy I get. They trust me when I say this girl is amazing,” Jessie reassured Mal with a little, cheeky smile as the two got into a Lift to meet Jessie’s family at the restaurant.

“I’m trying to be chill here,” Mal said as she was furiously blushing. “You’re hyping me up like I’m some amazing person.”

“You are.”

“Then when they meet me again, they’re going to be disappointed that I’m not.”

“Don’t say that!” Jessie quickly responded with a scowl. “Just be your wonderful self and there is nothing to worry about. Like I said before, they already know and love you. I probably have more to be worried about, they’re probably going to embarrass me.”

“I feel like I tried too hard though,” Mal said, referring to what she was wearing. As her eyes looked between her and Jessie, she said, “Or maybe you didn’t try hard enough? Look at what we’re wearing.”

“Ya know, you didn’t have to wear nice clothes. We’re just going to a casual sit-down place.”

“You could’ve told me,” Mal replied.

“I did.”

“Yeah, but I was expecting you to be wearing something a little nicer.”

“They’re my family, I don’t need to impress them. You, on the other hand, probably felt obligated to and, knowing you, you like to look nice all the time.”

“You’re annoying.”

“I’m annoying because I’m right.”

“Shut up.”

“You love me though,” Jessie laughed.

“Ughhhhh,” Mal said frustrated as Jessie got a kick out of this. As the car slowed down to a stop, she asked, “How do I look?”

“Beautiful, as always. Don’t worry about how you look. Just be you,” Jessie replied as they both got out of the car after thanking the driver. When they got into the restaurant, Mallory tried to take in the environment of the restaurant to ease her nerves. She took in the chaos of a crowded restaurant bustling with servers tending to their duties, smelt the aroma of various foods—the smell of garlic bread sticking out the most, the sound of sizzling meat and seafood on trays and the clank of plates and utensils, and the beautiful view of the restaurant overlooking the beach. As they
approached the table that Jessie’s parents and sister were at, the Fleming family immediately stood up with big smiles across their faces and arms out wide to greet the two soccer players who had just fought hard on the pitch hours before.

“Hello Mal! How are you?” Jessie’s mom exclaimed as she got up to give her older daughter’s former roommate a big hug.

“I’m doing well thanks, how are you?” Mal reciprocated the hug and tried to match the excitement, while still a bit nervous. Jessie gave quick hugs to Mr. Fleming and Elyse, and Mal followed suit. Even though Mal had met the whole Fleming family before, she was even more nervous given the context. It was one thing to meet Jessie’s family as her roommate, teammate, and friend but it was a whole different thing to meet Jessie’s family as her girlfriend. Her hands were starting to get clammy for being so nervous.

“I’m doing very well, now that I get to see you and my daughter,” Mrs. Fleming said as she gestured to her eldest daughter and the American. “Not to be rude though, but what are you doing here?”

“Yeah, we love you but I thought Jessie was bringing her girlfriend,” Mr. Fleming added as they all took a seat.

Jessie’s sister sighed, putting her head in her hand, recovering from second-hand embarrassment by her parents, then took a long sip of her water. Mal and Jessie both blushed. They both just sat there in silence for a moment, not sure what to say. Mr. and Mrs. Fleming just sat there eagerly waiting for a response while they casually drank from their water glasses.

“She is my girlfriend,” Jessie said quietly, finally breaking the awkward silence, immediately putting the napkin in her lap so she could avoid eye contact.

“What?” Jessie’s mom asked in disbelief, spitting out the water she had been drinking, her eyes going wide. She kept looking between her daughters and Mal, trying to figure out if this was a joke or not. The two UCLA phenoms were blushing as they looked around them, hoping no one noticed the debacle that was unfolding. Luckily, no one seemed to be paying any attention to them.

“I am Jessie’s girlfriend,” Mal quietly reiterated, nerves and shyness evident in her voice. She wiped her clammy hands on her pants then followed Jessie’s lead and looked down to put her own napkin on her lap.

“Out of all of Jessie’s friends and teammates, you were the one I least expected,” Mr. Fleming said.

“Geez dad, thanks for making this super awkward already,” Jessie replied with a scowl, rolling her eyes.

