

# *Under the Harmony* *- The Honeymoon* *Period Part 2*

*U*nder the Harmony ends with an interview with Blake and Rose, where they talk about their wedding, honeymoon, and the scrutiny they faced afterwards when information about Hunter came to light. Here is an additional section from that time. This should be read after Under the Harmony. This overlaps with Part One.

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I wake from my fitful sleep, knowing I'm the first one awake. I can tell by Blake's slow and rhythmic breathing that he's still asleep, and I don't want to wake him. I know his sleep has been as broken as mine for the last week.

The last peaceful sleep I had was on the plane journey home from our honeymoon, but I know I slept better last night. Something about Blake's words, or maybe it was his I-don't-care-about-this attitude when he swiped all my papers from the table, but it finally penetrated the darkness.

What is happening now, it is about just a small part of my past, and this tidal wave will soon also be part of my past. At some point, this destruction will become a memory. Everything will be rebuilt. One day, somebody might say 'hey, do you remember the tidal wave that ruined this place... you can't tell, can you, it's been rebuilt even better'.

I will rebuild better. With Blake. If his hand is in mine, if I can fall asleep every night in his arms, if it's his beautiful smile that greets me in the mornings, and his lullaby that carries me into my dreams, I feel like I can tackle anything. I can climb the highest heights with him. I can survive the lowest lows with him. I've known it since we fell in love together, but I let myself lose sight of that momentarily. I won't do that again. I'll never let him worry like that again. I'll be stronger, because I know I have a husband who holds me up when I feel like I'm falling.

I extract myself from Blake's arms. He stirs and I rest my hand on his chest for a moment, watching as he settles back into sleep. I get out of the bed quietly, determined to put things right.

I grab my phone and switch it on to check my alerts. There are so many because I've ignored everything for days. Messages, app updates, notifications, missed calls. There are several calls from Harry, my manager. There are no alerts to say he left me a voice message, but he has clearly been frustrated by my lack of response. There's only one text from him, but it screams at me.

*Rose. Call me. Immediately.*

I slip out of the bedroom and potter to one of the spare bedrooms. I sit on the bed as I connect the call. It's early, but I know it's always up early. He's always late to bed, too. He calls it his twenty-four-hour service. I tell him it's a fast line to an early grave.

Harry answers on the third ring.

"Rose," he says. I can't decide if his tone is a reprimand or sympathy.

"Harry," I acknowledge.

There's a long silence between us. Eventually, he gives a big sigh.

"Why didn't you tell me?"

"What, that I unwittingly had an affair with a married man? I didn't tell anybody for ages. Just Libby, her wife, and Blake knew. And now, the whole world."

"There's more to this than an affair. I know that," he says.

"How?" I ask, dreading his answer. Is he fishing for information, just so he can prepare for the upcoming storms? Right now, they're painting me as a homewrecker, but I know, and fear, that it'll get worse.

"There are rumours about him stirring. About his preferences, and how he treats women. It's been a few whispers about people he may have hurt. It'll pick up momentum, I'm sure. One thing I do know, he's not coming back from this. When that comes out, he's finished. Everybody loves an affair and scandal, but if he's done half the things I'm hearing in the whispers, he's over."

"There are whispers?" I ask.

Whispers have the habit of getting louder, reaching a screaming crescendo.

"Yes, Rose. Not about you, yet, but I assume if the whispers are true, you'll have experienced it too. I'm sorry for everything you went through. I wish you had told me, Princess."

He has always used Princess as a term of endearment, as well as a reminder for me not to be too dramatic. I'm sure he's aiming for the endearment, but it's too much a reminder of how Hunter would call me Princess when he was getting physical.

*Cry for me, Princess. Watch what it does to me.*

"Please don't call me Princess," I murmur.

I wonder if he's tracking in his mind at what point I started reacting to that nickname, if he knows the driver is because it stirs bad memories of Hunter.

"Understood," he replies. "Scratched from my vocabulary, I promise."

"I'm sorry for not being in touch."

"I understand, don't worry. Maybe we can meet up later in the week," he suggests.

"I was actually wondering if you had any events this week that I've been invited to. Somewhere I could go with Blake," I state.

