

If there was something Hannah Dalton prided herself on, it was self-control.

It would be very difficult to be married to, by all accounts, a controlling narcissistic asshole for a decade without murdering him, and *not* have remarkable self-control.

There weren't many qualities in herself that she found pride in, if she was honest. Marriage to Michael had left her torn down in that way. But after starting her journey in therapy, she was working on building herself up, on trying to recognize things she was good at.

She liked to believe she was a good mother, most of all.

She thought she was a decent artist.

She could make some damn tasty food.

And most of all, she had world-class resilience and self-control.

Her self-control around Caroline Parker, like many aspects of Hannah's life, was a journey.

The first time she had to come face-to-face with just how strong her lack of control around Caroline truly was, it was hangout weekend up at the lake, and she hadn't been expecting it.

Fine, they had nearly kissed a couple of months ago, the night before Abbie's birthday. But *nearly* remained a keyword for her.

Her subsequent realization that she had feelings for Caroline had been... unexpected. But it was something Hannah could manage. She *was* managing it.

It was made even easier by the fact that Caroline seemed to be largely unbothered by that moment.

Caroline had gone on a few *dates* last month, even. So, good for her.

It made it easier for Hannah to attempt to put this whole thing in a box. To summon up all of her self-control and push through the ugly feelings left in her chest when thinking about Caroline dating another woman.

At the end of the day, Hannah wasn't ready to date anyone – as amazing as Caroline was or not, regardless of whether or not Caroline could potentially have feelings for her or not. And her tight hold on her self-control made it easier to accept that.

Caroline and her friends' Hangout Weekend was a test of her self-control right from the start.

The thing was, she'd agreed to it before she'd ever had any conscious idea of Caroline as anything other than a friend and only a friend. And she really *had* genuinely forgotten about it, despite having written it on the calendar back in July. Between going back to college, Abbie's school year starting, and managing her work schedule around it all, something like a weekend of responsibility-free fun was just... not at all on Hannah's mind.

She wouldn't deny that she was excited by the prospect, though.

Maybe her excitement was immature or silly, but she really didn't have friends the way Caroline did. The idea of spending a weekend with no immediate responsibilities, dedicated to simply *having fun* with a group of women who seemed so friendly was impossibly appealing.

And, if Caroline liked and respected these women, that was more than enough to vouch for their character, in Hannah's opinion.

Everything was going very well, after the first night. She'd had a slight hiccup when faced with the reality of sharing a bed with Caroline.

She hadn't been lying, when she'd told Caroline that she was nervous because she hadn't shared a bed with anyone other than her daughter in so long. But... she hadn't been telling the *whole* truth, either.

The whole truth entailed the fact that Caroline wasn't just *anyone*. Hannah was reasonably certain that if she'd been paired up to platonically share a bed with any of the other women downstairs, she'd have easily fallen asleep after having had a few drinks for the first time in years.

It was the prospect of being so close to *Caroline* that had kept her up.

Unsurprisingly, Caroline had been respectful, maintaining space between them – hell, even offering to go sleep on the couch!

If chivalry had a name, it would be Caroline Amy Parker.

But... Hannah hadn't wanted that. God, she *vehemently* hadn't wanted that.

Her grip on her self-control had been loosened just enough to tell Caroline that she wanted to cuddle with her. Loose enough that she'd sighed when Caroline had pressed her body against Hannah's, relaxing into the bed. Loose enough that she'd been unable to stop herself from reaching up and carding her fingers through Caroline's soft, dark hair.

Self-control hadn't been lost, though.

Everything had remained *appropriate*. Despite the fact that Hannah had felt her body buzz to life, full of awareness in a way she hadn't felt in... god, she didn't know how long. Maybe not ever? Nothing inappropriate happened. She didn't even consider it.

Not seriously.

Admittedly, she'd been unable to fall into a truly deep sleep, unlike Caroline. Hannah had awoken with the sun streaming in brightly through the large windows, immediately propelled into the same *awareness* she'd fallen asleep with.

She'd taken a minute – just a minute – to allow herself an appreciation of the situation. To allow herself to take comfort in this connection with Caroline.

