

Briar POV

The waitress delivers the drinks we ordered, and I take a long swig of my tequila sunrise. I'm not much of a drinker, but in this moment, I feel it's alright to indulge. Derek swirls the amber liquid in his glass before he does the same. "What are you in the mood to eat, Briar?" Derek asks. "Honestly, I'm not sure if I can. I appreciate you bringing me here, Derek, but I probably won't be very good company." He smiles, and I've never noticed that he has dimples. "I'm not expecting anything from you Briar. I just want to make sure you have something to eat and a warm, comfortable place to sleep until you can deal with the sh*t storm Calob created." I want to tell him he doesn't have the right to say that about Calob, but he's right. "I'm not some weak woman who needs you to come and rescue me, Derek." "You are the farthest thing from weak. I know you are strong, Briar. Accepting help and friendship when you need it most doesn't make you weak. The fact that you have crumbled to the oor yet, is a testament to the woman you are. I have no doubt when you do crumble you will not let his mistakes keep you down. All I'm asking is that you let me be there in any way you let me."

"Why Derek? Why are you so desperate to help me through this cluster**k?" The waitress approaching our table interrupts us before he can answer. I'm not sure what I expect him to say, but I need to hear the answer. "Briar, are you alright if I order something for the two of us?" I nod and he asks me if I like lamb. "I do" I say, and he places our orders. Once the waitress is out of ear shot his eyes meet mine. "Do you want my honest answer or the one that would be considered socially acceptable given the circumstances?" "I would prefer honesty, always." "Briar, you are the most beautiful woman I have ever seen. I thought it the day we met three years ago, and I still feel that way today. I respected your marriage and would never cross that line with you before today. I grew up in a home where the wedding vows were held very loosely by my parents. I never wanted that for myself. I made a vow at a very young age that if I found the right woman and made that commitment she would never have to worry about where she stood with me. I'm not telling you this because I want you to date me now. I'm not a total a**hole. I know your heart is broken, and I would never take advantage of you. I would like to be your friend and my hope is at some point when you have healed, if you decide you can't forgive Calob, you will give me a shot."

I open and close my mouth like a sh out of water. How the hell do I respond to that? I take a deep breath before I nally say the rst thing that comes into my head. "Derek, I'm ready to go to bed. I really appreciate everything you just said, but my brain really can't process one more piece of information today." I stand and get ready to walk out when I remember that I have no way to get into the room he put me in. I turn back and he smiles. I notice the waitress setting our food down at the table and I feel like an a**hole for not even sharing the meal with him after he had already ordered. I asked him for honesty, I guess I just wasn't ready to hear it. "Come on, Briar, we will get your room key." He places his hand on the small of my back and leads me to the receptionist desk. A young woman with blonde hair and blue eyes greets us. She looks between us and smiles big at Derek. I'm not sure why I nd that irritating, but I do. She hands over the key card and Derek leads me over to the elevator. When we step inside, he pushes a code and the elevator lurches to life.

The elevator dings and the doors slide open. We step into the hallway and I notice there is only one door on this oor. He waves the key card and the reader turns green. "The code for the elevator is on the key card, Briar. I know you have my number if you need anything." He turns and steps inside the elevator. Once the doors slide shut, I sag against the door frame. I nally get myself together and step inside what can only be described as the most luxurious space I've ever seen. I grab my bags and plop down on the couch. I pull my phone out of my bag and dread turning it back on. I power on the phone and beep after beep indicates messages and calls, I've missed. I send a quick text to Lola telling her where I am and that I will call her tomorrow. I look at the messages from Calob and I'm tempted to delete them without even reading them, but like the masochist I am, I read every one. I turn my phone to speaker and listen to the voicemail he left me and that's my undoing. With no one around to watch me, I let myself give into the pain of my broken heart. Derek was right about one thing tonight. I will let myself crumble, but I will damn sure to build myself back up.

