



LOS ANGELES, CA CHAPTER 1

“Excuse me?” a voice asked behind me. I turned to see a young girl, a bright smile on her face. “Could you take our picture?”

Looking up, there was a life-sized cutout of Connor Jackson a foot away from me. He was wearing a white button-up and navy shorts, his brunette hair mussed to perfection. It looked like they’d added a little bit of sparkle to his brown eyes, his smile flashing a row of pearly white teeth. He sported the newest edition of Luxem shoes, which is why he’d been conveniently placed in the middle of the shoe store.

Standing next to the cutout was a group of teenage girls, all around the same age as me. And they were more than eager to pose next to the fake Connor Jackson.

“Of course,” I said, taking her phone. I snapped a couple of pictures before handing it back to her.

“Thank you,” she gushed, her eyes bright with excitement.

It was a very surreal experience to see a cardboard figure of my brother in a shoe store. It was even stranger to have a group of girls ask to take a photo with it.

“What’s your favorite song?” I asked, unable to hide my smile.

“Shades!” she proudly exclaimed, and the other girls nodded in agreement.

Only the worst song that Connor had ever released. “Really?”

“Do you listen to Connor Jackson?”

“Only every day.”

I felt a tug on my arm, and I turned to see my best friend, Jenica Terry, standing behind me. “We’re going to be late!”

“It was nice meeting you!” I called over my shoulder, as Jenica all but dragged me toward the store exit.

Jenica’s mom was waiting outside, keys in hand. “Come on, girls!”

I slid into the back of the minivan, followed closely by Jenica.

“Did you get something to eat?”

Jenica’s mom was like a second mom to me. Due to my parents’ busy schedule, Momma Terry was always the one to take me to soccer practice and games. We’d spent many long hours in the car, complaining about schoolwork and listening to Jenica gush about Connor while we laughed and rolled our eyes.

“Who were those girls?” Jenica asked.

“Connor Jackson fans.”

Her eyes lit up. “Really?”

Momma Terry and I both let out a laugh.

“You girls are in need of a shower,” Momma Terry said, with a shake of her head. “I can’t imagine what state your uniforms must be in. That won’t be a fun laundry load.”

“We had a game this morning,” Jenica said, laughing. “What did you expect us to smell like?”

“I didn’t realize how terrible it was.” She reached over and opened up the sunroof. “Luckily this is the last game of the tournament.”

We pulled into the parking lot, the mall only a short distance from the soccer fields.

"I really hope we win," I said as the car came to a stop. "I can't handle making it to the championship game and then losing."

Jenica let out an annoyed huff. "And I can't handle being this incredibly sore for nothing."

We grabbed our soccer bags from the trunk before meeting up with the rest of the team.

"Where did you guys go?" Leslie asked, as we joined the rest of the team, who'd clearly hung around the fields between games.

I plopped down on the ground. "The mall."

Coach Jefferson laughed. "Did you finally get a pair of new cleats?"

I pulled my freshly duct-taped cleats out of my bag. "Absolutely not. A little duct tape and the soles are good as new."

"You missed the tournament tradition of Subway and gossip," Leslie said as we stretched, with a shake of her head. "Very disappointing."

"I'll make it up to you, I promise," I said, with a laugh.

"Captains, let's go," Coach Jefferson called out.

And that was my cue.



"Where's my midfield?" I called, as I backpedaled toward the goal.

I looked at Coach Jefferson, who flashed me a one. One minute left in this tournament. One minute before we'd claim victory.

Haley cleared the ball, landing it right at Jenica's feet.

"Come on, Jen!" I called out, using the bottom of my shirt to wipe the sweat off my forehead.

She dribbled around the stopper before passing it off to the outside left wing, sprinting up the field as the wing chipped it over the defense.

“Use your head!” I screamed.

Jenica jumped up, her head connecting with the ball and sending it into the corner of the goal.

I sprinted from my position as sweeper to the opposite side of the field. Jenica jumped into my arms, shrieking with joy. We took a moment of celebration before the ref ushered us back to our positions. This team was coming for us. As predicted, they sprinted down the right side of the field.

I backpedaled, “Contain!”

Monica stabbed at the ball, and the midfielder chipped it up to the forward.

That left it to a footrace, between me and Marci Adams, the star forward of the San Francisco Snakes.

I reached the ball half a step before she did, jumping up and headed the ball out. She collided with me in the air, sending us both into the dirt.

“You good?” Michelle asked, reaching out her goalie glove.

