

## **Broken | 20: Thanksgiving**

### **20: Thanksgiving**

**LILY**

I wake up on Thursday morning to the smell of something mouthwatering cooking. Confused, I make my way downstairs and am surprised to see both my parents in the kitchen.

I mean, I know they said they'd be home for Thanksgiving, but when they still hadn't shown up at eleven last night, I assumed they were bailing again.

"Mom? Dad?" I whisper, rubbing my eyes, wondering if I'm still sleeping.

"Lily-Pad!" My dad smiles widely, opening his arms out to me.

I instantly wrap my arms around my dad for the first time since probably Christmas last year. "I missed you," I whisper, hearing my voice shake.

"I missed you too," Dad says as he squishes my body tightly against his. "How's school going?" he asks, letting me go.

"Good. I'm still getting As," I half-lie. I mean, my grades and schoolwork are still fine, just not my social life.

"Volleyball is really good too. We're going to state championships," I add, sliding into the barstool next to Dad.

"That's awesome. When is it? I'll see if I can make it." He smiles widely at me while Mom makes an impressed noise from the back of her throat.

Dad and I make small talk while Mom walks around the kitchen, opening every cupboard and drawer until she finds what she's looking for as she continues cooking.

"Where are the bloody spatulas?" she huffs, throwing her arms in the air.

"In the holder by the oven," I reply, pointing behind her.

"Why are you moving things around?" she snaps, turning her back to me.

"I haven't," I snap back.

“Watch your attitude,” she warns with a stern look that used to have me shaking in my boots, but now I just want to roll my eyes at her.

“How’s that boyfriend of yours? Olly?” Dad asks, changing the subject.

“Um...” I hum, not knowing if I should tell them the truth.

“You should invite him around for lunch,” Mom butts in with a wide grin.

“We broke up,” I mutter, and Mom instantly frowns.

“There’s actually a football game tomorrow,” I say, looking at Dad, who loves football.

“Ridgewood is playing Greendale. There was some fight last week, and the game got called off,” I explain, thinking about Oliver and Mason fighting.

“We should go.” Dad smiles, rubbing his hands together.

“We’re flying out at nine,” Mom says in a clipped tone.

“Right.” Dad frowns, pushing his lips together.

“You’re leaving tomorrow?” I ask, looking between them.

“Tonight,” Mom states while Dad sighs, giving me a sad look.

“You can’t even stay for twenty-four hours?” I huff before I can stop myself.

“Lily...” Mom warns.

“It’s okay, I get it. It’s hard to spend more than a day with your only daughter,” I snap before I stomp off back to my room.

I lie on my bed, staring at the ceiling, wondering why they couldn’t just stay more than a day. Hell, even one night would be nice.

Am I really that awful to be around?

I sigh as I push myself up to grab my phone. The abusive texts are still coming through steadily. I scroll through them until I see Mason’s name.

Mason

Happy Thanksgiving Princess xx

Lily

Happy Thanksgiving 😊

Just reading his text makes me smile and feel better. Just as he texts back, there's a knock on my door, but before I can answer, Dad comes straight into my room.

"You know I miss you, kiddo," he says, sitting at the foot of my bed.

"I miss you too," I whisper.

"I wish we could stay longer, but I've got to get to Toronto for work by Monday," he explains.

"Since when do you go to Canada for work?" I ask, pulling my eyebrows together.

"A couple of years now. Mom didn't tell you?" he questions, giving me the side-eye.

"No." I shake my head. So half the time my parents aren't even in the same country as me. Cool. That's good to know.

"I'm sorry we can't stay longer. But we'll be back for Christmas, okay?" Dad says gently before he places a kiss on my forehead.

"I won't hold my breath," I mutter, causing a hurt look to flash across my dad's face.

"You don't like us being gone, do you?" He sighs sadly, looking down at his hands.

"I can't even remember the last time I saw you," I confirm, shaking my head.

"I'll talk to Mike and see if I can start working from the office here again," Dad states, grabbing ahold of my hand.

"There's no point, Dad. I'm leaving for college in the summer. I've managed the past two years by myself. A few more months won't kill me."

"Lily-Pad." His voice cracks as he squeezes my hand tightly in his.

“Honestly, I’m fine.” I attempt to reassure him.

“I’ll try to make sure my trips are shorter until you go to college, though.” He half-smiles before placing a kiss on my head and leaving my room.

Two hours later, Mom flings my door open and orders me to come downstairs.

My parents and I sit at the dining table eating the perfectly cooked turkey and sides in complete silence. Only when Mom places a slice of apple pie in front of Dad does she speak up.

“What day does school finish?” she asks, making my eyebrows scrunch in confusion. “For Christmas break,” she clarifies.

“The twenty-first,” I mumble, scooping up a large amount of mashed potatoes onto my fork that I know won’t fit fully in my mouth.

“Oh. I thought you finished on the twenty-third.”

“It’s fine,” I mutter again before attempting to put all the potato in my mouth.

“We can just change the flights,” Dad states, staring at Mom like he’s trying to have a secret conversation with her.

“No. I don’t care.” I shake my head before deciding I’ve had enough.

As much as I wish that Dad would start working from home more, I have no doubt he won’t.

