



55 | Ovaries

Thank you @silent_singer_of_the_dawn for this poster!

I got carried away with this chapter, so it's a long one. Just wanted to give a heads up that you may want to get comfortable.

I've had a lot of requests for this first part.

Chapter 55: Ovaries

She doesn't know.

She doesn't know how she catches my eye every time she passes by.

I want her to stop and tell me, for once that I'm not a jerk and that she's attracted to me. Why is that so hard? I hear it from randos all the time.

She got me curious. A genuine soul with a hilarious tendency to cause chaos. Brutally honest, in a way I try to be. And vulnerable, because she's so forgiving to everyone around her. That's Minnie. And that's what made me want to protect her... before I realized how strong she already was.

And how much stronger she's getting.

Her timing last night was perfect. I was leaving the grotto party a er Jake's sappy singing. (My half-brother is trying to become Justin Bieber. The tattoos make more sense now.)

That's when she called my name and came to me with tears rolling down her face. She doesn't need to cry over me. I'm here. I've been here...

And I don't know why.

But she trapped me the day she ran over my laptop.

End of Luke's POV

The party last night had everyone talking. No photos were posted, per grotto rules, but whispers of it were in the air.

It isn't scandalous if it isn't a secret that's the grotto motto.

Because a lot of scandals are still under wraps.

Luke was handing in his history homework a er class, when the teacher asked him to stay behind. He let others walk past him as he approached her desk.

A girl dropped her notebook front of him. He picked it up, sweeping his hair out of his eyes. She smiled giddily and hovered in front of him, before darting o .

He remembered junior year when girls were dropping pens and books and bumping into him in the hallway all the time. It's calmed down a bit since then. Maybe they got less clumsy.

Or maybe they realized that 'accidentally' bumping into a guy doesn't start a chain reaction of a romance story.

His teacher wanted to talk about the midterm assignment. "I enjoyed your paper, Luke. Your writing is impressive, but I can see that you actually put work into the analysis this time."

He flicked through his paper, skimming the comments she'd highlighted on the sides of each page.

Suddenly, Austin came barging through the classroom door like it was his own home, (as usual). "Heyo!"

"What's up," Luke nodded to him, before returning to the conversation with his teacher, "Thank you, Mrs D. I'll read through it."

"Keep up the good work, Luke. Championships are won at practice. Isn't that what you say in basketball?" she smiled warmly.

Austin answered on Luke's behalf, "Haven't heard that one Mrs D, but we'll go compare notes..." Austin smiled while he steered Luke towards the door, "About our evenings."

The door slammed shut behind them and Austin exclaimed, "You disappeared last night!"

Some guy walked into the classroom a er them and high-fived Austin along the way.

"Great party man!" the guy praised him.

"Thanks, it'll be an annual thing," Austin grinned, and then sombered up to face his friend, "OK I'm listening. What happened?"

"I kissed her."

Austin yelled and punched him in the shoulder, jumping up and yelling out again, "MA BOY!"

"How was it?"

"F*cking fantastic."

"What are you going to do now?"

"Nothing. She's going on a date with Jake and I'm getting mind f*cked over here."

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Millie's POV

I submitted my Math homework and returned to my locker in search of my biology textbook. I was sure I put it there... I've been meaning to clean out my locker but what's the point? It'll get messy in a heartbeat again.

Julia was at her locker as well.

I looked at her and realized that we're overdue on a chat. She's been rude lately, and we need to discuss.

"Hi Julia," I approached my friend, feeling a sense of bravery I wasn't used to feeling.

She ignored me, grabbed a Mrs Field's cookie from her locker and slammed it shut. I didn't care. Honestly, I was over the drama.

My phone buzzed.

Cearra texted me: Where do you eat lunch?

I texted back: On the bleachers outside

Cearra: Can I join? Just got kicked o my table.

Me: Of course. Why kicked o ?

Cearra: LUCKY is mad I went to \$1 Entry without them

More drama. I sighed and sympathized with Cearra. I've dragged her into this mess with me, just because I became friends with the popular boys.

I felt someone's eyes on me. I turned around and saw Austin grinning at me like a Cheshire cat.

