

Broken | 9: The Game

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LILY

It's been three weeks and five days since I last spoke to Mason. It's been three weeks and three days since I last saw my mom.

I don't even know how long it's been since I saw my dad.

I miss all of them.

But I miss Mason the most.

Why hasn't he texted? I want to hate him, but I can't.

I'm back at our running spot, hoping I'll see him. As I jog, my eyes keep scanning the trail ahead, looking for him.

I've picked up my phone to call or text him more times than I can count, but I never do it. If he wanted to talk, he'd reach out... right?

The trail is empty. No Mason.

I finish my run, drive home, and head to school.

As soon as I step inside the front hall, I can feel the energy. Tonight Ridgewood is playing Greendale for the first game of the season, and everyone is hyped.

There are posters hung everywhere. I see a janitor taking down one that says, "Fuck Greendale."

"Are you okay?" Harry asks me as we walk to the cafeteria together.

"I'm fine," I fake-smile. Over the past month, I've perfected it.

"You keep saying that, but I don't believe you," he says, stopping and leaning against a locker.

"Is it Olly?" he asks, and I roll my eyes.

"I met someone," I sigh, leaning next to him. "I fell for him, but it's over," I whisper, thinking about Mason's smile, his laugh, his body.

"Babe," Harry sighs, pulling me into his arms. "Want me to talk some sense into him? I'll even beat him if it helps."

"It won't help," I mumble, hugging him back, wishing it would. "I'm going to go home," I sniffle, fighting my tears back.

"You'll come to the game, right? Jonah said he's coming." He blushes slightly.

"I wouldn't miss it," I half-smile.

After school, when I get home, I get straight in the shower, turning it on scalding-hot and sitting down on the floor, wrapping my arms around my legs.

After I don't know how long, I hear Ava calling my name from somewhere in the house. I'd forgotten we had plans to meet up before the game.

She finds me in the shower, says, "Lily, are you okay?"

When I shrug, she turns off the water.

"Come on," she says gently as she wraps a towel around my shoulders.

I let her help me up and lead me to my room.

I sit on the end of the bed as she dries my hair for me. "Thank you," I croak out.

"Lily, you can't let Olly get to you," she sighs, sitting next to me.

"It's not Olly," I sigh.

"Your mom?" she asks, getting up and going through my wardrobe.

"Yeah," I lie.

"You can stay with me whenever you want," she offers, pulling out a pair of black jeans, a white long-sleeve, and my red jumper.

"Can I tell you a secret?" she asks, shoving the clothes into my lap.

"Of course," I nod, pulling the long-sleeve over my head, not bothering with a bra.

"You have your nipple pierced?" she gasps, looking at my now-covered chest.

"Yeah," I mumble, thinking of Mason's face when I got it done. "What's your secret?" I ask, changing the subject, wrapping the towel around my waist and grabbing a pair of panties.

"I think Leah is sleeping with him," she whispers.

"Oh? What makes you say that?" I ask, pulling on my jeans.

"I'm almost certain I saw them making out after school," she says as I sit next to her again.

"Oh well, I guess these things happen," I shrug.

"You don't care?" she asks.

"Life goes on," I say, mustering my most *I-can't-be-bothered* voice.

Ava changes the subject with an eye roll. "Are you ready to go? Jonah is meeting us there."

"Almost," I say, pulling on my shoes and grabbing my face paint. I quickly paint two lines on both my cheeks, then Ava's.

"Now we're ready," she smiles.

As Ava pulls her car into the parking lot, I instantly spot Mason's car on the other side.

"Jonah is by the bleachers," Ava announces, tapping on her phone.

"You go find us a seat. I'm going to pee," I tell her before making my way to the bathroom.

As I'm leaving the bathroom, my phone starts ringing in my pocket. "M" flashes across the screen, making my heart race and palms sweat.

"Mason?" I whisper, answering the call.

“Sorry to disappoint, princess,” an unfamiliar voice replies.

“Who is this?” I ask, moving to stand behind the small brick building, facing the visitors’ locker room.

“Liam. I’m Mason’s friend,” he says.

“Why are you calling me?” I ask, chewing my nails.

“I swiped his phone and read his texts,” he replies coolly.

“Okay?” I draw out.

“He spent the summer with you?” he asks curiously.

“A little bit,” I answer, kicking a loose stone with my foot.

“So why’d you stop talking to him?” Liam asks casually, and I bite my lip.

“He stopped talking to me,” I mumble, wanting to cry. Why did things have to be like this? I wish we could’ve just stayed how we were in the summer.

“Are you crying?” he asks as I swipe a stray tear away.

“Maybe,” I mutter, resting my head against the wall and looking up at the dark sky.

“How much do you know about Mason?” he asks in a low voice.

“What do you mean?” I ask, clearing my throat.

“I mean about Callum,” he states, and my whole body freezes. “Judging by your reaction, he told you.”

I frown, looking around. I spot a Greendale player with the number fifty-five on his chest scowling at me across the parking lot. “What reaction?” I reply, trying to sound as casual as possible.

“Pretty sure I’m looking right at you,” Liam states.