True to Jess's comment, Caroline really *was* a cuddler. And it *was* very cute.

When Caroline was awake, she was so formidable. She emanated that innate, undeniable strength that Hannah had leaned on so frequently in the last year.

But when she was asleep, like this? She was so... soft.

Soft and warm and completely relaxed. Her body was still fitted against Hannah's as if they'd been made to exist this way together.

Caroline's deep, even breaths washed warmly over Hannah's collarbone and neck, making her shiver with every exhale. She could feel the generous curves of Caroline's breasts pressing tightly against her, the warm softness of Caroline's thigh so casually slung over Hannah's own.

She couldn't help the way she shuddered, the more aware she became of just how intimate this felt. Even if it *was* only a cuddle.

As gently as she could she slid out from the bed, from where Caroline was laying halfway on top of her.

She had to take a moment when she stood, taking a deep breath as she closed her eyes.
Control.

Rolling her shoulders, she made her way downstairs after pulling on a sweatshirt over her tank top, and a pair of thick, wool socks – Caroline had told her to pack some.

And she startled, surprised when she walked into the kitchen and found that she wasn't the first person awake.

Jess was already pouring herself a cup of coffee, giving Hannah a bright smile as she walked in. "Hey! Welcome to the early riser club."

Hannah offered a tentative smile back, which became far more genuine as Jess poured a second mug of coffee for her. "Thank you. I didn't realize you'd be up."

Jess absently nodded, settling against the counter. "Oh, yeah. I struggle to sleep in past six, even on my days off. Lacey's the same way; she ran just upstairs to get ready for our morning walk. How'd you sleep?"

"Very well," she answered quickly, because even if she hadn't slept for very long, even if her body had continued to tingle with awareness of Caroline, she'd *felt*... wonderful.

That thought made her furrow her eyebrows in self-rebuke as she sipped her coffee.

"Thank you. Again. For inviting me." She lightly drew a fingertip around the rim of her mug. "It's really been so lovely, getting to know all of you."

Jess laughed. "Yeah, we have our moments. But it's been *really* good to get to know you." She watched Hannah closely over the top of her mug. Close enough that Hannah started to squirm, before she said, "It's been a while since we met someone Caroline liked enough to introduce to us; she's usually very reserved about keeping our circle pretty tight."

An undeniably pleased warmth settled through Hannah, and she found herself smiling with it. "That doesn't surprise me; she's a very protective person."

"She is," Jess agreed. "When she cares, she really *cares*, you know? I'm constantly amazed by it."

Hannah nodded, easily agreeing with that sentiment.

“I had this whole vision when we were in law school,” Jess continued, “Of me and Caroline, becoming boss-ass lawyers and taking over the world together.”

Something in her tone nagged at Hannah, making her pause as she lifted her coffee up again. A suspicion she gamely tried to tamp down on, even as she asked, “I didn’t realize you two went to law school together? I’d just always gotten the impression that Caroline was closest to Kris? No offense intended,” she rushed to say, shaking her head. “I know you are all very close.”

Jess easily waved her off, taking Hannah’s commentary in stride. “Yeah, Caroline and Kris are probably the closest of all of us, now. It makes sense, since they’ve both stayed in Boston and all. The group has seen several iterations over the years.” She pursed her lips, thoughtfully. “But, yeah, I ended up deciding to go to Suffolk Law purely because Caroline was going to be there, though.”

Lacey walked into the kitchen, pausing when she saw Hannah but offering her a grin nonetheless. “Hannah! I didn’t realize you were awake. Morning.”

“Good morning,” she returned with her own small smile.

She took a deep breath and tried to act as though she didn’t want to dive right back into getting more information about Caroline. Something she’d picked up about Caroline was that while she wasn’t secretive in any way, she also effortlessly kept stories about herself very concise.

It wasn’t something Hannah realized she’d been consciously taking note of, until she’d realized how enraptured she was every time Caroline’s mom brought up little tales about Caroline’s youth.

But learning about Caroline’s childhood and adolescence seemed to pale in comparison to learning more about Caroline in law school – a topic Hannah hadn’t realized she was so interested in until this very minute.