“I’m sorry, that sounded so rude. I’m just really surprised. You two are just… complete opposites.”

“Dad, we know that. It took us a long time to finally get together and when we did, it took both us a lot of convincing that we were going to be in this relationship,” Jessie explained, still blushing.

“Well, welcome to the family!” He said to Mal with a large grin.

“Dad!” Jessie sighed.

“What?”

“It’s not like we’re getting married.”
“Yet,” her dad smiled playfully, giving a wink towards both Jessie and Mal.

“Mal was always my favorite child anyways…” Mrs. Fleming said as she took a sip of her wine.

“Mom!” Both Jessie and her sister exclaimed. Mallory was confused and felt like she was experiencing whiplash, everything was happening so quickly.

“I feel like I’m in a soap opera or some super dramatic reality TV show,” Mal said, looking between the four of them.

“Even if we didn’t already know you so well, this is exactly how weird this dinner would’ve gone,” Ellyse finally spoke up.

“Can you guys be normal for just one night?” Jessie asked. Right then, the waitress asked them for their order, and Jessie was grateful. They all ordered, thankfully halting their conversation. Mal made sure to not order the most expensive thing on the menu, but she wasn’t a coward so she got a reasonably priced large chicken caesar salad.

“Alright, let’s try this again,” Mr. Fleming said after the waitress left, as he and his wife smiled and made eye contact as if telepathically talking to each other. By their looks, Jessie could tell that her parents were about to embarrass her.

“It’s so nice to finally meet Jessie’s girlfriend! Mallory, we’ve heard such great things about you,” Mrs. Fleming added.

“But you’ve already met her before…” Ellyse pointed out. She had now become jealous of her brother for being able to skip out on this embarrassing episode of the Fleming family.

“We’re trying to be normal.”

“What are your intentions with my daughter?” Mr. Fleming asked, trying to keep a straight face but failing as his face broke out in a smile.

“Dad!” Jessie whined. By now, Mallory was thoroughly enjoying this—her hands no longer clammy from nervousness, as the Fleming parents were laughing while sipping their wine. Watching her girlfriend become embarrassed was entertaining, especially as the Fleming parents were now trying to be as obnoxious as possible. She had met Jessie’s parents before, and knew that they would be as annoying to the Canadian soccer star as they could be once the awkward reveal was over, but this was next level. Jessie’s parents couldn’t be serious at all.

“You’re way out of her league,” Mrs. Fleming said to her daughter’s girlfriend, laughing. Jessie agreed but hearing her own mother say that was embarrassing.

“Way to be a bully to your daughter, mom,” Jessie rolled her eyes.

“I think that about her too,” Mal replied, looking at Jessie as she smiled and lightly squeezed one of her girlfriend’s hands. Jessie smiled back and immediately felt much better. She was still embarrassed by her parents but she also kind of knew it was coming.

“When are we getting grandkids?” Mr. Fleming asked as Jessie furiously blushed.

“Ask Tristan,” Jessie replied, her face bright red.

“We love embarrassing our kids in front of their significant others,” Mrs. Fleming said to Mal, laughing as she and her husband clinked their wine glasses then took sips. “But seriously Mal, it’s a
pleasure to meet you as Jessie’s girlfriend. We already loved you as Jessie’s roommate, teammate, and close friend. But now we love you even more. When Jess told us that she was dating a girl, she got so embarrassed and was blushing so hard. We had never seen her like that. We knew whoever this girl was was special because no one’s ever made Jessie act like that. She was swooning just talking about you, even though we didn’t know this girl was you at the time. We’re really happy that you two realized your feelings for each other. She’s a lucky girl to be in love with you. You’re such a great person and player, and have always been a great friend and roommate to her. You two have such great chemistry on the field too.”

“She’s pretty special herself. You have a wonderful daughter,” Mallory said as she looked at Jessie’s blushing, embarrassed self with so much love and tenderness, that she didn’t even care if there were other people around to see. She didn’t even care that she was looking at her girlfriend like she had hung the stars, with her girlfriend’s parents sitting right there. Then their food came and that was the only thing that brought her attention away from her beautiful girlfriend (because food is pretty great too).

