

Amy Santiago's College Survival Binder

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Amy Santiago's College Survival Binder

by [sgtsantiago](#)

Summary

Amy Santiago has always been absurdly anxious about succeeding. So when she begins college, it is no surprise that she is determined to succeed. Amy has put together the perfect binder spelling out her path to success throughout and beyond college. She needs to study, establish strong relationships with her professors, and amongst many other rules, no relationships.

Jake Peralta wants to succeed in college. He really does. But he is still trying to find himself. And when he begins to develop a crush on Amy Santiago, he will do anything to get over her; even if he loses himself further. Besides, he doesn't have time for a serious relationship with all his extra time being dedicated to his football recruitment.

This fic is a Peraltiago slow burn that takes place in an Alternate Universe at the University of Brooklyn, a fictional college with outstanding sports and academics. This fic has POVs from both Amy and Jake. Enjoy! Also, I have clinical anxiety and have been on meds for years, so a lot of Amy's thoughts and feelings will be drawn from my own anxieties surrounding school and grades.

Follow me on twitter, @wariocheats !

Notes

The first few chapters are slow, but they are worth the read long-term, I promise! This is my first real long term fic in a very very long time so please know I am working on improving as a writer! I'm open to constructive criticism or tips/feedback at any point as long as you aren't rude about it! I hope you enjoy and once again I promise it'll get good really soon.

Nine-Nine

Chapter Notes

This chapter is pretty boring, I'll admit. But hey, I need a good slow intro before we really dive in. The future chapters will be much longer and more in depth and interesting. Just bare with me.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Amy

Amy Santiago has dedicated the past 18 years of her life into getting into her dream school: the University of Brooklyn. So when she stood on the campus quad, surrounded by thousands of students with that same fulfilled dream, it felt unreal. She gazed at the tall buildings towering over her, each brick and stone placed perfectly like some sort of painting or movie opening. As she scanned her surroundings, she realized that the quad was filled by peers dressed in crop tops, skirts, ripped jeans, tank-tops, pretty much any casual or cute outfit one could come up with; Amy's brothers had teased her in the car ride up for wearing a pantsuit to orientation. Maybe they had made a point. Amy always dressed for success, and she loved the powerful way pantsuits made her feel, especially to make others feel intimidated by her clear rejection of any stupid traditional gender expectations society set. But even so, the pantsuit probably didn't make the best social impression, which didn't help Amy's nerves about fitting in. But it was too late now, as an older student wearing an orientation shirt and an orange and blue-the school's colors- bandana began approaching her.

"Hi! Welcome to the University of Brooklyn! My name is Florence, and I am one of the freshman orientation leaders! If you could tell me your name and student ID, I can guide you to your dorm and help you get started!" the peppy student said as she passed Amy a pamphlet of the orientation week schedule.

"I'm Amy Santiago, and my student ID is 051518. It's nice to meet you!" She replied cheerfully, trying to hide her nerves.

Orientation should be Amy's jam. Upon studying the schedule, Amy saw her week was filled with club fairs, seminars, even games (Amy is ultra competitive, and any good game can help her assert her dominance over others, which she'd need if she wanted to equally assert her

dominance in the classroom). But Amy was nervous. She wasn't exactly the type to fit in with the popular crowd in high school. She didn't want to steer away from her work ethic, even in college, but making friends would surely be harder in such a large, overwhelming environment. She checked her perfectly color-coded and organized schedule. *Note to self*, she thought, *make a color-coded schedule for orientation week*. Amy has always been big on making mental notes. It's how she keeps herself sane. But she also keeps herself sane with schedules. She couldn't wait to hang up her bulletin board above her desk in her dorm, dreaming about covering it with detailed daily, weekly, and monthly schedules. And of course a copy would go in her binder. College would be an organizational heaven for Amy. Something about the need for diligent note taking and crazy amounts of studying really got her going. But adjusting wouldn't be easy. Amy needed to make sure she stayed focused. But hey, that's what binders are for.

Florence lead Amy to the Nine-Nine, which the orientation leader said was the nickname for the dorm hall Amy was staying in. Something about the campus having been built in an old Brooklyn district that technically no longer exists, and the hall was built on an old precinct for it, the 99th precinct. Amy made a mental note to research more about that later. She adored history, and really just learning in general. Her whole life had been a lead up to college. Now that she was finally there, it almost felt wrong that she had made it that far without hitting a speed bump in her plans. But Amy Santiago was textbook definition perfectionist, so speed bumps didn't occur often.

Amy took the elevator up to her dorm, her parents and all seven brothers slowly following behind with all of her luggage and bedding. When she arrived in her room, her roommate was already unpacked and blasting music in their dorm.

"HI, MY NAME IS KYLIE. I GUESS I'M YOUR ROOMMATE. WHAT'S YOUR NAME?" the girl shouted over her own blaring aux.

Amy reached over and lowered the volume on the speaker. "I'm Amy Santiago, nice taste in music" she replied in a softer, but amused tone.

Kylie smiled and came over to Amy's side of the room to help her unpack. Kylie didn't seem quite like Amy in terms of work ethic, but Amy wasn't one to judge a book by its cover, so she assumed Kylie just hadn't expected her to come to the room so soon. Between Amy, Kylie, Amy's parents, and her brothers, it didn't take the group long to unpack. Within hours, Amy was hugging each family member, giving them their own individual, well practiced and memorized goodbye sentiment. Once they had left, Amy immediately reached under her bed to pull out a lavender colored binder filled with hundreds of pages, separated by perfectly

placed Staples brand ultra-strength binder divider tabs; Amy's favorite. On the front of the binder was written, *Amy Santiago's College Survival Binder*. Upon reading the front, Kylie ran over to sit next to Amy on the unwrinkled, carefully made bed.

"What's this? Amy Santiago's College Survival Binder? Really?" Kylie asked, somewhat judgmentally.

"I'm a big binder person, what can I say? I am determined to make these next four years of my life perfect. I have laid out rules, recommendations, my course-load, and more. I have spent months perfecting it. I can make you one if you want!" Amy asked.

Kylie clearly wasn't too into the binder, but Amy didn't let that bum her out. "I appreciate the offer, but I'm okay. Anyway, I think we have to go down to the lobby for some type of hall bonding activity. It said so on the pamphlet, at least."

Amy giggled, feeling reassured that Kylie had read the pamphlet in depth. Amy herself had already memorized it. It felt good knowing her roommate clearly cared about structure, or at least for orientation week.

When Amy and Kylie had arrived downstairs, Amy had noticed that they were last to arrive. Amy *hates* being late. It's one of the many things that give her bad anxiety. She felt shaky as her heart rate started climbing, fearing Florence, who was their group leader for this activity, would be upset. But Florence had hardly seemed to notice the two hadn't already been in the circle, and Amy took deep breaths.

"Alright, hi everybody! If we haven't already met, my name is Florence, and I use she/her/hers pronouns. I'm a sophomore here at UBrooklyn studying molecular biology, and I'm your orientation leader for this week, and a resource for you all throughout the semester. I wanna start us off with a little ice breaker. We are gonna go around and say names, where we are from, pronouns, our major, and a fun fact about ourselves." She stared at Amy and gave a little nod. "Amy, would you like to start us off?" she asked. Amy couldn't decide if it was a good or bad thing that Florence had remembered her name. She took a deep breath in and fixed her posture.

"Hi. My name is Amy Santiago. I am from Lyndhurst, New Jersey, and my pronouns are she/her/hers. I am an art history major, though I am also interested in Justice and Law. A fun

fact about me is I am still seventeen, though I turn eighteen next month. I skipped fourth grade, so I'm a year ahead technically." Amy instantly regretted sharing that. She didn't want people to think she was braggy or a show-off. What if everybody thinks she's a show-off now? Amy began internally freaking out, but she got distracted when Kylie took over.

"I'll go next," Kylie says confidently. "I'm Kylie Baker, and I'm from the Manhattan area. I am majoring in computer and information sciences. Oh! Also, my pronouns are she/they, but I don't have much of a preference, so you can just use them interchangeably. A fun fact about me is I am totally obsessed with trivia, and back at home I used to participate in trivia nights downtown." *Holy cow*, thought Amy. *She's a trivia nerd too! Maybe this pairing wasn't so bad after all.* As the next few people introduced themselves, Amy busied herself thinking of all her favorite trivia questions she could ask her new roommate. *Name all of Jupiter's Moons? Who was the 19th Vice President?* Amy didn't want to bore Kylie, but god did she love a good trivia question. She totally forgot about the activity at hand until a loud, somewhat overconfident voice startled her back to the present.

Jake

"Sup, my name is Jake Peralta," Jake shared confidently in a hopefully impressive booming voice. If he didn't make everybody think he was confident, they'd realize he was insecure. And if Jake feared anything at all, it was letting his walls down. Or people knowing he has any walls at all. Like his father used to tell him, 'vulnerability makes you weak. Don't be weak'. The phrase always kind of scared Jake, but, then again, so did most of the advice his father had ever given him. Roger Peralta wasn't the best to take advice from, given he had always said how much he loved Karen, Jake's mother, and yet, the pathological liar left her. But Jake had looked up to his father as a child, and Jake wanted to be strong. Stronger than his father ever could be. So that meant bottling it all up and throwing the sadness into humor, the anger into power in football, and, well, the commitment issues into hooking up. But as far as anybody else knew, Jake slept around because he was cool, and because he could. Frankly, Jake had convinced so many people of this, he himself really truly believed that he simply was not a relationship person. But to his peers, Jake was always his most confident self, and to Jake, confidence meant he didn't need to be in a relationship. So his persona slowly became a reality, at least in his own mind. Nevertheless, Jake pushed his worries to the side before anybody could read into his awkward pause. "I use he/him/his pronouns. I'm from Brooklyn born and raised, and I'm here as a football recruit, but my major is undecided. And uh, a fun fact about me... is I have the coolest roommate around. Charles, take it away!" He exclaimed as he motions to his roommate.

"I'm Jake's roommate, Charles Boyle. I use he/him/his pronouns, and I am from Staten Island and am majoring in culinary arts, and my fun fact is that I took a gap year to run my food

blog and travel cross-country to do food reviews. Check me out on boyleboils.net, it's pretty high-end," Boyle said with no shame. Jake chuckled out of mild embarrassment and listened as the group wrapped up. But he couldn't help but look at Amy Santiago. Her soft dark hair was too perfect for him to look away, her clear, olive skin practically making her a shining star in any room. *No*, he thought, as he quickly looked away. *College is for hookups only. And that Amy chick is definitely not down for that.* He was still somewhat intrigued by her, but those thoughts were shoved down. The group was dismissed, and they had the evening to get to know the people on their floors before orientation would continue the next day.

When they got back to their room, Jake and Charles finished unpacking and walked into the hall to decide who to mingle with. Jake dragged Charles down the hall to knock on the door of two of his new teammates. Teddy and Doug, whose names Jake had learned at the icebreaker, happily welcomed Jake and Charles in, though they gave Charles a few odd looks. Jake couldn't help but feel intimidated by the guys. Doug was tall, strong, and clearly feared nothing and nobody. He looked like the type of person who would tackle his own teammate just to make a game more interesting. Teddy, on the other hand, looked like he wouldn't hurt a fly. He was tall and muscular, but had a soft look in his eye. So why was Jake so intimidated by him? Perhaps it was because he had seen Teddy eyeing Amy earlier. *Or, it could be that I'm attracted to Teddy?* Jake wondered.

Jake had never been big on labeling. He chooses to label things for his own comfort, but Jake still felt very uncomfortable in his own skin, and he never knew how sure he was of anything. It's not necessarily a phase, but rather, Jake simply could never make up his mind, even if it was about things as simple as what to eat for dinner. He knew he wasn't straight, and he knew he wasn't gay. Honestly, most sexualities confused him, because he just couldn't wrap his head around how people aren't just attracted to whoever they're attracted to. So if people asked him, he would say he was bisexual. It's true, he is, but he still struggles with the labeling differences of whether he is pansexual or maybe aromantic since he wasn't really down to commit. But he just didn't really know how to put himself into a box with it. He needed to learn more first. But what he did know was that he was drawn to Teddy, be it from attraction or jealousy or sheer intimidation.

Jake looked Teddy up and down, and he was certainly drawn to something about him, but he didn't feel that warm feeling he felt when he looked into Amy's eyes. But again, Amy was the last thing Jake wanted to be thinking about. Maybe he was just feeling off earlier. Maybe Amy just has kinder eyes. Well, I mean, sure, Amy has kinder eyes, without a doubt, Jake knew that. But like, who knows? Jake would find any excuse in his head to push Amy to the back of his thoughts. But Charles wasn't helping.

Before Jake knew it, he was being dragged out of Teddy and Doug's dorm, locking eyes one last time with the dreamy but seemingly boring jock, and Charles charged right across their room to knock on the door. Jake didn't know who it was in there, but Charles sure seemed

like he did. Kylie opened the door, and Charles immediately dropped Jake's hand to greet Kylie. It all made sense. Charles was totally into Kylie! That's why he had dragged him to her room! Jake was fitting it all into his head, making sense of the situation, before all his thoughts were jumbled when Amy Santiago stepped up to the door.

Chapter End Notes

I throw in some fun little easter eggs and such, did you notice? I like picking some stuff and relating it back to the show. But if you missed them, I will be recapping at the end of each chapter, so no worries!