I drop my fork onto my plate before standing up and grabbing it. “It was nice to see you,” I spit out sarcastically before turning on my heel and stomping off to my room.

I stay in my room until I hear Mom’s heels clicking across the hardwood floors and the front door slamming closed.

“Thanks for saying bye,” I mutter to myself before going downstairs to finish eating and no doubt clean up the mess.

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“Do you want to come to a party tonight?” Mason’s voice fills my room from my phone the next night.

“Where is it?” I ask, going through my closet in search of something to wear.

“Liam’s,” he says.

“Tell her she has to!” I hear Brittany’s voice yell in the background.

“I guess I don’t have a choice.” I laugh, throwing a black sweater onto the floor.

“I own no green clothes,” I groan, pulling out a Christmas sweater and chucking it on top of the growing pile of “no” clothes.

“You still have my school hoodie,” Mason chuckles.

“I do!” I gasp, turning around and grabbing it off my desk chair from when he left it here last week.

“Oh, look, it’s perfect.” I smile, zipping it up.

“I’m going to need that back soon. It’s getting cold,” he says, and I screw my face up.

“You’ll have to make a trade.” I giggle, lying down on my bed, picking my phone up.

“With sexual favors?”

I picture his face smirking as he says that.

“I was more thinking that black hoodie you stole back from me.” I smile.

“Tough trade.” He laughs. “I’m sorry I can’t pick you up.” He sighs.

“It’s okay, I don’t mind driving.” I brush it off, looking out my window at the rain.

Mason’s coach made the whole team come in early to start preparing for the game.

“Give me the phone!” Brittany says as a rustling comes through.

“I’ve gotta go,” Mason sighs again. “Brittany apparently wants to talk to you,” he adds before telling her to wait.

“I’ll see you soon.” I smile.

“See you then, princess. Oh! Don’t forget my good-luck kiss.” His voice trails off like the phone is being pulled away from him.

“Hey, girl!” Brittany’s voice comes out preppy. “I’m stealing your number from Mason’s phone and going to text you, okay?” she states like I have no choice in the matter.

“And when you get here, text me, and I’ll come paint your face and bring you in,” she says.

“Don’t you have cheering to do?” I laugh.

“They’ll be fine without me for a bit.” She brushes it off.

“And don’t wear that awful school sweater. I’ve brought a couple of my sweaters for you to wear,” she babbles.

“You’re the best.” I smile.

“I know,” she says cockily before laughing. “Oops. I’d better go—that’s my mom yelling at me.” She giggles. “Text me, okay?” she says before we say our goodbyes and hang up.

I smile to myself, thinking about how amazing Brittany and Liam are.

They just accepted me with open arms, no questions, no tests. Just friendship.

And Mason.

Mason is the sweetest and funniest person I’ve ever met.

Never once has he judged me for wanting to do something or for crying in a sad movie.

He makes me happy.

The only thing that could make my life better is if Harry didn’t hate my guts.

As I’m driving to Greendale for the game, my mom calls me.

“Hi, Mom!” I nervously answer through the Bluetooth.

Maybe she’s calling to say sorry for not saying goodbye last night.

“Lily Jane Bennett, what the fuck?” she yells, and I wince.

“What’s wrong?” I ask as everything I’ve ever done wrong in my life flashes through my mind.

“I just had a call saying you quit cheer!” she yells.

“I quit months ago,” I say with a frown.

“I know! And you didn’t think to tell me?”

I guess she’s right. I could’ve told her yesterday.

“I hate it, Mom. And you’re never home or answer my calls,” I snap, still angry at her.

“That doesn’t mean anything. I’m still your mother,” she snaps right back.

“Why did Lindsey ring you now anyway?” I sigh, not wanting to get into this argument but also thankful she didn’t tell her before yesterday.

“She thought you were bluffing and would come back, but it’s been months and you still haven’t, so she thought she’d better tell me,” she snaps.

“I raised you better than this, Lily! Dad works so hard for you to have a good life, and look what you go and do! The one thing I asked of you and can’t even do that. You’re such a disappointment!”

She starts to scream at me as tears start rolling down my cheeks.

“Honestly. Now you won’t even answer me!” she continues as my eyes get blurrier and blurrier.

“You’re quitting volleyball and track and joining cheer again,” she states, a bit calmer.

“I don’t want to,” I whimper.

“I don’t care!” she yells just as I lose control of my car.

Before I know what's happening, I'm spinning in a circle.

I slam my foot on the brake, but it doesn't do anything; I keep spinning and spinning.

My head hits the window before everything turns black.

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When I open my eyes, pain rushes through my whole body.

My head hurts the worst.

I feel like the stampede of antelope from *The Lion King* has run over me.

"Mason," I groan, reaching out for him.

He'll make everything better. I just need him to hold my hand.

"An ambulance is coming," a voice says, but it's not Mason's.

"Mason," I repeat, feeling my eyes close against my will and a cold hand grip tightly onto mine.

"My mom yelled at me," I mutter, feeling someone pushing down on the side of my neck.

"Moms do that," a new voice says.

"Where's Mason? I need him," I croak out.

"I need him," I repeat.

"Mason's coming," they say softly, and I feel my body start to relax and the pain I'm feeling slowly start to fade away.

Next Chapter

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