

“Do you have everything you need?” Sutton asked Lucy as she helped her zip up her jacket. “You have your stuffed dog?”

“Yes!” Her daughter exclaimed, her big, blue eyes blinking sleepily already. She was clearly valiantly fighting feeling as tired as she felt, but... that was Lucy.

Given it was a holiday, Sutton didn't hold to her typical bedtime, but Sutton didn't think she'd last too much longer, anyway. It was barely seven, now, and she was going for a sleepover with Sutton's parents at their hotel for the night, as they were going to take her out and about in the morning.

Lucy had been up and running around in excitement since just after six this morning, had gotten to have her sugar high at dessert, around three. She *had* napped during the Peanuts special, though, and would more than likely con Sutton's dad into getting her ice cream, so... Sutton really couldn't decide which direction it would go.

She tugged Lucy into her for a hug, giving her a kiss on the cheek as she did. “You be good for grandma and grandpa, okay?”

“And Auntie Alex,” Lucy promised, wrapping her arms around Sutton's neck and squeezing. Sutton smiled as she held a little tighter for a second. “Yes, honey, Auntie Alex, too.”

Her parents and Alex were all staying at the same hotel, and for all Sutton knew, it would be her sister that Lucy conned into getting her ice cream. She wasn't sure *who* but she knew it would happen.

“Happy Thanksgiving Mommy,” Lucy wished her as they pulled back.

“Happy Thanksgiving, honey.”

Lucy's attention was already pulling away from her even before Sutton had fully straightened up from their hug, moving to Ethan, who'd just finished pulling on his jacket.

Her parents stood similarly ready to go in her front entryway, and her mom was the first to hug her. As always, her hug was a little tighter, a little more desperate, like she tried to hold onto pieces of Sutton to keep with her during the weeks-to-months that they didn't see one another.

Sutton held back the same way.

“We'll see you for lunch tomorrow?” Her mom asked quietly, still holding.

And despite nearing forty, Sutton enjoyed the embrace as she always did. “I'll meet you at the restaurant,” she confirmed.

As soon as her mom stepped back, her dad stepped in, and so the procession went until her family all filed out the door, ending with Regan and Emma.

Who paused, as Regan made *eyes* at her.

“So...”

Sutton arched her eyebrows, already instinctively knowing what this was about. “So.”

She'd already heard Regan's delighted feedback regarding Charlotte coming to Thanksgiving since the day she'd told her friend about Charlotte's attendance last week – "God, her and your *mom* in the same place will be priceless!" and "Do you think she knows how to have a holiday meal that's not all about discussing the national treasury and foreign affairs?" and "Are you going to make googly eyes at her the same way you did when she met your family, back in the day?" and many more.

Regan only opened her mouth to speak, brown eyes bright with words Sutton could predict – wanting to talk about how she felt the day went, about the interactions Charlotte had had with her family, about Regan's impressions – before Emma wrapped her arm around Regan's waist and pulled her up close.

"We are not doing this to Sutton right now," Emma muttered, quietly enough for just the two of them to hear, while Sutton's family all mingled out on her front stoop, waiting for Regan and Emma to join them.

Sutton gratefully leaned in to hug Emma, before doing the same to Regan.

Who whispered, "We aren't doing it now, but we will be having a debrief soon!"

Sutton could only shake her head as she drew back, even though... if she was honest, as much as Regan could drive her insane, she wanted the debrief. She was self-aware enough to know that Regan was a once-in-a-lifetime kind of friend, who would do anything to protect her while also giving her a raw, truthful opinion, keeping Sutton's best interests at heart.

And she was just as grateful for Emma, who had somehow been the person to find the best way to manage Regan into containing those moments into appropriate times.

She did want to debrief, she thought, as she shut the door behind them all. But right now was not the time.

Especially given that it was still the day-of and Charlotte was still *here*; Sutton herself had barely had time to process how she felt about the day.

She took a moment to brace herself there against the door, squeezing the handle before pushing herself off of it and walking down the hall, intending to find the woman in question.

Charlotte had excused herself to Sutton's guest room/office to take a phone call – much to the lifted eyebrow of Sutton's mother, that Sutton hadn't missed – about a half hour ago, toward the end of the movie.

Which had given Sutton just enough time to delve into what this all *felt like*.

What it felt like, to be sitting and enjoying a holiday tradition with almost all of her favorite people – two brothers not in attendance – with Charlotte joining them.

And trying to figure out where Charlotte fit into that. What these feelings she'd been experience in different doses all day meant. Watching Charlotte with Lucy, with her mother, with her father, with Regan... it was all so *unexpected*.

Because if someone had told her only four months ago that Charlotte Thompson would not only be back in her life in any capacity, but that Sutton would be inviting her to Thanksgiving dinner with her family, she would have laughed – genuinely, laughed – in their face.

