
THE TROUBLEMAKER

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The Troublemaker

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I nudge my best bud Cole as he lifts his near empty beer bottle to his lips. “Who’s the cute girl with Kinsley?” I ask and take in the hot blonde shaking her ass on stage, as our good friend Kinsley dances wildly beside her. Kinsley, with her bright pink hair and numerous piercings, never fails to stand out in a crowd. I always liked the way she marched to the beat of her own drum. The saying is cliché, I know, but confidence radiates off her, and her refusal to cave to the ridiculous societal pressures put on women has always impressed me.

Cole takes a long pull from the bottle, and he scans the Vegas nightclub. “You mean the cute blonde?” His gaze rakes over our eclectic group of friends as they butcher some Neil Diamond song, giving zero fucks that my ears are bleeding from the off-key notes.

But I’m glad they’re all having fun with the karaoke machine. That’s what weddings in Vegas are all about, right? Tomorrow our friend Rider—aka the Wingman—and his gorgeous fiancée Jules will be tying the knot. I couldn’t be happier, but that doesn’t mean I’m going to get up on that

stage and make a fool of myself like everyone else in the wedding party.

My younger sister Nina—Cole's wife—takes the microphone, and things go from bad to worse. I must have done something shitty in a past lifetime to be subjected to this kind of torture. Cole cringes and turns my way.

"Sweet baby Jesus. Don't tell her I said this, but she needs to stick to her day job," he says.

I laugh at that. My sister is a New York Times bestselling author, and the love of my best friend's life. I smile, because she looks happy and all I've ever wanted was for her to have the life she deserves—with a guy who knows her value, and knows how to treat a woman with respect. The two have been happily married for a few years now, and after a successful NHL season, this break away from work and their two kids looks good on them both.

"Do you know who she is?" I ask again as the blonde looks my way.

"She's a friend of Jule's and Kinsley's. I think all three of them go way back. I can't remember her name. Maybe it's Emma or something. Why, you like her?" he asks.

A trio of barely dressed women in heels so high it's a wonder their noses aren't bleeding, giggle and stare as they walk by our table—obviously trying to get our attention. The people in the club went a little wild when half of the Seattle Shooter's team sauntered in. The staff quickly quieted them, but many have been trying to crash our private party.

I smile at them as they pass. "She's cute and fun. What's not to like?"

Cole nods and takes another pull from his beer. "She's definitely your type. Then again, who isn't?"

"Hey," I say and push him. The server comes by with a couple of fresh beers and sets them in front of us. "Can I get

you boys anything else?” she asks as she drops a napkin in front of me, her name and number scribbled on it.

“We’re good for now.”

“Okay, just shout if you need anything.” She offers me a big smile. “I do mean anything.”

I nod, and she saunters off, an extra little shake in her backside.

“Are you denying that every woman is your type?” Cole asks when it’s just the two of us.

“Well yeah...I mean...no. I just like women.” It’s true I do, although I have to say I am so goddamn played out these days, it’s killing me. I’d love to go to bed with the same woman every night, and more importantly, wake up with her every morning. Too bad settling down just isn’t in my future—and it’s not because I’m commitment phobic.

“And they like you,” he says, nodding to the napkin in front of me. “Obviously, but someday though, the right one will come along, and once you fall in love, your priorities will change big time. Next thing you know, your ride will be a minivan and a stroller.”

I shrug, not worried about trading in the sports car—because I want that. Cole is my best friend, and on some level, he must know I want what he has, but it’s out of my reach. What is it women say about me? Emotionally closed off? Yeah, that’s it. It’s no secret that two weeks is my limit with a woman. I thought things might go further a couple years back when I hooked up with Jess, my sister’s best friend. But nope, I couldn’t seem to give her what she wanted, and she dumped me for a guy who could express himself better than me.

Love and affection were rare things in my household growing up, which might be why it’s hard for me to express myself. I usually just fuck things up and end up hurting whoever I’m with. I’ve since learned that if I bail after two

weeks, no one falls in love, no one gets hurt. I'm just glad Nina never had the same problem, and is now in a loving relationship with my buddy.

"No minivan for me," I say and casually stretch my legs out, pretending I'm relaxed when I'm actually strung so tight my shoulders are practically hugging my ears. I should probably get laid tonight, it's what I always do to take my mind off things, but I'm not even sure if I want to have sex. If I tell Cole that I might just go to bed alone, he'll check me in to the nearest clinic. "I'm a bachelor for life," I add.

Cole makes a sound, one that suggests I'm full of shit, and says, "I think it'll happen when you least expect it, and with the last person you expect it to happen with."

