Follow the adventures and possibly misadventures of the members of Grace of the Fallen as they take on their first tour mixed with love, lust and drama.

Disclaimer: I own my characters and their band name.

I don’t own other bands mentioned or the tour (sad day)
The Beginning

“So the photographer ran an idea by me for one of our group shots.” Charlie said as she dropped down on the leather sofa beside me.

I hummed questioningly at her while still scrolling through my phone. When she didn’t continue, I looked over at my best friend and bandmate. “Are you going to tell me or aggravate me with the silent treatment?” I asked impatiently.

“I was making sure I had your full attention first.” She said with a huff.

“Well you have it, what’s up?” I asked.

We were currently relaxing on one of the many couches at AP Headquarters, waiting for our set. As a special edition issue, AP Magazine was doing a spread on each of the bands performing at Warped Tour. This would be our first time appearing and I couldn’t be more stoked. Charlie and I had started the band back when we were in high school together, but eventually took a step back to focus on college and possible careers in the ‘grown up’ world. After a while, we decided we missed the music too much to give it up completely.

Grace of the Fallen had gone through many different phases and people before it finally found ground with its current members. My best friend Charleston, aka Charlie, was our 5’4 modelesque, bombshell, tan-limbed guitarist. Her long dark brown hair was currently sporting a pastel pink and purple ombre dye job. She had originally started off as our drummer, but learned guitar between phases and then soon after mastered the art of screaming. I don’t know how she manages it without destroying her vocal cords, but she does and it’s what gives us our edge.

Kacee joined our ranks much later, as our new drummer. The crazy blonde, recently streaked with fire engine red, introduced herself during one of our college classes and we clicked instantly. It wasn’t long after that, Charlie and I decided to restart our band and the small feisty drummer was the first person we asked to join us. The only problem was getting the two of us to focus when we were together. I think we pushed Charlie to the edge of her patience quite frequently. After that it was just a matter of finding a bassist. We went through quite a few until my 18 year old, platinum blonde and blue haired, youngest sister joined us, bringing her amazing harmonizing abilities as well. The willowy teen was the perfect addition to round out our small family, with her sarcasm and calm disposition she helped Charlie balance out mine and Ace’s crazy.

“They threw out the idea of doing a edgy topless shot.” Charlie said.

“Wait! What?” I said tuning back into our current conversation.

“You did, but that was really unexpected.” I leaned back, running the ideas of how badly this could go if we ran with it. Then again it fit with our style and sound, so it could go our way. I ran my hands through my long auburn, blonde and turquoise ombre hair and let out a heavy sigh, “I’m down, but we’ve got to run it by Kacee and Brook. I know BB won’t really care so much, but Ace may fight us on it a bit. Are you ok with it? I mean there is a possibility your parents will see it and we are opening ourselves up to some major criticism.”

“I think it will be fun. I mean, yeah, mom and dad might freak out, but we are all adults and it’s
my decision not theirs. Ace will freak for about a minute or so, but she will do it if you’re down.” I
nodded running through the possible scenarios to get Ace on board.

“Alrighty, let’s go find them and share the plans.” Charlie stood, extending her hand to pull me off
the comfy couch.

It didn’t take long for us to find them in another part of the building shooting some pool to kill time.
As predicted, Brooklyn didn’t really care what we did as long as we could leave soon and eat. Ace
on the other hand took a lot more convincing that I thought would entail, she finally agreed, although
very begrudgingly. Soon the director of the photo-shoot found us and ushered us into the room we
would be using.

“So I want to get a couple of you all in what you’re wearing now as a group, then some
individuals before jumping into a few other outfit options and then we will end with the big shot.”
The photographer said as he moved to our instruments that had already been set up for us.

“Sounds good, do you want us in any certain position?” I asked as we followed him across the
room.

“I don’t want your drummer hidden by her drums, so I’d like to see her in front of them.” He said
absentmindedly.

“I have a name dude.” Kacee hissed out.

“Chill Ace, the sooner we get this done with the sooner we can go eat.” Brooklyn whispered to
the short tempered drummer.

Soon Kacee was propped up against her bass drum, her short, black ripped jean clad legs positioned
in front of her to keep her upright, drumsticks in hand and a pissed expression painting her pixie like
features. Charlie was to my right, her favorite Jackson purple, blue and green starburst electric guitar
swung over her shoulder, a smile breaking across her face when her eyes met mine. I smiled back
before glancing to my left where Brooklyn was, her black and turquoise bass clutched in her left
hand, I slowly stepped up to the vintage microphone, swinging my Scott Walker antique electric
guitar over my shoulder. I fixed my short black, BVB crop top under the strap and settled into the
first pose for the photographer.

Hour 1 slowly bled into hour 2 and a multiple of group shots and individuals were taken. Outfits
blurred into the next until it came down to take the ‘risque topless’ group shot. Ace shot me a dirty
look as she dealt with the makeup artist who was explaining the point of the electric tape that would
be placed over her nipples “just in case the MMA gloves slipped down” as the artist put it. I couldn’t
help but laugh as she scowled at me. I grabbed the black fingerless leather gloves, that I would be
wearing, before heading over to join her so I could get taped up.

“How ya feelin’ Ace?” I asked stepping up beside her.

“I hate you, no I more than hate you!” She seethed between clenched teeth.

“Oh come on, it’s not that bad and it will be over before you know it.” I laughed out. She rolled
her eyes at me before grabbing her robe and gloves and joined Brooklyn on the other side of the
room.

“She still mad about this?” Charlie asked from behind me. I looked over my shoulder to see her
long hair had been haphazardly curled with a metal and black flower crown circling her head.

“Well she’s not exactly happy, but she’ll live.” I nodded to her crown, “is that all they gave you to
“I’ll have the tape like y’all, but yeah I guess the way they are positioning us I will have my arms crossed and ‘properly covered’.” The laughter in her voice was obvious. She was the furthest from self conscious, so she was having a blast with this set.

“Did they pick out BB’s cover up?” I hadn’t had a chance to see what my little sister was wearing since she was already wrapped in her robe.

“Yeup! It’s this really cool cropped leather vest that they want her to keep open and the back has some kind of Celtic looking knot design.” Charlie explained while the makeup artist taped us up.

After the artist had done her finishing touches the photographer took over. He had decided that this group shot would be done in black and white giving the end result a grunge feel. I was placed dead center in front of a grayscale backdrop and told to place my forearms against my chest, covering the electric tape, hands in the ‘rock on’ gesture, with my fingers almost touching my chin. My long hair had been curled in loose ringlets falling over my shoulders and around my arms. Kacee was on my left, back against my arm, her gloved hands touching in front of her chest. They had styled her chin lengthed asymmetrical pixie hair, giving it a wild bed head look. Charlie was facing me on my right, arms carefully crossed, giving the camera her side profile, but head facing the camera and bringing up the end of the line was Brook. Her back against Charlie’s, hands grasping the lapels of the vest holding it open and out, but still hiding the black tape across her chest.

Based on the expressions of the photographer and makeup team, this was going to be the best shot of the day. Occasionally we were asked for different facial expressions or to move our head this way or that and on the rare occurrence move our arms or hands slightly, but for the most part we just needed to hold our stance. The final product would be from the waist up, giving the illusion that we were, for the most part, nude. It was time to bring back feminine sex appeal to the punk rock culture and we were here to make that happen.

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Not long after the AP ‘Warped Tour Edition’ Magazine came out, we were bombarded. It was like instant fame, not like crazy stalker fankid fame, but people knew who we were, they were listening to our music and buying our album. We were the overnight success story, but something told me this was just the tip of the iceberg. Warped Tour was going to be a fun filled, hectic, crazy time and I was counting down the days, which really only included about a week and half.
“Alright guys time to get on the bus!” Karah, our manager, yelled through the bands’ shared apartment. It was 3 am and most of us were still up from the night before, too excited and jacked up on caffeine to actually get any kind of sleep.

“Guys! Guys! This is it! Our first Warped Tour, our first tour in general. Am I the only one trippin balls about this right now?” Ace chirped at lightening speed.

“Oh my fucking shit, Kacee if you don’t chill out, it’s 3 in the fucking morning and y’all kept me up all night. I might kill you!” Charlie’s voice was thick with exhaustion as she scrubbed her eyes, annoyance etched on her face.

“Holy shit stickers, this is really happening. I mean this is surreal as fuck right now.” I jumped in, trying to stave off an argument. You don’t mess with a sleepy Charlie, it’s like poking a bear with a pointy stick that’s been set on fire. It’s not a good idea and will most likely get you mangled.

“I’m going to beat you all if you don’t get on that bus right now so we can all get some sleep.” Karah said from the front door.

“Yes mother.” Brook said sarcastically, before grabbing her pillow and headphones. Karah, used to our antics by this point, rolled her eyes.

“Holy mother of god!” Charlie said stepping out into the wee hours of the morning and seeing our tour bus. “That thing is huge! How did we get it?” She asked turning to look at Karah.

Kar shrugged, “I guess being the overnight sensations has it’s perks. I just went to pick one up and that was what was assigned to y’all.”

“I don’t care, as long as there is a bed, an outlet and food, it could be the worst looking thing in the world and I would still be happy.” Brook said from beside me.

“Ok my shit is wearing off and I want to crash, let’s get going.” Kacee said sleepily.

“Thank the elevated realms, we may all get some sleep if you two are crashing!” Charlie said throwing her hands up.

“Shove it! Why does it have to be so chilly at this time. I want my bunk and sleepy time.” I whined snuggling further into my fuzzy blanket.

After Karah checked to make sure we had everything for the umpteenth time, we finally stepped onto the bus and what would be our home for the next few months. The thing was huge, as soon as you walked on you were in what could only be described as the living room, two long couches covered each side of the wall, followed by a small kitchenette. Past that were 6 bunks, 2 stacks of 3
one on each side of the wall, between that and the small meeting room with a huge three sided couch was our tiny bathroom.

“I call one of the bottom bunks.” I yelled out.

“That was my fucking ear Syd.” Charlie said from in front of me. “Why would you want the bottom anyways?”

“Closer to the engine, it’ll stay warm for me. Plus I would be the dummy to roll over and out of my bunk in the middle of night.” I said as I threw my pillow and blanket on the bottom bunk opposite the bathroom wall.

“We will definitely have to take turns in the bathroom. I can barely move in that thing alone.” Ace said as she climbed into the bunk above me. Brook took the bottom bed across from me and Charlie climbed in above her. Karah took the top bunk above Ace, leaving the last top bunk open in case we had a friend over or the driver needed to rest.

“So which bands is everyone more excited to hear and meet?” I asked sleepily. Everyone was settled in for the trip, but the nervous energy was still burning it’s way out of me and I knew talking would eventually lull me to sleep.

I watched Charlie push her curtain open enough so I could see her face. “Our Last Night is the big one for me, but it would be cool to see Avenged again. We haven’t seen them live since Carolina Rebellion that first year.”

“Oh yeah! That whole day/night was fucking ridiculous. I was so sunburned after that. I’m pretty stoked to see BVB perform, I haven’t had the chance to see them live yet and Sleeping with Sirens would be cool.” I heard Brook’s curtain pull back and her grinning face looked over at me.

“Dude Fall Out Boy is gonna be awesome! And seeing Panic, Good Charlotte and Blink all reunited is going to be killer.” I nodded, agreeing completely. This was music I grew up on and being able to not only see them reunite but tour with all of them was a dream come true.

“Panic is my number one! Brendon is some kind of pretty.” Karah’s voice floated down from her spot above Ace.

“As long as I can avoid Ice Nine Kills, I’m gravy. I mean the band is awesome, I would love to hang out with them, but Spencer’s screaming gives me nightmares.” Ace said laughing.

“That is the funniest and weirdest thing you’ve said to date.” Charlie laughed out.

“Hey have you heard him? It’s terrifying. Besides I’m sure you’ve heard me say weirder.” Ace said sleepily.

“I can’t wait to see State Champs again. They are awesome live.” I said looking up at Charlie who was nodding excitedly. “Your head is going to bob off your shoulders if you keep nodding like that.” After shooting me the bird she announced she was going to sleep before putting her earbuds in and closing her curtain.

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60 hours, almost 3 full days of driving not including stops for food and bathroom breaks and time for, our driver/bodyguard, Bodhi to sleep. I have never been so ready to get out of a vehicle before in my life.
“Alright guys we’re here.” Karah said from the front of the bus. The four of us were currently in the back running over our set list for the ‘Road to Warp’ show.

“Thank all that is holy. I love you guys, but being cooped up for this long is making me stir crazy.” I said jumping up and running to the front.

“At least we have a couple of days before the show, maybe we can go exploring.” Charlie said as she followed me.

“I’m down.” Brook said as her and Ace finally joined us from the back.

“Let’s get checked into the hotel first and then we can go exploring. Bodhi let me know when you get in and I’ll get you your key.” Karah said as she stepped off the bus.

Anchorage, Alaska was stunning, it was right on the waterfront but then behind the city was huge mountains, if it didn’t get cold here or snow. I would have seen myself potentially living there. But alas it snows here and it get’s stupidly cold and I ain’t about that life. After a few days and nights of exploring we always ended up back at the same bar, Blue Fox Cocktail Lounge. The atmosphere was chill and drinks were great and honestly that’s all we needed.

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“Are y’all about ready?” Karah asked the other girls from behind me. Currently she was braiding part of my hair to give me a faux shaved look on the right side of my head. I had gone the whole shaved route a while back and loved it, but I wanted to keep my length while still giving off the appearance of shaving it again.

“I’m good.” Kacee said, twirling one of her drumsticks impatiently.

“I’ll be gravy once I finish my makeup.” Charlie said from in front of the mirror.

“I’ve been ready.” Brooklyn voiced from the other side of the room. She was laying upside down on the couch, head hanging off, looking bored as hell.

“Alright.” She said dropping her hands on my shoulders. “You’re ready to go now. Ok guys lucky enough you aren’t opening, but they have pretty much put you smack dab in the middle. Go do your thing, have fun and show them how girls rock.” Karah said giving us her little pep talk.

“Anybody else feel like they’re gonna throw up?” I asked laughing.

“Not at this current time, ask me again right before we step on stage.” Charlie said standing up.

We gathered around the side watching the end of Knuckle Puck’s set, Charlie and I singing at the top of our lungs to their last song. Before we knew it they were running off the stage and the stagehands were replacing their equipment with ours. The nerves were really starting to set in and my stomach was doing flip flops. I spun around and faced my small family grinning.

“Alright guys, this is it! She-Wolf Pack let me hear it!” I yelled throwing my hands to the top of my heads and howled, my girls quickly joined in on my howling, our little ritual before running on stage.

Everything passed by in a blur, I remember throwing my guitar on, the screaming fans, the bright lights. But the thing that stuck with me the most was the reactions, I guess when our spread in AP went out, there was a lot of speculation if the half naked chicks could actually rock. I would pay a million dollars, that I don’t have, to witness their facial expressions again when they heard Charlie
scream for the first time. Once our set was over, Karah escorted us to where we would be signing for the next hour, after that we were free to roam around, go see other sets or just go back to the bus. I was planning on hearing the rest of the bands if given the chance.
“That was epic.” Charlie yelled an hour later as we headed back to the bus to change. It was getting cooler and we were planning on heading to the bar after the last few bands played, so I wanted something warmer than my set clothes. Plus I’m sure I looked a mess after running around on stage and sweating.

“Oh my jeez, that guy that was getting your signature, he couldn’t stop freaking out about you. Your face was hilarious.” I laughed, while Bodhi opened the bus for us.

“I didn’t think your face could get any redder.” Ace said from behind us.

“That was way too much admiration for my liking. I thought the poor kid was going to pass out.” She exclaimed as she climbed the stairs into the bus.

“Mmmm what the shit stickers am I going to wear. I need to hurry up I don’t want to miss BVB.” I rummaged through my bag to find something that would be ok for both the show and the bar.

“Aren’t they the last band playing?” Brook asked as she walked from the back holding a black tank top with a bright blue skull on it.

“Yes, but I want to get near the front. Now where the hell is that damn shir-- Ah ha! Found it.” I yelled pulling out my favorite black BVB crop top. I grabbed a pair of light blue jeans with rips up and down the legs and my black leather jacket. “I’m going to change then fix my hair and make sure my face isn’t a mess.”

After throwing my clothes on I ran a brush through my long auburn, turquoise and blonde locks, avoiding my braids before yanking on my combat boots. I made sure my nose rings and makeup were good to go and walked out the bathroom door running into Charlie. She was dressed in a pair of black leather leggings, a flowy white State Champs tank and a three quarter length leather coat, her pink and purple hair braided into a messy fishtail braid falling over her right shoulder and down her chest.

“Ace! Brook! Are y’all ready?” I yelled moving past Charlie.

“I am.” Brook said. Her long legs were in a pair of black ripped up jeans, she paired it with her black tank top from earlier and her black scuffed up combat boots. She left her long blonde and black hair down to fall in waves down her back and holding her black coat.

“I can’t find anything to wear.” Ace yelled from the back.

“Hold on, I’m coming.” I said heading to where our drummer was rummaging through her suitcase. “What about this?” I asked holding up a pair of dark wash jeans and a tan loose tank. “Then
“What shoes?” She asked grabbing the articles of clothing I was holding up.

“Just wear your boots, they will match and then you’ll be comfortable while we’re out and about tonight.” I leaned against the open door way waiting for her to finish changing.

“Alright guys you aren’t allowed to go anywhere without me or Bodhi. The last thing I need is for someone to up and kidnap one of y’all.” Karah said from the other end of the bunks. I turned to see her dressed in a dark blue short sleeved shirt under a short caged black dress with a pair of fishnet stockings and black boots. Her chin length hair had recently been dyed a shocking silver with teal blue shadow roots and was currently styled to have a messy bed head look.

“Woohoo, lookin’ good there Kar.” I said whistling as she turned around showing her outfit off.

“So who wants to do what?” Karah asked when she turned back around to face us.

“I want to go listen to the last few bands. Anyone else want to go with me?” I asked looking at my bandmates.

“I’m going with Sydney! The chance to see State Champs and Our Last Night before we tour with them? Hell yes I’m down.” Charlie jumped in laughing.

“What about you two?” Karah asked looking at Ace and Brook.

“I just wanted to walk around maybe check out the rest of the venue.” Brook said shrugging.

“I’m gonna tag along with BB.” Ace joined in.

“Alrighty, well Bodhi you go with Sydney and Charlie since they are going to put themselves in the middle of the fucking crowd and I’ll go with Brooklyn and Kacee. We will meet up at the bus when the show is over.” Karah said looking around at us to make sure we all agreed.

Soon after, we were making our way back to the concert grounds from the bus. Charlie was currently walking backwards, talking a mile a minute with me about the bands we were excited to see, when I noticed Our Last Night heading our way. Before I knew it Charlie’s back was crashing straight into the front of Trevor Wentworth. I couldn’t stop the laughter that bubbled out of me.

“Oh my god” Charlie squeaked out before spinning around almost losing balance, if it hadn’t been for Trevor grabbing her she probably would have. “I’m so fucking sorry.”

“No, no, it’s cool.” Trevor laughed, his hands were still resting on Charlie’s waist making sure she didn’t fall over. “Wait didn’t you guys perform earlier?”

“Yeah we were up there at one point.” Brooklyn’s sarcastic reply almost had me in tears.

“Well someone’s testy.” Matt said from behind Trevor.

“Nope, sadly that’s her all the time.” I said, my laughter finally subsiding. “I’m Sydney, the testy sarcastic one is my little sister Brooklyn.” She nodded her hello, before I turned to Ace, “This is Kacee, Karah our manager, and beside her is our buddy Bodhi.” Everyone said their hellos before Trevor looked down at Charlie.

“And you are?” He asked grinning down at her.

“I would be Charlie.” She said before stepping out of his grasp.
“I heard your screaming earlier, very nice. Most people sound like a jumbled mess, you not so
much.” I watched as a steady blush rose up his neck as he scratched the back of his head. “Where are
you guys headed?” He asked clearing his throat.

“Sydney, Bodhi and I were about to head to the front to watch the rest of y’all play. Everyone
else was just going to roam around the grounds.” Charlie said smiling.

“Well shit if you want you can come watch our set from side stage.” Trevor offered.

After telling the others that we’d see them later, we followed the guys to the stage and watched as
Falling in Reverse finished up their set. Bodhi stood to the side as Charlie and I bounced up and
down singing at the top of our lungs to all of Our Last Night’s songs. Towards the end of their set
we were joined by the guys of State Champs.

“So what are you ladies doing tonight?” Matt asked once they ran off stage.

“We were planning on heading to a bar we found this past weekend, as a celebration of sorts.” I
said shrugging.

“Hey that sounds like fun, a cool way to decompress. Mind if some of us tag along?” Trevor
asked looking down at Charlie.

“Sure the more the merrier.” She said smiling.

“We’re going to go do our signings, where do you want us to meet you after?” Woody finally
spoke up as we walked down the stage stairs.

“We made plans to meet back at our bus, so I guess just head there. We’re going to finish
watching State Champs and BVB.” I said looking over the crowd, searching for a way to get up
front.

“Sounds good. We will see y’all later tonight.” Trevor said as he sent a small smile to Charlie. As
soon as they walked off Charlie turned to me with wide eyes.

“Please tell me that all just happened and wasn’t a dream or a figment of my imagination.” She
said hopefully.

“Yes, yes that all just happened. Now come on we’re going to be throwing elbows if we want to
make it to the front to see State Champs.” I said grabbing her hand and yanking her to the crowd.

Bodhi trailed behind us making sure we didn’t get lost or hurt. I was thankful for the guy, Karah
found him by some miracle and he’s been a fantastic addition to our little family, keeping us safe,
packing and unpacking our gear, driving us from one side of the country to the other. We were lucky
to have him. Somehow we made it to the front during State Champs’ second song and manage to
stay there for the rest of their set. It wasn’t long that their set ended and adrenaline started pumping
through my veins at the prospect of seeing BVB and being so close.

Andy Biersack sang like an angel and screamed like a demon and it was heaven on earth. Charlie
and I sang along to every song, dancing and jumping with excitement. Halfway through their set
Andy started singing *Lost it All* and I swear I was going to melt into a puddle listening to his deep
voice reverberate through the speakers. He walked to the edge near where me and Charlie were
standing, throwing his crooked little smirk down at us.