And yet, here they were.

And – there Charlotte was.

Unexpectedly back in Sutton's life, standing in Sutton's kitchen, at her sink, washing the dishes Sutton and her mother had wordlessly known had to be hand-washed rather than put in the dishwasher earlier.

The sleeves of the business-casual royal blue shirt she'd worn – tailored button-up, deliberately flowy over the chest, and undoubtedly costing more than a price of a shirt had the right to cost – were rolled up to her elbows, her hands and forearms sudsy, as she seemed to be deep in thought. She'd put her hair up in a bun, wavy tendrils falling lightly down the back of her neck.

And the sight of her jolted Sutton all over again.

Such a strange Thanksgiving. One she'd been focusing her attention on just... getting through. But now, it was through. And Charlotte was the only one still here.

Sutton cleared her throat as she walked in, curiously tilting her head, unable to stop herself from smiling at the image, in spite of the oddity of it. "I thought you had to take a phone call?"

Charlotte hadn't seemed to notice her entrance but didn't startle at Sutton's presence, which... didn't really surprise her, either.

"It was unavoidable," she said, a flash of contrition tugging at her lips. "I'm sorry; I do know that there is a *no politics on holidays* rule, but, well, in some parts of the world, this is not a holiday and all."

Her voice was light yet apologetic and Sutton shook her head, dismissing it.

"That is my mom's rule; I have a bit more leniency," she offered, jokingly but it was true.

While Sutton admired her mother a great deal and emulated her more than a bit, they did have their differences.

And it didn't bother her that Charlotte took business calls during their personal times together. Because she *was* always apologetic about it, she *did* have a very important job that Sutton supported, and Sutton wanted her to be successful.

Let alone the fact that – even only as her friend – Sutton marveled at Charlotte's success. She could admit that easily now that they were in a good place, as friends.

"Still..." Charlotte trailed off, a seriously thoughtful look on her face.

One that had been there since a couple of hours ago, when Sutton had found her in the kitchen. When Charlotte had apologized for their past.

"Sometimes I grade papers while Lucy watches a movie at night; my mom is someone who would have never let work come between bonding time. We *are* different people," she teased, softly, hoping to rid Charlotte of that very serious look.

For all of the truth that Sutton did need to process this holiday, she still knew the facts: she welcomed Charlotte back into her life as her friend. She'd enjoyed their time together. She'd enjoyed Charlotte being amongst her people tonight, in this capacity. And she'd been clearly appropriately concerned that someone might say something to Charlotte about the past that Sutton had moved on from.

And she didn't enjoy that part of today, that much she already knew.

"I'm a little surprised your parents aren't staying in your guest room," Charlotte commented, pivoting away from Sutton's mother as the sole subject of conversation.

She was good at that, but Sutton was also good at picking up on some of Charlotte's dodging.

Before she got drawn into the conversation, though, she stepped up to Charlotte and lightly nudged at her, only taking a moment to be amazed at the fact that even though Charlotte had likely been awake, dressed, and prepared for the day for twelve hours, she still smelled so... fresh.

Lightly shaking her head, she reached out to still Charlotte's hands. "You don't need to do the dishes. I can just get them done, later."

Charlotte's hand – warm and soft and wet from the water still – gently pushed Sutton's away. "You fed me the best holiday meal I've ever had; I can wash some dishes."

"Are you sure you know how?" She joked, arching an eyebrow, then laughing at the offended look on Charlotte's face.

"*You* act like you weren't raised by a bestselling author and a career politician, Sutton Spencer," Charlotte reprimanded, the deeply contemplative look fading into something much lighter as she flicked water at Sutton.

Who flinched, cutting off her laughter. "Well, I think my parents did a lot more to try to keep me humble," she pointed out. "I went to public school, did chores, got grounded."

"*You* never got grounded," Charlotte stated with authority, despite having never discussed this before.

And Sutton found herself laughing as she nodded. "Fine, yes, but my brothers and Alex did, and so did Regan."

"Of course your mother would also ground Regan," Charlotte laughed.

She liked this. This rhythm, the beat they'd developed years ago and had now managed to get back to. And she enjoyed finding it at the end of such a truly interesting day.

"Fine, though, throw your doting home life back in my face," Charlotte scoffed at her, but there was still a little smile playing on the corners of her mouth.

Sutton had found that Charlotte enjoyed the little jokes and mentions of life like this, through working on the story of her life together. Though, she didn't often many commentary on Charlotte's childhood with her parents, as Charlotte herself didn't often talk about it.

In fact, Sutton had learned almost every *story* about Charlotte's childhood – beyond cursory facts about her parents and occasional anecdotes about her and her brothers – due only to the

biography. It hadn't been something Charlotte discussed in detail in their history, and Sutton, ridiculously, hadn't really ever asked. Not that she'd felt it was her place to press about Charlotte's parents, anyway.

