

In Deep Bonus Chapter

By Callie Harper

Chase

Dots of white, puffy clouds drifted in the bright blue sky. The morning rose clear and beautiful on Naugatuck, promising that this Fourth of July would be perfection. Emma and I had flown up from Florida a few days ago, spent a little time with my mother and now we were out at my father's unused vacation house for Liam's famous—or infamous—annual party.

The windows in my bedroom overlooked the ocean, and today it reflected the same cheerful color as the sky, smooth and soothing. Looking at it now, you'd never know the water could become a mortal enemy, the force of a hundred men in one swoop of a wave. For a long time after the accident, the ocean seemed to taunt me, forever reminding me of how it had almost caught me forever in its clutches.

Now? Meh. I shrugged my shoulders, just a bit so I wouldn't wake Emma, lying peacefully still asleep by my side. I didn't take it personal anymore. It wasn't as if the ocean had a thing against me. I had just been in the wrong place at the wrong time, a stupid kid out with his stupid friends tempting fate. Fate was a bitch, and it didn't like getting poked.

I never thought I'd reach a point in my life where my whole near-death experience wouldn't seem like a big deal. And it wasn't as if I were saying it didn't matter, or it was inconsequential or irrelevant. No doubt, that accident when I was 14 had shaped much of the second half of my life thus far, combining with my already intense inner drive to create a nearly combustible force, propelling me onward, forever onward in pursuit of vindication in the form of Olympic gold.

Emma shifted slightly in her sleep and gave a soft, happy sigh. Both of us were buck naked—just how I liked it—she stroked her hand against my stomach, caressing me even before she awakened. A smile spreading across my face, I leaned down and kissed her on the head. Last summer I'd gone into the games in pursuit of a gold medal. I'd come out of them with something even more precious.

I meant that even though I actually had won gold, multiple times. The feel of standing there up on that podium, the national anthem rising up around me, seeing the tears on my teammates faces, everyone in the stands on their feet, there was nothing like it. And yet all that exhilaration, the heart-pounding adrenaline, the satisfaction in achievement and glory, all that paled in comparison to this moment lying in bed with the woman I truly loved.

What I felt with Emma went deep down into my bones. I was consumed with the need to cherish and protect her, have her by my side and love her the rest of my days. And there was nothing more overwhelming than the feeling that she loved me right back, even though she knew me completely, every Type A, overly-intense inch of me. I'd never felt more humbled and grateful.

“What are you thinking about?” Emma asked, sleepy, drifting her fingers across my chest. Somewhere in my reverie, she must have woken up, but I’d been too lost in thought to realize it.

“You,” I answered simply, working my fingers through her hair.

“Mmm.” She snuggled contentedly against me, purring like a cat. “Funny, I was just thinking about you.”

“Is that right?” I ran my hand along her spine, up, then down to the slight indentation before her gorgeous ass. The woman was so sexy.

“Yeah.” She ran her hand across my chest, tracing my muscles with her fingers. I’d stay in bed all day if she kept doing that. In fact, that wasn’t such a bad idea. “I was thinking how you should start wearing around your gold medals.”

“Oh yeah?” I laughed, surprised. That wasn’t what I’d expected her to say. I didn’t exactly make a habit of wearing my medals around. Emma had insisted we mount them on the wall in a display case, and there they lived for the most part unless I had a signing or speaking engagement with kids. Then, I’d take one out, dust it off and let them see an Olympic gold medal live and in person. That was always pretty fun.

“Definitely,” she continued. “If I’d won a gold medal in the Olympics, I’d make a hat out of it and wear it grocery shopping.”

“No you wouldn’t.” I laughed at the image, knowing modest Emma would do nothing of the sort.

“I might,” she insisted. I gave her a dubious look. “Well, I’d want to,” she grumbled.

“Those are two different things. But I’ll wear my medals for you if you’d like. Around the house. In bed. I’m sure we can find some way to incorporate them.”

Now it was her turn to burst out laughing. But I could feel her pulse race as I trailed my fingers along her side. It had been a year and I still couldn’t believe I got to touch her. She was like a gift every day.

Suddenly, she propped herself up on her elbows, using my body as a surface. “Did I remember to tell Mary about the extended deadline?” she asked, tense.

“Yes,” I reassured her, running my hands along her arms. We’d been flooded with applications for scholarships at the swim center we ran, so we’d decided to extend the deadline.

“So she’s going to update the website and our newsletter?”

“Yes.” Emma was so dedicated and diligent and I loved that about her, but we were on vacation at the moment. And fortunately, we’d hired some great people we could rely on to keep things running in our absence.

“Have I mentioned I’m excited we’re doing this?” She grinned up at me like a kid on Christmas morning.

