

After the museum, we decided to stop by the supermarket before returning home, his home rather, not my home, I dont know why I called it home, ~~new york is no longer my home, I was so caught up on~~

our "work date" that I hadn't noticed the time, and how long we had spent at the museum until we had stepped out and it was already dark out

"What do you usually like to eat?" I asked to Lucas who was pushing the cart, while I was picking out some fruits

"I pretty sure the correct answer is food" he says warily, unsure how to reply, I smiled to myself at his comment, usually his sarcastic antics really get on my nerves, but its starting to grow on me, is this a weird case of Stockholm syndrome?

"I meant what are your favorite meals you like to eat, like steak or chicken, so that I can get the ingredients" I reply back

"If you make it I'll eat it"

"So if I make sweet potato pasta you'll eat it?" I say the most unappealing dish I could think of from the top of my head, his nose crinkled, his lips that would always be smirking or had a playful grin were now curled upwards, he looked as though he was a child who was told to eat broccoli, I bit my lip to prevent a laugh that wanted to escape

"Okay maybe not that" he finally said, leaning forward towards me, his hot breath hitting my neck sending tingles down my spine, caused me to freeze in place "are you an option?" He whispered

I decided to play along with his little game "wait till dessert to find out" flashing him a seductive smile

"Keep flirting like that and, I dont think I'll make it past the appetizer's" he winked, my cheeks heating up, what is wrong with me, flirting with my boss

This man might be the death of me

Lucas 's POV

I was so relieved she liked the museum date, she looked so happy walking around taking in all the artworks, the way her eyes lit up, she looked completely entranced, her eyes never drifting away like other times, while my eyes couldn't stop looking at her, like a stalker, I couldn't control myself everything about her had me entranced, she was art in human form, her smile never left her face, it was the first time I've seen her smiling for so long, I never wanted her to stop smiling

I always regretted not going after her, the day she left, I always wondered what if I had tracked her down, what if I didn't stop till I found her, I thought I gave up too easy.

Now I see I wasn't meant to fix her or heal her broken heart, she was a strong woman who didn't need me or anyone to fix her, she didn't realize it at first, and if she stayed here in New York she may have never have.

When I saw her that day, in the office the timid, ideal New York housewife, I had once known was long gone, she was now a spitfire who spoke her mind, and didn't give a damn about what anyone said or thought, she was more vocal always making a rebuttal to my comments, I sound like a hormonal teenager, I just couldn't get enough of her

I was happy, we were making some progress, only she thinks its a work relationship ideal I was trying to build, if only she could see I want more, I just need to have patience and give her time to trust me, I have waited all these years, a few more months won't kill me, she isn't ready to open her heart yet I suppose I get it, Noah did a number on her, but I won't quit, I did all those years ago, and when she left for Paris, I won't quit again

Valery's POV

While I cooked the food, Lucas set up the table, I wasn't expecting much from him, or anything since we were at home, I surprised to find he had set up outside, a table good for two, with a red tablecloth, a candle in the middle, along with wine, our plates and utensils, it was a cute candle lit dinner

"Its not much but I thought dining outside would be better than inside, if you don't like it we can move inside" he rushed out, his hand brushing through his hair, his eyes looking everywhere but mine, let out a soft chuckle

"Its perfect" I reply with a smile, and in an instant his eyes lit up like a child on Christmas morning, I felt a tug at my heart

I set down the food, diving in, dinner was anything but quite we laughed, and we teased on another, we were like long lost friends

After laughing Lucas abruptly said "You know I'm happy for you" his laughter dying down

"Why so?"

"A year ago you were sad, barely ate, and timid, now you seem more confident, and happy"

I smiled before replying "thats because I am"

"I was wrong a year ago, about what I said, I hope you know I am sorry"

"Thank you it really does mean a lot"

|||

The next morning I woke up with a smile on my face, a smile I couldn't explain, I was probably just happy

Wait what?

Happy by what? By Lucas? Nooooo way he doesn't see me as a partner, he is just using his player ways, I'm sure of it.

A person was allowed to be happy without any reason right?

