

Chapter 9 (Lachlan): A Plan To Win

Control is an illusion, and like any great magician, I performed one motherfucking trick after another. Too many to count, really. All my life, I'd craved control, waiting for the day when I was no longer helpless and without choices, able to exert control over my life. I wasn't one that had to have it in every aspect of my life but found that sex did it for me. I could control the woman I was with. I'd lay out what I expected beforehand to her, what I wanted, and if she agreed to the terms, there it was. I had control. Sex was less about pleasure and more about control for me. The few times I'd stepped outside my rules, sex had been mediocre at best. The limited pleasure I'd found hadn't been worth giving up my rules for.

Until Elowyn. Only for Elowyn had I ever been willing to give up my sex rules. Only with Elowyn did sex become a way to express what she meant to me, and it had nothing to do with control. It was about wanting her near me. It was about craving closeness, not control. It was about fucking feelings and what the hell are you supposed to do you do with those? Emotions were an entirely different world to navigate.

Night after night after, as I watched her work behind the bar, I tried to figure out what it was about Wyn that made her different. Objectively, she wasn't the prettiest woman I'd ever seen, but she became the most beautiful woman in the world to me the longer I watched her. She wasn't the hottest, nor was she the sexiest. But, again, as the weeks passed one into the other, the more I got to know her, the more I noticed her above all others. She was sexy. She was hot. But even more than the superficial shit, she was real, she was giving, she was quirky and she was flawed. She wasn't a woman whose perfection demanded a pedestal; she was a very down-to-earth woman who I saw clearly, imperfections and all. And she seemed to love me despite all of my own massive failings. Elowyn wasn't a nameless, faceless body to control but a woman to care for, and, eventually, to love.

But as much as I loved her, I worried that the need for control, so far lying dormant, would someday rear its ugly head, so I warned her. Repeatedly. Tell her so she knows and maybe she'll still love you anyway I never wanted to blindside her, never wanted her to wonder what had happened. So I assured her that if she chose to move ahead with me, she had to know this was a possibility, and I blamed it on the biker lifestyle because to tell her about what was really driving it -- my need for control -- I'd have to tell her about my fucked up childhood, and neither one of us talked about our pasts. Told her I'd be careful, I'd always come home to her and we wouldn't talk about it when it happened. To me, it was nothing worth talking about anyway because it was just a way to exert control. Like a smoker needing a hit of nicotine and stepping outside for a cigarette, that's all sex with the club girls was to me.

And then, after I regained my control I went and sat in my room, wondering why I had to do what I did. Nothing felt right until I went home to Elowyn in the morning. She dispelled the emptiness and disgust that I brought on myself. And for a while, it'd be enough, but then I'd sense something in her and worry she was going to leave me, and if she did that, I didn't know how I'd function.

Funny enough, it was only when she took herself out of my life that it all snapped into focus: the control that I craved was nothing more than an illusion. Sex with ridiculous rules wasn't giving me control of jack shit. In effect, I'd thrown away what I had with Elowyn because of something that didn't even exist. I'd traded everything for nothing.

"No," I said out loud to her. Firmly. Regaining my footing. No. Elowyn had just announced that she'd leave me and I was going to have to figure out how to handle it.

Her startled eyes met mine. "No? No what? Lachlan?"

I stepped toward her. "No, I'm not going to have to figure out how to handle it because we're not done."

"Oh, we are," she said. It wasn't mean, just a statement of fact, and I think I would have preferred mean. But Elowyn was rarely mean. "We have to be. I want someone to love me and only me. And you've spread yourself a bit thin in that area, Lach."

"I did. I did, and I'm sorry, but I'm not letting you go, Wyn. I'm not just going to walk away from you. I'm going to fix myself and fix us. I'm never going to fuck around on you again."

"How are you going to manage that now that we're apart when you couldn't manage that when we were together? You know the old expression -- too little, too late. That describes us perfectly."

"No," I said, as if repeating that one little word could bring us back together. "I'm going to work on myself and I'm going to work on us and I'm not giving up. I'm not, Elowyn."

"My decision isn't up for a vote," she said.

Her tone of finality would have scared me at one time, but I had a purpose and an objective now. "Not asking for a vote, Wyn. I'm telling you what's happening here. You're going to see that I can be different. That I can be loyal. That I can be faithful. That however you need to be loved, I'll love you that way."

"So why didn't you do this before if it's possible?"

"You know that expression you don't know what you've got until it's gone? That'd be me. Hanging on to control...that's fucking out the window. I'll accept that I have no control where you're concerned when it comes to letting you leave my life."

"Lachlan, we're done. Face it. Time of death...I don't even know when it was. Maybe the first time you cheated was the beginning of the end. Maybe it was Yomi. I guess, in the end, it doesn't even matter."

"It matters. It fucking matters, Elowyn. Everything about you matters and I'm sorry I didn't show you that before. Do you remember what you told me when you agreed to be my old lady, Wyn?"

Wyn gave me the side eye because there was a lot she'd told me back then.

"You told me you loved me because I wasn't perfect. You loved me because I didn't expect you to be perfect. And I didn't, sweetheart. I tucked your words in my pocket and carried them with me every day. I'm not perfect. I hurt you. You've never talked about it, and maybe someday you will, but I'd like to heal the hurt I caused you and whatever hurts you had from before me, way back as far as you want to go. And I'll figure out how to do it. We can both heal and then we'll be ready for each other. Next time, Wyn, next time you give me your heart, I'm not messing around with it. Never again."

She looked down for a minute, and I wondered if anything I'd said and promised had gotten through the walls she'd put up against me.

Please

When she looked back up, I saw the answer. No. The walls were up and being fortified with each passing second.

"It's time for you to go now, Lachlan."

I had two options. Argue with her, plead my case some more...or go. Do what she asked.

"OK, Wyn. Thanks for listening to me." I gently touched the tip of her nose with the tip of my index finger, our traditional goodbye following a kiss. She wasn't ready for a kiss, so I did the next best thing.

"I'll be in touch," I promised, then walked out her door. Doing that was counter to everything I wanted to do, but that was something I figured I'd need to get used to.

It was time I started approaching Elowyn in a completely different way. On the drive back to the clubhouse, I thought of all the ways I could do that.

I was a man with a plan to win back the woman he loved.