

Chapter Twenty-Six

[CHAPTER HAS NOT BEEN EDITED: BEWARE!!!]

Recap

My phone vibrates just as I'm about to tell the two I'm o . Instantly, I halt and grab it, wondering if Dad had already come home from work. Much to my relief and confusion, the sender reads anonymous

He's lying, you know. He hasn't even told you the worst of what he's done. You think he actually went to jail for stealing a piece of candy? You can't trust him.

I stare at the screen for a good minute.

Then, slowly, I li my gaze to look at Travis. He's still arguing with his brother, waving his finger around and denying him the access to cheese. I really look at him—the way the scar on his temple travels down, fading away the farther down it goes. Like a grapevine, all his bruises are connected, one way or another.

I shake my head and tuck the phone back into my pocket.

"Travis," I say, clearing my throat, "I'm going to head o ."

He glances up while Mason continues to scratch at the counter for his cheese.

"Yeah," He nods before ducking and narrowing his eyes, "Be careful."

I manage to o er him an eye roll before turning around to leave. My fingers itch in my pockets as I bite my lip in puzzlement. My mind races as I go over what just happened.

"We're hitting the gym on Wednesday," Travis calls out before I exit.

Chapter Twenty Six

"Have fun!"

I turn to give my beaming step sister the most dreadful face I can muster. She winks at me while I throw the du le bag over my shoulder and shake my head at her coyness.

"Define fun" I reply with a sarcastic smile right before closing the front door.

With my hands tightly clenched around my bag, I spin around to face my ride; Travis Emmons. Sitting on his motorbike, he looks down at his phone, waiting for me as I go through my daily routine of procrastinating.

Just when I take a step forward, I hear Layla cry out, "Sex!"

My eyes buldge and instantly dart to Travis. I cross my fingers, hopelessly wondering if he possibly missed her outburst, but he didn't. Instead, the phone is by his side as he stares up at me with an arched eyebrow.

I feel my face turn crimson as he chuckles to himself, and I glare at him when he does so. Once I'm at reach distance, I grab the helmet he o ers me and clip it over my head.

He opens his mouth to speak but I grumble, "Don't even comment."

Travis clamps his lips shut instantly but they still quirk up into the trademark smirk I've grown to slap o during our sessions. Wordlessly, he grabs my idle arms and places them around his torso. No matter how many rides I've gotten from him, I've never gotten used to sitting in this position—it's as if I'm hugging him, and that's the last thing either of us want to do.

As usual, I try to pull back, but he captures my fists and forcefully presses them into his abdomen.

"Don't be stupid." He says with exasperation.

I roll my eyes, "Whatever."

As our conversation comes to another expected dead end, Travis spurs the engine, the roar drowning out the tension between us, and li s his feet o the ground.

We speed o , making sharp turns, ignoring traic signals—and though I feel as if every moment will be my last, I can't help but feel the same exhilaration every time. I squeal, despite my hatred of the bike, and latch onto Travis's leather jacket as he hits the gas on the turns approaching our destination.

When at last the ride is long over, I feel both remorse and relief—two emotions that leave me nothing but frustrated on the gym floor. Travis takes over a normal sized parking spot, annoying the crap out of me on purpose, and I groan.

"Travis..." I mumble as he shuts o the ignition.

He exhales and throws my hands o his torso.

"I know," He says while taking o his black gloves, "I just do it to annoy you now."

I glower at his back before bracing my arms on the seat and raising my legs over the cushion to get o . I lower my legs to the floor, the familiar dull aching crawling in the insides of my thighs from clenching the rim of the seat so tightly. Mentally, I groan, wondering how I am going to get through half of Travis's drills if I can't even take a wide stance.

With my du le still propped on my shoulder, I turn around to face Travis as he hops o with ease and slings his helmet on the handle of the bike. He rakes a hand through his now disheveled hair, a habit that I have grown to notice, and motions towards me.

"Helmet."

"Oh, crap!" I mutter, having completely forgotten it is still on my head.

I unclasp the straps and pull it over myself, biting my lips as my hair sprays all over my face, static making specific strands stick to my face like spider webs.

Travis gives me a once over as I brush the strands hastily o my face. Without saying anything else, he starts walking towards the gym, only motioning for me to follow him.

I do so and catch up to him just as we enter the building, the cool air whipping my face and causing goose bumps to form on my bare arms. I fold my arms across my chest and purse my lips as we walk down the hallways in silence. I take momentary peeks at his face, noticing newer bruises forming each and every time I see him.

I've never asked him where he gets them from—mainly because I feel I know the answer and simply don't want to hear it. Ever since I got that text message, I've always wondered what he's being doing, if the anonymous texter is in the least—telling some form of the truth. However, each time I take a good glance at Travis, I see him trying to train me—in some senses, I wonder why he would bother if he weren't on my side.

So perhaps his intentions are innocent in the end.

"What are you thinking?" His voice cuts me out of my rambling thoughts.

I whip my head to face him, hoping that my burning face doesn't give way to the answer: him.

Instead, I clear my throat, "Where did you get those bruises?"

He smirks, not the reaction I was expecting; nonetheless, I shake it o and focus on getting a reply.

"You, actually."

I almost freeze, "I'm being serious."

"So am I," He responds, bringing his full force gaze to meet mine, "Your hooks are getting good."

