



BURN
BUTTERFLY

BURN

REESE RIVERS

Reese Rivers Presents

Burn

Butterfly

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Burn Butterfly Burn

Ebook Edition

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JUDE

Tate, Beck, and I are hanging out in the living room when the front door crashes open with a loud bang causing all three of us to jump to our feet. Ash barges in with a furious expression dragging with him, of all people, Savy's sister by the arm.

He shoves her towards us and rages out, "Your girl is a fucking liar! She's been lying to us all along!"

I roll my eyes at his dramatics, a grin tugging at my lips, already knowing what this is about. Somehow, he's finally figured out that Savy's his Butterfly and he's about to have a Charlie Sheen level meltdown.

"Pathetic little bookworm is actually the fucking Butterfly! She's been conning me for two fucking years!" He rages at us.

I shrug one shoulder and let my grin spread causing Ash to roar and lunge at me.

"You... you fucking knew?"

I bark a laugh as Tate and Beck pull him away from me. "I fucking told you to look harder, you blind dumbass!"

"Wait, Savy? Savy's the Butterfly?" Tate asks incredulously.

"Did NOT see that coming," Beck muses with a shocked look.

Ash rocks his head side to side in denial as everything he thought he knew goes up in smoke. I turn to look at the cunt he's dragged into our house and see the calculating look in her eyes as they bounce between us.

"What the fuck is she doing here?" I spit out.

Ash chokes out a bitter laugh. "Oh, it gets so much fucking worse! Her being the Butterfly is just the fucking tip of the iceberg when it comes to her lies." He reaches out and drags her forward. "Tell them! Fucking tell them who she really is!"

Vanessa tosses her hair back and a smug smile crosses her face. "My sister's real name is Savanna Sevan, as in...Sevan Stadium. She's worth billions! She could buy and sell each one of you. Her name is literally on

the stadium you play football in! She's been making fools out of all of you this whole time!"

Whoa...that's...wow, just wow. My doll's loaded? That's...a lot to take in. I'm a little hurt that she didn't share that with me but she must have had a good reason to keep that to herself.

Movement behind the annoying blond has me tilting my head to the side to see past the screeching harpy and I see a white-faced Savy standing there. She's looking smoking hot in red stilettos, a black micro-mini, a sheer red crop top that shows a black bra underneath, and dark smoky made-up eyes with her hair billowing out around her. The long puffy jacket she must have thrown on over her Butterfly outfit is gaping open, showing me everything. She looks fucking bombing and I would love to see her dressed like that every day. The sister catches my look and spins around.

"There you are, sister! I was just letting your fuck-boys in on your little scam. I thought it was only fair to tell them that you're an heiress to billions and that you've been playing them all along."

Savy jerks her head as her mouth drops open to speak but her sister turns back to us and plows on viciously before she can say a word.

"She's not who she pretends to be! It's all a game to her. Savy acts like this lonely little nerd to suck guys in so she can play her sick and twisted games with them. She's done this before with other guys. She even managed to convince Hunter that she was a virgin! She's a slutty whore who will fuck anyone to satisfy her sick mind."

"No! I've never..." Savy tries to get out.

"She's an embarrassment to our family. She has mental issues. That's why we make her use her mother's maiden name. There were even rumors that she had something to do with her dad's accident!"

Savy goes paler as she sucks in a shocked breath at such a cruel thing for her sister to say. I'm just about done with this bullshit. I can see how bad the vile words are hurting my doll and I'm a step from dragging this bitch out by her hair when Savy speaks in a broken whisper.

"No, no, no, none of that..."

"She's a fucking fake! Everything about my sister is a fake and you are all fools for falling for it!" Vanessa screeches over Savy's words.

That breaks Ash's control causing him to take a menacing step toward her and roar, "Yes, she is! You are a fucking fake. Two fucking years you've been conning me! Everything that comes out of your mouth is a lie."

Savy shakes her head violently and her eyes look to Tate but he's just

shaking his head with a look of disgust. Beck stares back at her with dead, flat eyes like he's daring her to try and deny what the sister is saying. A small trickle of doubt moves through me. I don't care about her dancing and as far as her last name goes, so what, but it's the other things, the fucking around with other guys, and playing twisted games that has me feeling a touch uncertain. So when her hurt, panic-filled eyes land on me, I can't help myself. I need to hear her deny it.

