Nothing Gets Through Ch. 13

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The game is winding down.

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I will not cry, Lani told herself. *I will not.* She wiped at any tears that dared escape her eyes.

So Dom blamed her, just like Jason did. Well, she'd had it. Let them blame her. It wasn't her fault the defense had faltered tonight and allowed a season-high number of shots, any more than it was her fault that Jason had been hit with an errant stick during the scrum in his game. Next time, she told herself, she'd find a guy that had nothing to do with sports. Not even card games.

Dom caught up with Lani, although he was slightly winded when he did. She was shorter, but moved pretty quickly when she was upset.

"Lani, wait," he called. She jumped slightly but didn't turn around. She paused at the corner, debating whether to cross the street or just turn. In the time it took her to decide, Dom reached her and put a hand on his arm.

"Lani, please," he said. When she spun around his stomach twisted at the look of hurt on her face. He tried again. "Please, wait. I want to talk to you."

"It's not my fault," she said. He blinked.

"What isn't?"

"The game, the loss," she said, dark eyes blazing. "I heard you, and I'm sick of being blamed for things like that. First Jason, now you. I didn't have a damn thing to do with how many goals were scored or not."

"Of course you don't." Dom realized she'd misunderstood his comment to Karl. "That's not what I said."

"I heard you," she repeated, but now she was uncertain. He gambled and stepped closer; she didn't move away.

"You didn't hear everything," he said, gambling again and taking her hand. "I was telling Karl that I know people think I'm upset because of how things have been between us. But I wouldn’t blame you. We didn’t play well, we were out of sync, but that's not your fault, not at all."

"Oh. Well. Good." Lani felt awkward. She wanted to be mad, but he'd pulled that out from under her.

"I'm sorry, Lani," he said, moving closer. She swallowed as she felt the warmth of his body next to hers. She'd missed it. "I should have told you. Come back with me, please, and I'll tell you anything you want to know."

"Why?" she asked. She wasn't even sure what she meant. *Why now? Why didn't you tell me before? Why should I?*

"I was trying to keep you out," said Dom. "I know that. I don't let many people through; you probably have an idea why." She nodded mutely. "But you," he said, running a hand along her cheek. "You got through. It scared me when I realized it. I can't keep you out."

Relief and happiness swamped through Lani's body. She wiped at her eyes and gave a small smile. "Well, I'm not a puck," she said.

"It's much easier to keep those out." He pulled her to him. "I'm sorry, Lani, so sorry. I didn’t mean to hurt you."

"I'm sorry, too," she said, burrowing into him. "I let myself get too worked up. I should have just talked to you, but I was just so . . . surprised. I didn't know what to think."

"Come on," he said, turning so they could walk back to Karl and Dee. "The others are waiting. Let's go say hi and then we'll go to my place, okay?"

"Okay." Almost absently, she added, "I'm going to have to find another roommate. Cherie is leaving."

"Why?"

"I think she's joining some kind of nudist colony. She'll fit right in." Dom laughed.

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Dom waited long enough to close and lock the door and help Lani out of her coat before he swept her up into a kiss. She responded whole-heartedly, wrapping her arms around his shoulders and then her legs around his waist as he lifted her off the ground.

"I missed you," he said against her lips. He carried her back to the bedroom, anxious to rediscover the taste of her. He lay back on the bed, keeping her on top of him. "Karl tortured me by putting bags of coconut in the locker room. It drove me crazy." Lani giggled, then gasped as he nipped at her shoulder.

"I missed you, too." She dragged her lips across his forehead and over his cheek. He made a small sound and flexed his hands on her hips. "I watched all the games, even though I didn't go to a couple. Dee pestered me to go tonight."

"I'm so glad she did." He found her lips again, savored their softness for a moment then slid his tongue against hers, pleased when she shivered. "I know I said we could talk," he began.

"Later," Lani finished. "There are other ways of talking." To prove her point, she pressed her body against his as her fingers moved to unbutton his shirt. Dom growled and rolled over so that she was underneath him, kissing her deeply and reaching down for the edge of her shirt. She laughed as he tickled her sides and at the sound, he felt a heaviness he hadn't known he was carrying suddenly dissipate.

He pulled back to look at her, tracing his finger over her face.

"What?" she asked, curious.

"Nothing." He lowered his lips to hers again. "I just realized letting you in was a great idea."

A warm feeling spread through her as Dom pulled her sweater off and touched her bare skin. The urgency they'd felt just a moment ago had faded and they took their time with each other. Clothes came off and they explored each other with touches and kisses, but with very few words.

Dom kept his lips on hers as he moved inside her, unable to hold back a groan as her hips arched up to meet him. This was where he wanted to be, he realized. More importantly, where he wanted her to

be—with him.

Lani closed her eyes and moved easily with him as they found a mutually satisfying rhythm. It was like floating on a lake, with gentle waves rocking over her. At last she could feel the wave cresting, and called his name softly as she came and shook beneath him. Dom willed himself to wait, to experience her warmth and softness a bit longer, but it was difficult and when she came again, clutching him to her, he came with her.

"You know," he said after they'd recovered themselves, "maybe I should apply for that roommate position."

"You think so?" Lani raised an eyebrow.

"Well, I'd be happy to interview first," he said. The corners of Lani's mouth twitched.

"Do you smoke?" she asked in a business-like tone.

"No."

"Drink?"

"Never alone."

"Steady income?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Pets?"

"Only my rat, Oscar." He laughed as Lani punched him lightly on the arm. "Okay, no pets."

"Well, then," she said, pretending to consider it. "I guess the only thing left to discuss is the dress code."

"Dress code?" He gave her a look.

"Yes," she said primly, " a dress code." A mischievous glint came in her eyes. "Do you have any leopard print briefs?"

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This is the end. Hope you all enjoyed it, and thanks so much for all the votes and comments. :)