I lift my bottle and tip it his way. "Look at that. My best friend. The hockey player and a philosopher. God, I'm a lucky guy."

"Fuck off," he says and shoves me. "I'm right. You'll see."

I snort. "Want to bet?"

He glances around, the overhead strobe lights beginning to give me a headache. "We are in Vegas. I'll take that bet."

I shake my head. "Nah, forget it."

"Forget what?" Nina asks, as she comes our way, and sets herself on Cole's lap. She runs her hands through his hair, and kisses him like her brother isn't sitting there watching the two display affection. While I'd rather not watch them make out, my heart swells, happy and envious at what they have.

"Jesus, get a room already," I say.

She grins at me. "Ooh, that's a good idea. What were you two talking about?" she asks.

Cole opens his mouth, but I lean forward and cut him off. "That girl dancing with Kinsley. Do you know her?"

She turns. "Yeah, that's Jules's friend. She's here for the wedding, too. Her name is Emily."

“Emma. Emily. I was close,” Cole says, and I roll my eyes at him.

“She asked about you,” Nina says and takes Cole’s beer.

My dick twitches. “Oh yeah.”

She takes a big drink of beer, leaving me hanging. “Thanks babe,” she says and hands the bottle back to Cole. She lifts her head to see me as she wipes her mouth with the back of her hand. “Yeah, but I told her to stay away.” She tucks a strand of hair behind her ear. “I let her know you were nothing but trouble.”

“Sis, seriously. When did little Neaner Neaner become such a cock blocker?” I ask, using the childhood nickname she hates, just to piss her off.

Cole nearly spews a mouthful of beer. “Watch what you’re calling my wife, buddy.”

Nina lifts her chin an inch, all tough with her husband backing her up, and my lips twitch. “That’s right, Cason. Talk to me like that again, and Cole will put a beating on you.”

I laugh, and Cole grins. The last fight we had—over Nina—I blackened his eye and they both know it. They don’t call me Crazy Callaghan the Troublemaker—on and off the ice—for nothing.

“Cool it you two,” Cole says. “Everyone is coming back.”

The gang are all laughing and hanging off each other as they come back to the big round table. Rider orders a round of shots for us all. They come and we lift them in salute. Kane, Rider’s best friend—his brother—lifts his glass.

“To Rider and Jules,” he says and we all down our tequila and reach for a lime from the bowl in the center. My hand connects with Emily’s and she gives me a smile.

“Here,” she says, and puts the lime in my mouth. I suck on it, and she nibbles on her bottom lip as she watches me. Yeah, maybe if I took her to bed, it would help me forget

about all the things I want, but can never have. Juice drips down my chin, and I grab the napkin to wipe it.

“Uh oh,” she says, dark lashes fluttering over blue eyes.

“What?”

She points to the napkin. “I think you smudged the number.”

I shrug. “I wasn’t interested anyway.”

Her lips pucker as she reaches into her purse. “Maybe you’ll be interested in this,” she says, and discreetly slides her room key into my hand. I shift and shove it into my back pocket for safe keeping.

Kinsley grabs my hand. “Come on, Cason. You are not sitting here all night.”

“I am not singing,” I groan in protest.

“Fine, then you can dance with me. This is Vegas baby. You’ve been doing nothing but mope since we got here.”

“I am not...” I let my words fall off because it’s possible she’s right. She pulls me from my chair, and the second I stand, asshole and fellow teammate Liam, drops into my chair and turns his focus to Emily.

Motherfucker.

Where the hell is bro code? We don’t hit on another guy’s woman. Not that Emily is my woman. She’s not. But still, I was just sitting with her, and Liam is breaking bro code rules. I shake my head. I guess that’s why his on ice handle is the Rule Breaker, and I should probably cut him some slack; he recently lost his dad, and there was a huge scandal, and has been drinking steadily since arriving. I’m a bit worried about his mental state to be honest. I’m glad he’s here with us this weekend. I think he needs his friends around.

Kinsley drags me onto the dance floor just as those working the karaoke machine change to a slow song. I pull her into my arms, and her sweet vanilla scent fills my senses. I put my nose to her hair and breathe her in.

“Did you just smell me?” she asks.

“Why do you always smell so good?” I ask.

She laughs, and the sound curls around me. “Because I own a food truck. No matter how many times I shower I still smell like street tacos.”

“You think you smell like street tacos?” I chuckle at that.

“Yeah, I’ve been thinking of bottling the scent. Talk about an aphrodisiac for men, huh? They’d be coming at me from miles.”

I put my hands on her hips as she sways. What the fuck? Is that my dick twitching? Yeah, maybe I really am in bad shape if my dick is standing up and taking notice. Not that Kinsley isn’t hot, it’s just that she and I are friends. We go way back, and I eat at her food truck every chance I get.