"You been playing me, doll?"

As soon as I ask that, I know I've fucked up. I should have believed in her, believed in us, because I see my baby doll shatter at my lack of faith in her. Like a switch goes off inside of her, everything that makes her my doll drains away until she's just an empty shell in front of us. Her hands drop to her sides limply, her whole body droops, her eyes - fuck me... her beautiful blue eyes go flat, empty, and lifeless. They move sluggishly to look at each one of us and then she slowly turns away and starts walking toward the front door. With one stupid fucking question, I wiped out everything she felt for me, for all of us.

Vanessa laughs loudly and gets in her final parting shot at her back.

"Oh, Savanna, I almost forgot...Happy Fucking Birthday!"

My eyes bug out at how much worse this really is when I hear that. It's her birthday, it's her fucking birthday and I remember Beck telling us that her dad died in that accident on her birthday. She stumbles in her heels and presses a hand to the wall to keep herself upright, sliding against it the rest of the way to the door like she can barely hold herself up from the pain we've inflicted on her and that's when I lose my everlasting shit and scream her name. I try to shove past Ash and Tate to go to her, to scoop her up and fix what we've broken but they grab me and hold me back.

"Just let her fucking go! She made her bed with all her lies," Ash spits out. My elbow comes up and clocks him in the face causing him to let me go and fall back with a grunt. Tate's easy to shake off after that and I run to the front door to try to salvage this clusterfuck. My chest is heaving as I scream her name into the falling snow when I see the red tail lights flash as a car turns the corner off our street and I know she's in it.

"FUUUUUUCK!"

Tears gather in the corner of my eyes and I try to blame the cold wind and snow whirling around me but I know it's because of the pain we caused her.

I whip around baring my teeth as fury takes over, needing to lash out and make someone pay for what we've done to her and race back into the house. The three of them are arguing with each other over what they just

learned while the object of my fury stands there with a self-satisfied smile on her face. I head right for her and love how her eyes go big and scared when she catches sight of my expression. She tries to back away from me but there's nowhere for her to go as I close in on her. My tatted fingers curl and grip her blond hair and I wrench her head down as I drag her over to the kitchen island and slam the side of her face to it.

"Jude! What the fuck are you doing?"

"Let her go, man. You don't want to do this!"

Even to my ears, my laugh sounds maniacal. "Oh, but I really, really do!" I call back over the girl's screams. I reach over the counter to the knife block and pull a fillet knife and bring it to her neck. Everyone shuts the fuck up at that move.

"Sick and twisted games. That's what you said she plays, right? Well, let's play our own game. We'll start with a twisted fact so you know just how serious I am right now. Ready? Listen closely...it only takes a pen of pigs eight minutes to strip and eat a human body leaving no trace behind. The body will never be found...get it?"

She makes a mewling whine full of fear but tries to nod her head that I'm pressing to the counter.

"Fucking *Christ*, Jude!"

"He's fucking lost it!"

And then Ash, "She's not worth it, brother. Savy's not worth destroying your life over."

I turn my head to meet his eyes and growl, "Wrong...fucking...answer."

Back to the game. "You get to say yes or no. That's it and if I think you're lying, I cut. Each time you lie, I cut deeper, got it?"

She gasps, "Yes," as her tears pour onto the counter.

"Question one, was she a virgin when she slept with Hunter?"

The bitch whines like she doesn't want to answer so I press the blade a little harder. Not enough to cut yet but enough to let her know it's coming if she doesn't play by my rules.

She finally screams, "Yes!" so I nod and move on.

"Question two - Does Savy play sick and twisted games with men like you claimed?"

She's faster this time like she knows the jig is up. "Argg, no, no!"

I press her head harder into the counter. "Are you sure? You can elaborate on that."

"No! She's a loser. No man would even talk to her or look at her until you guys! The only reason Hunter fucked her was because his frat has a sex bingo contest and he picked her to fill his fuck-a-virgin square."

“Ah...fuck.” I hear Tate swear softly when he finally gets how bad we fucked up by not believing in her.

“Question three - Why does Savy use her mother’s maiden name instead of her dad’s?”

The question has her spitting in annoyance. “Because she wants to be... normal! She doesn’t want anyone to treat her like an heiress.”

“Next question - Did you put strawberries in her drink that night to make her sick?”