“Swim for your Life?” I asked, figuring I knew what she meant, but checking anyway. Liam’s Fourth of July party was going to be pretty epic, too. But she nodded yes to the center. “You have mentioned that once or twice,” I teased. I loved seeing the gleam in her eyes and honestly I felt it as well. We’d opened our doors a couple of months ago and already we had wait lists, national press highlighting our programs, and requests to replicate our efforts in other cities. I told them all to give

us a year to get our feet under us, but already I could see this getting big and doing a whole hell of a lot of good.

"I know I say it all the time, but I feel like we're really doing something meaningful. Giving those kids such a healthy outlet for their time out of school and helping them think about their futures."

"You feel that way because you are doing that." I hugged her to my side, knowing without her this dream wouldn't have come to fruition. She'd made it what it was, with a full scholarship administration side as well as a health and wellness blog. Yes, a blog. The kids did a lot of the writing, but she helped coordinate and guide them.

"I was thinking..." and off she went, idea after idea pouring out of her about how to make improvements and what area to expand into next. I stroked her back, a smile on my face as her enthusiasm sparked my own.

After a little while, she sat up abruptly. "Oh my gosh, I've been talking a blue streak! What time is it?" She looked around for a clock. "Do we have to get going soon to Liam's party?"

"Nope," I reassured her, coaxing her back down again to lie against my chest.

"We don't?" I could hear the smile in her voice, feel her limbs relax once again against my own.

"Nope." My hands drifted lazily along her bare skin, enjoying every moment. I was still getting used to this different way of experiencing time. For so many years I'd measured it in fractions of seconds. It had shaped everything, my entire consciousness for over a decade. Everything I'd done had been about shaving time off of those handfuls of seconds in the pool competing in front of the world.

Life was a whole different experience now. Time felt like molasses instead of quicksand, and sometimes I still felt almost disoriented by not rushing. But not with Emma. With Emma, I could let the seconds, minutes and hours stretch out indefinitely.

It felt so right together it was easy to forget we hadn't even been a couple for a full year yet. Last July we'd been dancing around each other, intrigued and attracted but facing barriers between us. I'd resorted to getting her to play games like truth or dare to try to get to know her. That brought up an interesting memory.

"You know," I began, "I seem to recall there's a question that's been hanging over our heads for about a year now."

"What's that?"

"Do you remember, way back when? We were playing truth or dare?"

"Oh my God." She laughed and shook her head, playfully batting my shoulder. "I remember that. You were all about the dare."

"You didn't seem to mind." I could still feel that rush of adrenaline when she'd given in to her own desire and climbed into my lap, kissing me hot and eager. "But back then I asked you a question you couldn't answer."

"What was that?" She looked up and the coy expression on her face told me she remembered exactly what I was talking about.

"I asked you what was your favorite sexual position."

She smiled and blushed. I loved that I could still make her blush, after all we'd done together

“Do you remember what you said?” I pressed.

“I said I didn’t know.” She paused, giving me another flirtatious smile. “Yet.”

“Ah, see? You do remember. And how about what I told you?”

“Oh, something that made me all hot and bothered.”

Yes.” I caressed her smooth skin, wanting to do exactly that all over again. “I told you you’d need a partner who’d be fully committed to the process of figuring it out. Someone who could help you test out all the options to discover the best of all possible answers.”

“You did say that.” She traced her fingers along my chest and shoulders, making me so hard with the lightest touch.

“Well, it’s been a year now.” I stroked along her inner thigh, enjoying the sound of her sucking in her breath. Her bare nipples pebbled and I dipped my head down, unable to resist a taste. So sweet and sensitive in my mouth, I sucked, then blew on her hardened tips.

I looked up into her eyes and the desire I found burning there made me smile. “Do you have an answer for me?”

“See, there’s a problem.” She frowned and shook her head, her hand drifting down to my abs, then lower to my hardened shaft. She traced my length, slowly, making me grow harder still.

“Oh yeah?” My powers of speech were diminishing. All blood was rushing to one place and one place only. It wasn’t my brain.

“I’ve learned a lot over the past year.” She teased my tip, caressing it, tracing the edge of my crown with her light fingertips. Conversation was about to end real soon. The time for banter was just about over. But I let her continue for another moment. “You assumed I’d have only one favorite position.”

“Mmm-hmmm.” My chest rumbled with satisfaction as she wrapped her hand full around my cock. I drew my fingers up her thigh and found her pretty lace panties, nice and wet right where I wanted it. I stroked along her slickness, watching eyes close and her lips part with desire.

Pulling her panties to the side, I thrust two fingers up into her, deep. She tipped her head back and moaned, her hand stilling on my cock. Good as it felt when she was stroking me, I loved distracting her, making her forget about anything and everything except what I was doing to her, the pleasure I was giving her.