She did still feel *it*, if she was honest. *It* being the curiosity she'd had back then, wondering all about Charlotte and what made her who she was.

But she was fairly certain that anyone who got to know Charlotte on any personal level would want to know those things.

"So, the guest room?" Charlotte prompted, as she resumed washing the dishes, giving Sutton a sidelong look. "I just, as with the aforementioned doting childhood, imagine that your parents would like to spend as much time with you while they're here as they possibly can."

Sutton blinked back to the moment as she reached for a dishtowel to dry everything Charlotte washed. They stood shoulder-to-shoulder, and she could feel the comforting warmth of Charlotte's body next to hers, as she considered the words.

"They do," she agreed. "And they usually do stay with us, here, when they come to visit. But given that it was a whole group coming, with Ethan and Alex and Chris, it just was easier to have them all staying in the same place. They're only ten minutes away, though."

Charlotte hummed in acknowledgement, slowly nodding. "They clearly dote on Lucy."

"Maybe too much," Sutton agreed, smiling down at the serving dish in her hands as she dried.

Her parents did love to spoil Lucy, often citing it as long-distance grandparents rights. And Sutton had a hard time arguing.

"It's impossible for a grandparent to love their grandchild too much," Charlotte said softly, rinsing the dish in her hands, slowly turning it under the faucet.

The thoughtful tone was back in her voice as she started to wash the final dish and Sutton studied Charlotte closely, her heart feeling very full, suddenly. Achingly full, at the tenderness in Charlotte's words.

It was the first Thanksgiving since Charlotte's grandmother had died, Sutton only realized in that moment, feeling like an utter fool. The thought killed the smile still on her mouth, as she looked closely at Charlotte's profile.

"Would you normally have spent today with your grandmother?" She couldn't help but ask.

"She wasn't one to be big on the holidays, necessarily. But, I would have joined her in the afternoon for tea and dessert." Charlotte's teeth bit into her bottom lip, against a fond smile. "Your mother would have hated it; full of politics talk. But it was nice for us."

The affection in her voice was so endearing in a way that Charlotte typically wasn't. Well, not outwardly, not with most people, though Sutton herself was a party to it more than most, she knew.

It made her own chest feel warm and suddenly, though she'd been anxious about what today would bring and though she'd questioned herself for inviting her, she felt so fucking *glad*

she'd invited Charlotte here with her today. It didn't matter that the invitation had only rolled off her lips because they'd been caught in a *moment*.

Because the thought of her sitting at her home, alone, doing work, while Sutton would have been having a nice day, surrounded by people who loved her... made her ache.

"I'm glad you came here today," the words left her on a whisper, but she meant them, wholeheartedly.

Charlotte finished rinsing the dish as she murmured back, "I am, too."

Still, as she reached out to turn the faucet off, there was that thoughtful look back on her face, the one from earlier. The one that she'd worn since Sutton had found her. One that told Sutton that she was thinking about something important.

And even Sutton couldn't help but ask about it. "Are you?"

Surprised light brown eyes moved to catch Sutton's, her eyebrows crinkling in question. "What do you mean?"

Sutton worried at the inside of her cheek, before she asked the same thing she'd asked earlier. "Who said something to you, tonight? About..." How did she phrase this? How did she phrase the big thing between them that they didn't really talk about? "The past," she settled on, simply.

Because she'd already disliked the idea. But she disliked it even more now. She wanted this friendship, and her home by extension, to be a place for Charlotte to feel welcome and comfortable.

Charlotte turned to face her, staring intently up into Sutton's eyes, before she slowly shook her head. "It... doesn't matter."

At least it wasn't a denial. Still, Sutton felt bolstered, putting her hands on her hips. "It matters to *me*. Regan or my mother," she muttered aloud for both of them; they had to be the culprits. "I invited you here as my guest. My friend. And earlier, you looked..."

She struggled to find the right words. Remorseful? Guilty? Just, *sad*?

"It truly doesn't matter, Sutton." Charlotte's voice was firm and unyielding, but coaxing still. Like she knew she could get Sutton to see her point. "It doesn't matter," she repeated, "Because they said something I needed to hear. And my apology was something I needed to say."

The raw *honesty* in her tone caught Sutton up in the moment, as she could only stare down at Charlotte, desperately curious to know what she was thinking. Worried it would be something that might disrupt this peace they'd cultivated in the last weeks, but also unwilling to break the moment.

"I hurt you, badly. And I knew I was doing it, even though it was never my intention. I know we don't talk about it, and that it's been a long time, and that you got married and had a beautiful daughter, afterwards. But taking ownership of the things you've done to hurt people is the right thing to do," Charlotte's tone was so sincere, so genuine, and her words were...

Well, there was a reason Charlotte was a popular speaker.

