



CHAPTER TWELVE

SEVERAL HOURS PASSED, and Elise found herself sitting by a table alone in the party of Emma and Dylan's wedding. The ceremony in the church had been very beautiful, and Elise's eyes were still somewhat red due to heavy crying for her sister, but at least the tears had ceased to flow and she was able to smile as the married couple danced on the floor. The party had only just started, and they were dancing their first dance as husband and wife, and it almost got Elise in tears again, but before she could get too sucked into the atmosphere, her attention was drawn from her sister to Schmidt, who seated himself next to the woman.

Elise tensed, though she wasn't sure how she had managed to keep calm before but now that she was thinking about Schmidt's feelings, she felt uneasy and awkward in his company. Despite having a massive, gigantic crush on him, Elise had succeeded on being a friend and therefore, wasn't any more awkward than usually, but now she let out a nervous chuckle when the man greeted her and took a sip of the champagne he had picked up from a waitress. His presence was enough to make Elise's palms sweat, and the uncomfortable feeling made her bite the inside of her cheek to unload her frustration into something, but leaving Schmidt wasn't an option. She would rather embarrass herself than run away from him — which was something she had never before thought, not even for Thomas, and she took it very seriously. She was willing to push her limits and step out of her comfort zone, just for Schmidt.

"Should we dance? I think dancing with someone else would be terribly wrong, since we seem to be so fantastic at it", Schmidt grinned once Emma and Dylan left the dance floor happily, and for a second Elise considered refusing, but his smirk was like a magnet that pulled her up to both feet along with him. Elise nodded and slightly licked her dry lips before taking Schmidt's hand and allowing him to lead her to the floor, as a rather slow song started to play from the speakers.

The undeniable attraction between the two pulled them close, and they ended up swaying along the music body to body, which was a familiar feeling, yet still so breathtaking and amazing. With a sigh, Elise lowered her head to Schmidt's shoulder and they continued to waltz around the floor amongst dozens of other people, but much to her delight, the crowd didn't disturb her like it usually did. Because even if the unsolved feelings that lingered between Elise and Schmidt caused her to feel somewhat uneasy, his gentle hold, familiar scent and calming presence still brought her relief and safety.

"You're right", Elise chuckled, "we are pretty fantastic at this", earning an equally so sound from Schmidt, who held her just a bit tighter and melted a tad closer.

From aside, Cece and Jess were staring at the two as they danced closely on the floor, not caring about anyone else, and frankly it made the both of them sigh in admiration, hoping that one day they could have that too. It was pure happiness and adoration towards each other, but the thing was, neither of them knew about their feelings and that was what Cece and Jess were for — to bring the two together, and make them confess their love for each other, which was obviously right there, yet both failed to acknowledge it in the air.

"They're so cute, look at them. Makes me wonder whose wedding this really is", Jess sighed and smushed her hands against her cheeks, while Cece nodded in agreement and pointed out their desperate need to do something. Jess had tried to not get involved, but obviously something had to be done, and when Elise nor Schmidt seemed to be the ones to kick it off, the two women would take matters into their own hands.

"Okay, you talk to Schmidt and I'll go talk to Elise. We need to make them see how in love they are and how they need to tell each other, yeah?", Cece suggested, and Jess nodded enthusiastically before they stood up, and marched over to the dance floor to interrupt the intimate dance of theirs. As much as they hated to break the lovely moment, it seemed like the right time in every other way, and therefore Cece tried to push the guilt in the back of her mind as she grabbed Elise's arm and caught her attention.

Elise was startled by the sudden grip on her arm, but once she saw Cece, she relaxed, and the same went for Schmidt, who was drawn away by Jess. "Hey, Elise, I really want to talk to you about something", Cece smiled, and dragged the woman to the side to explain things to her in a manner she aimed to make calm and cool, but even if they barely knew each other, Cece was nothing but supportive towards Elise. In fact, it seemed like everyone was thinking they should be together, which encouraged Cece and caused her to grow more and more certain about their eventual success.

"Yeah, what is it?", Elise smiled, somewhat nervous about talking in private with Cece, who got straight to the point.

"You like Schmidt", she blurted out, and Elise's eyes widened at the sudden statement she knew to be true, but hadn't expected to discuss with Cece. "And, I can tell Schmidt likes you too. You know, he used to have a crush on me, but this is something totally different. I think this might be love, Elise. He obviously cares about you deeply and—", Cece continued, but before she could go any further, Elise stopped her by waving her hands in the air and shaking her head, eyebrows knitted together and a confused look on her face.

With a hint of a smile, Elise looked at Cece, who closed her mouth and listened to what the other woman had to say. "Everyone keeps telling me that. Is it true? Does Schmidt like me?", Elise asked, trying to control her smile but it spread out on her face like an uncontrollable wildfire. Cece mirrored the expression, and she took Elise's hands in hers, but surprising Elise entirely, she then shook her head — however, before Elise had time to fall into shock and heartbreak, Cece had spoken up again.

"No, honey. He loves you. I'm serious, he looks at you like you're the center of the universe and whenever you're around, he smiles like he's the happiest man in the world. Elise, you should just tell him how you feel, because there is no way he would reject you, if that's what you're scared of", Cece assured with confidence, which made Elise's heart fill with happiness. Perhaps people weren't just messing with her, and indeed, it was the fear of rejection that was mostly stopping her from running over to Schmidt, but the way Cece promised it wouldn't happen was so convincing, Elise couldn't help but nod.

"Thank you, Cece. I needed this", Elise smiled, and Cece nodded with pride, happy with the reaction she had received.

