

Chapter One

Helena

I waited for Elliot across the red building I knew as the Stern Business School. I loved the way the violet NYU banners hung on the building and blew against the early autumn winds. Students sprinted out of the building in a hurry. I couldn't complain. This was the New York life.

"Hey beautiful," Elliot said as he appeared behind me and planted a kiss on my cheek. My heart jumped. "You ready?"

He grabbed my hand and led us to Dojo, our favorite restaurant along Washington Square Street. Dojo had been the restaurant that Elliot had taken me to for our first date. I remembered the exact table we sat in right by the window. We would turn our heads to look at the city outside every time we got quiet or things got awkward between us. If I remembered correctly, Elliot had reached for my hand and told me he liked me that day. Even though we had been friends before, it had felt right to be with him. Next thing we knew, we were dating and graduating from college.

"I got some good news," he said as we were being seated by the waitress. The music in the restaurant was a smooth jazz and I could hear the clinking of glass.

"What is it?" I said. The waitress' hair was in a bun and she had a nose piercing. She smiled when she stopped in front of our table.

"It looks like my firm will be working with your magazine," he said.

I had heard my boss talk about the new cover with the baseball players and Elliot's firm. I guessed this was actually going to happen. Elliot's firm was a public relations firm that specialized in promoting baseball year-round and worked with different baseball leagues all around the world. If you walked into the firm, they had a baseball as a chair.

"It's going to be great," I said before the waitress dropped two menus on the table.

"Can I get you anything to drink?" the waitress asked.

"Water would be good," I said.

"Water for me too," Elliot said. "Oh and we'll need another menu. We got someone else coming."

When she stepped away, I turned to Elliot.

"Who else is coming that I don't know about?" I asked surprised that Elliot hadn't told me this before.

"My coworker's joining us. I wanted him to meet you because he's the one who's going to be working closely with your magazine," he smiled flashing his big blue eyes at me.

"That's great," I said. I was excited about this new step for GLAM, the magazine I worked for, and because this new project was going to change my position and maybe even help me get promoted, or so I hoped.

When his co-worker arrived, Elliot stood up to greet him. I did the same. I could see this guy wore a suit. When my eyes made it to his face, I had to force a smile to prevent my jaw from dropping. My hands started to shake as I stared at the figure of Parker in front of me. My heart was beating fast and all of a sudden I couldn't breathe normally.

"Hi," I said. I couldn't believe it. His big brown eyes looked back at me. The smile on his face was impeccable. *Why would he be smiling?* His hair was tousled like it always had been.

Then all the memories of that night six years ago flashed inside my mind. The memories that I had so much wanted to forget.

I watched as my classmates huddled against each other and danced to the rhythm of the music. The wildest guys in our class stood by the bar area and downed shots until they were so drunk they could barely stand.

Parker's house was a mansion. The backyard was like a dream. There was what looked like a bridge right in the center of the backyard. Sometimes it felt as if you were in a movie. Lilacs and roses bloomed around this bridge and it made it all more of a fantasy.

I remembered when we were younger, while our mothers gossiped inside the house, I would sit on the bench by the bridge and pretend to be the princess I wanted him to come rescue. Of course, he would always come running towards me, he would pass me a plastic sword, and I would play his game. I always did.

It didn't surprise me when I saw him standing by the bridge alone as he leaned against the railing and stared at the horizon in front of him. His backyard was like a park and he was the center of it all.

"You're missing your own party," I said standing next to him.

"At least everyone else is having fun," he said. His eyes were big and brown, his skin a perfect tan. His hair had a tousled look; it was a dusty brown and usually hid under his baseball hats. He also wore a black Rooney shirt he had gotten at the concert we had gone to a few months ago. We had a weird taste in music but that was one of the reasons why we were best friends.

"I got you something," I said as I passed him the box I had been holding on to for months now. When he opened it, his eyes went wide and I knew I had successfully surprised him.

"No you didn't," he said, slowly raising the baseball hat I had gotten him signed by Pedro Alvarez, his favorite baseball player. "How did you get this?"

"Turns out my cousin got a chance to meet him when he went to train at the beginning of the summer. And of course I asked him to do me a favor," I said happily.

"You're the greatest!" he said placing his arm around my shoulder.

I watched as he took off the hat he had on and placed the new one I had gotten him on his head.

"Oh yeah!" he smiled while pointing at it. "I look super cool, don't I?" he smiled.

"I knew you would like it," I said.

"Please tell me that you decided not to go to New York because I seriously don't know what I'd do without you," he said smiling big and pulling me close to him. Every time he did that, my heart skipped a beat. I couldn't help how I felt about him.

I thought about how it was now time for college and how our parents said our college years were supposed to be 'the best time of our lives.' I couldn't picture myself without Parker and if I went to New York, everything would change.

"I decided to stay here," I said looking into the water under the bridge. It had taken a while to decide but night and day I knew that staying would be the best option. I couldn't deal with change. I couldn't leave everything behind, especially not Parker.

"Lena, even though I don't want to see you leave, you know you've got to go to NYU. You wouldn't wanna miss out on that opportunity, would you?" he said.

"Parker," I hesitated, "I need to tell you something." This was the perfect moment for me to tell him how much I loved him. I needed to get it off my chest.

"I need to tell you something too," he said looking into my eyes, "I don't know where to start but it's been going on for a while and—" before he could finish his sentence, I grabbed his face and kissed him fast.

"Lena, I—" Parker said. The expression on his face told me something different. He looked surprised, in shock even.

"I knew it!" I heard Vanessa's angry voice from behind us. Her hands were on her hips and her long black hair bounced as she walked.

"It's really not what you think," Parker said to Vanessa. Why was he explaining himself to her?

"Lena, why did you do that?" he looked straight into my eyes. I couldn't read him anymore. I felt confused, hurt and betrayed.

"Because..." the knot in my throat grew larger and I could barely get anything out. I swallowed the tears but they still seemed to escape from my eyes.

"Sorry loser, but Parker and I are together now. Obviously he couldn't tell you before you threw yourself at him," Vanessa laughed so loudly it hurt my ears.

"I don't even know who you are anymore," I said to Parker. I could feel my heart beating slowly. It was all too painful.

I did what I did best and walked away from him.

I wished he'd run towards me and told me he loved me, but he never did.

Before I knew it, I had packed my bags and landed in New York City as a girl in search of her dreams but with a broken and silenced heart.
