

First Day of Forever



Mary Calmes

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By

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One

I was sitting at my desk on a Thursday preparing to call it a night when my cell phone rang. I was happily surprised to see my best friend Davis Boone's number on the display.

"Hey," I smiled as I answered.

"What the fuck?" He growled at me from the other end.

"Charming," I chuckled. "I change my mind, I am not happy to see your num—"

"Why aren't you coming?"

I had no idea what we were talking about. "Sorry?"

"My party is Saturday night Cam and I'm supposed to do what—celebrate without my best friend? Really?"

"Party?" I was so confused.

"Yeah, asshole...party. Did you get the invitation or not?"

Invitation?

"I checked with my assistant and she said that yours went out first before anyone else's so don't even play it off like you never got it!"

He was really mad and he was never mad so something was really wrong.

“Davis, buddy, what’re you—”

He growled at the other end of the phone.

And then it hit me. “Oh that.”

“Oh that,” he repeated snidely. “So are you coming or not?”

I had not planned on it. It was his big party to celebrate him becoming partner at his law firm in San Francisco and I had not even once considered going. I was busy, I had a lot of work to do and getting on a plane was at the very bottom of my to-do list. “Ya know Davis I—”

“No Cam that’s bullshit. You’ve been blowing me off for month’s now—years, and its crap. I need you to be here, without you it won’t mean....if you’re there then....shit.”

If I was there then whatever it was was real and happening to him, if I wasn’t, it could be a dream. Without me there, to validate his moment, then he wasn’t actually having one. I understood why it was that way even as I wished it wasn’t.

Davis Boone and I had grown up in the same suburban Chicago neighborhood but whereas after high school I had stayed home and become a police officer, he had gone first to USC on a full ride academic scholarship and

then on to Yale to study law. After graduating he returned to California to join a firm in San Francisco. Now five years later, at thirty-six, he was being made partner and apparently, it was a very big deal. I had no clue, I only remembered about the party because my mind had flashed to the fancy metallic and calligraphy covered invitation that was currently stuck to my refrigerator with a smiling banana magnet. My mother liked to leave me notes and as such had bought the crappiest plastic magnets I ever saw in my life. I liked them immensely.

“Cam!”

Crap. “When is it again?” I asked him, returning to our conversation.

“You don’t care anymore—what the fuck happened to you?”

“What’re you talking about?” I placated him.

“I—just...can you just be here please, for once.”

“For once my ass,” I snapped at him. “I have been going to see you since you graduated from high—”

“But not in forever,” he groused at me. “You haven’t seen me in I don’t know when.”

“That’s bullshit,” I grumbled. “I just saw you in...in...” I had to think.

“Yeah, see. When was the last time you saw me?”

God when was it? That was terrible.

But it made sense. When he was in college and in law school, I was a rookie and then a patrolman, nothing special, just an officer in a uniform driving around in a crappy car. My partner, Jeff Doolittle, used to complain all the time that navy blue was not his color. His wife had informed him that he was a “spring” and should be wearing pastels. I had rolled my eyes a lot.

When I made detective, I got busy. I could no longer just hop on a plane whenever I felt the urge to see my best friend. And of course there was no way in hell he was returning to the Windy City. After being disowned by his parents, he was never coming back to Chicago.

I had come out to my parents my freshman year of high school and while they were concerned and confused, they dealt with it. My father figured it was a phase and my mother, who was always practical, informed me that at least this way she would never have to worry about me knocking some girl up. I had never really worried about the reaction of my family, I knew I was loved. I had been more concerned about the reaction of my best friend. It turned out that I didn’t have to worry as Davis was just as gay as I was.

I had been thrilled. I had been crazy about him since the seventh grade and when I told him that I was gay and he told me that he was too, I figured it was fate. But Davis wasn’t ready to act on his feelings and by the time he was, he decided

that I was too much of a slut to be with. I explained that by me making regular trips into the city with my fake ID that I was much more knowledgeable than he was and so was the perfect person to shepherd him into the gay life. He disagreed. He wanted it to be his first time and some other guy's first time. They would learn together. His logic, in my opinion was flawed, but by the time I wore him down, he decided that he needed to tell his parents before he took the final step.

It was disastrous. They threw him out of the house on graduation night, all his possessions scattered on the front lawn, trophies, family photo albums, all of it, his whole life in pieces for anyone walking along the street to see. His father yelled obscenities to the neighborhood, his mother prayed, and finally, before I got there, his cousin Paul arrived with some friends. Since I had been the last phone call he made from the house, I appeared in time to save him from a bashing. I showed up with the rest of the defensive line from Jefferson High and when Paul and the others saw us, they just ran. I was big, the rest of the guys even bigger, and we made quite the intimidating sight. When Davis' father turned the stream of screeching obscenities on me, I warned him to shut his mouth.

“Or what you little faggot,” he yelled back at me.

“Or I will tell my father Mr. Boone,” I roared back, standing up straight.

He shut up instantly. Screaming at his son's best friend who happened to be gay was one thing, screaming at the kid of his boss at the docks was another. They were both union men, they were both stevedores, but my father was higher up on the food chain. And just because I was gay had not stopped me from making the all-city football team, had not stopped me from being tough and mean and scary and had never, once, diminished my father's pride. He would not take kindly to what Davis' father was saying to me at that moment.

My friend Sam told everyone to go back to what they were doing as he and the rest of my buddies helped collect Davis' things from the front lawn. I took him home with me. My mother fed him, my father talked to him in the den, and my sisters went through his things and figured out what could be salvaged and what was a goner.

That night, as soon as the lights went out, there alone in my room in the basement, I was all over my best friend. Even though I knew the timing sucked, I wanted him too much to let that sway me. My mouth was hot, my tongue was talented, and my hands knew all the right buttons to push. I had four years of practice being in bed with other men, having lost my virginity at fifteen, and was ready to give him all the benefit of my experience. But his hand went to my chest as he lay panting and swollen-lipped beneath me.

“We can’t,” he gasped, looking up at me with passion-clouded eyes.