Amy's student ID, 051518, is the date of Peraltiago's wedding in the show, May 15, 2018 (05/15/18, unless you're from Europe and all)

Amy's actual major in college, which has been stated before, was art history!

I tried to keep birth areas true to people while also not making everybody from Brooklyn. Charles was actually born in Staten Island, and Melissa Fumero, who plays Amy in the show, was born in Lyndhurst, NJ, which is where I got the inspiration from! I tried to match majors closely to interest, except that Jake being on the football team was mostly just for the plot.

Kylie's last name is never revealed in the show, but Sarah Baker, the actress who plays her, was my inspo for the last name.

That's the fun stuff for now, but keep looking out!

The original character in this chapter is named after Florence, @flo_aniston on Twitter! I'm using my mutuals as names for my original characters, I think it's fun! Kevin was just a random name I pulled lol.

Guilty

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Amy

When Amy heard a knock on her door, she groaned a little. She had been watching a documentary on modern art, which one of her professors recommended to the class if they wanted a better understanding of their lesson, which, of course Amy did. She took out her earbuds and shut her laptop begrudgingly, taking her sweet time to greet whoever decided to interrupt her documentary. She walked up to Kylie, who had already answered the door, and Amy thought she saw the guy on the left, who she remembered from the icebreaker was named Jake, was looking at her, but if he had been, he had already looked away. Charles, meanwhile, clearly had eyes for Kylie. Joke's on him, though. Amy had only known Kylie for the day, but she had a gaydar that had yet to let her down. And Kylie was sending Amy's gaydar through the roof. They were almost definitely gay. Amy just had no proof. But she knew, and Charles would know soon. Kylie let Charles and Jake into the room, and Jake had plopped himself onto Amy's desk chair.

"What's this?" he asked, gesturing to the earbuds still plugged into Amy's laptop. "Were you watching something good?" he teased.

Amy rolled her eyes and scoffed, completely dodging the question. Good news was, Jake moved on from the conversation pretty quickly. Bad news was, it's because the binder caught his attention. Amy's binder had been sitting on her bed, right next to her half-finished weekly schedule she had been working on until her professor had sent that email with the documentary suggestion. Amy was typically one to do one task at a time, but she was determined to impress her professors, so that meant putting a pause in the schedule. Jake reached over to pick up the binder and read the cover.

"Amy Santiago's College Survival Binder?" he asked as he quite obviously was trying not to laugh. "Type A much?" he mocked as he began opening the binder. Amy quickly shut it closed, snapping "hey, you can't just open my stuff without asking. You'll get cheeto dust on it or something!" Jake brushed off his hands, which hadn't actually gotten cheeto dust on them, but Amy felt the insult was still pretty fitting for his personality.

"Besides," Amy continued, going on the tangent she had been dying to vent about ever since he introduced himself. "At least I have my life mapped out. Didn't you say you're undecided? Was 18 years not enough for you to pick a major? How can you just go into college without knowing what you're gonna do after you finish your general requirements?" Amy was a person that needed everything decided and set in stone. She didn't like having things open-ended, and she feared the unknown.

"I figured I'd just wing it," Jake said, only half jokingly. Amy felt almost annoyed by Jake's complete neglect for college.

Jake

Just wing it? Jake thought. His response was his defense mechanism, as stupid as he knew it was. If he hadn't said that, he would have had to go on about trying to figure himself out, or about how he deep down was terrified that he would fail whatever major he picked, as if somehow pushing off the decision would make his life any less stressful. Jake wanted to do well in college. He just struggled to find the motivation to work hard when he didn't have anything he was passionate about. Well, aside from football; but Jake knew he couldn't make it in the professional leagues, and he wanted something a bit more fulfilling. His dad was a pilot, and Jake knew what it was like to have a dad who was constantly traveling and was never around. Jake wanted his own family someday, and he was already afraid enough of becoming like his own father, so he didn't want to take on any type of career that meant not being able to come home for family dinners to hear about his kids' days at school. But Jake was not going to tell others about that, especially not Amy Santiago. He had no interest in sharing anything about his own personal life, and he had no interest in others being vulnerable with him. But he is a curious teenager, so he likes to snoop. But he doesn't want that type of stuff offered up to him.

When Charles told Jake they should get going, Jake was relieved. Amy was too distracting for him, too captivating. He wanted to forget about all of it and head over to one of the frat parties being hosted that night. Apparently it was some weird pre-rush thing for freshmen to have fun during orientation week. And Jake was ready to get wasted. Charles had invited Kylie, who reluctantly agreed after making sure Amy was cool being alone. They had invited Amy, but she said she wanted to finish updating her schedules or something. Jake admired her dedication to her work, but he needed to let loose. So a night in his dorm was not gonna happen for Jake just yet.

When they arrived at the party, Jake took maybe two seconds to scan the room before being shoved into a mosh pit with an unopened beer in his hands. He got nervous about making a good first impression, so logically, as Jake Peralta would do, he was gonna get drunk before

he could screw this up. He chugged the beer and ran to grab more drinks. After what felt like 10 minutes but was actually an hour, Jake and Charles could hardly stand up straight. Charles had gone to try to find Kylie, and Jake decided to focus his partying elsewhere: Teddy. Teddy stood across the room, and Jake couldn't tell if it was the alcohol in him or maybe the alcohol in Teddy, but Teddy was seemingly less boring in that moment. Jake walked right up to Teddy and the two began grinding to the beat of the music before intensely making out. *This is what college is all about*, Jake smiled to himself. Teddy gripped onto Jake's t-shirt and pulled him in closer, to the point where Jake could feel Teddy's breath hit his lips and heart beat against Jake's own chest. Jake tried not to look him in the eyes. He had decided eye contact wasn't his thing.

"My room?" Teddy asked in a deep, seductive voice. Jake knew they were both drunk, but this was what Jake wanted out of college, right? Jake thought about it to make sure he wasn't going to regret it, and he nodded his head. He had a few more drinks, and the two headed back to the Nine-Nine. As Jake followed Teddy to his room, just down the hall he saw Amy Santiago walking toward his area, probably to get to the printer room, if he had to guess, as if her life depended on it. His attention diverted from Teddy just for a moment, before his stomach started feeling a bit off. Amy had kept walking closer, since Jake was right next to the stairs, but Jake was too intoxicated to have a proper sense of depth perception. He took a step forward to say hello, and immediately bumped into Amy, causing her to drop the heavy binder on her left foot. Jake leaned down to help her pick it back up, but the second he opened his mouth to apologize, the alcohol hit him a bit too hard. He was too late to do anything, and he vomited all over Amy's binder. Teddy ran to go get Jake a water bottle and escort him to the bathroom, but Jake just stood there in embarrassment. His stomach was weak and he could hardly speak, but Amy was freaking out, in a trance of both pain and disgust. Before Jake got the chance to apologize, Teddy rushed Jake to Jake's dorm, and gave him a water bottle. So much for casual hookups that night. But what was worse, Teddy ran to help Amy. I mean, Jake was happy somebody was helping her, but Teddy? Really? Jake wanted to help, but Charles had come back and had sobered up, and refused to let Jake leave until Charles was able to make him a hangover cure and stomach settling tea.

"So, how was the rest of the party with Kylie?" Jake asked softly, trying not to upset his stomach more.

Charles was brewing tea in their sink and sighed. "Turns out she isn't into dudes. I saw her making out with another girl" Charles said depressingly.

"That doesn't mean she's not into dudes though, it just means she's into women. Don't get yourself down," Jake tried to say in a reassuring tone that didn't make him sound like too much of a softy.

"I thought the same thing, but I heard a guy try to ask her out earlier at the party, and she said she's only into women. I'm telling you Jake, it's all the good ones!"

Jake tried to assume the best in Charles and figured he meant it in a less homophobic sounding way; Charles was just upset, and he was surely just taken out of context. *Not ALL the good ones*, Jake thought. He thought of Amy, but Charles noticed his dreamy eyes, so when he asked Jake what was up with him, Jake shook himself out of it and said he was thinking about football practice starting next week and how excited he was.

When Charles left the room to go down to the kitchen to heat up the tea, Jake snuck over to Amy's room and knocked on the door. Amy didn't answer. Jake quickly grabbed a pen and a piece of paper and, in his hardly legible handwriting, wrote,

Hey Amy,

I just wanted to say I'm really sorry about what happened earlier. Maybe tomorrow after the club fair before the group seminar, I could come over and help you make a new binder? I just feel really bad since that binder is clearly important to you. We can go on a staples run if needed. Just let me know if I can do something to help. I'll leave you my number.

Apologetically (I checked, it's a real word!),

Jake Peralta from across the hall and from the hallway earlier but you probably already figured that out.

Jake slide the letter under her door and shuffled back into his own room when he heard Charles whistling in the staircase.

"What happened tonight anyway? Did you and Teddy get into it? Huh?" He asked teasingly.

"Nothing happened, it's not important. Just know that I was strong and it was... all Teddy's fault yeah!" Jake said in an attempt to keep a solid reputation. He wasn't sure if it worked, but Charles didn't ask any more questions. He drank the tea and the next thing he knew, he was trying to turn off the alarm blasting in his ear at 10 in the morning.

Jake turned off the alarm on his phone, and the first thing he saw was a text.

[Messages]

Maybe: Amy: *Hey, it's Amy from next door. I saw your letter. You can take me to Staples, but I'll have to decide if I want your help on the binder. You did break my toe, after all.*

You: *I feel so awful about that. Are you okay?*

Maybe: Amy: *Yeah, I went to a nearby Urgent Care, I'm just in a boot for a while. I was gonna sign up to audition for the dance team today, but I guess that isn't happening. But it's all cool, it'll give me more time to look at other booths at the club fair anyway. I'll see you afterwards. Meet outside our rooms?*

You: *Sounds good.*

Jake felt awful that he had broken Amy's toe. He shut off his phone and got ready for the club fair so he would have time to do something important he had planned.

Chapter End Notes

I promise it gets more interesting soon :) But I can't promise there won't be a bunch of bumps along the way. Buckle your seatbelts, everybody. We could be encountering some turbulence for a while (yes I know I'm using metaphors from different types of transportation just,,, moving on).

Starting From Scratch

Chapter Summary

This is where it starts to get good, but I need to draw this whole plot out, so don't get too excited!

Chapter Notes

This one switches POVs a lot, but I love the way it comes together for their relationships with each other. I hope you enjoy!

Amy

Amy Santiago had been ready for the club fair for months. She had a whole folder dedicated to each club, their purpose, their reputation, the time commitment, all of it down to a tea. Except that now her toe was broken, and all of that was thrown off track. Rarely in her lifetime has Amy encountered a situation in which she didn't know what to do. All previous situations of this include: when she got fired from her first job, as a librarian assistant, for disturbing readers while trying to organize books; when she finished the Harry Potter series and all the movies; when she was being bullied at school; and now: when something in her extensive plans had gone off track.

Amy had it all planned out: she was going to join the dance team, the debate team, and the book club. She was never great at dancing, but she enjoyed it, and the dance team was supposed to be her one place where she can harness her feelings into movement. Amy needed a new outlet. But she had no binder after last night's incident, and she had no plan. Amy felt her stomach drop as her breathing became heavier. Her head felt like it was spinning and her whole body was shaking. In her head, thousands of negative thoughts whisked around, taking their turns to remind her of how awful this situation felt. Her heart began beating faster as she felt paralyzed. As she stared at the different booths, all she could think about was that her perfectly planned out semester schedule balanced with activities, class, studying, and free time, was all out the window. Her thoughts were clouded, and it wasn't until Kylie shook her that she returned to reality.

"Are you okay? You seem really stressed" Kylie asked.

"Yeah, I'm fine!" Amy lied nervously. She didn't want her roommate to figure out how obsessive she is about this stuff, not this soon at least. Amy tried not to think about it, and she decided to still sign up for debate and the book club. But deep down, she knew it wasn't enough. What Amy Santiago needed was more time, and while she knew she could join another club at any moment, she also knew she wouldn't get the full experience of every event.

Amy felt relieved when the club fair had ended. She still felt regretful and upset about the dance team, but auditions were next week, and Amy's doctor said she'd be in the boot for another month. She would have to wait until next semester. This realization made her shudder. Kylie had gone to hang out with some cheer teammates, it wasn't competitive cheer but Kylie had been telling Amy all about how they had always wanted to do casual cheer. So Amy was alone in her room, anxious as ever. She opened up a window and pulled out a cigarette, hoping nobody would recognize her face from the window. She sat by the windowsill and tried to smoke her way to relaxation until she hears a knock on her door. Amy checks her watch, and realizes it had been 10 minutes since she was supposed to meet Jake outside of her room. She quickly put out and discarded her cigarette, and sprayed some perfume in hopes of masking any scent of it. Amy grabbed her bag and opened up the door, shutting it immediately so as to not let any smokey smell get into the hallway.

"You okay? You seem really... anxious" Jake said in a tone that almost expressed concern, but not enough to seem like he cared.

"I'm fine. Let's just go, okay?" Amy replied. Amy knew Jake felt bad about everything, and she didn't want him to know he was part of the reason she is so overwhelmed. Despite his tough guy persona, Amy had a feeling that deep down, Jake was a really caring guy. She wondered why he doesn't like to show it.

When Jake and Amy arrived in the parking lot, Jake opened the car door to motion Amy in.

"This is a pretty sweet car," Amy said.

"Thanks. It tends to impress people" Jake winked.

Ugh, really? Could he be any more of a player? That was sooooo unnecessary, Amy thought.

