
CHAPTER THREE

Nate

Wednesday, June 24

The digital billboard at the edge of Clarendon Street has had the same ad for as long as I remember—a dancing energy drink—so the fact that it’s changed catches my attention while I’m stopped on my motorcycle at a red light.

TIME FOR A NEW GAME, BAYVIEW.

Those are the only words, red against a stark white background. They fade off the screen and I wait, mildly intrigued despite myself, to see what’s next. Then the ad copy cycles back to *TIME FOR A NEW GAME, BAYVIEW* once again. So much for building suspense. Or letting people know what the hell you’re promoting. A-plus job, advertisers.

The light changes and I roar through it, following the familiar route to the Bayview Country Club. For a lot of people, summertime in Bayview means beaches, barbecues, and one-upping one another on social media with their no-filter vacation pictures. For me, it means a second job. Construction work by day, serving drinks to Bayview’s McMansion crowd at night, then trying to sleep for a few hours in a house filled

with five other people who have nothing to do except throw parties they keep trying to drag me to.

Living the dream.

I pull into the parking lot and settle my bike between two freshly painted white lines, then take out my phone to check the time. There's a new text waiting for me—a picture of Bronwyn and Stan, my bearded dragon, sitting side by side on an oversized rock in Bronwyn's garden. Now that she's home from Yale for the summer, she's decided that Stan needs, as she puts it, "more exercise and mental stimulation." So, some days when she's done with her internship, she picks him up, brings him to her house, and hangs out with him in the backyard. As far as I can tell Stan isn't moving any more than he usually does on these field trips, but he does seem to like having a new rock to sit on.

I grin, my mood instantly lifted. My girl's back in town for the next two months, so I guess I am, in fact, living the dream. Bronwyn's prelaw, and she had her pick of internships in New Haven or New York for the summer, but she chose one in San Diego. It's a fantastic job with the kind of woman-owned start-up that she wants to be general counsel for someday, so I don't even have to stress about her giving up opportunities to be closer to me.

Don't let a bird make off with him, I text back.

I WOULD NEVER, Bronwyn responds, with a horrified-face emoji.

Of course she wouldn't. There's not a person in the world you can count on more than Bronwyn Rojas. I know exactly how good I have it with her, and that's why I'm doing all this—the jobs, school, the cheap-ass house with too many roommates so I'm not blowing everything I make on rent. One of these days I'm going to be the guy Bronwyn deserves, not the guy she had to save from prison while we were in high school.

In the meantime, though, I have drinks to serve.

I shut off my bike, pocket the keys, and head for the giant pillars that frame the country-club entrance. At the edge of the

parking lot, there's a bulletin board filled with flyers hawking landscaping services, tutoring, housecleaning, dog walking—all the stuff rich people can't do on their own, because they're too busy hanging out at country clubs. My eyes land on one I haven't seen before that's a lot more glossy than what's usually there. Bright white, with just a few words in large red font:

TIME FOR A NEW GAME, BAYVIEW.

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