“Oh we can,” I assured him, leaning down to recapture his full, perfect lips.

“No,” he held me off, squirming out from under me. He was only a little shorter than me, six feet to my six-five, but he was leaner, his muscles long and sinewy whereas I was built like the football player I was.

“Why?” I swallowed hard, staring at the tent of his boxers, my mouth watering at the sight of him. All that bronze skin I had dreamed about since I was twelve, I was more than ready to taste him. “I swear to you D, I know what the fuck I’m doing.”

He took a shaky breath, and I saw the war he was raging with himself. What his body wanted against what his soul needed. “I just—I just lost my folks ya know? I have to go to college in two weeks and beyond what the scholarship does I’m fucked. I need a job and—I mean when school lets out for Christmas break where the fuck will I go?”

“You can come here idiot?”

His eyes got flat and cold. “Fuck that. Once I get on the plane Cam I am never coming back here. Never.”

It was like he punched me. “What about me?”

His eyes softened. “You’ll come see me.”

“Oh I will?” I teased him, trying to lighten the mood.

“Yeah,” he nodded, the smile turning up the corners of his beautiful mouth.

“Wherever I am you’re gonna be and that’s why this...this ain’t gonna work. If it got weird with us then I might as well just fuckin’ kill myself ya know? You’re all I got now Cam. You’re it. Without you...I got nothing. I got no family at all.”

We had met in kindergarten. I remembered him at all my birthday parties and even though our parents had never been close, the Boones were not Italian and in our neighborhood...but I was still allowed to be at his house and he was always welcome in mine. I didn’t have one memory of childhood, good or bad, that did not include Davis Boone.

When I broke my arm jumping off the rook of Theresa Fucilla’s house, he was the one that walked me home and went with me to the emergency room with my father. When his new bike got stolen, I scoured the neighborhood with him for a week until we found it. We were inseparable and now I was it, I was his whole world; I was his one and only remainder of home. So I understood him not wanting to lose me but at eighteen, horny with raging hormones, all I wanted was to be buried to my balls inside of him. I made a sound like I was dying.

“Please Cam,” Davis cried, moving forward in a rush, grabbing me, wrapping his arms around me, molding his warm body to mine. “You know I love you.”

And I did know it but I wanted to make him feel it. I wanted him to know how good it could be with us, between us, and most of all I wanted his legs wrapped around me, his head thrown back, eyes closed, panting, moaning my name. I wanted him riding my shaft, I wanted to push deep inside him and I wanted him to splatter my stomach with come. I wanted to own Davis Boone; it was all I ever wanted.

“Please Cam,” he said into my shoulder, pressing, pushing against me, moving without realizing it, trying to wriggle closer, his warm breath on my skin driving me right out of my mind.

“Okay,” I gasped, shoving him off me as I stood up, crossing the room to the opposite wall, breathing hard, gripping the edge of my desk, willing my body to calm down, holding on for dear life because I didn’t want to vent my frustration at him.

“Cam?”

“Give me a second okay?”

“Okay,” he breathed out.

I heard the calm in his voice and for a second I wanted to kill him. He was so relieved that I wasn't going to force him to have sex with me, like I was a rapist or something.

"You don't...you don't know how much I want the first time to be with you Cam. I...you're so gorgeous and when you kissed me I nearly...and if you kept going there's no way I could say no but...that I mean more to you than just—it means everything. It means you love me too. You're my best friend, always have been, always will be and now you showed me ya know? You showed me."

Oh yeah, I was goddamn fuckin' saint.

"You want me to go upstairs and sleep on the couch?"

"No," I growled at him, pushing off the desk. "I will."

I was almost to the stairs when he stopped me.

"Promise me we'll always be friends."

"I promise," I said quickly, starting up the steps.

"Cam."

I looked over at him disheveled in my bed, blond curls tousled, big blue eyes narrowed in half, clad only in his boxers pushed low on his narrow hips and couldn't hold back my groan of need. I had never wanted anyone like I wanted him.

“You’ll find someone perfect for you and when you do I’ll be all kinds of jealous.”

“Yeah,” I nodded, stomping up the stairs. I was sure I would.

“Cameron Frances Mancini are you listening to me?”

From the shrill sound of his voice I was guessing I had been checked out for several minutes in the middle of him talking to me. “Sorry D, now what?”

There was a frustrated growl on his end. “I said that I would come and see you but you live...I mean, my folks are still—”

“No I know,” I assured him. I didn’t want to see his parents either, not even to accidentally bump into; it wasn’t fair to ask him to run the risk. I had thought that sometime over the course of eighteen years that they would bury the hatchet, give him a call and tell him that being gay might not be okay with them but losing their son over it was ridiculous. But the ice never thawed and when my parents moved to La Grange, away from the old neighborhood, I never even drove by their house anymore.

“God are you even listening to me?”

I was, focused, again. “Yes I’m listening.”

“Cam you’re my best friend. You’re all I have from...you’re it so I need you to be here. It’s a really big deal for you to—”

“Sure, okay.”

“It’s a big deal and I need—”

“Oh for crissakes I said okay already, don’t fuckin’ run it into the ground.”

His laughter was relieved and warm.

“When is it again?”

“This weekend, Saturday...in two days.”

“Fine, I’ll figure something out.”

“You will?”

“Yeah.”

“Okay,” he cleared his throat. “So, um, are you coming alone or is Jason coming too?”

I made a noise in the back of my throat. “Jace and me, we’re takin’ a break.”

“Why?” He caught his breath which was sweet of him, like he was really sorry.

“We just want different things.”

“Oh? What did he want that you didn’t?”

“To have another guy join us in bed,” I said softly so no one would hear, standing up, grabbing folders and keys off the top of my desk.

“That sounds hot? Why is that a problem?”

“Oh I’m sure to you it does sound hot but to me...I want different stuff at thirty-five than I did at twenty ya know? I’m ready for the house and the dog and the ring.”

Silence.

“Davis?”

“Yeah no, I know...so you’re doing what?”

“Taking a break. He’s figuring out what he wants.”

