

UNTITLED

EM

Just my luck. I've lost my group, my fingers are numb, and somehow I'm stuck on a ski lift with Kaia—the girl I've been avoiding for over a year. The silence between us stretches, thick and uncomfortable, as we hover above the snow.

"Hi, Lettie," she says softly.

I let out a breathy laugh. "Haven't heard that name in a while." I used to be Lettie, before I needed new friends—before I became Jules. Lettie was who I was that night, the night with the kiss I don't want to remember.

Kaia tugs at her sleeve, eyes flicking away. "Should I call you Jules?"

"Nah. Doesn't bother me."

The cold presses in, but the silence feels heavier.

"So..." Kaia fidgets with her poles. "What's up?"

"Not much," I say, but she doesn't buy it. Her gloves are blue, too big—the kind you rent. I used to lend her mine.

She clears her throat. "You still write scripts?"

I blink. "You remember that?"

"You made me read three drafts of that play you wrote in year eight."

"Oh God," I mutter, hiding behind my buff. "I forgot all about that."

"I didn't."

The silence softens, warmer somehow. Not warm, obviously—we're dangling in freezing air—but the kind of warmth that fills the space between words, almost enough to say something real.

"Shoot!" Kaia suddenly yells, and I watch her big blue glove tumble into the snow.

"Nice," I tease. "Real smooth."

She groans, shoving her bare hand into her jacket pocket. "Worst day ever."

"Bit dramatic."

"Sorry, forgot I'm sitting next to the queen of chill."

"Shut up."

I sigh and yank off one glove. "Here."

She stares. "Seriously?"



“Don’t make it weird. Just take it.”

She slips it on; it’s too small, her fingers bunching at the ends.

“You still have tiny hands,” she mutters.

“You still have zero spatial awareness.”

She laughs, hard. “Won’t you freeze your hands off?”

“Nah, got a spare pair in my pockets.”

She shoves me playfully. “Damn. And here I thought you were being selfless.”

I pull on my spare gloves while Kaia watches, eyes a little too intense.

“Hey, Lettie?”

“Mmm?”

“Can I ask you something?”

“You just did.”

“Come on!”

I laugh.

“So... did you really mean it, that night at Zara’s?”

My heart stutters. That party. The kiss. Her running out before I could explain.

“Yeah,” I whisper, voice nearly lost in the wind. “I meant it.”

She blinks, surprised but silent.

“I’ve thought about it every day since.”

A half-smile tugs at my lips, but my eyes stay guarded.

“I’m sorry for running off.”

“I was scared,” she says quietly, eyes on the distant peaks. “Didn’t know what I was. Or what I wanted.”

I lean back, exhaling a breath I didn’t realize I’d been holding.

“So, what about now? Do you know?”

She smiles, leaning in closer. “Yeah. I think I do.”

For the first time, I believe her.