“What’s the coffee chat this morning? Are we going with talking about the weather or are we going personal?” Lacey asked, mixing sugar into her coffee.

Jess chuckled. “We were veering into personal territory. I was just telling Hannah why I decided to go to Suffolk Law.”

Lacey hummed, a look of understanding flashing over her face. “*Ahhh*. Going very personal, then. We don’t normally discuss how in love you were with Caroline unless there’s alcohol involved.”

Shock pummelled through Hannah, nearly making her drop her coffee, and quite literally making her choke on it.

She coughed, eyes watering, as she stared wide-eyed at Lacey, then Jess. Who both watched her back with a look of concern.

“You okay?” Jess asked, reaching out a hand and patting Hannah lightly on the back.

Hannah forced herself to nod, even as all she could hear was the blood rushing in her ears. “I’m... yes. I’m fine,” she managed, coughing one final time before she was able to take an even breath. “I’m just – I was surprised, I suppose.”

Jess arched her eyebrows at Hannah, her expression amused but also... something else. Something not quite identifiable to Hannah in this moment. “Are you?” She asked, her words quietly teasing.

Again, though, Hannah couldn’t quite understand the tone.

She nodded, biting at her bottom lip as she tried to work through verbalizing her thoughts. Especially as both Jess and Lacey were staring at her so intently. Intently enough it made her heart start beating a little faster under the unexpected and confusing scrutiny. “Yes. Confused. Just – Caroline’s never mentioned that?”

This time, Lacey laughed. “As if Caroline knew about how ardently Jess’s torch burned for her.”

Jess took the teasing comment in stride, gently shoving at her friend’s shoulder. She nodded, though, confirming, “Yeah, College Jess was deeply in love with Caroline. Throughout undergrad, and then into law school. But I didn’t tell her.”

Hannah couldn’t quite discern why her heart was beating so fast, or why she couldn’t seem to look away from Jess as she asked, “Why not? I can’t imagine she’d have had a bad reaction.”

There was no way Caroline – thoughtful, kind, empathetic Caroline – would have treated her friend badly, even if the feelings hadn’t been reciprocated.

Both Lacey and Jess looked suitably aghast at the suggestion, confirming Hannah’s belief that Caroline had been just as wonderful a person back then as she was now.

“No, she wouldn’t have,” Jess agreed. “Not even back then.”

“So... why?” Hannah pressed, even as she asked herself why the hell she was pressing for the answer.

“College Caroline – especially Law School Caroline – was... let’s say, *extremely* focused,” Lacey piped in, shaking her head fondly. “She had so many scholarships to keep up with, and she *refused* to let anything get in the way of that.”

Surprised yet again, Hannah decided she couldn’t risk choking on another sip of coffee and placed the mug down on the counter. “Really?” Feeling herself blush at just how interested she was, she cleared her throat. “I just mean, from the way Caroline tells it, she’s been very dedicated to trying to fall in love.”

She didn’t miss the look Jess and Lacey exchanged, even if she didn’t quite understand it.

“That’s not inaccurate,” Lacey agreed.

“But,” Jess cut in, “That started after law school. When Caroline landed the job of her dreams and finally decided she had the time and energy to properly dedicate to a partner.”

“Except for Michelle,” Lacey added, meaningfully. She elaborated for Hannah, “She was Caroline’s girlfriend in junior year, who dumped her right before Christmas. She was devastated.”

Jess snapped her fingers. “Right! Yes. And, after Michelle, Caroline was very vehemently *off* romance throughout the rest of her college career.”

Hannah was utterly fascinated by this, soaking in the new information like a sponge. She’d understood Caroline, she thought. Before Michael had come along and derailed all of her plans, Hannah had barely considered dating while in college.

Lacey cleared her throat. “So, as per mine and Jess’s weekend tradition, we like to take a walk on one of the trails near the lake before everyone else gets up. Are you interested in joining us?”

The offer sounded genuine, Hannah thought. And the idea of going on a walk on one of the trails around the beautiful lake *was* appealing, something she didn’t have the opportunity to do in her daily life.