Sutton could admit she fell captive to Charlotte as a thinker and an orator, just as much as anyone else who'd ever voted for her.

"And you, more than anyone, are someone I've never wanted to hurt," Charlotte finished as she reached out to slowly, deliberately dry her hands, plucking the dishtowel from Sutton's own. The dishtowel she'd forgotten had even been still in her grasp. "So, I am. I'm sorry."

Her heart had lurched in her chest, though, at the words. At words her twenty-five year old self would have longed to hear, even if they weren't *the words* she'd longed to hear. And maybe it was more than her body's reaction to the words.

Maybe it was the reaction to just... Charlotte saying them and *meaning* them, so intently.

At the intense look on her face Sutton's heart pounded, harder. And there was a reason they didn't discuss this, she thought dimly, as her throat was so dry and her mind was moving a mile a minute.

Because that past had been fraught with *feelings* – at least on Sutton's side – and their residual chemistry that had never faded was always lingering between them. And while it could often be managed – with the proper ignorance and care – it was best to not ever acknowledge it so directly.

Acknowledging this was... dangerous.

Very dangerous.

The *why* was so acutely thrown in her face in the moment. Because there was only inches between them, and they were breathing in the same air, and the second Sutton ever let herself *feel* it, was the second her control wanted to slip.

Especially because she recognized the look in Charlotte's eyes right now. For all Charlotte Thompson was world-class in disguising and mitigating and hiding her emotions with her admittedly skilled poker face, Sutton knew when Charlotte wanted her.

That had been something she'd never had to doubt or second-guess, not after they'd started truly sleeping together back then. And the look was the same one, now. A hunger that stole over her features, her cheeks flushing just a bit, her voice falling ever so slightly lower.

She heard it as Charlotte murmured, "I know we're being *friends*, I know that." Dark eyes slid so slowly over Sutton's throat, watching the way she could feel herself swallowing heavily, likely noting exactly the way her pulse hammered unstopably. She knew it, because she knew Charlotte was just as acutely aware of what Sutton looked like when *she* wanted. Because it had been Charlotte who'd shown Sutton what it was like to really *want* in the first place. "And I know that means I shouldn't say this."

She lifted her gaze to Sutton's. "But I don't think we were meant to be *only* friends, Sutton." Charlotte declared, and Sutton's mind went reeling with the statement. "I wasn't put on this earth to be your friend."

God. Sutton didn't – she didn't know how to address this. She hadn't been prepared for this. She resolutely did *not* think about this, because it wasn't what they were supposed to be doing here.

Yet, she couldn't brush it off. She wanted to. She wanted to tell Charlotte that she knew they couldn't do this. That they both knew this would be stupid.

But her words failed, because... Sutton *wanted*.

She wanted Charlotte Thompson with a feverish ache that had never been replicated. And she felt it clawing through her, desperate to be acknowledged after weeks of being forced to be dormant.

"I didn't think you believed in *meant to be* or any higher power," she managed to point out, knowing her voice was barely above a rasp, but utterly unable to help it.

She saw Charlotte shiver at it.

Fuck.

Charlotte tilted her head up, swaying closer into Sutton's space. Too close. Close enough to cloud her senses nearly entirely.

"I don't," she declared, shaking her head with a dismissal so... certain. "I'm not talking about any of that." Charlotte's tongue flicked over her lips and Sutton tried not to stare, but was entirely helpless to stop. "I'm saying, biologically, physiologically... you and I," Charlotte reached out and they both watched as Charlotte's hand reached out and tucked Sutton's hair behind her ear. Her fingertips were so *light* it was hardly even a caress, but she felt it.

She felt it, the warmth and the knowledge of that touch, echo through her, and she was the one who shivered, now.

And she knew Charlotte saw it, too.

"We were simply not made to be just friends, Sutton Spencer," Charlotte finished, as she dropped her hand.

Charlotte stared at her, gaze searching Sutton's, though she didn't step back.

There was such an openness, and honesty there that shocked right through Sutton, even if she was becoming familiar with it. It didn't matter that this had been the way Charlotte was with her since coming to know one another again; it just – it was so hard to mix the Charlotte in her mind with this woman in front of her.

The Charlotte of the past who was teasing and all-knowing and charming and in control but so rarely vulnerable or earnest – and rarely intentionally so – with the woman who gave apologies about the past and made declarations like they were not *made to be just friends*.

And Sutton felt it, the lurching of her heart in her chest. The strength of which only Charlotte could bring out in her.

Still, though, she felt paralyzed, as she emotions ran amok through her. The sheer desire, the surprise of just exactly where this night had turned, the wonder at just who exactly Charlotte *was*, now.



“I didn’t mean to put you in an uncomfortable situation with this,” Charlotte said quietly after a long moment. “I just wanted to be honest with you, about what I’m... feeling. I think, after our history, you deserve that.”