“I’ve died and gone to heaven.” I yelled near Charlie’s ear who rolled her eyes at me before
laughing.
“We should head out of this mess before they finish. I don’t really fancy getting ran over.” She yelled back. I nodded my head and turned to grab Bodhi’s attention.

“Let’s head out of here.” I yelled into his ear once he leaned down.

He grabbed my hand and I grabbed Charlie’s as we wiggled our way out of the crowd and went to find our group. It didn’t take long for us to find Karah, Ace and BB, who were currently under the Fall Out Boy tent with the guys of Panic!

“Back so soon?” Ace asked when she spotted us walking towards them.

“Didn’t want to get trampled at the end.” I said leaning against her. “What’s going on over there?” I asked nodding my head to Brook and Kar who were in deep conversation with Pete Wentz, Brendon Urie and Ryan Ross.

“I’m pretty sure they are inviting them out to join us tonight.” Ace said looking up at me.

“Oh hey that’s good cause we may have kind of invited some of Our Last Night out with us.” I said laughing.

“The more the merrier.” She said joining in.

“Hey that’s exactly what I said.” Charlie said jumping into the conversation.

“I guess that’s what happens when you spend so much time together.” Ace said shrugging.

“So how many people does that make it now?” Charlie asked.

“Ummm… Us, Trevor, Matt, Woody. Now Pete, Ryan and Brendon, so eleven.” I said ticking off everyone on my fingers, “unless we get some surprises along the way.”

“Anything could happen.” Ace said before shrugging me off to join BB and Karah.
After rounding up everyone, we started making our way to the buses. When we passed the BVB tent, I noticed the guys were already out doing their signings. Catching a glimpse of Andy had me slowing down to watch him interact with fans, the smile on his face could have lit up a whole room. Anyone could tell that the fans meant the world to him. I was so caught up in watching that I hadn’t realized I had come to a complete stop and was flat out staring at the gorgeous man, that was until he looked up and our eyes locked. I watched his small smile slip into a crooked smirk and I felt my heart speed up and a blush rise up to my neck and cheeks.

“Are you planning on standing there all night or are we going to go get our drink on?” Ace asked jumping in front of me.

“What?” I asked letting my eyes focus on the drummer in front of me.

“Wow Sydney, it looks like someone’s got it bad.” Charlie laughed beside me.

“What are you guys even talking about? Come on everyone else is leaving us behind.” I gestured to our group of friends that were already way ahead of us. I took a second to glance back at Andy who was wrapped up in conversation with Ashley and a fan, before jogging to catch up with everyone.

When we made it to the meetup spot, I looked at everyone we had for the night and it was decided we were going to need to take one of our buses to get to the bar. Charlie was leaning against ours next to Trevor talking about god knows what, Matt was beside his brother talking to Alex “Woody” and Ace. While Karah and Brook were still talking to Ryan, Pete and Brendon.

“Who’s bus are we taking!” Trevor yelled, causing Charlie to reel back.

“Dude my ear.” She yelled back, holding her hand to said damaged ear.

“I think y’all like to damage one another.” Matt said laughing. Trevor looked at Charlie apologetically giving her a small smile.

“Bodhi!” I yelled and watched as his head popped out of our bus. “Is our bus clean enough to take us and these delinquents to the bar?”

“Yeah for the most part.” He said climbing back in.

“Well then since we are all just chilling by ours we can take it.” I said shrugging.

“We can’t leave yet.” Alex said from beside Ace.
“And why is that?” Charlie questioned, leaning past Trevor to look at Woody.

“We ran into Black Veil Brides and Falling in Reverse on the way back and some of their members want to tag along.” He stated simply.

Well Ace was definitely right when she said anything could happen. How was I supposed to concentrate on breathing much less talking with Andy hanging out with us tonight?

“Hey what’s up with you?” Brooklyn asked, walking up to me.

Before I had a chance to answer, Andy’s deep voice carried over to our group.

“Alright, the party can now begin.” He said laughing, the deep rumble causing goosebumps to form over my arms.

I turned around to see Andy, Ashley, CC and Jake from BVB walking towards us with the frontman of Falling in Reverse, Ronnie, all freshly showered and dressed for the night.

Andy’s piercing blue eyes met mine and he grinned, “So who’s bus?”

I swallowed hard before clearing my extremely dry throat, “Ours” I somehow managed to croak out.

“Well then, why are we all still standing around? Let’s go!” CC demanded playfully.

I watched as everyone shuffled around each other as they made their way on the bus. By the time I made it on, Charlie was strumming out the tune to one of the songs we were currently working on, on one of the many guitars she had brought with her. Ace was sprawled out between Woody and Brooklyn, with a pair of drumsticks lightly tapping along with Charlie. Brook was quietly murmuring lyrics we were testing out under her breath, eyes closed and head resting on the back of her seat. I managed to find a spot on the floor leaning against the seat in front of Charlie and across from Andy and Ashley. Once I was settled I closed my eyes and started humming along to the chords, slowly picking up different lyrics with Brook. Before I knew it Charlie and Ace had finished the song and somehow me and BB had written lyrics to it. The guys clapping made my eyes snap open and look around.

“That was really good. How long have you guys been working on it?” Jake asked curiously.

“Honestly? We’ve been messing with the for a little while, but that was the first time we’ve actually finished it.” I said leaning my head back against the seat.

“You should keep it acoustic, nothing heavy like your other music.” Andy said from in front of me.

“Keep the drums, but stay light on them.” CC said from beside Ronnie.

I nodded listening to all of their suggestions, the problem was remembering what in the world we just sang. It wasn’t long after that the bus was slowing down to turn into the parking lot of the bar. As I moved to stand up a hand appeared in my line of sight. I looked up to see Andy standing in front of me his signature smirk in place offering me his hand to help me up.

“Thank you.” I said smiling up at the 6’2 singer. He nodded before stepping back to allow me some room to move. I stretched slightly trying to relieve the tension in my muscles from jumping around the stage earlier and from sitting on the floor on the way to the bar.

I watched as Andy’s eyes roamed over me before clearing his throat and backing up to walk off the
bus. What the hell was that about? I shook my head and started toward the front to head out.

“Everything ok?” Bodhi’s voice came from the driver’s seat.

“You scared me!” I shrieked trying to get my beating heart under control. “But yeah everything’s fine. Why?” I asked leaning against the door frame.

“He seemed frustrated when he walked by and it took you a few minutes to come up. Just making sure I don’t need to take care of anything.” He said shrugging.

“As far as I know everything’s great.” I was clearly confused as all shit to be completely honest.

“Alright just let me know if you need anything,” Bodhi said before I turned around.

Time to go have some fun.
The Blue Fox Lounge was a small hole in the wall bar, but it was exactly what we needed tonight. Somewhere small, dark and perfect for not being recognized. When I finally made it into the bar, I noticed our group had congregated at the far back corner and had already started the task of unwinding and celebrating. My eyes immediately sought out Andy, still trying to figure out what had happened back on the bus.

“Hey what took you so long?” Charlie asked from her spot beside Trevor.

“Hmmm?” I asked tearing my eyes away from Andy and looked at my best friend. “Oh sorry I was talking to Bodhi, he’s going to park the bus and then join us. I’m going to go grab a drink from the bar.”

“I’m going to go sign some people up for karaoke.” She said laughing.

“Take me with you.” Ace said, eyes lighting up with mischief.

“Oh god.” I sighed turning around to head to the bar.

Once I had my beer I glanced at the stage to see Charlie walking on it. I face palmed as soon as her eyes met mine and a grin crawled up her face.

“Sydney!” I heard her voice sing my name through the speakers.

“NO!” I yelled back as I walked to our group.

“But it’s our song.” She countered. I groaned out before setting my beer down in front of Andy as the first chords of *Eye of the Tiger* started playing.

“You’re lucky I love you and this song.” I said when I finally managed to make it beside her.

She rolled her eyes before we both broke out in our favorite dance routine and sang off key. Why sing perfectly when you’re surrounded by people who just want to laugh and have fun, we knew we could sing, we didn’t need to be show offs. When the song ended, I jumped down and waited on Charlie to join me.

“So what really took you so long on the bus?” She asked looping her arm in mine.

“Andy.” I said sighing.
“Ooooo color me intrigued.” She said stopping.

“Nothing like that. I wish it was something like that.” I said sadly. “No he just helped me up off the floor and then gave me this once over look with those eyes of his and then left. I’m so fucking confused.” I moved, tugging her arm to get her to start walking again.

“Who knows maybe he thinks you’re hot.” Charlie said quietly.

“That’ll be the day. One, last I checked he was still with Juliet. Two, if he isn’t then it ended recently and I’m not down for being a rebound, plus what if we did do something and things went south? We are on tour together!” I said trying to get her to drop it.

“Even if things ended recently, you don’t know if it was a decision made by both of them and if that’s the case maybe he’s just looking for some fun. Syd I love you, but you need some fun, as in you seriously need to get laid. You get cranky if you don’t.” She laughed when I smacked her arm as we made it to the table.

“Why are you hitting Charlie? What did she do this time? You know besides getting you on stage first.” Ace asked from her lounged position between Woody and BB, who was curled up next to Pete.

“Nothing I wish to discuss here at this present moment.” I said gritting my teeth.

“Well I wan--” Brook was cut off by the dj who was calling her name. “What! Who did this?” She asked her accusing eyes landed on Charlie.

“This one actually wasn’t me.” She said pointing to Ace, who had a huge grin on her face.

“NO! No, no, no. If I’m doing this you’re coming with me!” She yanked at Ace’s arm.

“Whhhaaat? Syd you gonna help me here?” Ace asked, giving me her puppy dog eyes.

“Me?” I asked pointing to my chest laughing. “Nope! You let Charlie sign me up, this is your penance.” I heard some of the guys laughing at our little scene. “Besides something tells me by the end of the night we all will have been up there more than once.”

“Oh yeah!” Charlie agreed. “Especially since I may have already signed you up for another song.”

“Jeezus Charlie, why?” I asked jumping into a chair, not noticing it was across from Andy, who was talking to Ronnie and Ashley.

“Because I can. We’re here to have fun and I am definitely going to have some fun with the song I chose for you.” Charlie said looking between me and Andy,

“Now I’m concerned what did you do?” I asked before draining the rest of my beer.

“Nothing for you to worry about.” She mumbled.

“I’m going to go sign up some people.” Matt said from the other side of Trevor.

“Don’t put me on that list again!” I yelled at his retreating back.
Karaoke

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: oh you know the usual... no band, no tour = not mine
characters and band name = mine
yay

The night went from there. Everyone was signing up everyone to sing the most ridiculous throw back songs. After BB and Ace sang *Wanted Dead or Alive* it went downhill. Matt signed Trevor and Charlie up to sing *Summer Lovin’* and to be honest I don’t know what was more funny, her excitement about it or the fact Trevor knew the song perfectly and her shocked expression when she found out. Karah actually got on stage after Bodhi signed her up to sing *Renegade*. I watched Brendon when she was on stage, his eyes hadn’t left her since they met and it was sickenly cute. Seems like they were hitting it off well. I glanced over everyone that was with us, stopping at Pete and Brook who were talking about different instruments, a small smile was on my little sister’s lips.

My eyes traveled on to Ace and Woody next, they weren’t overly cutesy thank god, but you could definitely tell something was building there. I passed over CC and Jake who were talking about the upcoming tour with Matt and Ryan. I shifted slightly to look at Charlie and Trevor, who were currently wrapped up in conversation beside me. I watched as Charlie laughed at whatever Trevor was talking about before his hand slipped over hers, lacing their fingers together. I couldn’t help the smile that I could feel spreading across my face at the happy look on her face It’s about time, they’ve been dancing around each other all damn day and night, maybe some other good things might come out of this tour. The feeling of someone watching me had me straightening back only to lock eyes with Andy’s piercing blue ones.

“Can I help you?” I asked the gorgeous singer. Before he had a chance to answer my name rang across the speakers and I snapped my head to the front. Seriously?! This DJ had the worst timing!

“Go!” Charlie yelled at me.

“Is this the damn song you picked out for me?” I asked grabbing my drink only to find it empty. Well shit, I glanced over at Andy’s full glass. Before I could second guess my actions, I grabbed his dark drink, draining half of it, then set it back down in front of him, his wide eyed expression making me laugh. “Sorry my throat is dry and you know how singing makes it worse.” I winked at him before making my way to the stage.

I glanced at the lyrics screen and could have slapped the pure shit out of my bandmate. I caught her grinning at me so I threw her the bird before glaring at her. I can’t believe she put me down for this song. It wasn’t so much the song as it was the fact that it was one of Andy’s singles from his solo project.

“Before I start singing this, just know I neither signed myself up to do this or this song. Charlie my dear I’m going to kill you.” I said in the mic before the speakers started playing *Stay Alive*. Charlie had ‘the cat who ate the canary’ grin painted on her beautiful face and was glancing between me and Andy, who looked slightly shocked, but more curious. I guess I needed to actually sing this...
and not fuck about like we’ve all been doing tonight, not really on my top list of ruining a song in front of the person who wrote and sang it.

When I finished the last lyric, I stepped down and made my way back to the tables we had set up camp at, avoiding Andy’s stares the whole time.

“If it weren’t for the fact that we’ve been friends for as long as we have and that I need you for the rest of this tour, I would kill you slowly and painfully.” I threatened looking at Charlie.

“That was really good.” Andy’s voice slid over the table.

“Ummm thank you.” I stuttered out.

“So you can rock a nude photoshoot, know how to have fun on stage” here he pointed to the front laughing, “and sing my song better than I can. Is there anything you can’t do?” He asked smirking.

“Cook.” Ace said from her spot.

“I can cook… ok no I can’t. I can bake does that count?” I said defending myself until everything he said hit me, “Wait! Back up, you’ve seen the photos?” I asked squeaking.

“I think everyone in the punk world has seen them. You guys are the only all girl band on this tour. Your photoshoot has been one of the most talked about ones out of that edition.” Jake said jumping into the conversation.

“Well yeah I mean I knew that, I just didn’t think everyone we’re touring with had seen it.” I said looking around.

“We all got copies when they came out, mostly so each band could see how theirs turned out, but after hearing about your band everyone got curious.” Andy said shrugging.

“Well then.” I said staring at the bar trying to figure out what else to say. When nothing came out I decided on going to get another drink.

“Sing a song with me.” His voice was deep and hauntingly beautiful as it floated from behind me. I turned away from the bar with a new drink to see him smiling down at me.

“I just sang. I think these people might be getting tired of hearing my voice.” I said laughing.

“I don’t think anyone could get tired of hearing your voice.” I blinked slowly trying to figure out if he was just being kind or flirting with me.

“What did you have in mind?” I asked caving in to him.

“Trust me?” I just met the guy, but I nodded my head and watched as he walked to the front to sign us up. I managed to somehow make my way back to our table and to a questioningly look from the girls.

“What’s he up to?” CC asked from beside Jake.

“Apparently we’re doing a song together.” I said plopping back down in my seat.

“What song?” Charlie asked moving her head off of Trevor’s shoulder.

“Beats the hell out of me, he just decided and won’t tell me. I’ll be just as surprised as the rest of
you.” I said taking a sip of my beer.

Andy soon rejoined our table, a small smirk gracing his annoyingly gorgeous face. After CC and Jake sang a very off key *Don’t Stop Believing* with Ashley and Ronnie, Andy’s name was called by the DJ. I watched as he unfolded his tall frame from his seat before reaching across the table and grabbing my hand. The cheering and catcalls made from our friends and bandmates had my skin burning from embarrassment. Lord what did I just get myself into?

After situating ourselves behind our mics, I heard A Days to Remember’s *If It Means A Lot To You* start blaring through the speakers. I couldn’t help the smile that slipped onto my face, there was something about this song that I absolutely loved and singing it with Andy would be something I would probably remember for the rest of my life. Grabbing the mic with one hand, I closed my eyes to listen to Andy’s deep voice start the song as I tapped out the beat on my leg waiting to join in on the chorus.

Once the chorus started up, I chanced a glance to my left, only to find Andy staring back at me. As cheesy as it sounds, in that moment everything else completely fell out from existence. It was just the two of us singing, caught up in something we both were passionate about and loved. It wasn’t until our friends got the whole crowd singing the background la’s did I snap back into reality. Then the song was over, it was like time had sped up and slowed down at the same time. I don’t know how that was even possible, but singing with him was something I would do again in a heartbeat.

“So that was fucking amazing.” Charlie said as soon as we made it back to our table.

“That harmonizing was like nothing I’ve heard before.” Trevor said from beside Charlie.

“Yeah it was crazy, you could hear both of your voices individually, but at the same time they blended so well that it was almost like they were one. It was something I’ve never seen happen.” Ronnie said looking between the two of us.

“I’m sure other people do it all the time.” I said scratching the back of my neck in a nervous habit.

“Did anyone think to record that?” Ace said from her spot beside Alex.

“I did!” Karah said waving her arms around in excitement. I groaned dropping my head into my hands. “What! It was great. Why would I not record that?”

“Nothing, just don’t go crazy with that.” I said laughing. It was a pretty lost cause when Karah had something she thought was good, it was as good as already posted. “I’ll be honest with you guys, I’m pretty exhausted and am so ready to crash.” I tried to stifle a yawn, but couldn’t hide just how tired I was.

“We should probably head back soon, long days and nights and even longer drives are ahead of us all.” Matt said from his spot by his brother.

I nodded my head vigorously trying to urge the point that I really wanted to go to bed. I needed to get some sleep, to sort through how my feelings were rushing around when I was around Andy. There was something about him that put me on edge, that made me want to act irrationally, to just feel. Those were things I didn’t want to deal with so early on in this tour and if I could just escape for a while, avoid him, then maybe I could get my ass in check before things escalated.

The group finally decided sleep was indeed needed and we all started to shuffle our way to the bus. The ride back was much more subdued, due to everyone passing out, than the ride there and I was entirely grateful for some peace. The day had been action packed and the night fun filled, but it was
all starting to take a toll on us. Tomorrow we would all be jumping on a flight to Dallas, Texas for the official first day of tour and our poor drivers would meet us there, since we would be in Texas the following three days.

I felt the bus come to a halt alerting us that we were back at the venue parking lot where everyone else’s buses were parked. Brook pushed me away from the couch so she could walk out with Pete and I groaned unlady like at being moved. Charlie chuckled at me before she followed behind the group stepping off the bus, leaving me with just Andy again, this was starting to become a pattern.

“Need help getting to your bunk?” He asked laughing.

“No, I need help dying.” I replied sarcastically as he helped me off the floor.

The combination of alcohol and exhaustion hit me all at once and I stumbled into his chest, his arms coming up to steady my body, stopping me from falling back on my ass. I felt my breath hitch when his arms tightened around my waist, pulling me closer to him as his head started dipping towards mine. I watched his lips quirk up at my reaction before descending into an almost hesitant kiss until I wrapped my arms around his neck, pulling him deeper. One of Andy’s hands moved to cup the side of my jaw before moving to the back of my neck, drawing me into a more heated kiss, pulling a groan from my lips. That little sound caused something in Andy to snap as he picked me up and slammed my back into the nearest wall, pinning me between it and his lean body.

My head tipped back, resting against the wall as his lips descended down my neck, leaving a warm path in their wake. The clearing of a throat made my head snap away from the wall to see my bandmates standing at the doorway leading off the bus, faces ranging from shock, to amusement, to extreme curiosity. I managed to unwrap my legs from around his slim waist while pushing him away from me in quick succession. His breath was coming out in small puffs as he rested his forehead against the top of my head, he placed a small kiss to my forehead, before stepping away from me and turning around to face the girls.

“I’m heading to my bus to get some sleep,” he shifted to look at me, “if you get lonely you know where I am. I’ll see you all in the morning.” His voice was rough, almost strained as he stepped around the girls and walked off the bus.

“Sooooo….” Karah started as soon as Andy was off the bus. “What was that about?” She asked laughing.

“Dude,” Ace cut in, “I don’t know what was going on when we walked up in here, but what we saw was fucking hot as hell.”

“Charlie told me to get laid.” I defended lamely.

“I did, this is true, but not on the bus the first night.” She said grinning.

“I did not need to see that!” Brook said groaning as she stepped around me to find some pjs. “You’re my sister and seeing you get it on will give me nightmares for the rest of my life.”

“Yeah, yeah whatever. I’m going to sleep, we have to be up at the ass crack of dawn for our plane.” I said yawning, before stumbling to my bunk, not even bothering to change.

“What? You’re not going to go back to his bus?” Charlie asked as she climbed into her bed.

“First off, I do not want to do anything with his bandmates being in the same area and secondly did you not just hear me say that we have to get up super early and my ass ain’t about that life.” I groaned as I stretched out.
“So you would do that in here? Where we can walk in on it?!” Brooklyn mumbled from across the walkway.

“Yes! I live to make your life a living, walking hell.” I laughed at her groan, “now shut up! I want sleep!”
Almost a month in, I felt drained, completely and utterly drained. I don’t know how the rest of them did this all the time. The constant partying, the constant drinking, the constant drugs, the late nights and then long sets with even longer drives between shows, I was crashing and we weren’t even halfway through the tour.

“Guys, I love you, but if you don’t get out of my room within the next 10 seconds, I might start breaking bones.” I looked between Vic and Kellin, who were ardently trying to get me out of the hotel and onto one of their buses. I was not in the mood to go out tonight.

“Syd! Come on, you haven’t been out with us in over a week.” Vic’s voice was close to a whine.

“Yeah the last time you went out with us was in Georgia!” Kellin jumped in.

“I went out with y’all in Florida, on multiple occasions.” I said. Arguing with the two lead singers was becoming way more exhausting than I wanted to deal with at this particular moment.

“That wasn’t a night in NYC, this is the city that never sleeps, besides that was beach time.” Vic shot back.

“So? Your point would be? I still drank way more than I needed to and we partied our little hearts out. I don’t need to go out tonight, maybe later. It’s not like we’re leaving anytime soon we’ll be here for a week,” I said flatly.

Ever since shit had hit the fan with Andy, they had been adamant to get me back out there and meet someone new. I was emotionally drained and definitely not in the right head space to jump into something new, but damned if these guys weren’t trying their hardest. I loved them to pieces, but all I wanted to do since that fateful night in Orlando was hide in a hole and sleep. The girls were currently out with their, for lack of a better term, other halves. Which meant I had the whole hotel room to myself for a while.