Quite insistently, though, her mind conjured the image of Caroline, sleeping peacefully in the bed they’d shared. And from that room, she had an incredible view of a landscape she’d never been given the opportunity to draw before. *That* was also something she didn’t have the opportunity to see in her daily life.

The decision seemed to be made for her in that moment, and she shook her head. “I appreciate the offer, but I think I’m going to go back upstairs and draw from the view in my room for a while.”

They accepted her words with a nod, Lacey bumping her shoulder against Hannah’s as she passed by with a mischievous grin. “Taking it easy today may be wise; you better be ready for tonight!”

Hannah gave her a somewhat confused smile in return – what, exactly, did that mean?

She found herself pondering the words as she settled in the comfortable, over-stuffed chair in her and Caroline’s bedroom. Before she ultimately decided it didn’t matter; no matter what was going to happen tonight, she knew that with Caroline by her side, nothing would get too out of control.

Comforted by that, Hannah flipped her sketch book open in her lap, her fingers flexing on her pencil as she turned to look out the window.

The view *was* gorgeous. Truly. All of the trees with their autumn leaves, the view of the water sparkling as the sun was rising into the sky.

Her hand remained still, though. It was a beautiful view, but she wasn’t inspired to draw it in this moment. Not the way she’d believed she would be.

Mostly because, now that she had a minute to herself, she was still reeling from what she’d learned downstairs. Caroline, who’d told her about how she’d pursued love and relationships for her entire adult life, hadn’t been interested in that aspect of life until after law school.

And most of all – Jess had been in love with her. For years. And Caroline... had never known.

Her ears perked up as she heard Caroline moan... something in her sleep. An unidentifiable word, or maybe it wasn't a word. Whatever it was, it made a shiver work down Hannah's spine, as she listened to the bedding rustle slightly.

Slowly, she turned her head in the other direction, toward the bed. Where Caroline was still sleeping, but had hitched her bent leg up even higher and had kicked the comforter off so it was only covering the bottom of one of her legs.

Hannah's breath hitched in her throat at the sight.

Caroline wore a pair of shorts so short, they barely covered her ass – especially like this. Her thighs looked so... soft. Her gaze travelled, as if magnetized, up over the perfect, hour-glass curve of Caroline's hips, where her shirt had now been rucked up from whatever movements she'd made.

Her back, waist, and part of her stomach were exposed, looking so smooth and inviting. Like Hannah could just *sense* that if she reached out and drew her fingertips along Caroline there, she'd be so receptive.

She didn't even realized she'd started to draw the contours of Caroline's body in her sketchbook until she looked down and saw herself tracing her pencil over the page. Even drawing the curve of her hips felt... sensual, Hannah realized, as her heart started beating harder in her chest.

She understood Jess, though – she assured herself – she wasn't *in love* with Caroline, herself. Still, a sigh escaped her as she watched Caroline stretch in her sleep. She understood that Caroline Parker was a dangerously loveable friend.

This, she decided as she continued to sketch, was an acceptable lapse in self-control. Just this once.

Her *just this once* theory was proven incorrect that very night.

Hannah didn't really drink. It wasn't that she was morally against it or had any personal objection, she simply didn't really care to drink. She hadn't enjoyed experiencing lower inhibitions around Michael the very few times she'd had more than a single glass of wine or champagne at an event, years ago.

Tonight, she'd decided she would indulge a little bit. A night where she was not responsible for Abbie, no one was driving, and she felt... comfortable.

As she stared at Caroline – finding herself doing so more and more frequently throughout the evening – she realized that very few things could make her feel as safe and secure as Caroline's proximity.

So, she was indulging in that just for tonight. And she felt good.

Well, she felt *mostly* good.

The only thing that nagged at her even a little bit, was the fact that instead of sitting next to Hannah, Caroline was half-sitting, half-laying on the floor, a glass of wine in one hand, the hem of her shirt thoughtlessly bunched up enough to reveal a sliver of skin... cuddled up to Jess.

That part continuously grabbed at Hannah's mind in the last hour, ever since they'd found themselves sitting in their respective places. It wouldn't have jumped out at her at all – if she hadn't learned what she'd learned this morning.

