

# Innings and Kissing- Chapter 5

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Stacey's breathing was erratic when she woke up, these sheets weren't hers. Hearing a deep snore, she turned her head and feared for the worst.

"Brett?" she whispered into the dark, "Oh, thank God."

As her eyes fixated the dimness of the room, she glanced at the clock on the nearby nightstand.

5:42 a.m. Great, three hours of sleep.

She looked down and realized the shirt that was swallowing her body, making her heart skip a beat. Had she slept with him?

Pieces of last night were vague, but she remembered he said he wouldn't take advantage of her in that state. Then other images flashed in her mind.

Macy. The club. Thalia. Anger. Shots. The two men. Crying. Fear. Brett. Desire.

A tear fell down her face and she quickly wiped it with the back of her hand.

She stepped out the tangled sheets and lightly tip toed to gather her heels, dress and coat.

Leaning against the door frame, she paused to admire the Adonis God in the bed. A small smile of female appreciation crossed her face. Though he infuriated her, he was simply beautiful.

Stacey thought the picture in front of her only existed in romance novels and love movies; not real life.

She slowly stalked towards his edge of the bed, refraining herself from running her fingernails across the ridges of his muscles.

He chest was facing down and his back was towards the ceiling. His sun-kissed skin made a beautiful contrast against the white sheets that ended at his narrow hips.

Hmm, back dimples, she thought to herself.

His naturally sandy blonde hair seemed a darker shade, with the only light illuminating it, coming from the hall. There was beard shadow on his chin, and she had to stop herself from rubbing her face against it.

She inspected a tattoo on his left shoulder blade. A cross in black ink with vines that interlocked.

*'In nomine patris, et filii, Spiritus Sancti'* were written across the knotting of the vines.

She rummaged through the Latin that was engraved in the back of her mind.

"In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit," she whispered into the shadows of the room.

She sensed there was a story behind it and wanted to ask him about it.

Before turning around she noticed a thick, black string of yarn on the nightstand beside him.

Picking up she noticed little knots, groves and beads. A rosary.

Placing the rosary back, she smiled.

"Wow, Irish," she said, "You really stick to your roots don't you?"

With that she left his spacious apartment, wearing his shirt and smiled at what she had realized.

She was going to make him hers.

Brett felt a shudder run through his body and cursed at the cold water of his morning shower.

He woke that morning to sweet scent of Stacey. Sugar and spice, and everything nice. Turning off the water, he stepped out and walked towards the large mirror in the bathroom, sans towel. Opening the heavy velvet curtains that covered the wall, he felt water drip from his hair to his back. Stepping back, he admired the view and the Sun shining through glass covered wall.

This view was a major factor why he had settled at Woodhill, and Stacey only being a few stories under him was an added bonus.

Walking towards the sheets where Stacey had slept the night before, he ran his hand along them. Her scent was still present in his room, and he inhaled deeply. Her smell was intoxicating, an aphrodisiac.

Brett thought of the brazen woman, when his thoughts were interrupted by a call.

“Brett, where in the hell are you,” a very pissed off person asked on the other line.

“Caleb?” he asked unsurely.

“Yeah, dickwad,” he said, “the game is in two hours and you have yet show up.”

“Game,” Brett stuttered, “Today?”

“Yeah, today, are you stupid?”

“No one told me about the game,” he argued.

“It was scheduled wrong, Thalia was supposed to tell you last night,” Caleb said, a bit nicer this time.

“She was?” Brett asked.

“I’m guessing you didn’t get the memo,” Caleb said, in a more frantic voice, “Just get your ass here.”

Hanging up and barely having enough time to get dressed, he threw a large tip on the table for his maid and left his apartment. He made yet another mental note to speak to Thalia about this mishap, but right now he just needed to focus on getting to practice without being fired.

After getting down to her apartment, Stacey couldn’t sleep. She decided to shower and then settled for cleaning. She pulled on her NYU spankies and Brett’s over night shirt, skipping a bra.

His scent clung to the shirt, and had distracted her numerous times throughout the day. Turning on the tv to one of the channels covering baseball, she muted it and turned up her stereo to Britney Spears’, *Toxic*, she picked up a rag and bopped her way towards her kitchen counter. After cleaning for what seemed like hours, she was satisfied with the feeling of a clean home. Putting her cleaning supplies under the sink, she flopped on the couch and turned up the volume.

Yankees were playing? That was weird. What was weirder was that a pinch player was in Brett’s spot.

Then there a knock at her door.

Still baffled, Stacy got up and walked towards the door, gatching a glance in a mirror on the wall. She felt bad for the person at the door.

Much to her her surprise and horror, Brett was standing in her door. Blue, faded jeans, black t-shirt, and a gray beanie. The little bit of hair sticking out from the front, seemed a golden hue today and she noticed a slight bump on the right side of his head. Then she noticed the color of his face.

He was a bit pale, but sexy as ever.

“Hey,” he said in a coarse, dry voice.

Her stomach somer saulted and her knees felt weak. But his game was on TV, and she knew it was live. A little fear surged through her body.

