

Girls' Night Zoom

AN LA LOVERS SHORT STORY

BY JOURDYN KELLY

Rebecca and Cass

“Are you sure you can’t blow this thing off and come back to the pink room with me?” Cass wiggled her eyebrows at her wife. She didn’t know how everyone else was faring during this pandemic, but Cass was having the time of her life. There wasn’t another human being Cass Giles would rather be sheltered in place with than her wife Rebecca. Of course, it didn’t hurt that Rebecca was a BDSM Mistress and a world-class dominatrix. There wasn’t a chance in the world of Cass ever getting bored.

“Cassidy, I promised the girls I’d show up this time. You kept me quite busy the last two times we had planned a Zoom get-together.”

“I know, I’m sorry.” Cass had the good grace to show a bit of contriteness for that. She hadn’t meant to be selfish and keep Rebecca away from her friends. Cass, however, found it incredibly easy to lose track of time when she was in the pink room with Mistress.

“No need to be sorry, baby. But I can’t miss another one. They’re going to think *you’ve* tied *me* up. We can’t have that, now can we?”

Cass grinned. “Nope.” She sighed. “Okay, I’ll get dressed. Maybe I’ll get some painting done while you’re busy.”

Rebecca swung her legs over the side of the bed and immediately regretted it. God, she loved being with Cassidy. But at the rate they were going, Rebecca’s age was starting to catch up with her. The hell if she was going to tell her wife that, though. No way. Rebecca knew Cassidy didn’t have a single problem with the sixteen-year age difference. Usually — after many discussions and inner musings — Rebecca didn’t either. However, this pandemic was bringing out the animal in Cassidy. Rebecca was getting worried that her body wouldn’t be able to keep up with the rigorous daily activity.

“I thought you were having your own little get-together with Hunter and them?” Rebecca schooled her voice as she stood on sore, jelly legs.

“Oh, yeah.” Cass checked her phone. “Well, Hunter didn’t cancel, yet, so I guess it’s still on.” She looked over her shoulder and caught a glimpse of her wife’s perfect ass disappearing into the bathroom. Hunter and Mo wouldn’t mind if Cass missed their little Zoom thing tonight. Right? Hunter had missed a few already, and it was fine. Though, in Hunter’s defense, she had been exhausting herself in a different way. By keeping the clinic open and working the front lines. Cass sighed again. Nah, she couldn’t miss this one. Hunter may need to talk while Ellie was busy with Rebecca. Besides, Cass and Rebecca had all night ahead of them.

“What are you grinning at?” Rebecca asked, squinting at her wife suspiciously.

“Huh? Oh, I was just thinking about how to entertain you *after* we’re done entertaining everyone else.”

Rebecca's stomach dropped. As much as she loved Cassidy *and* sex with Cassidy, Rebecca needed a teeny tiny little break. Maybe the girls could help her figure out how to tell Cassidy that without hurting her feelings—or showing her age. Until then, she smiled sweetly at her wife and patted her cheek as she walked by.

“Hey, babe? You're walking kinda funny. Did you hurt yourself?”

“I, uh, tripped and stubbed my toe in the bathroom,” Rebecca lied lamely.

“Lemme see.”

Rebecca put a hand on Cassidy's chest. “It's fine, baby. I just need to walk it off. Now, get dressed, please. This,” she gestured to Cassidy's naked body, “isn't helping anyone.”

Cass wrapped her arms around Rebecca and gyrated her hips against her wife's. “It *would* help if you were still naked, too.”

Tired or not, Rebecca felt the stirrings of arousal. *Good lord! I'm going to have to hang up my riding crop if I can't resist her at least once!*

“Cassidy.” Rebecca mustered up every ounce of Mistress she could get in her current situation. Fortunately, it worked since Cassidy dropped her hands to her side.

“Sorry, Mistress.” Cass bowed her head to hide the knowing grin. “I'll go get dressed. Do you want me to make you something to eat before your call?”

Rebecca chuckled. “I admit, you're getting better in the kitchen, baby, but I only have fifteen minutes. Your *masterpieces* take triple that, *and* you destroy the kitchen in the process.” She touched Cassidy's cheek. “But I appreciate the offer. How about *I* make us a sandwich?”

Cass turned her head and kissed the palm of Rebecca's hand. "Sounds good. I'm gonna jump in the shower really quick. Be out in two minutes." After a quick peck on Rebecca's lips, she zipped off to the bathroom.

Rebecca let out a breath. "You're going to be the death of me, Cassidy Giles. But what a beautiful and satisfying death it will be."

Ellie and Hunter

“Honey, you’re exhausted. Why don’t you go to bed? I can tell Rebecca and Patty to give Cass and Mo your apologies.” Ellie sat on her knees behind Hunter as she ran her hands through Hunter’s dark locks. She took an extra moment to massage her wife’s head, knowing instinctively that a headache wasn’t far from the surface.

“Nah, I’m okay, baby. I’ve already canceled on them enough. I feel like I haven’t seen Cass in forever. And Mo needs to see me as a friend again and not just her boss at the clinic.” Hunter exhaled and leaned her head back, hoping for more of that glorious massaging. She practically purred when Ellie dug her fingers in deeper. “That feels so good.”

