



the wedding day

A BONUS EPILOGUE

# Chapter One

## *First Look*

### Colin

“Are you ready?”

I stood there, on the Gene Leahy Park bridge, facing my grinning groomsmen as Olivia’s maid of honor yelled from somewhere behind me. I could smell Liv’s perfume and almost *feel* her, and I wondered exactly how far away she stood. Were we *this* close to back-to-back, or was she on the entire other side of the bridge?

“*Hell*, yes,” I said, feeling a little desperate because it was three o’clock in the afternoon and I hadn’t even seen or talked to her yet that day. I’d gotten used to waking up with her every morning, to talking to her a hundred times for a hundred inconsequential-yet-perfect reasons.

I fucking missed her.

“She looks like shit,” Jack teased, looking past me at his sister.

“Come closer and say that to my face,” she replied, a laugh in her voice.

She always had a laugh in her voice.

“One,” her bridesmaids yelled, and I rolled my eyes even though I was totally into it as the photographer started snapping pictures. “Two, three – turn around, Colivia!”

*Colivia*. Christ. Liv had been trying to make that our “couple name” for months now (I suspected just to irritate me), which was asinine and drove me to tackle her every fucking time she dared to say it.

Which I did not hate.

And she obviously didn’t, either, because she said it every damn day.

I turned around, and –

*Shiiiiit.*

I tried to swallow but my throat was pinched, my chest was tight and a roaring sounded in my ears. I wasn’t going to cry – *I wasn’t, was I?* - but Livvie was almost too perfect to look at. She was stunning, she was flawless, and I felt like I couldn’t breathe as I took in the long white gown, her slender neck and bare shoulders, the brightness of those green eyes and the soft curve of her red lips.

I knew I should speak, but what the fuck was there to say? My mouth wouldn’t move as I just stared, because there wasn’t a word in the English language that could describe the way she looked.

Perfect wasn’t perfect enough. Beautiful, gorgeous, stunning – they weren’t right.

Words that had been used before wouldn’t fucking work to describe her in this moment.

“Colin,” she said, her voice a breathy like she was about to shiver (even though it was a warm summer day). “If you don’t say something soon, I might have to kill you. Here – watch me.”

How could I watch her when the fucking tears were blurring my vision?

*Get it together, dipshit.*

Olivia cleared her throat and said, “You look incredible, Colin.”

I stepped closer and didn’t even realize my hand had moved until I saw it on her face.

Her eyebrows crinkled together. “Are you okay?”

I nodded and swallowed. Opened my mouth to speak, but all I got out was “Liv.”

And my voice cracked.

Her eyes moved over my face, like she was looking for something. She raised onto her tiptoes and said quietly, “Do you need to tell me something?”

*Fuck, yes, I did.* I needed to tell her that she was too good for me and that I didn’t know how I’d gotten so lucky and I already missed her in advance for every minute of our lives when she wouldn’t be with me.

But she misunderstood my silence – because what kind of a moron would be rendered mute by the sight of their bride – and said with a tinge of worry in her voice, “Oh. Well let’s go--”

I kissed her. My mouth was on hers, *with* hers, even though it wasn’t an answer or a statement or any sort of remotely appropriate response. Her skin was soft under my hands as I held her face and she kissed me back the way she always had, like she needed me, too. The bridal party broke into applause, but I didn’t give a shit. I just wanted every little piece of her.

Forever.

It wasn’t until I heard someone yell *you’re gonna ruin her lipstick, Colin* that I remembered where we were and what was happening.

Fuck *me*.

I lifted my head as Liv’s eyes fluttered open and she gave me a sunshine smile that made every cell in my body warm.

“Shit, Liv, I didn’t mean to mess up--”

“Are you kidding me?” she interrupted, raising a finger to fix her lipstick. “That was so much better than words, Beck. Your kiss was like silent poetry.”

*God, I loved her.* “How long until the wedding?”

She narrowed her eyes and said, “Like an hour and a half, I think.”

“I can’t wait that long,” I said, meaning it.

“Well, I’m sorry,” she teased around a laugh, lowering her hands to rest on my lapels as her green eyes danced. “But that’s just the way it works.”

“I wish we could go somewhere.” My body, my words – they were on their own, not controlled by my consciousness anymore but by my heart, apparently.

“Why can’t we?” she said, her mouth quirking into that wild-ass Livvie grin that I adored.

“Come on.”

She grabbed my hand and started pulling me in the direction of the busy city street at the top of the hill.