“Uhm, hi,” she managed to croak out.

His accent seemed much more potent than ever, and she wasn't sure if she should feel worried or turned on.

“Can I come in?” he asked, looking past over her shoulder.

She looked down at herself. No bra, no makeup, spandex shorts.

“Sure,” she said, and stepped aside and let him in.

He was carrying his gym bag and noticed he wasn't wearing a coat. It was middle November, in New York. And he wasn't he even wearing a jacket, let alone a coat.

“I see you're watching the game,” he said, dropping his bag on the floor next to the door.

Cutting the crap, she asked, “Why are you here?”

Crap, that sounded a bit mean.

“...instead of there,” she added, quickly.

He chuckled and picked the beanie off his head.

Brett saw Stacey's hand travel to her stomach and jaw part slowly.

She was wearing his t-shirt. She looked so much better in it than he ever did.

"What," she stammered, "happened?"

He pulled out a chair and sat down, "I got hurt."

She scoffed, "Thank you, Captain Obvious, that part was much evident."

He grinned at her humor. Sarcastic Stacey was back.

"I was manning my post, so to speak," he continued to explain, "when a player hit a pop fly. But the runner at first decided to run right into my line of view. He collided with me and I didn't have time to react, so the ball kind of got my head."

She turned and disappeared into the kitchen, "Lemonade?"

He was confused, first she was worried, then sarcastic, but now she didn't care?

"Sure," he hollered back.

He heard a few noises, glasses clinking, and she appeared once again. This time she felt two frosted glasses with lemonade, and a plastic zip baggie.

She handed him a glass and he took a sip. It was the best damn lemonade he had ever tasted.

"Why did you come here?" she asked, opening the clear bottle.

"I didn't have anywhere else to go."

"So I was Plan B?" she asked, never looking up.

"C'mon shortcake, you know you're always Plan A."

She finally looked up at him, and he winked.

Taking a cottonball and pouring peroxide on it, she walked towards him.

His legs were wide open and she stepped between them, sending his libido into over drive.

“Did you get this checked out?” she asked, toying with his hair.

“Yep, no sleep for 18 hours, and no alcohol.”

“Alright Big Foot,” she said taking off his bandage, “think you can handle a bit pain?”

“It depends,” he replied.

“On what?”

“If pleasure follows.”

Her hand stilled for a second before he felt a sting.

“Shit, ow,” he yelled, “Jeeze, Stace, what was that?”

“That my friend, was cleaning your battle wounds,” she said.

Her body was so small compared to his. She was short enough for his face to be leveled with her perfect and lush breasts, sitting down.

She bandaged his wound once more, and kissed it. He smiled at the gesture.

“Did pleasure follow?”, she asked.

“No, but my face so close to your tits was a close second,” he spit out, grinning.

He noticed her nipples harden through the material of his t-shirt. He bit back a groan when he realized she wasn't wearing a bra.

Stacey's stomach growled and she noticed it was nearing dinner time.

“Are you hungry?” she asked Brett, as she picked up the contents on the table.

He looked up at her and smiled, “Are you asking me on a date?”

She rolled her eyes, "Get over yourself."

He stood up and walked over to her. He kneeled beside her, and her breath caught in her throat.

"You dropped this," he said, looking up at her.

God he was beautiful, but he looked even better between her legs.

"Thanks," she said, taking the cotton ball from his hand.

He stood up, and dragged his callused hand over her calf, never breaking her gaze, causing her to shudder slightly.

He walked towards the couch and flopped down as if nothing had happened.

"So, what's on our agenda for tonight?" he called over his shoulder.

Still struggling with her breath, she stammered, "Our agenda?"

"Yeah."

"You're inviting yourself to tag along?"

He shrugged, "I'm taking up my IOU from last night."

She shuddered at the thought of last night, "What if I had nothing planned?"

"It's Saturday night, Stacey."

"Well, I have to get ready to check up work, so I'll just order pizza," she said, "there's a jar in the first drawer."

She walked passed him and added a little extra sway to her hips, and she notice his eyes staring intently on her butt.

"Eyes up, Cowboy," she said, "Give me about thirty minutes."

Brett was fumbling with a slice of pizza when he heard clicks on the hardwood flooring.

“You ready?” asked the sex goddess standing in the door way.

Stacey was wearing a black slick corset that ended mid-way down her tummy, giving him a glimpse a shiny object nestling in her belly button. She had on black jeans that were so tight, he questioned if they were painted on. He also noticed she was wearing black stilettos that added at least four inches to her height. She cleared her throat in a very unlady like mannerism and forced him out of his trance.

“I’d suggest you take a picture,” she said, “because I won’t be standing here all night.”

He looked up and a Cheshire cat smile spread across her face.

She walked towards the coffee table, leaned over and picked up a slice of pizza, giving him a view of her ample cleavage.

He let out a breath he hadn’t realized he was holding and stood up, with the coffee table seperating them. And he was thankful for that, because he knew if he got his hands on her, they wouldn’t be leaving anywhere, anytime soon.

