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# KEEPING SCORE

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NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR



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Keeping Score  
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**H**ate is a pretty strong word.

It's not one I use frequently, or even flippantly. I use it only when I mean it. When it's justly deserved, and when no other expression fits. Like that time when I was sixteen, and one of my foster parents dragged the new kid into the bathroom and flushed his head in the toilet because he didn't eat the broccoli on his plate—because getting a serving of fresh greens once a week was a privilege, not a right.

Hate.

That's the only word to describe what I felt for that cruel bastard. He deserved the ass kicking I gave him for hurting a fellow foster kid, but I didn't take joy in hurting him, or in all the hating—and there was a lot of hating. That stunt landed me in a new foster home, with a whole new set of problems.

But that's not what I'm thinking about at the moment. I'm thinking about the only other person I can truly say I hate,

and I'm currently sitting across the table from him, my legs relaxed, my feet kicked out in front of me, as beads of sweat trickle down Cochrane Montgomery's too perfect face as he stares at the cards in his hands.

I don't hate rich folks as a rule. Hey, whatever hand we're dealt is the hand we have to play, right? I learned to deal with poverty and violence early on, but Cochrane here, he's had it good up until now, which is why he's having a hell of a time dealing—or rather laying his cards down.

Am I taking enjoyment in his misery? Would it be awful if I said yes? Horrible if there's this satisfying pleasure washing over me as he squirms? I might have grown up on the mean streets of Chicago, and learned to use my fists for survival, but I like to think I'm a civilized human being—thanks to my sophomore year gym coach. He saw potential in me, and taught me to use my hands for something other than crime. He even gave me his old 1969 Honda CB 750 motorcycle.

No one has ever given me anything before, other than an ass kicking that I probably deserved. That bike has been with me since I graduated high school, when Coach handed her down to me—a ride for college, he'd said with pride, knowing he was a big part in shaping my future. I didn't want to take her, but he insisted. In return, I promised I'd take good care of her and now she's my pride and joy and I wouldn't trade her for the world. Sometimes I think it's the bike—Coach's belief in me—that gave me the motivation to make something more of myself and make him proud of me. That's why I'm here at Kingston College on a football scholarship, staring at the rich fuck who made my freshman year miserable by making sure I, as well as everyone else in our house and on campus, knew I was trash from the wrong side of the track.

He licks his lips, and his head lifts. I almost laugh as he tries to play it off, play it cool, like I can't see right through him. Christ, I'm a hood rat, and can read a room, a situation, an opponent with my eyes closed, and if he thinks I'm not aware of his stress, of every muscle twitch in his body as he tries to beat me at poker, he's out of his fucking mind. I guess he figures a baller like me, a kid from the streets, must suck at math. He'd be wrong. Cards come naturally to me. Joining in the monthly underground secret game at Wolf House, however, was not my thing...until tonight.

"Are you going to play or look at them all night?" I taunt, shifting a little deeper into my seat, not at all worried he's going to win. I have a straight flush, and he's shit out of luck, in more ways than one. Rumor has it Daddy cut him off, put him on an allowance, because he'd been draining his account. The truth is Cochrane—I prefer to call him Dick, a play on his name, but mostly because he hates it—has a gambling problem.

But it's not the douche bag's money I'm after. Rich boy just needs to be taken down a notch or two for treating me like trash when we roomed together first year. Guess he's not the cock-of-the-walk tonight. Back in our freshman year, he's lucky I didn't give him a Burnside beatdown—that's what we called it back in our Burnside neighborhood—but my scholarship to bigger and better was far more important to me. Plus, revenge really is a dish best served cold, and while I'm quoting proverbial phrases...Karma is a bitch.

"Yeah, yeah," he mutters and swipes at his face. He might be rich, and tall and good looking, and might know how to charm the girls, but everything about him rubs me the wrong way. There's more to him, something insidious lurking

beneath his perfect exterior. Maybe the girls are too dazzled by his perfect white teeth to see it.

“Come on, Dick. We don’t have all night.”

He glares at me through beady blue eyes and I grin. My confidence is shaking him to his core and I almost—almost—give a shit.

“The name is Cochrane,” he seethes through clenched teeth.