Sutton could still only stare, frozen, as her heart pounded. Just because – *what?*

Charlotte’s lips ticked into a small smile, as she stepped back, giving Sutton just room to actually draw in a breath without it taking over her senses. “I’ll leave you to it, then.”

Sutton’s spinning thoughts hadn’t caught up with her, yet, but – but *no*.

She reached out, wrapping her hand around Charlotte’s wrist. “You can’t–” she had to pause, to swallow, hard. “You can’t just say those things to me, and then leave.”

No, that couldn’t be the way this happened. Maybe *she* was thinking about the past too much, now that Charlotte had mentioned it. But Charlotte had been the one to call them off, all those years ago. Charlotte had been the one to bring their sexual relationship to an end, when Sutton had felt like it should have only been just beginning still.

And that was all she could think about, as the *want* stormed through her, landing between her legs, making her throb with the sentiment behind Charlotte’s words.

“You were the one who stopped us, back then,” she pointed out. She had to lick her lips, her heart pounding in her chest as she stepped even closer to Charlotte. She kept the hold she had – firm but not *gripping* – on Charlotte’s wrist, keeping her there.

But Charlotte wasn’t pulling back. Instead, she leaned against the counter and nodded. “I know.”

“You were the one who wanted to be *only friends* back then,” she reiterated.

“I know,” Charlotte confirmed, her voice soft, and this time, Sutton’s eyes followed the column of Charlotte’s throat as *she* swallowed hard.

Sutton didn’t even think as she stepped up even closer, boxing Charlotte in against her counter. She stared down at her, unable to even properly place the feelings raging through her if she *tried*.

“I didn’t want to stop sleeping together. I only ever *wanted you*,” she confessed, not even able to find a shred of her youth’s embarrassment at the words. “You drove me crazy. And I thought about you constantly. About the way you made my body feel. About how much I wanted to touch you. And... and you can’t just say you don’t believe we were meant to be *just friends* when you were the one who ended that.”

Charlotte angled her chin up at Sutton, melting against the counter, against Sutton’s body. She could feel the press of Charlotte’s chest against hers, how fast her heart was beating. Or maybe that was Sutton’s own heart. She didn’t know.

She just knew that... she *wanted*. She wanted clarity, she wanted an admittance, and she desperately, deeply wanted Charlotte.

“I know, darling. It was never because I didn’t *want you*, though,” Charlotte explained, her voice hardly a murmur and an octave deeper, as she flicked her gaze from Sutton’s eyes

down to her lips. “You know I wanted you. From the very first day I saw your *picture*, Sutton, I wanted you. And it was never sated. I—”

That was enough.

That was all Sutton needed or wanted or could stand to hear.

She used the hold she still had on Charlotte’s wrist to tug her forward, her other hand coming up to cup Charlotte’s jaw, holding her in place as she descended.

Their lips were already open as Sutton fell into the kiss. Furious and demanding and *yes*. *Yes*, she wanted this. *Yes*, she wanted Charlotte with a terrifying, ridiculous needy arousal that she’d never wanted anyone else with.

And *yes*. She agreed that they were not, physiologically, ever meant to be just friends. Whatever that could possibly mean, however that sort of chemistry worked.

She could feel it in her veins as she licked into Charlotte’s mouth, swallowing the deep, throaty moan Charlotte let out. The moan that reverberated through Sutton’s body, landing in her stomach and then melting lower, making her even wetter than she already was.

It should even be possible to be so wet, she thought in the back of her mind. So achingly, pulsatingly *soaked*, after just a fucking charged conversation.

But this was Charlotte Thompson.

Charlotte, who arched against her, pressing her body right against Sutton’s. Like she wanted to be so close, to feel Sutton against her with everything she had, and she could feel Charlotte’s entire body vibrating against hers.

One of Charlotte’s hands scratched at her neck before carding into her hair, the other sliding down, under Sutton’s shirt.

At the touch of Charlotte’s fingers on her own already growing-hot skin, she moaning against Charlotte’s mouth. God, *yes*. She fucking *craved* this.

Her own hands darted down, tugging Charlotte’s shirt out from where it had been tucked into her pants, wanting to feel the same soft skin. She used her hips to press Charlotte harder into the counter as she ran her hands up Charlotte’s sides, reveling in the feeling of her soft skin.

Charlotte’s nails dug into Sutton’s back, the biting pain driving Sutton higher, making the need ratchet up even higher, burn even hotter.

She slid her hands up higher, leaning back just enough to be able to cup Charlotte’s breasts, thumbing over her hard nipples through her bra. Still, though, she leaned down, refusing to give up the taste of Charlotte, the soft, but so *hungry* feeling of her kiss.

Like Charlotte craved her just as much.

And... she *did*. She’d admitted to it. She’d never not wanted Sutton; emotionally, there had been – everything else that had come between them. But she’d never truly registered how much she’d needed that confirmation that must have been still settled in her mind somewhere.