My dick should not be moving.

“First, you smell like cupcakes, and second you don’t need to smell like a taco to attract a guy, Kins. I’m sure they’re lining up for you.”

She snorts and looks at me like I have a brain tumor. “Oh, they’re lining up all right. I own a food truck remember?”

Wait, does she think that’s the only reason a man would be interested in her? Fuck, she’s hot with her wild pink hair and numerous piercings, not to mention the abundance of curves any guy would be lucky to sink his teeth into. She’s completely different from the puck bunnies who line up to meet us after a game, but that’s why I like her. Like I said, she marches to the beat of her own drum and cares little about social norms.

A round of cheers erupt from behind us as the gang all do another shot. This time Liam is putting a lime to Emily’s lips and she sidles closer to him. He can flirt with her all he wants. I’m the one with her room key in my back pocket. I’m just not sure I want to use it. Maybe all this pumped in oxygen is messing with my brain.

“You like her, huh?” Kinsley asks, and lowers her head. While I can’t see her expression, I hear a hint of dejection in her voice. I must be mistaken. Why would she be upset that I liked her friend? Before I can say anything, she says, “She likes you, too, Cason. Then again, who doesn’t?”

“Are you saying you like me, Kins,” I tease. “You think I’m a big fat snack you’d like to bite into?”

Her face crinkles like she’d just tasted something sour. “And my snacking stops today,” she says with a laugh.

She’s a joker, a teaser, but for some reason those words hit like a punch. I smile to hide the blow and say, “Always good to know where I stand with the ladies.”

“I’m not one of your ladies, I’m your friend, and you’re welcome,” she says. “But you should go for it with Emily. She’s always looking for a good time, and has no desire to get serious. She’s having too much fun being single I guess.”

“You two go way back?”

“Friends since childhood. She stuck by me when I quit law school and bought a truck.”

“She sounds like a good friend.”

“She is.” She arches a brow, but there is something I don’t recognize in her eyes. It can’t be jealousy. She just told me she was off snacking. “Are you going to go for it?”

I shrug. One because I’m unsure and two it feels weird talking to Kinsley about this. But maybe she’s right. Maybe I should stop feeling sorry for myself and hook up with a girl who knows where I stand. We break apart as the song ends. She saunters off, her swaying ass dragging my focus, and teasing something deep inside me. My dick twitches again.

What the ever loving fuck is going on with me?

Am I really upset that I’m not her type, that she doesn’t want to crawl between the sheets with me? I mean, that’s good though, right? That should make me happy.

We’re friends for God’s sake.

I shouldn't want to sleep with her. Shouldn't all of a sudden be thinking about her lush body beneath mine. I shut down my brain, and redirect my train of thoughts to ones that don't involve my friend naked.

Too bad my dick didn't get the memo.

“**H**ow did you end up with the honeymoon suite anyway?” Emily asks me, as I practically carry her to my bed, and toss her on it. She widens her arms and makes snow angels on my big, inviting mattress. She’s a hot mess, and if she could see herself, she’d be mortified. As a cosmetologist, she’s always so well put together. Tequila is not her friend.

“I guess I just got lucky,” I say. The hotel had lost my reservation, so they put me in one of their posh honeymoon suites. I’m not about to complain. The place is bigger than my Seattle condo.

“This bed is big enough to sleep six,” she tells me.

It’s true it is, but I wish I was sleeping alone in it, left to my thoughts about Cason, and the way his body moved with mine. Yeah, I want to lay here alone and fantasize, but I won’t. Not with Emily next to me. She’s had far too much tequila, and I needed to make sure she landed in bed safely. Friends take care of each other. She insisted she needed to go to her room, although she couldn’t remember why, and when

her key was nowhere to be found, taking her here to my big suite to sleep off the tequila was a no-brainer.

“Wait,” she says and sits up. She peels her tongue from the roof of her mouth, and furrows her brow in thought. “I think I’m supposed to get lucky tonight.”

I shake my head. “The only luck you’re going to have is if you don’t end up with your head in the toilet bowl.” I gesture for her to lift her arms. “Come on, let me help you undress.”

“That was good tequila,” she says and I laugh as I peel her shirt off. She flops onto her pillow and I remove her pants, leaving her in her bra and panties. I help her between the sheets and put a big glass of water on the nightstand. As she drifts off, I brush my teeth, and I’m about to undress and climb in beside her, but stop short when she starts snoring so hard, the walls begin to vibrate around me.

“Oh, hell no!”