Caroline and Jess both looked so at-ease, so relaxed, as their shoulders and sides pressed together, the blanket nest they'd curled up on looking so comfortable.

They looked *good* together, and that thought made Hannah's stomach churn. But, they did. Caroline, all curves and dark hair and eyes, with Jess, who was just a slip of a woman, even shorter than Caroline, with her strawberry-blonde hair and bright blue eyes.

Jess had been in love with Caroline. For years.

Hannah was able to stop herself from going down that mental path, as she'd done multiple times today, by reminding herself Jess seemed very much over her feelings, now. Nothing had ever come of them.

In a way, she told herself, it should be comforting. Comforting, to know that someone could see the intricacies of Caroline, could inevitably develop these feelings for her, but that the feelings *would* dissipate, and a friendship could still remain.

Yes, she decided, taking a sip of her margarita. That was the takeaway here.

Which was good. Because she didn't want anything to hinder her ability to relax and enjoy herself right now.

All of Caroline's friends made her feel at-home. Their stories and their laughter and easy ribbing... it was exactly what Hannah imagined spending a weekend with *friends* would be like.

She could feel the buzz steadily in her system, keeping her in a pleasantly warm place. A place where she laughed a little more freely.

That laughter abruptly cut off as Miranda groaned. "You know what? I need to *not* think about my dry spell right now, because this weekend is not about that. This weekend is about *fun*."

Hannah turned her attention to where Miranda sat, relieved that they were changing the subject from the turn it had taken a minute ago, into sex lives. Not that Hannah felt she was a prude, really, but... she didn't have anything to say on the topic of sex. She barely remembered the last time she did.

And, furthermore, she definitely didn't have anything good or fun or salacious to say about it.

No, if anything, this turn of the conversation made her feel like she was the only girl at the sleepover that hadn't yet had her first kiss.

It seemed her interpretation of Miranda's comment was off. Very, very off.

Rather than bring up another topic, everyone's attention turned toward Caroline. Curious and confused by the switch, Hannah also turned her attention back to Caroline.

Who seemed, adorably, to be in her own thoughts, as she snapped back to the moment and looked around at everyone. "What's going on?"

A little wrinkle formed between Caroline's eyebrows as she looked around, dark eyes obviously confused. God... she really was so *cute*.

Hannah took another sip of her drink to stop herself from going down that train of thought.

Miranda laughed, kicking her foot out. "We *asked*, as the perpetually single woman with the best hookup stories, where are your salacious tales?"

Immediately, Hannah's stomach twisted into knots, her breath catching in her throat as she silently stared at Caroline.

"Come on, Caroline, hit us with the details. You always keep us so well-fed," Lacey giggled, encouragingly.

Hannah's thoughts spun wildly.

Caroline had told her months ago that she wasn't dating anyone! Wouldn't her friends all know that, too?

Only... Caroline *had* gone out with that woman from her office last month. Even if they weren't still dating – as far as Hannah knew – they very well might have had sex. Why wouldn't that woman have wanted to have sex with Caroline?

She nearly felt sick with the thought, her fingers tightening on the stem of her glass. God, no, she did not want to hear about this.

If Caroline confirmed that she'd had sex with that woman, especially if she started talking about any of the details, Hannah would have to excuse herself to be sick in the bathroom. She'd –

Caroline groaned, falling back against Jess as she covered her face with her hands. "I haven't had sex like, all year. You guys know that."

Hannah relaxed back into the couch, her body feeling so light with the abject relief that flowed through her.

As the conversation continued around them, Hannah tried to reason with herself as best she could. She wouldn't begrudge Caroline having a sex life, of course. Caroline was a *very* attractive woman...

Hannah found herself staring at Caroline's hands, distracted by that thought.

Only to be jarred back into the moment as Jess's eyes glinted and she rubbed her shoulder against Caroline's as she said, "Caroline may have been my best, though. Definitely up there in my top three."

The sip Hannah had thoughtlessly been taking caught in her throat, her eyes widening in shock.

Even though there was music playing in the house and *every other woman* broke out in supportive cheers, Hannah heard nothing over the pounding of her own heart.