She used more force than was probably necessary to tug Charlotte's bra down, uncaring around actually taking it *off* yet, just needing to feel her. She pinched Charlotte's nipples, already so hard, feeling Charlotte's body jerk against hers, her hips starting to rock into Sutton's.

Charlotte had wanted Sutton from the first day, from the moment she'd seen her picture.

The thought drove her forward as she decisively kicked Charlotte's feet apart and slid her thigh in between Charlotte's, pressing right between her legs.

And even though both of their pants, she could feel how hot Charlotte was for her already. She felt it even before her nails scratched down Sutton's back, holding tightly onto her hips, trying to pull her closer.

Charlotte's want for her had never been sated.

She rocked her thigh hard up against Charlotte, groaning roughly in the back of her throat just thinking about the words.

She jerked one of her hands out from under Charlotte's shirt, reaching up and taking out the elastic holding her hair in place, so she could slide her hand into Charlotte's hair. Holding her still so she could suck at her bottom lip, scraping her teeth over it.

Charlotte cried out at the sensation, her hips moving faster against Sutton's.

"God, yes," Charlotte groaned in the back of her throat before Sutton's mouth reclaimed hers.

She'd never really thought about this, about the insecurities that must have remained somewhere deep down, after Charlotte had ended things. There was so much else for her to think about, that... clearly, this hadn't been at the forefront.

But she'd needed to hear it.

Then again, maybe hearing it was the most dangerous thing all night. The most dangerous thing that could happen between them.

Because *now*, she needed the proof of it. She needed Charlotte, again, and not in the way that was easily explained by the fact that they had undeniable chemistry. But in the way that Charlotte wanted her, the way she'd wanted her back then.

Sutton didn't even quite understand the difference in the state of mind she was in now, but she knew it was important and she knew she couldn't stop it, and she knew she needed to many Charlotte come.

She wanted to make Charlotte Thompson come for her, so hard, while thinking about how much she wanted Sutton. She wanted to many Charlotte come, after Charlotte had acknowledged *them*.

But when Charlotte's hips started moving faster into Sutton's the desperation growing, she willed herself to stop.

She tugged her mouth away from Charlotte's, sliding her hands down to still Charlotte's hips, as she stared down at Charlotte's face.

And she wanted fucking *pounded* through her, as Charlotte blinked her eyes open. Because she could see it. She could see that Charlotte would have come right here, from this, with her.

Her face was so flushed and she breathed so heavily, and Sutton didn't want it like that. Not this time.

She wanted everything.

She wanted what she'd wanted in the past, and wanted to reclaim what she'd had. She wanted to see Charlotte, to really touch her. And she wanted it in her bed.

"I want more," she said, her throat guttural. "I want – I want you, wanting me, all of me."

Charlotte nodded quickly, needily. "I do. I really do."

Her pupils were blown and her ready agreement pushed through Sutton, and she reached down to lace their fingers together and tugged Charlotte back in to kiss her.

She used her other hand to steady herself against Charlotte's hip, instinctively walking backwards toward the kitchen doorway. Charlotte followed her, body moving in sync with Sutton's as if they'd moved like this, body-to-body millions of times before and hadn't stopped for the last decade.

It made no logical sense. It shouldn't. They shouldn't fit together so easily, she thought with whatever clarity she could hold onto through the raging lust working through her veins.

But they did.

Charlotte reached under Sutton's shirt as they stumbled down the hallway, gripping at her shoulder blades and sliding her nails down as she nipped her teeth into Sutton's neck.

The dual sensation tore through her and she surged forward for the final step, roughly forcing Charlotte back against her doorframe as they reached her bedroom.

Charlotte's sharp intake gave her a moment of pause, before it melted into a long, drawn-out moan and she tilted her head up, demanding Sutton's kiss again, as she pressed herself harder against Sutton.

She remembered that about Charlotte, she thought dimly, and it notched up the heat in her body impossibly more.

Charlotte liked that.

She liked when Sutton was in control, when she showed Charlotte how much she fucking *wanted* her. She'd liked it too, the few times they'd ever dabbled in any light power dynamics. But Sutton hadn't understood then, not fully, the dynamics she enjoyed during sex or what it meant.

She slid her hand up and gripped Charlotte's hair, tugging her head back, feeling Charlotte's answering panting, breathy moans through her entire body, landing solidly between her legs, and she could feel herself ruining her underwear.

She liked it, figuring out how to take control of Charlotte, even if she'd only ever done it... lightly, back then.

That thought had her dragging her lips up Charlotte's neck, biting, then sucking, as everything burned even brighter.

Because Charlotte had stopped this before they could really explore that together.

And she wanted it *now*. She wanted to be with Charlotte, to take away Charlotte's control, in the ways she'd wished she'd understood more then.