I grab her purse and search for her key. Dammit. Would they give me a new one at the front desk, if I asked? If I had her ID, pretended to be her, what choice would they have? Even though we look nothing alike, I snatch her wallet from her purse, and head down to the front desk.

Jackpot.

Ten minutes later, I let myself into her room, and with exhaustion from a long day pulling at me, I strip off and collapse onto her bed. I close my eyes, and the second I do, visions of a naked Cason dance in my head. If I’m lucky, maybe I’ll have another sex dream tonight, just like the ones I’ve been having for the past year now.

Last summer, Cason and a few of his buddies had been playing street hockey with some neighborhood kids, and they all showed up half naked, and fully starved. Something shifted in me that day, woke with a vengeance. I always knew he was smoking hot, but damn, my ovaries nearly exploded as he

gave me an up close and personal view of his hard chest and tight six pack.

Would his lower body be just as hard?

Dammit.

I should not be fantasizing about my good friend, especially when he just showed interest in Emily. I lied when he asked if he was a big fat snack. Oh, did I ever lie. What I'd do to take a bite out of him. But Emily's the one he wants to go to bed with, not me—a tatted up girl who is the antithesis of the women who hang off his arm. I exhale sharply and work to push all images of Cason from my mind as I drift off. A long while later, a voice pulls me awake.

“Hey,” Cason says.

I take a breath, and then another. What the hell is going on? I try to focus, but my room is too dark to see anything. A big callused hand touches my face, and that's when I clue in. I'm fantasizing about Cason again.

“Mmm,” I say and settle against the pillow, ready to ride this dream out to orgasm. His lips find mine, and I moan into his mouth, to let him know how much I like his kisses, even if they're not real. No, none of this is tangible, not the weight of his body pressing down on mine, the hard cock indenting my leg, or the hungry groans that sound far too real.

“Sorry I took so long,” he says, and I put my legs around him, and move my hips.

“Forgiven,” I murmur and for a brief second he goes still. His body stiffens, and I'm not just talking about the anaconda between his legs. Oh, God, this is my dream, and I get to dictate what happens next, not him. I grip his hair, bring his mouth back to mine, and kiss the living hell out of him.

I lift my hips, grind against his body, and just give in to the things this man makes me feel. I'm not so sure I'd be so wild and bold in real life. It's true, my outward appearance tells a story, a rebellious daughter of lawyer parents, who was

supposed to follow in their footsteps, but inside, I'm not always as confident as I let on. But this, in my dreams, I can let go, and take what I want.

"Cason," I murmur. "Get naked all ready." I tear at his T-shirt, needing his skin next to mine. He reaches over his back and tugs, removing the stupid piece of fabric that's preventing me from touching him all over. I can't see a thing, but that's okay. I want to feel my way around his luscious body anyway.

"Better?" he asks.

"Much," I say, as his hand goes to my breast. He kneads me in his big, hockey player palms, rough from years of handling the stick, his thumb brushing against my nipple and holy, it's all I can do not to come.

"Yes," I say. "Just like that."

I fist his hair and push on him, until his mouth is right where I want it to be—for now. Soon I'll want it between my quivering legs. He chuckles at my boldness, and the sound vibrates through my body, and stimulates my throbbing clit.

"This what you want?" he asks, before pulling my hard nipple into his mouth. My lips part in ecstasy but no sound comes. He clearly knows what his kisses are doing to me. How could he not? I'm like a writhing, overstimulated nymphomaniac beneath him.

But I don't care.

My sex pulses, and I'm so damn wet and needy, I'm sure I'm going to climax the second he touches me. Let's find out. I grip his hair harder, and direct his mouth to my pussy, and he moves slower than I'd like, peppering hot, open mouthed kisses to my tingling stomach. He finally settles between my legs, and I arch up to meet his mouth.

The second his hot, wet tongue touches me, I let loose an agonized wail. "Yes," I cry out. He licks me, circles his tongue around my clit, and I grip the sheets and tug. "You are so

good at that," I say. He should be. He's been with enough women, but this is my dream, and he's probably performing better because I'm the one directing the show. No one could be this skilled in real life, right?

I move shamelessly against his face, rub my pussy all over him and his moans of want encourage me all the more.

"Yeah, that's it. Take what you want," he says from deep between my legs. He inserts a finger into me, and my muscles clench as deep pleasure radiates from my core.

"God, yes," I say as he licks my clit and circles the hot bundle of nerves inside me. I move against him as he fucks me with his finger, sliding a second in for a snug fit, and I let go of the sheets and go up on my elbows. I can't see his face, so I close my eyes to imagine it as he takes me higher and higher until I'm soaring without wings.