“Later tonight, I’ll give you a bath and a full massage,” Ellie promised.

“It’s very tempting to forget everything else *but* that, baby.” Hunter reached up and brought Ellie’s hands to her lips. She kissed each knuckle tenderly. “I’m sorry I’ve been neglecting you.”

Ellie hopped off the bed and walked around Hunter, kneeling in front of her. “You’re not neglecting me, Honey. What you’re doing at the clinic is incredibly important. Lifesaving. I don’t begrudge you for that.”

“But our time together is suffering,” Hunter reminded Ellie sadly. “I get up early, I’m gone all day, and by the time I get home, I’m too exhausted to do much of anything except sleep.”

“That’s not entirely true, Hunter. No matter how tired you are, you always ask about my day when you get home. You always sit at the table with me to eat your dinner. And when we go to bed, you always hold me in your arms as though I’m the only one who can keep you sane.”

“You are, baby. I may be too tired to show you. . .”

“That’s what I’m telling you, Honey. You *show* me every night. Making love to you is amazing. But that’s not the only action that tells me how much you love me. Do you understand that for me, it’s not just about sex, it’s about everything?”

Hunter smiled warmly at her wife. “I understand that. That’s how it is for me, too.” She leaned down and kissed Ellie passionately. “I still want to make love to you as often as possible,” Hunter whispered against Ellie’s lips.

“Well, that, um, ahem, goes without saying.” Ellie fanned herself. “Maybe your bath later will energize you enough to finish what you just started.”

Hunter pulled Ellie up, and they both flopped onto the bed. “How about we get started now?”

“I want to say yes so badly.” Ellie fidgeted until she found the perfect spot where she and Hunter melded together like pieces of a puzzle. “Ugh. Why do we have to be responsible adults who have friends they adore?”

Hunter chuckled. “It’s a burden, for sure. Hey.” She pushed a strand of hair behind Ellie’s ear. “Are we okay?”

“We’re better than okay, Honey. We’re in love. We’re married. And we still *want* to make love to each other. We just need to find the time.”

“Right now!” Hunter suggested again with a laugh. “Friends be damned!”

“I would be all over you, ripping these clothes off you if those friends were anyone else besides the people who have stood next to us through everything.”

Hunter thought about how Blaise kept Ellie's family from taking her away from Hunter. How Rebecca and Cass vigilantly came to the hospital to offer love and support when Ellie had been critically injured. How Eve and Lainey had helped bring Hunter's vision of the clinic to life. And how Patty and Mo quit their steady job at a hospital to work with Hunter during one hell of a pandemic.

"You're right." Hunter kissed Ellie again. "Did you happen to buy any Red Bulls when you went shopping this week?"

Ellie's brows furrowed. "Since when do I buy that gross stuff?"

Hunter laughed. "I know it's terrible, but the caffeine would keep me. . ."

"Jittery? No, ma'am. I'll make you some coffee and heat some leftovers before I get on the call with the girls." Ellie reluctantly rolled off Hunter. "And if you need more of an incentive to stay awake tonight, we got a package in the mail today."

"More stuff from Amazon?" Hunter asked before it hit her. She sat up abruptly. "Wait. *The* package?"

"Mhmm."

"Put that coffee in my 24 oz. mug, baby. We're getting reacquainted tonight!"

Eve and Lainey

“Knock, knock.” Lainey poked her head around the doorway, peeking in on her wife.

Eve looked up and smiled. “Hey there.”

“I don’t want to bother you. . .”

“Lainey, you’re never a bother. Come here.” Eve set her paintbrush down and beckoned her wife with a wink.

Lainey made her way to Eve, beyond curious as to what she had been painting for the last four hours. Trying not to look *too* obvious, Lainey gave Eve a quick kiss before turning her attention to the easel.

“That’s all I get?” Eve teased. “One measly little peck? I’ve been in here slaving away for hours and . . .”

“And that’s exactly why you’re getting such a quick kiss. I’m too curious to know what you’ve been working on,” Lainey concluded. “This is exquisite, honey.”

Eve chuckled. “Why, thank you, my love. Tell me what you see.”

Lainey rolled her eyes playfully. “Always a teaching moment for you, isn’t it?”

“For me,” Eve nodded. She stood up and wrapped her arms around Lainey’s waist. “Hearing you speak about art is enlightening for me. Especially when it’s mine.”

Lainey leaned her head back on Eve’s shoulder and looked up at her. “Why?”

“Because you see things I don’t. When I’m painting, my mind tends to stop thinking. I let the emotion take over. Then you come in and interpret what I’ve done.” She turned Lainey towards

her. “You know me better than I do. You *see* deeper inside the meaning of art than anyone I’ve ever known, including myself. So, when I ask you what you see, I’m *genuinely* curious. Almost anxious to know.”

Lainey stared deep into Eve’s gray eyes and knew that every word Eve said was what she truly felt. “Good lord, woman. How is it that your words can turn me on as much as your body does?”