What?

There was no mistaking the fact that Jess had said Caroline was the best lover she'd had.

For a moment, one wild moment, Hannah believed Jess was joking. Everyone – she'd learned last night – enjoyed ribbing one another, including Caroline.

God, she *hoped* that was what this was.

But, as she stared intently at Caroline – searching for the truth – Caroline wasn't taking this as a joke. She was... god, she was *blushing*, and she jerked away from Jess so they weren't cuddled up against one another anymore, as she muttered, "Be quiet."

Hannah stilled, the relief that had just flowed through her absolutely nowhere to be found.

Jess and Caroline. Caroline and Jess.

Jess, who was still smiling, but seemed so very sincere as she turned to look at Caroline. "I'm being serious," she insisted. "You were very in tune with my body! It was a great Hangout Weekend for sure."

Caroline groaned again, her blush staining her cheeks, and Hannah couldn't... she didn't *understand*.

She stared between the two of them, trying to reconcile what she'd learned this morning with this information. Jess had implied that she'd never confessed her feelings for Caroline, but she supposed the more she tried to remember, the more it became apparent that *that* hadn't been exactly what Jess had said.

She'd said she'd never told Caroline that she'd been in love with her throughout college.

Oh, no. Hannah might really be sick.

"You two were... a couple?" She couldn't help but ask, even though she didn't think she wanted to know the answer.

But she could *see* it all too well. She could see the comfort and familiarity and enjoyment Caroline and Jess had with one another, and –

Next to her, Kris let out a dismissive snort. "They'd never last as a couple."

While Caroline's other friends chuckled at that, seeming to nod in agreement, Hannah couldn't look away from Caroline. She felt like a storm was brewing inside of her, but she couldn't pick it apart right now.

All she could do was ask, "When was that?"

God, she *needed* for it to not have been any time in recent history. She had no right to wish for that, she knew. But she needed it to be the truth.

Maybe it had been the year that Caroline had taken Jess as her plus-one to the holiday party. Which had been years ago, but it still didn't comfort Hannah.

“A long time ago,” Caroline answered, finally, her voice sounding strangely urgent.

“Five years ago,” Jess clarified, and... yes.

If Hannah’s math was right, that *was* the year Caroline had taken Jess to their company holiday party. Had they left the party after Hannah had seen them and gone back to Caroline’s home, together? Had Caroline taken Jess out of the lovely dress she’d worn and been *in tune with her body* that very night?

She detested the very idea of it.

“The first time I tried to lure Caroline out to join my firm in New York when she came to visit,” Jess continued explaining, so easily.

Hannah didn’t understand her. She truly didn’t.

She’d been *in love* with Caroline for years, and had then... slept with her? She’d been okay with merely having casual sex with Caroline?

How? *How* had she not wanted more?

Jess then leaned in and placed a kiss on Caroline’s blushing cheek, stroking Caroline’s soft hair behind her ear.

Hannah set her jaw with the rush of – what was that feeling? Annoyance? Jealousy? Whatever it was, it made her feel nauseous.

“Why so shy tonight?” Jess asked, softly.

The annoyance at Jess rang through clear and strong, then. Clearly, Caroline was embarrassed about this. Clearly, she didn’t want to talk about it.

And Jess was going to kiss her cheek and continue to press for more?

Caroline didn’t want to share it – thankfully – and Hannah very much didn’t want to hear it.

When Caroline dropped down onto her back on the floor, covering her face with her hands, Hannah wanted nothing more than to be the person sitting next to her, assuring her that she didn’t owe anything to anyone. Even her friends.

But she wasn’t the person next to Caroline. Jess was.

“What about you, Hannah?” Miranda stating her name garnered Hannah’s attention. “You’re single. You have sex stories?”

“Um, no.” She couldn’t help how sharp her tone was, and normally, she’d have apologized for it.

As she downed the rest of her drink in one large sip, she made peace with the fact that she did not have an apology in her right now.

This was wrong.

The thought echoed through Hannah's mind as she quickly fumbled with the lock on the bathroom door. When she finally got it, she slammed her back against the door, her hand shaking as she slid it into the front of her shorts.

