

## Puck Bunny

The two weeks that followed were... different, to say the least.

After pictures of Liam and me surfaced, my life did a complete 180. As Zane's fiancée, I had managed to stay under the radar. But since Zane and I had been together for so long, it didn't take much for people to connect the dots and realise who I was.

Tess and I hadn't expected this. While Liam's fans were shocked by the photos—and sure, it was a great PR move—most of the attention wasn't on him. It was on me.

I lost count of how many times I scrolled through social media, only to see people calling me a puck bunny, a gold digger, warning Liam to be careful. Then, my bakery's location got leaked.

At first, people came just to catch a glimpse of Liam, lingering by the counter, eyes darting around like they expected him to stroll in at any moment. But after days of disappointment—and a few new policies that required customers to actually buy something to stay—the questions started.

Were Liam and I really together?

What was I planning to do with all his money?

How did Zane feel about his ex being obsessed with hockey players?

Was that why he left me for the model instead?

Some even had the audacity to ask me who was better in bed.

I had never been more humiliated in my life. Everything I was, everything I wasn't, was stripped away. To them, I was just another girl

chasing after a hockey star.

And it didn't help that Tina and Monica, the girls we met at the costume shop, had posted about Liam buying all our clothes. Or that pictures of us leaving Raven's and petting Mama were everywhere.

In one of them, Liam and I are smiling at each other. I don't even remember smiling at him, but there it's there—warm and genuine. Enough to convince people we cared about each other.

Just not enough to convince them I wasn't exactly what they accused me of being.


Through all of this, it seemed like people were seeing Liam in a whole new light. No longer the guy who broke hearts for fun—but now as the guy who was definitely going to have his own heart broken.

And, of course, I was the villain of the story. The hockey slut.

And where was Liam in all of this?

Nowhere.

I hadn't heard a single word from him in two weeks. Even Tessa pointed out how terrible it looked—publicly announcing our relationship, only for him to disappear. A PR nightmare. But I can't bring myself to care.

The anger I feel toward him is almost suffocating. If I see him right now, I'm sure I'll be able to stop myself from slapping him across the face. 

Yes, I signed the contract. Yes, it was my fault for not realising how my past with Zane would come back to bite me in the ass. But for weeks, I had been slut-shamed, ridiculed, harassed—called every disgusting name in the book—because of him. And he couldn't even be bothered to lift the phone and call.

Hell, if reaching out was too hard, all he had to do was tell his obsessive fans to back off. Sure, maybe it wouldn't stop them. But at least he'd be doing something. At least he'd be pretending to care.

And even if they didn't listen, at least they'd realise they didn't have his blessing to harass me.

But his silence?

It only threw more fuel on the fire on social media and my anger.

It's 7 AM, and the bakery is closed. I've started opening much later, but it doesn't seem to make a difference.

People show up anyway. The CLOSED sign on the door might as well be invisible.

I glance at the cookies in the oven, seated on a stool as I absentmindedly remove the seeds from the watermelon Tessa dropped off before heading to work. She promised to make Liam to fulfil his contractual obligations.

A bitter laugh slips out before I can stop it.

Was my presence so unbearable that he had to be forced to be around me?

Or maybe he was just embarrassed to be legally tied to someone like me. He probably didn't even think about who he was signing the contract with that night, he was just desperate to keep his job.

And what better way to kill two birds with one stone than by using someone who was invited to Zane's wedding? It was as high-profile as it got.

The media turned my fake relationship with Liam into a perfect backdrop for Zane and Becca's wedding. For every headline about us, there's one

about them. The difference?

Becca isn't under public scrutiny.

How can she be? She's beautiful, famous and rich. The perfect bride. Not some poor, average-looking hockey slut supposedly chasing after the sport's golden boy for his money.

Frustration rises in my chest, and I focus on the watermelon, pulling out more seeds to calm myself. But then -

An acrid smell fills the air. My nose wrinkles as I place the sliced watermelon on a plate, scanning the room for the source.

The smoky scent thickens and gets even stronger.

Oh, shit -

**THE COOKIES!**

I jump up, racing towards the oven. The second I try to open it, a sharp sting shoots through my fingers from the scorching heat, making me yank my hand back with a hiss.

"Shit!"

I rush to the sink, cranking the tap and shoving my hand under the cold water. My frustration bubbles over. I've been so scatterbrained lately, so unlikely myself.

Once my hand is dry, I grab my oven mitts and pull out the tray. The cookies are burnt beyond saving.

I exhale sharply. What the hell is wrong with me?

I can't open the bakery like this. Not today.

Sighing, I start cleaning up, reaching for my phone to call a taxi home -

KNOCK, KNOCK!

My head snaps toward the entrance. Someone's at the door.

See? I might as well throw the goddamn sign away at this point.

Usually, I'd go check who it was, but I couldn't find the fucks to give. I've been too frustrated, too off. I don't trust myself not to cuss out whoever's at the door, so I make a quick decision.

"We're closed!" I call out, even though the CLOSED sign slapped onto the door should have been obvious enough.

Besides, who the hell knocks on a door that clearly says closed?

With the number of weirdos and psychos I've encountered recently, I wouldn't put anything past anyone anymore.

Fucking hockey fans.

But even after my warning - like the absolute psychopath they are - the knocking doesn't stop.

Knock. Knock. Knock.

Over and over and over again.

If it's someone who knows me, why not just call? Why keep knocking when I'm clearly not answering?

I ignore them at first, focusing on cleaning up my mess. When I'm done, I sit down, still ignoring the knocks that are gradually getting louder, and

pop a piece of watermelon into my mouth.

I scroll through Zane's recent posts. All pictures of Becca. Of course. My stomach turns, but before I can dwell on it, the knocking grows aggressive.

Then -

The door handle rattles.

My stomach drops.

What the actual fuck?

A million thoughts race through my head, each one ending with me dead in a ditch somewhere. My hands tremble as I grab a knife and start dialing 911 -

jingle.

The sound of keys.

I freeze. My breath catches.

Whoever's at the door has keys to my bakery.