“Fine,” I answered, gripping her hand and pulling myself up.

Marci stood up, glaring at me.

“Watch your back,” she spat, storming back to her position right as the ref blew his whistle, signaling the end of the game.

Us: 2. Snakes: 1. That was a championship win.

“I would hug you,” Jenica said, as I jogged off the field, “but you’re covered in dirt.”

I wrapped her up into a tight hug, letting out a squeal.

“You smell like BO!” she called, laughing as I squeezed her tighter.

Coach Jefferson reached over and offered up a high five. “Proud of you.”

I joined the line of girls as we shook hands with the other team. Marci pulled back her hand as she reached me.

“Good game!” I called out to her, as we went our separate ways.

“Don’t antagonize, Katelyn,” Jenica said, steering me toward our bench.

I took off my shin guards, taking in the celebrations of our team as I stuffed everything back into my backpack. As Coach Jefferson congratulated us on winning the tournament, it finally hit. All of our hard work had paid off.

My grin widened throughout his speech, and I pulled everyone into a group hug as he finished.

“Katelyn!” Leslie screeched. “Jesus Christ.”

“Get in here, Coach!” I called out. “A celebratory, mandatory, group hug!”

Amidst the groans and the complaints, I could feel the positive energy radiating from the girls as we cheered. And then suddenly I was at the bottom of a collapsed group hug.

“Get off!” I cried out. But I was unable to contain my laughter, the overall excitement of the weekend seeping through me.

“Medal ceremony!” Coach called out. “Come on, let’s head over.”

We traipsed to the medal tent, giggling and chatting about the game. Standing beneath the hot, non-air-conditioned tent, we were forced to listen to the tournament hosts drone on about the sponsors and how grateful they were. When you’re hot and sticky and in close proximity to other hot and sticky people, the excitement dies down.

As we received our first-place medals, the picture-taking frenzy began. The most unflattering pictures always come from posttournament medal ceremonies, when you’re all dirty, sweaty, and tired. But they’re also the best ones.

The ceremony came to a close, and we began saying our good-byes. This was the last tournament of the season, with the upcoming summer focused on conditioning and team building before we started all over again. And I was going to be gone for all of it.

“You won’t even be thinking about us,” Leslie said. “You’re going on the road trip of a lifetime.”

"It's an overglorified bus tour," I corrected, "and I'd much rather be here with you guys."

"You're going to have fun," Monica argued. "Relax and actually let loose."

That *definitely* didn't sound like me. "I'll do my best."

"Is your dad on the way?" Jenica asked, as we walked back toward her car.

I checked my phone for the first time in hours, my dad having sent me a text nearly an hour ago that he was on his way from our home in Los Angeles to the tournament fields in Santa Monica.

"He should be here any minute," I said. "He's not really good at keeping me in the loop."

She folded her arms, her eyes flitting around the parking lot as we waited for my dad. "Are you watching the interview tonight?"

"It's apparently a family event," I said.

"I'm excited. Connor is so famous these days."

It was true. Connor had taken the country by storm after one of his YouTube covers went viral. People noticed his singing, and it wasn't long before he was in the studio, recording a demo track for which my parents fronted the money.

Before we knew it, Connor was sitting in a meeting room with Lightshine Records, his demo playing in the background. And now he was a walking, talking, pop star poster boy. It's been a whirlwind, to say the least. Everything about our lives changed: my parents quit their nine-to-five jobs to manage his career, my brother's songs are on the radio, his video for "Shades" has been viewed over two hundred million times and he's guest-starred in sitcoms and even appeared in movies. And now we're all going on a cross-country tour with Mackenzie Lewis, an up-and-coming pop superstar, and Skyline, my favorite band.

Out of the corner of my eye, I saw my dad's Lexus pull into the parking lot.

“He’ll be proud of you,” Jenica said.

“I bet you ten bucks he won’t even ask how my tournament went.”

“I’m sure that’s not true,” she said, unconvincingly.

“Yeah right, I’ve got to go.”

“I’ll call you tonight after the interview.”

I flashed a thumbs-up before heading over to my dad’s car.

“No, no, no,” Dad said into his Bluetooth. “That’s not the jacket we ordered.”

I plugged my headphones into my iPhone, putting the right one in my ear and leaving the left ear open in case my dad decided to start a conversation with me. Closing my eyes, I let the Skyline song play as I leaned my head against the window. I’d seen Skyline via livestream when they played to a venue of thirty people in Beaufort, South Carolina, which was their hometown. They were four brothers who quickly rose up the pop charts after my brother promoted their album on his social media, which I may or may not have had a hand in.