“You were saying?” I teased, stroking her slowly, in and out, making sure with each deep thrust in the pad of my thumb hit her exactly where she needed it. She sighed and bucked her hips up into my hand, wanting more, needing it now more than conversation.

“You were telling me there was a problem,” I reminded her, dropping my head again to her breast and tracing a circle around her nipple. “Are you feeling unsatisfied with your options?” I smiled wickedly as I grasped her nipple between my thumb and forefinger and pinched. My fingers up inside her deep, she arched her back off the bed and gasped, twisted, close to orgasm. “I’m waiting for an answer,” I reminded her, stilling my fingers until she gave me what I wanted.

“They’re all... Chase!” she gasped as I withdrew, then rammed my fingers back inside of her slick heat.

“Come on, tell me while I fuck you with my fingers and watch you come.” She flailed on the bed, her hand grasping at the sheets, until I pinned her wrist down, caging her with my body. She wasn’t going anywhere until I had my way.

“Chase,” she groaned, quivering at my touch.”

“You like it when I fuck you from behind.” I slowed down, torturing her with my gentleness.

“Yes,” she groaned.

“And you like it when you ride me.”

“Uh,” she moaned, pushing against me.

“But what’s your favorite?”

“It’s all... she panted, searching for words. “It’s all so good, Chase. All of it!”

“No favorite?” I asked, picking up the pace, thrusting into her as I pinned her down.

“Oh! Chase! I love it all! Please!”

Growling with satisfaction, I dropped my head between her legs and took her pussy in my mouth, licking, sucking, devouring her like a starving man. She exploded under my assault, bucking her hips into me, screaming her lungs out into the empty house. Merciless, I drove wave after wave from her, making her shudder and sigh and clench and moan over and over again, until she finally collapsed, limp and sweaty against the pillow.

Lifting my head, I grinned at her. “You ready to get fucked now?”

Soft laughter emerged from her as she mustered the strength to meet my gaze. “You’re relentless.”

“In and out of the pool, baby.” I worked my way up her body, kissing every inch I passed.

“I wouldn’t want it any other way.” She wrapped her arms around my shoulders and looked up at me with a gorgeous glow I’d never get enough of. My Emma.

Emma

A woman could get used to starting her days with a blistering, toe-curling orgasm. Or two or three. It really made the whole day brighter. Chase sure knew how to take good care of me.

I took my time rubbing lotion on my legs, freshly washed and shaven. We’d taken a nice, long shower together and afterwards I’d remained in the bathroom to get ready for the party. I was really looking forward to the barbeque at Liam’s house. He was such a fun guy to be around and he apparently threw the party of the summer each year for the Fourth.

My phone blipped with a text.

Tori: Happy 4th!

She followed it up with lots of emojis including the American flag, fireworks, and male biceps because what holiday was complete without hot guys? Especially Fourth of July when it was a national requirement for handsome men to remove their shirts.

Emma: Happy 4th!

I sent her back a slew of my own emojis, with confetti and party horns. Smiling, I placed my phone back on the counter top. It was nice to be on good terms with Tori again. We'd never be close like we once were, but we'd settled into a nice groove together, grabbing the occasional lunch or meeting up to shop for something or other. I was happy to not have any bad feelings between us anymore. She'd made a stupid mistake and so had I. We'd both felt bad, both suffered, and then it had been time to move on. Holding on to regret or anger didn't do anyone any good.

Plus, it was hard to stay upset with anyone when I was so damn happy. I'd never been one to keep a grudge anyway, but now that I had an annoying perma-grin plastered across my face? I could not be bothered.

Scoop'd had officially been laid to rest at some point back around the holidays. I hadn't checked it once since I'd gotten home from Rio. There was too much bad karma there. But Tori had told me early in the new year, letting me know she'd moved on from it as well.

"It was fun, but now it's not," she'd summed it up. Guess that about said it. The quote would have made a good inscription on the tombstone we should have put up over the blog several years ago. But remorse was another one of those feelings it didn't make much sense to walk around carrying.

The trick was not repeating past mistakes, and I truly felt I was on a different path. Through Swim For Your Life I was meeting so many incredible people, all much more like-minded. I guessed that was one of the many fabulous benefits of pursuing your dreams—you found yourself surrounded by amazing people along the way. I felt such purpose and energy each day. Walking into the lobby of the center always lifted my spirits, no matter how early in the morning or how late at night after a long work day. The kids had painted a mural there, with all the butterflies and rainbows and gold medals you could imagine, dedicated to the pursuit of dreams. With the incredible array of programs we offered plus now a wide range of scholarships, some to attend college, it felt like we were playing a part in helping them not just dream big but realize those dreams. There was no better feeling.