Jake turned up the volume on his radio and began blasting his rock mixtape. Amy liked the music, but she didn't want to give him that satisfaction, so she sat in the car unamused for the whole 5 minute drive to Staples.

Jake

When the two arrived at Staples, Jake watched as Amy eagerly slammed the car door shut and power walked toward the entrance to the store. Never had he seen somebody so eager to get office supplies. He chuckled out of Amy's hearing range, amused at her excitement. As they opened the doors, Jake could tell this was Amy's happy place. She had this cute little look in her eyes like a kid at Disneyworld for the first time, and Jake's heart wanted to melt a little bit seeing he made her so happy. Or, well, no, that's not how he felt, nope, no feelings at all. Jake was just neutral at a Staples with some girl he accidentally ran into. That's all it ever was and that was all he'd ever let it become. Jake returned his focus to the task at hand: getting a new binder. Amy showed him to the binder section. He suggested some different cheap plastic ones, but it became very clear that Amy would only settle for a perfect binder. Jake walked up and down aisles until he stumbled upon a section of binders with built in dividers. "Hey, Ames," he froze before quickly clearing his throat, convincing himself nothing had happened. "Uh, I meant Amy, come check this out!" Fortunately, Amy hadn't seemed to notice after she took one look at the binder he had picked out. It was a baby blue binder with options for 10 different dividers. It had 5 inch rings and was seemingly unbreakable based on the strength of the material.

"This is perfect" Amy said with awe and satisfaction. She leaned in to give Jake a hug, and he could smell her sweet shampoo in her freshly washed hair. As she went in for the hug, Jake quickly ended it after realizing he was letting himself get too close. *This is not who I am, and it is not who I want to ever become. At least not in College* Jake reminded himself.

Jake threw in some glitter, some new pens and sharpies, tape, highlighters, and glue, and the two checked out and headed back.

Jake wanted nothing more than to go back to his room and take a shower to clear his head. He needed to stop thinking about Amy Santiago. But when she asked him if he would come help her fix some of it, he would've felt bad saying no.

Amy

Amy has always been a pretty private person, especially when it comes to her goals. But Jake Peralta had found her a perfect binder, and she could use the help printing things, given her boot made it so difficult to run back and forth from the printer room. *I will let him help, I just will make sure he doesn't look at anything and kick him out after I don't need him to finish the binder*, Amy vowed to herself silently.

Once Jake and Amy had laid out all the materials, Amy began explaining how this would go. "You will be helping me grab stuff from the printer, and like I promised earlier, you can help with the glitter. But you can't read my stuff, okay?"

"Sure, Santiago" he chuckled. Amy gave him a look suggesting that she's being serious, but she secretly liked being called Santiago. She liked the way it rolled off of Jake's tongue. It somehow sounded more personal coming from him than others. She was never a big fan of nicknames, but she didn't give Jake the stop light like she normally would with others.

Amy grabbed some sharpies and got to work. The cover would come last, Amy knew, because it had to be perfect, and if she messed this cover up, she'd hate the rest of the binder too. So she began with the first section of her binder: classes.

Jake

Jake had known Amy was thorough, but this was next level. She had a whole section dedicated to classes, encompassing everything from ratings from Rate My Professor to a 4-year course plan perfectly mapping out her college career. Amy had most of this information saved on her computer, thankfully, but Jake had to do a LOT of trips to the printer room. He played some of his rock music softly, which he could tell Amy liked, no matter how hard she tried to hide it. Amy Santiago was clearly terrible at lying. Which is no shocker considering her goody-two-shoes teacher's pet reputation. Sometimes, if she was absorbed enough in what she was doing, Jake could catch glimpses of Amy bopping her head and mouthing the words to some of the songs. But he knew if he said anything, she'd stop. And part of him didn't want her to stop.

The next section of Amy's binder was extracurriculars. Jake saw Amy grow a little anxious when beginning this section, and he felt bad. But he knew if he comforted her, it would make him seem soft and weak. So he said nothing. But he made a mental note about it. Amy was pretty closed off while they worked on schedules, events, engagement plans, and member rosters. He just went back and forth from the printer and helped with any taping or glueing needed. It went pretty quickly with Amy doing it mostly on her own. Jake felt weird with the silence, but the music eased it a little, and he figured Amy just needed time.

They worked section after section, from meal plan budgets to maps of the campus and surrounding Brooklyn area to college bucket lists, which, for the record, Jake was not allowed to look at.

"Alright! We're almost done! All we have left is the code of rules." Amy said with an exhausted enthusiasm.

"Code of rules?" Jake asked mockingly.

"Yes, a code of rules. Things I need to follow in order to be successful in college." Amy said confidently.

"Like what?" Jake teased.

"Wouldn't you like to know? My rules are for me and me only. You can stay to help me do the finishing touches. Just promise you won't look?" Amy said softly.

"Promise."

Amy

Amy's rules were her ultimate pride and joy. She had spent years putting together a perfect college plan, and her rules guaranteed an airtight plan to success. She began writing them out one by one, feeling reassured that she was a good rule follower.

Rule #1: Never push homework off to the night before. *Procrastination ensures you will miss at least one deadline. You cannot miss a deadline, it's not even my rules, it's the rules of college classes.*

Rule #2: Partying is for the weekends. *Weekdays are for homework and studying.*

Rule #3: If you don't study, you will fail. *Studying thoroughly, of course. Flashcards, highlighters, memorization, application. Keys to success.*

Rule #4: A good relationship with authority guarantees a good future of connections and help. *That's where the professor ratings come in.*

Rule #5: If you don't balance your life, you'll fall off. *Extracurriculars, studying, class, and social life. All must stay perfectly balanced.*

Rule #6: Take diligent notes. *Pretty straightforward.*

Rule #7: Limit screen time. *Helps with sleep and mental health. Duh.*

Rule #8: Always do the optional recommended work. *Recommended reading means expected reading. That's the best way to look at it.*

Rule #9: Keep a tidy room for optimal studying spaces.

Rule #10: NO RELATIONSHIPS, NO DATING, NO ANYTHING. *It will only distract me from my goals in life. I can't afford to get caught up in a relationship when I should be focusing on my academics.*

These were Amy's 10 rules to live by for the next four years. And she stood by them.

Jake

When Amy finished writing out her rules, she walked over to where Jake was sitting, queuing his next songs on his playlist. She tapped his shoulder. He turned around to see her messy hair, wearing loose sweats and her makeup lightly smudged. He looked at the clock. It was already nearly midnight. They had been working all day. Jake stood up in response to her tap, trying to hide back a smile.

"Hey, I just wanted to thank you for all of your help. You could have just left me to fix my own problems. I appreciate you making things better. And I obviously accept your apology. Just maybe learn to hold your booze next time" she teased.

In that moment, maybe it was the exhaustion, but Jake had been more attracted to Amy than ever before. Without thinking, he leaned in to kiss her. When she realized what was happening, Amy quickly broke off the soft, stupid kiss. Jake had opened his eyes, feeling ashamed, when he accidentally glanced over at Amy's binder to see rule #10. No relationships, no dating, no anything.

"I- I don't know what just happened or why I did that, I am so so-"

"You should leave" Amy said disappointedly.

Jake quickly rushed back to his room, where he told Charles he was heading to sleep. Jake sat in his bed staring at his ceiling for hours.

Why the hell did I do that? What the fuck is wrong with me? I don't even want a relationship, and Amy doesn't want anything, so I need to stop this. What am I supposed to do now?

Jake's phone pinged.

[Messages]

Maybe: Amy: *Hey, can we talk about what happened?*

Read at 3:24 am

All Jake wanted-no-needed, was to never see Amy ever again. What he needed was a distraction. And fast.

Dance! Dance! Resolutions?

Chapter Summary

No. Chapter summaries are cheating. Read the chapter, fool. But ily. xo

Chapter Notes

There are a lot of phone messages mixed in with POVs. Anything right next to a bolded section is a message. Messages are all in italics. For example, in this situation,

[Messages]

(Bolded Unknown Caller): (*Italicized message*)

(After that enter space above, this is a narration. Italicized words are thoughts. But, if we go back to...)

(Bolded You): (*Italicized message that is a part of the text*)

I hope that made sense! Just look for bold, I strictly bold the message contacts so as to not throw anybody off.

Anyway, some of this is super boring I'm not gonna lie, but I don't write useless content, know that. Everything happens for a certain reason that y'all will understand the more you read mwahahaha

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Amy

It had been exactly a week since what Amy now referred to as "the incident" with Jake. She felt stupid. Not because he kissed her, but because for a split second, she let him, and she liked it. Amy Santiago could not let herself develop feelings. Besides, it had been a whole week since they had even made eye contact. The closest interaction Amy had had with Jake since the incident was when she nearly bumped into him when she was walking into her room and he was escorting some random hookup out of his room. Jake truly was a player if Amy had ever seen one. His dorm wasn't exactly sound proof, and that's all she'd ever say on the matter.

Sometimes, she caught herself daydreaming about the way his soft lips felt against her own. But she would stop herself, shifting her focus to something more productive. She wanted to talk to Jake about what happened, but it was clear he wasn't interested in discussing it. That was the hardest part. Now it was just weird.

As Amy was getting ready for her first class that Monday, she felt her phone buzz.

[Messages]

Maybe: Gina Linetti: *Hey Amy! This is Gina Linetti, captain of the UBrooklyn Dance Squad! I just wanted to remind you that we have practice today at 5pm sharp at the dance hall, don't be late and show up in something comfortable!*

Amy was confused as ever. She had decided to wait to do the dance team until next semester because she couldn't audition due to her injury. *What is going on?* She wondered.

You: *Hi Gina! I'm so sorry, you must have the wrong Amy. I didn't sign up for the dance squad.*

Maybe: Gina Linetti: *This is Amy Santiago, right? I got your number from some guy named Jake, he said you were in a boot but that you'd be out soon. He insisted you'd be a good addition last week after the club fair. You can sit on the side bench and watch and learn our routines until you're out of the boot, then you're on the team, if you want the spot. This Jake guy spoke pretty highly of you, so I trust in this decision if you trust in me. He sent over some old recordings of you, some home videos from earlier this year it looks like. You clearly have a lot of passion, and your moves aren't bad. We want you on the team. You in?*

Jake talked to Gina for me? Why would he even do that? He's been ignoring me all week! But... I don't know, that's kinda sweet of him. But no, he's still a jerk who kissed me and ditched me and I cannot excuse that. How did he even get those recordings? He doesn't know anybody from my home life. That's creepy, right?

You: *I'll see you at 5pm.*

Amy's body was whirling with emotions. She was excited to be on the dance squad. Relieved her life was mostly back on track. Feeling good about the new social scene she was about to enter. Still confused about how Jake pulled this off. Still mad at him for everything. Still missing him deep down.

Jake

It had been one week since Jake had decided he needed to get over Amy Santiago. Within that week, Jake had hooked up with 6 different people who he hoped to never see again, he got drunk pretty much every single night, and he went to the gym for multiple hours a day as a distraction. And it was finally starting to work. Thank god, too, because Charles was definitely getting sick of the routine.

Jake's plan for pretty much anything that caused him distress was just to shove it aside and pretend it never existed. He did that with his dad, he did that with the kids who bullied him in middle school, he did that with his many many mental issues, and he was doing it with Amy Santiago. And Jake Peralta had no shame for it. It was his new school year's resolution: hooking up was his only option, and feelings were for the week.

Monday was Jake's first day of football practice, and he was thrilled to finally have his outlet back. When he is playing football, no problem in the world could shake his mood. He was high off of sheer adrenaline, he was focused, he was in his essence. He was ready to get back out on the field.

The football team was having their preseason game that Friday, and Charles was already mapping out his plan for a celebratory cake, as Charles Boyle does. Jake was excited to play, and Charles was excited to meet girls on the cheerleading squad and invite them to the after party to impress them with his baking skills. It was all Charles had been talking about since Jake had invited him to the game. Jake was nervous to see Teddy for the first time since they nearly hooked up. It was this weird internal conflict where Jake had to choose between a) pretending nothing happened and never speaking to Teddy ever again, b) talking to Teddy about it and defusing the awkwardness of it, c) hooking up with Teddy for real this time but without the commitment afterwards which could make things even more awkward, or d) not thinking about the situation at all. For now, Jake was going to stick with option d. Shocker.

Jake's first ever college class was a biology lab, one of his general requirements. Jake was never the best at science, but he loved those experiments where things would blow up. But biology seemed like the easiest science option, so it was the one he decided to take.

When Jake walked into his lab, he first noticed three important things: 1. His professor, Dr. Smith, was a lot younger than Jake had expected. 2. There weren't any cool weird animals like there were in middle school science rooms. 3. Jake was late, and there was only one open seat: the middle of a 3-person table. Who were the people on the outside seats? Teddy and Amy. *Just my fucking luck.* Jake awkwardly sat down and suffered through the lesson as Amy continuously raised her hand and Teddy would just say "Good question!" or "I agree!" to literally anything Amy would say. Jake could make it through the day. He would just have to actually show up on time next class.

Just when Jake thought he had powered through the worst of it, Dr. Smith made an announcement.

"Before I let you all go, I wanted to let you know that the people at your table right now will be your lab partners for the rest of the semester. You will begin your first lab next week. In the meantime, please do the textbook reading on the board for next class as we discuss the introduction to how you will be executing your work this year." Students all around the room groaned, Jake and Amy included. Teddy seemed excited, though Jake couldn't quite tell if it was about him or Amy. Maybe both? Nevermind. Jake was screwed now regardless. He had to face both of the people he had been working so hard to avoid. But he still had some time to get his shit together before he had to face them. So he would dedicate as much time as possible to avoiding them both.