God, she was so wet.

She gasped, both from the shock at feeling exactly how soaked she was and from how fucking perfect it felt to finally have pressure against her clit.

This was so wrong, but Hannah's self-control was shredded right now.

She shouldn't have asked Caroline about sex. She shouldn't have done that. It truly was all Hannah's own fault – *she 'd* been the one to press Caroline for details.

But she couldn't help herself. She... couldn't.

All she'd been able to think about after their sex-talk had ended earlier, was Caroline.

Caroline and sex.

Caroline, who normally had so many sex stories to regale her friends with.

Caroline, who'd had sex with Jess.

Caroline, who'd apparently been Jess's best lover.

It didn't come as a surprise to Hannah that Caroline was an attentive lover. Caroline was attentive in everything she did.

Sucking her lip between mine and grinding down against her, with both of us knowing where this is going. Feeling her body under mine, arching against me when I kiss and bite down her neck.

Caroline's words, in that husky, low timber echoed through Hannah's ears, as she started rubbing her clit harder.

A moan broke out from her throat, before she slapped her hand over her mouth to silence herself. She couldn't let herself get caught, because *this was so wrong*.

But it wasn't wrong enough to stop.

Instead, she flicked her tongue over her bottom lip, replacing all of Caroline's hypothetical *her* pronouns with Hannah's own.

Caroline's mouth on *Hannah's*, hot and hungry. Caroline's body holding *Hannah's* down against the bed. Caroline's mouth on *Hannah's* neck, biting in a way Hannah had never thought she'd want but she craved it right now.

The very idea of Caroline biting her neck, maybe even marking her, made Hannah's arousal spike, and she hadn't even known that could happen.

Not when she was so wet, she was dripping down her thigh and she hadn't even come yet.

I miss making you come, Hannah heard Caroline's voice in her ears, and another moan – louder and longer – vibrated against her palm as she throbbed against her fingers.

Holding my hands against your hips and pressing you down against the bed. Feeling you drip against my mouth, feeling how hard your hips press against my face.

Hannah rubbed her clit even faster, so fucking wet that it was difficult to feel any friction. But it was enough. Yes, fuck, it was *enough*.

She could feel her orgasm getting closer, closer. Barreling toward her as she did precisely what Caroline described. Rolling her hips, wanting to feel Caroline's grip holding her down. She could imagine it, so clearly. With her eyes closed, she could *see* Caroline here, on her knees, staring up at Hannah with those eyes so, so dark. Wanting.

How desperate you'd get, your legs shaking, my name the only thing you can say –

“Caroline!” Her name burst from Hannah's mouth, muffled as she pressed her hand even harder against her mouth as she came.

She came so hard, her entire body shuddering with it, grateful that the door was holding her up because she didn't think she would have been able to remain upright on her own.

She dropped her head back against the door, letting her hand fall limply from where it had been slapped over her mouth.

Hannah slowly blinked her eyes open, coming to terms with the reality of what she'd done.

She'd asked Caroline to essentially verbally fuck her. All right, not *her*, but... she'd definitely asked Caroline to cross a line. And when Caroline had obliged, she'd snuck away into the bathroom and fucked herself to the strongest orgasm she'd ever had.

“Fuck,” she whispered, still out of breath.

It took several minutes, but eventually, Hannah pulled herself together.

As she washed her hands, she looked at herself in the mirror. Her hair was mussed from how she'd been laying in bed earlier, and her pupils were blown, and her face was undeniably flushed.

She'd crossed a line, that was the truth. But she could still come back from this, she decided. *They* could come back from this.

If Jess and Caroline could continue to be friends after actually having sex, this would be... fine.

Her self-control was still in tact.

The reins had been loosened, undoubtedly, but... she'd had lowered inhibitions due to the drinks she'd consumed, and – most of all – even despite that, she'd wanted so badly to turn to face Caroline and kiss her.

To have Caroline act out everything she'd said.

But she didn't do that.

She'd had the presence of mind to go to the bathroom and make *herself* come.

The paragon of self-control.