Eve’s eyebrows shot up. “I — I was only telling you how I felt.”

Lainey couldn’t help but laugh. It wasn’t often Eve Sumptor was caught off guard. Even less when she was at a loss for words. “You’re so beautiful when you’re flustered. I should try to do it more frequently.”

“Please don’t,” Eve groaned, squeezing Lainey’s body to hers in a fierce hug. “I don’t particularly like feeling off-kilter. I’ve had enough of that to last me a lifetime.”

Lainey patted Eve’s back, then moved her hand down and patted her tight ass. “Oh, come on, Honey. It’s different when I fluster you, isn’t it?”

Eve touched her forehead to Lainey’s. “Yes, ma’am. And you’re doing it again.”

“I’m sorry,” Lainey grinned. Without leaving Eve’s arms — her favorite place to be — Lainey turned back to the painting. She loved how Eve’s work was now so colorful and alive. This piece, however, was different than the others. Still colorful, there was an underlying theme to this one. “This is new for you,” she said softly.

“Hmm?” Eve looked at the painting with fresh eyes. Lainey was right. It was new, and Eve wasn’t sure how she felt about it.

“Surrealism isn’t something you usually paint, but it’s incredible. Look here.” Lainey pointed to a dark corner of the canvas. “The darkness only fills a tiny fraction of the painting. Even being there, it is beamed with light trying to protrude into its existence. These figures,” she pointed at small, faceless shapes. Even without the help of features like a mouth or eyes, the painted figures looked happy. “I’ve never seen an artist depict such joy in a character that wasn’t made obvious by their expressions: a smile, a twinkle in the eye. But here I can practically see them frolicking with sheer happiness. And the love expressed here between the two larger shapes, the way they intertwine, it’s palpable.” Lainey turned again to look at Eve. “Is this us?”

Eve studied the painting once more before answering Lainey. “You and the children fill my mind. All I ever want to do is make you all happy. To keep you safe. I guess this is the first time I’ve ever put that to canvas.” She frowned then. “I don’t like that the darkness is still there.”

“Oh, honey.” Lainey touched Eve’s cheek gently. “Darkness doesn’t just go away when the light turns on. It’s still there. Just hidden. If we spend our lives trying to get rid of it, we miss the true meaning of the light. It’s there to guide us. To help us through the dark. To make sure we’re not afraid of it anymore because we know it can’t hurt us anymore.”

Eve grinned. “Still reading your psychology books, huh?”

“Oh, stop!” Lainey slapped Eve playfully on the arm.

“I’m teasing you, baby. I think what you said was beautiful. And true.” Another glance at the painting. “Maybe we’ll keep this one in here.”

“I’d like that.” Lainey sighed. “I almost forgot why I came in here.”

“It wasn’t to see me? Touch me? Torture me with your naughty ways?”

Lainey laughed. “The kids are still awake.” Her eyes shifted slightly, then came back to Eve once she was satisfied with what she saw.

“Did you just check on said kids?”

“Yes. What good is having a monitor in here if I don’t use it? Besides, even knowing Kevin is now a certified lifeguard, I still get nervous leaving them in the pool unsupervised.”

“I love the mother you are,” Eve said softly. “So? What did you initially come in here for if it wasn’t to ravish me?”

Lainey moaned softly. “Stop that! I came in here to ask you if you were ready for the Zoom call with the gang. It’s in about,” she checked her watch. “Oh, shit! Ten minutes!”

Eve released Lainey and sat down on her stool. “Do I have to?”

Lainey’s brow furrowed. “No, Honey. You don’t *have* to do anything. But can you tell me why you don’t want to? I thought you liked them.”

“I do!” Eve blew out a breath. “The thing is Ellie invited me to be on the call with you. But Hunter invited me to her own little Zoom whatever. Lainey, I don’t know where I belong.”

“Where do you feel more comfortable?”

“Here in my studio. Or with you. Or with the kids watching TV. I’m terrible, aren’t I? They are great people. I adore them.”

“But you’re an introvert,” Lainey declared. “I think they’ll understand that. Honey, you’ve been to their parties, you participate, you engage, you’ve done so much for them and vice versa. But that doesn’t mean you have to be involved in everything they do.”

“You don’t mind me skipping it?”

“No, of course not. Are you going to stay in here and paint?”

Eve shook her head. “I’ve been in here long enough. I think I’ll join the kids in the pool. Then we’ll get some pizza, watch a movie, bake some cookies.”

“I know what you’re doing, honey.”

“What?” Eve asked innocently.

“You’re trying to sway me.”

“Is it working?”

Lainey rolled her eyes again. “Yes. Let me text Ellie.”

Eve took Lainey’s phone from her once it was out of her back pocket. “Don’t cancel, baby. Maybe Ellie put this together because she needs her friends. I’ll save you some pizza. And maybe a cookie.”

Lainey leaned in close. “If you hope for anything naughty to go on in here later, you’d better save me more than one cookie.”

Eve shivered with anticipation. “Fine. Two cookies. And an entire can of whipped cream.” She waggled her eyebrows and gave Lainey a wink.