“No he’s not,” he sighed, “you already figured it all out for him. I know you, and I know how your mind works.”

“What are you talking about?”

“The second he said he wanted some other guy to join you that’s all you heard. You stopped listening right then.”

“What’re you trying to say?” I frowned, wondering what the hell he was talking about.

“That you are an all or nothing guy Cameron Mancini and once he even hinted that you weren’t enough you were done.”

“I don’t—”

“He wanted you too idiot, not just the other guy but all you heard was that he wanted somebody else and so you shut yourself off. He’s probably trying to figure out how the hell to fix it with you.”

“It can’t be fixed,” I told him. “He said what he really wanted, he can’t take it back.”

“See,” he exhaled. “You should just say that you and Jason Collins are over because let’s face, you already are.”

And he was right. “Yep.”

“When did it end?”

“I dunno, like a month, month and a half ago.”

“I can tell you’re devastated.”

I grunted.

“Jesus.”

“What?”

“Do you have any idea what a prick you are?”

I shrugged.

“Did you shrug?”

It was like he could see me. “Fuck you.”

He started coughing.

“You’re such an asshole D.”

“I know,” he cleared his throat. “So you’re coming?”

“Oh for fuck’s sake I said I was didn’t I?”

“When will you be here?”

“Friday night.”

“Swear.”

“What’re you five?” I snapped at him.

He chuckled. “Friday, I’ll see you then. Call me as soon as you know when you’ll be in and I’ll be at the airport.”

“Fuck that, I’ll see you at your place.”

“Cam I—”

“I’ll see ya,” I grunted.

“Fine, I’ll see you.”

It was only when I hung up that I realized what I’d done. “Crap.”

The laughter snapped my head up as I saw my partner Everett Hastings sitting at his desk, leaning back, feet up next to his computer keyboard, with a shit eating grin on his face.

“Where ya goin’ now pretty boy?”

I flipped him off as he put his head back and roared. Watching me go from hard-ass police detective to total push-over for my best friend had him pretty damn amused.

Two

I had only been to my best friend's loft once before but my memory was good so I was able to give the cab driver directions from the airport. My best friend's place was not far from Union Square, South of Market, in a neighborhood that used to be more industrial but had gone through a lot of changes to become *thee* place to live in the city. Many buildings had been converted from warehouses to lofts and Davis' place was one of those.

It was a huge space with a heavy steel door that had to be rolled open and bolted on the inside. It had a high ceiling and you could see the pipes over your head, huge windows that were in no way child safe, a kitchen along one wall and the sink shared space with the counter where he had barstools for people to sit on. His dining room was on one side, his living room on the other, and his bedroom was behind a thick frosted wall of glass. The bathroom was to the side of his enormous king size—emperor size—bed. It was basically a huge studio except that it had a second level. His den was above his bedroom as were two more guest bedrooms and the second bathroom. It was a massive space and I had the fleeting urge to yell to see if my voice would echo.

As I took the stairs to the second floor to claim one of the bedrooms, I wondered where the hell my best friend was at four-thirty on a Friday afternoon. I had already called his office and was informed that he was gone for the weekend. After I showered and changed, realizing how hungry I was, I gave him a call.

“Hey,” he answered on the second ring and I could hear the noise behind him. He was out somewhere, probably at happy hour. “Where are you?”

“I’m at your place asshole, where are you?”

“What?” He gasped, which was fun to hear. “You’re where?”

“In your apartment.”

“But you were supposed to call me.”

“I have a key, I have the stupid thing that opens the security door downstairs and we both know I don’t do airports. I’m fuckin’ starving so I’m gonna go pick some shit up. You don’t even have olive oil in your pantry D. What the fuck?”

He chuckled. “I don’t cook, you know this. I eat out.”

“And breakfast? You don’t even have eggs.”

“I don’t have breakfast; I get coffee on the way to my office.”

“I don’t see a coffee maker in here either.”

“Are you listening to me? I don’t make it, I buy it.”

I groaned loudly. “I’ll get you one.”

“Why? Once you go I’ll never use it again.”

“I like coffee,” I told him. “And I’ll be here at least until Tues—”

“You know what, get the coffeemaker. You’re right, we’ll need it.”

He was agreeing with me?

“Did you hear me?”

I grunted. “When will you be here?”

“I’m coming now. I just need to ditch my friends and—”

“No don’t do that, we can catch up whenever you get here. I’ll eat and hang out and when you’re done just—”

“Cam,” his voice cracked which it never did. “I haven’t seen you in over a year. I want to—there are things I wanted to tell you and...I’ll be there as fast as I can.”

“Okay D, don’t hurt yourself.”

He chuckled and hung up. Not wanting to starve, knowing that our sleep schedules had never coincided especially since I was on east coast time; I grabbed his key and my leather jacket and headed out. Waiting for the man to rise from his coffin every morning while I waited for breakfast and coffee was not my idea of fun, I needed to stockpile his refrigerator with staples. Like milk. Who didn’t have

milk in their refrigerator? Even an ex-boyfriend of mine who was lactose intolerant had the soy kind. Jesus.

By the time I got back it was after six, but he was still a no show. I got the groceries put away, turned on some Latin jazz, little Astrud Gilberto, and started cooking peppers and sausages because I knew it was his favorite. It wasn't as good as my mother made, but nothing ever was. Though my father, after tasting mine, did say it was closer than any of my sisters could do.

I opened up a bottle of Chianti, and was tossing a salad when the door rolled open two hours later. Davis breezed in with four other men, all laughing, loud, tipsy but not drunk. They were all in the same kind of wool suits, tailored, expensive, with trench coats on over the top. On some of them the ties were loose, on others, like my best friend, the tie was missing.

I smiled at them.

"Jesus Christ," the guy on Davis' left breathed out. "Is this your friend?"

Davis nodded, clearing his throat, walking around the bar to reach me.

"You're cooking."

"I always cook," I reminded him, my voice husky, low, because it was so good to see him. I put down the wine glass and held out my arms. "C'mere."

He flew at me, hurling into my arms, wrapping his tight around me. He was trembling and I had no idea why.