"I have had several requests for you, as always. Shall I send you some details?"

"Perfect. How about you come for dinner on Monday?"

"Sounds good. Looking forward to seeing the house," Harry replies.

We say our goodbyes and a few minutes later, my phone beeps with possible events for us to go to. The one that catches my eye is a film premier tonight. It's a scary prospect, to put myself out there for the world to see, but I want to show that Blake and I are strong, that nothing will shake us. No matter what comes out to the light, no matter how brutal it gets, Blake and I will be okay.

I reply to Harry to tell him we'll go to the premier. I check the time and look up the wedding photographer that we were supposed to meet. Their website suggests they are open, so I phone them, planning

to make an appointment for later in the week. I'm delighted they can accommodate us today, so I agree for them to visit today. As I hang up the phone, I'm smiling, excited to see the wedding photography.

I go back to the bedroom. Blake is still asleep, so I head to the bathroom so I can shower. As I start the water in the shower, I check my social media account, the last icon with the alerts. I hate the idea that there will be damning messages, but the first thing I see is that Blake has mentioned me in a comment. It's a photograph he's uploaded. The sentence takes my breath away. My fingers quickly move across the phone, to repost his uploaded image, to tell him he dazzles me too.

I shower and dress, then sit and wait for my husband to wake, ready to show him that I'm back.

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"Are you sure about this?" Blake murmurs in the car as we pull around to the front of the theatre.

"Yes," I whisper, though I'm not sure. Not entirely.

He squeezes my hand. "We can go home."

"No. We can do this."

The car pulls to a stop. Blake gets out of the car first and holds the door open for me. The crowd isn't huge given it isn't a blockbuster film or a central London premier. It's still busy. There are other celebrities I recognise, milling around outside, posing in their outfits, chatting to the journalists.

There's a small lowering of the volume when Blake helps me out of the car. A hushed anticipation. As I get out of the car, I keep my attention on him, letting the other people fade and blur.

"Blake!"

“Rose!”

“Rose!”

The voices call out, the cameras click, the lights flash, my heart pounds.

There’s a friendly journalist I recognise who calls my name. She smiles warmly, and I’m sure she won’t ask me any probing questions about Hunter.

I gesture towards her to Blake. He nods and I slip my hand from his, walking to the woman I know from previous interviews.

“Hi, Jenna,” I say.

“Rose, so nice to see you,” she says warmly.

I glance over to where Blake is, pulled into an interview. He keeps glancing towards me, checking I’m okay.

I don’t hear any whispers about Hunter. It’s nothing like I imagined. Pictures are taken. Questions are asked. I give some hearty answers to Jenna about various topics before she’s demanded for another interview. The crowds shift, interviewers moving onto other people to interview, ticking off the famous people for quotes they can print.

A journalist I don’t recognise takes a step towards me. Blake’s not far away, giving me another glance between questions to make sure I’m okay. I nod again. One more interview, and then we can go in. Sit down and enjoy the film.

The journalist gives me a sickly smile. “So, Rose, how do you feel about being labelled a whore?” he asks.

The shock of his words almost has the power to knock me off my feet. It doesn’t matter how many times I reminded myself in the car that this could be a possibility. Despite the preparation I thought I did, I’m stunned into silence, especially as it’s a stark contrast to how everybody else has treated me this evening.

I cannot speak, not even to defend myself. I want to run, but I'm frozen to the ground. I will myself not to cry.

Across the red carpet, being interviewed by somebody else, I see Blake freeze. I hear him make his apologies for the interviewer before swiftly turning and striding in my direction. He reaches my side and stares at the guy who uttered the question. I don't think I've ever seen Blake looking so openly hostile before.

"Did you just call my wife a whore?" he spits. Despite the hostility on his face, his words are icy and drip with venom.

"I didn't call her a whore. I asked how she felt about being called a whore," the interviewer clarifies. He looks smug at his response, like he's found some clever little loophole that allows him to be a snake.

"Don't hide behind semantics. You called her a whore. However you dress it up, that was your intent. Did nobody ever teach you it's impolite to call somebody a whore? If not, I'm telling you. Don't use that word. Don't use those labels. Least of all about my wife."