Charlie and Trevor had become official during our show in NC, two nights previous in our home state. We had all been pretty excited when we hit Charlotte, our parents had already made their way there the night before and were meeting us for lunch as soon as we got there. Poor Trevor had been a wreck all week when he found out Charlie’s parents were going to be at that particular show, but refused to tell us what was going on to keep him on edge so badly. It didn’t take us long to figure out after he and the rest of Our Last Night made their way onto stage. Charlie had left her parents under our tent with everyone else as the two of us made our way to our normal spot off to the side of the main stage.

After singing a couple of songs, Trevor turned to the side and motioned for Charlie to join him. I couldn’t help the laughter that burst out of me when I looked to see her face drained of all color and
shaking her head violently. It took me pushing her to get her to finally move and take Trevor’s out
stretched hand.

“Everyone this is Charlie, if you’ve been keeping up with the tour you probably know who she is,
if not shame on you, but what most of you don’t know is how I feel about her.” Trevor laughed softly
at the ooo’s and ahh’s that passed over the crowd. “But I’ve never really been good at just saying
how I feel so instead I’m going to sing you a song,” he said glancing at my best friend, who’s face
was brighter than my hair. I watched as he leaned down to kiss her quickly before the first chords of
White Tiger started up and he let go of her hand so she could move back to the side with me. Trevor
may have been on stage in front of a massive crowd, but this song, those emotions they were all for
Charlie.

Then there was Kacee and Alex, our super secret couple. Not secret in the sense that they were
hiding it from us, but in the sense that they liked their privacy. They avoided all possibilities of being
seen by any photographers together, unless they were with a group of some sort. They wanted as
close to a normal relationship as they could get, considering our current situation. After seeing how
fast relationships could crash and burn in a normal setting, they were taking all the precautions
needed to keep theirs happy and healthy, but just because they were taking precautions didn’t mean
that it was actually working.

On the other end of the spectrum was Karah and Brendon, where Ace and Woody liked to keep to
themselves, these two were not shy in showing the world they were together. They figured if it’s
going to work then it’s going to work no matter if they are in the public spotlight or not, might as
well have fun while you can. I think they’ll do just fine, they kind of just clicked that first night. They
are both the odd balls and just fit for some reason. We all like to joke that their crazies are the same
so if anyone is going to understand the other it was the two of them.

The only couple that wasn’t an actual couple was Brooklyn and Pete, not in the official sense
anyways. We all knew they were only seeing one another, but I think they had this unspoken
agreement that they wanted to take things slow, let them progress in a relaxed manner. They spent
time together, did the atypical couple things, but were in no rush to put a label on a good thing and
honestly who the hell was I to judge?

“Sydney, you can’t keep yourself locked up for the rest of the tour.” Kellin’s voice broke through,
pulling me away from my inner thoughts.

“I’m not locking myself up.” I snapped, “I’m just not in the mood to go out tonight, that’s all.”

That was a lie, I knew it was, they knew it was, but they eventually let it go and soon I was back to
being by myself. After they left, I flopped down on my side of the bed I was sharing with whichever
bandmate decided to crash with me for the night and let my mind wander back over the past few
weeks. I should have never let things go as far as they did with Andy. I should have never let either
of us act on the tension that was suffocating us both. Now I was here, shutting myself off from
people, people that were my friends and family in a place and time full of possibilities, all because I
couldn’t step away from the desire.
Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: (I don't want to keep writing these...) I still only own my characters and band name.

Anyways... hope you are all enjoying this thus far

After our encounter on the bus that night in Anchorage, we hadn’t gone further to act on how we were feeling. We kept a decent distance, acted like friends, until New Orleans. Andy wanted to work on a music video for another single off his solo album and asked if I would be in it. Sure why not, what could possibly go wrong with this? I guess it depends on how you look at it, now thinking back on it I should have said no. If I had just said no, then things wouldn’t have happened the way they did, but then? Then it seemed like a fun idea. We were in New Orleans, we were going to do a video, what was the harm in that?

We spent most of that summer night into the early morning and most of the next day working on the video for Beyond My Reach. The premise revolved around a couple dealing with the fallout of their relationship with flashbacks to happier times. Looking back, I should have known spending all that time together, rolling around in between sheets, barely clothed, was going to catch up with us and backfire. After wrapping for the video, Andy and I made our way to a local bar to celebrate and decompress.

One drink turned into two which turned into five, before I knew it we were back in the hotel room we had filmed the video in and this time we weren’t acting, at least not in the sense of filming. We were acting on the pent up frustrations and sexual tension that had been building between the two of us earlier that day during filming, shit who was I kidding they had been building since that first night.

I rolled over, tugging the pillow over my head as I pictured that night vividly in my mind. I hated that I could still remember how his hands felt on my skin, how they pulled and pushed, scratched and caressed. I hated how I could still feel his lips as they ran down my heated flesh, how his teeth scraped over me causing goosebumps to explode over my skin. I hated how his deep voice could have me trembling with need without him ever touching me. But most of all I hated myself, I hated that even now I wanted to be back under him. I hated how badly I wanted to be moving with him, like the ebb and flow of waves crashing against the shore before pulling back out into the depths of the ocean. I hated how, laying in this quiet room, I wanted more than anything to fill it with the sounds that had bounced off the wall that night.

But as they say all good things must come to an end and what an ending that good thing had. The next morning I had been on cloud nine, on a high that I didn’t think I was ever going to come down from and with good moods come questions. All it took was one question, one question to burst my, what I thought to be indestructible, bubble. Andy had already made his way back to his bandmates, without any of them being the wiser. I on the other hand decided to take my time. No one was expecting me until later, so I could walk back to my bus in complete bliss.

Kellin was the first to see me, smiling back at what I could only assume was my contagious grin. I can remember that morning in vivid detail. How my afterglow faded as fast my coffee could go from hot to cold. In a matter of minutes, Kellin had asked that one question I wish he had never asked me,
What’s got you so happy this morning? We were pretty close and he knew how much I had been fighting myself with the Andy thing, he had even helped me, keeping me busy, hanging out with us so we were never alone. The moment I told him Andy and I had slept together, his smile dropped and he looked at me with wide eyes.

I can still hear his voice rattling in my head, We need to talk. I hated those words, they never came with any kind of good news, it was always followed up with: this isn’t going to work out. Instead they were followed by something worse, Sydney, he’s still married. Even now my stomach still drops at the thought, I still feel like someone’s pulled the rug out from under my feet. Of all the things I was expecting Kellin to say to me that wasn’t it. I felt stupid, I still feel stupid, how could I have let this happen. I should have asked questions, should have figured out if he and Juliet were still together. I was furious, seething with anger, it took Kellin and Vic holding me to keep me from searching out Andy and beating the hell out of him.

I groaned into the pillow before throwing it across the room and sitting up. I knew thinking about this wasn’t going to help me get over it, I thought after a couple of weeks I would be over it, on to the next one, but I still see him everyday. I did manage to get him alone later that night, after Kellin and Vic calmed me down. There was a lot of yelling, mostly from me, and a lot of I’m sorry’s, mostly from him. I was able to hide what was going on for a few days, until Florida. Since we were there for a few shows, Juliet surprised Andy by flying out there to be with him. Who can turn down Florida’s habitual warm weather and beautiful beaches? Not her apparently.

The moment I saw her, I lost my cool. It took Charlie threatening silence, Ace threatening bodily harm to whomever hurt me, and Brooklyn threatening bodily harm to me, before I finally broke down and told them all what had had happened, Karah and Bodhi sitting quietly by watching it all unfold. With the help of Vic and Kellin and my little family, I was able to get out and actually enjoy Florida, drinking as much as I could to forget Juliet was there all over Andy. I wanted to hate her, for what she had, who she had, but I couldn’t, I hated myself for falling for a married man and I hated him for not telling me.
Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: characters & band name = mine
Hopefully some of you out there are still reading =)

A loud knock on the hotel room door jolted me out of my self pity and righteous anger.

“Sydney!” Charlie’s voice sounded from the other side of the door, “open the door! I forgot my key and I have a surprise.”

I pushed off of the bed and made my way to the door, opening it to my excited guitarist.

“What the hell has you cracked out?” I asked turning around to head back to bed.

“Don’t you dare lay back down on that bed!” She yelled, half serious half joking. “I am about to impart on you amazing news and you’re going to be excited with me!”

“Why again aren’t you annoying Trevor with this craziness?” I didn’t lay back down, but I did lean against the tempting bed.

“Because he already knows, he also knows that this is big for us and I needed to come tell you ASAP.” She chirped out.

“Ok, well then spill the beans already fruit loop.” I sighed out, too tired to deal with her enthusiasm.

“Sydney Callahan! You will not ruin this for me!” She shrieked. I slammed my hands over my ears and glared at her.

“Fine, then just tell me already.” I said, moving my hands to rest on my hips.

I watched her pull out what looked to be tickets from her back pocket, she better not have busted up in here freaking out about some concert or I might kill her, guitarist/screamer needed be damned.

“Tuesday, you are getting your ass out of this room, going to this concert and meeting 30 Seconds to Mars with us, because not only did Interscope send these down personally to us, but the guys themselves asked them to. They want to meet us and give us the opportunity to co-head a tour with them.” She explained calmly, though just barely.

I felt my eyes grow wide as I snatched the tickets from her hands to make sure she wasn’t lying to me. “Is this for real?!”

“Yeup! Now get the fuck excited with me!” She screamed happily, “can you imagine, co-heading a world tour with 30 Seconds to Mars!?”

“This is unbelievable, how-I mean why-WHAT?” I couldn’t help but stutter out trying to comprehend the opportunity being handed to us.
“I guess they’ve been keeping up with the tour and they really like what they’ve seen of us, they want to help get our name out into the world more, but they want to meet us first, make sure our groups mesh well. It is almost two years of our life we’d be spending traveling with them.” Charlie reasoned as she jumped onto the bed.

“I guess that makes sense.” I said shrugging, “have you told Brook and Ace?”

“No. Only me, you and Karah know. I thought we could tell them together.” She said smiling.

Finally something positive after all the negative. I was excited and nervous, almost to the point of being overwhelmed, but I wasn’t going to let that stop us from a major opportunity.

“Well let’s go find them!” I laughed out.

“You do realize it’s after midnight, the only places they are most likely going to be is in their guys rooms.” Charlie said grinning.

“Look at who we’re talking about, Brook and Pete aren’t at that stage yet so honestly I’m not too terribly concerned about walking in on something there and Ace told me her and Woody were having issues and hadn’t really been on an intimate level in days, so yeah no concern on that front either.” I looked at my best friend whose eyes grew wider, it hit me then that Ace probably had only told me that last bit. “So are you going to run these hallways with me and find our family or not?”

“Woah, woah, woah!” Charlie’s arms flailed around in front of her face, “you can’t just drop that bit of information on me and then not explain.”

“Actually I can, but honestly I don’t know much more than that. They aren’t doing so hot, that’s all she really told me;” I grabbed Charlie’s arm and yanked, “now can we go?!”

“Fine, fine, we can go,” she sighed out as she allowed me to pull her off the bed, “race you to Pete’s room.”

And like that we were off, running down the hotel hallways, racing to find Pete’s room before the other, to grab Brooklyn. Charlie beat me by a millisecond and pounded on the door, yelling for BB to get her ass up and answer the door.

“Jesus Christ you guys it’s almost one in the morning, nothing can be that important.” She complained as she opened the door, scrubbing the sleep from her eyes.

“Yes we know and yes it is,” I grabbed my younger sister’s arm and pulled her out, pjs, barefoot and all, “now come on we gotta find Ace.”

“Have I told you lately I hate you both,” Brook sighed as she chased after me and Charlie.

“Almost every morning we wake you up.” Charlie shot back as she rounded the corner of the hall Woody’s room was located on.
The sounds of raised voices made us slow down in our hurry to get to Ace.

“Look I just don’t know if I can do this anymore.” I heard Ace before actually seeing her.

“Of course you can’t, I told you there’s nothing going on with me and her.” Woody’s voice was laced with agitation and anger.

“It has nothing to do with her, it has to do with us and I’m just over it.” Ace’s voice was rising with her anger and I knew if we didn’t get her away from Woody now he might not get away with all his body parts.

“Ace!” I watched my blonde best friend and drummer snap her head around and finally notice our group.

“Uhm-- hey what are you guys doing up so late?” Ace stuttered trying to calm the anger I knew was bubbling under the surface of her calm facade.

“We just got some news,” Charlie spoke up glancing between Ace and Woody.

“Ok, just,” her voice faltered slightly, “give me a second.”

“It’s fine Kacee, just go with them, you’d rather do that than deal with us anyways.” Woody bit out.

“Don’t you dare make this about my band Alex, it’s unfair and you know it has nothing to do with us.” Ace said spinning around to face, what looked like her soon to be ex-boyfriend.

“Whatever,” Woody said, turning around to open his door, “I’m going to bed.”

“You walk away now and I’m done,” Ace threatened at his back, “finished.”

“Fine, I’m done arguing,” Woody said, “it’s all we’ve done the past few days and I’m tired of it.”

The sound of a door opening beside me had my attention snapping from my friend and her situation to who was joining our little show.

“What’s going on out here?” Juliet’s voice cut through, setting my teeth on edge, standing in only a black silk robe, arms folded and braced against the door frame.

“Nothing Juliet go away.” Brook spoke up from behind me.

“No need to be rude pipsqueak.” I felt my eyes widen before grabbing my sister’s arm, restraining her from going after the annoying singer.

“Hey love,” I watched the pale tattooed arm of Andy’s slide around Juliet’s waist and pull her
against his shirtless chest, “everything ok?”

The smirk that painted her lips made me seriously consider letting Brook go, consequences be damned, but the sound of a door being slammed brought me back to the situation at hand and not my sordid love affair with the blue eyed frontman.

“Fuckkk,” Ace’s voice sighed out as she stared at the door in front of her.

“Ace?” I asked quietly, “are you ok?”

“I’m fine, can we just go back to our room, I want to hear this news.” She said, walking slowly towards us.

“Syd?” I heard Andy’s voice from behind Juliet and I wanted the ground to swallow me whole. I had managed to avoid Andy at all possible costs and now here he was with his arms wrapped around his wife, could my life suck anymore?

“Fuck. Off. Andy!” Kacee gritted out as she passed by, grabbing my arm as she went, dragging me away from the man who had caused me to shut myself away from everyone.

I stumbled behind my irate friend as she yanked me away from Andy, Charlie and Brook following close behind.

“Are you really ok?” Brook asked Ace as we travelled down the halls we had ran through earlier.

“Yeah, I will be,” she responded dejectedly.

Our voices bounced off the walls causing Pete to step out of his room as we were passing by, “Am I going to get her back anytime tonight?”

“Eventually,” Charlie said as she laced her arm through Brook’s.

“I promise we will send her back to you in like 15 minutes just need to let her in on some developments.” I reassured the musician.

Pete waved us on with a stupid grin thrown Brooklyn’s way before heading back into his room.

“This better be worth it,” Brook sighed out as she followed us into our shared room.

“Trust me,” Charlie said, excitement bubbling back to the surface, “it is.”
Ace threw herself on the unoccupied bed and waited for one of us to finally speak.

“Soooo,” I started, “we are going out Tuesday night.”

“Seriously!” Brook started, “you pulled me out of bed, had me running around the hotel, all for this?”

“Patience young padawan,” I threw my hands up in a ‘be calm’ manner, “jeezus, you have your father’s temper sometimes.”

I watched her flick me off before leaning against the wall, waiting for the rest of the news.

“As I was saying, Tuesday night we’ve been invited to a concert,” I grinned over at Charlie.

“Wait for it,” she said answering my knowing smile.

“For 30 Seconds to Mars, they want to meet with us, to give us an opportunity to go on a world tour with them, co-heading.” I managed to get out without anymore interruptions.

I waited for the information to finally sink in and watched as Ace sprung off the bed and grab Charlie in excitement, Brooklyn looked shocked into silence.


“Is this for real?” She finally croaked out.

“Funny enough, that was Syd’s first question too,” Charlie choked out a laugh as Ace was still squeezing the air out of her.

Brooklyn finally started laughing, the shock wearing off into excitement, “when? Where? I mean how?”

“We can only assume they’ve been keeping up with the tour,” I said leaning against my bed.

“The label sent down the tickets, Karah gave them to me cause I was the first person she saw before going out with Brendon. We meet them after the show Tuesday, see how we do all together. If we don’t get along, they probably won’t ask us to go, but we are still being given a huge opportunity.” Ace had finally let go of Charlie so she was able to explain a little more of what was going on.

“Guys, a world tour, with one of the biggest, most successful bands we’ve ever heard, could you imagine that?” Ace exclaimed.

“Not only that, but we wouldn’t be openers, we would be co-heading this with them.” Brooklyn’s voice held a tone almost akin to awe.
“So was that information worth dragging you out of bed?” I asked her.

“Yes, yes it was, but I am now taking my happy ass back to bed and cuddle with that adorable
man you saw out in the hall.” She stuck her tongue out before turning around and walking out the
door, heading back to Pete.

“On that note, I’m going to go curl up with Trevor now,” Charlie said, leaving the room all to me
and Ace.

“So how are you really holding up?” I asked as I climbed back in bed.

“Honestly? A lot better than I thought I would. I mean yeah I have to see him everyday, but we
knew it wasn’t going to last, not for the long haul anyways. I didn’t get fucked over like you did with
Andy so I think it will all work out.” She fought off a yawn as she curled up in the other bed.

“Yeah, maybe one day I can look at Andy again without either wanting to break down crying or
punching him in the face.” I laughed out.

“Trust me there are days I want to punch him for you, which by the way you should have let
Brook go at Juliet. I would have paid good money to watch her whoop that girl’s ass.” I couldn’t
help but laugh at the visual my mind painted up for me.

“It’s not her fault her husband is a lying, cheating man-whore.” I said after composing myself,
“besides I don’t need someone like him in my life and with us possibly going on such a massive tour
later, it would have probably ended anyways.”

“The hell with it,” Ace yelled at the ceiling, “we’ll find the right people and when it happens
we’ll know.”

“You’re right, the hell with it!” I yelled back, “now let’s get some sleep it’s after 2 and we have a
show tomorrow, not to mention a ton of interviews, that truthfully I’m not looking forward to.”

“Night Syd, love ya.” Ace said quietly, half asleep already.

“Night Ace, love you too.” I hated how easy it was for her to just shut her brain off and pass out
like that, but it wasn’t long after my brain finally shut up and let me fall into the abyss of blackness
called sleep.
“So I’m here with the all girl band that’s taken the punk world by storm Grace of the Fallen,” The bubbly blonde interviewer turned to where we were seated in the cool air conditioned bus that was being ran as media central, “How are you guys doing today?”

“If the heat would drop about 20 degrees I’d be even better.” Kacee said from my right.

“I agree with you there.” The interviewer said laughing.

I snorted at how ridiculous this interview was already starting out as.

“Grace of the Fallen, how did you guys come up with your name?” Jeez I wish this woman would say her name again.

“It was kind of a thing me and Charlie had going on back in highschool, I don’t honestly even remember, I’m sure we were going through a stage and it sounded cool.” I said, shrugging my shoulders.

“Sounds about right,” Charlie backed me up laughing.

“Well ok then,” she laughed awkwardly before moving on, “we have some fan questions that were sent in,” we nodded, shuffling in our seats waiting to see what the fans had come up with, “let’s get started.”

For the most part they were easy questions, What’s your favorite color? What’s your favorite food? How do you come up with your songs? What inspires you? Everything simply answered, “Okay last question, Are any of you single?”

“Uhhhh random,” I laughed out, moving the microphone to my left, “Charlie? Want to start this one off?”

“Thanks oh so much,” Charlie’s sarcasm had me grinning, “I’m sure everyone has seen Trevor’s performance, so just to clarify no I’m not single,” She said before passing the microphone to her left.

“Shit, really, ummm, no I’m not, I’m currently off the market.” Brooklyn sputtered out before throwing the mic to Ace.

“I am so single and beyond ready to have some fun.” Ace announced with a shark’s grin painted on her pixie like features.

We all laughed before the mic was handed to me, “Single, very single.”

“So there you have it guys, half of Grace of the Fallen is taken, while the other half is single.” She turned back to us, “thank you so much for taking the time to talk with me, I hope the rest of your tour goes great.” We all thanked her before filing out of the bus and into the stifling heat of the sunny
New York summer.

“Alright guys, you have some time before your next set of interviews,” Karah saddled up next to us as we walked to our marked tent for lunch, “and your set time has been moved back slightly due to some technical error going on with the electronics.”

“Do I have time for a nap?” Brook asked.

“If you don’t take forever to eat, yeah you should be good for about an hour.” Karah stated as she guided us towards a spot to sit down.

The day went as smoothly as any other day could with a heat index in the high double digits and non stop interviews, by the time we got back to our hotel I felt like the walking dead.

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Our schedule stayed so busy that by the time Tuesday rolled around I hadn’t had a second chance to even think about the concert or meeting Jared, Shannon and Tomo. Now that it was here I felt like I was going to throw up everywhere, my nerves were wreaking havoc on my insides and it felt like bats were flying around, banging against all my internal organs.

“Guys if I pass out, just you know pull me along and pretend,” I flailed my arms around, “shit I don’t know just come up with something, that I have narcolepsy or something.”

We were currently in our hotel room rummaging through our suitcases and getting ready for the concert. 30 Seconds to Mars was holding another Church of Mars at the St. Peter’s Episcopal Church. I had seen videos of the last mini concert that they had held there and it was stunning. The church, their music, the whole atmosphere had been amazing and I couldn’t wait to experience it myself.

“Hey y’all we have to leave in 10 minutes to avoid traffic,” Ace announced. She was already dressed in her favorite black jeans and sleeveless AC/DC shirt with her signature combat boots already laced.

“I’m ready, we’re just waiting on Sydney,” Charlie yelled from beside me, as she ran her hands through her loose curls.

I watched as she climbed off the bed and moved around the suitcases strown around the room. She smoothed her black Journey tank over her jeans as she continued to the door where Kacee stood. Brooklyn was in the bathroom, already dressed in ripped jeans and white tank top, her well loved black vest hung half off her shoulders.

“I’ve been done,” She said, leaning her blonde head out of the bathroom to look at me.

I was currently sitting on the bed in a pair of dark washed ripped blue jeans and a my bra. I had already braided my hair in a loose fishtail braid that hung over my left shoulder, now all I was missing was a shirt, but everything I tried on I hated.