“What’s wrong?”

He shook his head. “Nothing,” he pulled back, away from me but still staring at my face. “You look great.”

“I look the same,” I said as I moved around his kitchen to check the oven. “You’re hungry right?”

“Yes,” he coughed.

I looked over my shoulder, squinting at him. “Are you sure you’re all right?”

He cleared his throat. “Yep.”

I rolled my eyes, checked the sausages and then closed the door. I noticed that none of his friends had moved. “Hey, I’m Cam, anybody want some wine?”

They all wanted wine.

His friends were nice. Mitch and Jon and Alain and Rick were all lawyers just like Davis, except for Alain who worked as a CFO at some company that designed synergy solutions. I nodded like I knew what the hell that was. As they all got comfortable on the barstools, Davis suggested that they all take seats in the living room.

“Oh no,” Alain assured him, “the view is great from here.”

But Davis was right, the city lights were better from the living room. I started to butter bread when Davis was suddenly at my elbow.

“Did you want to change?”

I turned to him. “What?”

He forced a smile. “Well we’re all in suits and...you’re in your jeans and that T-shirt that looks about two sizes too small and you’re barefoot and—”

“And? If you’re embarrassed of me take your friends and—”

“That’s not what I mean,” he cut me off. “You’re just...those jeans have seen better days huh?”

They were old faded jeans and they were covered in holes but who the hell cared? “Davis your place is just like my place and if I’m home I’m gonna be comfortable. What the hell?”

He pursed his lips, pressing them together like he wanted to say something.

“Why don’t you go change? Just ‘cause your friends can’t doesn’t mean you shouldn’t be comfortable.”

“No it’s fine,” he said, reaching toward me but stopping himself at the last second.

He was being so weird. “Hey look.”

His gaze followed where I had tipped my chin. “A red coffeemaker?”

“You like red,” I told him.

“Yeah but,” he swallowed hard, raking his fingers through his short, thick blond curls. “You shouldn’t just get stuff that I’ll like. What about—”

“It makes espresso too,” I grinned at him. “If you’re a good boy I’ll make you some later.”

After a minute he shifted so he was standing behind me. I felt his breath on the back of my neck.

“What’re you doing?”

His hand was suddenly on my hip before his fingers twirled into my belt loop.

“D?” I asked, looking over my shoulder at him.

“Your hair sure got long,” he said, curling a long piece around my ear.

“Yeah it’s called undercover,” I teased him, not sure what was up with him.

“Are you nervous about tomorrow?”

“Yes,” he said fast, looking relieved, “really nervous.”

I shrugged, “don’t be. I’ll be right next to you. I brought my black suit I hope that’ll be okay.”

“It’s perfect thank you.”

“I even brought a tie.”

I heard his breath hitch and looked back at him again. “Are you sure you’re okay?”

He nodded fast.

“I made enough if you wanna invite them to eat.”

“Or we’re eating,” Alain said as he walked up beside me. “Can I help butter your bread?”

The way he said it, all flirty like he was just so smooth made me instantly annoyed. Guys who shoveled it on, laid the lines on you, those kind of men did nothing for me. Honest, from the heart, genuine desire, real need, even halting declarations which ended with straightforward questions like *do you want to take me home and fuck my brains out* just tuned me on big time. I had never been one for games. I liked all the cards on the table.

Turning, I fixed him with a heated stare, wet my lips and leaned close to him. “I dunno man; you think you’re up for that?”

His eyes went all over me and he caught his breath. “Sorry, that was stupid.”

I settled, calmed, gave him a smile. “It’s okay.”

The muscles in his jaw clenched and his eyes narrowed in half. “Davis never said you were gorgeous, I would have remembered.”

I reached up and touched his cheek. Handsome man, delicate features, sinful lips, eyes the color of a storm-washed sky. He was definitely my type. He leaned into my touch, rubbed his cheek into my palm.

“After dinner would you come home with me?”

It was straight forward and I liked that.

“Jesus Cameron you’re beautiful.”

“And I cook,” I teased him.

“And you’re busy,” Davis growled, shoving in between us, pushing Alain out of the kitchen before rounding on me.

“Davis!” Alain yelled at him.

“Go sit at the goddamn table,” he rasped back, pointing at me. “My friends are off limits you shit, you know that.”

I shrugged, “he started it.”

He growled at me. “Tomorrow is my big day, could you not fuck everything in sight until you get back home please.”

“Fine,” I said, going back to preparing the meal.

“You just got out of a long-term relationship; you’re so ready to start a new one?”

“Who said anything about a relationship,” I asked him, scowling. “I just wanna get laid.”

“Count me in!” Alain volunteered.

“Aww,” I smiled over at him. “Thank you.”

“Me too,” Jon waved at me, “really. Your friend is smokin’ hot Davis, why didn’t you tell us?”

“What did I miss?” Rick asked as he returned from the bathroom.

“Cameron’s going to be sleeping around while he’s here.”

“Oh yeah?” Rick gave me a devilish grin. “Then let me tell you something Cameron, I give the best blowjobs in the city. Ask anyone.”

“They are good,” Mitch vouched for him, “but mine are better. Come on Cam, make us a plate and let’s go. I’ll show you at my house.”

I laughed at them; they were nice guys and obviously enjoyed giving Davis crap. When I wagged my eyebrows for my best friend only then did I notice how upset he looked. Moving fast, I did what I always did and cupped his face in my hands, staring into his face, bringing him close to me.

“Jesus you’re really in a twist about this thing tomorrow huh?” I asked, my thumbs smoothing over his cheeks as he gripped my wrists. “It’ll be okay D I

promise,” I said before I drew him forward, into my arms, wrapping him up, burying my face down in his shoulder. “I’m here, it’ll be great.”

I felt his hands slide across my back, before he let out a deep breath and leaned into me, pressing, sighing, and shaking.

“Um,” one of the men said from behind me, “thanks for the offer of the meal Cam and it smells amazing but I think we’re gonna go.”