"You ready?" Chase called into the bathroom, clearly eager to head to the party.

"Almost," I assured him, putting on some light mascara. I never went big with makeup, but today I did feel a slight flutter of nervous energy at the prospect of meeting all three of his closest friends. I'd met Liam several times now, of course, at the games last summer, over the holidays, plus he'd come down to see us in Florida. He was a true friend with a great sense of humor. Those flashing Irish blue eyes had

set more than one heart a-fluttering when he'd come down to visit us. But despite my hints at setting him up, he'd always declined.

"He's fixed on someone, that's for sure," Chase had agreed when I asked him what was up. "I just don't know who." For a guy who seemed like an open book, something lay there undiscovered with Liam.

Stepping out of the bathroom, I gave a twirl in front of Chase.

"Damn, girl," he swore under his breath, wrapping his hands around my waist and giving me a full kiss. Even in a simple sundress, the man made me feel like the most gorgeous woman in the world.

"So, do you think all your friends are going to be there today?" I asked, leaving his embrace to head to the kitchen where we had a couple bottles of wine and a sixpack of beers chilling in the fridge to bring to the party.

"Hope so," Chase agreed, following me in. "Liam, obviously."

"Do you think we'll meet his secret love?" I clasped my hand together in breathless excitement.

"Secret love, huh?" He pulled out a bag of tortilla chips and a jar of salsa to bring as well.

"You know, the person you think Liam is all hung up on?"

"We'll see." Chase shook his head. "I know him about as well as anyone, I guess, and I haven't been able to figure it out."

"That's because you're a man." I patted him affectionately on the shoulder. What a shoulder. Even a casual tap filled me with appreciation.

"And you'll get to the bottom of this mystery because you're a woman?" he asked, arching an eyebrow.

"I've got a better chance." I winked at him and he cracked a smile.

"You're probably right."

"And what about Jax? Will he be there?"

"Probably," he agreed, grabbing a baseball cap and his car keys. "He'll stir up some trouble."

"I'm so excited to meet him!" It must have come out overly enthusiastic because Chase gave me a squinty "oh really?" glance.

"The ladies do love him," he admitted, sounding none too happy about it at the moment.

"So I've heard!" I had to tease, acting especially eager, as if Jax presented even the remotest threat to my Olympic champion. Chase had me up and tossed over his shoulder before I knew what was happening.

"Is that right?" he asked as he carried me across to the living room where he threw me down on the couch and started tickling me until I screamed and laughed, unable to breathe. "You're interested in meeting Jax?"

"I'm kidding! I'm kidding!" I gasped, twisting and laughing and then sighing as he kissed me, deeply. "I love you." I melted into him, nuzzling his neck, kissing him again and again.

"Love you," he echoed, tasting my lips, my mouth, savoring me with every kiss. He sank his forehead to mine, caressing my cheek. Then he stood and pulled me up along with him.

"I was kidding," I assured him again, though I could already tell from the gleam in his eye that he knew that all along.

"Yeah, I know. I just like keeping you on your toes." He squeezed my hand.

"Seems like you swept me right off them."

He smiled at me and kissed me again. "It's hard getting out of the house when we're together."

"It is," I agreed, turning to grab the wine bottles. "Oh, and, do you think Ian's going to be at the party?" The minute I asked, I felt bad that I had. That blinged-out look on his face drooped a bit.

"Doesn't look like it," he said, downcast. "Last I talked to Liam he hadn't heard from him. Ian's pretty much dropped off. He's not answering anyone's calls."

"I'm so sorry." I hated seeing Chase look so sad. "I hope he's OK."

"Me too," he agreed, kissing me again on my forehead. "Me too." He nodded, feeling the gravity of his words. But then he looked at me and smiled. "You ready to head out? I'm ready to show you off."

"Let's do this." He took the wine bottles from me, insisting on carrying everything and making it all look effortless. My hero. As we walked out to the garage, I'll admit it, I checked out his ass. So sculpted and muscled, his jeans hugging him just so.

"You checking out my ass?" he asked, giving me a nod as he loaded the trunk with a couple of folding beach chairs.

"Of course I am." I owned it.

"That's my girl." He smiled at me and I smiled right back, loving the truth of those words.

Thank you so much for reading Chase and Emma's story! Stay tuned for Liam's story out in late 2016. There's a lot more to that hunky Irish firefighter than first meets the eye. Jax and Ian's stories are coming too in the first months of 2017. I can't wait to share all them with you!

My next book, *Undeniable*, comes out October 24th and it's going to be one wild ride. Forced apart by circumstance, now Dom has to protect Gigi from a death threat. But who will protect her from him? It's a standalone, the last in the *Beg For It* series about the dominant, alpha males in the Kavanaugh family and the strong, sexy women who make them finally meet their match.

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