“Just grab the first thing you see, everything looks great on you and it’s just a concert, maybe drinks after.” Charlie said, the exasperation evident in her tone.

“Fine,” I huffed out as I grabbed the first black top I saw, the fabric slid across my skin, flowing over me until it hit right above my belly button, “let’s go.”

The three of them glanced at me, expressions ranging from Kacee’s outright amusement, to Charlie’s
wide eyes and slight smile, to Brook’s knowing smirk. I glanced down making sure my shirt wasn’t backwards before looking back up at my bandmates and family.

“What?!” I finally snapped, tired of the stares. “Are my nose rings messed up again?” Recently I had switched out one of my nose ring studs for a hoop and it kept hooking itself over the front stud.

“No, no, come on you look great.” Ace said grabbing my arm and yanking me out of the hotel room.

I still felt like there was some kind of silent joke going on between them that I wasn’t aware of, but I pushed it aside as we headed out of the hotel and to the church the concert was being held. Time to make a good impression and headline our first tour.
“Dreams really do come true,” I laughed out as we made our way down the aisle to one of the front pews.

Luckily we were able to get to the old gothic style church with 20 minutes to spare. Emma, Jared’s personal assistant, had met us out front, greeting us with a warm smile and explained everything we needed to know, from where to sit to when we would meet the guys.

“How are you talking the concert we’re about to see or the tour we might go on?” Brook asked from behind Charlie.

“Both? How about both?!” Ace grinned around me as she settled herself in the second row.

I nodded my head, looking around at the fans that were lucky enough to make it into the small church auditorium. Thankfully, if they did recognize us, they didn’t say anything, this wasn’t our show and we didn’t want to take any of the attention away from the guys, not that was really going to be a problem, it was 30 Seconds to Mars for fuck’s sake.

“I can’t believe this is really happening,” Charlie exclaimed as she moved between me and Brook.

“For real, I mean how is this our lives right now?” I asked, but before any of the girls could answer the lights dimmed and the fans surrounding us started screaming.

Let the show begin, I thought eagerly. I squinted my eyes watching movement from the side as the guys made their way to the front of the room, settling behind their instruments and microphones, excitement coursed through my veins, as I gripped Ace’s arm beside me.

“Hey I need that later,” Ace said, gently prying my hand from around her arm.

I could feel my face scrunching up in confusion, “what?”

“If you gripped my arm any tighter I was going to lose it,” I could feel her laughter as she wrapped her arm around my shoulders.

“Oh!” Realization hit me as I started laughing with her, “sorry, I’m stupidly nervous right now.”

“Don’t be, just enjoy the show, everything will work out the way it’s supposed to,” Ace whispered before focusing on the front, eyes resting where I assumed Jared was standing.

“When did you get so philosophical?” I muttered under my breath.

Ace’s eyes snapped to mine before a shark’s grin slipped onto her face. What a cryptic little shit.

“What are you two whispering about over there?” Charlie asked after she pulled my arm to move


“Kacee is being all smart and shit,” Charlie’s laughter was quickly swallowed as the first chords of Tomo’s guitar rang through the church. I could feel the air in my lungs whoosh out as the lights flickered to a soft glow, finally allowing everyone to see Jared, Tomo and Shannon for the first time. The moment was surreal, being able to see a band I had loved since highschool, it was honestly a dream come true. Then the thoughts of going on tour with them crept through my brain again, causing my pulse to speed up, making me sway slightly. I slammed my hands down on the back of the pew in front of me to keep my knees from buckling. How do you make a good impression on a set of guys who have been playing almost as long as you’ve been alive?

I glanced to my right where Charlie and Brook stood, grins painted on their faces as they swayed to Night of the Hunter, a quick look to my left and I saw that Ace’s eyes had yet to leave the form of Jared. I couldn’t help the bubble of laughter that crawled up my throat as I watched my drummer stare at the blue-eyed frontman, her eyes full of both lust and awe as he sang the first lines of the song. I was about to lean in and make a comment when the rumble of drums had my attention snapping to the front to watch Shannon. As long as Jared didn’t slide in my way, I had the perfect view of the drummer as he played.

To be honest, it was mesmerizing. I couldn’t pull my eyes away from him and the way his muscles moved under his skin with each hit of his massive floor toms. His intensity, his complete surrender to the music, it was hypnotizing and I was there with him, lost in that moment. Whatever spell he was weaving, I was under it, completely and totally under it.

“You keep staring like that and you’re eyes are going to get stuck.” Ace’s voice had me moving my glazed eyes away from Shannon and over to her grinning face.

“Oh like you have any room to talk.” I teased and watched a slight flush rush to her cheeks.

“He’s pretty,” she said shrugging.

“I didn’t say there was anything wrong with staring at him.” I laughed out.

“Who’s lusting after who?” Charlie asked after seeing our back and forth banter. I couldn’t help but laugh at how well she knew us, she didn’t even need to know what we said to know what we were actually talking about.

“Ace is lusting after Jared.” Yeup, definitely just threw her under the bus, which definitely meant she was about to drag me under with her.

“Ask Syd what she thinks of Shannon,” Thank god for the loud music vibrating through the church or the whole world would have heard her.

“Keep it in your pants guys!” Brook said, grinning from ear to ear.

“Can’t make any promises,” Ace yelled before her eyes moved back to Jared and all music ceased.

The room didn’t stay quiet for long as the fans erupted into yells and applause. I turned to face the front once again, trying my hardest to keep my eyes moving, watching everyone, but no matter what my sights always landed back on Shannon. I could feel Charlie and Brook looking at me, grins spread over their faces as they tried not to laugh.
“Aren’t you supposed to be watching the show not laughing at me?” I leaned over and asked Charlie.

“You are much more entertaining at the moment.” She said quickly before wiggling away.
Official Meeting

Chapter Notes

Disclaimer: blah blah blah same old bullshit... y'all know what I mean =P

This chapter is short I apologize, but hey you'll get two today!

All too soon the lights were shutting down, leaving only the backlights behind the guys on, throwing shadows down the aisle. Tomo’s electric guitar started the first keys of *Up In The Air* followed quickly by Shannon’s drums. The yelling of the fans started and Jared ran down the aisle as the lights flickered to the beat. I felt the energy in the room kick up about 20 notches leaving me breathless. Charlie and Ace started jumping up and down on either side of me causing me to jolt slightly from the moving bodies. Laughing, I soon followed suit, letting the electricity of the song flow through me. I watched fans slide out from their pews, crowding the aisle to dance and jump together and a grin split across my face. I wanted this, I wanted fans to love our music so much the let it just fill them.

Ace looked between me and the fans, before sliding out and joining them. Jumping and laughing as she danced with the group of kids in the aisle. I watched as she let Jared’s voice wash over, seeing pure joy on her face for the first time in months. This is what we all needed, time away from the tour to just enjoy being fans again, to just enjoy fans in general. I hadn’t felt this happy and free in a long time and even if we didn’t get the tour offer, I would be forever thankful for this slice of time given to us. Charlie pushed me out into the aisle, where her and Brook quickly followed. We finished listening to 30 Seconds to Mars’ final song, dancing in the aisle with the freedom to be ourselves and enjoying the sounds of their art.

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“Holy shit, was that even real?” I sighed out, as I flung myself onto the nearest arm chair. I shifted slightly, slinging my legs over one arm while hanging my head over the other.

After the concert had ended, Emma had found us surrounded by a few kids asking for pictures and autographs. We were led to what was the makeshift green room in the church and informed that the guys were meeting with fans and would be around after they were done.

“Did you see him,” Kacee groaned as she flopped into another available chair. “My god, the things I want to do to him.”

“You need to get laid.” Charlie laughed out as she moved to stand behind my chair.

“I’m trying.” Ace said throwing her arms out, “do you think he would object if I jumped him as soon as he walks in?”

“As soon as who walks in?” A smooth voice cut through our ramblings.

I snapped my head up to see Jared and Tomo walk through the door. Laughter bubbled up in my throat as I watched Ace’s eyes widen dramatically. Charlie and Brooklyn collapsed in on each other behind my chair, their giggles growing louder as the situation progressed.
“Dear god I feel like I just walked in on you and Shannon talking.” Jared said, his eyes focused on Tomo.

“What about me and Tomo?” Shannon’s deep voice sounded as he rounded the corner, my pulse quickened even as my laughter quickly died in my throat. “Sorry I got caught up in the shower.”

I could see his hair was still damp and looked as if he had attempted to run a towel through it, leaving it in complete disarray. My eyes followed water droplets as they trailed down his muscular neck, darkening the collar of his shirt. It took Charlie smacking my head to get me to focus on what was being said and not on how much I wanted to catch those water droplets with my tongue and not his t-shirt. I dropped my legs from the arm of the chair and stood up, walking over to introduce everyone. Tomo and Shannon moved to sit on one of the small couches while Jared stood in the middle of the room.

As I made my way over to meet Jared, his eyes trailed over me before a quick grin crossed his lips, “Nice shirt.”

I felt my eyebrows crinkle in confusion before looking down at the shirt I had thrown on earlier. What I thought was a plain black top turned out to be the gag gift Ace had bought me the summer before with the words, I Prefer The Drummer, written in white across the chest. Charlie, Ace and Brook soon dissolved into another round of giggles behind me at Jared’s comment.

Facepalming, I turned to look at my bandmates, “seriously guys? Of all the shirts, you let me leave in this one?”

“Hey I bought you that shirt! Don’t make it sound like it’s the worst thing.” Ace defended, her laughter subsiding slightly.

“Fuck meeee,” I groaned out.

“Maybe later,” Shannon’s quick response had me dropping my arm from across my eyes to look at the drummer, his gorgeous hazel eyes sparking with mischief.

“You,” I said pointing at him with a grin, “I like you. I have a feeling we’re going to be great friends.” His answering smile had butterflies forming in my stomach and my heartbeat sputtering.

It took everything in me not to climb into his lap and kiss that smile off his face. Come on Syd! Get your head out of the clouds, you do not, I repeat DO NOT need to get involved with another musician.
The loud buzz of someone’s phone had me breaking eye contact with Shannon’s yellow-green gaze and looking for the source of the noise. Charlie shook her head when my eyes landed on her and pointed at Brooklyn who was slowly pulling her phone out of her back pocket.

“Syd, is your phone off?” She asked after looking at what I assumed was a text.

“No, I’ve just been ignoring it. Why?” I pulled my phone out of my back pocket to look at the lock screen. “Well shit.” I had 10 missed calls, 3 missed facetimes and about 20 missed texts, all from either Vic or Kellin.

“Karah said if you don’t answer one of them soon she’s going to kill them.” Brook laughed at my shocked face. “They won’t stop asking if you’re coming out tonight.”

I groaned loudly before throwing myself on the carpeted floor in front of the couch Shannon and Tomo were occupying. I felt my shirt crawl up my side to rest above the top of my ribs as I raised my arms to cover my face. How did they find out I had finally left my room? If I didn’t go out tonight they were going to harass me about it for the rest of eternity. FUCK!

“Well that was dramatic.” Tomo’s voice held barely contained laughter, “I didn’t think anyone could be anywhere close to Jared’s dramatics. I’ve been proven wrong tonight.”

I felt a foot carefully nudge my exposed side, moving my arm slightly I could see Shannon leaning over me grinning, “Are you dead?”

“No, but you’re about to be if you don’t get that cold ass shoe off my side.” I replied scathingly.

The phone on my bare stomach started vibrating again and I moaned causing Ace and Charlie to start laughing. I slid my finger across the screen to answer what I thought was a phone call, “SYD! Hellooo?? Why am I staring at a ceiling and some dude’s face?”

Shannon laughed before leaning further off the couch to look at my phone screen, “You’ve reached Syd’s answering service. May I take a message?”

Before Vic could respond, I grabbed my phone, coming face to face with Vic’s confused but grinning face, “Syd! Oh my god you’re alive! Wait, what are you doing? Or more to the point where the fuck are you?”


“Yours?” Kellin’s voice broke through the loud crowd around them.
“No, y’alls. Where are you guys?” I shifted my unused arm to support my head as I talked to them.

“Get out of my face!” Vic yelled as he pushed Kellin out of the screen. “I swear Kellin I will bite you!”

“Oooo kinky,” I heard laughter floating around the room and remembered I wasn’t alone and was supposed to be talking about a possible tour opportunity. “Look guys, I really can’t talk right now--”

“You promised you would come out this week, you’re already out of your room, you have to come meet us!” Vic’s voice broke through the commotion, he had stopped fighting with Kellin to return to his previous point.

“Really? Can’t we pick another time?” I was trying my hardest to weasel out of going out at all.

“No, you have to promise you will come out or I’m not getting off this phone and if you hang up on me I will annoy you until your phone dies--” I cut him off before he could finish his ramblings.

“Fine, jeezus fuck, I will go out! Just go away!” I finally agreed before moving my arm to drop my head back on the floor, letting out a loud sigh, “hey Vic?”

“Yeah?” I looked to see him staring at me through the phone screen, concern etched in his features.

“Is he there?” I couldn’t help but ask. I needed to know.

“Yeah,” he sighed out, looking over the phone to a spot in the bar they were at.

“Okay.” I shifted into a sitting position against the couch, side pressed against Shannon’s leg.

“Hey Syd?” Vic asked quietly, almost to the point I couldn’t hear him.

“Yeah?” I glanced over at Jared who was happily chatting away with Ace.

“She’s here too.” My eyes snapped back down to the screen to see Vic looking at me.

“Okay,” I sighed back, “well the sooner I get off the phone, the sooner I can meet up with you guys.” Vic’s face split into a happy grin and I could hear Kellin cheering loudly. “You guys are such goobers.”

“We’ll see you soon then?” I nodded quickly before ending the facetime.

Sometimes they were just too much. I was exhausted just from that conversation, there was no telling how the night would go.

“Everything ok?” I glanced beside me to see Shannon, arms braced on his thighs, leaning his head down to look at me.

“Yeah, great,” I smiled at him.

“So Syd?” His deep voice questioned, “What’s that short for?”

“Oh shit, I completely spaced on introductions. Umm Sydney, it’s short for Sydney.” I laughed out before extending my hand to shake his.

“I’m Charleston!” My guitarist announced happily, still behind the chair beside Brook, “but
“Beside her is my little sister Brooklyn,” I picked up, grinning at the blonde.

“Brook or BB is fine.” She said quietly. “And over there, with your singer is--”

“Ace,” Jared finished, a small smile on his face as he looked at my drummer.

“I'm really sorry about that,” I said looking between Jared and the couch Shannon and Tomo were on, “If I hadn’t answered they would have continued to blow our phones up all night.”

“It’s ok, really,” Jared’s calm voice had me looking back at him.

“Would y’all like to go with us? It would give us an opportunity to get to really know each other, see how we are around friends. I don’t know about y’all,” I said looking at my friends and bandmates, “but I'm currently trying not to fangirl around a band that I’ve been listening to for, shit, well over 10 years, it's making it kind of difficult to focus on what needs to be discussed at the moment.”

Charlie’s giggle rang around the room, soon followed by Ace. Jared looked back at my drummer before a grin slipped onto his face, I was going to have to keep an eye on that developing relationship. There was something about the way he was looking at her, like there were stars in his eyes. I couldn’t help but smile at the thought, she needed someone good for her and something told me Jared would be just that, especially after Woody.

“I could use a few drinks and a place to let loose,” Shannon said, breaking me out of my thoughts.

“Excellent!” Charlie exclaimed, quickly pulling out her phone. I watched her fingers fly across the screen as she typed out her text. “Trevor said they’re at the Refinery Hotel’s rooftop bar. It’s about a 30 minute walk or a 10 minute ride, up to y’all.”

“Walk? You want me to walk?” Brook stated, eyes wide and eyebrows raised at Charlie’s suggestion. “What is this nonsense?”

“Is there even a taxi that will carry us all?” Ace asked. I glanced over at my drummer, who was slowly removing herself from her chair, with the help of Jared.

I groaned loudly as I threw my head back against the couch cushion beside Shannon’s leg, oh god a decision was never getting made.
Twenty minutes later, after some back and forth deliberation, we finally decided on a cab. The Refinery Hotel was nice, I mean like take one wrong step and you break something nice. We quickly found the elevator, pushing the button that would take us straight to the roof where the bar and the much needed drinks were located. As soon as the doors opened, I could hear the music flowing across the rooftop and feel the grin forming on my lips. Okay, I’ll admit it, I missed this, going out with my friends-my family, having a few drinks. I honestly couldn’t wait to see how this night unfolded, how Shannon, Jared and Tomo took to our little family.

“It seems kind of empty, is it just the bands tonight?” Ace asked from beside me.

She was right this first section of the roof was completely empty. I looked around the brick and wood enclosed patio, chairs vacated, not a soul in sight. To the right, three floor to ceiling double doors were open, curtains hanging to the side to show the night sky, to my left, three massive brick arches, leading to the next section. Charlie was the first off the elevator, followed quickly by Brook. They passed through one of the arches, bypassing a few people at the huge bar and headed straight for a group of people seated outside. Ace and Jared looked at each other before shrugging and following our guitarist and bassist.

Shannon, Tomo and I decided to stop at the bar instead of following the rest of our group out, giving me time to look around the middle room. On the far side, sat a room length half booth, covered in what looked to be red velvet, with little pub tables set in front of it, leaving the other side of the tables with little chairs for guests. I caught sight of some of the bands we were on tour with lounging around the tables, talking amongst themselves. In the middle of the room, separating the bar and pub tables was a 16 seater long table, looking up I noticed that the glass roof had been retracted, leaving the wide black beams open and the night sky available without restriction.

“SYDNEY!” A voice yelled, causing me to yank my eyes away from the bright lights of the Empire State Building and towards the direction the voice came.

I had enough time to turn away from the bar, before a solid body slammed into mine, my vision was quickly turned upside down when I found myself thrown over Vic’s shoulder as he toted me past the opened sliding glass doors and into the night air. The final section of the rooftop was, for lack of a better word, a gorgeous deck. There were two U shaped grey couches placed at each end of the patio, in the middle of those sat 2 two seater swings with lounge chairs and small tables spread sporadically around. Vic managed to carry me to the opposite end where one of the U shaped couches was located.

“VICTOR FUENTES PUT ME DOWN RIGHT NOW!” I yelled, beating his back. I could hear Charlie’s laughter getting closer, before my world tilted right side up again.
“Jeez Syd you could rival Charlie with those lungs.” Kellin laughed out.

“I didn’t even get my damn drink thanks to you!” I pushed Vic causing him to stumble into Kellin harshly, before spinning around to take in my surroundings.

Charlie was sprawled out against Trevor on one section of the couch, with Matt beside them talking to Brook and Pete. Across from them, Jared and Ace were wrapped up in each other, talking about god knows what, but clearly they were the only two that existed in that little world. In the middle of the wrap around couch, Vic’s brother and bandmate Mike sat with Karah and Brendon, laughing at my outburst. An annoying high pitched laughter had my eyes traveling to one of the two seater swings, where Juliet and Andy were cuddled up.

“Ignore them.” Vic’s voice chimed beside me.

“I’ll do my best,” I said, plastering on a fake grin, “now can I go back to the bar and get my drink?”

“I got it for you.” Shannon’s low drawl sounded from behind me.

“You are my savior!” I exclaimed excitedly, grabbing my drink from his extended hand. “So did y’all just decide to kick everyone out or what?”

“We all pitched in, rented the place out, the only people allowed in are bands on the tour or whoever we let in.” Kellin said from the other side of Vic.

“Did your wife ever make it in?” I asked after taking a sip of my beer.

“Yeah she’ll be here a little later with Vic’s girlfriend.” He laughed at Vic’s goofy smile.

“Awesome I haven’t seen Danielle since Florida, I miss her!” Brook said from her spot beside Pete.

“I’m going to walk around,” I had been still for too long and I really wanted to see who else was up here, “anyone want to join me?”

“I’ll go,” I grinned over at Shannon, who’s answering smirk had my knees trembling and threatening to buckle at any second, god I was so screwed.

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After about an hour and a half of mingling and catching up with everyone, Shannon and I found ourselves on the other U shaped couch, laughing and talking, just taking the time to get to know one another.

“Seriously? Country?” He laughed, hazel eyes hidden behind a pair of dark sunglasses. “Out of all things?”

“Hey I’m from North Carolina, it’s like a requirement to love country.” I said grinning at his outright disbelief. I shifted so my short legs rested across his thighs.

“I’m from Louisiana, you don’t hear me talking about swamp-pop,” he countered, nose crinkling slightly at the thought.

“Please god don’t ever say swamp-pop again,” my ribs were already tender from all the laughing, “Oh my god, I can’t breathe.”

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“It’s a really simple concept, you pull air in through your mouth, fill your lungs then push it back out.” He shifted his left arm from the back of the couch to prop his head on his hand, elbow still resting by my head.

“Smart ass,” I quipped before pushing his bare side, god it should be illegal for a man to look so good in a cut off t-shirt. “Why do you wear these things? It’s dark out here,” I pulled the sunglasses off his face and placed them over my eyes, “I mean, I can still see your eyes moving behind them.”

“I don’t know kind of a way for me to watch people without being caught,” he shrugged slightly before taking a sip of his drink.

“I think your eyes are too gorgeous to keep them hidden behind such dark lenses.” I said sticking my tongue out. I slid the dark Ray Bans off my face to hand them back to Shannon.

“Keep them, they look good on you.” I grinned goofily as I placed them on top of my head.

“Of course they do, everything looks good on me.” I said before laughing at the face he pulled, “I tried, oh my god, I tried to keep a straight face after saying that, but you should have seen your facial expression, holy shit.” I leaned over my legs, pulling in as much air as my lung would allow.

“Keep it up and I’ll push you off this couch.” He responded while poking me in my ribs.

“Yeah, yeah, you don’t scare me.” I laughed out.

That was a lie, I was scared of him. I was scared of the way he was making me feel, the butterflies knocking around my stomach. How easy it was to talk to him, how much we had in common, how badly I wanted to kiss him. Listening to his deep voice made me wonder what it would sound like after waking up, would it be thick with sleep? How would it sound lust filled, would it be deeper? Huskier? Would those beautiful hazel green eyes darken? My laughs sobered up quickly at the thoughts going through my head about the gorgeous drummer next to me.

“So was it always music?” Shannon asked, sensing my inner thoughts turning heavier.

“Actually no. Me and Charlie, we played all through high school, then we thought it was never going to happen so we took a break, went to college.” I leaned back against the couch, head falling against the back, legs still in his lap as I thought back to old times.