Amy

When Amy arrived at dance practice, she felt a relaxing breeze brush against her face as she opened the door to the well air-conditioned building. She hobbled over on her boot to meet everybody, and was immediately greeted by an intimidating, tall girl wearing a flashy outfit and a high ponytail.

"You must be Amy! I'm Gina, welcome to the Brooklyn Beaches, get it because like bitches but not! Anyway, you'll want to watch me during this. I know what I'm doing, it's why I'm captain. Anyway, meet the rest of the squad. I'm a junior, so are Stella and Caroline." Gina

said while pointing around the room. Amy made mental notes of names with faces. She was determined to remember them all. "Over here are our resident elderly, aka our seniors, Victoria, James, and Eric. Next you've got our sophomores, Alex, Megan, Jess, and Danny. Lastly, our other fresh meat. You, obviously, then Zoe, Nadya, Eli, Olive, and Rosa." Gina wrapped up.

"Zoe, Nadya, Doug, Olive, Rosa," Amy softly repeated to herself. She looked down at her boot in dismay as she took a seat on the side and watched the other members practice. It was awkward, but everybody was really understanding. Amy took notes the whole time, counting beats by tapping her boot to the tempo.

As Amy was getting up to leave, four people approached her. She sorted through her memory and identified them as Nadya, Olive, Zoe, and Danny.

"Hey, we noticed you couldn't dance because of your boot, but we were about to head out to the bar after quick showers, and we wanted to see if you wanted to come?" Nadya asked.

This was a big moment for Amy. On the one hand, it was a really good opportunity to get close with her squad and develop a solid social life. On the other hand, it was a Monday night, and Amy wanted to get ahead on her lab reading. *But is going to a bar really considered partying? Plus, as long as I stay sober and don't stay out too late, it's fine. Besides, my lab reading isn't due for another two days.*

"I'm in" Amy said enthusiastically. This was Amy's first of many mistakes of the evening.

Jake

Football practice had been great. Jake had talked to Teddy as if nothing had ever happened, and it was working, he thought, because Teddy didn't seem awkward or off about it. So that was a score on Jake's board. The coach was great, and Jake was already making friends. After Jake hopped out of the shower, he got a text from Doug, one of his teammates from down the hall.

[Messages]

Doug Judy: *Hey, man. The team is heading down to the local bar tonight. You comin?*

You: *Absolutely. See you there.*

Jake quickly got dressed and began heading over. After all that stress from the bio situation, he could use some drinks.

When Jake arrived at the bar, he found the table of his teammates and strutted over there, still pumping adrenaline from the excitement of having had their first practice. They all went around and everybody ordered drinks and appetizers. They were laughing, joking around, having a great time. Jake got up to run to the bathroom, but before he made it to the door, he bumped into somebody.

"I'm so sorry, football has me used to tackling people, so I guess I must have bumped into you a bit too hard" he said charmingly. It was his best attempt at some kind of braggy pick up line, but it felt like a good way to fit in that he was a football player.

"Well sounds like you might be too aggressive on the field, ever consider that?" the girl teased. She held out her hand. "I'm Zoe" she said with a smile.

"Jake. You ever play football though? Aggression is the whole game." Jake tried to say in a flirtatious way.

"I guess I'm just a bit too submissive to be the first to tackle others" Zoe bit her lip and ran her hands through her hair. She was totally into him.

"You know, if you don't tackle, you get tackled."

"That's a chance I'm willing to take," Zoe responded seductively, her body drawing closer to him.

Amy

"A round for the table, please" Olive said as they excitedly ordered after dance practice.

"Oh, none for me, thanks, though" Amy said shyly. She didn't want anybody to think she was lame, but she promised herself she wouldn't drink that night. Everybody around her was drinking, but she didn't feel too out of place, because they were all still talking and having a good time. Amy finally felt as though she was fitting in somewhere for the first time in her life. Everybody was so energetic and fun, and since it was all about dance, people actually tried to be perfect, and all of a sudden Amy's perfectionist trait was the norm in her new environment. She couldn't wait to go back and tell Kylie all about it. Kylie and Amy were starting to get closer, and Amy felt like she could really trust Kylie. It was nice. Amy was making real, genuine friendships. She smiled. But not for long.

Amy looked up from her glass of water she was drinking to see Zoe stumbling out practically attached to the lips of some guy. But not just any 'some guy'. Jake Peralta some guy. Amy didn't know how to feel. Why did she feel somewhat jealous? Almost angry? Sad? Amy's brain shut off. Next thing she knew, she was already two drinks in, screaming along to the soft music playing in the bar.

Every time Amy thought about Jake, she just ordered another shot. It felt like it was all she could do in the moment. She was dancing on the table until she saw Jake's empty seat over where the football team was hanging out. Bottoms up. At some point, she was pretty sure she ran her hands through Teddy's hair. *Really, Santiago? Keep it in your pants. Rule 10.*

By drink 5, Amy was bragging about her academic accomplishments. It could have gone terribly, if not for the fact that everybody else at the table was already on round 11. So nobody could really process a thing.

The door opened, and Amy turned around, flipping her hair as if she was on camera and life was moving in a sexy slo-mo. Her hair dropped back, life speeding back up to reality. It was Jake. He ran over to grab his jacket from Doug, and before Amy could even register what was happening, his messy hair and lazily buttoned shirt were flying out the door. Amy watched him jog away.

"Another round, please!" Amy shouted.

Second mistake of the night. Six drink Amy.

Chapter End Notes

Character dedications!

Victoria- @Munoz18Victoria on twitter

Stella- @Ravenreyes_kru on twitter

Nadya- @dojang__ on twitter

Seven Drink Amy?

Chapter Summary

We've heard of 1-5 drink Amy, we saw 6 drink Amy, but what is 7 drink Amy like?

Chapter Notes

This is where shit starts getting real good. I'm probably more excited than you are. This chapter might end up being somewhat on the shorter side. I'm gonna start exploring more side character add-ins as well and make them more relevant to the plot. We will see how that goes.

Amy

Amy was hurt. Maybe the sixth drink wasn't helping. But she was really, really hurt. Not by Zoe. Amy didn't choose to tell anybody else about what happened, and she had to own up to those decisions. Frankly, she wasn't totally hurt by Jake either. He could sleep with whoever he wanted. Amy Santiago was hurt that in that moment, she wasn't Zoe. And maybe, just maybe, if she hadn't pushed Jake away, she could've been. Amy knew relationships weren't good for her in college. She didn't want to change that. But she was drunk and she was sad, and she couldn't change that feeling if she tried.

There was only one solution, and Amy knew deep down that she'd regret exploring it.

"Can I get another drink, please?" she shouted across the room.

Third mistake of the evening: entering the unknown.

Seven drink Amy had never happened before. Amy was as blind to what would happen as the rest of her friends were. None of them could have seen seven drink Amy coming, not in the

way she did (title of her sex tape haha).

As her seventh drink kicked in, Amy Santiago was no longer sad, confident, horny, dance-pants, loud, or spacey. Well, she was still loud. She was drunk after all. But no. Seven drink Amy was angry. Not yell at your parents because they took away your phone angry. More like a 'why did you kiss me and why did you leave me and why did you ignore me and why don't you want me' angry. Amy was drunk, and all logic was out the window maybe 4 drinks in. This was a whole new Amy Santiago, and she was about to regret everything she did.

Jake

Jake had seen Amy when he was leaving to grab his jacket. Truth is, after he figured out Zoe was on the dance squad with Amy (which didn't take long during small talk on the way to his dorm room), he bailed out. As embarrassing as it was, Jake Peralta had made a weak decision. But it honestly could have been worse. The only person who ever had to know was Zoe. She agreed she wouldn't tell anybody what happened, and in exchange, he promised he'd set her up with one of his teammates. She said she was more of a relationship person anyway. *Gross*. Jake realized he had forgotten his jacket, and none of the guys would answer his texts, so he ran in and out of the bar as quickly as he could; he didn't want to look at Amy. She made him weak. The bad type of weak. The type of weak Jake's father would tease him for. The kind of weak Jake's father was. Amy made him feel like he could throw out the rest of his future and still be okay because he had her. That's like what his dad did, only instead of ditching his job for his family, Roger Peralta ditched his family for work and booze and hookups. *Shit, am I turning into my father?* Jake worried. Jake didn't want to soften up. It would wreck his reputation and probably his football career. But was he becoming like his father? These thoughts would begin to haunt his dreams for weeks.

Jake hurried back to his dorm. All he wanted was to hang out with Charles and watch sitcoms and forget about his father. But on his way back, his phone buzzed.

[Messages]

Teddy Wells-Ramos: *Hey Jake, are you okay? I saw the way you ran in and out of the bar a bit ago, and you seemed kind of shaken up, but not in a good way. What happened with Zoe?*

Jake honestly appreciated the text. As weird as it was, he liked having Teddy as a friend. Sure, he was a bit boring at times, but he was a good friend and was really empathetic. But he would never admit that to Teddy.

You: *Hey! Thanks for texting, I'm fine, Zoe was just too sore from dance practice. You know how that dance squad gets...*

Teddy Wells-Ramos: *Haha yeah, I get it.*

Teddy Wells-Ramos : *Speaking of, what do you think of that Amy girl? I saw her staring our way earlier. Do you think she's into me? I think I might make a move. Should I?*

Jake was never one to make many decisions. Anything with more than one option usually involved a coin toss, a friend's advice, or picking numbers. But now he had to actually put his head together and think. Jake had two ways he could take this. He could tell Teddy to make a move. Teddy would likely get rejected, because of Amy's rules, or he would succeed, and Jake would actually have to move on this time. And either way the bio lab would probably suck. If he told Teddy no, Teddy would definitely pry and Jake would have to tell him everything, but Jake Peralta does not like letting down walls. Any walls. Plus, Jake would have to talk about his feelings. Another thing he doesn't like. And it would still ruin the dynamic of their bio lab. But Jake did not want to get involved. And for the first time in a while, Jake came up with a compromise all on his own. Yep, he made a decision. No coin, no advice, no numbers.

You: *Honestly dude, just go with your gut.*

Perfect.

Jake walked to his dorm and settled down, even though Charles wasn't there. Where Charles was? Jake had no clue. But he turned the tv on anyway. He had it on for about five minutes, before hearing a knock on his door and turning the tv off again.

Amy

Amy had planned out just about none of what she was going to say. All she knew was she was drunk, she was angry, and she was knocking on Jake's door.

When Jake opened the door, he didn't even get the chance to finish asking her what's wrong before she escorted herself in and slammed the door behind her.

"What the hell, Peralta?" She snapped.

"Okay, so we *are* doing last names, noted. But what are you talking about?" Jake asked.

Amy was angry. And she was getting louder every time he spoke. It's as if she was trying to overpower his voice to assert her dominance.

"You wanna know what I'm talking about? I'm talking about you kissing me last week, then ignoring me and pretending like nothing ever happened. I'm talking about you leaving me on read when you knew I wanted to talk about it. I'm talking about you not even daring to look at me for the past week. I'm talking about you being nice one moment and then totally switching up the next. I'm talking about you being a fraud, Jacob Peralta. You act all tough and bad boy and unaffected by everything, and hurting others in the process. Your whole life is a total persona and you can't even see it! You are such a dick, and until you are willing to admit that, you aren't going to change. I was so pissed that you were ignoring me. But maybe I should've been trying harder to ignore you. Because clearly you aren't the person I thought you were. And I don't think I want to be friends with this little character you've put on. Go to the theatre, Peralta, so you can audition for some new acts to put on; because this one is getting real fucking old."

And with that, seven drink Amy stormed back into her room, plopped on her bed, and chugged a water bottle just to throw the empty plastic across the room (and then pick it up and dispose of it properly, of course. Pent up anger was no excuse for littering). She heard a knock on her door. She didn't answer. Another knock. Amy stayed put.

Amy's phone buzzed.

[Messages]

Jake Peralta: *Look, Santiago, you're obviously super drunk. Can we talk about this tomorrow?*

You: *Amy. It's Amy. And no. I have some homework to catch up on.*

Jake

Jake obviously felt shitty. He hadn't realized he was upsetting Amy by ignoring her. He had thought it was for the best. He never really considered what kinds of consequences it would have on others.

As much as he didn't want to be, Jake was a bit worried about Amy. She got drunk on a Monday night, which strictly violates Rule #2 in Amy's binder, 'Partying is for the weekends'. Plus, she said she hadn't caught up on all her homework. Amy Santiago was not one to push off homework, ever. Especially since it violated Rule #1, 'Never push homework off to the night before'. Maybe Jake was worried about her because he cared. But he didn't want to believe that was true. So he decided on the other possibility: he was worried that if Amy was willing to break rules from her binder, if Teddy asked her out, maybe she'd break that rule too. It wasn't much better for Jake to admit he was worried about this, considering it still kind of admitted he deep down was at least slightly into Amy.

Well, regardless, it didn't matter what happened with Teddy; bio lab was going to be awkward no matter what now.

Amy

When Amy felt her phone go off again, she almost didn't check it. She didn't want it to be Jake. She really didn't want it to be Jake. She had finally begun sobering up and she didn't even want to think about all the things she had said or felt.

