



## Dream On

“Hey, Wes.”

I was sitting on the porch steps, doing my assigned reading for American Lit, when I looked up and saw Liz.

“Buxbaum.” I let my eyes drift to her trench coat and said, “What’s up with the flasher outfit?”

She bit down on her bottom lip, the bottom lip that was drenched in the red lipstick that I fucking *loved*, and she seemed nervous. I was about to say something sarcastic because she wasn’t saying anything at all *and wearing a damn trench coat*, but then her hands moved down and started untying the belt.

I swallowed and climbed to my feet.

“I got a prom dress,” she said, her voice breathy as her eyes moved over my face, “And I want to know what you think.”

“Oh,” I managed, a little confused because I didn’t know she was even going to prom, but then the belt was undone and she was pulling off the coat. I watched as it fell to the snowy sidewalk – *wait, when had it started snowing* – and then there was just Dress.

*Oh, dear God.*

Liz was wearing a long white dress, a strapless dress that exposed her pale shoulders and smooth skin and made her hair look like long, dancing flames. She was a fucking ice queen as the flurries swirled around her, and my voice didn’t want to work when I managed to rasp out the words, “It’s nice.”

Her eyebrows scrunched together and her lips pursed, making her look like a displeased child. “Nice.”

“Yeah, uh, it looks really nice,” I muttered, not wanting to say anything that would tip her off to the fact that she could wear an inflatable T-Rex costume and I’d still find her to be the most attractive human on the planet.

“I bought it,” she said, stepping closer and lowering her voice, “Because I was hoping it would inspire a certain someone to ask me to prom. Do you think it’ll work?”

Did I think it’d work? I’d sign over everything I owned just to look at her in that dress for another five minutes, so yeah - I was probably too biased to answer that question.

I nodded, but way too emphatically – *dipshit* - so I had to look back down at the book of poetry in my hand and pretend I didn’t care.

“So...?” Liz took the book away from me, her pink-tipped fingernails covering the lines of *Somewhere I Have Never Travelled, Gladly Beyond* before she closed it and tossed it over her shoulder. *What is happening?* It was snowing harder, but I didn’t even feel the cold as those green eyes looked up at me with expectation.

Like she was waiting for me to *do* something.

“So...?” I repeated, feeling like I was missing something.

“So ask me, Bennett,” she said, near enough for me to see the tiny gold flecks in her emerald eyes. “I only wore this dress so you could take me to prom.”

“Wait. *Me?*” I asked, lowering my head just enough to sniff the side of her exposed throat. “How do you always smell like vanilla, honey?”

“It’s you,” she whispered on a breath, setting her palms on my chest. “I’m not even wearing perfume. Those are my just my natural Bennett pheromones.”

“No shit?” I managed, rubbing my nose over her skin.

“No shit. Now ask me, Wes.”

I needed to slow down and enjoy this moment, because Liz wanted me to take her to prom *what the hell*, but slow wasn’t possible. Especially when her pheromones were giving me a contact high. My hands squeezed her waist and my words fell all over each other as I murmured into her ear, “Will you go to prom with me, Liz?”

“Yes,” she said, and I lifted my head because I had to see her face. *Was this real?*

I looked down at her and she smiled, her ruby red lips sliding wide in a Liz Buxbaum classic that made me feel *everything*.

Victorious.

Sublime.

Like I’d won every-fucking-thing.

“So should we practice our prom kiss now?” she asked, her long lashes fluttering as her eyes went to my mouth.

“What?” I didn’t know what that meant, but I also knew the answer was unequivocally, “Yes, of course.”

She laughed a soft, whispery giggle that fired each and every neuron in my body. Her hands slid up to my shoulders as she said, “The only way for us to make sure our prom kiss is perfect is for us to practice, right?”

*Was this real?*

“Right,” I agreed, so incredibly committed to working my ass off at practice.

“But we can’t do it on the porch. Come on.”

Liz took my hand and pulled me behind her as she went into my house and led me up the stairs to my room. I couldn’t keep my gaze from her skin as I followed, from the exposed expanse that stretched between the waistband of my low-hanging Emerson sweatpants - *Damn, but I loved her body in my clothes* - and the bottom of her cropped tank top. *So much perfect skin.*

My heart was pounding in my chest as she closed the door behind us.

“We have to lie down,” she said, her mouth mere inches from mine. She was correct – *you couldn’t kiss standing up, right?* – but when her eyes squinted around a mischievous little smile and she stepped away from me to climb on top of my bed, I was in serious jeopardy of fainting.

“True,” I mumbled in agreement, but then my brain proceeded to melt into a puddle. Because Lizzie got comfortable. She stretched all the way out. On my bed. Her hair was on my pillow, her body on my sheets, her lips waiting for mine as she grinned at me.

*Dear God, that tattoo.*

*I could write an entire book of poetry about the daisies on her delicate skin.*

I stood there for a second, frozen and alarmingly dizzy, and then I was crawling over her body. I was too scared this wasn't real or that she'd change her mind, so I wasn't wasting a minute.

I needed to kiss Liz like I needed to breathe oxygen.

"Hurry," she said, her hands grasping at my shirt, and then it was happening. Liz's mouth found mine, *my fucking beautiful instigator*, and she kissed me like it was the only thing she'd ever wanted to do. She was a wild attacker, my frenzied Elizabeth, and I growled as she whimpered into my mouth, a sound that I felt everywhere.

"Wes," she whispered, and I loved hearing her say my name as she kissed the hell out of me, as her fingertips trailed over the ridges of my back, as her gorgeous body cradled mine in the softness of my bed.

Everything was right in the world.

"You need to get up," she said, but she didn't stop kissing me.

"Sorry," I said, turning our bodies so we were on our sides but still meeting her kiss-for-kiss. "I didn't mean--"

"Wes, you need to get up!"

"Okay--"

"Wesley!"

*GAH!*

I opened my eyes, my heart pounding, and saw my bedroom ceiling.

"Do you hear me?" My mom yelled from down the hall. "It's quarter after!"

I blinked, staring at the space above me, slowly registering the disappointing truth that it'd just been a dream.

*God, it'd seemed so real.*

I closed my eyes.

I could still see her in the long white dress, smiling at me with red lips in the falling snow.

I rolled over and pulled the sheet up to my shoulders. *It's not over.*

“Are you up?” my mother yelled, pissed off now.

“I don't have first block today, Ma,” I lied, burying my face in my pillow. “So I start late.”

I knew sleep was a stupid reason to be tardy, to potentially end up with detention, but I didn't care. That dream had been so real that I could still smell the vanilla of her skin and feel the warmth of her soft body underneath mine.

*It couldn't be over. Not yet.*

The odds weren't in my favor that it would ever happen for real, so I was damn-sure going to try my hardest to get back in the dream and have a few more minutes with Liz.