“Why does he need to come in for another fitting?” Dad argued. “We already came in for a fitting and the wrong leather jacket was ordered.”

My tournament went great, Dad. We won first place. Thanks for asking and engaging with me.

“Okay, okay,” my dad muttered. “Let’s get it done right this time.”

Me? I’m okay. Tired and pretty sore. But it was all worth it, ya know? Since we won first place and all.

My dad hung up the phone, silence filled the car.

“Everything went well?” my dad asked. “You know, with the soccer and all.”

A bubble of excitement sparked. It was more than I’d expected him to ask. “It actually went really well,” I said. “We won—”

My dad held up a finger in the air as his phone rang. “This is Lorie; I have to go over schedules with her. Hold this conversation.”

Closing my eyes, I let Zach Matthews's voice soothe my wounded ego. The hour-long drive was excruciating, and I couldn't get out of the car fast enough once we pulled up to the house.

"Katelyn?" my mom's voice called from the kitchen.

Ignoring her, I headed up to the second floor and locked my bedroom door. I ripped off my uniform, throwing it across my room. The only time he bothered to ask me about the tournament, it was interrupted by Connor's needs. Everything was about my brother these days. Connor's schedule. Connor's tour. Today, Connor's leather jacket fitting.

Connor freaking Jackson.

It was like my parents forgot that I exist too. I have hobbies and interests and do things that are outside of the Connor Jackson realm. Lately, though, nothing seemed to exist outside of the Connor Jackson realm.

I threw off my sweat-soaked bra and underwear and grabbed a quick shower. Then I lay down on my bed with a towel wrapped around my hair.

"Katelyn?" my mom's voice called through the door. "Are you going to join us for dinner?"

I hopped up off my bed, walking across my wood floor to crack the door open. "No."

She came into my room and sat on the edge of the bed. "I never got a text update after the last game."

"You actually want to hear about it?" I asked, as I eased myself down next to her.

"Of course, my love. Every detail."

"You don't even understand the game," I teased.

"Just the offsides stuff," she said, with a wave of her hand. "And, you know, the card system. And maybe the rules on hands."

My body melted into hers, like it did when I was a kid and upset.

"Your brother's interview is going to be on in a few minutes," she said. "Are you going to come and watch?"

As much as the Connor Jackson hype got to me, he was still my brother. And I was pretty damn proud. “Yeah, I’m coming.”

“I kept a plate of lasagna warm for you,” she said, nudging my shoulder. “And cooked a fresh batch of garlic bread right before you got here.”

“For me?”

“Who else can eat an entire loaf of garlic bread by themselves?”

Mom led me downstairs to where my plate of lasagna and heap-
ing pile of garlic bread waited. When I got to the couch, my dad was
already seated, the TV on.

“Connor, grab your sister a TV tray,” my mom said as she cleared
a spot for me.

He glanced up from his phone. “Huh?”

“TV tray for your sister.”

“Are her legs broken?”

Dad reached behind the couch, handing me a TV tray with a
pointed look. “The interview will be on in a minute. Save the argu-
ments.”

I hadn’t said a word.

“Connor Jackson,” the reporter announced as my brother’s face
lit up the screen, and the live recording audience applauded.

“Did they have signs?” I asked. “You know, making sure people
cheered for you?”

Connor flipped me off without looking away from the television.
My dad gave me another pointed look. I deserved that one.

The reporter gushed over Connor and his accomplishments. “So
tell me,” the reporter said, leaning into him. “How does it feel to be
headlining your own tour?”

“It’s an honor. I’m so excited to share my new music with my
fans.”

“I’ve heard rumors of a worldwide tour on the horizon. Any
comment?”

I choked back a laugh. This is the first headlining tour in his career, and there are already rumors of a worldwide tour?

"I'm taking it one tour a time," he said, with a laugh as well. "Let's start with the United States and see where it goes from there." He cleared his throat. "But a worldwide tour is definitely something I'd be interested in later on my career path."

The real-time Connor let out a groan. "That sounded so *scripted*."

"I didn't think so," Mom said. "I thought it sounded genuine!"

"It was scripted though, wasn't it?" I pointed out.

"It's not supposed to *sound* like it."

The interview continued for another ten long, excruciating minutes.

"After the commercial break, we'll hear 'Shades,' Connor's hit song!" the reporter said.

Of course it's "Shades."