We enter the main room just as a group of three exits with towels on their backs and sweat dripping from their faces.

I scrunch my nose as they pass by and shake my head in annoyance when I hear Travis chuckling behind me.

Placing my bag on one of the li ing benches, I unzip it and pull out my water bottle.

"Okay," I agree while opening the cap, "But what about the marks on your neck."

I turn around a er taking a small sip of my water and almost choke when I see Travis standing a few feet away from me. He stares down at me with a brooding look, his jaw line becoming prominent as he clenches his teeth.

"O limits," I mutter, raising my hands in the air, "I get it."

"That's what I thought." He snaps, continuing to stare me down with such intensity that I feel myself shrinking.

He smirks and rolls up his sleeves, revealing a whole other batch of bruises he had been hiding all along. With me staring at him in astonishment, he turns around and approaches the fighting ring.

I bore daggers into his back, a feeling of agitation rolling over me. For so long, I've let him use his intimidation as a weapon against me. I thought it was supposed to be used to protect me, but I'm starting to doubt that now.

I grit my teeth before pushing o the bench and sauntering over to him. With his back still turned away from me, I use that to my unvented anger's advantage.

"You know what?" I ask, not really caring for a reply, "I am so tired of you."

As he turns around, ready to respond with some nasty comeback, I throw a punch his way, the sound of my hand coming in contact with his face. He stumbles back, a groan escaping his lips when his hand instantly reaches out to touch the spot I punched.

I clench my fists and watch, void of any emotion, as he grips his jaw and massages it forcefully.

Even a er I punch him, I don't feel the frustration fading—in fact, it gets worse the longer I stand there and the better he gets.

I step forward, "I thought you were trying to help me."

"Hell," He looks at me amidst his massaging, sending me a look of incredulity, "I am!"

"Really?" I ask, again, not wanting to hear him reply, "Because ever since you told me, I've felt even more in the dark about it."

"I told you what's important." He drops his hands to his sides and sighs.

I raise an eyebrow and sco , "How can you be the judge of what's important?"

"Dammit Faye!" He shouts, his voice finally breaking, "Because I've been dealing with this my entire life."

"Exactly!" I shout back, throwing my hands up in the air.

"What's your point?" He growls, his fists clenching.

"If you've been dealing with this so well, then this wouldn't be happening. Any of it." I state, motioning around us and circling myself.

When he doesn't respond I nod my head continuously and smile humorlessly. He keeps his eyes downcast as I do so, and I start to feel this tight sensation bunching in the center of my chest. My breathing becomes harsh and my hands start to clam up, turning sweaty by the second.

I purse my lip, debating whether I should tell him the truth—because honestly, I'm not sure whether I'm his good.

"I—" I start, looking down briefly, "someone sent me a text."

When I glance up again, I see Travis staring at me with a shocked expression plastered on his face. He gets up and walks closer to me, his shoulders hunching when he gets closer.

I take an unconscious step back and he freezes when he notices my withdrawal.

"When?" He questions harshly.

"Last week." I reply, deciding to get straight to the point.

He exhales sharply and takes a step back, "You've been keeping this from me for an entire week?"

"That's not the point," I shake my head, "My point is what it said."

He opens his mouth to speak, but I hold a hand up, hoping that if I can finish this, I can convince myself that what I'm saying is true.

"I can't trust you." I repeat, gazing o into the distance as I rehash the exact words, "It said you held deep secrets and that I can't trust you." I look up at him and shrug my shoulders, "At first I didn't tell you because I was scared—"

"Who was it from?" Travis throws his head back and runs a hand over his face, "It's that personwho you can't trust."

I smile sadly, a twinge of dejection entering my veins, "I can't trust you either."

Travis jukes up and covers the distance with determination in his dead set gaze. I watch with caution as he places both his hands on my shoulders. He leans down at stares at me levelly.

"Yes" He corrects, "You can"

"I'm sorry Travis," I reply, stepping out of his grip, "But I can't."

Before he can say anything else—before I can—I spin on my heel, grab my bag, and fast walk out of the room. Travis doesn't say a word, and I don't expect him to.

As I start to jog down the hallway, I feel tears brim at the ridges of my eyes. Shock, confusion, frustration, anger...all these emotions cloud my senses, leaving me an emotional wreck. My heartbeat starts to grow louder, louder than the pumping of my blood, and I hear it travel through every inch of my body.

The only thing I can think of now is getting home.

I push door. Only, when I glance up, I notice the same three people the le the building earlier blocking my escape route.

With their hands in their pockets, and smirks on their faces, they watch in amusement as I start to walk backwards.

"Hello Faye," One of them states, grinning at my retreating figure.

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So I think this chapter will either make you hate Faye or be just as confused and frustrated as her. Because of previous comments that i've read (which by the way, thank you VERY much!) I feel the need to defend Faye. Many of you have called Faye annoying or whiny--and at times, I completely agree--but just remember, this girl has a past with abuse and Travis isn't an angel either.

With that said, I'm really curious to know what y'all think of the relationship NOW between Travis and Faye. Do you think this chapter has revealed vulnerability--any new emotions between the two that shocked you? ;

Anywho, thank you so much for always supporting me!

Like always, comment?

Can I have 25 comments?

VOMMENT. (ps, don't hate on that word--it's amazing and you know it.∞)

xxSummerxx