The answer is quick and adamant. “NO! No, I didn’t do it. I don’t know how that happened!”

I want to cut this bitch so bad and see her blood wash all over my fingers but I actually do believe her so I lift the knife enough to yank her upright and then put it back against her throat.

“Last question - Why do you hate her so much?”

I’ll give this cunt props for the anger and attitude that suffuses her face even with me holding a knife to her throat when she spits out, “Because she has EVERYTHING! She has the money, she has the fucking name I never got and she has the power that goes with it. She does NOTHING with it! It should be fucking mine! All of it should be mine.”

I drop the knife away from her and nod at this pathetic excuse for a woman and toss the knife on the counter.

“I guess I do have one more question. Hmm, maybe a few more. Who pays for everything you have?” She makes a face telling me Savy does but refuses to answer so I keep going.

“Today’s her twenty-first birthday, right? Does that mean she comes into her inheritance today?”

That gets me a petulant shrug making me chuckle darkly 'cause she just doesn’t get how fucked she is. So, I spell it out.

“Final, final question. After what you just did to Savy, what do you think she’s going to do to you now that she has full control over the purse strings?”

It takes her a beat but when she realizes the ramifications of what she’s done to the wrong fucking person, she goes so red in the face that she almost turns burgundy. Her eyes are wide and filled with rage as they dart around the room like she’s looking for a way to slam that genie back into the bottle and it makes me laugh darkly again.

I turn my back on her and wave at Beck, “Get that cunt out of my house.”

ASHER

I pace back and forth through the kitchen as Beck hauls out the trash and Tate sits on the couch with his head in his hands. Jude grabs his phone and presses it to his ear mumbling, “Come on, doll, pick up.” He punches the red button when she doesn’t and goes to call her again. Fuck him. So she wasn’t conning them but she sure as hell conned me and she lied about a hell of a lot more than that. Savy doesn’t get a free fucking pass for any of that.

“Just let it go, Jude! She fucking played me and lied to all of us. Why are you still sniffing after her like a dog in heat?”

He bangs his cell against his forehead and roars through gritted teeth.

“Fuck you, Ash! You got your head so far up your own ass you can’t see straight. Tell me... fucking tell me how she played you? Savy danced in a bar and you caught sight of her and became obsessed. She didn’t make you that way. She didn’t make you any promises, did she? No, she didn’t say one goddamn word to you in two fucking years! You think because you watched her like that she owed you something?”

He tears at his hair and tries to call her again but doesn’t get through so keeps ranting.

“You know why she danced in that cage, behind that mask? It’s because she wanted to BE that woman but she was too afraid to be her in real life. She told me...” He barks out a crazed laugh. “She told me that you were the first man to SEE her, to look at her like she was something. She said you made her feel fucking...WORTHY! Argg! She was so fucking wrong. Savy’s always been worthy. You’re the one who isn’t worthy of her.”

He stabs a finger into my chest causing me to step back.

“When she met you here in real life, she was terrified of telling you because she knew you’d be furious that she wasn’t the girl in the cage. She knew you would punish her for it. Why should she have told you when she didn’t fucking trust you?”

I want to argue with him but he shoots me a dark look and asks, “Did you tell your Butterfly who you really are? Did you tell her where we come from? The shit we’ve done over the years? Didn’t you owe her the truth? No? So why the fuck are you entitled to know her secrets, then?”

He turns away from me as his thumbs fly over the keyboard sending text after text and I go to the window and look out at the falling snow. I think back and remember the first time she came here. I answered the door and she almost had a seizure when she saw me. She could barely look at me after that until the night of the blizzard.

I remember now, I remember what a dick I was to her, telling her that we didn’t need to deal with her being triggered by the storm. It was after that that she stopped being nervous around me and now I realize it was that moment that Savy threw up a wall to keep me out. She stopped caring, so my being a dick didn’t phase her anymore.

My eyes crash closed as I remember that moment we had in the kitchen when I saw her tattoo for the first time. She said, fuck... she said it was supposed to remind her that she could be something, something she wasn’t. It was supposed to mean that if she was brave enough, she could fly. And then she cried. I held her as she cried and I just thought it was PMS but she was trying to tell me her story in her own scared way. I took her up and put her to bed and she said how sorry she was and now I know that had nothing to do with being in my space. Savy was trying to tell me how sorry she was that she wasn’t brave enough to tell me the truth.