Blaise and Greyson

“Hey, doll.” Greyson wrapped his arms around Blaise from behind, his hands traveling up to one of his favorite places. And frowned. “You’re wearing a bra.”

“I can see why you’re so good at your security job,” Blaise quipped.

“Ha, ha. Why are you dressed? Are you going somewhere?”

“Yes.” Blaise stood on her tiptoes and kissed her husband soundly on the lips. “Into the other room with a bottle of wine.”

Greyson watched his wife sashay out of the bedroom; the confusion was written all over his face. “Do you want to elaborate?” he called out as he followed her.

“I told you this morning that I had girls’ night tonight, stud. Which means you and Ezra are on your own.” Blaise selected a bottle of wine. After a split-second thought, she chose another one as well.

“Wait, you never told me that.”

“Sure, I did. Right before I did other things to you that blew your . . . mind.” Blaise chuckled at the double meaning of her words.

“And you expect me to remember *anything* after that?” Greyson grabbed Blaise as she was passing by him, lifting her onto the counter.

“You realize that the last time you did this to me, we got Ezra,” she reminded him with a wink.

“Would it be so bad if that happened again?” he asked as he kissed Blaise’s neck.

“Uh.” Blaise pushed Greyson back to look him in the eye. “What?”

“What what? Would it be a terrible thing if we had more babies?”

“Greyson Steele, are you telling me you want me to get as huge as a house, unable to see my feet, miserable, and rip myself open *again*?”

Greyson blinked at her. “Well, that’s, um, not exactly how I thought about it. I was thinking that Ezra would enjoy having a sibling.”

“He has one. Piper.”

Greyson sighed. “I know that, doll. But she’s traveling now. I thought maybe someone a little closer to his age would be good for him.”

“Another baby,” Blaise repeated with an eerie seriousness. “I don’t know if I want to go through that again, Greyson.”

“The misery fades, doesn’t it, doll?”

“Oh, I hadn’t realized you’d given birth before.” Blaise rolled her eyes. “That’s not what I meant anyway. Finding out Piper was alive was one of the best things that has ever happened to me. But I don’t know if I can explain the trauma, Greyson. Every second I spent in that hospital giving birth to Ezra was filled with terror that something was going to happen to him. That someone would take him from me like they did Piper.”

Greyson caressed Blaise’s cheek. “But they didn’t, doll. I won’t let that happen.”

Blaise sighed as she kissed his palm. “I know that deep down inside. Unfortunately, it doesn’t take the fear away. Besides, I love our life now. Well, other than the fact that my daughter

is quarantined in another country, I can't leave the house, and there are times when I've plotted your murder because you're stubborn as a mule."

"*I'm* stubborn?" Greyson laughed. "Woman, you *invented* stubborn!" He wished she had talked to him about how she felt before. He knew she had been anxious at the hospital when Ezra was born. He just hadn't understood how deep that wound went. "Hey, doll. I love our life, too. Even if you never invite me to these little get-togethers you have. It makes me wonder what happens at them."

Blaise snorted. "Never invite you? Do you know how many times I'm teased because of the grass stains you *always* seem to make sure I have?" She bopped him on the nose with her fingertip.

"That doesn't count. I still don't know what happens during these girls' nights." Greyson narrowed his eyes. "Have you ever thought about being with a woman?"

Blaise burst out laughing. "Is *that* what this is all about? You're afraid I'm going to leave you for a woman?"

"No. Not — not really."

"Oh my god. See? This is one of those times I plot your murder." Blaise glanced behind her. Ezra was still napping in his favorite spot his daddy set up for him. A small tent surrounded by a mountain of pillows and a fake campfire. She smiled at the sweetness of the scene. Maybe one more wouldn't be so bad. Of course, Blaise wasn't about to tell Greyson that now. "Yes."

Greyson, who had followed Blaise's gaze, looked back at her. "Yes?"

"I've thought about being with a woman before."

He was surprised, disheartened, and slightly aroused. Greyson cleared his throat, disgusted with his typical male response to her answer. “Ellie?”

“All of them,” Blaise answered. “I mean, have you seen my friends? My *lesbian* friends? It takes all the willpower I have to turn down their offers to make me ‘family.’ That’s what most of the night is all about. They show me what it could be like being with a woman. I have to admit it’s tempting. Seeing how sensual it is for a woman going down on another woman. I pinch myself constantly to remind myself I’m married. They are, too, but it’s all consensual.” Blaise tapped her finger on her chin. “Hmm. I wonder how it will be tonight since we can’t be in the same room. Ooo, maybe toys will be involved! The naked pillow fight might be hard, though. What fun is it hitting yourself and pinching your own nipples?”

Greyson’s mouth had dried up. Speaking of up . . . any red-blooded man would take the image Blaise just described and play it in his head. On loop. In HD. On a projector screen. Greyson Steele was as red-blooded as any other man. His wife was hot. Her friends were hot. He was . . . not happy.