"I'm...coming," I say and clench around his finger, so hard, it steals the breath from my lungs. My God, I've climaxed in my sleep dreaming of him before, but this is different. Far more intense. He pets me lightly, bringing me down to earth and before I can fully catch my breath, he stands to remove his pants.

The hiss of his zipper fills the silence of the room and I go up on all fours, to follow the sound. I moan, and breathe in his scent.

"I want you in my mouth," I say and he groans.

"Where are you?" he asks.

I sit on the edge of the bed and reach for him. My hand connects with his stomach. "Right here, waiting for you to put this big cock into my mouth."

"Fuck," he growls, and my hand slides lower to grasp his cock. I rub him lightly. Velvet wrapped around hard steel. As I stroke, he steps closer.

"You're going to choke me with this thing," I say, and he draws in a fast breath.

“I won’t hurt you.”

Cason is one badass motherfucker—most guys know not to mess with him—but underneath it all, he’s sweet. I always knew that about him, which must be why his tenderness has worked its way into my dream. He’s not the flowery prose kind of guy, and I’ve never really seen him display affection to any woman other than his sister, but I’m not asking for that at the moment.

“My mouth is open, Cason. Feed me your cock, and maybe I want it to hurt a bit.”

He swallows, and I move forward so he can find my mouth. He grunts and taps my bottom lip. I lick him, taste the come dripping from his slit, and my moan seems to do something to him. He comes closer, and slides to the back of my throat. I relax my throat, take him deeper than I’ve ever taken any man and he thickens even more.

He grips my hair, wraps it around his hand, and follows the motion of my bobbing head. God, I’ve never much been into giving oral sex, but I like it with him. Everything from the way he tastes, to the groans crawling out of his throat turn me on even more.

“It’s too good,” he murmurs and pulls out of me.

“Then why stop?” I ask, my heart pounding as I squeak in a breath.

“I want to fuck you.”

“Yeah, I want that, too.”

More sounds fill the space between us; clothes rustling, foil ripping, and latex being rolled on.

“Middle of the bed,” he demands in a soft voice.

“Ooh, I love it when you go all alpha like that,” I say with a laugh.

“Yeah?”

“Yeah. I’m in the middle of the bed, now,” I inform him.

“Legs spread?”

I widen my thighs in invitation. "All spread."

"Pussy wet?"

"Ah, yeah."

"Touch yourself. Let me know for sure."

I slide my hand down my body and moan when I find myself slippery wet. My God, I am so aroused, I'm ready to climax again. I roll my finger over my swollen clit, and I quiver from head to toe.

"Soaked," I murmur.

"Jesus, I wish I could fucking see you touching yourself."

His breathing changes, becomes rough and labored. Is he visualizing me touching myself? Does that turn him on? "Hands above your head," he commands in a soft voice.

Ooh, that's different. I reach up and grip the rails. "Hands are exactly where you want them," I say.

The bed dips as he climbs on, and slides over me. "You want my cock?"

"Yesss," I hiss, as his lips crash over mine and muffle the sound. He kisses me hard, deeply, like a man who's been deprived of human contact. His hands touch me all over, slide up and down my arms, stroke my face, and shape my sides. His fingers move to my breasts, and he brushes the underside as I kiss him back, and savor the sweet taste of him, as our tongues play. His full weight presses me deeper into the mattress, and he shifts, his cock probing my opening.

I put my legs around him and lift my hips. "Please," I beg. "I need you to fuck me."

"You need to come, again?"

"God, you have no idea how much I want to come again."

He slides a hand between our bodies, and inches a thick finger into me. "I have a bit of an idea," he says with a chuckle.

I move against his finger as his thick cock indents my thigh. "I don't think I'm the only one who needs to come."

“You’re right.”

“Then please put you—”

Before I can finish the sentence he powers into me, driving so high and deep, I swear to God, my back teeth just rattled. He hits my cervix, and holy hell I almost climax again.

“This what you want?” he asks, and goes still, his cock stretching me in glorious ways.

“God, yes,” I cry out, and nip at his shoulder and ear. He’d have a little bruise on both those places tomorrow—if this was real.

He grunts and pulls back. I cry as he almost slips free but then he pistons back inside me. I gasp. No man, not that I’ve been with a lot, has ever hit me so deeply before. He does it repeatedly, sliding past my G-spot, and hitting my cervix with his crown as his pelvis stimulates my clit with each thrust. It’s the perfect trifecta, but then his mouth leaves mine and he wraps those hot lips around my nipple. The second he does, I know I’m a goner. Lost. Down for the count. All pleasure centers in my core, and I completely submit to it.