Although her body made him harder than a 2x4, it was her undeniable beauty that took his breath away. She had put on makeup, not heavy makeup, but just enough to enhance her already stunning features.

“Uh,” he began to stammer, “Where are we going?”

She bit her pizza and wrapped her tongue around a string of gooey cheese, never breaking eye contact.

He let out an audible groan, and she just winked at him.

“We are going to work,” she said, dropping her pizza crust and headed towards the door.

It took a few seconds for him to compose himself and follow.

“Work?” he asked, slightly perplexed.

“Mhm.”

“Where?”

“Chookie McCalls.”

Brett started choking on his own spit, Chookie McCalls was one of the most expensive gentleman’s club in New York. He knew because he and Nick had almost spent their paychecks there, one regretful and drunk evening.

“You work there?” he asked, not knowing what else to say.

“Something like that,” she replied in a nonchalant voice.

He was going to ask her what she meant by that, but the look she gave him said there was a story behind it and he wasn’t sure he wanted to hear it right now.

“Well, after you Mother McGee,” he called out walking behind her. “So you understood the name?” she asked, walking down the corridor.

He thought back at the time he had read *The Deep Blue Good By*, one his favorite books.

“John D. McDonald happens to be one my favorite authors,” he replied coolly.

Stepping into the elevator she pressed a button, and the movement shifted her corset, “Keep it up, Yankee boy. I might keep you around.”

If only she knew he was willing to beg for that possibility.

Stacey sat in her office of Chookie McCalls, and listened to the sexy beats of music outside the doors.

“So you own Chookie?” asked the baseball player sitting on the couch. He really could pass for a male model.

She put her feet up on her dark wood desk and noticed Brett’s eyes on her body. Even the harsh winter wind couldn’t lower her body temperature around him.

She exhaled, “Yes.”

He made eye contact with her and noticed his usual blue eyes had turned to a color that resembled moss.

“How long?” he asked.

“What?”

“How long have you owned it?”

“Legally, five years,” she said.

He gave her a look and she knew he had multiple questions. She really didn't want to tell the story behind her ownership and how it happened, but he obviously had different plans.

“Want to talk about it” he asked tentatively. She shook her head and he narrowed his eyes.

“Mary adopted me when I had just turned eight, and I moved in with her, in that duplex not too far from the stadium.”

She paused to look at him and he nodded.

“Her neighbor had just lost his daughter to leukemia and he sort of took me under his wing. He was a single parent and he didn't want me to replace his daughter, but he knew I didn't have a dad, so in a way it all worked out.”

She paused and had to take a deep breath. She wasn't used to telling people this side of her, but something about Brett made her want to crawl into his lap and spill her whole life to him.

“As the years went on he taught me about pretty much everything, how to drive, how to fix things, around the house and even with myself. He had this sort of energy that constantly made you feel at home, no matter where you were. He always went to my dancing recitals, never missed a holiday, he even grew a friendship with Mary.”

She felt a tear trickle down her cheek, and looked down at her hands in her lap.

“When I was about seventeen I went out of town for a competition in Albany and when I got back, I learned he had passed away. He had suffered from pancreatic cancer and no one knew why he never said anything. The funeral was small, he didn't have much family, and stuck to himself, so not many friends showed up either.”

She heard Brett let out a long sigh and continued.

“When his will was being read, he left most of his things to the bank considering his debt. But the last thing he left was this place, and it was for me. I didn’t even know he owned it, I just thought he worked here. I didn’t know what to do, but the law didn’t let me put my name on the lease until I turned twenty one.”

Stacey tightened her hands and blinked back a few more tears.

“On the night of my twenty-first birthday I signed the papers and came in here for the first time. It was in pretty bad shape and people wanted it because of the location, but I couldn’t sell it. So instead, I spent my savings on fixing it up, I hired some dancers from the studio I used to work at, and trained them myselfes.”

She ran her hand against the edge of the desk and felt the carvings in the wood.

“His name was Connor, Connor Blake,” she said, “He was Irish too.”

She felt a sob rip through her, but she stopped and instead made the mistake of looking up.

She saw Brett’s eyes flicker and he immediately stood up and walked towards her.

He scooped her into his arms and sat in the chair, placing her in his lap, making the tears a steady stream down her face. She knew by now not to resist him and she just let herself be held by him. Her face was in his neck, and her nostrils flared at his scent. He smelled so good, so familiar and his body fit so perfectly against hers.

“You know,” she said through tears, “you really have to stop all this manhandling me.”

His hand was tracing circles on her upper thigh and she felt heat radiate through her body.

“I’ll stop when I want to,” he said into her hair.

Brett’s heart was shattering at her story, but it was also caving in at her strength. He never would’ve guessed all she had gone through, and for that he knew no one would ever replace her.

She stood up and leaned over, giving him a chaste kiss on the lips.

In the two seconds their mouths touch he felt a current run through his body, and every nerve was on fire.

“Let’s get home,” she said, turning to get her bag.