Calob POV

I step out of the OR and, for the rst time in hours, I'm alone. I slide to the oor and lean my back against the wall. I had to compartmentalize my feelings to be the surgeon that little boy I operated on needed, but now everything that I put away in that neat little box in my mind is breaking free. Briar is threatening to divorce me. I know what I did was wrong, and I am the only one to blame, but I can't let her go. I have to nd a way to prove that I am still the man she married. If she forgives me, I will spend the rest of my life showing her how much I love her. I spin the wedding band on my nger saying a prayer that I haven't completely lost the woman I love. I push myself to my feet and make my way back to my oce. I step into the ensuite bathroom and strip off my scrubs. Once I'm showered and back in my street clothes, I grab my bag from my oce and rush to the elevator. Maybe, if I'm lucky, she will still be at the condo. Maybe she will give me a chance to beg for her forgiveness. I'm sure I broke the speed limit as I weave in and out of evening trac. When I reach the condo, I say a silent prayer of thanks when I see Briar's BMW sitting in its parking space. I throw the car in park, and rush for the door without even grabbing my bag.

I fumble with my keys and push the door open. "Briar" I yell into the empty space. I take the stairs two at a time until I reach our room. My heart sinks when I nd it empty. I open the closet and notice her suitcase is gone. I walk slowly to the bathroom and her perfume and makeup case are no longer sitting next to my razor. I look down and see Briar's lab coat lying on the oor. I reach down and grab it off the oor, hugging it to my body. My wife is gone. I want to go back to this morning before we left for work. No, I want to go back in time a month and never make the biggest mistake of my life. Hot tears run down my cheeks. I rush back downstairs and outside to my car. I grab my bag and rush back inside. I dial Briar's number, and it goes right to voicemail. "Briar, I know your angry, but I would really like to at least have a conversation about what I did. I can never tell you how sorry I am that I hurt you. I love you so much, Briar, and I will spend the rest of my life trying to prove that to you. Please, I'm begging you, Briar, to call me back." I end the call and dial Lola. The phone rings three times before she nally answers.

"Lola" I say, but she cuts me off. "You have some nerve calling my phone after what you did to Briar." "Lola, please listen to me. I made a mistake. I never meant to hurt my wife. I was an id*ot. Is she there? I need to talk to her and tell her how sorry I am." "You're pathetic Calob. She loved you, and you hurt her in the worst way possible. Do you think some words will change what you did? You don't deserve her. I hope she takes my advice and gets under Derek Coleman. It's the least you deserve" she says, and the line goes dead. It takes all my control not to throw my phone across the room. They talked about that ba**ard. I can't let him get to Briar, she is mine. I grab my keys intending to drive to Lola's apartment. The knock on the door stops me in my tracks. I grip the handle and open the door to nd my parents smiling back at me. I forgot they were coming for dinner with everything that happened. "Mom and Dad, I'm sorry I didn't get a chance to call you but tonight isn't really a good time for dinner. I was just on my way out." "That's alright Calob, I would rather visit my daughter-in-law anyway," she says with a smirk. "She isn't here, mom, and I don't know when she will be back."

"Calob, what on earth are you talking about? Why wouldn't Briar come home?" I drop my head with the overwhelming sense of shame. "Calob, tell us what's going on" my father insists. "I screwed up, and I don't know if she will ever forgive me." My mother grabs my arm and leads me to the couch. "Calob, what did you do?" "I had an affair with a nurse at the hospital." My mother gasp and covers her mouth with her hand. "How could you do such a thing, Calob? We raised you better than that," my father says. I look at my mother and the only thing I can see in her eyes is disappointment. I don't think in all my years I've seen her look at me that way. "I made a mistake." "A mistake is forgetting her birthday or your anniversary. A mistake is leaving the toilet seat up. This was a deliberate act of betrayal. I don't care what the reason behind it was. I never thought I would live to see the day when I would be ashamed to be your mother, but right now that is exactly how I feel. I love you, Calob, and nothing will ever change that. Your father and I are going to leave and give you time to think about all you have done. We are here if you need us." She leans in and presses a kiss on my forehead. "I love you, Calob, but your mother is right. I hope for your sake you can x the mess you have made."

The door closes and the ache in my chest intensifies. My phone starts to ring and I pull it from my pocket hoping to see Briar's name ash on the screen. It is not my wife or anyone that I want to speak with. I can't even believe she is calling me after everything that happened today. I put the phone to my ear and I don't give her a chance to speak. "What was unclear from our meeting today. I want nothing to do with you. I love my wife, Lucy. I don't want you and I never will. Do not call me again" I say and cut the call before she can even get a word out. A few seconds later, my phone dings. I look at the screen prepared to block her number when the world around me starts to spin from two words. I'M PREGNANT