My senses explode, like rockets blasting off into the night. I can’t see, hear, or speak. I can only feel a full body orgasm that strips away every thought I’d ever had, allowing me to focus solely on the most intense pleasure I’ve ever experienced.

I wrap my arms around him, my sex clenching hard around his beautiful cock, as I curl in tight.

“Jesus,” he whispers as he holds me in a possessive way, absorbing the waves crashing over me. My body finally stops spasming, and I move my hips, wanting more...everything.

He jerks his hips forward, changing the rhythm and pace as he chases his own orgasm, and I hold him tight. “Yes,” I say.

His breathing changes, and he buries his face in my neck,

kissing and sucking on my skin, like we're teenagers partaking in a hickey fest. Not that I ever did that. Much.

"I'm right there."

"I want to feel it," I say, and let loose a cry at his first sweet pulse. He goes still deep inside me, his body damp, his muscles rolling beneath my fingers. He spasms and pulses and grunts as he depletes himself, and I love all the real, honest, raw sex noises he's making. There is definitely nothing flowery about this man.

He finally stops and his lips find mine. His kisses are softer now, less hurried, and I melt against his tenderness.

"You good?" he asks.

"How could I not be good? Best. Sex. Ever."

He laughs at that, and inches out of me. "Really?"

I exhale a contented breath and roll to my side. He slides in behind me, the big spoon to my little one. "Of course. How could it not be? I'm dreaming."

What the ever loving fuck? I just had the best sex of my life with Kinsley, and this whole time she thought she was dreaming? I hug her body to mine, her warm scent washing over me as her breathing slows, changes. As she falls asleep my brain zaps to life, trying to figure out what the hell just happened.

Okay, I came to this room expecting to find Emily, but the second Kinsley spoke, I knew it was her. I was ready to scream “abort” and run for the hills, until she wrapped her arms around me and devoured my mouth with hers, letting me know exactly how she wanted to play this mistake out. Although it sure didn’t feel like a mistake.

Still, it was, and the right thing would have been to put a stop to it, but her body was so goddamn warm, and lush, and I’m just a simple man at heart—driven by baser needs. When she wrapped her legs around me, there wasn’t a single man on the face of this earth with enough willpower to walk away from that.

Am I right, or am I right?

But what I'm supposed to do next is beyond me. I don't normally do sleepovers, but this is Kinsley I'm holding. My good *friend*, Kinsley—who was in some semi-sleep state while we had the most incredible, mind blowing sex in the dark of the night.

Do I stay?

Do I bail?

Do I pretend this never happened and we laugh it off come morning? Oh, yeah, how funny would this be: *Hey Kins, I came in here to fuck Emily, but found you instead, and you know me, any warm body will do.*

I hardly think she'd find that laughable. I certainly don't.

Jesus. I don't want her to think she was nothing more than a warm body for me—that's fucking demeaning and wrong. I have a reputation sure, but I don't for one second want her to think none of this meant anything. The honest to God's truth is she *was* my first choice, but I walked away from that because of our friendship.

Which now could be in jeopardy. Could be? No, it definitely is.

Way to screw things up, dude.

I briefly close my eyes, as her soft breathing sounds do little to relax me. We're obviously going to have to talk about this mistake, but I'm not so sure I should be here when she wakes up. That might just make things all that much more awkward. I inch away, and instantly miss her heat. Odd, considering I'm the guy who's quick to bail. I move around in the dark, and stub my toes on the corner of the bed.

Fuuuuuuck.

I hop around like a frog jacked up on Red Bull and clench down on my jaw to stifle a barrage of curse words. She moans in her sleep and with my foot in my hand, I stop bouncing around. I stand perfectly still as I wait for her to settle. She finally goes quiet and I gather my clothes. I hurry into them

and do one last check in the dark to see if I left any traces of our night behind, but can't make out a goddamn thing.

I open the door as quietly as possible, and it clicks shut behind me. Bending forward, I brace my hands on my knees, and suck in a few deep breaths. Voices sound in the distance, and I straighten to my full height. Since I'm completely worked up, I can't imagine I'll get any sleep tonight.

I head down to the casino and grab a drink at the bar. A cute blonde settles herself on the stool beside me.

"Hi Cason."

"Hey," I say, and swirl the whiskey in my cup.

"I'm such a huge fan."

I cast her a smile. "Nice, thanks," I say and take a big drink of my whiskey. I welcome the burn down my throat, as I think about the mess I've gotten myself into.

"Would you mind autographing something for me?"

Any other time, I might have considered taking the blonde to bed, but now, I'm too fucked over and need to get my head on straight before I make any more mistakes tonight.

