

Epilogue (Lachlan): Your Version Of Love

Years later...

Growing up, life was uncertain, painful. I was always on guard, ready to move at a moment's notice. Life was a fucking rollercoaster, and I knew at any moment, I could go plunging down a steep drop or be whipped around a tight corner with dizzying speed.

That tension, that being poised on the balls of your feet to be able to move at any moment felt normal when I joined the Mayhem. I understood it, was comfortable with it. I'd brought that same expectation of the bottom dropping out to my relationship with Elowyn, and I'd counteracted it in the most horrible way possible.

But I'd fought back. I'd taken a look at myself and looked at everything about the man I was that I needed to change and fucking changed it. I needed to be better for myself and for Elowyn because I didn't want to live without her.

So I needed to deserve her.

And somehow, she found forgiveness within her and forgave the unforgiveable. The day she told me it's definitely happening I got on my knees in front of her and pressed my head against her belly and threw my arms around her waist.

"You will never regret this," I vowed to her. "I would give every last drop of my blood to ensure I never hurt you again."

She stroked my hair and said, "I know. I know, Lachlan."

I kept that promise to her until my dying day.

We didn't live together for another year, and Elowyn joked she wasn't moving in until my kitchen and bathroom got an overhaul, but that wasn't really the reason for the delay.

She was waiting for the needle to move one more time, from it's definitely happeningo it's a fact, JackI was on probation still, and that was fine because I was a work in progress. Just like I was renovating my kitchen and both bathrooms, I was renovating myself. Wyn was also working on herself with her friend Roberta, who became a close friend for both of us.

And when she was ready, in her typical, understated Elowyn way, she let me know the needle had moved one final time. We were having dinner at my place, Gypsy asleep in my living room, when Wyn looked at me across the table.

"The truck will be here tomorrow around one, they estimate."

I'd looked at her blankly.

"The moving truck."

That hadn't helped much.

She'd started grinning. "The needle has moved to it's a fact, JackI she said. "I'm moving in, Lach."

For a minute, I could only stare, not quite comprehending, but trying to absorb this unexpected news.

"Wyn," I croaked, and fuck me if my eyes didn't fill with tears.

Getting out of my chair, I'd walked over to her, pulled her up and just held her in my arms, my tears sliding into her hair.

"Men have said it before, but no one's ever meant it more: you've made me the happiest fucking man alive." I had to breathe in and out a few times before I could whisper, "Thank you, Wyn."

The next day, Elowyn moved in, and I had three of the prospects at our house to make unloading faster.

The new Mayhem chapter was growing, and we'd had about twenty brothers from the original chapter move to join us. Not one brother had protested when I, as the president of the chapter, told them there would never be any club girls here, and Butcher had also instituted a no club girls policy at the mother chapter. Our businesses were flourishing and the once-dying town was coming back to life and attracting more people to the area with the number of jobs and opportunities we'd created.

That also brought in some lowlifes who thought they could take advantage, but our new chapter also had guest accommodationand a full array of tools, so we dealt with any potential threats quickly and decisively. And soon enough, word got around that you didn't want to bring any shit into our town unless you wanted to die slowly and painfully for not heeding our warning.

So Elowyn and I settled into our new lives, our healthier lives, finding our relationship to be much more open and honest and, above all, equal. We still ran up against old ghosts, but we worked them out, and Wyn quickly realized there wasn't anything I wouldn't do for her.

Which could explain how she finagled me into what turned into a lifelong extracurricular activity outside of the Mayhem.

"...and he was returned twice, Lachlan. Twice! It about broke my heart --"

"Slow down, Wyn," I said as my girl's voice rushed into my ear the second I answered her call. "Let's start with where you are."

"I went to the shelter this morning to drop o some donated blankets and gi cards I'd been collecting through the book store."

"OK. I'm with you. Then what?"

"Well, I was thinking that Gypsy shouldn't be an only dog, so since I was there dropping o donations already --"

I pinched the bridge of my nose. My girl was lying and not even doing it well. She'd gone there to get us another dog.

"-- that I'd just take a look and see if they had any dogs that might get along with Gypsy. And there was a pit-husky mix with these sweet blue eyes that broke my heart -- he was adopted twice and returned both times because he didn't know how to act in a home. Just think! He got out of that cage twice only to be returned twiceAnd oh! his eyes just slayed me, Lach. So, I was thinking that since you trained Gypsy, you could train Sky -- named for those sky blue eyes of his! Did I mention his eyes? And maybe we could keep Sky but there are other dogs there that just need some training so they can get adopted into good homes, too. The guy at the shelter said they have dogs returned all the time because of behavioral issues and it broke my heart. So I thought...maybe we could... youcould help train them and they'd be adoptable. You did such a good job with Gypsy, and I thought, you know, since you like control, this could be a healthy outlet..."

I burst out laughing. "You kidding me, Wyn?"

"Well, I mean, it's a goodkind of control. You help the dogs control their behavior so they can be adopted into loving homes."

"OK, Wyn, let me check out Sky. You still at the shelter? I can meet you there."

She didn't say anything and I wondered if her call had been dropped.

"Elowyn?"

"Um."

"Wyn, you OK?"

"Yes. I'm in the driveway. With Sky. And I think he just chewed up one of the headrests in my backseat."

"Woman!" I laughed at her.

"I couldn't resist his eyes."

So, luckily, when we introduced Gypsy and Sky, they were like long-lost old friends. A er about three months of training, Sky had become a model citizen, and I hadn't even complained in that first month when he'd chewed up a chair, a pillow and a pair of my motorcycle boots.

It seems Wyn wasn't the only one to fall victim to those blue eyes.

Once Sky was settled, I began working with the shelter to train some dogs that just needed a little bit of love, guidance and behavioral modification. Some of my MC brothers got into it as well, and the number of successful adoptions soared. It was incredibly satisfying to see our graduates go to good homes where they got the love they'd always deserved.

Even though Wyn and I never had children of our own, our home was overrun with little ones. We were the godparents to a number of Mayhem o spring and as they grew older, we became the fun aunt and uncle and our house was theplace to hang out. As Wyn always jokingly said, we got to have all the fun without any of the responsibility. And as the children continued to grow up, they treated us as trusted friends.

Wyn and I had worked on our backyard, turning it into an oasis and a safe hangout for the Mayhem teens since we had a pool, a lounge area, a volleyball court and a basketball court. Every weekend, just about, there was a Mayham get together at our house and Wyn's eyes would meet mine and she'd mouth, this is everything

I couldn't help it. I had to walk over to her each time and kiss her like my life depended on it, mostly because it did.

"You'ræverything," I'd whisper in her ear. "You're everything, Wyn, and I love you."

"Oh, Lachlan," she'd sigh as she buried her face in my neck. "I love you."

Every time she cuddled into me, I realized I'd never get over almost losing her. It would never leave me, the guilt for what I'd put her through for all those years. But in true Wyn fashion, she knew what I was thinking and she helped me out of that dark spiral. She'd pull my head down to hers and put her lips just against mine and give me the words I needed.

"Lachlan, I not only likeyour version of love, I loveyour version of love."

That never failed to soothe my heart. Wyn and I were two damaged, imperfect souls who'd held onto each other and created our own beautiful version of love that carried us through the rest of our lives.

Author's note: Sky is a real male pit/husky mix, and is 14 years old. He was a rescue from a bait farm and is now living his very best life full of

love, happiness and everything good.