“No,” Davis said huskily, easing back, leaning out of my arms. “Let’s have dinner, Cam always cooks enough to feed an army, we’ll never finish it all if you guys don’t help. Besides, he’s a fantastic cook; you don’t want to miss out.”

They said no but he insisted and in the end, Davis got them to stay because Davis could convince anyone to do just about anything with enough time. He wore you down.

It was nice to sit and listen to the men talk, hear the banter and the traded stories. They excluded me without meaning to, just part of being the only one without the ivy league education and the six-figure a year job.

“So Cam,” Alain asked, pouring himself another glass of wine, his fourth, “what is it that you do?”

“I’m a police detective,” I smiled at him.

“You carry a gun?”

It was a stupid question that I had stopped answering years ago. The only one worse being the one that followed.

“You ever have to shoot anybody?”

“Yes,” I assured him, standing to clear the table.

“I didn’t mean to—”

“I know you didn’t, but I don’t do the highlight reel unless I’m really trashed or if I wanna get in your pants.”

The table fell silent as I carried plates to the kitchen.

“He didn’t mean anything,” Davis said from behind me.

“I know, it’s fine, I just don’t feel like getting into it tonight.”

I felt his hands on my hips.

“What is with you tonight?” I chuckled.

He leaned into me and I froze. His hands were suddenly up under my T-shirt, sliding over my abdomen, the hard bulge in his dress pants shoved into the crease of my ass.

“Davis,” I began, swallowing down my heart, trying to breathe as I had to clutch at the counter. “What the hell are—”

“Cam,” he rasped his voice cracking as he pressed his face between my shoulder blades. “I need to talk to you okay?”

I nodded, concentrating on breathing.

“You feel so good,” he said, his hands tracing over my stomach. “Your body is so beautiful, always has been but now,” he gasped, “Christ, I could eat you.”

He was going to kill me where I stood.

“When everybody leaves will you forget about the dishes and pound me through my mattress?”

My knees went weak; my groan sounded strangled.

“I’ll take that as a yes,” he said, pressing a kiss to the side of my neck before he ordered everyone to get the hell out.

The protests came fast.

“Please,” he urged them. “I need to let my best friend fold me half and fuck me until I pass out.”

I never saw people move so fast in my life.

When I looked at him, he was grinning like crazy, his blue eyes flashing, one eyebrow arched as he looked at me, daring me to move.

“Have you lost your mind?”

He shrugged.

“You said you didn’t wanna mess stuff up with us. I’m the only family you got.”

“When was the last time you heard that from me?”

Last time? What the hell? “Every time you see me you tell me again how glad you are that we never tried to mess up what we—”

“Wait,” he put up his hand, “think now. Really try and remember when the last time was.”

And I tried then to pinpoint a date in my mind.

“See?”

“What am I seeing?”

He took a breath. “Lately—no not lately, for like the last couple years, I’ve been thinking that I couldn’t be any more stupid if I tried. I mean you’re it, you’re everything and what am I gonna do, keep counting on your relationships crashing and burning so you’re never serious about anyone? Jesus, I thought Jason was never going to fuck up. Thank God he’s a bigger idiot than I am.”

I just stood there, staring at him.

“Say something.”

I had no idea what to say.

“Cam?”

“Why are you fucking with me?”

“I would never,” he promised me. “And you know that.”

I was stunned. Years of putting him out of my mind and now he was ready to have me? What the hell?

He put up his hands. “It’s not fair, I know. You knew this was right when we were eighteen and I didn’t and I wasn’t ready and I was scared and now because I’m ready you’re just supposed to jump on board the love train.”

I tried really hard not to smile at his phrasing.

“I know, it’s lame and I’m stupid but we both knew that and really... I’m so sorry Cam. What can I tell you that you don’t already know?”

There had to be something.

“Quit your job, move out here, get a new job and....or,” he swallowed hard, “if you won’t or can’t... I’ll move home.”

“Oh fuck you!” I roared at him. “I would never make you move home.”

“Good,” he shivered, swallowing hard, “I don’t want to but really, Cam...you’re the one so if you say I have to...I will. I mean you’ve been it since I was old enough to know who my best friend was, I just didn’t know. And now you’re the only one I want to sleep with, the only one I want to kiss and I swear to God I will even learn to cook so you don’t have to do it every night. But please, just let me have you.”

“What if it ends up just like you were worried about all those years ago?” I was struggling so hard not to just grab him, still unsure if I was awake or asleep. Maybe the plane had gone down somewhere over Texas and I was in a coma somewhere.

“Listen, I almost threw up watching you touch Alain and I realized, even though I was pretty sure damn sure before, that I cannot, will not, have you touching anybody else from now on. I need you.”

“And you were gonna tell me this when?”

“What’re you—”

“When did you have this fuckin’ revelation?”

“I told—”

“Its bullshit,” I said, turning away from him, striding toward the open window to get some air. “You just got sentimental watching me with—”

“Cam I haven’t even seen you in almost two years.”

Which was precisely my point. I was mad suddenly, really mad, where did he get off?

He stepped in front of me and before I could move away, he had his hands on my face.

“Baby.”

“I am so not your—”

“Oh yes you are,” he assured me, leaning in, “always have been I was just too scared and too stupid to know it. Kiss me like you mean it.”

I always meant it when I kissed anybody. If I kissed him, ever, neither one of us would recover. “God I wanted this,” I confessed, my voice deep and husky, and full of wanting him.

“What?” He asked, his eyelids fluttering as he looked up at me.

“You looking at me like you are now, I really wanted it.”

“Not wanted, want,” he corrected me.

“You hope,” I teased him.

“No I know,” he surged forward and I smiled under the onslaught of his lips and teeth, bumping, drawing blood, not meaning to hurt me but not caring at the same time. It was unavoidable at that point.

“Forgive me my blindness,” he said, his tongue sliding over my bottom lip before he bit it gently. “And I’m so sorry for everything. I—”

“It doesn’t matter,” I promised, tipping his chin up as I bent and sealed my mouth over his. When my tongue touched the seam of his lips, he parted them for me eagerly. He tasted like honey and I pulled him forward and kissed him deeply, letting him feel the beginning of the rhythm I could provide. The moan, torn from

his chest, went straight to my cock. Always, without fail, he was the one man who set fire to my blood. When I eased back, he leaned with me, trying to prolong the contact.

