

## 'A different kind of Valentine's Day'

*A bonus scene from BOHEMIAN*

LUCIA

My lingerie no longer fit.

Not the silky dresses or the sheer panties or any of the pink, frilly, black, polka-dotted, sexy items I'd bought over the years to entice Calvin.

Not that he needed much enticing. Most days I could crook my finger with a suggestive smile and he'd have me up against the nearest flat surface in seconds.

But it was *Valentine's Day* and I didn't think being seven months pregnant was a reason not to bust out every filthy move I knew. I couldn't bend down anymore, and nausea had plagued my entire pregnancy. I was also exhausted, and my feet were swollen and every hour this baby engaged in a particular type of kicking that had me doubled-over.

*But still.*

I was Lucia Bell goddammit. I was a former supermodel *and* a poet, and I was pretty sure *lingerie* wasn't going to be my fucking downfall.

Which was how I ended up on our bed attempting to wrangle the world's tiniest scrap of fabric over my swollen belly. I tried – and failed – for so long, I eventually gave in to my body's screaming urge to shut my eyes.

For just...a second.

Just...one...

"Lucia."

I fluttered my eyes open to find sweet Calvin, crouching by the bed with a concerned look on his face. I rubbed my fingers against the scruff of his jaw.

"Happy Valentine's Day," I murmured drowsily. Then I looked down and saw my half-naked body covered in a myriad of satin scraps. "Oh my god, I was trying to seduce you and I fell asleep."

Calvin gave me the kindest smile, tucking the wild strands of my hair behind my ear. "You don't need to seduce me, beautiful. I've been officially seduced. Yours forever, I'm afraid." His fingers trailed down my skin until his palm could smooth over my belly. He laid his head there, closing his eyes as our daughter kicked. "Feisty."

"I wonder who she got that from?" I asked, rubbing at my tired eyes. "Also, I was trying to give you the dirtiest sex of your life tonight but I...um...I really don't feel up to it."

I hated admitting it, hated admitting the many tiny ways this pregnancy was affecting me. I was used to barreling through physical discomfort and exhaustion – not giving in.

"Good, because I already planned us a Valentine's Day night and it doesn't involved any fucking."

I bit my lip. "I love fucking you though. Just to be clear."

Calvin chuckled, leaning in to brush his lips over my own. "Fucking you is my religion, Lucia. But tonight is all about you in a different way. Okay, beautiful?"

I nodded, sighing into his touch. “Okay.”

“First, I need you to sit up,” he said gently, helping me into a sitting position. This was getting harder and harder – the shifting in my center of gravity made the simplest things challenging. “And I’m going to untangle you from this strange gathering of fabrics you’ve got here.”

“All my lingerie,” I said somberly. “It’ll never fit me again.”

“Not true,” Calvin said, kissing my temple. “Also I could care less about lingerie. Arms up, Lu.” I lifted, breathed a giant sigh of relief as the tight material slid free from my body with a *pop*. Calvin wrapped his arms around my waist and helped me stand. Then he slid the other lingerie down my legs, being careful with my swollen feet. He looked up at me from his knees and I couldn’t help but caress his forehead.

“You look especially handsome this evening,” I said. Calvin kissed my belly.

“And you look like my favorite woman to worship.”

He stood, leading me into our bathroom – a wall of windows opened to the statuesque Redwood trees outside. Their scent drifted in on the night breeze – the majestic boughs, the ocean, the stars. The room was entirely dark except for the candles Calvin had lit.

“Oh, Cal,” I said, throat tightening. The tub was filled to the brim with steaming, soapy water. With a cheeky grin, he handed me an ice-cold glass of fuzzy liquid.

“Non-alcoholic champagne.”

“You *didn’t*,” I teased. I took a sip, my toes curling at the slide of cool bubbles against my tongue. “Fuck, I miss champagne.”

Calvin took my other hand and led me to the tub. He kept our gazes locked as I stepped in. When my feet hit the deliciously-hot water I let out a moan that bordered on pornographic.

“That’s my girl,” he laughed.

“Is it possible for hot water to feel so good?” The night air was just cool enough to make the water extra tempting, extra luxurious.

“Remember the night you broke us into the hot springs?” he asked, holding me as I lowered the rest of my body into the water.

“I thought *you* broke us into the hot springs?”

Calvin leaned forward and nipped my throat. “Such a liar.”