“That was *not* nice,” he growled. Greyson wasn’t sure what he was most upset about. That Blaise had teased him or that his damned body had a typical male response. He had hoped with all the women that surrounded him, he had learned to be more sensitive. And perhaps immune to such antics by his frustrating wife. *I guess I still have some work to do on myself.*

Blaise looked down and chuckled. “Oh, I think your other head disagrees. He found it quite nice. It’s what you get.” She hopped down from the counter. “You questioned my loyalty.”

“I did not!”

“You did, too!” She stood there in the middle of the kitchen, hands on hips, and a stern look on her face. “I *love* my friends, stud. Very much. But for some odd reason, I’m *in* love with you. Not to mention, I’m straight. *And* all of my friends are married! Happily! I thought we were, too!”

“We are!” Greyson returned, lowering his voice to a whispered shout so he wouldn’t wake Ezra. “I don’t doubt you, doll,” he said quietly. “But I’m not naïve enough to think it can’t happen. Lainey was married to a man. So was Eve.”

“The difference is, neither of them *wanted* to be married to those men. I married you, Greyson, because I *wanted* to. Because I love you. I want to be with you.”

Greyson took a chance walking up to his fiery wife and wrapped her in his arms. “I love you, too, doll. I’m proud that you want to be my wife. Even when you’re plotting my murder.”

Blaise chuckled. “Yeah, well, now I’m recruiting the girls to help me bury the body.”

“Guess it would be futile to ask you to keep this between us?”

Blaise shrugged. “Probably. What are you and Ezra going to do while I’m relaxing and drinking wine?”

“Oh, I don’t know. Boy stuff. Drink beer, smoke cigars, watch NASCAR.”

“I swear, Greyson Steele, if you let my son watch NASCAR, I will divorce your ass and marry a woman!”

Greyson grinned down at his wife. “Oh yeah? Who? They’re all taken.”

A sly smile blossomed on Blaise’s lips. “Not Kiara.”

The blood drained from Greyson's face. "Shit. No NASCAR. Can we still smoke cigars?"

Blaise shrugged. "Yeah, as long as they're good ones. Whiskey instead of beer. And, for the love of everything holy, will you please teach the boy to gamble? Geez. How will we ever get out of this shithole if we don't teach our child to lie, cheat, and steal?"

Greyson roared with laughter. "God, I love you, woman!" He emphasized his words with a long, passionate kiss.

"Mummy?"

Blaise pulled away from the kiss. *Dammit*. "Hi, sweet boy. You have the *best* timing! You must get it from your daddy."

Ezra hadn't a clue what his mummy was talking about. All he knew was he was hungry. "Hungy."

Blaise picked him up, smooched him all over his face causing him to giggle and held him out to Greyson. "Good luck. Mummy is off for the next couple of hours."

"Be good!" Greyson called out as Blaise strode down the hall, two wine bottles in hand.

Blaise held the bottles up in the air and wiggled her butt for Greyson's amusement. "Don't worry, stud. I'm *always* good."

Patty and Mo

Mo flopped back on the bed and let out a long, suffering groan. “I just want to sleep for the next twenty-nine hours.”

“Why twenty-nine?” Patty asked as she tossed a t-shirt at her wife. “You need to get out of those scrubs. And take that duvet off the bed so we can wash it.”

“Can’t move. Too tired.”

“You have to move. You need to shower and get ready for your call with Hunter and Cass.”

Mo groaned again. “I’ve seen enough of Hunter to last me a lifetime, mama. I swear, when she said she was leaving trauma and opening a clinic, I thought following her would mean a cakewalk.”

“That was your first mistake, sugar. You’ve known Hunter long enough to know that wherever she goes, stress follows.” Patty sat next to Mo and patted her leg. “Hunter didn’t cause this pandemic, sugar. You focusing your exhausted anger on her isn’t fair.”

“I know,” Mo sighed. “It’s just weird having her as my actual boss. I mean, at the hospital, she was a superior, but she could flat out fire me now. And tell me what to do. Or what not to do. It’s not a good best friend dynamic.”

“You’re tired, and you’re making this much harder than it needs to be, Mo. Hunter is Hunter. She never carries over her duties as your ‘boss’ into your friendship. Why are you?”

“I’m a dumbass?” Mo responded self-deprecatingly. “I don’t know why she drives me crazy sometimes.”

“Maybe because you constantly put yourself in competition with her,” Patty answered carefully. She knew this was a touchy subject for Mo. Ever since they were teenagers and Hunter grew up tall, slender, and beautiful, Mo began to think she never measured up. She wasn’t tall, or thin, or even what you would call classically beautiful. Though, to Patty, she was perfect. Well, maybe not perfect. Mo could be crude, rude, and socially inept. But God help her, Patty loved all of Mo’s imperfections.

“See? Even you think I don’t live up to Hunter’s awesomeness.”

“Oh, pssh, child! Don’t you dare turn your insecurities around on me! I won’t allow it.” Patty stood and put her hands on her hips. No one in their right mind would challenge a woman like Patty. No one ever accused Mo of being in her right mind.

Mo sat up and rubbed her face roughly. “You just said. . .!”

“What I *said* was *you* put yourself in competition with her. Damn of it is, *you’re the only one who does that!*” Patty scolded harshly. “Why on earth do you think I married you?”