"Yeah, sure," I say and hold my hand out for a pen. She puts a marker in my hand, and opens her blouse to reveal breasts barely contained in a tiny lace bra. "Ah, yeah, okay." I scribble my name across her breasts when I spot Liam coming our way. He's not steady on his feet, and I'm guessing he lost his chance with Emily every bit as much as I had.

Oh, but you won something so much better.

He slaps me on the back. "Hey bud," he says.

"Liam, this is..." I pause and wait for the girl to give me her name.

"Lexi," she says.

"Liam, meet Lexi. What a cute couple you two make." I hand the marker to Liam, and slide from the stool, and Lexi jiggles her tits, looking for another signature.

I head back to my hotel room, and before I climb into bed, I put a call in for breakfast, for my room and Kinsley's. Tomorrow we'll have to talk—I think—and I don't want her hangry, plus I feel shitty for bailing. I snort. Like food is really going to make this all better.

I flop down onto my bed still dressed, and the next thing I know, there is a knock at my door. I blink my eyes open to discover it's not the middle of the night like I assumed. After that terrific round of sex, I'd obviously fallen into a deep sleep. Christ, my body hadn't been that worn out since our playoff games.

I push to my feet and rake my hand through my hair as I stumble toward the door. The fresh scent of coffee helps perk me up and I give the guy a big tip. I check my phone and groan. With so much going on, I'm not sure I'm going to have a chance to talk to Kinsley alone.

I take a big drink of coffee and jump in the shower. Twenty minutes later, after stuffing a few pancakes into my mouth, I go over the events of last night as I head downstairs to the lobby.

I spot Emily sitting in the lobby, and I stiffen as I get closer.

"Whoa, are you okay?" I ask as she sits there with her eyes closed.

She blinks one eye open, and groans. "Too much tequila," she says and taps the seat beside her. I sit down. "Uh, did I give you my room card last night?" she asks.

I nod. "Yeah, you did."

She groans louder. "I didn't mean to stand you up like that."

"It's not a problem." No, not a problem at all that I slept with a good friend, and ran out under the cover of darkness, leaving her to believe it might have been a dream. Yeah, not a problem at all.

I reach into my back pocket and pull out the key card. “Here,” I say and she closes her hand over it.

“Keep it. I’ll make up for it tonight.”

I try to give it to her, but she’s adamant that she doesn’t want it back, but no way in hell can I sleep with her tonight after being with Kinsley. Hell it’s not that I can’t, it’s that I don’t want to.

I glance up to see Kinsley enter the lobby, dressed in a pair of cute jean shorts with frilled edges and a flowery blouse that showcases lush breasts my tongue had the pleasure of licking. My dick instantly hardens as her gaze flies to mine. Her eyes slowly drop to take in the push and pull between us with the room card, which looks like I’m trying to get it back from Emily’s hands, when it’s not like that at all. Kinsley’s eyes widen, and she blinks rapidly. She steps closer and plaster on a smile. That’s when I notice the love marks on her neck. Fuck. Her hand goes to said love marks, and she turns her focus to Emily when Emily asks a question.

“Kinsley, what happened to you last night?”

Kinsley takes a fast breath, her gaze sliding to mine. With confusion written all over her face, like she’s still trying to figure out if last night was real or not, she looks at my neck, and earlobe—a very teeth lanced earlobe. A strange sound crawls out of her throat.

Guess she figured it out.

“Remember I said I had to go to my room last night,” Emily says with an unlady like snort.

Kinsley turns from me and hugs herself. I take note of her quivering hands. “Yeah, but you couldn’t remember why,” she says, her voice as shaky as her fingers.

“Well I remembered why. I was going to get lucky.” She laughs and jerks her thumb my way. “I gave Cason my key card.”

“Oh, God,” Kinsley croaks out as she stumbles backward.

Emily laughs. "You must have been sorely disappointed when you crawled into my bed and found it empty." Emily winks at me. "But like I said, I'll make up for that tonight." She closes her hand over mine, securing the key card in my palm.

"You thought..." Kinsley begins, her gaze bobbing back between the two of us. "Holy," she gasps as the tumblers fall into place. She backs up, hits a potted plant and when they both nearly topple I jump up and slide my arm around her.

"You okay?" I steady her body by anchoring it to mine, and even though it's not the time to be taking pleasure in her soft curves, my goddamn dick has a mind of its own. I mentally scold myself and pray she can't feel the thickness between my legs as I consider scooping her up and going for round two.

"I...uh...I don't know." Dark lashes flash rapidly over blue eyes. "I'm not sure of...anything."

"Emily, can you get Kinsley a cup of coffee please," I say, my reasons two-fold. One, she looks like she needs a strong cup of java to help clear her head, and two I need a minute alone with her.

