

My Hockey Alpha

Chapter 8: No Means No!

I walked back to the party, trying to ignore the strange interactions I had just had with Enzo and Lisa. Jessica was dancing with the group, while Lori was still sitting on the steps of one of the cabins and smoking. I didn't feel like dancing right now, so I went to sit with Lori.

Lori handed me her joint without a word when I sat down. I didn't smoke very often, but I just wanted to relax right now, so I took it gratefully and took a couple of puffs.

"I saw you talking to Enzo and Lisa," Lori said, taking the joint back from me and flicking a bit of ash on the ground. "Everything okay?"

I shrugged and pulled my knees up to my chest.

"I just... made some mistakes."

Lori chuckled and took a deep drag of her joint. "Yeah," she said, "getting involved with hockey guys is usually a bad idea."

By Monday morning, I felt a lot better about the situation. I woke up early to get ready for class and put on a long-sleeved henley and black skinny jeans. By the time I got ready and had my breakfast, it was time to go.

Jessica normally came to class with me, but she wasn't waking up on time so I left without her. I felt a bit bad about it, but I wanted to start this week off on a high note and didn't want to be late along with her. I knew she'd understand.

I walked out of the dormitories and started to cross the quad toward the shuttle stop; today, I usually took the shuttle to the medical campus for my classes, which I didn't mind. I couldn't afford a car, and besides, sitting on the bus gave me time to read or just people watch.

"Nina! Nina, wait!" a familiar voice called out.

Justin.

I sped up, just wanting to ignore him and move on with my day. But he caught up and grabbed my arm.

“Nina, can we talk?” he said breathlessly. I pulled my arm away and shook my head, continuing toward the shuttle stop, but he jogged to keep up with me.

“Please, Nina,” he said.

I stopped in my tracks and whirled around to glare at him. “What the fuck do you want?” I growled.

“I just wanted to say I’m sorry,” Justin pleaded. “I know I fucked up.”

“Oh, you don’t say?” I replied, raising my voice. “You literally fucked a cheerleader in my bed. On my birthday, no less!”

By this point, students were noticing our argument and started to gather nearby, whispering to one another.

Justin hung his head and stared at his feet. “Look, I know I was extremely shitty. I only went after Lisa because all of my teammates are dating popular cheerleaders and models. I got peer pressured into getting with her, but now I know that I made a mistake. Please... Will you forgive me?”

I scoffed and folded my arms across my chest. “How desperate do you think I am?” I said. “You ruined my birthday and you broke my trust. I’ll never forgive you.”

Justin looked speechless. I could tell that he wasn’t expecting me to be so confident in my response. If anything, I felt even more confident now that I had spoken my mind, and with that I turned on my heel to head toward the shuttle stop once more while Justin hung his head and walked away.

I didn’t get far before my plans to make it to class without any more drama were ruined again as a motorcycle pulled up in front of me.

The rider, who was wearing a black leather jacket, took off his helmet.

It was Enzo.

Was my life a movie? What on earth was happening and why couldn’t I just get to class in peace?

When Enzo removed his helmet, all of the girls in the general vicinity began to gather and swoon... but Enzo only had eyes for me.

“Want a ride to class?” Enzo said, patting the seat behind him, which caused the other girls to start whispering.

“Who is she?” I heard one girl whisper.

“I have no idea,” another replied. “But I’ll tell you what... if Lisa finds out, this nerdy girl is gonna be dead meat.”

I frowned. Hearing Lisa’s name made me sick to my stomach.

“Well?” Enzo said. “I have a spare helmet.”

“No thanks,” I replied. “I’m taking the shuttle.”

There was more whispering as the other girls were surprised at my refusal. Any girl would feel lucky to ride on the back of Enzo’s motorcycle, but not me. I just wanted to be left alone! I sidestepped to get around Enzo’s motorcycle, but he rolled forward a bit to block me. He flashed a cheeky smile at me, his brown eyes looking perfectly normal as opposed to the last time I saw him.

“C’mon,” he said. “Are you sure?”

“Yes, I’m sure!” I shouted, stamping my foot and clenching my fists. “Stop trying to mix me up in whatever game you’re playing with Lisa!”

I walked away, fuming, and left Enzo looking surprised behind me.

As I reached the shuttle, I heard Jessica shouting behind me. I turned to see her running and waving her arms. She looked a bit frazzled, like she had just woken up. Her dirty blonde hair was pulled into a bun and she was wearing leggings and a sweater, much unlike the preppy party girl version of herself that came out on weekends.

“Hold the bus!” she shouted. When she got on, we sat together. I ignored how out of breath she was.

“Just woke up?” I said as the bus started driving away.

Jessica nodded. “Yeah. I was up late last night...”

“I know,” I replied with a smirk. “I heard you come in after midnight. Was the lucky boy cute, at least?”

Jessica blushed and looked down at her lap. She fiddled with her sweater a bit.

“Hey, today is the day we pick our clinics,” I said. “What are you thinking of doing?”

Jessica smiled and clutched her bag to her chest. I had lived with her and Lori long enough to become used to how different Jessica was during school. She always focused on her studies and was really smart, always getting top marks in classes, but on the weekends it was like she became a different person. I didn’t mind, though.

“I think I really like pediatrics,” she replied. “I love working with kids. What about you?”

“Surgery,” I replied.

I knew that Jessica was a bit sad that we wouldn’t be studying together anymore, but we would have eventually had to take our own paths anyway. We both knew this from the start.

“I’ll miss you during class,” Jessica said, resting her head on my shoulder. “You’ll have to spend extra time with me outside of class!”

After classes, I always went to work at a local diner for some extra cash. My parents paid for my school, but any other expenses — like books, clothes, and food — were my responsibility. I didn’t mind working at the diner, though. It was fun to meet all kinds of new people, and the owners were a lovely older couple.

When I got to work, I went into the back and pulled my hair back, then changed into my uniform; a retro style blue waitress dress with a white apron and white sneakers. Once I was ready and satisfied with my appearance, I grabbed my notepad and got to work.

It was a slow night, which wasn’t unusual for Mondays. We had a few travelers here and there — truck drivers passing through mostly — as well as a couple of regulars and some students who chatted and studied at their

table. I spent most of my shift standing behind the counter and pouring fresh coffee for whoever needed it.

I only had an hour left on my shift, and the night had gone well so far... Until the last person I wanted to see walked in.