As I got dressed my phone began ringing, Rosie's name lighting up the screen, I nearly jumped with excitement, I have missed her, I should've called her sooner "Hey early bird, I miss you already"

She let out a playful scoff "yea I could tell with all the texts and calls you left me, oh wait you didn't" she says sarcastically, I can practically see her giving me a pointed look

"I know I'm sorry the first few days was" I took a pause to think of a word to best describe the events that were occurring within a few days upon my return, before replying with "eventful" I settled with that word since I assumed she would think I meant busy, I didn't know how to explain what was going on without coming off unprofessional, or give the wrong impression, and at least by saying eventful I wasn't lying entirely, since it was for me at least I can't speak for Lucas

"Yes I saw this eventful days well a glimpse of it at least" she giggled before adding "Less than a week back in New York and you are already taking over gossip columns"

"What do you mean?"

"You seem to be the New York society's favorite topic at the moment"

"when you guys told about them I always thought you were all over exaggerating"

"Send me the article, I haven't been opening my phone as often"

"Busy with your date" she teases

Before I could correct or ask what she meant by date, my eyes found the answer, there were three different posts about me, one where I was on the plane, the museum date and us at the store

I was glad Rosie couldn't see red that was definitely showing on my cheeks, how embarrassing, if she saw it how much more Tanner, I can't even imagine his reaction, would he be mad at me for wasting time, or would he tease me and imply something that wasn't true, I should've been more careful

"They dubbed you Ms, Phoenix"

I cringe at the name, I thought I was the CEO's EXWIFE I wondered to myself "has Tanner seen this ridiculous article, I swear Rosie its really not what it looks like" I rushed out practically panicking

"It looks like your having a good time, are you not having a good time? Cause if you aren't I'll put you on the next flight back here"

Rosie instantly becoming protective mother hen

"No" I said almost too quickly, I mentally slapped myself for the reaction, but I also didn't want Rosie to send me home, knowing her, her fingers were right over the book flight button "I mean, no I don't need the flight, I am enjoying, I was just worried Tanner and you might think I was treating this project as a vacation"

"No darling, Tanner got a good laugh from it, we didn't expect you to start working right away anyways, we thought you would spend a week visiting your aunt and uncle"

"Thanks Rosie, I really wish you were here"

"We will see each other soon, are you sure your okay there? I know New York isn't your favorite place, if you don't feel up to it you can always come home, Tanner will understand"

"Thank you Rosie, but I can handle this I need more interior work and this will be my biggest project yet" though I am in the fashion department I have been branching out to the other design departments just so that I can get more commissions and experience, before this job I only did smaller projects, like a cafe, or a boutique, which reminds me why I need to take this seriously, I can't mess up, Tanner put a lot of trust and faith in me, and I am really grateful to him "Tell Tanner I miss him, and thank you for this project, I promise I won't let him down"

"You should also thank Lucas for that part, Lucas requested you on his team"

"He did?" My eyes widen, stunned by Rosie's comment, why would Lucas request me

"Tanner told me Lucas and Dmitri argued about it, Dmitri wanted someone from the interior design department, but Tanner vouched for you, that you do interior design commissions, and Lucas said that he didn't want to work with someone he wasn't comfortable with"

"I didn't know that" I say slightly doubting myself, insecure rushing in, I shouldn't have been surprised Lucas made the request for me even though I have landed this project if it weren't for him, now I feel even more pressure to show I am deserving of this project

"I can practically hear your overthinking thoughts all the way here, you deserve this project and we all know you will do amazing, don't put yourself down, if you ever need to talk we are all here for you, don't be embarrassed"

My heart fluttered at her kind words, I was so grateful to have her and my friends in my life they always boosted my spirits "Thank you Rosie, I'll call you later this week, I got to head to work"

"Okay, please don't and open the gc every now and then"

I let out a soft laugh "yes, will do, talk to you soon"

Now time to focus on the project, I will not let my insecurities, doubt or Lucas distract me

HI GUYSSSSSS SO PLEASE TELL ME WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT LUCAS AND VALERY SO FAR? DO YOU THINK THEY ARE JUST "PARTNERS"? 

Continue to next part