“Okay, okay it was me,” I laughed, palms up. Calvin handed me the champagne with bright eyes before stripping off his clothing – the candlelight bathing his naked body in a warm light that had me sighing with happiness. With his own contented groan, he slid into the other side of the tub and picked up my left foot. Kissed the ankle. Then pressed his thumb into the arch.

My head fell back against the tub, my hair already beginning to stick to my throat.

“What feels good?” he asked.

“*That*,” I groaned. He massaged my feet with delicate focus – months of stress and discomfort unwound and vanished beneath his fingers.

“I dreamt about our daughter last night,” I said.

“Tell me everything,” he whispered, kissing my ankle again.

I held his gaze over the bubbles – behind him the trees shook with the night breeze. He picked up my other foot, beginning the same ministrations. The water was like velvet, the steam

scented with lavender. The heat of it soothed every aching part of my body – my hips, my breasts, my lower back.

I closed my eyes, attempting to recapture the fragments of the dream. Calvin massaged my calf muscles. “We were running through the forest and she kept stopping to show me the flowers. *This one mama. Look at this one.*”

My voice caught – the emotion of the dream hitting me all at once.

“She called you *mama* in your dream?” he asked. Calvin picked up my hands, which were always sore from writing. He kissed each digit and the palm – and then began massaging them too.

“Yes, she did,” I said. “I loved it.”

“I want to go running in the forest with our daughter,” Calvin rasped. He kissed my wrist and I laid my hand against his face. “Swim in the ocean. Climb tall trees.”

“I want that too.”

Calvin crooked his finger. “Slide this way beautiful.”

I turned – a little awkwardly, and we both laughed when water splashed over the sides of the tub. But I was rewarded with Calvin pressing his thumbs right between my shoulder blades.

“That feels heavenly,” I said, letting my head fall back against his chest.

“You’re working so hard, Lucia,” he said against my ear. “*And* you’re pregnant. It’s okay to let yourself rest. Nothing bad will happen, I promise.”

“I know,” I whispered. “This is...this is the nicest thing, Calvin.”

“Anything for you.” His fingers massaged my shoulders, my neck, scratched against my scalp. The hot water and his soothing hands had me drowsy, relaxed – pain-free for the first time in weeks. After a while, he dropped his hands and tugged me against his chest, stroking my hair as I dozed in the flickering candlelight.

“We need to pick a name still,” he teased. “She could burst into the world at any minute.”

“I think I know her name now.” I thought about my dream, the forest, the flowers – the landscape of Big Sur that had carved itself into my soul. “I think her name is River.”

Calvin’s lips moved against my hair. “I think I love it.”

I turned a little, sloshing more water. “You do?”

“This is River,” he said, placing a hand against my stomach. Love suffused my entire being. “And I was thinking about her middle name too.”

“What do you have in mind, dear Calvin?”

“Josefine.”

I pressed our lips together, giving him a kiss that rivaled our first one. “River Josefine.”

“She’ll be quite the poet,” he said. “Just like her mother.”

And then he held me in the water for a long, long time. Until the candles burned low and the air turned cold. Wrapping me in a fluffy towel, Calvin took me to bed. Laid me gently on our soft sheets, arranging the pillows so my new body was comfortable.

And because it was Calvin, he dropped his head between my spread legs and licked me with slow, sweet strokes; a tentative exploration of my folds that had me gasping on the bed. It felt like an ending. It felt like a beginning. One hand stayed in his hair, caressing the strands with my fingers. The other found his, squeezing as I climbed and climbed the waves of pleasure. It felt so fucking *good* to lay my tired, aching body down and receive – to do nothing but writhe against

Calvin's talented mouth and let my climax shimmer through me. I was the night sky, awash in stars, tingling with light.

After bringing me back down to earth, Calvin slid up the side of my body and hugged me close. He was hard, I could feel it – I wanted to give him the same luxury, wanted to take him into my mouth until he cried out.

But sleep was already settling over me like a heavy blanket. Sleep, relaxation, calm – just what I'd needed.

“Calvin,” I whispered, “I want to...I want to make you come.”

He made soothing sounds, stroked my hair. “Later, beautiful,” he said. “I promise we'll spend all day fucking each other tomorrow.”

“That sounds nice,” I said dreamily, already half-asleep.

“I love you Lucia,” he whispered, reaching over to turn off the light. Our daughter kicked briefly. “I love you River.”

I held Calvin's palm over my left breast – let him feel the affect he had on my heart.

“I love you,” I whispered back. “Happy Valentine's Day.”

And then, in the cool darkness of Big Sur, we slept.

THE END