“Where are you going?” Jack yelled, sounding entirely unconcerned as he watched us through a squint.

“No idea,” I said, following Olivia off the bridge and up the hill.

“Why the fuck are you grinning like that?” he asked.

“Like what?”

“Like an *idiot*,” he replied, his voice laced with disgust.

“It’s because I’m marrying *her*,” I said, pointing a finger at Olivia, who was hauling ass up the steepish hill of the park.

“We aren’t done with pictures,” Jillian said, her hands on her hips.

“*We* are,” Olivia shouted to the group, walking faster and dragging me along behind her. I squinted into the sunshine, wholly obsessed with my bride as she yelled, “Just go do some shots or something. We’ll be back in time for the wedding.”

## Chapter Two

“Where are you taking me, Marshall?” I asked as we crossed at the corner. Olivia seemed to be on a mission, forging ahead while still pulling me behind her, but I had zero complaints.

*No place I'd rather be.*

“I'll know when I see it,” she said, charging up the sidewalk as if she *wasn't* wearing a body-hugging wedding gown and 3-inch heels.

“So...are we looking for a sex alley, then?” I teased. “Somewhere we can have a quickie?”

“You wish,” she said, not slowing.

“Wine bar?” I guessed.

“Not until *after* the wedding,” she replied, tugging me a harder as she walked a little faster.

“Be honest - is this just a donut run?”

Olivia stopped and whirled around, pure mischief in her eyes as she let go of my hand and pushed me out of the foot traffic with both palms on my chest, cornering me in front of a shop.

“Do you think it is?”

I meant to say *with you it's likely*, but instead I looked at her long eyelashes and confessed, “You are so fucking gorgeous, Liv, that it hurts my chest.”

“There,” she said, her eyes dropping to my mouth as she stepped even closer. Her soft perfume swirled around my nose as the breeze toyed with a long, dark tendril that had come out of Olivia’s up-do. “*That’s* what you were supposed to say at the first look.”

“I couldn’t, though.” I gave my head a shake and managed a half-shrug, still baffled by my failure. “I’m so sorry. I fucking forgot words when I saw you, Liv.”

Her nostrils flared and she looked away from me for a second, turning her head to the right, and when she brought her gaze back, her eyes were sparkling with tears. “Apology accepted and also I’m in love with it.”

I lowered my mouth and kissed the top of her head. “So where do you want to go?”

“I don’t know,” she said, narrowing her eyes in concentration. “I want to do some little *something* that we’ll always remember, apart from everyone else. Some moment we can mark down as belonging to just you and I.”

“Well maybe we could--”

“Col.” Olivia smacked my arm and pointed behind me, waggling her eyebrows. “*Look.*”

I followed her gaze, and – holy shit – we were standing in front of a tattoo shop.

With a buzzing neon *OPEN* sign in the window.

“I mean,” she said, her eyes sweeping over my face to gauge my reaction. “Not that you necessarily want to--”

“For fuck’s sake, Marshall, we are standing in front of a tattoo shop – *of course* I want to.”

Her mouth dropped open, forming an “O.” “Seriously?”

“Why the fuck not?” I said, willing to do anything she wanted. “That will definitely take care of the marking of the moment, right?”

“Do we have time?” she asked, her voice rising in pitch and getting a breathy quality to it and she bounced in her pumps. “And what should we get?”

I fucking *loved* the look Olivia got on her face when she was excited about an idea. It was a cross between precocious-child-on-Christmas-morning and college-co-ed-getting-off-the-plane-for-first-Vegas-trip.

Excitement and unbridled *Let's Do This* made her eyes dance.

“You think of the what and the where,” I said, grabbing her hand and pulling open the door. “While I beg them to squeeze us in.”

“I get to decide?” I heard her say as we walked into the shop. “Seriously?”

“My gift to you, Bride,” I said as I headed for the counter. I saw seven or eight customers getting inked, but I didn't see any employees sitting around, looking bored.

*Fuck.* I instantly remembered as the girl at the desk looked up at me that you had to have an appointment at nearly any tattoo shop.

*Shit, shit, shit.*

I didn't want to disappoint Liv an hour before our wedding, dammit; what kind of a start was that?

“What are the odds,” Olivia said before I had a chance to speak, “That someone might be available to give us a very fast, very tiny tattoo before we wed in an hour?”

The girl smiled as she looked at us in our formal wear, like she found us to be *cute*, but said, “God, I wish I could help, but all of the artists are busy at the moment.”