I glance around the basement of Wolf House, at the other intense, and illegal, games going on around me. I turn to our dealer, Andrew, as he waits for Cochrane to make a move. Andrew was the one who told me Cochrane was broke and looking to win back some money. He’s really one of the good guys. Rich, but treats everyone equally. We bonded my first year at Wolf House, when I was roommates with Cochrane. I have no idea who made that mix-up. Putting a scholarship baller in with the captain of the college’s elite rowing team? Obviously, someone mixed the papers up or had a brain tumor. I suffered through freshman year at Wolf House—I never belonged there to begin with—then switched houses during sophomore year, going off campus with a few of the guys I met on the football team. It was a much better fit, and I never looked back, until Andrew, the only guy I ever liked from Wolf House, sent me a message about tonight’s game. He never was much of a Cochrane fan either.

“So, where’s that girl of yours tonight?” I ask, knowing it will just rattle him. “Such a sweet thing.” Reagan might be sweet to look at, the perfect California blonde and a killer body, but I don’t like her much either. I don’t hate her. She doesn’t deserve that harsh label, but she is one of the rich girls, following in her folks’ footsteps. Truthfully, I don’t begrudge her that. Good for her for having the grades and ambition to



aim for the senate like her parents. I don't know why I know that about her, only that I do. Really, she means nothing to me.

*Then stop thinking about her, Rocco.*

"Where she is and what she's doing is none of your business." He turns his attention back to his shit hand, and the table begins to vibrate with the nervous shaking of his foot.

I go silent, and just smirk at him. He takes a fast breath, and I'm pretty sure he's throwing up a silent prayer to God, which makes me laugh. Where the fuck was the mighty being when I was getting the living shit kicked out of me when I was barely a teen? Never mind that, where was my mother? Oh yeah, I remember. She fucked off when I was a toddler, leaving me with a mean bastard of a father, who resented everything about me and blamed me for her departure. When I got older, he used to like to show me how much he hated me, either with his fists, or his belt. He said it was to toughen me up, make a man out of me. He used to say that's what his father did to him, and he turned out just fine. Wrong. He did not turn out just fine. I was taken away in my early teens, and have no idea where he is today. I don't care.

He plays his hand, and I stare at the pair of kings. I exaggerate my movements, slowing everything down to drag out the moment as I lean forward and lay my hand out, showcasing a gorgeous straight flush. Cochrane goes so silent, I think he might be having an out of body experience, and not a good one. His head lifts slowly, and his nostrils flare. He stares at me for a long moment.

"Pay up, buddy." I say, breaking the silence between us as the other games go on in the basement.

He glares at me, his blue eyes hard, and almost...pleading. Man, it really shouldn't give me pleasure to see the guy who taunted me, went out of his way to exclude me—make me feel less, especially in front of his girlfriend—called me gutter trash, and every other derogatory name under the sun, because I wasn't born into a prominent family, squirm. He got away with it because I couldn't fight back and risk losing my scholarship. Guys like him, with powerful fathers, would get me kicked out of college. I had a future to focus on. Still do, which is why showing up at this illegal game is out of character for me.

"Again?" He glances down, reaches for the cards, but I put my hand over his to stop him. His head lifts, his perfectly styled blond hair a little mussed from running his shaky hand through it. "Double or nothing?"

"No time." I pick up my phone to check for messages. "I have somewhere to be." I don't, but I'm not playing him again. I'm sure I could beat him, but taking his money isn't the point here.

"Listen, I can't—"

"Can't what?" I ask, and take my coat off the back of my chair as I cast Andrew a glance, wondering if he's going to step in. Looks like he's going to let me handle things my way and that's fine. I give him a nod to let him know I've got this and he steps away, leaving us to battle it out.

Cochrane leans in, and steals a glance around. "I can't get the money to you tonight."

I give a low, slow whistle. "That's against the rules, bro."

"Yeah, look, can you give me a week or two?"

I click my tongue and give a slow shake of my head. “Don’t think so. There’s a new ride I’ve had my eyes on.” I put my hands out, and mimic the action of revving a motorcycle. Yeah, he owes me a shitload of money. I lift my hand, like I’m about to gesture the private security guard over, and Cochrane pushes his chair back.

“Don’t.”

I drop my hand. “Don’t what? Don’t tell anyone you can’t pay?”

“I can pay, it’s just going to take me a while.”

I shrug into my Falcons coat, and fold my arms. “I’ll wait while you call Daddy.”

He curses under his breath, and pulls his phone from his pocket. He scrolls, but he’s stalling.