[Messages]

Kylie Baker: *Hey girl! I met this cute girl, Rosa, said she's on your dance squad, which congrats by the way eeeeeek! Anyway, we started talking, and I'm gonna be spending the night at her place ;) I'll see you tomorrow, I wanna hear all about everything!*

Amy was excited for Kylie, but she honestly could really use a friend. She didn't want to walk Kylie through the whole story, but having some comfort people wouldn't hurt. Amy's phone buzzed again.

Maybe: Nadya: *Hey Ames! It's Nadya, from dance! Gina gave me your number so I could add you to the groupchat, but I wanted to reach out privately. Are you okay? Olive said that while I was in the bathroom you ran out of the bar. They said you seemed pretty upset. Can I come over? I have a punching pillow I can bring.*

Amy remembered Nadya. She was really sweet and a talented dancer. As much as Amy needed to go to bed, she had made enough mistakes tonight to know this decision would at least be on the better end of things she did that day.

You: *Yeah, that would be nice. I'm in the Nine-Nine hall, room 522.*

And within 10 minutes, Nadya was knocking on Amy's door. Amy invited her onto her bed, and sat on Kylie's bed across from Nadya, since Amy knew Kylie wouldn't mind if she sat on her bed.

Amy wasn't expecting to tell Nadya anything, more or less everything. But Amy was already on a roll, why break a mistake making streak /sarcasm/!

So Amy and Nadya stayed up until two in the morning, and Amy unpacked it all. Nadya offered up advice, but Amy turned down the offer. She wanted to figure this out on her own. But what her and Nadya had ended up deciding was that Amy's best option was to start over with Jake and try to consider being friends, if Jake could be himself this time around. But nothing more than friends, they had agreed, because Amy was sticking to her rules. After that night, she could clearly see that nothing was worth steering off track. It only made her life worse. But, it did mean Amy would have to talk to Jake, since they were still lab partners and needed to make things not super weird for class. But just when Amy thought she could fix the bio dynamic, she got a late night text from a contact she didn't recognize.

[Messages]

Maybe: Teddy Wells-Ramos: *Hey, Amy, it's Teddy Wells-Ramos, I'm in your bio lab group. I saw you at the bar earlier and you seemed really fun. I was wondering if you'd maybe wanna go out some time?*

Great /sarcasm/, Amy thought. As if this shit wasn't already dysfunctional and testosterone dominated enough.

Game On

Chapter Notes

This chapter is a bit shorter, just because it felt like an appropriate place to leave off at chapter 6. Enjoy, and please spread the word about this fic to friends, if it gets big I have plans to do a series fic where after this one ends, I make another one which follows them from the point we leave off with this fic once I finish it.

Amy

"Dear ~~Diary~~ Journal,

Let's do a quick recap: My bio lab group: Jake Peralta, Teddy Wells-Ramos, and myself. Jake and Teddy nearly hooked up. Now they're football teammates. Jake and I briefly kissed. Then I confronted him last night in a drunk fury. Now that's even weirder than it was before. And, well, Teddy just asked me out. So if my calculations are correct, this is one hell of a rejection love triangle. Or should I say a friend-zoned triangle. I rejected Teddy, obviously. He seems nice and all, but after last night, I'm done breaking rules. I finally caught up on my bio reading. I have class again today. Even though our lab group work doesn't technically start until next week, I am already dreading all of this. Why must college throw me for a loop so soon? I had it all planned out. Stupid rule breaking. Karma I suppose. But I'm gonna fix things with Jake. I just need to make a plan first, since we saw where winging it got me. Wish me luck.

Amy"

Jake

Bio class that day could not have been more awkward for Jake. Teddy seemed quiet and cold the whole time, Amy was ultra-focused on the class, and Jake just sat there trying to make sense of the lesson while sorting his thoughts from everything that had happened the night before. And frankly, he was still trying to sort through his feelings, as gross as it felt. He had called his mom the night before. He honestly didn't know who else to call. He needed advice. His mom wasn't the most helpful with that stuff, but she had told him to follow his heart if it was steering him in the right direction. Now, Jake just had to figure out what the hell that meant.

Toward the end of class, Jake's phone buzzed. He doesn't get a ton of texts during class hours, but he checked regardless.

[Messages]

Santiago: *Meet me in the quad in 10 minutes. I feel bad.*

Jake was trying to hide a smile. Amy Santiago had texted him during class; the thought made him chuckle. It was quite out of character for her. But he was glad she wanted to talk. Only, that meant he now had just 10 minutes to figure out his entire game plan.

When Jake got to the quad after class, Amy was sitting on a picnic blanket in the middle of the grass with some snacks neatly spread out.

"Hey. I feel really bad, about everything. I was drunk and I was mad because I really want to be friends but you felt so cold and fake around me. But I want to start over. We don't have to be friends, but I don't want to be living across from an enemy. Can we clean the slate? I brought snacks. I figured we could just, I don't know, talk?" Amy said. She seemed really nervous the whole time. It was cute in a way. But the word friends made Jake's heart sink a little if he was telling the truth. He didn't know where he was at, but maybe he wanted something more with Amy. But he knew it couldn't happen; Amy is a rule follower at heart.

"I'd like that," Jake said, trying his best to shake himself of his cocky persona he usually put on around others. He was a bit disappointed, but he didn't show it. What he really needed was to talk to Charles.

The two sat there for 45 minutes and talked about bio class and dance and football and mostly just casual college talk. Jake was dying to leave, though. He needed to talk it out for real this time. So the second he found the right opportunity, he made some excuse about needing to do homework and power walked straight to his dorm.

When Jake opened his dorm door, he was relieved to see Charles sitting at his desk. "Charles, thank god you're here. Can I talk to you about something?" Jake asked softly. It was embarrassing for him to admit he had emotions. But it was his best option. So he told Charles everything.

"But how do you feel, Jake? What's the issue if you don't want a relationship anyway?" Charles asked.

"The issue is my stupid emotions. I can't get into a relationship. I'd screw it up just like my dad, and what if I just left one day? How could I do that to another person? And Amy doesn't want anything at all. She doesn't want it to interfere with college. Besides, I could never give her what she deserves. I think I want to be more than friends with her. But she just wants friends at most. How can I be friends with her if she makes me feel this way? It's setting myself up for disaster. But she was right. I have been acting like a dick. And if I choose to not be friends with her, that's me being a dick. So how do I do this? How do I become friends with her without getting hurt?" Jake had felt a sense of relief. He had actually let some walls down, and it felt good. Like a breath of fresh air. Maybe this whole feelings thing wasn't as bad as he thought it would be.

"Jake, I honestly think you just need to take things slow. Just try to move one step at a time, and think with your brain instead of your penis. Just be nice. Maybe being friends won't end up being as bad as you think. Plus, you could use a break from trying to sleep around. Maybe you just need to let people come to you" Charles said.

"Let People Come to You title of your sex tape" Jake joked. "But seriously, thanks. That's really good advice. I think I'll go with it."

Amy

When Amy got back to her room, she felt relieved that it was all working out with Jake. Now she didn't need to explain everything to Kylie, or to Rosa, who has been hanging out in their room with Kylie all day. They were super cute together though, Amy had to admit.

"Amy! Perfect timing. You and Rosa, this Friday evening, what are you guys doing?" Kylie asked with a smile. Both girls shook their heads.

"Great, because now you have plans. I want you both at my first cheer event, it's for the football preseason game. I want you to come and support me!" Kylie was clearly too excited for their presence for either girl to say no, even though Amy knew it meant she would see Jake there. But, hey, it was okay, because they were gonna be friends now. Or something. Amy decided to invite Nadya and Olive as well so she'd have more friends to hang out with. And so would Rosa, since they all did dance together.

The next few days went fine. Bio was less awkward for Amy and Jake, though Teddy's presence made it mildly weird. Amy had stuck to her rules and was doing well in her classes so far, and she had spent pretty much every day either in her room with Kylie and Rosa or out with Nadya. Things were finally starting to settle in.

That Friday afternoon, Nadya had invited everybody over to get ready. She said she wanted them to look spirited, so Amy had no idea what was in store.

When Amy arrived at Nadya's dorm for the first time, she honestly wasn't sure what to expect. Nadya was a very organized, kind person, but she always felt a bit chaotic too. And Olive was Nadya's roommate, though Olive was much more gothy grunge type. But Amy was surprised to see their room was a very simple white and black contrast, though it certainly made the most sense. The two were very neat, neater than Kylie had kept their room, and it was refreshing for Amy to be reminded of the similarities she shared with her new college friends. What she wasn't expecting at all was their look. Nadya was wearing an orange crop-top and pleated short royal-blue skirt, with Airforce One sneakers, high Nike socks, and orange and blue stripes painted on her face. Olive, on the other hand, was in a loose orange t shirt and baggy jeans, with sneakers and orange and blue themed eyeshadow for her makeup. Amy was not prepared for what makeover was about to happen.

Rosa showed up about 20 minutes later, wearing all black, as Rosa did. Nadya and Olive pestered Rosa about dressing more spirited, but Rosa was committed to her look.

When Amy looked in the mirror, she was v shocked at how much she liked it. Her hair was done up in a perfect high ponytail with orange and blue ribbons. Her makeup was simple, and she had tailgate style orange and blue glitter on her cheeks. She didn't own much school apparel, so Nadya lent her an oversized blue school t-shirt with a belt to make it look like a t-shirt dress. Amy was already wearing her black boots, and somehow the look just worked. Amy felt really cute and confident, like she could get whistles from a mile away (not that she wanted any, obviously). Nadya, Olive, and Rosa all did some pregaming before-hand, and they invited Amy to join them, but she just watched. It may have been a Friday night, but Amy had decided to put a brief hold on getting drunk after last time.

Jake

Jake was more nervous than he had felt in a long time. It was moments before his first ever real college football game. This game would pretty much make or break how much play time he would get that season. So to say Jake was stressed would be an understatement. The team got into a huddle as Jake took another swig of water. Football was pretty much the only time he was actually good about staying hydrated. The coach gave some inspiring words that sounded half angry, but that's most coaches. They counted off, and before Jake could process a thing, the game was already starting. Jake was a starting player. This was a huge moment for him.

Ever since Jake was a kid, he had dreams of starting in a real, televised football game. He had wanted to play professionally for most of his childhood. Until his dad left and Jake realized playing football meant he'd be doing the same. From then on, Jake had no clue what he wanted to do with his life. Deep down, he kind of wanted to be a cop, or maybe even a doctor. Med school was probably out of the picture, but Jake was still lost as ever. Football was, in a way, his coping mechanism for not knowing where his life would take him. At least he'd always have football.

When the whistle blew, Jake was off. He knew what to do and where he needed to be. He was focused on the game. The first few plays were great. Until Jake was on the ten yard line, and he let himself get distracted, for just a moment. There was Amy, cheering from the benches. Her hair was up in a tight little ponytail and she was dressed up like she actually cared. Jake had never pegged Amy for the spirited type. Clearly he had misread her. The soft evening light hit her flawless skin, and she looked like she had just stepped down from a vacation in heaven. She was screaming cheers from the top of her lungs, and she had her beautiful smile with her perfect teeth and cute little dimples. She was stunning. And there she was, watching him play football. Cheering for him. Smiling for him.

The next thing Jake remembered was opening his eyes in his bed back in his dorm.

The Slump

Chapter Summary

This is the real chapter 7 but I wrote a draft of it while drunk last night so I'm gonna post that one at the end of the fic for y'all to laugh at. Anyway this fic is looking to be 15 chapters in total based on what I have laid out. But there will be a sequel fic following them from where this fic will leave off! So get excited for that.

Jake

When Jake had opened his eyes, he was expecting to be back on the field a few seconds after looking at Amy. He convinced himself he got distracted by the glitter she was wearing because it reflected from the sun. But deep down he knew he was lying to himself.

"Jake, you're awake!" Charles exclaimed.

"Apparently. What happened?" Jake asked in a rough, tired voice. His head was pounding, especially on the left side. It felt like he could feel his heartbeat painfully all around his head. His vision was a bit blurred, though he did just wake up, and he was struggling to process everything that was going on.

"Let me give you the full run down. You got distracted during a game, and another player rammed right into you. You fell, and the doctors said your helmet must not have been tight enough, because you hit the side of your head on it and got a mild concussion. They sent you home after some MRIs, but they put you on a TON of pain killers so you've been asleep for the majority of the past 24 hours. Do you really not remember any of this? You had a full conversation with me at the hospital. You were all dazed and spacey and you said something about wanting to see Amy. She came in to visit, brought you those flowers next to your bed, but the doctors asked her to leave so they could run more scans." Charles said while gesturing to the flowers sitting in a vase by Jake's bed.

Jake couldn't help but smile. Amy brought him flowers. Although it was pretty embarrassing that Jake couldn't remember everything from the pain killers.

"Thanks, Boyle. Hey, I didn't say anything, like, weird or impulsive when Amy was there, did I?" Jake worried.

"You just punched her arm lightly and said 'hey, buddy' before staring at her hair for two minutes before she got kicked out. It was weird, but I think the injury makes it less shameful."

"Thanks, buddy" Jake replied with a laugh.

"Oh, one more thing," Charles said. "They said you're out for the rest of football season this year."

Jake could have sworn he had blacked out. But he just felt paralyzed.

Amy

Jake had been approved for medical absence, since he couldn't really do much mentally straining work for the next five days. Which meant for the next 4 classes, Amy was stuck alone with Teddy.