“Oh,” Livvie said, and when I looked down at her, the magical expression was gone. She was smiling and happy, but the *excited-to-commit-crimes* vibe had vanished from her face. “Well, that's okay--”

“Excuse me,” I said, or *announced*, actually. I turned around so I was facing the customers, pulled out my wallet and looked inside. “I will give—”



I grabbed the huge wad of cash I had – poker winnings from the night before – and tried counting it *twenty-forty-sixty* as I said, “All of this to anyone willing to give up a portion their appointment to us.”

“Holy shit, Col,” Olivia said, her mouth going wide into a high roller grin.

“Count it,” I murmured, handing her the money while continuing with, “We have to get married in one hour, so this only happens if someone is willing to help us out.”

“Two someones,” she corrected, and then she pulled a total Olivia.

“I cannot believe this dipshit has twelve hundred dollars cash in his wallet,” she said to the room, smirking like the brat that she is as she held up two wads of cash, “But it’s yours if you’re kind enough to squeeze us in. We just want to get one tiny little word – nothing fancy – so it’ll be quick, I promise.”

I looked down at her. “What word?”

“You can have my appointment,” said a huge, shirtless dude on the other side of the room. His chest was covered in tattoos, so much that I wasn’t even sure what he’d been having done that day. “As long as you tell me the word *before* you tell him.”

Everyone laughed, and then my betrothed sprinted over to him, shoved a wad of money into his hand and whispered into his ear.

“What word, Livvie?” I asked again, sliding my hands into my pockets as I watched her from across the room.

The guy’s face broke into a big smile, which turned into a chuckle when she pulled back and added, “So it’s going to drive him crazy for as long as we both shall live.”

I was terrified and utterly charmed, which perfectly described my life with Olivia.

“You can have my time, too,” said the woman on the table to the left of the laughing man. She was in a sports bra and appeared to be getting something on her back, but the artist was sitting straight up now and the woman was reaching for her top. “That way you can do it side-by-side.”

“Is it okay with you?” I asked the artist, who thankfully looked amused. “I promise we’ll tip well.”

“Yes,” Olivia said to the artist at the other table. “We will definitely make it worth your while.”

She started talking to both tattoo artists as I crossed the room, lowering her voice, but when I reached her side she said – without even looking up from her conversation – “Lose the pants, Beck.”

That made all eyes in the entire fucking place turn to me.

“I – I beg your pardon?”

Were we seriously getting matching ass tattoos?

Were we hillbillies now?

*No offense to people with ass tattoos, I thought, but what the hell?*

As she watched me with a questioning smile on her lips, with one eyebrow raised in challenge, I started unbuckling my belt. She probably thought she’d have to talk me into it, but the truth of it was, I was hers and I would do anything – any fucking thing – to make this day perfect.

If matching frogs on our asses made it perfect for her, I was willing to drop ‘em and pay for a goddamn ass tattoo.

“Don’t you want to know first?” she asked, her green eyes wide with shock. “The what and where?”

“I know it’s what you want,” I said, absolutely meaning it when I said, “So I am all-in on the ass tattoos.”

“*What?*” She scowled as if I’d lost my mind. “I don’t want matching *ass* tattoos; what are we, hillbillies?”

“Then why am I--” I stopped talking and narrowed my eyes. “Olivia, please tell me why I need to remove my pants.”

The grin was back and her eyes were dancing again.

“Liv.” I leaned my face closer to hers and said, “If not ass, then where?”

She cleared her throat. “Well, you know how I *really* love that hipbone-ridge thing of yours?”

I glanced over at the still-shirtless guy, and he was fucking beaming, as if he’d never been this amused. I wanted to tell him to mind his own business but apparently I took too long to respond to Liv, because she kept talking. “That indentation just below your waistline but above your--”

“I know what you mean, yes,” I interrupted, intent upon stopping her before she was sharing bedroom details. “You want it *there?* But why?”

“Because,” she said, her cheeks a little pinker than they’d been the previous moment. “Then I can be the only person who ever knows about it, and you can be the only person who knows about mine. This wedding day moment will be written forever, but no one other than us will know.”

Well, shit.

*It was impossible to not be obsessed with her brain, right?*

“So yours will be in the same place?” I asked, definitely not hating the thought of that.

“Wherever you want it, Husband,” she said, giving me a slow, contented smile that I wanted to save as my mind’s wallpaper for every fucking minute of the rest of my life. “Your wish is my command.”