“What were you going for?” The smooth timber of his voice made me roll my head towards him, meeting his yellow-green gaze straight on.

“Psychology, I wanted to help people. I figured if I couldn’t help with my music anymore, I would help in another way.” I sighed out. “But after a couple of semesters we realized we needed the music, I loved my classes, but it was too much, I needed to play, to sing.” He nodded his head, understanding clear in his eyes.

“If it weren’t for Jared and music,” his voice deepened with emotion, “I don’t know where I would be, probably in jail or dead.” I closed my eyes to keep the tears in them from showing. The world would have missed out on a beautiful soul if he hadn’t turned to music. “Though, I thought about being a therapist at one point.”

“Really?” He nodded, “I think you would be good at that.” His soft smile had my heart jumping to my throat and the need for my drink great, only to find my glass empty.

“Need another?” I looked over to see him watching me intently, “I was about to get up and grab one for myself, I can get you one while I’m up.”
“Sounds good, I’m just going to run to the bathroom real quick.” I dropped my legs from his lap and quickly stood. Letting the dizzy spell pass, I stepped around Shannon before heading towards the bathroom in the first section of the roof.

Stepping into the empty bathroom, I made a beeline for the sinks to splash cool water on my face. After a few dips, I glance at my reflection. My cheeks were flushed, whether from the drinks or how Shannon was making me feel, I didn’t honestly know. I needed to pull myself together, getting involved with him would be a bad idea right now. I was a mess, things with Andy had put my emotions through the ringer and Shannon didn’t need someone like me fucking up his life.
Hello all my loves! The usual disclaimer here you know the routine... I’m just tired of writing it bleh

I grabbed a few paper towels and dried off my cheeks, checking the mirror one more time to make sure I didn’t look a wreck, I turned around and left. What I wasn’t expecting was to actually run into someone when I stepped out.

“What are you doing?” A harsh whisper had my eyes traveling from the chest I ran into to clear blue eyes, Andy’s blue.

“I think that should be my question,” I stated, moving to step around the lean frontman. “Why are you skulking around the girls’ bathroom?”

“Don’t play stupid with me Syd,” he shifted to the side, effectively boxing me in a corner.

“I’m not fucking stupid Andy,” I bit out, “I just have no idea what the fuck you’re talking about.”

“What are you doing with him?” The venom in his voice had me halting any attempt to move.

“Excuse you?” I blinked up at him. “When does what I do matter to you?” What was even going on? He acted like we were together, like he had a say in what I did. Didn’t he have Juliet? Wasn’t she who he needed to worry about? “Actually, you know what, don’t answer that.”

“Don’t be like that Sydney,” his voice turned pleading, “you know how I feel about you.”

“Really? I know how you feel about me? Cause last I checked you were still married and failed to tell me.” I rolled my eyes at the absurdity of this conversation before pushing past him.

“Wait,” I felt his hand wrap around my wrist harshly, jolting me to a stop, “it was never suppose to be like this.”

“Like what?” I glanced up at him, “were you just supposed to have your cake and eat it too? Did you think things were just going to go your way? Life doesn’t work that way Andy.” I tried pulling my wrist from his grasp, only to feel it tighten more. “Let. Me. Go.”

“Syd, please just listen to me,” Andy’s deep voice made my teeth grind together.

“I said let go Andy, there’s nothing you have to say that I want to listen to.” I yanked again, but still couldn’t get my wrist free.

“I think she said let go.” Shannon’s dark voice had my eyes snapping to one of the brick arches. “I suggest you let her go,” his muscles were tense, almost as if he was ready for a fight.

The weight on my wrist finally subsided and I stepped away from Andy, moving closer to Shannon, who’s hand was outstretched for me to take. I laced my fingers with his, letting him pull me away from Andy and away from the hellish situation that had just unfolded. Not a word was said between
the two of us until after we had stopped by the bar to pick up our drinks and were sitting back on the couch. I set my glass carefully on the table in front of me before pulling my knees towards my chest and laying my forehead against them.

“Want to tell me what that was all about?” Shannon asked slowly, carefully, his voice still holding barely contained rage.

I moved my head slightly, eyes peaking out from under my arms, “I’m an idiot,” I croaked out.

“I seriously doubt that, but really, what happened?” I felt him shift beside me as he settled back into the couch cushion.

“I got involved with a married man before I knew he was a married man,” my voice was muffled as I buried my head back in my arms.

“That doesn’t make you an idiot, that makes him an asshole.” Shannon growled out. “Do you love him?”

My head snapped up to look at Shannon, “Do I what?”

“Love him? It’s a pretty straight forward question.” His words were nonchalant, but the tone in which he said them were anything but.

“No, no I don’t.” I realized then as I said them out loud that it was true, I didn’t love him. “I had a massive case of lust for him, but honestly what was left of that evaporated just now with how he treated me.” I tried smiling when he glanced over at me, “Thank you by the way.”

He nodded his head with a small smile, acknowledging my thanks before clearing his throat, “what did he want?” His tone had changed slightly, less angry and aggressive, more curious.

I dropped my legs to cross them indian style as I shifted to face Shannon. “He wanted to know what I was doing with you, more like demanded. It was like he thought he owned me, that what I did, needed to be ran by him first.”

“Come here,” I hadn’t noticed that I was shaking until Shannon’s hand slid to cup the back of my neck, pulling me into his side to hold me, “you don’t owe him anything.”

His voice felt and sounded like thunder in my ear as it pressed against his chest. I probably could have stayed like this for the rest of the night, but sadly the elevated realms were not on my side. Huffing, I shifted to pull my buzzing phone out of my pocket.

“We’re being summoned,” I said after reading a text from Ace, it was odd that it was coming from her and not Charlie.

Glancing up, I noticed Ace’s eyes peeking over the top of the couch before her head ducked back down disappearing from my view. What the hell was that? It’s official I have the oddest friends. I pulled myself away from Shannon to stand up, grabbing my drink I turned to see him still on the couch.

“Are you coming?” I asked, extending my hand to help pull him up.

Drink in hand and Shannon trailing behind me, I walked over to our group of friends and family. Vic and Danielle had taken up a spot beside Brook and Pete beside Vic was Kellin and his wife, Katelynne. She looked at me when I walked up, a strained smile painted on her burgundy lips. I had gotten lucky that Dani understood that there was nothing going on with me and Vic, he was that
brother I always wanted and it would never go further than that. Katelynne on the other hand hated me, I wasn’t even that close with Kellin, but that didn’t stop her from not liking me.

I set my glass down on the small table behind the couch before sitting on the edge behind Ace and tumbled over to land on my drummer, only to come face to face with Jared too. “OH GOD HELP ME!!! I’M TOO CLOSE TO YOU!” I yelled, scrambling around, but failing to do anything other than shuffle my legs.

Shannon’s deep chuckle sounded from behind the couch before I felt his strong arms wrapping around my waist, pulling me back over, and setting me back down on my feet. I watched as Ace and Jared sat up, laughing at my obvious distress.

“Next time you’ll look before you just sling yourself over.” Ace wheezed out.

I shook my head joining their laughter, “nope probably not, but I don’t ever need to be that close to Jared’s face again.”

“Hey,” Jared’s affronted tone made me laugh more, “my face isn’t that bad to be close to.”

I shrugged before grabbing my drink from the table and flinging myself into the seat next to Ace, to watch the rest of our group converse. I looked over when I felt Shannon move to lean against the arm of the couch to my right.

“Charlie!” I yelled across the way, grabbing my guitarist’s attention, “where’s your phone? You don’t usually miss the opportunity to harass me about socializing.”

Her grin made me smile as she pointed up at one of the speakers, “why do you think the music hasn’t sucked?”

Before I had the chance to answer Hozier’s Jackie and Wilson started flowing through the many speakers located around the patio. Ace rolled her eyes at mine and Charlie’s excitement before laughing at us. I scrambled to stand up before leaning over to pry Charlie away from Trevor.

“Where are you taking Charlie?” Brook asked curiously.

“To dance, this is our song!” I responded as I moved past Shannon to the little spot behind the couch.

After singing and dancing to the first verse and chorus to the song, Brook and Ace finally joined us, spinning and jumping around in excitement. Jackie and Wilson soon ended followed by the opening chords of Charlie Puth’s We Don’t Talk Anymore, which had Brook backing away, head shaking violently.

“Nope, nope, not happening.” She said, still backing away to join Pete in her spot.

“Aww come on Brook,” Charlie laughed out.

“We don’t talk anymore!” I sang loudly, pointing at my little sister.

“THIS IS WHY WE DON’T!” She yelled back, dropping down in between Dani and Pete.

“Party pooper!” Ace giggled out.
Shannon’s laughter brought my attention to the dark haired man, who was still lounged on the arm of the couch. I crooked my finger at him, urging him to come dance. His hazel eyes widened before he started shaking his head. I nodded back, ignoring his protests as I moved closer to him.

“Come dance with me,” I grinned before putting on my best puppy dog look, “please?”

He finally gave in, grabbing my hand and spinning me away, only to pull me back with quick succession. Lightning sparked through my veins at the feeling of his chest against mine as we swayed off beat in a half assed jazz type salsa move. I felt my heart jump to my throat when he dropped me down into an unexpected dip. His deep chuckle made me glance up at his quick smirk before he pulled me back to him, causing my nose to brush against his neck, starting a fire that was slowly burning its way through my body.

“Someone’s got some hidden talents,” I jibbed, trying to get my beating heart under control.

“There’s a lot you don’t know about me,” he spun me back out, his sunglasses almost flying off my head, “yet.”

I snatched the shades from falling and placed them on my face as he spun me back in, letting our bodies move together. The pull of his body calling to mine, like they were meant for each other. I was thankful his dark lenses covered the blood rushing to my cheeks coloring them cherry red. The song was coming to an end as he slowly dipped me again, this time leaning down with me, our faces mere inches from each other. Time seemed to slow to a stop and I held my breath, waiting to see what his next move would be, I was completely trapped in his hazel gaze. A loud scream from the other side of the patio broke the trance and had us snapping our heads to the side to see what was going on.

Shannon slowly pulled us up so we were standing side by side, watching the events unfold. I pushed his sunglasses back on top of my head, eyes widening as Juliet flung her arms around, yelling at Andy. For his part he just stood there, letting her rampage on and on about god only knows what, she wasn’t a very coherent yeller. Then Andy’s eyes cut to me, locking with my own blue gaze and I knew what was going on. I don’t know how, but she knew. I froze in fear as her eyes followed his and found me at the other end.

“YOU!?” She screamed as she stomped towards me.

“To be fair, I didn’t know about you until after.” I countered.

Let it be known that I don’t honestly think before I talk sometimes, this was one of those times. The sharp sting of flesh meeting flesh didn’t register until a few seconds after she had slapped me across the cheek. I’ve been told on numerous occasions that my sarcasm would get me into trouble, I found
one of those moments. I stepped back as Juliet wound up to hit me again, this time with a closed fist, but Shannon grabbed her wrist, effectively stopping her.

“I think you need to come get your wife.” He said, looking over Juliet’s shoulder to lock eyes with Andy.

I stood stock still as Andy appeared beside Juliet, pulling her away. This is what I wanted to avoid, her finding out, her reaction, people finding out. Granted everyone in our group, sans Tomo and Jared, knew about me and Andy, but now the other bands had seen Juliet’s outburst. My thoughts scattered when I felt a cool hand grasping my jaw, my eyes focused quickly on Shannon as he moved into my line of sight, moving my chin carefully to look at my cheek.

“T’m fine.” I croaked out, I could feel tears pricking my eyes and quickly blinked them away, I would not cry.

“Are you sure, she clocked you pretty hard.” The worry in his voice warmed me, but I was too angry at the situation to show it.

I nodded before pulling away from his tender touch. “I think it’s time for me to call it a night.”

Moving around Shannon, I walked back to our group of friends and family. The looks on everyone’s faces ranged from outrage to outright shock to some slight confusion.

“Hey, do you need us to go deal with her?” Ace asked, looking over at Brook, who was currently being held down by Pete.

“I just need Pete to kindly LET GO!” Brook gritted out.

“Guys!” My voice broke slightly as I raised it, grabbing almost everyone’s attention, “I’m fine, just drop it.”

“Are you sure?” Charlie asked quietly. I nodded curtly.

“I think--I’m just--” I sighed loudly in defeat, “going to call it a night.” The girls quickly protested, arguing that I needed to stay on principle, that Juliet didn’t need to run me off. I shook my head sadly, “I’m not running away, I just really need to go.”

“Then we’ll go with you.” Charlie stated, pulling away from Trevor to stand up.

“No, guys really, stay have a good rest of the night. Seriously I’m just going to go to bed, sleep it off.” I argued.

“We can’t just let you go back to the hotel alone!” Ace said vehemently.

“I am a fully grown adult, not a child. I can take care of myself. Y’all stay!” I just really needed some time away from everyone, some peace and quiet after the shit that just went down.

I moved over to give my little sister a hug, as she was still being held against Pete, moving over to place a quick kiss on Charlie’s cheek.

“Call us? If you need us to come back.” Charlie whispered before I moved away.

“I promise.” I replied as I stepped back behind the couch and dropped a kiss to the crown of Ace’s head before looking at all the guys, “Keep them safe or I will come after y’all.” I locked eyes with Pete, Trevor and Jared, grinning evilly at them, “Night everyone.”
I made it to the bar before I realized someone was following behind me. Turning around, I smacked straight into Shannon’s firm chest.

“What are you doing?” I asked confused.

“Making sure you make it to your hotel safely.” He said it with such authority it took a minute for me to realize what he had said.

“No, jeezus I’m not a damsel in distress. I can take a cab back to the hotel by myself!” I knew it was little unfair of me to snap at him, he was honestly just trying to make sure I was safe, but I needed to be alone.

“You can get mad at me all you want, but it’s either me or the girls. They are worried about you, which means they aren’t going to actually relax and have fun if someone doesn’t come with you.” He grabbed my hand, pulling me towards the elevators.

“And you just happened to volunteer as tribute?” I grinned up at him.

“Something like that,” he laughed out, pushing the down button.

“Sydney.” Andy’s voice had me dropping my grin and spinning around. “Can we talk?”

“No.” I stated firmly, “from now on if it isn’t of ‘life or death’ importance or about this tour, I want nothing to do with you.”

“Syd,” he started moving towards me until Shannon cleared his throat.

“You heard her Andy,” he almost growled out, “leave it alone.”

Juliet took that time to reemerge from the women’s bathroom, looking around she noticed me with Andy and her eyes clouded over with rage. I rolled my eyes before turning around to see Shannon standing in the door of the open elevator, the tension from earlier leaking back into his stance.

“Don’t,” I murmured, pushing slightly on his chest to get him moving into the elevator, “it’s honestly not worth it.”

The ride down to the lobby was almost unbearably quiet while Shannon stayed in his own thoughts and I stayed in mine. What was going on with my life? First the Warped Tour gig which was a godsend, then the magazine cover warping our popularity out of the ozone, everything with Andy and now the mess that just happened. Why couldn’t I have just gotten through this tour with zero drama? I felt the elevator slowing down followed by the ding alerting us that we had arrived at our destination.
The Morning After

Chapter Notes

I'm getting really close to what I've already pre-written so updates will be a little scarce soon.

I'm also almost done with Part 1 of this series as well, so yay for that too!

Anyways hope you all are enjoying this! And you know the usual blah blah blah disclaimer that goes up here so without further ado... STORY

The loud bang of the hotel room door hitting the wall startled me awake. What time was it?

“Hey,” Ace’s voice floated from the bathroom, “how was your night?”

“Huh?” I mumbled sleepily.

“Syd? Hello? Are you awake?” Sitting up I saw Ace stumbling into the main room.

“I am now. Did you just get in?” She nodded before throwing herself on the bed.

“Yeah,” her voice was wistful, a grin painted on her lips.

“Ohhhh,” her grin had me smiling back, “want to tell me what that’s all about?” I gestured to her glowing form.

“After you tell me how your night went.” I sighed before throwing myself back against my pillows.

Sadly nothing had happened between me and Shannon. The cab ride had still been a quiet affair, but Shannon had relaxed again, finally going back to the man that had joked and laughed with me. After he took the time to walk me to my room, I invited him in as we were still talking and neither of us were tired. After changing, I walked into the main room to find him sprawled over the bed near the wall. I climbed up next to him to continue on with our conversation and by the end of the night my head was across his stomach, using him as a pillow.

“Nothing happened. We got back here, I changed, then we just hung out, talked until I guess I fell asleep.” I shrugged.

Ace looked at me skeptically and I continued to think about the previous night. How did I get under the covers? It didn’t look like I had crawled under them myself and I don’t remember getting up the night before at any point. I felt my brows furrow as I dug through my memories… Oh shit!

“I’m going to go, you’ve got a show tomorrow and you can barely keep your eyes open.” Shannon’s deep voice, now even deeper with exhaustion, murmured.

“Mmhmm,” I managed to mumble out.

“See?” He chuckled out.
I felt the bed shift as he climbed off before his arms pushed under me, slowly pulling me towards his chest, the warmth of his body seeping into my chilled skin. All too soon he was laying me back down on the mattress and shuffling the covers over me, but I missed the feel of him against me.

“Stay?” I whispered, snagging his hand to pull him back.

I was sure he had already told me goodnight and left, but the feel of the bed dipping behind me had me shuffling over to allow him space to settle in next to me. The feel of his muscled arm curling around my waist had my tired lips shifting into a small smile as he pulled me back against him. Sighing in contentment, I finally allowed sleep to pull me under completely.

I started shaking my head back and forth in disbelief while Ace stared at me, head tilted to the side as she tried to piece the puzzle together.

“Fuck me,” I finally breathed out.

“Umm? Care to enlighten me as to what just went on in that head of yours?” She asked, confusion clear on her face.

The door once again slammed open, followed by the voices of Charlie, Brook and Karah. Soon their smiling faces came into view as I frantically grabbed my phone from the side table.

“Is she ok?” Charlie asked, concern evident in her voice.

“Your guess is as good as mine at this point,” Ace said, “we were just talking about her night before she kind of went catatonic.”

I could feel everyone’s eyes on me as I unlocked my phone. A few missed calls, some social media notifications, but there on the screen a missed text from a contact I knew I didn’t have before I went to sleep last night.

Good luck today. I had a great night last night.
Can’t wait for the tour. Text me when you wake up. -SL

“Fuck me!” I yelled.

“That’s now the second time you’ve said that,” Ace announced.

“Sydney? Are you ok?” Karah asked, sitting on the edge of the other bed, careful not to startle me.

“I asked Shannon to stay last night.” I managed to squeak out.

“Hell yeah! Go Syd!” Charlie said laughing.

“No, no,” I shook my head, “I mean nothing happened. I fell asleep on him while we were up talking, he went to put me to bed and I asked him to stay. Guys, what am I doing?” I ran my hands through my hair in frustration.

“It sounds like you had a sleepover, pretty straightforward and simple to me.” Brook said as she laid down beside me.

“Always know how to put it so elegantly don’t you sis?” I said, poking her in her side.

“I mean if ‘nothing happened’ as you say, then there’s no reason to freak out.” She responded, slapping my hand away.
“It’s not that I didn’t want it to, but there’s something different about him. I don’t want it to be like Andy. What if what he’s feeling is the same way? What if all he wants is something physical?” I threw my hands up in surrender, “you know what? I can’t handle this right now. We have a show to get ready for.”

“And Ace has to tell us why she has a grin the size of Texas on her face.” Karah laughed out.
Soon we were done with the part of the tour that had us staying in New York, followed quickly by the rest of July. Before we all knew it was August 1st and we would soon be heading to California. Things with Shannon were great, he was probably the closest thing I had to a best friend. Yeah I had the girls and I loved them, but they were more family, Shannon was that person I could go to for anything. There were texts exchanged all day everyday, when I wasn’t busy performing or doing interviews with the girls, I was talking to him. We had skype calls at least once a week and if we had time there was the occasional facetime in between those calls.

Ace’s news that fateful day weeks ago, had been that her and Jared had gotten together. What started out as a pure physical release situation had shockingly bloomed into a full fledged relationship. It was nice to see her so happy after things with Woody had ended. They also weren’t keeping things exactly on the downlow either. Ace had finally said fuck it, she was happy and the hell with keeping things hidden.

Charlie and Trevor were still the most sickeningly cute couple in the world, but they continued to put a smile on my face. While Brook and Pete had FINALLY announced that they were an official couple, causing social media to explode and interviews to become ‘hella awkward’ for me as the older sister. Karah and Brendon were doing the best out of all of us. She was lucky she only had to manage us and could get away with spending more time with her boo than we did. We still loved her though.

“What in the world are you wearing?” Shannon’s laughing face peered at me through the small screen of my tablet.

“What? You don’t like it?” I asked, pulling the hood of my penguin onesie down over my eyes.

“I never said that, but I can’t really see what it is exactly.” He moved his face closer to the screen.

“Shan I can see up your nose, move away!” I laughed from my bunk on the bus. “It’s the penguin onesie Brook got me. It’s ‘onesie party girls night’ tonight.”

“You’re having a onesie party without me?!” He feigned hurt as he pulled away from the camera, giving me a better look at him.

I tried to get my beating heart under control. After waking up that morning and remembering him staying the night, I had kept him at arm's distance. I didn’t want things to become muddled, to give off the wrong idea, especially after everything he had seen with Andy. He had quickly fallen into the roll of best friend after that, me on the other hand? Well my heart wouldn’t stop the crazy pitter pattering every time I got a call or text, skyping was even worse cause then I got to see him. I was falling harder for him everyday and I didn’t know how to stop it.
“We can have one when you come and visit after the tour.” I grinned at him.

“Fine, I guess that will have to do. So are we all still on for lunch when you get here?” His eyes seemed to light up at the idea of finally getting together.

Stop that shit head, now you’re starting to sound like heart. No need to get your hopes up either one of you.

“That’s the plan, we have a show in New Mexico on the 3rd then head to LA before our three shows in San Diego, San Fran and Pomona.” I ticked off the places as we talked.

Before Shannon could respond, the curtain on my bunk was flung to the side and I was tackled by Charlie.

“What are you doing in here, it’s onesie party time!” She yelled out, the yellow horn of her purple unicorn onesie nearly poking me in the eye.

“I’m talking to goober here.” I said pushing her over and pointing at the tablet screen.