His eyes were glazed as I looked down at him, and he licked his lips, which was very sexy.

“We should talk,” I said gently, holding him tight in my arms.

“Can I just wanna get in bed with you. That’s all I want, it’s all my body wants, it’s all I can do right now period.” The heavy-lidded eyes, the slow, sly curl of his lip, the way he breathed out, slowly, deeply... I was lost. “We can talk later.”

I wasn’t sure whether insisting we clear the air first was the best thing or not and my body was not helping at all. The picture of him under me kept slipping into my head over and over.

“Look at you,” he said, lifting my T-shirt, hands sliding over my burning skin. His touch sent sizzling heat straight to my groin. “You’re so beautiful.” He let out a low moan of appreciation.

But he was the beautiful one I was just me, just a jock who became a cop and the only thing that ever made me special was my family....and him.

“I can’t wait to feel you inside me.”

And because he'd voiced his desire it was all I could think about. My caution, control, was useless when it came to Davis Boone.

"Are you okay? You sound like maybe you like the idea of that."

So much for silence, I seemed incapable of not making a complete fool of myself. My jaw hurt it was clenched so tight. All I could do not to grab him and kiss him breathless.

His smile was wicked. "Somebody wants me bad."

Like there was ever any question of that.

I turned to look at him and he lunged at me, kissing my eyes, my nose, my cheeks, my jaw, my throat and then my lips. I felt how much he wanted me; he couldn't seem to get close enough.

"You're very forceful Mr. Boone." I smiled at him, pulling back to look into his glittering eyes.

He just stared at me. "You have no idea how I'm gonna be."

I concentrated on breathing. "We need to talk."

"Whatever you want, I'll do whatever you want after."

"After?"

He leaned into me, his chest pressed to mine.

My head snapped up and my eyes locked on his.

“Yeah. After you fuck me for hours... I’ll do whatever you want.”

I just stared at him.

“Come with me,” he said, lacing his fingers into mine, tugging me after him.

I followed, feeling how tight he was holding on. Two steps up from the floor to where his bed sat behind that frosted wall of glass. I had time to admire the dark earth tones, so very masculine, the myriad shades of brown and black before he had his hands all over me.

I stilled his restless fingers, flattening them against my chest, over my heart.

“So talk.”

“I said after.”

“No now, I want to hear about this epiphany of yours.”

“You scared me.”

“When?”

He just looked at me.

I waited.

He swallowed hard, his eyes searching mine. “Last night when I talked to you I thought Jesus.... I haven’t talked to Cameron in so long... I have no clue what’s going on in his life and then you tell me you broke up with Jason because

he wants a threesome and I'm thinking shit, what if you wanted that? What if I lose you to—"

"Never mind," I chuckled, pulling him close, "clearly you're overwrought. Lemme kiss you."

"Wait," he tried not to smile.

"Jesus," I growled at him, "stop, go—which is it?"

"No that's not," he exhaled sharply; "I just got it you know? In that second, I got it."

"D," I said, reaching for him, putting my hand on his cheek to comfort him.

He leaned into my touch, covering my hand with his, pressing my palm hard against his cheek. "I knew right then that if I didn't tell you the truth I'd lose my shot at ever having a home."

"Davis—"

"You're my home Cam," he said, sliding my hand down his cheek, to the side of his neck and lower under the collar of his dress-shirt, all the time, walking backwards, moving me toward the bed. "And if I lose you then all the time we spent apart would've been for nothing. I know I had to grow up, learn to trust, find out what I needed to know before I could come home."

"Davis, honey, you don't have to—"

“You’ve only ever been in love with me. I’m not stupid, I know that for a fact, but I know too that the time between when we see each other is getting longer and longer and pretty soon you’re going to give up on me. Pretty soon, you’re going to fall in love with somebody else. I can’t have you fall in love with someone else Cam,” he said softly, his voice husky, his pupils dilated now as he stared at me. “And I’m lucky because you haven’t, not yet.”

“Davis—”

“And so I begged you to come and here you are,” he said, his voice going out on him as the tears filled his eyes. He gave me the smile that could break my heart. “You’re here with me and I’m going to make you want to stay and never leave me.”

I nodded.

“Cam,” he breathed out my name. Something had pleased him.

I went silent watching him, waiting. To see the familiar look on his face, the obvious delight, made it hard for me not to just grab him. Ripples of pleasure were coursing through me.

“You agreed. Did you mean you’ll stay?”

“We need to talk about it,” I smiled at him.

“So you’ll think about it?”

“I’m already thinking about it.”

He took a quick breath, like he was diving into a pool before he grabbed me, kissed me and the noises he made, the way his hands were all over me, under my shirt, gliding over my abdomen, biting and licking my throat, pressing kisses against my neck, my jaw.... he took my breath away.

“Cameron....”

I closed my eyes and let my head fall back, loving the way his mouth ran over my skin as he kissed his way down the side of my neck to my shoulder. “D maybe—”

“Maybe what?” He asked, before he shoved me back hard. I hit the bed I hadn’t realized was that close behind me. The way he was looking at me as he stood over me was very possessive, very hot.

“Maybe we should slow down.”

He made me gasp when he came down on top of me. I couldn’t stifle my laughter.

“What?”

“You’re missing the meaning of slow,” I smiled; reaching up to frame his face in my hands, take in the luminous smile and the now glowing sapphire blue

eyes. I had always wondered if they got deep and dark with lust and it seemed I had my answer. “And you’re adorable but I want to talk to you and—”

“I don’t wanna talk to you,” he said, swallowing hard. “I want you to take off your clothes.”

I could feel my heart pounding just looking at him.

“You should see how you’re looking at me, like I’m a ghost or something.”

“Sorry.” I smiled at him. “It’s just I’ve been waiting on you my whole life.”

“Do you want me Cam?”