“So when did you two fall in love? Was it when you were roommates?” Mrs. Fleming asked, wearing that “I’m a mom ready to hear the tea be spilled” mischievous look that moms wear when they’re trying to get some important personal information about their kids. All the while, her daughter only got more embarrassed and blushed even more.

“I think she fell in love with me when we were roommates,” Mal said with a smile, Jessie’s face was completely red. “After my ex-boyfriend and I broke up, I was a complete mess but she got me through it when we went to Maine together. I should’ve known she loved me then because what type of college student just surprises her friend with plane tickets? Much less to the wrong destination in mind? Your daughter really is one of the most caring people I know. She helped me with a lot of things. She helped me become a better player and student, and most importantly, a better person. She helped show me how to love.”

Jessie’s parents smiled that proud smile parents do when they get praise about their kids.

“Sadly, it took me awhile to fall in love with her but this past September is when we got together. It’s honestly been the best five months of my life. I’m planning on dropping out and going pro soon, so it’s going to be tough for the both of us but no doubt, what we have is special and I’ll do everything I can for us to continue to work,” Mal gushed, not taking her eyes off of Jessie for a second.

“You’re planning on going pro now?” Mr. Fleming asked as the conversation finally turned to a more serious one.

“Yes, it’s been a long process of deciding but it just feels right that I go now. Even before winning everything I could win at the college level, I had made the decision. I’ll develop better going pro. I’m not sure if I’ll go to the NWSL or overseas but I’m meeting with an agent soon. I think I’ll go to the NWSL though, maybe overseas later. It’ll be tough but I’m up for the challenge,” Mal explained in between bites of her food.

“That’s awesome, Mal. We’ll be sure to cheer you on wherever you are,” Mrs. Fleming replied with a big genuine smile. After taking a bite of her food, she said to Jessie, “Jess, honey, are you a child?”

“What?” Jessie questioned, looking like she was a deer in the headlights.

“Use your napkin,” Mrs. Fleming said as she used her own napkin to wipe off the little bit of tomato sauce that had decided to plant itself on Jessie’s chin. Embarrassed by her mom’s actions,
Jessie’s face became the color of the tomato sauce. “I swear, sometimes you eat like you’re a three year old.”

“Tell me about it,” Mal laughed, deciding to join in on this session of “Embarrass Jessie” with Mrs. Fleming. “When she’s watching soccer, I have to feed her her food because she’ll forget how to eat.”

“You know, when she was a toddler, she used to only be able to eat if she wore a bib. She would scream and cry if we tried to feed her and she didn’t have a bib on. Sometimes she’d throw food at us if we gave her food but she didn’t have her bib on. I’m surprised she didn’t decide to become a goalkeeper, that food thrown would hurt,” Mr. Fleming recalled with a laugh.

“Wow, I did not know that,” Mal smiled as one of her eyebrows went up in amusement. She looked at Jessie who was embarrassed beyond words, her eyes transfixed on the small droplets of wine that had stained the white tablecloth.

“Oh, we have a lot of embarrassing stories about Jessie to tell you,” Elyse said with a devilish smile. At this point, there was no turning back and Jessie knew that trying to stop them would be impossible so she just sat in silence for the rest of the night as she ate. With her ears and face red, her parents and sister told her girlfriend all of the most embarrassing moments about her that they could remember. Her family was enjoying every second of it while Mallory was amused and would often end up joining the Fleming family in laughter. At the end of the day, Jessie didn’t care too much about Mallory knowing all of her embarrassing stories because if there’s anyone in the world outside of her immediate family who she wouldn’t mind sharing them with, it’s her girlfriend. Plus, seeing Mal laugh so much, especially along with her family, was special. It was honestly one of the most beautiful sights she had ever seen, and she wanted to memorize the scene before her forever.

Chapter End Notes

Reminder: Most of the things in this fic are fictional. I don’t know everything about Jessie and Mallory because that would be weird and privacy is super important.

I also think Dansby Swanson is incredibly attractive and I love him and Mal together so much (FYI I’m bi lol).

Also, sorry for taking so long to update. I’ve been saying I’ve been super busy for the past 2 years but I’m honestly just always super busy. No guarantee when the next update will be because, somehow, I’m actually going to be even busier next semester. Sorry for taking forever to finish this, but thank you for the continued support!

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