“Could you tell your brother to stop texting Ace she’s as bad as Syd here,” She leaned in front of me to talk to Shannon.

“Contrary to popular belief Charles, we don’t live together nor do we spend every waking moment together. He’s at his place tonight so I’m of no use there.” Shannon said, laughing at Charlie’s face when he referred to her as Charles.

The nickname had slipped out one time and her reaction had sealed the deal on him calling her that for the rest of eternity. Pushing Charlie off my bunk, I quickly told Shannon goodnight and promised to text him in the morning, before joining the girls in the living area of the bus. Ace was sprawled on the couch in her light gray wolf onesie, phone in hand quickly typing out a reply to Jared. Karah and Brook were jumping around to *Wild Things* as it blared from the bus speakers. I couldn’t help but laugh at seeing a Squirtle and a Fox dancing around trying, but failing to pull Ace into the fray.

Charlie clambered behind me, pushing me into the middle of Karah and Brooklyn who grinned at another addition to their crazy dancing. The hell with sleep tonight, we were going to have fun, act like kids, eat some junk food, annoy the fuck out of Bodhi and from the looks of it Ace if Karah tried to get her to join again. Charlie’s playlist transitioned to *Don’t Let Me Down* causing us to start singing at the top of our lungs, Brook laughed so hard she tumbled into Karah who fell onto the couch, jostling Ace who looked up from her phone to glare at our manager.

“Ace get off your phone or we’re leaving you at the next stop.” I yelled at our drummer.

“You wouldn’t do that, you need me.” She said turning her sharp blue eyes on me.

“Watch me, you need to let loose and stop staring at your phone. You’ll see him in like three days, one night isn’t going to kill you.” I snapped back.

“Fine,” she sent Jared a text before finally jumping up to join us.

Eventually she gave in to the fun and started laughing. No one can stay mad or cranky during a ‘onesie party’!
A few hours later, everyone had crashed. I don’t know what woke me up, but I was so restless that I knew sleep wasn’t going to find me anytime soon. Quietly, I climbed out of my bunk to see Karah sitting at the table, still sporting her Squirtle onesie.

“Have you gone to sleep yet?” I asked, stifling a large yawn.

“Yeah I got a couple of hours in.” She set her pen down to look at me, “what are you doing up?”

“Couldn’t sleep, figured I’d just make a cup of coffee. Want one?” I asked holding up the bag of Black Fuel coffee.

“Is that Shannon’s blend?” I nodded before returning to the coffee maker to set it up. “Yeah go ahead you know how I like it.”

After finding out about Shannon’s coffee company, I informed him I would be ordering a bunch of stuff once I got back home, it’s kind of hard to do when you’re on the road. Instead I found a basket full of goodies at our following venue full of a couple different blends of coffee and a bunch of Black Fuel gear, including a few tops I told him I was eyeing.

“So what are you doing?” I asked once I had filled our cups and joined her at the table.

“Emailing with Emma, trying to set up y’all’s tour dates and such.” She ran her hands through her short silver and teal hair. “I just want to make sure it’s all in order before we get back.”

“What’s the rush? Don’t we have almost a year before that when we get back?” I took a sip of my coffee, sighing at the pure perfection of the warm liquid.

“About that,” her tone had me quickly glancing back up at our manager. “Brendon asked me to move in with him when the tour was over.”

“Oh MY GOD!” I squealed out, “That’s awesome. Right? I mean that sounds great. Isn’t that a good thing? You seem kind of not excited.”

“No, no, I’m more than happy and excited. It’s just that’s a huge step and it’s on the other side of the states. I just don’t want to leave y’all and then something happen.” She closed her laptop to give the topic her full attention.

“We’ll be fine. I mean especially if you get all the tour stuff done before you move and who knows maybe we’ll follow you out there. The girls are all dating guys who live in Cali, anything could happen. Please don’t miss out on such a great step in your life because of the band.” I slid my hand over the table to grab her wrist, “seriously, go!”
She nodded before the most happy and blissful smile slid onto her face to replace the stress and worry that was there to begin with. I took another sip of my coffee before unlocking my phone to send a quick text to Shannon.

_Better watch your stash of coffee, I might steal it all when we get there. -Syd_

I talked a little more about the coming tour with the guys with Karah before the buzz of my phone made me smile.

_I’ll make sure to stock up then, coffee fiend. -SL_

Scoffing at the fact he called me the coffee fiend, I locked my phone and looked up at Karah who was grinning at me.

“You are so in love with that man and you don’t even see it.” She announced proudly.

“I know exactly how I feel about him thank you very much,” I snipped, “but it doesn’t matter, I’m not going there.”

“That’s not fair to either one of you Sydney.” Karah said sadly.

“It’s plenty fair to him, he doesn’t need my level of fucked up in his life.” I shoved myself away from the table, clearly ending all conversation about Shannon and made my way back to my bunk. If I was lucky I might get a couple more hours of sleep before we got to Oklahoma City.

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Sharing a tour bus with four other girls and a guy was a pain in the ass, adding three more guys, even for just a night, was complete and utter chaos. I loved Pete, Trevor and Brendon but Bodhi was my limit on living with a dude on a bus. After the show in Oklahoma City we hit Albuquerque, since we were all going to LA to meet up with Jared and Shannon, they jumped on our bus to leave early after our performances. The first few hours were fine, we joked, messed around with songs, talked about some collaborations later, after the halfway mark I just wanted some peace and quiet.

Ace and I somehow managed to stow away to our own bunks, each doing our own things. She wanted to call Jared while she had the chance and I decided to go over some of the tour dates Karah had finalized with Emma and few of the songs we were looking at recording on our off time. We wanted to release another CD when we got back home, something to have out before the tour starting next summer. The loud buzz of my tablet had me jumping, causing me to hit my head on the bottom of Ace’s bed.

“You ok?” I looked over to see Ace’s upside down face at the corner of the curtain, phone against her ear.

“Yeah,” I groaned rubbing the top of my head, “stupid tablet.”

I looked down to see a missed skype call from Shannon and silently cursed my best friend. I highly debated not calling him back, but knowing I would see him tomorrow meant he would probably ask why. Sighing out in defeat, I grabbed my tablet and quickly dialed him back.

“You do realize it’s after midnight right?” I asked as soon as he answered. “Shouldn’t you be asleep, you need all your energy to deal with this wired assed group.”

“What? No hello, how are you, nothing?” He laughed out.
“You made me smack my head on Ace’s bunk, so… nope.” I grumbled out, my head was in serious pain.

“Aww poor thing.” His sarcasm tonight was on a major high and it made me seriously debate why I called him back.

“I will hang up on you I swear on everything that’s holy Shannon Christopher.” I really needed him to find his chill.

“Ooo bringing out the middle name, someone’s in a mood.” I rolled my eyes and then winced, god how hard had I hit that bunk? “How far out are you guys?”

“We’ve just hit the halfway mark, I think.” I could feel my eyes squinting as I tried to run the times through my hurting head.

“So you’ll be here around, what? Almost 8ish?” He looked at his phone to double check his time.

“Sounds about right,” I nodded. “Which means you need to go to bed old man.” His beautiful hazel eyes narrowed at me in faux anger.

“I’ll show you old man,” his voice deepened, sending shivers down my spine and my mind straight to the gutter.

“Yeah yeah, all bark, no bite. I’m going to bed, these people are too much for me tonight.” I stretched my sore body out, jostling the iPad off my lap.

“Great view,” Shannon deadpanned.

I looked down to see the screen facing the bottom of Ace’s bunk and started laughing.

“Now you can see what I slammed my head into.” I grumbled as I picked the tablet off the bed.

We eventually said our goodnights after making plans to meet up at Jared’s when we got into town. I was excited to see him, I was excited to spend time with everyone and enjoy a little time away from the tour, but I was falling in love with my best friend and I didn’t know what to do or how to stop it. I sighed heavily before crawling under my covers, god I’m so screwed. Those were my last thoughts as sleep pulled me into black oblivion.
“Hey, if you want a shower before everyone wakes up I suggest you do it now.” Ace’s voice broke through my sleep fogged brain.

I cracked my eyes open to see her freshly showered face peeking at me through a small slit in my curtains.

“Thanks,” I groaned as I pulled myself out of my warm blankets. “What time is it?”

“About half past 7, we should be there in the next hour or so.” I watched as my drummer slid in the back room to change before the group realized we were awake.

After a quick shower, I threw on a pair of my comfy ripped up skinny boyfriend jeans and grabbed my white Black Fuel top. Soon I could hear voices starting to rouse from the living area of the bus.

“Jeez,” Charlie yawned, “What time did you wake up?”

I put my curling wand down on the floor and looked up to see my guitarist scrubbing at her tired eyes.

“Ace was up before me, we figured you’d all sleep in a little later since you stayed up so late, we got first dibs on the shower.” I grinned as she grumbled incoherent words while shuffling to grab her clothes for the day.

“I need the address to wherever I’m dropping you people off at,” Bodhi’s voice rang through the bus.

“Give me a second and I’ll be up there to show you.” Ace yelled from beside me.

I finished my hair then threw on some makeup just as Charlie walked back in with Trevor, both dressed and ready.

“Everyone else ready?” I asked, putting my stuff away.

“Karah and Brendon are, Pete just finished up and Brook is in the bathroom, she didn’t want to get up, it took a lot of threatening.” Charlie said as she threw herself down on the seat behind me.

“I heard that,” Brook growled out as she walked in, towel wrapped around her hair and body. “Trevor I love you like the brother I never wanted, but please remove yourself from the room.”

He threw his hands up and slowly backed away from the door frame, letting Brook shut the door in his face.
“Someone’s testy, what time did you get to sleep?” I asked as she rummaged through her suitcase.

“Not early enough to deal with this many people.” She responded as she yanked on her clothes.

“Remind me to talk to her until she’s had food and caffeine.” Charlie whispered loudly.

I laughed as my sister turned around to glare at our pink and purple haired friend.

“I’m going to eat you if you don’t shut up.” Man she was super grouch this morning.

I felt Bodhi guiding the bus up a steep hill, causing Brook to stumble into Charlie’s lap as she tried to pull on her shirt.

“Jeezus, where the hell does this man live?” Charlie asked as she pushed Brook off of her.

Shrugging, I climbed off the floor and headed to the front of the bus.

“Holy shit,” Brook yelped as we looked at Jared’s home through the bus window, “he lives in a goddamn compound!”

I caught sight of Shannon’s white Ducati next to what I could only assume was Tomo’s car. The sound of us pulling up must have alerted the occupants of the house to our arrival, because soon Jared, Shannon, Tomo and his wife Vicki were stepping out and watching Bodhi park. Ace was the first to jump off, quickly followed by Karah and Brendon. I looked through the front window to see Shannon talking to Jared who had his arm wrapped around Ace, keeping her tucked snugly against his side, while Brook, Pete and Trevor climbed down the bus stairs. Feeling my heart pick up speed from seeing Shannon, I slowly backed away from the front into the living area.

“Hey,” Charlie’s voice startled me causing my heart to skip a few beats, “are you ok?”

I nodded, clutching at my chest, “yeah I’ll be fine.”

“When are you going to tell him how you feel?” She asked quietly.

“Never,” I muttered out, giving her a droll stare. “Why mess with our friendship if he doesn’t feel the same way?”

“I’m about 100% sure you both feel the same way about each other, you’re both just too blind and stubborn to do anything about it.” Charlie countered as she turned away and stepped off the bus.

I sighed out before running my hands through my hair in frustration, why was this always happening to me? If I didn’t make an appearance soon everyone was going to start wondering what I was doing. FUCK! Ok, Sydney get your shit together, push it down and away. He’s your best friend which means he’s definitely going to know something is up if you don’t get yourself under control.

“Syd! Get your ass off this bus now! I’m hungry and you’re holding everyone up.” Brook’s voice yelled from the open door.

I jolted out of my thoughts and groaned, shit. I passed Bodhi at the front as I made my way off to join the group waiting for me.
“Are you going to tell me what’s going on with you?” Shannon asked as we were all settling around the massive table at Republique.

“Nothing,” I murmured, avoiding his intense gaze.

“Liar,” he growled out.

Jared must have sensed the tension climbing between us from across the table as he cleared his throat, “so are y’all excited?”

“Excited?” Charlie question, “excited about what?”

“The nominations?” Tomo asked confused at Charlie’s response.

“What nominations?” I queried, ignoring Shannon’s growing frustration.

“Seriously?” Tomo looked around the table, “you guys don’t know about the nominations for the APMAs?”

I shook my head back and forth, confusion clearly painting most of our features. Shannon shifted beside me before throwing his phone down on the table in front of me.

“Now who has the problem?” I countered as I grabbed his phone to look at the list.

The look he gave me made me seriously consider choosing my next words carefully. His usually bright hazel eyes shifted into a dark stormy green making me clamp my jaw shut and look down at the screen.

“Guys,” I breathed out in disbelief.

“What?” Ace asked from across the table, glancing between my stunned expression and Jared’s grinning one.

I could feel myself getting lightheaded as I continued to look over the list of nominations.

“Syd??” Charlie question, concern clear in her voice.

“This is just, just…” I struggled to think, to put words together, “just wow.”
Shannon grabbed his phone out of my hand effectively bringing my attention back to the table and my bandmates worried expressions. The waitress chose that moment to stop by our table to take our drink order, giving me time to process what I had read.

“HOLY SHIT!” Charlie screamed next to my ear after the waitress had left.

“We’ve been nominated,” she said looking up from her phone before glancing between me, Ace and Brook, a wild grin painting her face.

“We’ve been what?” Ace asked incredulously.

“Nominated. As in we’ve been put on a list for fans to vote on, so that we can win an award.” Brook said, her sarcasm evident as she spoke slowly while she stared at Ace.

“Thanks, ass, I knew what it meant.” She responded before flipping her off. Brook shrugged while everyone else at the table laughed. “What are we nominated for?”

Charlie ran her finger up the screen of her phone, “Well you and Brook have been nominated separately. You for drums which btw you’re up against CC and Brook’s been nominated for Best Bassist.”

I watched as Ace and Brooklyn’s eyes went wide before they looked at one another.

“What else?” Brook asked, her voice carrying a tone of shock.

“As a group we’ve been nominated for Breakthrough Band AND Best Live Band,” Charlie said as her eyes continued to roam over the page, “Oh my god!” Her hand clasped Trevor’s arm tightly. “You guys have been nominated for Best Underground Band.”

“Really? That’s pretty damn awesome!” Trevor laughed out.

“Anyone else up there?” I asked, leaning against her hoping to read over her shoulder.

“Panic!’s up for Song of the Year and Best Music Vi--” She stopped abruptly, pulling the phone closer to her face.

“What?” Ace asked curiously.

“Uhh,” Charlie glanced at me then started shaking her head, “nothing, nothing, just couldn’t read it clearly.”

“I call bullshit,” I announced, “let me see that.”

After snatching the phone from her hand, I scanned the list to find what had startled her and there it was in black font on the little white screen, Andy was up for Best Music Video, the very one that had snowballed everything.

“Well fuck.” I spat out.

“Would someone please tell me what the fuck is going on?!” Ace seethed out.

“Beyond My Reach is up for Best Music Video.” Charlie sighed out.
“Well shit,” Ace said as she slumped back into her seat, “Wonder if he’ll thank you if he wins.”

“I hope to all that’s fucking holy he either doesn’t win or if he does, doesn’t even look my way much less thank me.” I stated before crossing my arms and slamming back against my seat in a huff.

“Annywayyss,” Charlie started back up effectively ending all Andy conversation, “Panic!, Fall Out Boy and Sleeping with Sirens have all been nominated for Artist of the Year, while Madness is up for Album of the Year.”

“Kellin’s going to be annoying for the next month.” I said laughing.

“Especially since he’s also been nominated for Best Vocalist,” Charlie paused to look at Pete, before she finished, “but he’s against Patrick.”

“We all know Pat will win.” Pete said, a grin splitting his face.

“Oh!” Charlie exclaimed excitedly, “The Divine Hero is up here for Song of the Year.”

“Aww, I’ll have to send Vic a congrats text later.” I managed to get out before the waitress reappeared with our drinks and ready to take our meal orders.

The rest of lunch consisted of Shannon still badgering me about what was wrong and the nominations. I did get a chance to shoot Vic and Kellin both texts congratulating them on their nominations. Both were super stoked about their own nominations, but were just as excited for our group as well. By the time lunch had ended a group of fans had spotted us, thankfully they kept a decent distance, but it didn’t stop photographs from being taken. Great this is going to be all over the tabloids by morning.

“We should celebrate tonight.” Jared commented as we made our way out of the restaurant, Ace tucked securely against his side. “I’ve got plenty back at the house.”

“You know I’m always down.” Charlie said from the other side of Trevor, arms linked as they took point, heading to where our cars were parked.

I looked around at the girls, all with their respective significant others, all nodding and agreeing to a night of celebration, until my eyes rested on Shannon at the back of the group. Slowing my pace, I fell back to walk with the hazel eyed drummer.

“So are you going to be grumpy gills all day?” I asked, carefully nudging his side.

“I’m not being grumpy.” I couldn’t help the roll of my eyes as I stopped to gawk at him.

“Not grumpy? You won’t even look at me, much less talk to me.” At this point our group was a pretty far distance away from us as he stopped to look at me.

“You’re the one not talking to me Syd. I know something’s off with you and you won’t tell me what’s going on.” Shannon’s voice dropped dangerously and the concern in his eyes was almost enough to cause me to finally spill the beans.

“I’m just tired Shan,” I sighed out, careful to hide my real meaning, “This tour has been draining. What with all the drama and tension with Andy. I’m honestly ready to go home and recharge.”

Shannon nodded his head in sympathy, slinging his arm over my shoulders to pull me into a hug. “I
get it Syd. I do, but don’t shut me out.”

“You’re too annoying to shut out.” I laughed out as his face morphed into feigned hurt, before he leaned down and swung me over his shoulder, causing me to yell out at the sudden action. “SHANNON CHRISTOPHER PUT ME DOWN RIGHT NOW, I SWEAR TO G--”

“You’re not really in a position to threaten Sydney,” Shannon laughed out as he started walking again to meet back up with the gang.

“Please put me down, your shoulder isn’t the most comfortable thing digging into my ribs dude.” I pleaded as I was jostled around.

Shannon laughed again before slowing to a stop and letting me slide down his body, placing me carefully back on my feet. I felt my cheeks warm at the feel of him against me as my brain headed straight to the gutter. If it wasn’t my heart acting up it was my brain and body. I really needed to get my shit under control before he figured out I was lying about what was going on with me. His yellow green eyes studied me carefully, before I cleared my throat and stepped away from him.

“Come on, they’re going to leave us if we keep lollygagging.” I said, forcing a laugh out.

“Lollygagging? Really Syd, you and your country hick sayings.” I felt Shannon’s arm fall across my shoulders again as we slowly made our way to the parking lot.
Never again. Seriously, never again was I sitting around and drinking with that many couples. What had started out as a simple night of drinking and celebrating the nominations had turned into what would have been an orgy had everyone not retired to their own rooms. I let out a long sigh as I reclined back on my bed for the night and stretched out my sore muscles. Finally a real bed, god I missed this. Hotel beds are all good and well but they were overslept in and not soft plushy goodness. I could feel my eyes getting heavy and wanted to slip into oblivion when a knock on my door had me jolting up and glaring at the offending noise.

“Go away,” I yelled before cringing at the thought of drawing any of the other occupants attention to my room.

“Open the door Syd,” Shannon’s voice had me sliding off the comfy bed and dragging my feet across the room to let him in.

“What do you wa—” I trailed off noticing how he was dressed. I let my eyes fall to the dark boots covering his feet, to his light ripped jeans and up to his leather clad arms, motorcycle helmet in hand, “what the hell?”

“Come on, we’re going for a ride.” He handed me the dark helmet before glancing over my appearance, “you need to change first though.”

“I don’t think I brought my riding jacket dude.” I grumbled as I sat his helmet down on the bed to rummage through my suitcase.

“You have a designated riding jacket?” I glanced back to see him leaning against the door frame with confusion painting his gorgeous features. I took a deep breath and swallowed hard, trying to hydrate my now parched throat.

“Ye-” My voice caught as he stretched, revealing a small sliver of skin. Clearing my throat I started again, “Yeah, you know for when I go riding.”

“Wait, hold on, we’ve been friends for how long, I’ve talked about my bike and you’re just now telling me you ride?” He dropped his arms and prowled into the room, eyes locked on me.

I shrugged as I looked away from him and started pulling out clothes I deemed ok to wear in case we crashed. “It wasn’t really brought up?”

“Not brought up? Really Syd, you’re a mess sometimes, ya know that?” He sighed out as he watched me finally grab some clothes and turn to him.
“Yeah so I’ve been told, on numerous occasions.” I looked at him expectantly, before finally waving my clothes around, “Are you going to get out so I can change?”

I watched as his eyes clouded over, lost in his own thoughts that weren’t helping my own, before he shook his head and backed out of the room, quietly shutting the door behind him. God I was in over my head.

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The night summer air was cool as it whipped around me. The helmet Shannon lent me keeping my hair out of my face, allowing me to enjoy the ride. I hadn’t been able to just enjoy the ride since getting my own license, so I let the sensation fill me. I felt Shannon shift, kicking the Ducati into 6th gear and speeding up the winding mountain roads. I leaned with him when he took the next curve, whooping joyously as the adrenaline flowed through my veins. God I missed my bike. I couldn’t wait to get back home and take my gorgeous beast out for a ride through the Wilmington back roads. Soon the bike was being downshifted into 1st, allowing us to coast to a smooth stop. I waited for Shannon to put it in park and kick the stand out before I climbed off and looked around. The view was unbelievable, the night lights shining back at me like a sky on fire. Los Angeles was stunning in the day but at night it was simply breathtaking.

“This is my favorite place,” Shannon breathed out as he came to stand next to me.

“It’s beautiful.” I let the awe saturate my voice as I took in the scene.

“I come here when I need to think.” He shifted to lean over the wooden post that held up the fencing to keep people from falling off the mountain. “I’m usually alone.”

“So why bring me?” I asked, moving to stand closer to him.

“I felt like you needed a place to think too.” He looked over at me and smiled that breathtaking smile of his, making my knees almost buckle. “Plus that house was some kind of noisy tonight.”

I couldn’t help the laughter that bubbled out of me. “God was it ever.”