Mo opened her mouth to give a flippant answer, but nothing came out. Nothing came to mind. “I — I don’t know. You’re bopping me on the back of the head most of the time because of my dumb antics.”

Exasperated, Patty threw her hands up in the air. “You can be the most pigheaded, knucklehead there ever was. But you’re *my* pigheaded knucklehead! When we first met, I didn’t think we would be compatible. You were so wild and I . . . well, I thought I had already sowed my oats.”

“You know, you’re not that much older than I am,” Mo said softly.

Patty sat down beside her wife and sighed. “When it came to relationships, I was, sugar. I had been hurt so badly by those I thought loved me. I was convinced that I would end up alone, and at the time, I was fine with that. Mo, it was your stubbornness that got me to open my heart to you. Yes, it annoys the hell out of me sometimes. But you wouldn’t be you without it. And I wouldn’t love you if you were any different than you are.”

“And the bopping?”

“Love taps,” Patty grinned. “I have to keep you in line somehow.”

Mo snickered. “I guess so.” She glanced over at Patty. “Why me, Patty? You could have anyone you wanted. Why did you settle for me?”

“I didn’t *settle* for you, Mo. I fell for you. You’re different than the others. You challenge me. You keep me on my toes. You keep me feeling young. I fell in love with your unique way of courting me.”

Mo laughed. “I texted, called, and emailed you like every five minutes asking you out.”

Patty nodded. “You sure did. And you brought me flowers, chocolates, and little gifts. You weren’t afraid of looking silly or desperate.”

“I *was* desperate! Desperately in love with you!” Mo shook her head with a smile. “You made me work hard for a yes!”

“I needed to know your wild butt was serious because I wasn’t about to go through another heartache. Mo, sugar, neither one of us is perfect. But maybe we’re perfect for each other.”

Mo took Patty’s hand. “I think we are. I’m a little confused about how we got from me sleeping for twenty-nine hours to this, though.”

“Like all of our conversations, my dear, we take detours. Now, I have to shower before getting on my call with the ladies. Are you going to hang with Hunter and Cass? Or should I tell Ellie you’re too exhausted?”

“Would you really make excuses for me?” Mo asked sweetly, batting her eyes.

“Oh, child, don’t ever do that again! You can’t pull off the innocent look. And, yes, I would make excuses for you. Now you answer my question.”

Mo blew out a breath. “Yeah, I’m going to *hang* with Hunter and Cass. Kinda lame, though, because we can’t play cards or nothing.” She thought about that for a minute. “Which means they can’t take my money. Heh! I may like this Zoom whatever a lot better than poker night.”

Patty pursed her lips to keep from laughing. “Me, too. I get tired of hot dogs when you lose.” Patty leaned over and kissed Mo on the cheek. “Shower time.”

Mo swung her short legs back and forth as she thought about everything Patty had said to her tonight. She smiled as she replayed each word. When she got to the end of their conversation in her head, Mo’s eyes widened.

“Shower time.”

Mo jumped up like the bed was on fire and began stripping down. “Wait for me!”

The Ladies

Ellie logged into her scheduled Zoom meeting and waited for the others. She popped a grape in her mouth and smiled. Hunter had grumbled playfully when Ellie supplied her with “healthy” snacks for her meeting. Hunter let Ellie know *many* times while she was preparing the snacks that the poker games Hunter was used to during girls’ night had all the “good” stuff. Salty chips, savory dip, peanuts, and whatever else they could find that was bad enough to clog an artery or two. It wasn’t until Hunter tasted one of the veggie dips Ellie had made that Hunter happily took off with her snacks in hand.

“You’re already smiling, and we haven’t even started yet.”

Ellie looked up at her iPad and saw Blaise settling in. “Hey, sweets.”

“Hey, yourself, babe. I can’t believe I’m the first one here. So, why the smile?”

“I can hardly believe it myself. It’s almost as though you thought I’d have red velvet cake waiting for you.”

Blaise’s head snapped up, and she looked closer at the computer. “Do you?”

Ellie laughed. “No, silly. Did you think I would email it to you?”

“Well, as my best friend, you’d *think* you’d find a way to get me what I crave the most in this world.” Blaise rolled her eyes dramatically as she poured herself a glass of wine.

“You are a nut. I will bring you some red velvet soon. I promise. And I was smiling because I was thinking of Hunter.”

Blaise took a sip of her wine. “You two are disgustingly cute,” she said after she swallowed.

Patty's smiling face popped up on the screen. "Who's disgustingly cute?"

"Hey, mama Patty! And, guess. You know it isn't Greyson and me."

"Oh, I don't know. You two are pretty cute when you're bickering," Patty grinned and turned her attention to Ellie. "Hello, child. I'm guessing you and Hunter are giving Blaise a cavity again."

"Hey, mama. If Blaise is getting a cavity, that's totally on her and her weakness for sweets."

"Sweets?" Lainey adjusted her camera until she was centered perfectly in the frame. "Who has sweets? Hello, ladies."

Ellie, Blaise, and Patty all greeted Lainey enthusiastically.