“Nope. I’m at home,” I lie, hoping like fuck he believes me.

“Look, I’m going to be honest with you,” he says, pushing himself off the wall, and I panic for a moment thinking he’s going to come over here.

“Mason is—shit,” he hisses, looking at the door that’s opened, and a fuming-looking Mason storms out.

“What the fuck are you doing?” I hear Mason’s voice through the phone as I watch him stomp up to his friend.

“We’re meant to be out on the field,” he snaps before the line goes dead, cutting me off from my eavesdropping.

I watch the two talking as I slowly slip my phone back into my pocket.

They exchange a few words before Liam starts walking back into the locker room, Mason following closely behind.

I want to yell out to him so badly.

Once they’re both inside again, I make my way to the bleachers.

By the time I make it to the bleachers, they are full.

Thankfully, Ava and Jonah saved me a seat on the end of a row in the middle.

“What took you so long?” Ava asks, leaning over Jonah to look at me.

“Long line,” I lie, looking at the Ridgewood players warming up, no sign of Greendale on the field.

“Why aren’t Greendale out yet?” Jonah asks, looking between us.

“No clue. Maybe they’re too scared to come out,” Ava laughs.

“Probably.” He joins her laughter, looking at the field.

“He’s there,” I say, pointing to Harry’s number sixty-eight.

He really wanted sixty-nine for shits and giggles, but the school wouldn’t let him, so he settled for sixty-eight.

“Finally!” The man sitting in front of me huffs when the Greendale players come out from under the bleachers.

My eyes instantly find number twelve.

He's standing off to the side talking to fifty-five, Liam.

"That one is Mason the quarterback, and the one next to him is Liam the running back.

They're the best players on the team and just the *worst*," I hear Ava explaining to Jonah.

"So we hate those two the most?" he asks, looking confused.

"Yup." She nods as the players start their warm-ups.

"I heard that his brother died and he's mentally fucked now, so they're probably going to lose," she adds, making me frown.

"How'd he die?" Jonah asks, and I want to scream at both of them to mind their business.

"I've heard three different ways—drowning, drive-by, and car accident, so take your pick." She laughs, and it takes all my willpower not to stand up and punch her in the face.

"That's really sad," Jonah snaps at her.

"Oh, he'll get over it." She tries to brush it off.

"What the fuck is wrong with you?" he asks in disbelief.

"Do you think this is funny too?" he snaps, looking at me.

"Quite the opposite, actually," I say, giving Ava an *are you serious?* look.

"Let's just watch the game."

Turns out Jonah knows less about football than I do.

He asks me what the rules are, and throughout the game what's happening, but all I can really tell him is when someone scores a touchdown or gets some points.

It takes all my power not to get up and start cheering when Mason scores three touchdowns.

I never actually noticed how good of a player he is.

After the last one, Jonah looks at me with a sad face.

"We're not going to win, are we?" he asks, and I shake my head.

There's no way Ridgewood could come back.

Greendale has crushed us.

Once the final whistle blows, some of the Ridgewood players throw their helmets on the ground, including Harry, while the Greendale players celebrate.

"I really thought Mason was going to suck.

I mean, I heard he got in mad shape, but with his brother I thought he'd be weak," Ava babbles as we make our way toward her car.

"Will you shut up?" Jonah exclaims.

Ava's face looks like she's just been slapped, and I bite my lip to stop myself from laughing.

"You know we're Harry's best friends, right?

We can make him dump you like that," she spits out, clicking her fingers.

"Try me, bitch," he states, not caring about her threat.

"Whatever." She rolls her eyes.

"Lily, you want a ride?" she snaps at me.

"Harry said he'd give me a ride," I lie.

Without another word, Ava stomps off toward her car.

"I can't stand her," Jonah groans as we head toward Harry's car.

“She has the best intentions,” I say.

“Sometimes,” I add, pursing my lips.

Jonah and I talk some more, leaning against Harry’s car while we wait for him.

My eyes keep glancing at the visitor locker rooms, hoping to catch another glimpse of Mason.

“Babe? What are you doing here?” Harry’s voice asks, making me pull my eyes away from the door to him.

“Ava was being a bitch,” I explain, making him roll his eyes.

“Typical.” He snorts, unlocking his car and throwing his duffle bag into the back seat.

“Cooper was on fire tonight,” he comments, nodding his head over to where I’ve been staring.

Where Mason and Liam are both walking out of the door.

“He wasn’t even making his normal shitty jokes,” Harry says as I unconsciously take a step closer to Mason.

“Which number was he?” I hear Jonah ask, but I don’t hear Harry’s reply because Mason has turned his head and is looking directly at me.

He stops walking, and it takes all my strength not to run over to him and throw myself into his arms.

“I feel bad for him.” Harry sighs as I watch Mason climb into his car while Liam gets into the passenger seat.

“Want to go to the party?” Harry asks as we all climb into his car.

“Sure,” I agree, wanting to get drunk to get my mind off Mason.

“Olly will be there,” he says, looking at me through the rearview mirror.

“I don’t care.” I shake my head.

I could not give any fucks about Oliver anymore.

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