

“Oh, crap,” Lizzie cried. “I’m not ready yet.” She snatched the earrings from Summer’s hand. “You have to stall him. I still need to finish my hair.”

Summer looked down at the baggy flannel boxers she’d pulled on when she got home from making the final preparations to her classroom earlier. Had she even remembered to shave her legs today? Yesterday? The T-shirt she wore was tied in a knot at her waist revealing the Ben and Jerry’s induced swell of her belly. No way was she dressed to greet anyone, much less a hot jock.

“Nope,” she said. “I’m locking myself in my bedroom until you leave.”

“I just agreed to your big ask,” Lizzie hissed. “This is mine in return.” She slammed the bathroom door in Summer’s face and locked it.

Millie was barking like a fiend in the living room when the doorbell rang again. *Damn.* There was no time to wrap herself in a Snuggly.

Or refill her wine glass with liquid courage.

With a heavy sigh, Summer made her way to the living room. Millie’s toenails were tap-dancing on the oak floors as the little dog prepared to launch herself at whoever was on the other side of the door. Summer positioned her leg awkwardly to prevent Millie from escaping and opened the door.

She bit back a groan at the sight of the lips she’d been having some serious dreams about last night. The eyes she’d been wondering about yesterday were hazel, she noted. And currently very bemused.

“You,” she said, sounding just as priggish as she had the day before.

Monty’s owner shoved his hands into the pockets of his sharply pressed khakis. “Uh, I hope I’ve got the right address. I’m looking for Elizabeth Pearson.”

*Of course he was.*

“She’s expecting a football player.” In for a priggish penny, in for a priggish pound.

He rocked back on his heels. “Number eighty-one in your Growler’s program and number one in fans’ hearts. Not to mention a Pro-Bowl wide receiver three years running.”

“Wow.” That explained Papa Harry’s “big fan” comment from yesterday.

Millie whimpered as she clawed at Summer’s leg to escape. No doubt the silly dog wanted to roll over and expose her lady parts to her lover’s owner.

“Ow!” Summer yelped when Millie’s claws broke the skin.

Leaving Monty’s owner to fend for himself with the little hussy that was her grandmother’s dog, Summer hopped on one foot to the kitchen. She snagged a paper towel and held it to her shin while pouring herself another glass of wine with her other hand. Who said she wasn’t talented?

“They aren’t acting in the movies. It really does hurt like hell when you put alcohol on an open wound. You might want to hold on to something.”

Great. Mr. Smartass had closed the door and followed her into the kitchen. He was cradling Millie in his arms. The dog purred like a cat as she tried to burrow into his neck. Not that

Summer could blame her. She'd gotten a whiff of the guy when they were at the door and he smelled delicious. Like fresh soap and her grandmother's fabric softener.

Without the silly ball cap, his dirty blond surfer hair was finger-combed into a semblance of a style that made him look carefree and boyish. Combined with his lush lips, the man was lethal to female hearts everywhere.

And he was all Lizzie's.

Summer downed half the glass of wine in one swallow.

He grinned at her. Not the potent smile he'd nearly taken her out at the knees with the day before. This was the gracious one reserved for his "big fans."

"That works, too." He stroked Millie's ears and the dog moaned as though she was in the throes of passion. "So. You and Elizabeth. You're sisters?"

"Cousins." She continued to press the paper towel to her leg while willing Lizzie to hurry up.

"Ah." He nodded. "I never connected the dots. I guess I don't even know Harry's last name. But he spent all afternoon bragging about his granddaughter, Summer, the talented cellist, and YouTube star. He never once mentioned Elizabeth."

His comment stunned her, making her sputter mid-swallow. "He was talking about me? To you? Whatever for?"

Millie was snoring against his shoulder now. His fingers gently stroked the dog's fur as he carefully rested a hip against the counter. "He and his friends were in the pub at Forest Glenn talking about their plans for the Growler's pep band. They're playing at the picnic this afternoon. He mentioned you might be joining them this season. He seemed pretty excited about it."

"Oh, no." She shook her wine glass at him. "He's just trying to fix me up with their director. No way am I joining their band."