"I have grapes and cheese, Blaise has wine, and Patty?"

Patty held up a bowl. "Cereal."

"You know," Lainey said with a chuckle. "These get-togethers were much more appetizing when Ellie was cooking for everyone."

"You ain't lyin'," Blaise muttered. "By the way, I'm hungry now."

"Are you Grubhubbing?" Ellie asked when she saw Blaise on her phone.

"Heh, kind of. I'm texting my hubby to bring me some grubby." Blaise snorted with laughter and muttered "hubby grubby" again. "Who are we missing?"

"Rebecca," Ellie answered. "And Eve?"

"Oh, um," Lainey cleared her throat. "Eve decided to spend time with the kids tonight. She sends her love and apologies."

“Whose apologies am I missing?” Rebecca asked. She gingerly sat down in her chair in front of the computer.

“Eve’s,” Blaise answered, raising her glass in salute to Rebecca. “Apparently, her kids are more important than us.”

Lainey laughed. “While you’re all very important to Eve, she does love our kids more. I know it’s taboo to say, but there you have it.”

“It couldn’t *also* be that she’s one of the most introverted people I’ve ever met, could it?” Rebecca laughed. She adjusted her position and immediately regretted it. “Damn it.”

“Well, there’s that, too,” Lainey acknowledged.

“Are you alright, Rebecca?” Ellie asked with concern. “You look like you’re in pain.”

“I agree, child,” Patty said with authority. “You look tired, too. Do you have a fever? A loss of taste? Trouble breathing?”

Rebecca chuckled. “I don’t have COVID, mama Patty.”

“You can’t be too careful. Come to the clinic, and we’ll test you.”

Ellie leaned in and scrutinized Rebecca. “Do I need to get Hunter to go over there?”

“Stop! I’m *not* sick!”

“I don’t know, Rebecca,” Blaise piped up. “You do look pretty ragged.”

“I hate to agree,” Lainey said softly. “But, they’re right.”

“Oh my god, girls. I’m *not* sick! I’m exhausted! Cassidy is convinced that *quarantine* is Italian for marathon sex. She’s fucked me so thoroughly that I’m walking funny. I had to lie to her earlier when she asked why I was limping by telling her I tripped!”

There was a moment of silence before everyone erupted in laughter. Rebecca saluted them all with double middle fingers.

“Tripped over your age,” Ellie snorted, then laughed even harder. She took out her phone and began texting.

“You better not be telling Hunter!” Rebecca warned.

“I would never! I’m telling Jessie. It’ll make her sorry she blew this off to *study*.”

“Oh, god.” Lainey covered her mouth, trying to control the laughter. “We’re sorry, Rebecca. We don’t mean to laugh at you.”

“Speak for yourself!” Blaise guffawed.

“You, too, Patty? I thought at least *you* would have sympathy for me!” Rebecca whined.

“Child, you two met at a sex club! What did you think she’d be like during a lock-down?”

Rebecca sighed. “You’re saying this is all my fault?” A resounding yes filled Rebecca’s earbuds. “I hate you all.”

“You love us,” Ellie responded. “Why don’t you just tell Cass you need a break?”

“And let her think my age is catching up to me? Hell, no. I just need to find a way to keep Cassidy on the receiving end more often. Ladies, the whips and chains are coming out.”

Greyson stopped abruptly in his tracks. The bag of chips he was carrying fell loudly to the floor. “Uh, I —”

Blaise was laughing so hard she nearly fell out of her chair. “You weren’t supposed to hear that, stud. Bring me my food, please. Then go away. The good stuff is just about to begin.”

Without a word, Greyson bent to pick up the chips and handed them and the sandwich he had made over to his wife. He forced himself to look at the monitor, at each of the women on the screen, and smile. “Ladies.”

“Hi, Greyson!” They all sang out in unison. Each put on an innocent smile as he studied them.

“Right. I’ll, uh, just be going.” Greyson kissed Blaise on the cheek. “*We’ll be discussing this later,*” he whispered. With a short wave, Greyson closed the door behind him.

“You just got me in trouble.” Blaise shook her head. “Ugh, the things I’m going to have to do to him to convince him,” she muttered to herself.

“What are you on about, child?”

“Greyson wanted to know what happened during girls’ night. So, I kind of told him that you all try to recruit me. By, um, doing naughty things.”

“Blaise Olivia Francesca Knight-Steele!” Ellie scolded.

“Ooo, you got mothered!” Lainey teased.

“I was kidding! Plus, he deserved it for suggesting we have another kid.”

Ellie sat up. “He what? Does he not remember how traumatized you were with Ezra?”

Blaise sighed. “I should know he would never let what happened to Piper happen again.”

“I don’t think that’s the point, babe,” Rebecca said softly. “Whatever you may know that trauma is still there.”

“Agreed,” Lainey chimed in. “Eve and I were just talking about this. She painted this incredible piece today but was unhappy that bit of darkness showed up in her work. I’ll tell you what I told her. That darkness doesn’t just go away. It’ll always be there.”

“That’s very true, child,” Patty agreed. “Trauma has a way of sticking around no matter what we’ve done to fight it.”