Tate breaks me from my thoughts.

“That’s how she got my dad to back off. It has to be. She used her name and probably some threats that the kind of name like Sevan could follow through on. She told him her real name to try and protect me. Even though she tries to hide it from the world. Why the fuck did she want it hidden? Why wouldn’t she tell us?”

Beck shakes his head and then knocks it back against the wall he’s leaning on.

“Didn’t you hear that bitch? Savy just wanted to be normal. Think about the weight that that kind of name and fortune comes with. If people here knew, she would have been under a microscope constantly and they all would judge everything she did.”

Tate throws his hands up in the air in frustration. “Fine! But why work two jobs? It’s not like she needed the fucking money with billions in the bank. Fuck, she didn’t need to stay here after her place blew up. She could have just bought a fucking building to move into!”

Jude throws his phone down in anger. “Are you that fucking stupid? She

doesn't CARE about the money! She didn't care about our pro salary and bonus and she doesn't care about the billions her dad left her. She's got plastic Target dressers in her room for fuck sakes. All my doll cared about was having someone see her, care about her. She just wanted something real. And she...won't...answer...my...calls! FUCK!" He looks frantically between all of us. "One of you try, call her, text her!"

Tate shakes his head. "If Savy was going to answer for any of us, it would be you, Jude."

I turn away again not sure I want her to answer any of us. Just because Jude reasoned it out, doesn't mean I don't feel like I've been betrayed by her, lied to.

"Where is she? Where would she go? All her stuff's here," Jude mumbles as he tries her phone again.

After two years of only wanting one woman, I finally chose. I fucking picked Savy and it all fell apart. That reminds me of the charm bracelet of tiny books that I left on the table in the club so I scrub at my face, then throw him a lifeline.

"She was still wearing her Butter...her club clothes. She probably went back there."

His head jerks up from his phone and starts nodding quickly. "Yes! Okay, okay, Beck, I need you to drive me to the club!"

As one, we all start moving to the door but Jude throws an arm out blocking me from following. "No, not you. You don't get to go anywhere near my doll. You threw fuel all over my girl and lit the fucking match. You can stay right fucking here and burn for it."

"Jude..."

He cuts me off with a snarl. "Shut your hole! You're fucking done, Ash."

Tate and Beck look back at me with cautious expressions as they all gear up in jackets and then my three best friends, my family, leave me alone with the weight of what I've just done.

I stand there long after the front door slams closed trying to justify why all this is hers and not my fault but the longer I think about it the harder it gets. I finally move to the stairs and climb them, stopping at her open door. I take in the blue bed the color of her eyes, piled high with pillows, and breathe deeply of her peaches and cream smell. I let my fingers clench around the door jam. She did this, she had no right to... An image of her sad, wet blue eyes slides into place as she gripped my wrist and said, "Ash...I'm sorry, I'm so sorry."

I see her in her cage dancing for me. How her eyes always met mine.

Not the sensual, sexual looks but the times her eyes were full of something else, something nameless. The times when I was having a shit day and her eyes said, 'it's okay, I see you, I'm here for you.' The two women, the Butterfly and Savy merge into one and it makes me realize that Savy's given me way more than I've ever given her and she never asked for anything back. The only thing Savy ever took from me was my eyes watching her and I gave those to her willingly.

"Fuck!"

BECKETT

I drive my truck through the snow to Masks as Jude continues to pound away on his phone trying to reach her. I'm so pissed at myself right now. I knew what a cunt that sister of hers was but I still let her pour her poison all over what I have with Savy. When she said that Savy was playing us and then when Ash seemed to confirm it, I just accepted it. I didn't even give her the benefit of a doubt.

The first thought that went through my head was that of course she would betray me, quickly followed by the toxic thought that she was just like my mom. It makes me realize that I've never let myself get close to a woman because I assume they would leave me. I can't let myself go through that again. My mother chose death over me and I've never let any woman close enough to feel that kind of pain again. I guess I'm fucked up more than I thought I was and Savy just paid the price for it.