"For your first national interview, I thought it went exceptionally well," Dad said. "Smooth talking, easy smiles, you really charmed them."

"I guess."

My mom looked over at me. "Katelyn? What did you think?"

"About the interview?"

"What *else*?" Connor asked.

I felt the bubble of anger stir within my chest, and I took a bite of the lasagna to help push it back down.

"I thought it was fine," I said. "Standard. Wasn't great, wasn't bad. Average."

Connor's lips pursed together, and for a moment I felt guilty.

"If you don't have anything constructive to contribute, Katelyn, then next time keep it to yourself," Dad said.

With that, any ounce of guilt I had washed away.

"I'll do my best."

"Here's Connor Jackson performing his hit single, 'Shades!'" the reporter announced. The camera swung over to the stage where

Connor was standing. It went off without a hitch. His voice was smooth; his dance moves were on point.

To me, it was your average pop song: repetitive and without substance. He sang “Shades” because that’s what people asked of him, because that’s all people wanted to hear these days. But his heart wasn’t in it.

Mom clapped at the end of the clip. “You did beautifully.”

Dad stood up, his phone in hand. “As I said before, I thought it went very well. And I think it’ll help open more doors in the future.”

He left the room, followed swiftly by Mom, who promised she’d be right back. I reached over and grabbed my phone, an unread text waiting for me from Jenica.

“You weren’t a fan,” Connor stated, matter-of-factly.

“I don’t have anything constructive to contribute,” I shrugged.

“But?”

“But I wasn’t impressed. You didn’t even look like you were enjoying yourself half the time. You looked stiff and awkward and uncomfortable.”

“Probably because I was.”

Mom came back into the room, a smile on her face. “Okay, Katelyn, let me hear it.” She sat down next to me. “As I said earlier, every detail. Tell me all about the offsites.”

“About what?” Connor asked, leaning forward.

“Katelyn had a soccer tournament this weekend, remember?”

Connor didn’t answer. Of course he didn’t remember. Unlike his interview, my games weren’t broadcast throughout the house. Nobody came to see me; my mom was the only one who even took the time to call. I didn’t have a platinum-selling album. I didn’t have a national tour that started in two weeks. I didn’t have meet and greets to schedule and public appearances to attend.

I was just Katelyn Jackson. And lately that seemed to be more of a burden than a blessing.



LOS ANGELES, CA CHAPTER 2

“You’re not answering my texts.” Jenica plopped down on my bed.

My phone was sitting facedown on my nightstand. “I’m trying to focus.” I was standing in front of my closet, with piles of clothes around the room, trying to figure out what I could fit into a single large suitcase that would last me most of the summer.

“I didn’t come over just to watch you pack,” Jenica said. “The Limitless Showcase emails are supposed to come out today.”

Shit. *How had I forgotten?* I bolted upright. “Have you gotten yours yet?”

She shook her head in response. “Still refreshing my email every sixty seconds.”

I grabbed my phone, doing the same. Nothing. The Limitless Showcase was the most renowned soccer showcase of the year. All of the top-ranked Division One soccer coaches come to scout, and

the U.S. Women's National Team notoriously chooses recruits from the Showcase. To be invited was an honor in itself.

"It's going to be a *long* day," Jenica said. "I texted Coach Jefferson and he said he hasn't heard anything yet either."

Before I could answer, there was a knock on my bedroom door.

"I'm packing!" I shouted. "Jenica is helping."

"I don't really care about that," Connor called back through my door. We had stayed away from each other since our sort-of fight after his interview yesterday.

"What do you want?" I called.

"To talk."

"I'm busy!"

There was a clicking noise, and then my door opened. Connor came in, shutting the door behind him.

"I have pizza," he said, holding up the plate for me to see. "It's my peace offering." He placed it on my bed, flashing Jenica a smile. "Hey, Jenny."

"You know I hate that nickname," she said.

"But it's cute," he teased.

"*I'm* cute," Jenica corrected. "Let's not get that mixed up."

"What do you want?" I asked, interrupting their flirtatious banter. I wasn't in the mood to be a third wheel in my own bedroom.

"To talk," he repeated. "Can we step outside for a sec?"

"I'll start sorting Kate's piles of clothes. You guys go on."

I pushed myself up off my bed with a groan, following Connor over to his room.

"I have more pizza in here, don't worry," he said, shutting the door behind him.

I took a slice as I sat down on the edge of his bed. "What's up, pop star?"

His face soured. "Don't call me that."

"You're *famous* now."