I gave him a weirded-out look back. His grin only got larger.

Luke must have told him about our kiss.

100%

And there Luke was, the snitch himself. The sexy snitch. He was handing over his gym bag to someone on the basketball team, unaware that I was watching. Happy to see my overconfident jerk.

His broad shoulders and musky scent. The way his hair falls over his electric blue eyes. He glanced my way and his face so ened.

He le his group behind to come to me... but, unfortunately, they followed him.

They continued to speak to him, but he came and hugged me before he turned to address them.

There's a feeling I get when I get close to Luke. It's like a spiraling sensation of excitement mixed with coziness. Small shocks of electricity.

Like my mum and her cocktails, I'm addicted.

He doesn't know that I'm standing here, reminiscing about his hands on my body. He's talking like he doesn't know how I remember his mouth on mine.

Pause and then replay on the memory.

Maybe he thinks I'm thinking about the news. Yes, look focused. I stood straight and put a serious expression on my face.

He saw through my 'serious' expression and knew that my mind was on nothing near the news. It was on him. I was stuck on him.

And he smirked.

"Want to get out of here?" he asked.

Yes.

My phone buzzed in my pocket and I reluctantly looked away from Luke. Cearra had texted me.

"I have to go," I apologized.

"You're not eating with us?" he asked, surprised, "We have lunch in room 109."

"I can't," I said, "Cearra's waiting for me outside."

Sure, I like the guy. But ovaries before brovaries.

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The day was chilly. Wind knocked over my orange juice and I returned it to my tray, half spill. Cearra was used to having a table indoors, so this was her first time braving the elements. She was shivering.

Summer was a distant memory.

"Here, do you want my sweater?" I offered, "I'm wearing two layers underneath."

She shook her head, "I prefer to freeze."

The sweater was ugly, I guess.

And Cearra was a trend setter. "This bench is so uncomfortable. I can't believe you sit here in the winter too. Join our table in future."

I laughed, "Do you think you'll join your table in future? I'm sorry you got kicked o . I should've asked Austin if we could bring your friends to the party."

"Nah, girl, I'm excited you invited me. If they're going to get jealous about it, that's their problem. You're too nice for this system, honestly. F*ck 'em."

"It was a fun night, wasn't it?" I smiled.

"Epic. I still can't believe he has an underground lair. It's insane," she exclaimed, popping grapes in her mouth, "Totally insane. And I wasn't even the one who got a song written about me."

"Oh, yeah," I sighed, putting my tray on the bleacher beside me. My empty burrito wrapper almost flew with the wind. "I can't believe it either. I didn't realize he felt that way."

"What are you talking about? He asked you out on a date."

"Yeah, but it's a no-pressure, getting-to-know-you kind of date. The song he wrote was a lovesong," I exhaled, feeling overwhelmed.

I hadn't spoken candidly to anyone about this. There wasn't really anyone I could speak to. Lately, I've been going to Luke but...not about this. He was involved.

Cearra stared at me with a horrified expression on her face, "Are you... are you actually hesitating? You do realize he's the hot, mysterious new boy with an amazing voice and guitar skills. Not to mention, he's been a total gentleman towards you."

"When you put it like that, I sound crazy."

"Yeah, you do. A date with Jake will be great," she laughed, and checked the notifications on her phone. When she put it down, she focused on me again, "OK, Spill. What's holding you back?"

I took a deep breath. Do I admit it? Do I say it to her? Once I put it out into the universe, I can never take it back...

"I have feelings for Luke."

My revelation fell flat. She looked at me, "OK. Everyone does."

"Right," I had to accept that, "Well, so do I and... and that's what's holding me back."

Cearra replied, "I'll phrase it differently. I love BTS and I'm already married to Jimin in my mind, but I'm not going to stop dating people in reality."

"Ok but I am talking about reality. Luke is at our school."

"You think he actually likes you? How?" she quickly added, "No offence. I mean, he's like the most famous senior of all."

"I get it. That's not what I-"

"They're both hot. Both brothers are smoking," she said.

"It isn't about the looks. I enjoy our banter. Luke makes life fun, he's honest as hell and we click"

"I've never heard anyone talk about him like that."