Everything Jude said was true. She didn't owe us anything. Savy has a right to her secrets just like anyone else. She never expected me to tell her anything, she just accepted me for who I am and then tried to help me when she saw how much I was struggling with my future. But at the first sign of conflict, I automatically thought the worst of her. Fuck, she deserves better than me, than us. We've been careless with her from the very start. Making her feel like she wasn't enough to be worth pursuing. Savy gave all of us a second chance after we fucked up the last time but the sick feeling in the pit of my stomach tells me that we probably won't get a third chance.

"Pull up at the doors. Fuck finding a parking spot," Jude tells me and a quick glance over at him shows me just how tightly wound he is.

If Savy doesn't forgive us, if we lose her, Jude's going to go off the rails. I've never seen him like this for anyone before, let alone a woman. As soon as I pull up and throw the truck in park, he's out of the door with Tate quickly on his heels. I wait one moment and decide, fuck it, I'll eat

the ticket. I shut it down and jump out quickly catching up to the others who are being blocked by Marco, the massive front door bouncer.

I've got a good foot of height on him but he probably has an extra fifty pounds of muscle on me. I might be able to take him in my current frame of mind but I've seen this guy fight and it's fucking dirty.

"There's nothing I can do, man. Stella says ban them, we ban them," he's telling Jude who starts tearing at his hair again.

"Urgh! I just need to talk to Savy, Marco! She works here as the Butterfly." Jude begs, causing Marco to cross his huge arms over his chest and glower at him.

"I know who Savy is, you dick. I don't know what the fuck you guys did to her but she was a wreck when Stella took her out of here."

"She's not here? Do you know where they went?" Jude whips out his wallet and pulls out all the cash in it and holds it out to the bouncer. "Please, man! I need to find her. I need to fucking fix this!"

Marco plucks the wad of cash from Jude's fingers with a huff of laughter.

"Good fucking luck with that. I heard Stella tell the driver to take them to the airport. She's fucking gone, asshole. You're too late. Now fuck off."

Jude bellows and lunges for him but Tate and I get a hold of him and drag him back to the truck. We wrestle him inside of it and climb in. I'm so fucking mad at myself, so damn scared that we broke her to the point that we won't be able to fix this. I ignore Jude as he rants at me for not taking him to the airport as I drive us home. Marco's right, we're too late. When I pull into the driveway and shut the truck off, I finally turn to Jude in the back seat.

"There's nothing we can do right now. We're all getting on a plane tomorrow for the bowl game. We're just going to have to ride this out until she comes back after the holidays. Jude, you have to shut it off for now. You and Tate need to focus on the game. Your whole futures depend on how you play in the next game and then Nationals when you fucking win. We will fix this thing with Savy when she comes back to school. You know we will! Think about how upset she'll be then if she's the reason why you fucked your whole future up. Lock it down, the both of you. Pour everything you're feeling into the game and win. Win for her."

Tate scowls but nods his understanding so I turn back to Jude. His eyes are closed but when he opens them it's a scary motherfucker looking back at me as he gives a curt nod and then slams out of the truck. Tate and I share a concerned look but there's not a lot we can do until Savy comes back to school so we follow our brother into the house.

TATE

We pull up to the house fresh off the plane from winning our bowl game. I'd like to say we're on a high of celebration but all of it is tainted by everything that's unresolved with our girl. Jude hasn't stopped blowing up her phone since that night but all his messages are showing delivered and not read. Same with mine and Beck's. I don't know if Ash has even tried reaching out to her. There's a major rift between him and Jude right now over it all so Beck and I are just trying to stay out of the line of fire.

We go up the front walk and are met by stacks of Amazon boxes and bags blocking the door. I was expecting some deliveries but not this many.

"Fuck, how many books did I order?" I muse, worried that I may have put in duplicate orders by mistake. Jude shoots me a look.

"You ordered books? For Savy?" At my nod, he rolls his eyes. "Well, so did I. I ordered everything on her kindle in paperback to replace the ones she lost in the fire."

I smirk at that knowing those faerie porn books will be read by him just as much as by Savy.

"I ordered all her favorite literary classics. All her copies were filled with little colored flags where she highlighted stuff. I thought we could go through them together and make new ones."

We both turn to Beck and he just shrugs. "I ordered her a bunch of fleecy clothes with cartoons on them and smelly candles. You know how she likes to be comfy and warm."

Ash grunts in annoyance and reaches past the stacks to unlock the door and then shoves a bunch of boxes into the house to make a path. I shoot a quick look at Jude and see the dark look in his eyes as his childhood friend disappears inside.