"Shut up," Connor said. "Are you going to come to rehearsals with me today?"

"Why should I?"

I didn't know anything about the show. I didn't even know the setlist. Dad micromanaged all of that.

"There's a closing number that I want a second pair of eyes on," he said. "It's the encore written for the show, and Mackenzie, Skyline, and I all perform it together. And you're the only one I trust to give an honest review."

"Why?"

Connor hadn't asked for my opinion on anything since his very first live performance, when he wanted to know which song he should go with. Since then, it's always been him, Mom, and Dad. And I've been the bystander to the Connor Jackson show.

"You're my target audience," he said.

Oh. It was all a strategy.

"I've got a lot of stuff to finish before the tour," I said. "Jenica's helping me pack, but I still have a science project to do and—"

"It'll only be one afternoon," Connor interrupted. "Please, Katelyn? I really need your help."

Connor must really be desperate if he was willing to beg.

"Um, okay," I said. "If you think I can help."

"Thanks, Kate. It means a lot."

I stood up as I finished off my slice of pizza. "I've got to get back to it."

"Okay, cool. I'll let you know when we're ready to go. Maybe, like, thirty minutes before?"

"Sounds good."

Silence lapsed between us, and I cleared my throat to break it.

"Okay, see you then."

Jenica was sitting on the floor with my clothes when I came back into my room.

“What did he want?” she asked, without glancing up from what she was doing.

“My help, I guess.”

That caused her to look up, raising an eyebrow in question. “With what?”

“I’m not really sure. Something about the closing number for the show.”

“That’s awesome, Kate,” she said. “Maybe you’ll get to finally meet Zach Matthews.”

“Shut up.”

“Don’t roll your eyes, you never know!” she sang. “Tell me about the Matthews brothers again? Which one would be perfect for me?”

Jenica knew how to get me talking. I was the biggest Skyline fangirl there was.

I flopped back on my bed. “Jesse is the oldest at twenty-two. He has brown hair and these dark, dark chocolate-colored eyes. He’s the more serious and broodier one, the bad boy almost. He plays bass. And then there’s Aaron, the keyboardist—he’s twenty. He has sandy blond hair and light brown eyes. He’s the quiet one that I think holds the band together. He’s not nearly as serious as Jesse, but not as much of a goofball as Ross. He’s a perfect middleman.”

“And who’s Ross?” Jenica asked.

“Ross is the third oldest, he’s eighteen, the drummer. He has dirty-blond hair and bright brown eyes. He’s the class-clown type, always cracking jokes and making light of situations.”

Jenica leaned in with a teasing smile. “And the fourth brother?”

“You know it’s Zach. He’s sixteen, nearly seventeen. Lead singer. Songwriter. Lead guitarist. Basically perfect all-around. He has caramel eyes that stare into your soul, and brown hair that is always

the perfect amount of messy. He's the lone wolf, always in the background of his brothers. But when he sings . . . it melts your heart."

"And I wonder which one is your favorite."

I turned to glare at her. "Don't call me out!"

Jenica giggled as she held up a pair of lacy underwear. "Oh, you're definitely packing these."



Connor's driver pulled up in front of the house, rolling down his window as I stepped up. Connor was already at the rehearsal space, and he'd sent his driver to pick me up.

"Hey, Richard," I said as I slid into the backseat.

"How was the tournament this weekend?" Leave it to Richard to be the only person to actually care about me and my accomplishments.

"We came in first."

"Of course you did. You're Katelyn Jackson!"

"Thanks, Richard. Thanks for caring."

"Play hard?"

"Win hard." That had been our saying for as long as I could remember. Richard flipped to Bluetooth radio, my phone connecting.

"Are we listening to Skyline today?" Richard asked, with a teasing smile.

"Always."

The ride to the rehearsal space was short, and Connor's bodyguard, Eddie, was waiting outside once we arrived.

"Afternoon," Eddie said, before opening the door for me.

"Thanks, Eddie."

He led me upstairs and I could hear "Shades" before I even went in. Connor and his choreographer, Christopher Kline, were blocking it. Connor smiled and waved at me, and then managed to fall off the chair he was standing on.

“Sorry, Chris,” I said.

“Just in time. Can you press play, Kate?”

“Sure.” The dance was flawless, Connor actually managing to pull off the choreography. Chris cheered at the end, reaching over to high-five Connor.

“At least we know it’ll work,” Connor said, hopping down off the chair.

“We need to do that consistently,” Chris said.