My heart stopped. “Oh yes.”

“And you love me, really... only me.”

“Davis—”

“Because I’m the only one you love.”

It really was not any kind of revelation. I could just tell him since he already knew. Everybody did. “Yes.”

“Same here, there’s only you.”

I stopped breathing.

“Show me.”

“Honey—”

“Cameron...show me,” he pleaded, and I felt him shaking. “Please baby.”

I moved my hands down his throat before I started unbuttoning the dress shirt he was wearing. The way he closed his eyes under my hands, the trembling, it was all very satisfying.

“What are you thinking?”

I was silent as he sat up, straddled my hips. My hands roamed up his thighs before I even realized I’d done it.

“Talk to me.”

I watched him instead as he slid the unbuttoned shirt from his shoulders and pulled it off. There was all at once the sleek golden skin I remembered, the defined muscles in his arms, the hard pecs, washboard abs, his collarbone that drove me crazy and his long, smooth throat.

“You should see your eyes,” he breathed in, wetting his lips. “So dark...”

I stared up into the blue eyes I loved. “You’re gorgeous.”

“Cameron,” my name was spoken like he was in pain as he shifted over my groin, pushing down into me, “tell me, say it...say it now.”

“I love you Davis.”

“Then fuck me,” he said, his voice husky, barely there. “I’ll beg if you want.”

“D.”

“Cam” my name almost whimpered. “Baby please....I want you inside me.”

Which annihilated any remaining strength I had to say no to him.

I heard his breath catch as I pulled him down to me. Our remaining clothes were shed in a frantic rush and even though I wanted to kiss him and hold him and make slow love to him I knew that it had to wait. Because as much as I wished he knew the depth of my love, he needed to be shown. For Davis, in that moment, desire equaled heat and urgency. If I didn't manhandle him and pound him down into the bed I couldn't really want or need him that much. And right then there was nothing as important as him knowing that any more time away from him would kill me. So I was rough with him, demanding and when he was naked, sprawled out on the bed under me, I sat there staring down at him, drinking in the sight of him as he was finally right where I wanted him.

“Cam,” he breathed out. “Please.”

“God I missed you.” I told him as I ran my hands over his skin, under his knees as I pulled him forward.

He couldn't stop shaking, his whole body vibrating under me. “You did?”

Like he could ever be replaced. “I did,” I answered as I gently bit the side of his neck where it joined his shoulder, kissed down his chest, sucking at the same time, licking, my mouth moving slowly, leaving deep red marks on his skin.

His soft moan before the pleading began. “Please baby.”

“Please baby what?”

“Cameron I’m never going to...I...”

“Can’t talk?”

“Let you go,” he rasped out, his voice cracking as the tears filled his eyes.

“Cameron I just want to be with you. I don’t need to...” He was pushing up into my hand, at the same time wrapping his legs around my waist. “Cam...”

“Yes?”

“Please Cam,” barely a whisper now, the whimpered urgency there in his labored breathing, his hot, flushed skin, the way he let his head fall back on the bed. “I’m so sorry I was so stupid for so long. Don’t make me beg you.”

“Beg,” I growled against his ear, my hand slipping over him, gripping him gently.

“Please baby...please.” His back bowed, his voice cracked.

I leaned over him running a hand down over his abdomen, my lips on his throat. He jolted when I bit him, let out a deep sigh when I licked over it.

“Cam...baby...please all I want is to be with you, never leave you I just—I love my...baby.”

To be there, with him, I was drowning in sensory overload. I knew his body so well and didn't. I would need to learn how he liked to be touched, learn if he liked hard and fast or slow and deep.

"No," he howled when I reached toward his nightstand. I already had the lube; there was only one more thing I needed.

"Davis I—"

"No," he growled at me. "I've never, not once without and I'm clean. Are you?"

"I'm a cop," I squinted down at him, unable to hold my annoyance, my thumb sliding over his gold eyebrow, loving the feel of him, memorizing every texture, every reaction, and every look. "I'm clean."

"And have you ever fucked anyone without a condom?"

"No," I shook my head and then was stunned to silence as the most radiant smile was given to me. He was breathtaking.

"So I'm first, I'll be your first...me....with nothing between us."

I had never been inside anyone without a condom. Never wanted to be, never cared enough to ask for that gift. But now, my best friend in the world, the man who had my heart since we were twelve, him I would be inside and I would feel everything. It was too much.

“Davis—”

He pulled me down for a kiss, his tongue driving deep inside as I lined up the head of my painfully engorged shaft with his ready entrance. I had put my fingers and his lube to good use, stretching and preparing him, sliding in and out of him until he was writhing under me, adding fingers until I knew he was ready for my cock. When I finally slid inside of him, the heat, the pressure, how unbelievably tight he was, all of it, everything, made my heart stop.

Davis tore his mouth from mine and yelled my name.

It was the sweetest sound I ever heard followed by the demand that I fuck him. Hard.

I held him down, and by his response I understood that the dominance was craved. He cried out when I pulled back only to plunge back deep inside. He begged me not to be gentle, mine to do with as I pleased.

Three

When I woke up I knew instantly that I was alone in the mammoth bed.

When I rolled my head sideways, I found him standing over me, hovering.

“What’re you doing?”

“Watching you sleep.”

“Why?”

“Because you’re finally in my bed, I never thought I’d pull off that trick.”

I grinned up at him.

He was silent for a minute, thinking about something. “Do you think your mother will hate me?”

I scowled at him. “What’re you talking about?”

“Your sisters? Your Dad?”

“Davis—”

“I bet they will though... hate me I mean, when I take you away from Chicago.”

“We need to talk about all that.”

“Why?”

“I have a job, you have a job...we need to slow down and figure everything out.”

“Can’t you transfer? Don’t policemen do that?”

“Yeah but—”

“I just made partner, I have to stay here. You said you wouldn’t make me move home.”

“And I won’t,” I assured him. “I won’t ever make you do any—”

“Oh,” he breathed out, “I see you—you aren’t going to make me leave San Francisco but you’re not moving here.”