“I want my money, Cochrane. Tonight.” I bite back a chuckle, and decide to let him squirm just a little while longer. The truth is, I already won. I don’t need his money, or a new motorcycle. My old one serves me well.

“Look.” he leans closer, all conspiratorial like. “My girl...”

Okay, now he has my interest. “What about her?”

“You like her. I know you do.”

I don’t. Sure, I was nice to her when I shared a room with Cochrane. Why wouldn’t I be? But all right, let’s see where he’s going with this. “What does that have to do with any of this?” I wave my hand over the disarray of cards. “You want me to play her or something? I mean, if you’re desperate for me to take her money—”

“You can take *her*.”

I sit there, my ears buzzing with the hum in the basement, positive I'm not hearing him correctly. Cochrane did not just offer his girlfriend up in exchange for money, right? No way, no how did he mean that. If he did, I might just have to beat the shit out of him once and for all.

I stare at him, trying to regulate my breath, slow the pulse at the base of my neck as I wait for him to continue, and he finally does.

"I don't have the money right now," he lowers his voice and continues with, "Reagan, maybe you can...I don't know..."

"Fuck her?" I blurt out for shock value, and his nostrils flare as he scrubs his face.

He shakes his head. "No, I don't mean that." He tugs on his hair, clearly digging himself in deeper and it's going to be fun to watch him try to come out of this with a shred of decency left. Who offers up their girlfriend? "I just, maybe you can hang out with her or something. I'm not suggesting sex. It's not on the table."

"Yeah, because that would make her a whore, Cochrane."

"She's not a whore. She's just the only thing I currently have of value."

Holy fuck.

My heart beats a little faster against my chest, and as my shock ebbs, rage takes its place. To think this guy would actually use his girlfriend for payment...I mean...I can't even wrap my brain around that. I always knew he was a dick. I just never knew he was this big of a one. Reagan does not deserve a douche bag like this for a boyfriend, one who is willing to trade her to cover his own ass.

Speaking of asses. Reagan has the sweetest ass I've ever set eyes on. The sweetest everything...but I am not going to take her in exchange for money. That is fucking ludicrous.

I crack my knuckles. "What the fuck would I want with Reagan?"

"She could maybe help you with your homework."

"I've got straight As, dude." I gesture to the cards. "I'm good in sciences and math."

"Yeah, okay, well. Maybe she could...cook for you. She's a great cook."

"Keep going."

He sits up a little straighter. "You could—"

"Show her what a loser you really are? Spread a little of this Rocco charm and take her from you, make her my own?" I'm just egging him on. Reagan is a nice looking princess, but a princess nonetheless, and we don't belong together. Not in this world or any other.

He snorts. "Yeah, like she's going to choose you over me, Rocco."

"You sure about that?"

"Yes. She's smarter than that."

"Maybe I'll prove you wrong."

"Not going to happen."

I glare at him, and don't like the gleam in his eyes. "Listen, you fuck with me, I'll fuck with you."

"How?"

“By getting sweet princess Reagan to fall for me, to prove you wrong.” I’m bluffing. I’m not an ass who goes around playing with other people’s feelings.

“You can’t.”

He obviously wasn’t worried about that when he put her name on the table. Now though, as he averts his gaze, I catch a small hint of worry. I can’t help but think she should see what a disrespecting douche he really is, ready to hand her over to bail himself out. Anything to save his own ass. Fight your own battles, dude. Christ, if I had a girl I loved—and I’m questioning Cochrane’s love for Reagan—she’d be on a damn pedestal, and I’d fight tooth and nail to protect her.

“You can’t touch her. She doesn’t deserve that.”

I snort. “She doesn’t deserve any of this now, does she? But here’s what I’ll agree to. I won’t touch her, unless she wants me to.”

“She won’t,” he bites out harshly.

That’s fine by me, I don’t want to touch her either and I am one hundred percent sure Reagan is going to shut this shit down. Although there is another part of me, a small part that sees the obedient daughter, the doting girlfriend, the strait-laced college student who might do whatever it takes to save her boyfriend’s balls, as little as they might be.

I crack my knuckles. “If she says no, we’ll have to find another way to make you pay.” I’ve been keeping score of all the hateful things he said to me, all the cruel pranks to make me look like a loser to his buddies at Wolf House freshman year. Yeah, it was Cochrane who had a huge end of year bash at a posh downtown hotel and invited everyone from Wolf House—everyone but the loser from the wrong side of the

tracks. He did love to flaunt his money, and drive home the fact that I didn't belong. I can't help but think there was more to it though, that there were other reasons he hated me. Maybe it was because his girlfriend was always nice to me, and I was always nice to her. Maybe on some level he felt threatened. Or maybe not, and I'm not even sure I care.