I realized then that maybe Luke was also lonely... if most people treated him like a commodity.

Maybe that's why we found each other.

"I think he's changing," I admitted, "I really think he's starting to be more considerate."

"Isn't that what every girl says? I can be the one to change him?" she mocked a high pitch girl's voice, "He's the player but I own the game!"

I sighed, "I know. That's exactly what I'm thinking; there's no way he can change his ways. His reputation is infamous... but I can't help how I feel. And I can't ignore the man I've come to know."

"No way," Cearra leaned towards me like this was the gossip of the century, "Are you saying he's told you he's into you?"

"No," I answered, "But he's shown me."

Cearra screamed.

**

I was waiting for Jake to reply to my message. I had asked for time to talk. I needed to tell him. We were not going on any date.

I didn't want to have this conversation in whispers during our English Lit class to hear his side in the lyrics of a song. As poetic and cute as those scenarios are, I want to be honest. I want to be truthful. And my fear of hurting his feelings... has clouded me from that.

Have you had lunch? Jake

I received his message just as Cearra and I returned to the cafeteria to put our trays away. My burrito belly and myself were very full, but...

I could do with seeing you. Something to brighten my day Jake

"He's here," Cearra alerted me.

I looked around and saw the rustle in the cafeteria as focus shifted towards the group that had just walked in. Luke, Austin, Chad and Bianca.

He's here. She was talking about Luke.

"Cearra! Is that your new friend?" a girl's voice mocked us.

It was Lexi, taunting us from the table where LUCKY always sat at. Julia was sitting in Cearra's seat, eating a salad.

"You saying I can't have friends without your permission? Get outta here," Cearra flipped them o , before she warned Julia, "Don't get too comfortable in my chair. Recognize who put you there."

Savage.

Cearra grabbed me and we walked towards the door. I saw Jake getting his lunch and told Cearra I'd catch up with her later.

Jake was chatting with a lady who worked in the cafeteria. He had a bottle of kombucha on his tray.

"You're not going anywhere," Cearra chuckled. She pointed at Luke and then at Jake.

Luke was walking directly towards his brother. He hadn't seen me.

I could not believe this was about to happen. A er the fight that erupted on their living room floor, I could only imagine what'll go down here - in the cafeteria, in front of our entire school.

Luke. does. not. care.

He faces up to situations. And he got to Jake before I did.

"You. Let's talk."

Jake turned to his brother, looking somewhat surprised but mostly unfazed.

"About time. You've been avoiding me at home."

"I haven't been home."

Bianca swept in, "Let's take this outside, boys. Everyone's watching. No need to make a scene."

"We can talk outside," Jake accepted and then riled Luke up, "You talk better with your fists anyway."

"OK," I exhaled and took a step forward.

But two hands planted themselves firmly on my shoulders and pulled me back. I looked up and found Chad glancing down at me in amusement.

"Not you, Millie. You have a rep for turning these situations into mayhem."

Boys gossip, huh? I didn't realize he knew.

Chad looked up and nodded to Austin who was already on the other side of the dessert bar. Austin took it as his cue to intervene.

He shoved the dessert bar forward and mowed it into them. Since the brothers were determined to take each other down in public, Austin had resorted to this to stop them.

But the brothers had fast reactions, and pressed down on it, forcing the dessert counter to stop.

I scrutinized the cakes to see if anything had flipped over...

"What are you doing?!" Jake called out.

Austin slid over the glass counter and reit. "I'm making a scene. Let's go before the principal comes in."

The chef was already exiting the kitchen with a giant ladle in her hand. A man who worked at the cafeteria called the principal's office, swearing.

The boys had no other options except to leave.

And behind them, Chad, Bianca, Cearra and I followed.

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A/N: Aaand that's a wrap for this chapter!! Perhaps too long? I kinda just went with it.

Please vote if you like the Austin-Luke friendship! I really want to know! We're almost close to the end now.

That's not meant to be a spoiler. Let's call it an end that never ends... or a beginning that may end... Anyway, you can find me on Instagram @NatalieInACorner and I'd love to hear from you!

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