“Davis we haven’t even talked. Why can’t we talk?”

“Because I want my life to start right now!”

“You’re being an ass,” I informed him. “I don’t live on your timeline. You don’t get to decide that you want me and then get me. It doesn’t work like that. We live two very distinct very separate lives; we need to figure out a way to combine them.”

He bit his bottom lip. “I just want to be with you.”

“And I want that too, we just need to figure out how,” I said, reaching for him.

He took my hand and let me pull him back down into bed, into my arms. The way he wrapped around me, snuggling into my shoulder, so natural, like he'd been doing it for years, made me smile. I realized after several minutes, that he had lifted his head and was glaring down at me.

“What?”

“You're not listening to me?”

“Yes I am,” I lied, pulling him back down, stroking his forehead, watching the golden brows furrow like they always did when he was irritated with me. “I just can't get over the fact that you're in bed with me.”

“Well I am and since I plan for it to be a continual thing we need to—”

“I could die happy right here.” I said, shifting closer to him, burying my fingers in this thick hair. “Davis Boone...holy shit.”

Me saying his name must have appealed to him, his quivering breath, the whine in it full of need, told me as much.

I chuckled into his hair, leaning close, breathing him in. God I loved him, couldn't get enough of him. “I always wanted to just lie in bed with you.”

“Yeah?”

I leaned over and kissed him so he'd know. I made sure I got all of his mouth, kissing him thoroughly, deeply, letting him feel the jolt of need that ran

through me. It was a demanding, consuming, lingering kiss, my lips pressed to his making it last until he pulled away so he could breathe.

“God Cam the way you kiss me.” He said and I felt his breath on my face as my lips were still hovering over his. “Don’t stop.”

I slanted my mouth over his; kissing him so hard that the moaning was guttural, up from his soul.

“Cam,” he rasped out, gulping for air when he shoved me off. “I could die from this.”

“C’mere,” I said gently, leaning in.

“Wait,” he pushed me back again. “I wanna talk to you.”

“You don’t think maybe we could do that in the morning?” I chuckled.

“No I—”

“My dear sweet man,” I sighed, staring down into his eyes. I just wanted to bask in his attention. When I bent for another kiss, my hands sliding into his hair; he closed his eyes under my touch. Leaning back, I spoke close to his ear. “I feel like I haven’t seen you in years.”

“It felt like it,” he told me.

I sucked his earlobe inside my hot mouth.

The noise he made was full of need.

“I didn’t think you’d ever want me. “

“Idiot, you’re my home, I’ve always wanted you, I just needed to make sure that it would work with us. I couldn’t ever lose you.”

“And now?”

“Now I know that I have to take a chance. I can’t let anyone else have you just in case it doesn’t work with us. I have to be brave.”

I chuckled and kissed his collarbone as he slid his fingers over my jaw. “Me too,” I smiled up at him. “I gotta dive into the deep end too.”

“I want to give you everything you’ll ever want.” He said, and leaned up, kissing my throat.

“I worry that we don’t want the same things.”

“We do. I promise we do.”

“Are you sure? Being made partner and all is—”

“No Cam,” he smiled, shifting over on top of me, pinning me to the bed. My body instantly responded to him being pressed against me. “I just want a home, with you.”

I was silent, hoping he finally knew what he wanted and praying that it really was me and a life with me. Just staring up into his dark blue eyes, my hands in his hair, brushing it back from his face, made my heart hurt.

“I’m going to make you so happy if you just let me.”

I smiled at him.

“And if you decide to move out here and if you don’t want to be a policeman anymore, you don’t have to be.”

It took a second for his words to filter into my brain. “Wait. You’re saying I could quit if I wanted and stay home.”

“Yeah, that’s what I’m saying.”

I smiled slyly. “Just stay home and cook for you and be here every night to do wicked things to your bod?”

He caught his breath. “Oh yes please.”

“Can you ever really see that happening?”

“About the wicked things?”

“Oh no that’s a done deal that you got, it’s the kept man part that ain’t gonna fly.”

“A boy can dream,” he sighed heavily.

I opened my mouth to say something.

“Shut-up,” he cut me off, “I don’t need you to tell me everything right now. That was shitty of me to try and push. I just, I want you so bad Cam and now after...we were amazing. Weren’t we amazing?”

“Yes we were,” I assured him, easing him down to me, my mouth demanding, my tongue pushing between his lips. The moan rose up out of him, his eyes drifting closed. “There’s nothing as important as us. I just wanna be with you.”

“Baby—”

“Stop, you’re thinking too hard, everything’s settled.”

He jolted under my hands. “It is?”

“Yes,” I breathed out, sucking his bottom lip inside my mouth. “We’re gonna be together, we just have to figure out the geography. That’s the easy part.”

The sound he made when I rolled over on top of him made me smile.

“You’re mine,” he beamed up at me. “Cameron Mancini is all mine.”

And I was, had always been.

“I was so stupid.... all the things I said over the years.”

“Never mind,” I growled at him, “just lemme hold you.”

“But—”

I kissed him hard, my mouth slanting over his, my tongue invasive. I was rough and bruising and devoured him until I got the whimper I was after. His arms wrapped tight around my neck and I could feel his heart beating next to mine.

When I slipped my hand between us to fist his shaft, he moaned in my mouth. I pulled back just enough to unseal our lips but not move out of his embrace.

“Cam,” he moaned my name.

“Love,” I smiled at him. “You’re scared because now you have something to lose and you feel guilty for making me wait. Don’t okay? You learned that you love me; I learned that faith is a good thing to have. We’re good. We’ll figure the rest of it out.” I assured him, leaning my forehead against his, tucking him against me, and cuddling him close to my heart. “I’m so happy right now I could fly. It’ll be okay, we’re smart guys—well, I am—”

“You shit,” he growled at me.

I laughed back. “This is the first day of forever, now go to sleep.”

Arms around my neck, warm willing body plastered to mine, I was in heaven plain and simple. I had always known who the one was, and now, finally, he knew it too.

“I love you,” he breathed out the words.

Forever.