We stood in silence, letting the dark engulf us. The tension flowing out of me slowly as I closed my eyes to listen to all the noises of the night. I finally opened my eyes to look over LA, enjoying the way the lights flickered and the car lights added to the details, making the city look like a live painting. I sighed out before looking over at Shannon, watching the way the lights played with the plains of his face. His eyes locked on the city below, it was then I realized I couldn’t keep how I felt about him to myself anymore. The girls were right, it wasn’t fair to him and it wasn’t fair to me to keep it all locked up.

Shannon’s head turned to me, brows furrowed and realization dawned on me that I had said his name out loud. I steeled myself and took a deep breath before carefully stepping into his personal space. His eyes followed me, tracking my movements as I slid my hand up to the back of his neck. The confusion I first saw lit up in understanding as I brought his head down closer to mine. When our lips finally met, it was a whisper of a touch, almost an illusion, but slowly shifted into something more, something primal. Something driven by weeks of repressed emotions and need. I felt more than heard the groan that vibrated through Shannon’s chest as he pulled me closer to him. The feel of his fingers lacing through my hair, locking me in place, caused a shiver to race down my spine. All I could feel was his body against mine, all I could taste was his tongue running across mine and all I could smell was the deep scent that was only Shannon.

Something in Shannon changed as he broke the kiss, ending it as fast as it began, before stepping
back and running his hands roughly through his hair. I watched perplexed as he seemed to be fighting with himself.

“We shouldn’t have done that.” He rasped out.

I stepped back, carefully masking the hurt I felt at hearing those words. This wasn’t exactly how I saw this moment unfolding.

“Shit,” Shannon’s voice echoed around us, “this—that shouldn’t have happened. I’m sorry.”

“Sorry? Sorry for what?” I finally found my voice. “I’m the one who kissed you. I just thought we were on the same page.”

“It’s not like that Syd.” He scrubbed his hands down his face, “fuck! God I’ve wanted to kiss you for weeks, but fuck the fucking timing.”

I tilted my head, brows furrowing in bewilderment as I watched him. “What are you talking about Shannon?”

“I could never tell where we were, you were—are my best friend and somewhere along the way I felt more, but I didn’t know where we stood. I waited, shit Sydney, I waited for you to make the first move.” Shannon looked up, his eyes stormy as they locked with mine, “When you didn’t say anything, after all the flirting and the underlying comments, I figured you weren’t interested. I just—I’m seeing someone.”

I stood there in complete silence, frozen, unable to piece together what the hell was happening. I fucked up, god I was a fuck up. Everything I touched, all I did was destroy things. I had something waiting for me, something perfectly made for me and I waited too long.

“Syd?” His voice broke through my hazy brain, “Syd, please say something.”

The pleading in his tone made me look up at him, “I think—maybe we should take some time.”

Shannon’s face fell and my heart broke even more. God was there ever going to be an end to this?

“That’s it? That’s all you have to say?” The tone he once held was morphing into justifiable anger as I closed my eyes.

“What do you want me to say Shan? That I felt the same way? That I waited for you too? I didn’t want to mess up what we had, but I wanted so much more. I wanted everything with you. I just didn’t want to screw you up with my fucked up-ness.” I could hear my voice cracking as I spilled. “I’ve kept you at a distance, but somehow everyone could see it. I tried Shannon, I tried so hard not to fall in love with you, but somehow the more I fought it the more I fell for you. I just wanted to keep you happy, keep you in my life even if it was just as my best friend.”

I slid my phone out of my pocket sending a quick SOS to Ace knowing out of all my family she would be the one awake. I needed to get out of here, my heart couldn’t take anymore. I wanted to tell him to leave her, to give us a chance, but I knew that wasn’t fair. If he was happy with this girl then who was I to ask something like that?

“Sydney?” I glanced up to see Shannon, his beautiful face, crestfallen and I knew I was right, I knew from the beginning I would mess it all up.

“I can’t Shannon, I think you should leave.” I choked out, stepping away from him.
“I’m not going to leave you up here alone,” He argued.

“I don’t need a babysitter Shannon, and I sure as hell don’t need you.” I hated myself for saying those words, but I knew if I didn’t push him away I would destroy him, so I lashed. I lashed out at the one person I needed in my life as much as I needed my girls.

“Really Sydney?” Shannon’s voice held barely contained anger, ”You don’t need me? Fine.”

The start of his Ducati and the spray of rocks shattered what was left of my broken heart as I listened to him speed away. This was the right thing, pushing him away, letting him find real happiness with someone who wasn’t a walking disaster, but god it hurt.
Preparations

Chapter Notes

The usual disclaimers my loves! OC’s and their bandname is mine! Everyone else is their own person =)

A month, a whole fucking month and I felt like I was still falling apart. I had picked up my pieces and battled through the last week of the tour, the girls by my side every step of the way. After wrapping up mid-August, we came back home, enrolled in a class each at UNCW and set about putting our lives into some kind of normalcy. I had locked myself away most nights, furiously writing out every possible feeling into a song. The girls, god bless their hearts had stuck by my ever growing mood swings.

Today though, today I was a mess, a mix somewhere between anger, nervousness and excitement. The anger had been boiling since that night Ace and the girls had picked me up. Jared driving to the exact location he knew Shannon frequented. It wasn’t Shannon’s fault, it was my own, but I couldn’t keep my feelings from lashing out at how angry I was. Now knowing I’d have to see Shannon, since the boys were going to be presenting at the APMAs, made me dread the night. Nervousness and excitement were kind of a given, our first APMAs, our first award show period, things we had been nominated for! We were currently holed up in a hotel in Cleveland, OH, not far down the road from the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, where the show was being held. A knock on the door to my room had me spinning away from the window I was gazing out of to walk across my room and answer it.

“About time,” Charlie said as she pushed past me with her things. “I fucking hate not being home, too much shit to bring.”

“At least you have everything. I’ll be honest I can’t remember if I grabbed my shoes or not.” Brooklyn grumbled, towing her dress bag and duffel.

“You didn’t,” I said, holding the door open for Ace, “they’re in my bag, along with Ace’s bracelet.”

“What would we do without you?” Ace asked as she settled her things on the end of the bed.

“Crash and burn? Or in Brook’s case go barefoot to an award show.” I laughed out as I moved back into the room.

“So we have roughly an hour before we’re supposed to meet the guys for lunch and then we have about 3 to get glammed up.” Charlie yelled from the bathroom.

“I might pass on lunch,” I said softly. The girls stopped in their various activities around the room to look at me.

“You’ve got to eat Syd,” Ace said from beside me, concern etching her face and voice.

“I know. I can order some room service, or go grab something at the cafe I saw on the way up here. I just can’t-I can’t bring myself to face him, not yet.” I sighed out, curling around my pillow.

The girls exchanged looks before all nodding in understanding.
“Bodhi should be here in a bit, we could all go grab something together.” Charlie said looking down at her phone, her fingers flying over the smooth screen of her iPhone.

“Guys, I can be alone. I promise I’m not going to break.” I argued, sitting up to look at them.

“We haven’t had a group dinner since he left for home, it would be nice to have dinner, catch up.” Brooklyn announced as she unzipped her dress bag and started getting her stuff together for that night.

“Besides, I’ve already text Trevor, he said he’d let the boys know when they met up. We love them Syd, but you’re family and we would never put you through something you weren’t ready for. But tonight you have to put your big girl pants on.” Charlie laughed as I pulled a face.

“I love you guys.” I could feel tears pricking the back of my eyes at how much their kindness, love and support meant to me. I wouldn’t be where I was without them and they still just kept giving.

“We love you too, but enough with the sappy, I need food.” Leave it to Brooklyn to announce her stomach.

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“Someone get the damn door,” I yelled from the bathroom, face barely an inch from the mirror as I tried to finish up my makeup. “And before you ask Ace, it’s the hair stylist.”

I heard Ace mumble to Charlie that I needed to stop reading minds as she opened the hotel room door and let in the guy Karah had hired to do our hair for the night. Stepping out of the bathroom, I ran my eyes over the tall man, his lankiness almost outdoing Brook’s.

“So who’s first?” He asked excitedly, batting his obviously fake, but gorgeously done, lashes.

“Do you want easy to hard or hard to easy?” Ace asked, tongue in cheek as she tried not to laugh at her own innuendo. I couldn't hold out as I doubled over with the first real laugh in a month.

“Ooo girl, I like you already.” And just like that we had made a new friend.

Ace was first, her short blonde and red locks carefully constructed into a messy bed head rocker look, complimenting her beautifully done smokey eye, making her blue eyes stand out against her pale skin. I cocked my head to the side as I took in her appearance, Jared was going to be speechless. The short black dress she sported claimed a plain front, but one peak at the back showed a full skeletal spine and rib design, crawling down her spine and leaving her back bare to everyone. Her sleeves ending a bit above her elbows, showing off her many tattoos and the silver skeletal bracelet/ring accessory. The shoes, though they were the real work of art. A piece of Charlie’s making, taking Ace’s favorite show and creating the Iron Throne into a walking masterpiece.

Next up was Brooklyn, after finding out her age and seeing what she was wearing, Mark wanted to have fun with her look. I watched as he had her swing her head over before splitting her long blonde and blue tresses into two equal parts. The finish product was two detailed braids on the back of her head leading up to two buns, mixing her blonde and blue locks magically. The 5’5 bassist looked in the mirror at her new hair before shrugging, tucking one of the loose strands behind her ear and turning to hug Mark. Out of the four of us she was the most conservative, rocking a black sleeveless top and dark blue and green plaid thigh high skirt, her feet enclosed in another pair of Charlie’s gorgeous creations. The black heeled booties flaunted a vest like appearance around her thin ankles, with a silver zipper up the front with matching silver skull charm. They were probably my favorite, next to my own. Pete was in for one hell of a surprise.
Mark took a break after finishing up Charlie’s purple to pink hair, a simplistic braid stretching the length of her forehead, temple to temple, while the rest had been teased to give her a rocker chic hippie look.

“Charlie,” I said grabbing her attention as she did her makeup, “If you look any more hippie, I’m gonna have to disown you from the band.”

Charlie glanced at me through the mirror, a grin painting her beautiful tan features. “You can’t disown me, you love me too much. Besides you need me, who else would deal with you on a daily basis?”

I laughed at the too true words before running my eyes over her form, taking in the black crop top. The front was simple with a keyhole opening on the chest leading into an almost halter top form around her neck, the back was split into two lace straps, leaving her sun-kissed skin on display. Trevor was going to be hard pressed to keep his hands to himself. She paired the top with a pink asymmetrical tulle skirt, the shortest layers hitting high on her thigh, with the longer layers lying above her knees. Her long legs were made even longer with her black beaded heels, a small zipper design on the side by her enclosed toes, a tiny skull dangling from it, keeping with the theme of her shoe line.

“Yeah yeah, whatever.” I mock-argued dismissively, before sliding back out of the bathroom to let her finish.

“Your turn missy,” Mark’s sing-songy voice had me turning to look at him.

After what felt like an eternity, Mark finally tapped my shoulder letting me know he was done yanking on my scalp. I slid out of his chair before making my way to the bathroom. The final result was perfect. Mark’s wonderful hands had taken my long blonde, turquoise and red hair and turned it into a beautiful mix of fun and punk. I turned my head from side to side eyeing the three intricate braids on the sides and top of my head leading into the teased high ponytail.

“Mark!” I yelled from the bathroom, “no one’s ever allowed to touch my hair for an award show again but you.”

I stepped away from the mirror and back into the room so see his beaming smile.

“So we approve?” He asked, hesitation now lining his features.

“Approve?! I more than approve, it’s perfect and gorgeous and will look absolutely amazing with my dress. I love it!” I rushed over to the now relieved hairdresser and wrapped my arms around his slim waist, “thank you so much!”

“You are so very welcome love. Call me anytime you need me.” And like that he was seeing himself out so I could get dressed and ready to go.

I looked over the girls who were patiently waiting for me to finish up, each on their phones, either talking to their other halves or flipping through their social media. I quietly moved around the room to my dress bag before unzipping the vinyl, slowly revealing the dark material of the dress I had finally picked out last week.

I hadn’t realized I was standing there staring until Charlie’s voice broke my through my haze, “Syd? You ok?”

“Yeah,” I blinked slowly before taking the dress out of the bag, “I was just thinking, be right back.”
Honestly, I had pictured this night going differently. I was over the moon for the nominations, I was even happier for my girls, but I missed Shannon. I missed him more than was probably right, but the heart wants what it wants and right now it wanted a certain hazel-eyed drummer. Sighing out, I carefully stepped into the gunmetal gray velvet dress, the soft material flowing over my skin like liquid, hugging what little curves I had. The hem hitting me in an asymmetrical pattern high on my thighs. The black, silver and dark gray chains, that connected across my bared sternum and hung off my shoulders, were cool against my heated flesh as I turned to make sure the deep v of the back sat right at the dip of my lower back. Carefully, I stepped into the stunning black, jewel encrusted heels that Charlie had made, specifically for me for tonight, the tiny silver skull and chains glinting in the bathroom light on the back of my ankle, before turning back to the mirror.

“Welp, this is as good as I’m getting,” I whispered out into the small bathroom.

I ran my fingers under my eyes catching the small black flecks of my eye-shadow that had fallen before stepping back to leave the room. The squeak of the old door opening had the girls turning to look at me, making my cheeks burn under their widened eyes.


“If Shannon didn’t know what he was missing before he sure will tonight.” Ace encouraged with a small smile. I knew she meant it as a compliment which is how I was going to take it.

“That dress was made with you in mind, that’s for damn sure.” Brook laughed out, releasing the tension that had risen slightly from Ace’s comment.

“Well guys, let’s see what this night holds for the Grace.” I whooped out, the girls following suit as we stepped out of my hotel room.

Whatever was in store for us, we were ready, a solid unit that could take on anything.

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Red Carpet

My usual disclaimers: I own my original characters and their band name

I don't own the APMAs or the other bands and people mentioned. I know its a sad day

lol

Hope you guys enjoy

Screaming fans, flashing bulbs and the scorching September heat of Cleveland, Ohio, accosted me as soon as the limo door swung open to reveal the red carpet of the APMAs. We had decided we would appear at the show as a unified group and the girls would meet their respective significant others on the carpet. Pictures were snapped and autographs were signed in between multiple interviews and I had never wished that Karah was here as much as I did right this second as I was corralled to yet another interviewer as the girls took pictures with their boyfriends.

I watched the fans go wild as Trevor stood next to Charlie as they posed for another picture. They were a striking pair, her hippie looks matched his wild bad boy look. The black suit jacket he chose hung over his white dress shirt splendidly. The black pants he had gone with were ripped at the knees and matched his attire perfectly. I swiveled my eyes down the carpet, stopping where Ace was currently tucked into Jared’s side while he was being interviewed. As usual he was meticulously styled, donning a blood red suit jacket over a black v-neck t-shirt and matching black dress pants. B and Pete finished up the line further down as they talked to Patrick. Pete had gone a little simpler, just like Brook. His tattooed forearms were bared as he went with a plain white t-shirt with tan suspenders connected to his tan and black plaid pants.

Our manager had decided that she would go on tour with Brendon instead of staying home alone and attending the APMAs. I was over the moon happy for her, but man I wish she were here to guide us through this hell. Soon we were making our way, as a group, under a heavy canopy where the hosts of the red carpet were being sheltered from the burning sun. Ash Costello of New Years Day and Keith Buckley of Every Time I Die stood on either side of Vic and the rest of Pierce the Veil and I grinned at their sharp suited selves.

“At least we know they clean up well,” I said, nodding over to the guys, laughing.

Vic heard our laughter and his head snapped up to look at us from the other side of the canopy and grinned. His child-like energy had us grinning back and waving as they said their goodbyes to Ash and Keith.

“So we’re here with the lovely ladies of Grace of the Fallen,” Ash started once we were all under the canopy with microphones in hand. “We hear there’s not only a tour coming up, but a new album as well. Can you tell us anything about that?”

“We can actually,” Charlie started off, “but first can I just say you look stunning today.”

Ash grinned before giving Charlie a quick hug also complementing as well as she received.
“What am I? Chopped liver?” Keith broke in.

“Aww Keith you know you always look good.” Ace said laughing, it was enough to appease the frontman and soon we were back on topic.

“So the album is currently in the works, we are hoping to have it released before the tour kicks off.” I stated quickly and efficiently.

“Syd’s been working day in and night out.” B chimed in. “We have to coax her out of her room to eat most times.”

Sadly she was making it sound more glorified than it actually was. I spent most my days and nights holed up in my room writing lyrics yes, but the shit with Shannon was what was fueling all those songs. They had to threaten more than coax me out into the real world to eat. Ash and Keith laughed before steering the interview to the upcoming tour, after we discussed the co-headlining tour we talked about the upcoming awards and if we were nervous. Commotion to the right of the tent had me turning at the waist to see who was coming up to be interviewed next.

I felt my eyes widen as I saw Andy and Juliet heading our way before the one and only MGK slid up to take the next spot. He was dressed head to toe to impress. His suit sported a unique abstract black and white pattern over a halfway unbuttoned black dress shirt, his signature chest tattoos on display. How was he not dying in this heat? What was with the guys here, wearing long sleeves and suits in this heat, I was in a short dress and I felt like I was melting. They were all crazy.

“So I’ve got to ask,” Keith’s voice had me turning back around to pay attention to what was being asked, good thing I did since his eyes were locked on me, “Where’s your date for the night?”

“Yeah, we’ve seen that Kacee has her eye candy Mr. Leto,” I cringed slightly at Ash’s name for Jared, even knowing who she was talking about still didn’t stop my thoughts, “Charlie here with her beau Trevor, and even little Brook has Pete. Why don’t you have someone tonight?”

“Oh you know, I thought I would just see what it was all about,” I attempted half-assed, waving my un-microphoned hand dismissively into the air.

“I’ll be your date.” The deep Cleveland accented voice had me turning around to look at the blonde rapper.

“Oh yeah?” I asked watching as he slid his sunglasses down his nose and blatantly gave me a once over before nodding. I rolled my eyes before giving him my own once over, “I don’t remember actually asking to be quite honest.”

“If you change your mind sweetheart you know where to find me,” he grinned, showing off his silver vampire teeth grillz. And why did I find those really hot? God I needed to get my shit together.
“Yeah, I’ll be sure to notify you darlin,” I snarked back before turning around to finish up our interview.
Cleveland’s Rock and Roll Hall of Fame was probably one of the most beautiful buildings I had ever seen, but finally being inside and feeling the cool air conditioned air caress my heated skin was heaven on earth. The girls and I followed the guys as they made their way to the massive hall that would be holding the actual ceremony. Thirty tables, 15 on each side, lined the floor that was surrounded by levels of seats, where fans could view the awards. The front held the massive stage where all the bands would perform and the presenters would announce who won what.

“I need a drink,” I announced after sitting at our designated table. The nerves were hitting full force and I needed something that would calm them.

“It’s 5 Syd, maybe you should hold off,” Charlie laughed out, “at least until the show starts.”

It took everything in me not to flip her the bird as my leg bounced up and down. My nerves were shot and each passing second had my anxiety ratcheting up another notch. I watched as Andy and Juliet headed down the walkway separating the two rows of tables, taking a seat at the table directly across from us. From the corner of my eye I saw MGK collapsing at the table to our right with the rest of his group, followed by Papa Roach and his friends, all loud and slightly intoxicated. Why was I not with them?

Then I saw him cross in front of me and my breath froze in my lungs. The girls and Jared had done a great job of keeping him out of my line of sight the whole red carpet, but now? Now he was walking in front of me looking perfect. Shannon’s 5’9 frame was covered in a soft dark grey v-neck t-shirt with a black blazer rolled to his elbows. His legs enclosed in a pair of light blue ripped jeans and his favorite black shoes. The only blight on his appearance was the gorgeous brunette attached to his arm. She was stunning in her black dress and exotic features that screamed Russian model. They looked flawless together and I wanted to throw something.

“Fuck it,” I breathed out, “I’m getting a drink.” I announced louder before standing up.

My abrupt movement caught Shannon’s eye making him stop his trek to the table to the left of ours.

“Sydney,” his voice was low, almost a whisper, before he cleared it and moved to stand in front of me, “you look beautiful tonight.”

“I-umm,” I started my voice cracking and stuttering before I backed away from him and his girlfriend, “excuse me.”

I’m sure I looked crazy or at the very least rude as fuck, but there was no way I could stand there and talk to him like nothing had happened. Finally, I stepped up to the bar ordering the strongest Jack &
I felt eyes on me, from honestly every direction, as Kelly escorted me back to my table. After thanking him, I finally sat down facing the girls. Their expressions ranging from B’s completely open curiosity to Charlie’s eyes rolling so hard I thought they’d fall out of her skull to Ace’s barely disguised disgust.

“What?” I finally snapped, each of their eyes growing wide at my outburst.

“Nothing, nothing,” Charlie started, hands raised in defense, “absolutely nothing.”

“Somehow I don’t believe you.” I sighed out.

Soon the lights faded, thankfully halting any more conversation about me and Kelly. The crowd of fans grew louder as Alex and Jack from All Time Low took the stage, beginning their hosting duties of the night. We laughed and cheered on Tyler Posey’s appearances. We sang and swayed to Chris Carrabba’s acoustic performance of Hands Down, before singing and dancing to the combined performance of Mayday Parade and The Main. My 90’s heart skyrocketed when Stephan James of 3rd Eye Blind joined the stage and started singing Jumper. The girls laughed at my enthusiasm as I sang at the top of my lungs, letting the tension of the last month leave my frame, to hell with all this drama. I was going to drink, have fun and enjoy the outcomes of the awards, consequences be damned.

Jack and Alex took to the stage once again, announcing Savannah, Oliver and Masato, three lead singers who were presenting the award for Best Vocalist. I felt myself move to the edge of my seat as I watched the nominees flash across the screen, joining the screaming fans as Kellin and Patrick’s faces and names joined the rest of the nominees. I glanced around the room, locking eyes with Kellin across the way, his face was lined with stress as we waited for Savannah to open the envelope. I gave him my most encouraging smile before we heard Oliver’s voice ring out over the PA announcing Patrick had won, Kellin grinned wide as we all stood and clapped for our close friend. The night proceeded from there, Yellowcard performed next and watching Vic perform with them was beyond amazing, his grin was infectious and you could tell he was on cloud nine.