He gulps. "She'll agree."

I tap my fingers on the table. "If I agreed to this, we'd need to set rules."

"Yeah, of course," he quickly agrees, a measure of relief registering on his face.

"You owe me a shit ton of money. Reagan is going to have to work that off for as long as it takes."

His throat gurgles as he swallows, hard, and he tugs at the collar of his shirt as his gaze drops to my knuckles. Is he suddenly realizing the error of his ways, the precious cargo he's putting in the hands of a guy who was dragged up on the streets? Oh, what would senator daddy think of this? Yeah, like Reagan, he too is following in his father's footsteps.

"What are the rules?" he asks.

"She's mine for one month."

His body stiffens. "You...want her for one month."

"Yeah, I think that sounds about right. One month to work off *your* debt." I press my thumb into my bottom lip, like I'm considering what she might taste like.

"You can't touch her. It's not like that."

"Like I said, I won't, unless she wants me to."

“She won’t.” He shakes his phone. “Can you give me a minute to talk to her? I need to run the whole month thing by her.”

I grin. I don’t want Reagan—don’t want to fuck her. I’m not into high maintenance princesses, but his comment about her never wanting me pisses me off enough to say, “Sure, but don’t blame me if it’s my dick she wants when the month is all over.”



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**REAGAN**

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I take one fast breath and then another as I stare at my boyfriend and take in the worried, almost pleading look in his eyes. I briefly pinch my eyes shut, sure I'm dreaming and he didn't just show up late at night to tell me he sold me in a poker game. A hysterical laugh crawls out of my throat, because that's insane, right? Yeah, it is. This is all just a dream. I'm really in bed, all snuggled beneath my blankets, and Cochrane isn't here offering me up to the notorious, big bad football player who sort of scares the shit out of me.

We had a run in once, or twice, or a dozen times. At least, I think we did. It was freshman year, the night was dark, foggy, and I could barely see where I was going. I'd tried to call campus security for an escort back to my place, but they were working overtime due to the recent rash of events on campus and I couldn't get through. Cochrane said he was in group study and couldn't get out of it to walk me home. I had no choice but to hightail it myself, despite the warnings that no female should be out alone after dark. There was a stalker on campus, and a girl had been attacked. She was okay, thank

God, and while walking alone wasn't my smartest move, I couldn't stand outside the lecture hall all night.

Keys in hand, I ran in the fog until the rumbling sound of a motorcycle engine reached my ears. My step stilled as my heart beat faster and through the haze I was sure it was Rocco Gianni, following me on his bike. Was he the stalker? I never found out, and after that I changed paths, taking an even longer way home. Nevertheless, over the years, late at night when I was all alone, I was sure I could still hear his bike, smell his scent—a mixture of freshly soaped skin, motor oil and leather. It's lived inside my brain since I first met him at Wolf House freshman year.

"Reagan, did you hear me?" Cochrane's whiny voice pulls me back, and I open my eyes. Blood drains to my toes because no matter how much I want to believe I'm hallucinating, I'm not. Cochrane is standing in my kitchen, begging me to save his ass by handing mine over.

"I heard you," I say softly, quietly, as I back up until I fall into a kitchen chair. I lean forward, brace my elbows on my knees and bury my face in my hands. "Can't you just ask your dad for money?"

"He cut me off, you know that. If I ask, he'll tear me a new one, and maybe even investigate. If he does and realizes I've been gambling illegally, here at Kingston..." His voice goes quiet and I spread my fingers to peek at him. He puts his finger to his throat and makes a slicing motion. "Lots of heads will roll and it probably won't look good for you, either, you know since we're a couple and people will think you're guilty by association."

"My God, Cochrane. How could you drag me into this?" I hate conflict, any kind of conflict, and here I am being

dragged into the middle of a horrible situation. I hug myself to stave off the cold that always lives inside me, more so tonight.

He hurries up to me and sinks to his knees. He takes my hands in his, his blue eyes wide and imploring. "You'll won't have to do much. It's not like you have to sleep with him or anything."