Now Blake's voice is raised enough for people to start paying attention. People who had been clamouring to speak to other celebrities are now turned in our direction.

"I'm sorry, Mr Daniels," the interviewer stammers, back peddling.

"No. Don't do that. Don't apologise to me just because I called you out on your behaviour. Look my wife in the eyes and apologise to her for what you said." Blake continues to glare at the interviewer. I'm sure the guy now feels about six inches tall. The crowd around us has fallen silent. The only noise is that of the camera clicks, photographers clicking as they probably hope they'll see somebody throwing a punch.

"I'm very sorry," the interviewer says to me. He sounds sincere, but I know he wouldn't have apologised if Blake hadn't called him out. He probably would have kept questioning until I gave in and sobbed, begged the world their forgiveness for my sins.

I don't respond to him other than a small nod of my head. It isn't because I don't appreciate the apology. It's that I have more pressing things I want to get to. I turn towards Blake. I ignore the sudden shouts of people around us. I smile broadly at him, watching as his hostile expression melts away into a smile just for me. I throw my arms around him, pull him closer to me. He dips his head and then his lips meet mine in a hungry, possessive kiss.

Around us seems to be hundreds of camera clicks and flashbulbs, lighting up the night sky, but when we break away from our kiss, I only see Blake.

"You ready?" he asks. I nod and he guides me away from the crowds, the camera clicks, and the microphones. He walks me through to the foyer of the theatre. Most people are still outside, being interviewed or trying to shoot their shot at being featured in the papers.

"Thank you," I say.

"I know you don't need saving, but nobody is ever going to get to call you a whore. Ever." His voice drips with sincerity. He kisses my forehead, and I swear I've never felt so cherished.

When he stares down at me, my heart flutters in my chest. How have I been so lucky as to being able to call this man mine? My husband. My protector. Somebody who loves every piece of me, somebody who I love beyond measure.

I push up onto my tiptoes so I can whisper in his ear. "When we get home. Two rooms tonight."

For a second, he looks confused and then he catches onto my smile and my thoughts. I've been too distracted by everything going on in the news and media to have attempted any intimacy since we got home from our honeymoon, and he hasn't pushed either. We've settled for comforting cuddles, and as much as I love being in his arms, tonight, I want more.

“Three,” he counters, a grin on his face.

“Two and the garden,” I offer.

“How long is this film?” he growls.

“We don’t have to stay,” I remind him.

“You’re not worried that they’ll think you’ve run away?” he asks.

“Nope. Couldn’t care less.”

He grabs my hand and before I know it, we’re running out of the foyer. Back through the crowd, through the symphony of camera clicks. His enthusiasm makes me laugh. It reminds me of the time we spent in the little cottage, when we would run down the beach together, arms outstretched, like we were a pair of kids.

We blow past the reporters and the people being interviewed. I’m pretty sure all they can hear is my laughter.

There’s a parked taxi just past the crowd. Blake pulls me to a stop. He knocks on the window, and the taxi driver winds the window down.

“Are you booked?” Blake asks.

“No, mate, wherever you want to go,” the driver replies. I can tell he’s surprised to see us both, and I can’t help but chuckle when I hear one of our songs is playing on the radio.

Blake opens the car door for me, and I slide into the backseat, letting him get in beside me. He holds my hand as the taxi starts. He gives our address, and we talk with the driver the whole way home. Blake never once releases my hand, and the whole journey, I can’t stop smiling.

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In the morning, the papers and sites are filled with news about us. There’s a beautiful photograph published on one of the entertain-

ment sites. Blake and I are staring at one another, like we're the only two people in the world, that we would only ever have eyes for one another.

The headline proclaiming: "The Look That Silenced The Critics."

The article summarises the comments by the reporter and Blake's immediate critique. Although it summarises the current media storm about Hunter, the emphasis is about me and Blake, how united we looked.

I find I don't care. All I know is that we christened three rooms and the back garden, and my heart is filled with joy. I know we'll survive anything thrown at us, that we're stronger together, that we'll always be together; in this life, and the next.