After Best International Band was taken by You Me at Six, Spencer from Ice Nine Kills and Matt from From Ashes to New took the stage to announce the winner of Best Bassist. We all turned to B who looked as white as a ghost, which considering how pale she already was, was a feet in and of itself. Ace slid her hand over to grab B’s unoccupied hand as we watched the nominees being
announced on the screen.

“And the winner is,” Spencer started slowly.


Pete leaned over and kissed the top of B’s head as Ace slung her arm around her slender shoulders.

“You’ll get it next time B!” Charlie said with an encouraging smile.

“Guys, really it’s ok. He definitely deserved it. I’m honestly just honored to be nominated.” Brook laughed out.

I laughed with my sister as the waiter rounded our table again and I waved him down, the girls looked at me warily as I ordered my third drink of the night.

“Dude, it’s a party, I’m going to enjoy my night.” I argued as the waiter left.

“Just don’t overdue it all, I know why, but just careful.” Jared countered from between me and Ace.

I rolled my eyes but nodded to appease him. Issues performed next, followed by Stitched Up At Heart presenting Best Live Band which we lost to Neck Deep, but let’s be real here, we knew there was no way we were winning against them. Their stage presence was off the wall and we happily cheered as they took the stage to accept their much deserved award. Good Charlotte performed after taking home Classic Album for Young and the Hopeless, which made me feel about 20 x’s too old. The next award was for Best Drummer and if I thought Brook was tense about her nomination, it was nothing compared to how Ace looked as her name slid across the screen as Matt from August Burns Red opened the envelope. Sadly it went to CC, but Ace grinned and clapped as we watched him stand from across the walkway and hug Andy.

“Okay, now I need a drink.” Ace announced as she leaned against Jared.

Her stress of possibly having to walk the stage alone was released as soon as CC’s name rang through the hall.

“About time!” I yelled, “now I won’t be the only getting ugly looks.”

The girls’ rolled their eyes before ordering their first round and my fourth, soon I was going to lose count. I watched Alex and Jake prepare the stage as Set It Off joined them to announce Best Music Video and I froze in my place, eyes jumping straight to Andy, who’s eyes were already on me. I know it’s awful, but all I could think was ‘please don’t win, please don’t win’ as clips of the nominees’ videos played on the big screen. I blushed as Andy’s video flashed across with a snippet of us rolling around on the hotel bed. Glancing across the room, I caught quite a few people looking between Andy and I, making me want the ground to swallow me whole as I caught Juliet’s murderous gaze. Something about her made the petty side of me rear it’s ugly head, causing me to shrug at her before raising my glass in a mock salute, draining the last of its contents.

Laughter to my right had me briefly looking over to Kelly, who grinned as he watched my little display of bitchiness. He raised his glass before copying my salute, his grin never faltering, at least someone was enjoying my level of pettiness over here.

“And the winner is Andy Black for Beyond My Reach,” Cody’s voice announced and my head snapped back to the front.
“Please tell me I misheard him?” I choked out.

“If you had been paying attention instead of eye flirting with blondie over there,” Ace started sarcastically, “you would know, that no, you didn’t mishear him.”

“Why is everyone on my case about who I talk to tonight,” I grumbled as I slammed back in my chair.

“We just think he’s a bad idea Syd.” Charlie joined in.

“They, they think he’s a bad idea.” Brook chirped, clarifying her stance, “I think you do what you need to do.”

I grinned at my baby sister as Andy started his ‘thank you’ speech, god please don’t thank me. Thankfully he wanted to keep his head tonight cause not one peep was made about me or my involvement in the video and I praised whatever holy being was looking down on me.
So close to the end of this part. I'm getting very sad that it's almost over. I hope you've all enjoyed the rollercoaster ride cause it's about to hit rock bottom really fast.

As per usual chapter I only own my characters and their band name and their mistakes lol

Everyone else is their own person and the award show as well.

To avoid listening to Andy’s voice droning on, I let my eyes wander around the venue. I scanned from table to table, picking out people I knew, my friends, people I had never seen before, to the fans up in the stands. My eyes finally made it to the table to my right where Jacoby Shaddix and the rest of Papa Roach were supposed to be, only to find the table pretty vacant, even Kelly was gone. Where the hell did they all run off to? I shook my head, trying to clear it of my curiosity as I sipped on my drink, and continued on with my roamings, only to lock eyes with Shannon at the table to the left of us. His hazel green gaze shifted from surprise at being caught, to concern as he watched me down my sixth or seventh drink, I had honestly stopped counting at this point.

The burn of the liquor flipped in my stomach as I tried my best to look away. I hated that he looked at me like that. Didn’t he know I just wanted to forget about him? To forget that I was in love with him. To forget what it was like to finally kiss him and tell him how I felt just to have it end our friendship. I wanted more than anything to just sink into the oblivion that drinking offered. I wanted the pain to go away, any possible way. But I wouldn’t be the one to blink first, thankfully or not, I’m not sure which I feel right now, his girlfriend said something that had him finally breaking eye contact with me and looking over to the stage. The voices of Jack and Alex changed to that of Matt’s from Bullet for my Valentine and Alex from Atreyu as they presented Papa Roach’s performance.

“Come on people!” Jacoby’s voice vibrated through the room, “I wanna see you up!”

The chords of Getting Away with Murder had the fans jumping up and down, screaming at the top of their lungs to each lyric. I watched as the ginger headed frontman of Memphis Mayfire, Matty Mullins joined the stage, singing the next verse before Jacoby joined back in. Bands all around the room joined the fans, standing, jumping and singing and to hell with it I was one of them. The song soon came to an end much to my sadness.

“Wooo, AP how you livin’?” Jacoby laughed out as the crowd surrounding the stage yelled. “Everybody doin alright out there? I don’t know about you guys sitting on your asses over here,” he motioned to a couple of tables next to ours, “that shit ain’t rock-n-roll, what’s up! This ain’t television, come on!”

I laughed at the affronted looks at the bands behind us at being called out, before they finally rolled their eyes and stood up, half to join the rest of us and the other half to go get drinks at the bar. The opening of Scars started and I looked at Charlie, hand on my chest as we both started to belt the first verse. These were the songs we grew up on, the ones that made us want to pursue music in the first place. The frontwoman of Tonight Alive, Jenna McDougall joined Jacoby on stage, and the crowd went wild as she started the next verse. The girls and I sang at the top of our lungs until the very last
chord.

“We got some more surprises for you guys are you ready?” This man knew how to pump up a crowd.

I forgot we were honestly at an award show, it felt like all those years ago, concert jumping with my best friends.

“Hey Papa Roach,” I looked around as the voice of Kelly blared out of the PA.

“Are you kidding me?” Ace asked, exasperation clinging to her words.

I couldn’t help the laugh that jumped out of my throat as I looked over at her and Charlie, both not thrilled to see Kelly on stage, but as soon as he did the atmosphere changed to something almost electric. Brook and I leaned against each other, swaying and singing every lyric to MGK’s *Til I Die*. They finished up their set with Papa Roach’s *Last Resort* and I watched as Kelly jumped into the throng of people in front of the stage, moshing with the fans as he finished his lyrics.

“He’s lost his damn mind.” I laughed out as Brook watched him crawl back on stage.

“I don’t think he had one to lose in the first place,” She countered, that was probably true.

We waved the waitress down and ordered our next round of drinks as Twiggy Ramirez presented the *Icon Award* to Marilyn Manson. I zoned out, letting the haze of alcohol run its course, taking all my emotions and bottling them up. If I could get through this night without having an altercation with Andy and Juliet and another face to face with Shannon, I was going to drop to my knees and praise whoever was upstairs keeping them away from me. I hated that I felt that way about a man that I still considered one of my best friends, the man that I was head over heels in love with, but I couldn’t sit here and watch her fawn all over him. I couldn’t pretend that seeing them together didn’t hurt me, so to avoid it, I was going to drink my night away.

Soon Jack and Alex replaced Marilyn and Twiggy announcing *Song of the Year*. I clicked back into the award show as I watched Brendon and the rest of Panic! flashed across the screen followed by Vic and the guys from Pierce. I glanced over to Vic’s table giving him a thumbs up before turning back to the stage.

“And the winner is,” Keaton Pierce, of Too Close To Touch, started, “Panic! at the Disco’s *Hallelujah*. Brendon and the rest of Panic! are actually on tour right now, but we do have a small video we’re going to show.”

Everyone’s eyes moved to the screen, where Brendon sat, grin plastered across his face as he accepted his award. I glanced at the girls who all grinned back, if you looked just close enough you could see Karah’s hand in the frame, I was glad she was there to celebrate this moment with him.

“Wow guys, this is beyond awesome,” Brendon laughed, “I actually made a bet with myself that if I won this award I would do something I’ve been meaning to do for a few months now.”

Charlie grabbed my arm causing me to break my gaze from the screen, “what’s he doing?” She whispered, to no one in particular.

“I don’t know brobo, keep watching like the rest of us and we might find out.” I whispered back.

The look she gave me wasn’t one of her nicest. We both turned our heads back to the screen to see Brendon grab Karah’s hand and pull her down next to him on the leather couch.
“Everyone, this is Karah, my beautiful, amazing girlfriend and if it wasn’t for her I wouldn’t know what was up or down right now on this crazy tour.” We watched as he took a deep breath before dropping on one knee and pulling out a small ring box from his pocket, “Karah Rose, I’ve loved you since the day I met you. Would you do me the honor of being my wife?”

“Holy. Shit.” I breathed out, eyes wide as I watched our manager nod her head up and down, tears streaming down her pale face.

“Did that just happen?” Ace asked, as a wild applause broke through the venue.

“I think so.” Brook finally joined in.

“That little shit!” Charlie blurted out. We all turned our wide eyes to our guitarist, confused at her choice of words. “He didn’t even tell us!”

I couldn’t help the laughter that bubbled out of me at her outrage for Brendon not telling the four of us.

“Well that was unexpected.” Alex announced as he stepped back out on the stage.

After Neck Deep’s performance, 3OH!3 took to the stage to present the award for Underground Band. My eyes blurred as the faces of the nominees flashed by, Too Close To Touch followed by Moose Blood, then Our Last Night, everyone at our table whooped and hollered as Matt, Trevor, Woody and Tim’s faces crossed the screen. Charlie leaned against Trevor, their hands intertwined as we waited with baited breath for Sean Foreman to announce the winner. The other half of 3OH!3, Nathaniel Motte, stepped up to the microphone.

“The winner is,” he glanced back down at the paper, “OUR LAST NIGHT!”

Trevor sat in stunned disbelief as the rest of our table jumped up yelling. Charlie had to jostle him a bit before a wide grin painted his features as he stood up, sweeping her up into a full bodied hug and planting a kiss on her grinning lips. I stood next to Brook and Ace as we cheered on our friends, Trevor finally let Charlie go to join us as he ran to catch up with the boys, who were halfway to the stage. After accepting their award and giving their speech, which consisted of Trevor telling Charlie how much he loved her and the guys thanking the fans, they made their way back to our tables, where we proceeded to have another round of drinks. Halfway through Beartooth’s performance Jared, Shannon and Tomo disappeared, causing Ace to look around in confusion.

“Hey I’m sure everything is fine.” I attempted to keep her calm.

“He just knew that this category was a big deal, this is the one we really want.” Ace’s voice went up another octave.

“I’m sure he has a good reason Ace, just take a deep breath.” Charlie said from Trevor’s side.

A good reason he did have, since at that moment they appeared on stage to present Breakthrough Band.

“See good reason.” Brook laughed.

We watched as I Prevail, Knuckle Puck, Neck Deep, Set It Off and State Champs’ pictures flashed across the big screen followed by our picture from the big AP Warped Tour Edition spread ended the list of nominees. I reached beside me and grabbed Charlie’s hand before snatching Ace’s who was holding on to Brook’s for dear life. I don’t think I had ever felt this nervous or sick until this very moment. I could hear my heartbeat in my ears and my pulse quickened with adrenaline. Jared
stepped up to the microphone as Shannon held the award and Tomo the envelope.

“And the winner for Breakthrough Band is,” Jared paused dramatically.

“I swear to god, I’m going to kill him,” Ace seethed through gritted teeth.

“Just deny him sex for the next month,” I grumbled out.

“Yeah but then she’s without it too,” Charlie argued.

“Fuck! I wish he didn’t feel the need to be so damn aggravating,” Ace mumbled.

“GRACE OF THE FALLEN!” The three of them announced together.

“Wait, what?” I think my brain just broke. “Did they just say Grace?”

“Holy! FUCK! We won!” Charlie exclaimed, jumping out of her seat screaming.

Trevor and Pete stood clapping as we managed to climb out of our seats. My legs felt like jelly as I stood away from the table. I don’t know how but my feet managed to get me to the stage and up the stairs to accept our award. I hugged Tomo while Jared kissed Ace and Brook took the offered award from Shannon’s hands.

“Holy shit,” I sighed into the microphone. “I guess this is actually happening. Umm—we’d like to thank our fans, without you guys we wouldn’t be here right now.”

Ace moved from Jared’s side and took over the speech, “We’d also like to thank our label, Interscope, along with our friends, family and loved ones.”

With that we were ushered through the back to give an interview and then let back to the main floor to finish up the night. The rest of the show was honestly a blur, after winning I started slamming back shots in celebration followed by more Jack & Coke’s. The girls drank but at a slower pace and with more control. We watched Of Mice & Men’s performance followed Andy’s and then A Day to Remember closed out the night. In the end Jack won the mock presidential campaign, reigning supreme over Alex and then it was announced the after party would be held at Skully’s Music Dinner being hosted by Every Time I Die and Issues. I guess it was time to get the real party started.
Guys this is it. The end of part 1. I can't believe I've officially finished a story. I hope you guys have enjoyed the journey thus far. I know I have.

Usual disclaimer, my characters are mine, their mistakes are mine everyone else is their own person and their mistakes and choices are their own.

Skully’s Music Diner was unlike any other diner I had ever seen. The whole bottom floor was split between a bar with the old school vinyl booths and pub tables spread throughout with the other half being a huge dance floor positioned in front of a massive stage. The balcony above boasted another bar with more booths and pub style tables and bar stools. As soon as we stepped in, Charlie grabbed Trevor’s hand, pulling him to the middle of the dance floor. Brook and Pete followed Jared and Ace to a booth to eat and I B-lined for the stairs, I needed another drink and pronto. Juliet and Andy were occupying the downstairs bar and if I could avoid them for the rest of life I would. Shannon was with his Russian model talking to Tomo, giving me the perfect opportunity to slip away from everyone.

“Can I get,” I stopped for a moment, debating what I wanted, “a pineapple rum with a splash of juice?”

The bartender flashed me her pearly whites before nodding and making her way down the bar to start my drink. I zoned in watching as she deftly mixed my drink, when a hand brushed across my waist causing me to jump slightly.

“So about that drink.” Kelly’s voice sounded by my ear and a shiver slipped down my spine.

“You’re a little late, but how about the next one?” I asked, slipping carefully out of his grasp and looking up at his mischievous smirk.

“Deal, how about a dance then?” His question caught me off guard but I quickly recovered as the bartender set my drink down beside my elbow.

“Ok,” I grabbed his outstretched hand and my drink, “let’s see if you can keep up.” And like that we were off.

A few strong drinks and a handful of songs later, I was feeling that good buzz. The cause, a good mixture of alcohol and Kelly’s body against mine. Who knew the man could dance? It honestly felt like his hands were everywhere, keeping me right on the edge the whole night. I allowed him to spin me around, putting my back against his chest as we swayed to the beat, his breath even as he leaned down to run his nose against the shell of my ear. Good god this man was going to give me heart palpitations right here in the middle of the dance floor. I felt his hands on my hip tighten as his lips grazed down my neck to the dip that connected to my shoulder. Heat flared in my gut as his teeth grazed over my pulse point, causing my eyes to flutter close as I let the rush of sensations crash over me.
“Sydney!” Charlie’s raised voice had me snapping my eyes open to see my guitarist glaring at me. “Can we talk?” She yelled over the music.

She never gave me the chance to answer before she grabbed my arm and pulled me away from Kelly and towards Ace and Brooklyn.

“What the hell dude?” I asked as they pushed me into the girl’s bathroom.

“What the hell is right,” Ace started, “what are you doing?”

“Dancing, drinking, enjoying the night,” I started, “well I was until y’all yanked me away to have this little pow wow.”

I crossed my arms, huffing out as I watched them all exchange worried glances between the three, well Ace and Charlie’s were worried, Brook just rolled her eyes and leaned against the counter.

“I thought we told you he was bad news.” Ace jumped back in.

“And I thought I told y’all to leave me alone about it.” I argued. “I’m just trying to have some fun, seriously.”

“We just don’t want you to do something you’re going to regret.” Charlie reasoned.

“The only thing I’m regretting right now is following you into this bathroom. Look I love you guys I do, but I just want to have a night where I can forget about everything and just be free.” I snapped out.

“I told them,” Brook started with a sigh, “Go Syd, I’ll corral them back to the boys.”

I rushed out of the bathroom, running smack dab into a solid frame. Hands on my waist steadied me as I looked up into Shannon’s honeyed eyes. I wanted to cry, I wanted to scream and yell at the injustice of what was going on, but instead I backed out of his arms and cleared my throat.

“Sorry,” I mumbled out.

“Hey, are you ok? You look really upset.” Shannon moved to brush a piece of hair out of my face, but paused, thinking better of it.

“I’m fine Shannon, nothing to worry about.” I snipped.

“Woah Syd, what’s going on with you?” The concern his voice set my teeth on edge and I wanted to punch him.

You! You’re what’s wrong. I wanted to scream it at him. I wanted him to know that I hated seeing him with his gf, that I hated she could hold and touch him. I hated that she could kiss him and call him hers.

“Drop it Shannon, please, just leave it alone.” I pushed his hand away.

“Sydney, please talk to me. I’m worried about you,” He pointedly looked down at the drink in my hand before his eyes drifted over to Kelly who was standing at the bar watching our exchange.

“I’m not any of your concern anymore. You made your choice Shannon and I wasn’t it, so just go back to your girlfriend and have a good night.” With that I pushed past the man I loved to join the man who was doing a damn good job of keeping me preoccupied.
“Hey, you o-,” before Kelly could finish his word I pulled him down for a searing kiss. “-kay?”

“Buy me a drink?” I asked grinning up at him.

“I’ve got a better idea,” he winked down at me before ordering a round of tequila shots.

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“Ok, are you ready?” he asked laughing as he held the salt shaker in his hand.

What had started off as a joke ended up with the two of us doing versions of body shots of tequila at the bar.

“What’s as ready as I’m going to be.” I held his shot in between my fingers, before popping his lime wedge in my mouth.

I felt the warmth of his tongue as he licked a stripe across the dip of my collar bone before coating it with salt. Heat spread across my face as he licked the salt off before grabbing the shot from my outstretched hand with his teeth and then fished the lime wedge from between my teeth with his mouth. I felt eyes on me from across the room and decided to follow where the source was. The girls stood to the side, each with their respective significant others all wrapped up in their own conversations, well it wasn’t them. I kept looking around the room until my eyes locked with Shannon’s, they were filled with sadness and something else, something barely contained. I watched as his girlfriend yanked on his arm and he broke contact with me just as Kelly started talking.

“What’s your turn,” he handed me the salt and looked at me questioningly.

“You’re too tall to reach your neck,” I said out loud, before grabbing his hand and flipping it over. “Wrist it is.”

I looked his wrist over, debating the best route to take, until an idea popped in my mind. Slowly I took his middle finger into my mouth, letting the alcohol encourage me to do things I didn’t normally. I watched as his eyes grew wide before sprinkling a decent amount of salt across it.

“What’s ready?” I asked breathily.

“Oh baby, you know I am.” His cock-sure grin back in place.

I grasped his hand, bringing his finger to my mouth once again to lick the salt away before slamming the tequila back. As I went for the lime wedge between Kelly’s teeth, he dropped it, sealing his lips over mine. The moan that made it’s way from my throat only encouraged Kelly as he wrapped his arm around my waist, securing me tightly against him.

“Wanna get outta here?” His voice was deeper, more raw as he broke away from me.

I nodded my head and let him lead me out of the diner before hailing a cab. After listing off my hotel and finding out it was the same as his, we were off.

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If the ride from Skully’s to the hotel was a hint of how the rest of my night was going it was going to be one hell of a ride. Somehow I ended up in Kelly’s lap, his hands slowly crawling up the hem of my dress, before they finally found the skin of my hips. The feel of his hands securing me in place as his lips roamed up and down my neck caused a groan to escape my lips, only encouraging him as his teeth latched onto the side of my neck. The cab finally came to halt in front of our hotel and we
stumbled out, quickly paying the driver.

“What floor?” Kelly rasped out.

“Third.” I managed out before he backed me up against the far wall.

We managed to make our way down the hall and to my door before the realization of what was about to occur hit me square in the face. I slowly put my hand on Kelly’s chest, stopping all motion.

“I’m sorry.” I whispered out. “I don’t know if I can do this.”

Kelly rested his forehead against the top of mine before blowing out a slow breath.

“Look,” he started, “I know I’m the last person you probably want to tell, but I saw how you looked at him. I know that you’re in love with someone else.”

“That’s—it’s not—,” I fumbled through my words before taking a deep breath in and then slowly letting it out. “I’m sorry.”

“Hey,” I felt his hand cup my chin, bringing it up to look him in the eyes, “nothing to apologize for, but if you want someone to help you forget for the night,” he leaned down to whisper in my ear, “I will happily very happily be that person.”

His voice was low, sensual and sexual in nature and made me want to take back everything I had just said. He stepped back quickly grabbing a key card out of his back pocket, sliding it carefully into my hand.

“If you change your mind,” he started walking back down the hall. “I’m on the fifth floor, room 509.”

I waited until I heard the ding of the elevator before I slammed my back against my door trying to get my brain to work through what the hell had just happened. What was I doing? Why did I just let him leave? What was wrong with me? Why did I think bringing him up here was a good idea? Then a flash of Shannon with his girlfriend jumped through my mind. Nothing was wrong with me, I was going to use Kelly like he said and forget the awful pain that throbbed through my heart. I glanced down at the key card in my hand before closing my eyes, my decision finally made, I walked to the elevator. Anticipation gripped my gut as I pushed the up button and watched as the numbers slowly ticked by, the butterflies in my stomach making me jump as the elevator dinged. Fuck it, tonight was supposed to be for living and that’s exactly what I was going to do.

Stay tuned for Part 2.

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