My heart jumps into my throat. I hadn't even considered that sex could be part of the re-payment plan. But what if it is? What if Rocco, a brutal guy with those rough and tough hands, wants me in his bed? A strange shiver goes through me. Would he touch me brutally, tear at my clothes and forcefully devour my mouth? Or would he caress with gentle hands, a slow easy seduction that would shake the ground beneath me and send me soaring into outer space?

Which do I want more?

Wait, what? I don't want either. That is not going to happen in a million years. A billion, even. Not even if we were the last two people on earth and mankind depended on us.

"Reagan?"

"No, just no. I am not something that can be traded for currency. I can't even believe that crossed your mind."

He points to his face. "If you want to see this in one piece again..."

My jaw drops open. "He threatened you?"

"Not with words, but he cracked his knuckles and stared at my face."

"My God, Cochrane. We need to go to the police. Wait, wait..." Another thought hits. "There's a guy threatening you

with physical violence and you still thought it was a good idea to put me up for trade.”

“He won’t hurt you, Reagan. He likes you.”

My head rears back. “Likes me? He doesn’t even know me, and...” I pause as a shiver goes through me, memories of him watching me from the fog stealing the air from my lungs. I guess if he wanted to hurt me, he would have, right? Then again, maybe it wasn’t him following me those dark nights, keeping his distance until I locked myself in my house, and then revving his bike as he took off, me safely behind my door until the noise faded into the night.

“Please, buttercup. Do this for me, for us. We can’t let anything stand in our way of becoming senators, getting married, having the family we always wanted.”

I swallow the lump in my throat. Right, can’t let anything get in the way of those plans—plans that had been carefully laid out for me by my parents. I think they were grooming me to follow in their footsteps the second I was born. I’ve done everything right, followed all the rules, been the good daughter and the good girlfriend, but this...this is over the top.

I fold my hands on my lap, the fight going out of me. “What do I have to do?”

“Whatever I tell you to.”

The deep voice at the door has Cochrane jumping to his feet, and me nearly falling backward on my chair. I grab the table, trying to stop myself from toppling over when Rocco is right there, catching the back of my chair and righting me before I fall—while Cochrane stands there doing nothing.

“You okay?” he asks, those translucent blue eyes of his locking on mine with genuine concern. He hovers over me, all brawn and muscle and smelling like wind and leather, like he’d just taken a long bike ride. Everything about him overwhelms me, frightens me...does weird things to my insides.

It’s a struggle to find my voice, but when I finally do I smooth my hand over my nightie, instantly realizing how thin it is. Oh God, he can probably see my nipples. I cross my arms over my chest to hide my body from his eyes, even though they haven’t strayed from my face. He’s not interested in me sexually, otherwise he would have looked, so I guess that’s good news.

“I am now, thanks,” I say.

“What are you doing here?” Cochrane asks.

Rocco doesn’t turn, not right away. Ignoring Cochrane, his worried gaze moves over my face, like he’s making sure I’m okay, and his closeness starts messing with my brain and body.

I push back my chair, needing a reprieve from his closeness and he finally straightens to his full height and turns. That’s when I notice the big black bag on the floor by the door.

“Why wouldn’t I be here?” he says to Cochrane as he picks his bag up and hikes it over his shoulder, letting it dangle down his back in that rough and tumble masculine way that teases parts of my body I didn’t know existed before.

He turns to me. “So you’re cool with this, Reagan? Cool with Dick here selling you to me for one full month?”

“A full month,” I yell and jump up, but instantly wish I hadn’t because Rocco is right there again, my body almost flush against his, my nipples now a tiny bit harder. He dips his

head, not to see my near naked body, but to meet my eyes, like he's checking in on me. My entire body quivers.

"There are rules," Cochrane pipes in, and I inch back, needing to put a measure of distance between us.

"Rules?" I squeak out.

Rocco smirks. "Yeah, I'm not allowed to fuck you."

My throat tightens at his vulgar words, the world closing in on me a little. "I'm not...doing that."

"That's okay. I don't want to fuck you either, Reagan."

What the hell? Why am I so offended that he doesn't want to fuck me? What's wrong with me? Oh God! What am I even saying?

"But you are mine for the next month. I just have to figure out what it is I want to do with you." He looks past my shoulders. "First, I guess we should figure out where I'm going to sleep. Do you have a spare room, or will I be bunking with you?"

"My...roommate."

