

*Thirteen years ago*

Every motion of Gideon's head sent the room spinning until his stomach lurched.

For the first time in Gideon's twenty-one and a half years, he was legally drunk. In fact, he'd only been illegally drunk once before, after the thing that being drunk had almost been enough to get out of his brain. He hated losing control, even to some random molecule in his bloodstream. Which he supposed was why he'd never before been subjected to the idiocy of games invented for the purpose of getting drunk.

But something about their university graduation had buried his friends under an avalanche of nostalgia, so they were gathered in Theo's room playing something called Never Have I Ever, which sounded like the start of a logic puzzle on the LSATs but was actually painfully easy to follow. If they'd all been like that, Gideon would have managed a perfect 180 instead of a 174.

"Never have I ever had sex with a virgin," Theo announced.

Hell, Gideon was starting to think every statement was aimed at getting him as drunk as possible.

He tossed back the shot of ouzo. Jax and Dane did the same, while Theo poured out another round into their glasses with a smug smile.

"Hang on." Jax wiped his mouth with the back of his hand. "So are you saying you never jerked off once before you had sex? How does jerking off not count as sex?"

"What's Mr. Pre-law got to say on that?" Dane pointed at Gideon.

"He says the accused was a virgin to hand jobs the first time the accused put his hand on his own dick, and masturbated to a climax. Masturbating another would count as sexual conduct so I

must rule for the prosecution. Drink, Theo.”

“Wait. I have never had my dick in a guy who has never had a dick in him before.”

“Nope. That was not the statement on record.” If Gideon was going to be puking his guts out, Theo could be right there next to him.

“I hate you.” Guess Theo had Gideon’s plan figured out.

Jax looked around and announced, “Never have I ever had had sex with a girl.”

Gideon stared down at his shot glass with the tiny image of Niagara Falls painted on it. Or maybe it was the Brooklyn Bridge. Theo had on one lamp and some candles and a lot of the bottle of ouzo had made its way into Gideon’s body.

“Wait. Doesn’t that show count? Family Daze?” Dane demanded.

“Seriously?” Jax tried to give Dane a piercing glare, but it was as blurry as everything else around them.

Was college really over? This morning they’d been dressed in their Columbia blue gowns and had their names read, shook hands with the Dean, but for Gideon it only meant changing pre-law for law school. The rest of them—they were done. They’d all say they would keep in touch, but would they ever see each other again?

Gideon tuned back in to hear Jax giving a speech. “Just because my character had sex on that show does not mean I did. God.” Jax shuddered. “Alicia bit my tongue once too. Bitch.”

“How are we defining sex now?” Theo asked. “I don’t want to be overruled again.”

“Fine. Never have I ever fucked a female.” Jax might have had the voice training to reach the cheap seats in the theater, but it probably wasn’t necessary in an eight by ten dorm room. At least

the dorm was mostly empty. Eviction day Monday.

Dane and Theo clinked shot glasses and tipped back their heads to swallow the liquor.

"Gideon?" Jax looked at him in surprise.

"I didn't drink, did I?"

"Fine." Jax held his hands up in surrender.

"Jax never has ever fucked anyone from what I hear." Dane said as he refilled the shots with the best coordination of any of them. "No wonder the two of you were over before you even kissed.

No one to top." He waved the bottle at Theo and Jax.

"We kissed," Theo insisted.

"And even with that disaster it was more fun than Alicia." Jax laughed as Theo shoved him, then dropped dramatically across Theo's lap. "Still love me?"

"Always." Theo kissed his forehead. "And that was a better kiss than the one I got four years ago."

Jax smacked Theo with the pillow he'd been sitting on.

"My turn." Dane met Gideon's eyes. "Never have I ever cheated..."

Gideon's ears, his throat, his cheeks were on fire. Dane was going there now? Tonight?

"...on a test," Dane finished.

Jax had the shot in his hand then looked around. "Seriously? Never?"

"Does it count if I let someone copy from me?" Theo glanced at Gideon who held up his hands.

"Don't look at me. Dane's question, his call."

"Yes, it counts." Dane shoved Theo's shot toward him.

“You just want to get me drunk enough because I’m the only one you haven’t fucked.” Theo drank his shot.

“Did you mean in this room, on campus, or in the New York Metro area?” Jax asked.

“Hey. You guys go right ahead and do the complicated dating thing. I’ll enjoy getting laid.”

Dane handed the bottle to Gideon. “You’re up.” There was a challenge in the smirk on his face.

The bastard was so good at that. Place all the C-4 and then hand over the detonator. Gideon was done with that game. If this was the last time the four of them were together, he wasn’t going to be the one to blow them apart.

“Never have I ever been on a roller coaster.”

Theo drank his shot. “Are you kidding? You grew up in Brooklyn.”

“So?” Gideon stared at his brimming shot glass.

“Practically the most famous roller coaster in the world is in Brooklyn. The Cyclone.” Jax’s words slurred even more after this last shot.

“And Niagara Falls is close to Buffalo. Did you ever take a barrel ride over that?”

“One, I was only born in Buffalo, I didn’t grow up there. And two,” Jax stared at the two fingers he had raised, “I can’t remember the rest of my point.” He dropped his head back into Theo’s lap.

“We have to go.” Theo said.

“I have orientation for my internship on Monday. You’ll have to go over the falls without me.”

Gideon gave the little blue waterfall on his shot glass a glare and stretched out on the floor.

“No. To Coney Island. We’ll all ride the Cyclone. We can take the train.” Theo made it sound so

reasonable.

“Speaking as someone from Brooklyn, I don’t think the Cyclone is open at three in the morning.

Sometimes you can’t even find a fucking laundromat open past nine.”

“We’ll go tomorrow,” Theo said, as if that settled everything.