"Dear Journal,

Everybody knows the phrase 'boys will be boys'. I am typically a pretty intuitive person, but I was naïve to believe this phrase would not apply to guys in college. Jake is out on medical leave for the whole week due to his concussion. So Teddy and I have been working on the bio lab. Which would be totally fine, except that he can't seem to take no for a fucking answer. I politely told him last week that I wasn't interested in anything and I wanted to focus on my college career. So what does Teddy do? He comes up to me in bio and hands me a poorly thought out plan on how we can be friends with benefits and somehow it wouldn't interfere with my college work. I told him I was not into casual stuff, and was not looking for anything with anybody right now. I didn't even lie to him and somehow that wasn't good enough. It's only been two classes and I'm already miserable. Today, Teddy played a slow jams playlist he said he 'dedicated to me' while we were working on our hypothesis. I've been doing pretty much all the work. As weird as it is to say it, I miss having Jake around. He would totally fuse the tension since him and Teddy had a thing or whatever. I'm trying not to crack, but Teddy is

irking me to no end. I'm afraid to see what tomorrow's first experiment trial holds for me. I hate men. Well, I guess at least I still have women. Remind me in four years to make sure I'm out to everybody I know. I don't need anybody trying to set me up strictly with douchebags.

Amy."

Jake

It was Tuesday, and Jake was slowly becoming miserable. Charles still had classes, which meant that Jake spent most of his day staring around the room or getting way too alone with his own thoughts. He was instructed to minimize screen time and not do anything straining to his body or mind. Which ruled out pretty much anything Jake could possibly do on his free time. Without football, Jake had nothing. He was showering less, he struggled to get out of bed, and the only thing getting him to eat was Charles pestering him and the fact that he could still order delivery. On the somewhat bright side, him and Amy had begun getting closer (as friends). After bio, she would come to his dorm and catch him up on anything entertaining he missed. Yesterday, she said Teddy kept hitting on her. Jake laughed, but he also did feel kind of bad. He never knew Teddy was so persistent. But Amy would be over in exactly 10 minutes, and it was honestly all Jake had to look forward to until Charles would play cards with him later that evening.

When Jake heard a knock on his door, he stood up so fast his head starting pounding again. Opening the door as he swung with it, Jake dizzily smiled when he saw Amy, who was carrying none other than her newest binder: her 'things to update Jake on' binder; his personal favorite of her binder collection. Amy had an annoyed look on her face, which was bad, but it meant something interesting happen, which was great for Jake. He was bored out of his mind. Amy was the only person who had enough time in her schedule to actually make time to hang out with him. He was still shocked she had forgiven him. But things were becoming somewhat normal again, and their friendship was the only thing keeping Jake entertained, so he could live with the feelings he kept trying to shove back down.

"I have so much to update you on, today was the worst" Amy sighed.

"YES!" Jake shouted excitedly. Amy rolled her eyes; he smiled back. Jake knew Amy knew what he meant. Amy smiled a little.

"Today, Teddy dedicated a slow jams playlist to me. Then, when I asked him what he had drafted for our hypothesis, he said, and I quote, 'My hypothesis is, if I keep asking Amy out,

will I succeed?" Amy scoffed.

"Well, would he?" Jake teased.

"Maybe if he managed to create his own alternate universe," Amy joked. Jake laughed, even though he didn't totally get why it was so funny. Their laughs fell in sync, and Jake couldn't help but stare deeply into Amy's soft brown eyes. He wished he could take a mental picture for later.

"So, how have you been? I know it isn't easy being stuck inside your room all day," Amy said.

"I'm holding up. I pretty much do nothing all day. It's pretty depressing. I just miss having stuff to do. I can't even play video games for another three days. I'm in a total slump. I think I'd rather be in jail" Jake said disappointingly.

"Somehow I doubt that, Peralta" Amy said. *Peralta*. He had been calling her Santiago as a joke for the past few days, but this was the first time she had called him Peralta. It felt so right. The way she said it made Jake feel like his whole world could melt away. God, she was cute. He wanted to kiss her so badly. But he knew he couldn't. And Jake was working to better himself. He was not going to screw this friendship up. Not this time.

"What?" Amy asked with a giggle. Jake had realized he had been staring at her for way too long.

"Uh, nothing. Just spacey, concussion, you know? Anyway, what have you been up to? Whatever it is, I bet it's better than my day." Jake said.

"Classes have been fine, dance is good but ever since Gina got the stomach bug, she keeps randomly cancelling practice. My dorm is boring as ever, I love Rosa and Kylie, and I'm so happy they're together, but they constantly kick me out. I've been spending way too much time crashing at Nadya and Olive's dorm. I keep a sleeping bag there full time now" she chuckled.

Her laugh. Her laugh made Jake's heart warm. It was so soft and genuine. It was truly contagious.

"Oh, hey, I actually thought of something semi-fun you might want to do!" Amy said sweetly.

"Anything. I'll do anything. Well, unless it's homework. I won't do your homework" Jake said seriously.

Amy laughed. "In your dreams, Peralta. I'd never let you anywhere near my homework. Anyway, this is not totally up your alley, but it's better than nothing. So as you know, in accordance with my four year plan to succeeding in college, I want to have a research paper published by the end of the year. It isn't assigned, just a personal goal. I know, I know, this already is boring you into another nap. But hear me out. I decided to go with a topic that hasn't been explored as much: how we consume art as a result of the influence of media" Amy said enthusiastically.

"Santiago, with all due respect, ya bore me" Jake said with a laugh.

"Just listen, Peralta! So what this means is I want to study different forms of visual media, and compare it to the way people consume art at, say, an art museum. This type of visual media includes video game graphics, social media posts, digital art, etcetera. So I was thinking, you could maybe help me find some of this digital media and help me compare it with physical artworks." Amy tried to sound appealing. But it was so many fancy words.

"I still don't get how this is even close to being fun" Jake smiled.

"Let me break this down for you: you get to help me by playing video games, scrolling through your phone, and inserting your opinion in places where you get to sound intellectual. And I'll have a camera, so if you get too bored, you can vlog or whatever. I don't need your help, but it would be nice. And I'd put your name on it as a co-author, so you'd have a work published in your name, which would be good for resumes and future careers, even if you don't know what you want to do yet. How's that sound, Peralta?"

Every time she said his last name, he fell further into her hands like putty. "Fine, but I call Mario Party for the video game stuff. Wario Cheats, and I'm willing to prove it to the world!" He said in a frustrated tone. Amy giggled a little from his remark. He loved making her laugh. Jake would consider becoming a stand-up comedian if it meant he got to see her smile and laugh all day. *Come on, dude. Pull it together. This is so lame of you,* Jake thought.

Amy

Earlier that day, in Nadya and Olive's room

"So, Ames, remind me why you want Jake's help on this project? You know this is a huge make or break" Nadya wondered.

"Yeah, plus I don't know a ton about his brains, but he did just get a concussion, and we can't prove he got into this school for academics, exactly" Olive softly chuckled.

"I thought it would be the nice thing to do. Plus, he is totally into anything electronics, and he has a more open schedule than all of the free time between the two of you combined. He seemed really depressed when I went to see him yesterday. I think I'm the only interesting thing that happens to him during the day. And you both know that even in my most interesting essence, that's still a pretty sad high for him to have." Amy replied.

"Yeah, but what about *the incident*? What if something happens again?" Olive asked.

Olive and Nadya were both Amy's most supportive friends. Olive was always the one who worried about the what if's. They had a lot of anxiety about the future, similar to Amy. Nadya was the balance beam, the more realistically optimistic of the three. She was great with advice. And if Kylie and Rosa had been there too, it would've been the perfect balance; it's their whole friend group dynamic. Kylie was the one who would try to encourage everybody to be more spontaneous. She was always peppy, which is ironic considering how well they work with Rosa, who is usually the more down-to-earth pessimistic friend. Amy could not have been happier with her little friend group. If she had gone back and told her 12-year-old self that she would have all these awesome friends in college, she would have dropped her Harry Potter wand on the ground in shock.

"You both know I love you so much, but trust me, Jake is totally cool with us being friends. He's been as normal as a college football player with a concussion can possibly be, and he is actually really sweet when you get to know him. He is a really good friend, which still shocks me sometimes." Amy said.

"It's just because of you, Amy. Haven't you noticed? He softens up around you. It's so obvious. He's definitely into you, Amy" Nadya insisted. Olive nodded in agreement.

"I'm telling you both, you're wrong. Jake has just changed as a person in general; it has nothing to do with me." Amy replied, somewhat in denial. If she let herself believe Jake liked her, it meant she'd start to let herself like him back. She'd always been good at repressing emotions to strive for greater internal goals, but sometimes, she'd slip up, and her brain would just replay the football game in her head, imagining it was her who had distracted him.

A "Lab"ly Day For Fighting

Chapter Summary

BESTIES IT IS SO GOOD FROM HERE ON OUT I PINKIE SWEAR OKAY also
haha y'all like the pun in the title? I'm so funny

Chapter Notes

This chapter is mostly gonna be based in bio lab which is sooo boring for me to write cuz I'm not in college so I usually skip through it so I don't mess it up but we are gonna roll with it; this also forces me to now actually have to say what their lab is on so for the sake of me being lazy can we just not read into it and just whatever sciency words I say we just pretend actually make sense like don't read into it I'm making this whole thing up k? k thanks.

TW for catcalling and physical fighting, idk what needs trigger warnings so I'm putting these just in case.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Amy

Time skip, fyi. It is now Monday of the following week.

When Amy sat down in bio class, she could not have been more relieved to have Jake come and sit next to her. She had hoped that with Jake back, Teddy would quit hitting on her finally. Plus, her and Jake had developed a really good friendship over the past week, and she enjoyed his company.

"Alright class," Dr. Smith said. "Today is our first official experimentation day. Please come up to the front of the room to get your safety goggles. Roll up any long sleeves, put your hair back, and once you have all that on, you can send somebody from your group to go and retrieve your materials. Don't forget to carefully document every step of the experiment. I'll be here if you have any questions."

Amy volunteered to go get safety goggles for the group. When she returned, she could sense some mild tension, but she wasn't sure who was mad at who or why.

Jake

Jake rolled up his sleeves as Amy passed him his safety goggles. He watched as she carefully pulled her hair into a ponytail, tying it safely with a secure ponytail holder she had worn on her wrist. He could get used to watching her put her hair up (wink wink). She slid her safety goggles on, looking dorky as ever in the cutest way possible.

"What, Peralta? Forgot how to put the goggles on?" She teased. *Shit. She noticed I was staring.*

"Yeah, actually, care to help?" he smirked in response. She rolled her eyes and he put his goggles on, loving the banter they had going on. From the corner of his eye, though, Jake could tell Teddy wasn't having it.

"Hey, *Peralta*" Teddy mocked. "Why don't you quit staring at Amy and go make yourself useful, go and get our materials" he said with an attitude. Jake blushed a bit at Teddy saying Jake was staring at Amy. He wasn't exactly wrong. But he *was* pissed for sure.

Jake saw Teddy say something to Amy, though he wasn't sure what, since he was too far away. Amy laughed. Jake felt a bit jealous, but knew he shouldn't let his feelings get in the way of anything. Yep, feelings, that's right. Jake was willing to admit to himself finally that he had feelings for Amy. But he was trying to be a better person, so he pushed them down and was doing his best to get rid of them.

Once Jake set the bucket of materials down on the table, the group got to work.

"Okay, Teddy, you have the packet, right?" Amy asked. Teddy nodded with a cocky smirk.

"Perfect. Peralta, did you get the microscope and cell panel?" She turned towards Jake. God, he could never get enough of the Peralta stuff.

"Here and ready for some reporting!" Jake replied with a smile. He sounded so dorky, but he honestly didn't care anymore. He couldn't keep up the bad boy look around her. Not anymore. Amy Santiago made him soft.

Amy

Amy was focused as ever when doing her experiment. She wanted to do it perfectly so they could avoid having to do too many trials. If she could get the first few close enough in results, they could get a head start on the lab report. But Jake and Teddy were a bit distracting, each in their own way.

Amy was trying to look in the microscope and draw what she saw, but whenever she leaned over, Teddy would let out the most annoying whistle. Amy was nearly 18, so she had been used to catcalling, but school was a different story. It was worse, because it was harder to escape. Amy had Jake write down some numbers, to which he happily complied. He was surprisingly efficient. But the third time Teddy whistled, Jake caved.

"Dude, cut it out. Can't you tell she's not interested?" Jake snapped at him.

Teddy slowly made his hand into a fist, "Oh shut it, Peralta. You're just jealous you don't get the view I'm getting"

"I'm not kidding, Teddy. Cut the bullshit and just focus on the goddamn assignment, asshole" Jake made a fist in response.

Teddy stood there for maybe 3 seconds before throwing a punch right at Jake's cheek. Amy tried to scream for them to stop, but Jake threw the next punch.

"Lay off of Amy, or else," Jake threatened. Tension was growing by the second.

"Or else what?" Teddy asked, shoving Jake onto the floor. Amy ran over to try to hold Teddy back, to which Teddy shifted his attention immediately. He turned around and leaned in for a kiss, lord knows why. But before Amy could get away and before Teddy could touch her, Jake grabbed Teddy, turned him around forcefully, and punched him unconscious.

"Peralta, Wells, what the hell is going on?" Dr. Smith ran over as he helped Teddy up from his brief blackout. "Get up and work on your experiment, and if I see any more bickering or fighting, you're both failed. Got it?" The boys nodded. "Class is already just about over. so both of you can be dismissed now. You're both getting suspended, if I can help it. Miss Santiago, a word?"