I helped Chris clean up the studio space while Connor gathered up his stuff.

“See you in twenty for group rehearsal,” Chris called out after us.

I followed Connor up to a room with his name taped on the door. Inside the small space was a single chair and a garment bag hanging from the ceiling. Connor sat down in his chair and let his head fall back, closing his eyes. “I’m already taxed.”

The door opened and, Lorie, Connor’s publicist, stepped inside. She handled everything from assisting in scheduling Connor’s interviews to handling his social media accounts.

“Lana wants to speak with you,” Lorie said. “Before your Q&A session this evening.”

Lana Regas, Connor’s ex-girlfriend. Connor and Lana had met at a red carpet event, and the two of them had immediately hit it off. And things had been great between them . . . for a while. And after one drunken night of confessions between the two of them, NDAs were signed and the relationship abruptly ended.

Lana was a Greek goddess. She stood tall, at five foot nine, and often walked the runway for luxury brand names as a lead model. But most of all, she was a massive bitch. And everybody knew it. When she wanted something, she got it. Not always in the right way.

“I have no interest in talking to her today,” Connor said. “Tell her whatever it is, we can talk about it next week.”

“You know how Lana gets . . .”

"I'm midrehearsal for a tour that starts in two weeks," Connor said. "I don't care what she threatens to do. I don't have time to deal with her bullshit today."

"Noted," Lorie said, writing in her planner. "The rest of today is pretty light media-wise. We'll continue dropping teasers about the music video on your social profiles, and you have the fan Q&A at seven tonight."

Connor nodded.

Lorie glanced toward me. "Hi, Katelyn."

"Hi."

"Can I get you anything?"

I shook my head. "I'm okay for now."

She wrote something else down in her planner before leaving, shutting the door behind her.

"Is this your every day?" I asked.

Connor opened both eyes this time. "What?"

"People drop in and tell you what your daily schedule is, and you just have to go with it?"

"Pretty much."

"That sounds awful."

And then, as if on cue, my dad came through the door, iPad in hand. "You need to be dressed and ready."

"Skyline is never here on time," Connor whined. "I'm not getting dressed in that leather suit until the absolute last minute."

Connor had specifically requested Skyline as an opening act, and I'd screamed when I heard they'd accepted. Not only would I get to hear them perform at every tour stop, but I'd actually get to meet them in person. Sometimes being a Jackson had its perks.

"Ten minutes," my dad said icily. "I'll see you in the rehearsal studio." And with that he was gone again. Connor didn't seem bothered by the encounter, instead taking to his phone with an impassive expression. This life wasn't something I envied. My dad and I could

hardly have a two-minute conversation. There's no way I could handle having him bark orders at me. My career would've been over before it started.

"You can't fangirl," Connor said without looking up from his phone.

"Fangirl?" I asked.

"Over Skyline, when they get here. You can't fangirl."

"Who says I'm a fan?"

"Are you for real? The giant poster of their lead singer on your wall, for starters. The fact that you basically begged me to help promote them . . . the fact that you play their songs all the time."

All valid points. "I can play it cool," I shrugged. "Watch, I bet I won't even bat an eye."

"Fat. Fucking. Chance."

"I'm cool as a cucumber, you just watch."

We cracked up.

"Who's the kid you have a poster of again?" Connor asked. "Is it Zach?"

"Yes. Are you best friends with him yet?"

"I'm pretty sure they think I'm an egotistical douche," he said.

"Why would they think that?"

Connor was silent a few moments. "I'm not really good with the whole *friend* thing."

"I guess I'll have to get the scoop," I said.

"I bet you will." He stood up, letting out a yawn. "I've only met Zach once."

They'd been rehearsing for weeks. "Really?"

"He doesn't really come to group rehearsals often; we usually use a stand-in for him."

"What do you mean he doesn't come to group rehearsals?"

If Mackenzie, Skyline, and Connor all came together for the last song, how would Zach know his cues if he didn't show up to rehearsals?

“He’s got that condition,” Connor said, his eyes flickering shut. “God, I’m so tired. What’s it called?”

“Epilepsy,” I filled in.

Being a Skyline fangirl meant that I’d fallen into a deep Reddit thread about the ins and outs of Skyline. And an even deeper rabbit hole about epilepsy.