He angles his head, and his thick dark hair falls over his eyes. "You want me to sleep with your roommate?"

I give a fast shake of my head. "No, I mean. I have to clear this with her. We share this house."

He glances around. "Pretty big house for two people. You girls probably won't even know I'm here, anyway."

"Oh, I'll know," I squeak out.

His brow raises. "What's that?"

"Nothing," I say, trying not to sound as breathless as I feel.

*Rocco is staying at my place for one full month!*

What did I ever do to deserve this?

I lift my eyes to his. "What was that you said about rules?"

He jerks his head toward Cochrane. "Your boyfriend said no fucking. I guess you and me will have to figure out the rest come morning." He stretches, acting and looking like he's always belonged in my house. "Do you want to show me the way, or should I just fall into the first bed I find?"

My heart is crashing so hard, I'm sure the guys can hear it. "There's a spare room, second door on the left. You can sleep there tonight. We'll figure the rest out in the morning."

He nods, and walks around me. "Night."

As he stomps off, I turn to find Cochrane leaning against the kitchen counter, rubbing his chin hard, worry all over his face.

"This was a mistake," he murmurs. "A stupid fucking mistake."

I plant my hands on my hips. "You think?"

He swallows, and pushes off the counter. "I shouldn't have."

"Goddamn right you shouldn't have." It's not like me to swear. Good Lord, proper manners have been pounded into me since I was a child. I'm sure every strand of hair on my mother's head would fall out if she heard me. But under the circumstances, with my blood boiling in my veins, I can't help myself. Apparently finding out I've been sold has reduced me to my worst.

His eyes are wide, like he's too shocked at my outburst, as he reaches for me. "I'm sorry, buttercup. If I could take it back, I would."

I shake my head. For some reason, I'm not so sure I believe him. "Yeah, well, you made your bed, Cochrane, and now Rocco is lying in it."

"Reagan—"

"Out," I snap and point to the still open door.

He hesitates but I stand my ground. "Leave."

He turns and sulks to the door, his slow movements grating on my last nerve. He looks back over his shoulders. "I can come back tomorrow to help you set the rules."

"I'm a big girl, I can do them myself. I think you've done enough already."

He nods. "I really am sorry. The month will go fast and he's only sleeping here tonight to piss me off. We don't really like each other. He'll probably leave come morning, and you'll never have to deal with him again."

"And if he doesn't? If he's underfoot for a whole month, what am I supposed to do then?"

He snorts and gives a humorless laugh. "I don't know, just don't fall for him."

I stand there for what feels like ten minutes staring at Cochrane, completely dumbfounded. I shake my head to pull myself together. "That's what you're worried about?" I ask, my voice bordering on hysteria. "You sell me to the scariest motherfucker on campus, and your biggest worry is that I might fall for him?" He takes a step toward me. "Go." I prac-



tically shove him out the door and lock it behind him, then lean against it, trying to catch my damn breath.

What the hell just happened, anyway? Maybe I really am dreaming all this.

Boots shuffle in the upstairs hall and a growl crawls out of my mouth. Nope, not dreaming. Rocco Gianni, the toughest guy on the football team, a guy who is full of scars and bruises from a brutal upbringing, now owns me for one full month. The floor upstairs creaks again, and I wonder if he's lost.

I shut off the kitchen light and dart up the steps, coming to a resounding halt when I find him dressed only in a pair of jeans, his hand on my bedroom door handle.

"What are you doing?"

He turns to me, and I try hard not to let my gaze drop to take in his hard chest. "I thought I'd take a shower before bed. I hope you don't mind."

"Over there," I say and point to the door to the left. "That's my bedroom and it's out of bounds."

"You a Falcons fan?"

"No. Why?"

He shrugs. "You just used a football term." He hovers over me and my damn knees weaken. "In football when we go out of bounds, there's a penalty." He glances at my bedroom door. "What kind of penalty would I get if I crossed that threshold?"

He's teasing me, playing with me, trying to get to me, and he's doing a damn fine job. I guess his hatred of Cochrane extends to me simply because we're a couple, but I've never done anything to him.

“Just don’t go in.”

“Maybe you meant to say it’s off limits.”

“Maybe I did.” God, this guy is throwing me off big time. I point a shaky finger. “Shower’s right there.” He turns, his chuckle reverberating through me as he walks down the hall, looking as good going as he does coming.

Yeah, there’s no way I’m not going to know he’s here.