Amy was petrified. She knew she had nothing to do with the fight. But she was rarely called to speak to a teacher in such a harsh tone. She couldn't help but feel somewhat anxious.

"Miss Santiago," Dr. Smith asked quietly at his desk. "What happened? Do you need to switch groups?"

Amy was scared. She was often hated on in school for being a snitch. She really didn't want to make enemies with the football team. On the other hand, Jake didn't deserve to be suspended for standing up to her.

"Dr. Smith, what happened was Teddy Wells-Ramos was sexually harassing me, and Jake stood up for me. Teddy threw the first punch. Jake was just trying to help. I'll be okay with my group to finish off the semester. Just please don't suspend Jake. He was just trying to be a good friend." Amy pleaded.

Dr. Smith nodded his head gently, and dismissed the class. Amy hurried back to the Nine-Nine, rushing straight to Jake's dorm. She knocked hastily, worried about Jake.

Jake

Jake's face was bleeding and his head hurt more than ever, but he felt worse about the suspension more than anything. He didn't want to disappoint his mom, and even worse, it was going right on his record. Amy was right: just because Jake didn't know what he was doing

with his life didn't mean he didn't need to try. A suspension would look bad to any sensible employer.

When Jake heard an aggressive knock on the door, he flinched. He slowly opened the door, relieved to see it was just Amy.

"Hey, Santiago. Thank god you're here. I wanted to apologize. I'm sorry I got distracted and wasted time during our experiment. And I'm really sorry if you got in any trouble. I promise I'll clear your name." Jake said anxiously.

"Hey, I'm not in trouble, and neither are you. Dr. Smith asked me about what happened, and I told him how you defended me. He's not going to suspend you. But I owe you a big thank you. The way you stood up for me today when even I couldn't bring myself to do it, it was really brave of you. You aren't the Jake Peralta who first showed up at this school, and I mean that in a good way. You're a really good friend. I hope you know that. You're a *good person*, Jake. I mean that."

Jake felt his whole body warm up. He smiled deeply, and he couldn't stop staring into her eyes. He looked down to see her hands had grabbed his, holding them tight. He could have lived in that moment forever. His heart beat faster, he forgot the pain in his head or the blood on his cheek. In that moment, it was just Jake and Amy. That was all he could have asked for.

"Hey," Amy said gently. She turned his face to the right. "You got a cut! Are you okay? Have you cleaned it yet?" Amy was worried about him. It was adorable.

"Puh-lease, Ames." This was his first time calling her Ames. It just slipped out (title of his sex tape) but he didn't regret it. Instead, he decided to own it. "Everybody knows cuts will stop bleeding if you just wait long enough!"

Amy groaned as she turned around. "Don't move, Peralta. I'll be right back." She said as she shut the door behind her. Jake giggled all cute and giddy. Amy cared about him, and he loved it.

When Amy came back, she sat Jake down on his bed and sat next to him, adjacent to his cut cheek. She carefully took a wet cotton ball and cleaned off his cut with soap and water. It stung a little bit, but he tried to seem macho about it. She put some Neosporin onto a q-tip and got dangerously close to his face as she carefully applied the cream to his cheek. She grabbed a band-aid and placed it softly on his cheek, and Jake could feel her warm breath against his neck. He couldn't lie, it was *super* hot. "And done!" She said cheerfully. "Thanks, Ames" he said, trying to act as though that nickname was a normal thing.

"I've got to go do some work, but please make sure to ice the area. You already have a mild concussion, it wouldn't help anybody if it got worse. Be careful. Text me if you need anything" Amy said as she gathered her things and walked out of his room. Jake smiled. He *so* had feelings for her. It was undeniable at this point.

Amy

When Amy left Jake's room, she felt the butterflies in her stomach settle down. She was attracted to him, and had no idea why. But she knew she couldn't and wouldn't act upon it. When she walked into her room, Kylie was sitting on their bed with a grin.

"So, I heard about bio class today. Pretty hot that Jake fought for you, huh?" Kylie teased.

"You know I don't like him that way. But yes, it was sweet of him. Where's Rosa? You two have been attached at the hip nonstop!" Amy exclaimed.

"She has class Eventually, and I know, we are so cute, right? She's gonna come home with me for winter break. I'm so excited!" Kylie squealed.

Right, winter break, Amy thought. It was a month away, but most people had made plans already. But not Amy. Amy's only plans were to head home and hang out with her family. Nadya was headed back to Virginia to see her family and her partner, and Olive was traveling to Canada for a few weeks for fun. Amy didn't exactly have too many friends at home, so she was dreading the break nearing. She honestly could've been fine just staying on campus. But her parents want her to come home and visit, which meant putting up with all seven of her chaotic brothers.

"Hey, I know you aren't looking forward to winter break. But let's not think about that. You finally turn 18 tomorrow, you youngster!" Kylie joked.

Since Amy had skipped the fourth grade, she was a year behind everybody else in her grade ever since. It was weird being the only minor of all of her friends, but that was finally about to change. Well, not much would change, but Amy could at least legally vote soon!

Amy's birthday had never had the Average memories attached to it. She had few friends, and her day was normally spent eating a special lunch with her favorite teachers, or spending the evening in the library with a cigarette. But Amy was a bit more optimistic this year, knowing she had great friends. Nadya was in charge of party planning, and she was hosting at her older sister's apartment in the area. Amy didn't love surprises, but she trusted in Nadya, so she had no clue what would be happening at the party nor who was invited. It would be a good day if Amy could help it, and she could finally enjoy herself again.

Chapter End Notes

Sorry for the shorter chapter, it felt like I was drawing it out but I promise it will all become apparent why in just a few short chapters. For now, I'm excited to write chapter 9 and on, and I think you will all be excited to read them as well. Hope you're enjoying!

Bets

Chapter Summary

Amy's 18th birthday. Shorter chapter with a WILD ending. I promise the pain will end soon. It'll come in waves, but soon.

Jake

When the clock struck midnight, Jake knew Amy would be asleep. She has a perfectly timed out sleep schedule for optimal learning. So as much as he wanted to knock on her door and pop balloons in at that moment, he decided to go with a simple text.

Ever since Jake had accepted he had feelings for Amy, he had gone soft. He wouldn't call it love, but Amy made him feel like the whole world could disappear before their eyes. It was more than just attraction: Jake liked Amy for every little thing about her. He constantly looked forward to spending time with her, so he was ecstatic that Nadya had invited him and Charles (hey, they needed other guys, too!) to her birthday party. He just had to make sure he didn't do anything stupid. It was a Thursday night, but Jake knew Amy's rules had exceptions: one of those being her birthday. Jake's goal was to stay as sober as possible. He didn't trust drunk Jake enough around Amy.

Amy

When Amy woke up, the first thing she did was turn off the alarm on her phone. She could have slept in, but she did not want to miss a moment of her birthday. So, she had set her alarm for 8am. Even though she didn't have classes until 9am. She hadn't gotten many messages, not relevant ones anyway, except for one.

[Messages]

Peralta: *Happy legality, Santiago! Now, you don't even need to work hard in college. You can sleep your way up to the top! Ha!*

You: *Morning, Peralta, and thanks :) Are we gonna need a whole new binder for that plan?*
/j

Peralta: *What, a binder of who you're gonna sleep with, or a binder of all your weird student teacher sex fantasies I bet you have?* /j

You: *That second one sounds like a binder with Peralta written all over it. You sure it's not your weird sex fantasies?* /j

Peralta: *Wouldn't you like to know ;)*

Peralta: *But jokes aside, I hope you have a great day. See you tonight!*

You: *Thanks. See you tonight, Peralta.*

Amy shouldn't have been as excited as she was to have had that text conversation with Jake. She was starting to develop feelings for him. And that was never good. Amy couldn't let her feelings fight the binder; it wouldn't end well.

That whole day, Amy had just been awaiting her party. Nadya kept hyping it up, so she was pretty stoked. Classes were fine, and she met up with Kylie for lunch which was fun, but now, it was 6pm, and Amy was in her room, getting ready.

Amy had decided to dress up a bit for her birthday. She put on a short, low cut silky red dress. She put on a dark red lipstick, and Kylie helped her do a smoky eye look. She threw on her favorite pair of black heels, and grabbed her purse. When Amy looked in the mirror, she felt more confident than ever; this was *her* day. She was excited to take pictures, too. It would be nice to update her social media profiles with something a bit more fun. She flipped her hair back and scrunched it up a bit with her hand, making it look loose and free, but not to the point where she looked like she just left a one-night-stand.

Jake

When Jake knocked on Nadya's door at 6:55pm, he was expecting Amy to be there already. But apparently, she was told not to come a minute early. Normally, Jake was the type of person to show up at least 10 minutes late to everything. But he didn't want to disappoint Amy. Plus, he thought she'd be impressed that he showed up early.

While he waited, Jake took his gift, which he had attempted to wrap as perfectly as he could, but failed, and placed it on a table next to the food. There was a freshly ordered pizza there, as well as hummus and pita, some chips and salsa, and, as expected, a ton of booze. Oh, and a cake, of course, that read "Happy Eighteenth, Amy!" on it in a fancy font Jake knew Amy would approve of. Charles followed behind him, and Kylie offered them both beers. Jake wanted to turn it down, but Charles had happily accepted already, and it was awkward enough waiting for Amy, so he figured it wouldn't hurt to have one beer to lighten the mood.

Shortly after, Olive and Rosa had made their way in. Jake had assumed the party would be small, but he hadn't thought about how small it would be. The answer was awkwardly small. But when Kylie introduced Amy all cheesy-like in the doorway, none of the other people in the room had mattered. Jake couldn't stop staring at Amy. Her hair was messy in the most perfect way, and her dress hugged her body like a model's outfit would. She walked in with a confident look, and Charles had to smack Jake's arm to knock him out of it.

"Hey, Ames," Jake said awkwardly, clearing his throat. "You look... great. Happy birthday!" He said, blushing. Jake wanted to stay sober, but he was already acting awkward enough. When everybody got settled and cocktails were served, Jake grabbed a slice of pizza and accepted every refill they had.

Amy

As close as Amy and Jake had gotten, Amy felt a bit weird having worn the outfit she had worn. She probably would have dressed a bit more modestly had she known Jake and Charles were invited. But, that's what she gets for letting Nadya keep everything a secret.

Amy had three exceptions to her 'no drinking on a weeknight rule': 1. If she didn't have classes the next day. 2. If it were, for any reason, a holiday or big celebration. 3. Her birthday.

So when Nadya pulled out the drinking games, Amy didn't care what number drink she'd hit that night. It was her night and her party.

First up was Never Have I ever, to which Amy had remained shockingly sober.

When Olive pulled the "never have I ever had sex" card (they were asexual, so it wasn't shocking to anybody), Amy had all eyes on her when she was the only other person in the circle to not drink. She was 1 drink in, so it took a minute for spacey Amy to realize her and Olive were the only virgins in a room. She blushed a bit out of embarrassment, and from the corner of her eye, she saw Jake look at her, but not with shock like the rest; he just looked like he felt bad she had felt so embarrassed.

Amy was relieved to move on from Never Have I Ever, and she was only two drinks in. Everybody else was already at least five or six in. But now they were playing bullshit (the card game), and although Amy was a terrible liar, she was great at tricking others when needed.

"Hey, Santiago! You ready to get hammered?" Jake teased. The rules of the game were if you got caught lying, you had to take a shot. Amy was always competitive, but Jake's teasing only got her more in the game. Amy Santiago was ready to win.

Some light flirting happened throughout the game, but nothing Amy would admit meant anything. She still had her limits. And Rule #10 had no exceptions.

Amy took only two more shots. She was now four drink Amy. Most of the people at the party were hammered. But it wasn't over yet.

"Let's hope you can still stand up right, because I'm whipping out twisterrr!" Nadya shouted. "If you fall, you're out and you have to do the amount of shots of what place you were in, meaning if you are first to fall, you'd place in 6th place, since there are 7 of us here and one of us is on the spinner. Do we have any volunteers to spin?"

"I'll do it." Rosa said. "I wanna be in the front seat to see this shit happen. I say this game lasts five minutes max" Rosa laughed.

"Hey Santiago," Jake whispered in Amy's ear. "Prepare to lose, birthday girl" Jake taunted.

"Please, I'm more sober than all of you here. I'd put money on my winning." Amy said with a bit of her words slurring.

"Okay, you're on. If I win, you have to down double the amount of drinks you are supposed to when you lose."

"Okay, then if I win, you have to do triple, Peralta."

"How's that fair?" Jake drunkenly whined.

"I'm the birthday girl, remember. Life isn't fair. Bet on" Amy said with a smirk.

The first few rounds went fairly smoothly. Charles got out almost immediately, while everybody else stood their ground. Amy made a handful of dirty jokes, and her and Jake were in an intense competition. They teased each other, flipped each other off, and made tons of jokes about the other losing.

"Right foot, red" Rosa announced. Amy moved her foot over, and found herself brushing up against Jake. Her body felt warm, though that could've been the alcohol. Jake was evidently beginning to sober up, and Amy began getting a bit nervous. She was not going to lose.

After a few more calls, the game had taken Olive and Kylie. Three left.

"Right hand, yellow" Rosa called. Amy and Jake were now practically intertwined. Amy had begun to sober up, and she was back to two-drink Amy.