Looking over to Schmidt, Elise continued to smile and felt tears making a slow, but certain approach once again as she beamed with utter joy and excitement. She had never thought she would find the courage to be the one to confess her feelings, but as her eyes met Schmidt's from across the room, she couldn't help but make herself a silent promise to make a move later, and finally tell him how she felt.

"Thank you for having us, May", Nick was smiling at Elise's mother as the group of friends stood on the driveway, about to leave Phoenix and fly back to L.A. May smiled and forced each and every one of them to give her big hugs, but it wasn't as awkward as it had been on the day of their arrival, because the bunch had grown surprisingly close with Elise's family over the weekend. Elise was glad to notice how May and Winston joked a lot, and how her mother had gotten fond of the rest of them as well, while Emma and Jess had exchanged a few words and a good laugh at the wedding. They seemed to all get along well, and it made Elise nothing but profoundly happy, and satisfied with the success of the trip.

Once the residents of Los Angeles, excluding Elise, had left the house and went inside the cab they had ordered to take them to the airport, the woman stayed behind to give her mother a long hug. They talked frequently, but sending text messages and seeing each other in person were two entirely different things, and therefore having to leave her childhood home again made Elise emotional, obviously.

"I'm gonna miss you, mom. I'm glad I got to see you guys", Elise smiled at May once they ended the tight hug they shared at the front door. The two of them had always been close, and even though Elise was certainly glad that she got to see her father at Emma's wedding, she wouldn't have preferred staying anywhere else than May's house. She had always shared a special bond with her mother, which caused the both of them to tear up when Elise insisted on having to leave to make their flight in time.

"I wish you all the best, Ellie. And I hope things between you and Schmidt go well, too", May grinned, and placed a careful kiss on Elise's cheek. Elise blushed faintly, but nodded anyway, and as she had thanked her mother and waved her goodbyes to Emma and Dylan, she walked into the taxi that was patiently waiting and sat next to Jess in the backseat.

It was a bittersweet moment to leave her family again, but it wasn't the last time she'd see them, and as she all, at home something great would await.

The flight to Los Angeles went smoothly and they all got back in one piece, however, extremely tired. After dropping Cece off at her apartment, the friends headed home, where they instantly parted ways to go to sleep due to the long weekend that had definitely taken its toll on each of them. Three doors shut soon, when Jess, Nick and Winston all went in their own rooms, but instead of doing the same, Elise walked in the kitchen where she aimed to make her night tea, unable to sleep without the comforting warmth lulling her there.

As Elise started to boil the water, Schmidt stayed with her in the kitchen, perhaps to keep company or perhaps to do something else. Elise assumed that Jess had talked to Schmidt about the feelings they had for each other, since Cece had talked to her about the same thing, and the realization that they were both most likely aware of the love in the air, made her cheeks heat up along with the hot water she eventually poured into a Supernatural mug. Admittedly, the thought of Schmidt having a crush on Cece once upon a time kind of frightened Elise, considering Cece was so pretty — a real one, she was a damn model — and if the two of them were ever to fight for Schmidt's attention, Elise was convinced she'd lose. But Cece had assured it was all in the past, whilst Elise was in the present and hopefully, in the future.

Sinking the tea bag into the mug, Elise chewed on her lower lip and faced Schmidt, who instantly smiled at her and caused her to do the same. The silence in the kitchen was rather awkward, but they both had something they wanted to say, and it could most definitely break the quietness and the tense atmosphere, but neither managed to speak up. Elise prepared her tea, and drew a long sip when it was ready, whilst Schmidt just leaned against the counter and fiddled with the hem of his jacket, unsure what to say, how to say.

Schmidt opened his mouth then, and Elise did the same at the exactly same time, causing the both of them to just stare at each other as if waiting for the other to speak, but when no one did, it became silent again. It was nearly unbearable, and Elise wanted to drown in the orange tea she was quietly sipping on, but eventually the moment came to an end, however not like she had imagined it to.

"I'm going to sleep. Night, Ellie", Schmidt blurted out suddenly, and as he wished him a good night, Elise turned her back on the man, who sneaked into his own room and left her alone. Standing by the counter, Elise sighed in utter disappointment, all of it aimed at herself for being unable to do something as simple as talking to Schmidt about her feelings, but the moment had passed and now, it was only her and the fictional characters on her mug. It became silent in the lo, only Elise's occasional sighs audible in the dim room.

Until the door of Schmidt's room opened again.

Surprised, Elise lowered her mug onto the counter and turned to face Schmidt, who approached her with confident, determined steps, and she had barely opened her mouth to question his intentions when he had already cupped her cheeks with both hands and pressed her against the counter whilst their lips finally, finally crashed together in a loving, intense kiss. Elise was shocked, to say the least, but when she understood how it was a dream come true, she relaxed and closed her eyes to enjoy the kiss entirely and Schmidt did the same while moving his lips talentedly on hers. Once they were breathless and their hearts were racing, Schmidt finally pulled back enough to separate their lips, but he still remained close to her, their bodies touching whilst Elise rested against the counter.

"I've wanted to do that since I first saw you", Schmidt whispered, looking into Elise's eyes which were shining with joy, and she smiled faintly whilst placing a hand on the back of Schmidt's head, feeling the short hair against her soft skin. They rested their foreheads together, both smiling and catching their breaths as they shared a first kiss. It had taken them a good while to make a move, but when it was worth the wait, for sure. Breaking the silence, Elise sighed quietly, and looked up into Schmidt's eyes as she nodded in agreement.

"Me too."

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THE SCHMELISE SHIP IS SAILING

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