Emily groans and pushes to her feet as I keep my arm around Kinsley and set her on the bench.

She swallows. "Last night..." she begins and stops. Wide worried eyes search my face, but she already knows the answer to the question lingering on her tongue.

"Yeah. It was me," I say. "I was there with you. You weren't dreaming."

She exhales sharply and leans forward clutching her stomach like she's in physical pain. "I didn't...I thought... dream. Ohmigod, I can't believe this."

"Do you dream about me, Kins?" I ask in a soft, sincere voice, somehow liking that crazy idea.

"Yes...no...I don't know. I just didn't think..." She goes so

still, I'm not even sure she's breathing. "Ohmigod," she says again, her body shaking.

I put my arm around her, and pull her to me. "Hey, come on. It wasn't so bad was it."

"Bad?" She shakes her head. "I have never been more embarrassed in my life."

"What's to be embarrassed about? We're two consenting adults, and the sex was great."

"You thought it was great?" she asks, her big blue eyes wide.

"Yeah, it was fucking great. Didn't you think it was?" I know I'm not great at expressing myself with words, so I really hope this isn't coming out the wrong way, and making her feel worse.

"I..."

"Tell me the truth, Kins. You can be honest with me. We're friends."

"Friends who just slept together." She bends forward and groans again. "Ohmigod, so bad."

I nudge her playfully. "I believe it's called friends with benefits." She shakes her head and I ask, "Wait, are you saying the sex was bad for you?"

"My God, Cason, it was the best sex I ever had," she blurts out, then looks mortified when an elderly lady walking by stops, gasps, and gives her a mortified look. Kinsley puts her hand over her mouth. "Oops."

"Nothing to see here," I say. The white-haired lady with the small poodle tucked in her bag huffs and saunters off. "Okay, so it was the best sex. Not a problem then, right?"

"I figured it was so good because I was dreaming." She covers her face and peers at me through spread fingers. "I never knew it could be that good, to be honest. You did all the right things, but..."

I puff up my chest, loving that I satisfied her. "But what?"

“But,” she says and inches away from me. “You thought you were crawling in bed with Emily.”

“Ah, about that—” I begin and stop, because it’s true. I can’t dispute the fact that I thought I was crawling in bed with Emily. But once I found out it was Kinsley, it changed everything. The second our lips touch, I realized I was in the wrong bed, with the right woman. She’s not the kind of girl I usually go for. That doesn’t change the fact that we were explosive together, and when it comes right down to it...I want it again. Jesus, I’m such a typical guy, it’s ridiculous.

“You...Emily...”

“Did someone just say my name?” Emily asks as she comes back with coffee in a paper cup, one for her, and one for Kinsley. How nice of her to think I might want one.

“Just wondering what was taking you so long,” I say.

She huffs at me as she hands the cup over to Kinsley. “Ah, tequila. Hangover.”

“Thanks,” Kinsley says and takes a big sip of coffee.

Emily stands over her friend, her head cocked. “Kins, are you okay?” she asks, and tugs an elastic off her arm to tie her hair back. “You look like you could use a drink or ten, and it’s not even noon.”

“Yeah, just didn’t get much sleep last night,” she says and casts me a fast glance. “Strange bed. I would have slept in, but we all have a full list of wedding events planned for the day.”

The elevator doors ping open, and out comes Rider and Jules followed by the other wedding guests. Liam saunters over to me, a shit-eating grin on his face.

“Had fun with Lexi, did you?” I ask.

“You missed out, bro. She was wild.” He leans into me and says, “Wait, you don’t look like you’ve missed out at all.”

“What makes you say that?” I ask and shift uncomfortably. I don’t normally talk about my bedroom antics with my friends. I leave it to their own imagination, and I’m sure most

times it's better than the truth. Except for last night. Yeah, my teammates could never envision how great it was between Kins and me.

Liam laughs. "I guess you haven't seen all the bite marks, my friend." He lets loose a whistle. "It must have been one hell of a night."

I slowly turn my head, and find Kinsley staring at me wide-eyed. "Yeah, it was something."

"Who was she?" Liam asks. "I kind of like biters."

I take in a well-sated Kinsley, and a ridiculous stupid idea I have no right thinking races around my little pea-brain. The sex was great, we both agree to that, and we're adults doing what adults do. Maybe, if she wants, we could indulge in a little friends with benefits action while we're here for the wedding. What could it possibly hurt, as long as we're on the same page and agree to no regrets when it's over?

"Who she was is none of your business, and if she's going to bite anyone again, it's going to be me. No regrets. No expectations." Her eyes grow wide as she stares at me. "If that's what she wants."