Her hands were frantic as she pulled off Charlotte's shirt, shaking just a bit with how much she *needed*. Needed to be able to see Charlotte, to really take her in.

And she did, finally leaning back just enough, her own breath leaving her in heaving pants with the desire taking her over. Charlotte's breasts spilled over the cups of her bra that Sutton had tugged down, the curve of her hips was even fuller now, and she was so stupidly sexy.

Sutton lifted her arms automatically for Charlotte to take off her own shirt in the same urgency that Sutton moved with, before she moved down to hastily slide down Charlotte's hands, taking her underwear with it. And she could see how wet Charlotte was as she did.

So fucking *wet*, and Sutton was so –

“I want you so badly,” she admitted, need leaking into her voice.

“I do too—”

She didn't know if Charlotte was done speaking or if there was something else yet to come, because she couldn't wait.

She pressed herself against Charlotte, feeling her entire body skin-to-skin, for the first time in over a decade, as she pressed Charlotte back into the doorframe. Charlotte shivered, arching into Sutton, but her mouth was just as hungry, her hands just as frantic as Sutton felt them streak over her.

Charlotte's hands scratched up from her hips to her waist, slid to cup her breasts, her hips pressing right into Sutton's, as she kissed back just as fiercely, just as wanton.

And Sutton could feel her body responding so easily to the touch. So wanting, so willing to giving into the skillful touch she knew Charlotte had.

Only – “No,” the word escaped her in nearly a growl, as she pulled back from their kiss.

“No?” Charlotte asked, eyebrows arching up in concern, “You don't—”

“I want to touch you,” Sutton told her, staring into Charlotte's eyes, as she slid her hands down to her hips and gripped. “I'm going to *fuck you*.”

She felt a ridiculous sense of pride at the way Charlotte's eyes widened, the way her mouth trembled open. Because she never would have said that, then. She never would have felt comfortable, never would have expressed it in that way.

But she would now.

She used her grip on Charlotte's hips to walk them toward her bed, squeezing a little tighter and feeling her blood start to pound in her veins as Charlotte's breath escaped in a whimper.

“I’m... surprised,” Charlotte breathed out, even as she arched closer.

“I remember that you like that,” Sutton asserted.

And maybe she should have questioned it, but she didn’t. Because, absurdly, she remembered everything when it came to this, to them.

“And I know, now, that I do, too.”

With that, she spun Charlotte around to face opposite her and used her hands to encourage Charlotte to climb into her bed.

Which Charlotte readily did, on her hands and knees, and Sutton’s breath stuttered out at the sight. And she, admittedly, did had to take a second.

Because... Charlotte Thompson was in her bed. On her hands and knees. And she was so wet for Sutton that she could see her dripping.

For *her*.

Because Charlotte had never stopped wanting her.

In the crazy, undeniable, ridiculous way that had never stopped.

She swallowed tightly against any of the old thoughts she might have had, against any of those feelings. Because this was not about *that*.

This was about needing to take Charlotte, to show both of them that this was exactly what Charlotte had said. Physiologically impossible to ignore. This was for Sutton to *fuck* Charlotte in ways she’d made herself stop thinking about so long ago.

Her hands shook with the need for it, as she climbed up onto the bed behind Charlotte. She leaned down and kissed Charlotte’s shoulder, sliding her fingers up and moving over Charlotte. She *was* dripping, and she coated Sutton’s fingers the second she touched her pussy, and she couldn’t have stopped the victorious groan if she’d tried.

She did this to Charlotte. It was her. Just like it used to be.

She touched her lightly, just until Charlotte groaned in frustration, pushing back against Sutton’s hand.

And then she sank her teeth into Charlotte’s shoulder blade and sank two fingers into Charlotte.

They both moaned at the feeling.

Charlotte arched into her touch, pushing back against Sutton’s hand, and she – she had to fuck her.

She started slowly, for a few thrusts, sliding in deeply.

And when Charlotte released a long, shaking moan, she felt this triumphant, needy, longing feeling slide through her. Melting right into her very bones, as she fucked Charlotte harder, faster.

She reached up and gripped Charlotte's shoulder, pushing her down against the bed as she moved harder, faster, really fucking Charlotte.

The gasps and groans turned into cries of Sutton's name, and every single one pounded through her until it was all she could hear.

Her name on Charlotte's lips, Charlotte's heat around her fingers, and Charlotte's legs sliding open wider to take her even deeper.

Charlotte wanted her, she thought, and she felt *crazed* with it.

She'd known for the majority of their friends-with-benefits situation that Charlotte was attracted to her, sure, but it wasn't like this. This was not the controlled Charlotte she'd once known. The Charlotte who did only ever lose that control – unwillingly, it felt like – in the bedroom.