"Come on, let's carry this stuff up to her room. We should go buy some bookshelves and set them up so when she comes home it'll be all ready for her. It'll be a nice surprise."

Jude hums his agreement and some of the darkness leaves his expression. The three of us grab an arm full of boxes each and trudge up the stairs but Jude stops dead in her doorway and makes a noise like someone just stabbed him in the guts. I push him further into the room and everything inside of me just sinks. It's all gone. She's all gone. The only thing left in the room is the bare mattress and right in the middle of it is a key attached to a pink plastic butterfly. I drop the boxes and turn to grab Jude by the shoulders. He looks fucking wrecked.

"It doesn't matter. It's just temporary. We'll get her back. When she comes back to school we'll find out where she's moved to and we'll get her back. This isn't over, Jude. We're not going to fucking give up."

He nods slowly, sets the boxes down, and leaves the room with a crushed expression. My eyes meet Beck's and it's there that I see all the doubts I'm feeling but won't voice. Fuck, this might actually be over.

JUDE

[← Messages](#)

Savy

[Details](#)

Good morning, beautiful. Today is the best day ever. It's even better than the day we won Nationals because today classes start and that means you're here. I'm going to find you, doll. I'm going to find you and make you listen. You're mine Savy and I'm not going to let you go. xoxo

Don't do this baby! The office says you withdrew, that you're not enrolled here anymore. Savy, that's not going to stop me. I'm not giving up on us. I don't care where you are. I don't care how long it takes. You're mine, doll, don't ever forget that. Xoxo

2 months later

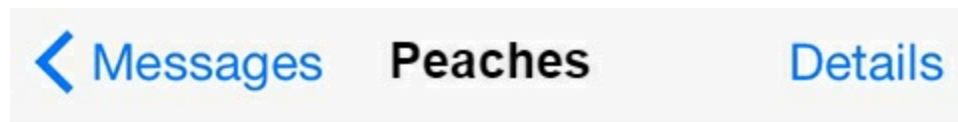
< Messages

Savy

Details

I wish you were here with me today. It's draft day. You're all I thought about when I got the call. All I wanted was to pull you into my arms and hold you. I promise you, baby, I'm not giving up. You're end game for me, doll. That's never going to change. Goodnight, angel. I hope you dream of me as I dream of you. Xoxo

BECKETT



I can't feel anything anymore. You're gone and now Jude and Tate are leaving too. Everyone always leaves. I just want to feel something again. I don't want to be alone.

I fumble the phone with alcohol-numbed fingers and cock my head to watch it fall to the floor before draining the last of the cheap whiskey from the bottle and then drop it too. It takes me a few minutes as my head spins to finally bend over to try to pick up my phone but I end up stumbling right into some chick that's passing by. She grabs a hold of me and pushes me back up against the wall to keep me upright with a laugh.

“Dude! You are so fucking wrecked. A big guy like you could flatten a girl like me. Are you a football player here?” She asks me with a little bit of a slur in her tone as she sways in front of me. I narrow my eyes a bit to see her through the whiskey haze and know right away she's not a sorority girl that I know. Her cheap clothes don't fit and she's got a large rose tattoo on full display between her large breasts spilling out of her low-cut

top.

I swallow past the shitty taste in my mouth and say, “Football, yeah, was going to be a star. You don’t go here?”

She leans against the wall beside me but ends up sliding right into me so I anchor an arm around her waist to keep us both up as she giggles.

“Nope, no college for me but some frat guy brought me here after my shift at the club was over.” She runs a hand over my chest and her brows pop up at what she feels. “I was gonna fuck him for the free booze but he’s scrawny compared to you. You wanna take a ride on me, big boy?”

My head drops back against the wall as the room tilts but I can feel her hands roaming over me and it feels good, better than what I’ve been feeling since my girl left so when she tugs on my arm, I let her lead me to a room and for a little while, even if it’s meaningless, feel something.

When Jude finds me the next morning, I’m naked on some frat house bedroom floor with my wallet and phone stolen. All the numbness I was feeling shifts to guilt and self-loathing for being so fucking weak. It doesn’t matter that she left me or that after two months I know she’s not coming back. It still feels like I just cheated on Savy and I know more than ever now that she deserves better than me.