When Skyline began gaining notoriety, they appeared in multiple interviews. But Zach was always noticeably missing. At first he was labeled as a diva by the industry, but eventually he announced that he suffers from epilepsy, and that rehearsals, interviews, and tour would be too much for him when he had a scheduled routine to follow with his doctor. He never did any late-night or early-morning interviews, as he’d said that sleep was a key factor in managing the disorder. Sometimes he’d come around throughout the day, dropping in for a few minutes to say hello. But the other three brothers usually took care of the press releases.

“Yeah, we have a training session on that before the tour starts,” Connor said.

“For epilepsy?”

“For what to do in case of a seizure. It was requested by their management . . . which is essentially Jesse.”

And it made sense. The last thing Skyline would want to happen was for their lead singer, their brother, to get hurt.

“I’m going to get dressed,” Connor said, checking the time. “I’ll see you in a sec.”

That’s my cue to leave. “Same rehearsal room?”

“Yup.”

I headed back to the space. “Hello again,” Chris said.

I waved in response before taking a seat at the front of the room, my back against the mirror.

Mackenzie arrived next. Everyone in Hollywood knew Mackenzie Lawrence. She was notorious for late-night parties, one-night stands, and subpar pop music.

“Chris,” she said, snapping her gum.

“Mack,” he said.

Mackenzie’s eyes landed on me. “Who is this?”

“Connor’s sister,” Chris answered. “She’s going to watch the closing number.”

She gave me a once-over. “If you think that will help.” She took a seat in one of the chairs. “This outfit sucks. I can barely move.”

She was dressed in a maroon leather jacket with matching pants. She was wearing a tight-fit, white T-shirt underneath and a pair of maroon pumps.

“That’s why we’ll be rehearsing in them for a week.”

The answer clearly didn’t satisfy her, but she didn’t press the issue any further. “Who all is coming today? Connor?”

Chris nodded.

“And the Jonas Brothers?”

I couldn’t help but laugh, Chris joining in.

“All four of them,” Chris confirmed.

I pressed my lips together to keep from outwardly fangirling.

“Impressive,” she said, with an arched eyebrow. “What’s the little one’s name again?”

“He’s a hell of a lot taller than us.”

She frowned, once again displeased with Chris’s response. “Name.”

“Zachary, but I think he told me he goes by Zach.”

She waved her hand dismissively. “There are way too many of them for me to remember.”

“Jesse, Aaron, Ross, and Zach,” I said, more loudly than I thought.

“Cute,” she commented, her face impassive.

I had no idea what to take from that. “Thanks?”

The door flew open, Connor coming into the rehearsal room.

“Whose idea was it for all-leather?” Connor asked, his hands immediately going to cover his crotch. “My dick is way too exposed.”

“Wear a cup,” Chris said. “You’ll survive.” He stood back to survey him. “And where’s your jacket?”

“Still waiting,” Connor said, with a slight frown. “From my meeting with Dad yesterday, I guess they ordered it in red instead of black. The right one should be in ASAP.”

Connor took a seat in one of the folding chairs, next to Mackenzie. “Did I miss anything?”

“Other than me complaining about the leather monkey suits too?” Mackenzie asked. “Not much.”

As Chris and Connor took to chatting, another ten minutes clicked by.

“They’re always late,” Mackenzie said, her gaze still focused on her phone. “How do they expect to go on a national tour if they can’t even show up to rehearsals on time?”

“Relax,” Chris said, with a slight laugh. “Everyone has their flaws. I can deal with them being late.”

“We’re lucky if *you* show up on time, so no shocker there,” Mackenzie scoffed.

“I am surprised, actually, that you were here before all of us today,” Connor said, leaning over to Chris.

Chris pointed to his head. “Beanie, sweats, and a T-shirt—I was out the door in less than five.”

The door clicked open again. Two members of Skyline walked in. My eyes widened to see Ross and Aaron Matthews also dressed in leather.

“Look who finally decided to show up,” Mackenzie snapped.

“I’d say this is record time for us,” Aaron said, taking one of the seats.

Ross immediately glanced toward me. “Who’s the newbie?”

As soon as his eyes landed on me, my cheeks immediately burned. It was all I could do to stare at him, trying to process the fact that Ross. Matthews. was actually talking to me.

"That's my sister," Connor said, answering for me. "Katelyn."

"Cool," Aaron said, flashing me a smile. "Are you coming on tour?"

I nodded. Not like I was really given a choice.

"Had to hunt down Zach's leather suit," Ross said. "He and Jess should be here momentarily."

"Do we need a lesson in how to tell time?" Mackenzie asked, sarcasm dripping from her voice.

"The first two numbers are the seconds, right?" Ross asked, flashing her a pearly white smile.