## Chapter Three

### Olivia

“I cannot believe you ran all over town in your wedding dress,” my mother huffed as she pinned a white rose – plucked from my bouquet – over the ketchup stain on the top of my dress (the remains of the hot dog Colin had bought for me from a street vendor). “Do you ever slow down and think?”

*Best wedding day ever* was what I was thinking at the moment.

“No, she does not,” my sister-in-law said from behind me, curling my hair because the up-do had been destroyed after lying on the tattoo table and then sprinting back to the church so we wouldn’t be late. “Which is why we adore her.”

I looked in the mirror and hoped Colin wouldn’t be disappointed as she pinned my veil in place.

I mean, I still looked *good* in the long white gown and professionally-applied makeup, but I’d lost a little of the “bridal finishing” that my handlers had magically achieved before the park.

But it’d been so worth it.

“Done,” Dana said, then everyone started scrambling for the door. It was ten minutes past four – ten minutes past when the wedding was supposed to start - so there was no time for casual strolling.

“Are you ever going to tell us where you guys went?” asked Jillian, Colin’s sister, as we rushed to line up in the foyer.

“Quickie,” Sara muttered, handing me my bouquet before stepping in front of me and grabbing my brother’s arm. “Ten bucks says those little shits snuck away for a quickie.”

Which made Jack groan in disgust. “Gross.”

My brother would be relieved to know that wasn’t actually the case, but Colin and I had vowed to take our little secret to the grave.

I smiled in spite of the chaos around me as I pictured Colin at the tattoo shop. He’d looked so incredibly sexy – and hilarious, stretched out on a table in full formalwear from the waist up, but only in CK boxer-briefs, black socks and expensive dress shoes from the waist down.

He hadn’t made a sound when the needle inked COLIVIA onto the very-taut skin of his hip region, whereas I whimpered like a baby – while he teased me incessantly - when the needle inked the same thing onto the very-sensitive skin just underneath my right breast.

The spot *he’d* selected.

It was silly and stupid and wonderful, but the entire day had been *perfection*. We’d literally inked into our history a perfect private moment, and I *adored* him for understanding.

For wanting it as much as I had.

He’d piggybacked me back to the church (because heels were impossible to run in), only slowing for hot dogs, and now to top it all off, I got to marry him.

How could life be this good?

I took a deep breath as the doors opened and the bridal party started walking down the aisle. I let the string quartet version of *Lover* float around me like soft dandelion wishes, wobbling taking flight on a warm summer breeze.

I felt almost liquid with happiness.

My dad linked his arm through mine, and once Sara and Jack walked down the aisle in front of us, I could finally see Colin, standing at the front of the church.

Our eyes met - *God I love his hot blue eyes* – and I wondered if it were possible for me to ever love him more than I did at that moment. He stood there, solemn and handsome with his jaw clenched and his gaze burning into me, and that seemed unlikely.

But then...he did it.

He proved that it was possible.

Because Colin's intense expression transformed as he looked at me. His mouth went into a wide smile and his eyes got squinty as he tilted his head, cupped his hands around his lips and mouthed the words "*COLIVIA FOREVER.*"

Just for me.

## Colin

"Is she laughing?" Jack whispered from beside me, but there was no way was I looking away from the masterpiece that *was* Olivia to give him an answer.

"Hell, yes," I said, feeling hot and cold, numb and tingly, excited and calm – everything all at once. Liv's hair was no longer swept up, but instead fell long and curly – *fucking perfect* - around her sun-kissed shoulders.

But it was her face behind that veil – *dear God, her face* – that held me utterly transfixed.

Because Olivia was ethereal.

She was joy personified, the picture of shimmery golden happiness, and I knew I'd never forget the way her green eyes squinted as she beamed down the aisle.

When she finally reached the front and her dad handed her off, it felt like the final piece of *me* was being pressed into place, as if I were finally whole. I lowered my head, breathed in her scent, and whispered into her ear, "Tell me exactly what you're wearing, Misdial."

Her eyes widened in surprise, but then her fingers squeezed my bicep and she smirked up at me. Someone else might've let it go because a. we were standing in front of three hundred people, b. she looked like an angel behind that veil, and c. we were in a church, for the love of God.

But my Miss Misdial was *not* someone else.

Olivia went up on her tiptoes, put her mouth to my ear, and whispered a new twist on the magical words that had brought us together.

“My wedding dress and your favorite thong, Wrong Number.”

**The End**