“Okay, yeah, I get that,” Blaise admitted. “But do I deny him another child because I can’t get my shit together? I mean, hell, I have Piper being followed by a fucking bodyguard — without her knowledge by the way — while she’s traipsing around Europe. The only way I agreed to let her travel is by giving her a laundry list of demands. Am I going to be like that with Ezra? Or another baby if I decide to have one?”

“Honey,” Ellie soothed. “I call that being a mother. You’re going to worry no matter what. I worry about Jessie every second of every day. It’s worse for you because of what you’ve been through. But I don’t consider that a flaw. You just want to keep your family safe.”

Blaise poured another glass of wine and drank half of it in one big gulp. “On to another subject.” She saw Ellie’s look of disappointment. “Hey, *if* I decide that getting as big as a barn and being miserable for nine months is something I’m willing to do again, we can come back to this topic. Deal?”

“Deal.” They all agreed.

“Ellie, how is Hunter doing during this pandemic?” Lainey asked, changing the subject as Blaise wanted.

“She’s drained,” Ellie said truthfully. “Patty, you and Mo know. I’m surprised you’re not dead on your feet right now, too.”

“Believe me, it takes a lot of coffee,” Patty sighed. “Mo collapsed on the bed when we got home, stating she was going to sleep for twenty-nine hours.”

“Why twenty-nine,” Blaise asked.

Patty shrugged and chuckled. “Because she’s Mo. This thing really did mess up Hunter’s idea of staying away from trauma, though. You sure she’s okay, El?”

Ellie nodded. “As I said, she’s tired. Mentally and physically. And, Rebecca, we have the opposite problem. Hunter apologized to me for not being able to make love more often. I do miss that, but she makes up for it merely by the way she treats me. It doesn’t matter how tired she is, Hunter is always attentive and loving.”

“So, I’m the only one quarantined with a sex fiend?” Rebecca asked dryly. “Lainey? Patty? Blaise? *Someone* please tell me their partner has no concept of social distancing when it comes to their wives’ vaginas.”

More laughter. Though Rebecca did notice Lainey looking away. “Lainey?”

“I plead the fifth,” Lainey responded quickly.

“Uh, nope! That doesn’t fly at girls’ night!” Blaise said with feigned seriousness. “We answer all questions here.”

“Oh?” Lainey said sweetly. “Which one of us did you have the fantasy of recruiting you about?”

Blaise blushed. “I — I didn’t. That was just a joke I told my husband to rile him up.”

“Now, Blaise. We don’t lie to each other, child. Spill the tea,” Patty prodded.

“Yes, please do,” Rebecca goaded. “Even though I know Lainey asked the question to get out of answering one.”

“Okay, guys,” Ellie chided gently. She could see her best friend getting flustered and decided to put a stop to it. Blaise was already having issues with Ellie possibly having more in common with someone else. Ellie knew it wasn’t about her being gay. It was more about Blaise *not* being gay. Sometimes Blaise wondered where she fit into Ellie’s life. “Leave the poor girl alone.”

“No, no.” Blaise cleared her throat. “*I* made the rule. I think. I’ll answer it.” She took a deep breath. “Kiara.”

“Nice,” Rebecca said with respect.

“Can’t blame you there,” Patty concurred.

“She is beautiful,” Lainey acknowledged.

“Excuse me?” Ellie said with a frown. “All these years, I’ve had to put up with you, and you choose *Kiara*?? Rude! *I’m* your best friend! If *anyone* is going to recruit you, it should be me!”

Lainey, Rebecca, and Patty sat silently, eyes wide.

“You’re married. I had to be polite and choose someone who wasn’t attached,” Blaise said with a straight face. “But if you want to give it a whirl. . .”

The two best friends stared at each other for a full minute before they started giggling uncontrollably.

“Did you see their faces?” Ellie said in between the breath-stealing laughter.

“See them? I took a screenshot!” Blaise doubled over, clutching her aching stomach. “Oh my god, I needed that laugh! A few more like that, and I’ll have a six-pack!”

“We hate you,” Lainey said, narrowing her eyes at her so-called friends.

“You love us,” Ellie and Blaise sang together, causing the others to join in the merriment.

“It hurts my vagina to laugh,” Rebecca said after she sucked in a breath. Which only caused more laughter.

“Eve is going to be sorry she missed this,” Lainey struggled to get out.

“I wonder if our wives are having the same fun.” Patty pondered as she dried her eyes.

The SOs (Significant Others)

Cass looked up from her book when Mo let out a loud snore. She was sprawled out on what looked to Cass like a bed with just sheets. Cass glanced over at Hunter's little square on the screen. The doctor was passed plumb out. Her head was at a weird angle, which made Cass wonder for a moment how it was going to feel when Hunter woke up. But then Cass shrugged and went back to her book. Both Hunter and Mo missed the opportunity to tease Cass about her choice of literature.

The Art of Lesbian Kama-Sutra. Cass's eyes widened, and she turned the book sideways. "How is that even possible?" she muttered, then smiled. "I bet Rebecca could do this."

... Pray for Rebecca's vagina