"That's too bad." He sounded genuinely disappointed. Of course, that could have been the effects of the wine she was guzzling. "Fans and everyone on the team really enjoy the band. They make the gameday experience memorable. They're what make playing for the Growlers so unique."

He was calling her out for dissing the band. She was sure of it. But what business was it of his what she did or didn't do with her life? She opened her mouth to ask him that, but, thankfully, Lizzie appeared, saving her from yet another priggish moment.

His mouth curved up in an appreciative expression when his eyes landed on Lizzie. Summer bit back a sigh because her cousin was, as always, gorgeous. Looking at the two of them together made her stomach sink. They looked like Malibu Ken and Barbie. Their children would be stunning.

Summer tossed back her wine glass but it was empty. How had that happened? She debated pouring another one but held off. Mainly because she still had to walk Millie and the last thing she needed was to break an ankle drunk-dog-walking in the dark.

"Oh, Millie, get down," Lizzie scolded the dog. "You'll get hair all over Luke's shirt."

Her cousin was less of a dog person than she was, but in her case, Summer wanted to be one. She doubted Lizzie knew about Monty. Not her problem. She'd find out about the big lunk when she moved from WAD to WAG. Summer stifled a giggle.

Malibu Luke carried the still sleeping dog into the living room where he gently deposited her onto her bed. While his back was turned, Lizzie turned to Summer and shot her a questioning look. Summer shrugged. Lizzie mouthed "Isn't he hot?"

*So hot that the room was spinning.*

Summer managed a quick thumbs-up before he turned back to them.

"Did you two get acquainted?" Lizzie asked.

"Actually, we met yesterday." He aimed another one of those gracious smiles in Summer's direction. "My grandmother and your grandfather are neighbors."

Lizzie's eyes went wide. "Seriously?"

Luke looked pleased while Lizzie looked. . .panicked.

"We'll have to join them in the pub for trivia night some evening," he suggested.

Lizzie didn't go to Forest Glen. Ever. It was too difficult for her. Summer decided a rescue was in order. After all, her cousin had agreed to speak at Career Day.

"She doesn't get to see my grandparents that often," she said. "Her schedule being what it is, our grandmother is sundowning during the only time of day she can visit."

Lizzie's shoulders relaxed. "Um, yeah. And Papa Harry and I have a standing lunch date every week. It gives us an opportunity to visit while he gets a meal out."

Luke nodded. "I'm sure he enjoys that. Maybe my Gram and I can join you one day?"

Lizzie beamed at him. "We'd love to have you join us."

Summer bit back a snort. Lizzie would love any opportunity to be out and about with a celebrity. Especially since it helped her celebrity status in the process. No doubt Papa Harry would enjoy it, too, being the "big fan" of Luke.

Except Summer didn't like the idea that it could be misconstrued as the two of them going on a double date with Papa Harry and Luke's Gram. Of course, it wasn't. But her grandparent's friends and neighbors wouldn't know that. She didn't want them to get the impression her grandfather was less than devoted to his wife.

"Nice to see you again," Luke was saying as he led Lizzie to the door.

Summer saluted them with her empty wine glass. "Say hi to Papa Harry."

Lizzie halted in her tracks. "Papa Harry?"

"Didn't Luke tell you? The Growler pep band will be entertaining you at the picnic."

She could see the moment Lizzie realized her grandfather and his friends would be "chaperoning" her that afternoon. Papa Harry and his cronies could be a bit overbearing, but they meant well. Obviously, Lizzie didn't think so. Her cousin's lips curled inward. "I forgot he was still involved with that group."

"It'll be fun at the games year. Now that I know those guys. Maybe they'll take requests when I score," Luke joked.

"Right. They'll be at the games, too," Lizzie said. "Fun." Her tone indicated she thought it would be anything, but fun.

"I'll be there, too." That had to be the wine talking because Summer had no intention of joining with the Growler pep band.

Lizzie looked at her askance. Luke, however, was sporting that killer smile from yesterday. The one that made her want to do whatever it took to keep him smiling at her like that forever. And then he winked at her. As though by agreeing to join the band, she'd just passed some kind of test.

*Or dare.*