Mackenzie flipped him off in return as the door clicked open again. My heart felt like it was doing somersaults in my chest as Jesse walked in, followed closely by Zach. I stared at Zach in his white T-shirt, black leather jacket, and pants. His brown hair was swept off to the side in the messy style he usually wore. And his brown eyes looked unusually dark. His jacket was tight against his biceps, and I could see the ripple of muscles underneath the thin, white T-shirt. I couldn't take my eyes off the perfection that was Zach Matthews.

"Found your leather gear?" Chris asked.

Zach tugged on the jacket. "Is it supposed to be this tight?"

"Unfortunately," Connor said.

"This is Katelyn," Chris said, gesturing toward me. "She's going to be watching today, because Connor doesn't trust my opinion."

Heat pooled in my cheeks as all eyes turned toward me.

"Not true," Connor said. "I'd like a second pair of eyes before we actually go live in our skin-tight leather."

Ross flashed me a smile, and my heart pounded even harder in my chest. "If you want to suggest a costume change, I'd be all ears," he said.

"Music in five!" Chris called out. "Positions now."

Everyone shifted around the room, moving chairs and taking their places for the start of the song. My eyes immediately focused

on Zach, although I tried to convince myself it was solely for research purposes and not because he's Zach. Matthews.

Mackenzie opened the song. Her voice was smooth, but her music wasn't for me. I enjoyed songs with a deeper meaning behind the lyrics. And she was nothing more than bubblegum pop music. The choreography was intricate, and involved a lot of balancing on chairs, which, by the looks of it, was really hard for Connor. And as predicted, Connor fell off the chair during his solo, which had Chris cackling.

Ross was the only one from Skyline who seemed to have any sort of rhythm. I could see Aaron glancing at Ross, trying to follow along. Jesse didn't even bother trying. And Zach gave up about a quarter of the way through the song, taking to tipping his chair back and forth as he sang. The ending was perfect though, with everybody hitting their marks.

"So?" Chris asked.

"I thought the ending was really good," I said.

The room busted out laughing, even Mackenzie.

"I think Mackenzie has the choreography down really well," I said. The look she gave me said she clearly agreed.

"Connor has no balance." I ignored the look he gave me. "Overall, I didn't think it was *bad*. It's just obviously not show-ready."

Ross raised his hand from where he was seated in one of the plastic folding chairs. "*We* don't get a rating?"

The heat rose in my cheeks again. "Ross has enough rhythm to follow along in the choreography."

Ross fist-pumped. "Let the record show that I'm the best dancer in Skyline."

"As if he didn't have a big enough head already," Aaron muttered.

"I don't need a rating," Zach said. "I know I sucked."

"Zach doesn't have dance skills," Ross said, reaching over to ruffle his hair.

His brother ducked away from him, "Leave me alone."

"Should we scrap it?" Chris asked.

"No," I said.

"Katelyn, I thought you were on *our* side," Ross whined.

I was trying really hard not to let my inner fangirl out, but I could feel the heat spread down the back of my neck as Ross said my name. *Ross Matthews knows my name.* It was hard not to be starstruck.

"Can we at least scrap the chairs?" Jesse asked.

"I like the chairs," Mackenzie argued.

"We have a little over a week to nail down the choreography," Chris said. "If we scrap the chairs, we have to reblock. And if we don't, then we have to learn to balance in that time."

Jesse let out a short laugh. "Both sound impossible."

Clearly choreography wasn't Skyline's thing.

Mackenzie groaned. "God, Negative Nancy, can you cool it?"

I could tell Jesse wanted to snap back, but Aaron gave him a quick shake of the head. They seemed to have a silent conversation.

"Let's run it again then?" Chris questioned.

"Great," Zach said, in a listless voice. "Can't wait."

The words slipped out before I could stop them. "I can tell."

His eyes slid toward mine, his lips pressed together and turned up into a smile. And now I was sure I was the color of an actual tomato.

"Okay, Katelyn, game plan," Chris said. "I'll be watching Connor, Aaron, and Ross. You've got eyes on Zach and Jesse."

Oh God. Connor looked up at the ceiling, clearly concealing his laughter from the rest of the group.

"Do I have to run the choreo again?" Mackenzie asked.

"Practice makes perfect," Chris quipped.

"Perfect?" Mackenzie panned. "I'll settle for mediocre."

My eyes zeroed in on Zach as he took his place. *I'm not concentrating on how Zach's shirt rides up when he reaches up. I'm not*