

# The Set-Up PROLOGUE

**\*\*LINCOLN\*\***

I've fallen victim to a heinous act.

An act so vile, so downright dirty, that I'm not sure . . .

as a son,

as a member of society,

as a twenty-year-old *man* . . . I will ever recover.

*Ever.*

I see the concern in your eyes, your hand wandering up your chest to clutch the collar of your sensible cotton shirt, scared to find out the truth.

Brace yourself against something sturdy, because what I'm about to tell you might just knock you back on your ass in horror.

*\*Deep breaths, everyone\**

I've recently become the pawn of a meddling mom.

Yup, you read that right. A MEDDLING mom.

The bane of a son's existence.

I know what you're wondering . . . what did she do? Make me pick up my socks during summer break?

*\*Eye-rolling\**

*\*Woe is you\**

*\*Grow up\**

*You grow up!*

Ehhh, that was a little harsh. But before you go and put your judgy face on, you need to know the difference between a nagging mom and a meddling mom.

A nagging mom is one who storms into the living room while you're trying to watch the series finale of *Game of Thrones*, complaining about the dishes in the sink you swore you'd take care of once you found out who took the throne.

Nag, nag, nag—part of the daily routine of the person who birthed you, or in this case, one of two moms who adopted me.

But a meddling mom, oh boy. They're a fresh kind of hell wrapped up in high-waisted leggings and muted tunics. This isn't some everyday mom who texts you GIFs of squirrels playing with a hula hoop. Nope, meddling moms have an agenda.

An agenda that they believe benefits their children. But it really benefits them . . . and only them.

In this case, my mom's agenda: get Lincoln to fall in love.

I understand it's not a crime for a mother to want her child to fall in love, but let me tell you. When she makes it her mission when you're home from college, it should be classified as a misdemeanor.

That's right, all freaking summer, my mom has made it her duty to set me up with girl after girl, all of whom she's met in our hometown Kalamazoo, Michigan. I'd like to say I'm exaggerating that she made a list *and* set me up with every eligible girl—one by one—but I'm not.

I saw the Excel spreadsheet on her computer.

Girls who were highlighted in red were a no-go.

Girls in green still had a fighting chance.

Girls in yellow? Apparently, I had lukewarm interaction with them, but they showed promise.

Why is she so desperate for me to fall head over heels?

Can you believe she's been spending time on the Internet, researching relationship statuses of major league baseball players? Well, she has. *Too much* time. And she said she didn't want me to end up forty, about to retire, with nothing to say for my life other than that I was able to throw a ball off a mound.

She also wants a girl to fawn over.

When my mothers were adopting, Mom hoped for a girl, but Mama hoped for a boy. Don't get me wrong, my mom loves me more than anything—hence the meddling and nagging—but she always wanted to do girly things with me, like have tea parties, get our toenails done, shit like that.

Side note: I've done the pedicure thing with her, and it's not that bad.

But she wants a daughter, and apparently, a daughter-in-law is the next best thing.

Which brings me back to my summer of "not love." I wanted nothing to do with these girls and after my mom's eighth attempt to set me up—yes, eight—I told her enough was enough. I was done.

And thankfully she listened . . . until the last Saturday before I left for school.

The evil matriarch in the devil's leggings made her final stab at finding a girl for me.

And I hate to admit it, but she saved a doozy for last.

A fucking titan in black skinny jeans.

A boss of nonchalance.

And a girl who will not only turn my life upside down, but do it while juggling a soccer ball, looking effortlessly gorgeous, and is one hundred percent against relationships. *Of any sort.*

*Thanks, Mom.*

\*Thumbs up\*

*Your meddling has made me absolutely miserable.*