This was Charlotte who pressed herself back into Sutton with abandon. Her control didn't slip this time; she'd given it up.

And that knowledge made Sutton moan, herself, grinding into her own hand as she used her hips to fuck Charlotte even harder.

Both of Charlotte's hands gripped Sutton's sheets, knuckles turning white, as she felt Charlotte get tighter around her fingers, and she wanted to feel Charlotte come for her more than she thought she'd ever wanted anything.

No, she didn't want it; she *needed* it.

"I need it," she found herself gasping as she moved her hand faster.

Charlotte only moaned in response.

"I need to see you come for me," she said again, her own urgency rising, as she slid her other hand down and sought out Charlotte's hard clit.

Within seconds of rubbing her, even from a not-great angle, she felt it. Charlotte's body froze, then trembled so hard, as she cried out.

"Sutton. Sutt – *fuck!*"

She felt Charlotte contract around her, felt her body shudder so hard, as she grinded back into Sutton's hand.

She didn't stop moving, not until Charlotte reached down clumsily, her hand weakly tapping at Sutton's still moving between her thighs.

Her own desperation fucking clawed through her, even as Charlotte flopped down to the bed, seemingly boneless, onto her stomach.

Sutton stared at her, momentarily in a haze, as she felt herself dripping down her thighs. Charlotte was breathing heavily, her hands curled into loose fists against Sutton's sheets, and her body was utterly melted into the mattress from being so sated.

And Sutton *needed* all over again.

She reached down, urging Charlotte onto her back. Charlotte moved with her willingly, settling against one of Sutton's pillows as her chest heaved, and she looked so... utterly fucked, that Sutton felt her clit pulse even harder. She did that to Charlotte.

*She* did that, and she knew – she just *knew* – that even in the lovers Charlotte had surely taken since, she'd never let any of them have her in this way.

Sutton tossed her leg over Charlotte's hips, settling above her, as that thought nearly pushed her right to the edge in and of itself. But she didn't want to come without Charlotte's touch, even if she could. That wasn't what this was *about*.

She wasn't even sure what it necessarily was about, but she knew it wasn't that.

"Touch me," she very nearly begged, her voice reedy. She rocked against Charlotte's hips, knowing Charlotte could *feel* how wet she was for her. Rubbing herself against Charlotte, so wet she could hardly find any traction, and *still* it felt so – "Charlotte, I'm–"

Charlotte, brown hair tousled and messy, her lips swollen from Sutton's mouth still, her entire expression dazed, looked up at her from where she lay, snapped to attention the second Sutton spoke.

As if her words, her need, lit something in Charlotte, her expression lit up and she reached down, sliding her hand down between Sutton's legs. She lifted just enough to let Charlotte touch her, before grinding back down.

The firm, steady touch on her clit was fucking *heaven*, and she grinded down into it, needily. She didn't care that she was definitely wet enough that she was soaking Charlotte's entire hand most likely, dripping down against her hip.

She couldn't care less about the gasping, desperate groans escaping the back of her throat as she threw her head back.

She just – she was so – "God, I'm so close," she moaned out. "I'm... I–"

*Fuck*. Her world drew into central focus, her nerve endings slight, and she wanted to come *so badly*, as she rode Charlotte's hand even harder. So close, so –

"You feel so fucking good," Charlotte's voice – so throaty after moaning and the chanting of Sutton's name – forced Sutton to open her eyes, staring down at Charlotte as she moved against her. "Darling, I–"

Sutton's orgasm hit her like a freight train at the word, hurtling through her body as her nerve endings lit up. She gasped, then groaned, jerking down against Charlotte's fingers, harder. Needing to ride out every single sensation pushing through her body.

She rode through her orgasm, pushing through any aftershocks even as her body jerked with them, so ridiculously sensitive. But she wanted every moment of this.

Finally, when she felt totally wrung out, she slide to her side, collapsing next to Charlotte on her bed, breathing heavily.



The quiet in the room was only disrupted by their breathing, the blood rushing in Sutton's ears moving from static at first, to quiet background after a minute, as she stared up at the ceiling.

And even though she didn't know exactly what this meant or what they were *doing*, she couldn't deny that she liked the feeling of this. Of Charlotte's body warm and soft next to hers during the come down, as the night settled around them.

This wouldn't be like the last time they did this, she knew that instinctively, and it also wouldn't be the last time they did it. She didn't know what it *was*, she thought again, as she turned her head to look at Charlotte.

Who was already looking at her in the lamplight of the room.

But she knew that.

"That's not what I invited you here for today." The words left her, unplanned. But, honest. Her brain was not firing at full capacity, in fairness to herself.

Charlotte's smile was slow and beautifully crooked. "I didn't assume so." She paused, before saying softly, "I'm... *thankful* for it, though."

There was an honesty there, but also that stupidly charming, joking voice and Sutton could only laugh at it.