"You're going DOWN, Peralta" Amy screamed.

Jake said nothing, though he did laugh. Amy couldn't tell how drunk he was at that point.

"Left hand, yellow" Rosa said. Nadya fell. It was just the two of them left.

The tension in the room could've been cut with a knife. It was partly sexual tension, partly competitive tension, partly the tension of the alcohol winding down.

Amy and Jake were both tangled and partially drunk. But Amy was back down to one drink Amy. One drink Amy would be her undoing.

"Right leg, green" Rosa yelled. And with that, one spacey Amy lost her balance and fell over.

"Suck it, Santiago!" Jake screamed. "But like, happy birthday, obviously" he joked.

Amy did four more shots, as promised. They sang happy birthday and had some cake, and at around 1am, five drink Amy was headed back to her place. Charles had already left about an hour earlier, since he had an earlier class the next day. So the walk home was just Kylie, Jake, and Amy. Amy was carrying her bag of gifts, and was holding her own heels in fear of tripping while walking. Jake was somehow much more sober than she was at that point.

When they reached their hall, Amy and Kylie could hardly walk. Kylie ran to their room, probably sick from drinking too much. Before Amy and Jake parted ways, Amy stopped him.

"Peralta, wait," Amy said in the quietest voice a drunk girl could.

Amy, overconfident, drunk, and definitely tired, did the dumbest thing a drunk Amy could have done. She closed her eyes, leaned in, and went in to kiss Jake.

Jake

Jake hadn't been sure what would've happened in that hall, but what he wasn't expecting was Amy to kiss him. But Jake had to weigh his options. He decided he didn't want to be a dick this time around. So when Amy Santiago leaned in to kiss him, he stopped her.

"What's going on, Peralta? I thought you were into me!" Amy complained drunkenly.

"Ames, you're drunk out of your mind, its getting close to 2 in the morning, you have class tomorrow, and if you were sober right now, you would regret knowing you let yourself do this. I'm gonna open your door, and I want you to drink some water and go to bed. Goodnight, Ames. Happy birthday." Jake said as he escorted her to her room.

Despite the chaos of the night, Jake couldn't help but fall asleep with a smile on his face. Even if she wouldn't admit it, even if she wouldn't soberly act on it, Amy liked Jake back. And that was enough for him to smile for eternity.

Anxious

Chapter Summary

Per the title, TWs for anxiety, smoking, uh idk what else I genuinely don't know what requires trigger warnings half the time.

Amy

When Amy had woken up the next morning to her alarm, her head was pounding and she could hardly remember anything past twister, though granted that was when she had gotten the drunkest.

She took an aspirin and chugged the bottle of water next to her bed. She had an hour until class, and she realized she hadn't opened her gift from Jake. She looked over at the box, wrapped almost perfectly, which made her proud. She carefully unwrapped the little bow on it, taking off the card that said: "To Ames, From Peralta". She ripped off the wrapping paper and opened up the plain white box inside.

In the box was a small shotglass that let you count your drinks by sliding a marker to the next number up, only it didn't let you slide past 6. When she turned the shotglass over, the other side had writing that read, "Rule #2: Partying is for the weekends. Seven drinks are for anybody but Amy Santiago". Amy struggled to hold back a smile. It was a really cute, funny, and thoughtful gift.

[Messages]

You: *Just opened the gift, I love it. I have class until 3, wanna come over after and we can get started on my research project?*

Jake

When Jake saw the text from Amy, he wasn't sure whether he should feel relieved or nervous. She clearly hadn't remembered anything from the night before. He wasn't sure how to react. But he had time to think about it.

[Messages]

You: *See you then!*

And thus, Jake Peralta's day of contemplating began.

Amy

Amy Santiago, in case it wasn't obvious enough, hated the unknown. So not being able to remember everything from the night before stressed her out to no end. She spent her whole Friday freaking out, trying her hardest to recall everything she possibly could. But on top of that, finals were coming up soon enough, and Amy was getting insanely stressed with her course load. She had been fine the whole semester, but her professors were starting to really load on the work, and Amy was getting increasingly anxious that she would disappoint them.

During bio that day, Amy and Jake hardly spoke. Mostly because Amy was so anxious. She wanted as little interaction as possible for as long as she could.

After her last class of the day, Amy hurried to her room. She needed to smoke before Jake came over. She was already so stressed and she wanted to calm down, but she didn't want anybody to see her. She sat by her window for about ten minutes before there was a knock on her door.

"One minute!" Amy said anxiously. She closed her window and threw out her cigarette, spraying some perfume on herself before opening the door.

"Hey, Ames. You smell nice?" Jake said, slightly confused.

"Haha yeah, thanks. Kylie, uh, bought me a new perfume for my birthday, and I was trying it out!" Amy choked nervously.

"Okay. Well, I brought over some of my favorite video games and my phone charger, so what are we gonna start with?" Jake asked.

"Perfect. Let's just get everything laid out first. I have my binder with all the stuff I'll need, as well as my outline." Amy said.

While Amy was collecting everything from around the room, the silence was awkward, but Amy didn't care. However, Jake seemed to notice.

"So, last night was fun, right? Did you have a good birthday?" Jake asked.

Amy starting twirling her hair nervously. Her heart rate shot up and her breathing grew heavier. This was the last thing she had wanted to talk about in that moment.

"Yep, uh huh, it was great. So, anyway, the project-" Amy began before being interrupted.

"Hey," Jake said softly before gently pushing Amy to sit down onto her bed. He sat down next to her. "What's going on, Ames? You've been anxious all day. Are you okay?" Jake asked.

"Yeah, I'm fine, thanks. But the project-" Amy started before once again being interrupted.

Jake

Jake wanted to help Amy work on her project, and he knew she was all about productivity and efficiency. But when he noticed the cigarette sticking out of her trashcan, he had to interrupt her again.

"Ames, can I ask you a question?" He asked quietly. Amy nodded nervously. "Have you been smoking?" He questioned with concern.

Amy laughed nervously. She was a terrible liar. "No! What? What would make you think that? That's funny!"

"Ames, be real with me." Jake looked into her eyes.

"Okay, fine, yes, I was smoking, whatever, can we move on now?" Amy said stressfully.

"No. I want to talk about it, Amy. Do you always smoke? Do you need help? Jake asked.

"I don't need help. It's not a huge deal. I started a couple of years ago when an old friend in high school offered me a cigarette before a test. I was having crippling anxiety and it made me feel more relaxed. So, I smoke when I'm anxious. Now can we move on?" Amy asked hastily.

"You already know my answer to that. You do realize smoking is not a healthy way of coping with your anxiety, right? What's going on Eventually that's making you so anxious?"

Amy hesitated. Jake held her hand and gave it a squeeze to show he was there for her.

"It's a lot of things. I can't remember half of last night after twister, which is driving me insane. My teachers are loading on work like it's nobody's business, and college is becoming a lot harder than I had expected. I need perfect grades. I want to prove myself to my family. When I go home for break, I want my picture to move it's way up the hierarchy of children, which yes, is actually a thing in my family. I want to earn my spot. I want to show my parents that I am just as good as all my brothers are." Amy began to tear up.

"Hey, it's okay. You're like, the most perfect, intelligent person I know. If your parents think you aren't their most perfect child, they're obviously wrong. What matters, Amy, is *your*

hierarchy." Jake said. He got up and grabbed the polaroid camera sitting on Amy's desk. He took a picture of Amy, all teary and messy and anxious and tired. He let the picture print, and shook it out. Once it developed, he grabbed a piece of tape off her desk, and stuck the picture above her bed.

"You, Amy Santiago, are the Average person you can be. You make the world a better place. You are perfect the way you are, and all that matters is that you can see that. But seriously, talk to somebody. I want to be here for you, but I can't make it all better. You are really fucking smart, Ames. You know smoking isn't even close to the answer. Promise me you'll talk to somebody, okay? Then I'll help you with anything you need for this project. Look in my eyes and promise me you'll be kind to yourself."

Amy stared back at him. "I promise" she said. Jake wiped the tears from her cheeks, and stood up.

"Well, come on! We haven't got all day to bust out your big breakthrough post-college resume!" Jake said with a laugh. Amy smiled back at him.

Amy

Amy was glad she had Jake to help her through everything. His company made her happy, and he somehow always knew exactly what to say. She was developing a small crush, but she wanted to keep things platonic for her own sake.

"Okay, so first, we start at the very beginning shifts of art to media: the photograph. I was thinking we could start by taking photos of things around us, and then compare photos to traditional paintings by famous artists of the past, and how an artist might choose the scene for what they paint, versus how a photograph might be more simple or complex." Amy said. She handed Jake a digital camera. He immediately turned it on and took a picture of Amy. When she tried to put her hand in front of the camera, he pushed her hand to the side and took another one.

"If you ask me, I think this is pretty close to art" Jake teased, turning the camera around to show a picture of Amy rolling her eyes on the screen. Amy rolled her eyes once again, more in a joking way than before.

"I'm gonna use my phone for this, since we are looking at different styles of photography. Let's split up and meet back in thirty minutes to talk about what we found interesting. Try to tell a story with it. Pretend to be an artist for the day. Feel free to get as cheesy as you want" Amy said with a smile.

"See ya in thirty!" Jake said as he skipped out the door. Amy laughed at his goofiness. He was good at making her laugh. She liked the way Jake made her feel. Being around him made her less anxious; he made things funny in a way that it was hard to feel as scared or anxious. It was as if Amy's anxiety was constantly on a scale, and every time Jake was around her, her anxiety levels dropped by 2 imaginary points (not that the scale had any values on it). Amy was glad she asked Jake to help her with her research. It made the process more enjoyable.

Thirty minutes later, Amy and Jake both arrived outside Amy's dorm, right on time.

"Look at you, showing up on time!" Amy teased.

"I wouldn't want to waste your time" Jake winked jokingly.

They went in and plugged Jake's camera into the computer.

"Tell me you took this seriously," Amy said, shooting Jake the look of a pre-disappointed mother.

"I did, I promise." Jake said seriously.

Jake

Jake was honestly excited for Amy to see his photos. As much as he wanted to goof off, he knew how much Amy's project meant to her, so he took his time to do things perfectly.

When Amy pulled up the pictures, Jake was prepared.

"Allow me to run you through a slideshow," he said in a joking tone.

The first photo on the camera roll, after the pictures he took of Amy, was a photo of the Nine-Nine hall. Jake put on his best goofy artist voice, which included a light funny British accent, as he narrated the scenes. "In this first photo, is the residence hall known as the Nine-Nine."

"Cut the accent, Peralta. You're making the picture worse" Amy joked.

"Okay, okay. But I did put thought into this whole thing, I swear," Jake began. "I took this photo of the Nine-Nine because I feel like it is very open to creative interpretation"

"Interpretation" Amy interrupted.

"Right, that. But when you look at this picture, you have no idea what is inside. It is the outer layer of the lives of the students in it. If somebody were standing outside there now, they'd have no idea we were in here working on your project. You get to create the lives and stories within it. However, of course, since it's only a picture, the downside is that it's super plain, and a painting could add more up-close textures and colors to add to it." Jake said with a smile.

"That was... very profound. I'm not going to lie, I'm surprised." Amy remarked.

"When something is important to me, I like bringing it to life. The Nine-Nine has given me friends, stories, everything. But anyway, my next picture, let me pull up the slide real quick," Jake said softly to himself as he clicked to the next photo, "Is of your binder, actually. Don't ask how I got this picture or anything. It's in the past now. Anyway, this binder represents your college path, your goals and dreams. It shows the crushing anxiety education puts on modern society. It isn't a fancy book or an ancient story, it tells a modern picture. It's harder to portray simple modern concepts through art. Imagine if I had painted a picture of your binder. Pretty lame, right? But photos let you get the best angles and lighting, so you get to work with it to make it your own. Art doesn't give you that, since you work from scratch. Did that sound smart? I had to google a bunch of fancy sounding words before I got here," Jake laughed, though he was completely serious.

"Oh GOD This is SO Boring. Please Kill Me. Nice job, Peralta. But I do have to ask how you got back into my dorm while we were out?" Amy asked.

Jake laughed. "So now, the last picture I want to show you is this" Jake said. The photo on the screen was one of Amy, who was standing 30 feet in front of Jake, taking a photo of the flowers in a nearby garden.

"That's just me, Jake. Is this the photo you meant to pull up?" Amy asked.

"Let me paint you a picture, Santiago. Pun intended. Art takes time. While that is one of it's many great qualities that makes it so inspirational to see the time and care put into a piece of art, a picture can snap a quick moment that couldn't be created originally by an artist in that same way, and would take too long to paint before losing the moment entirely. This photo isn't a person taking a picture. It's a hard working, passionate student, Amy Santiago, spending her free time taking pictures of nature's beauties. But people are part of nature, too. Art often does not capture the world in it's natural habitat. No artist would choose to paint a picture of one Amy Santiago taking a photo on her phone. But a camera can capture all that within seconds, and turn it into a story. It depicts the things an artist wouldn't think to paint, because it feels so surfaced or silly. Boom. Art." Jake said as he did an imaginary mic drop. He then grabbed the camera, and took a picture of Amy's face, showing shock and confusion as she tried to understand how Jake got so smart, probably.

Amy

Whatever Amy had been expecting out of that day, it certainly wasn't what Jake had shown her. He made her picture choices feel ridiculous. She ran him through everything briefly, but she didn't have as much depth to it as Jake had.

"You know, Jake, you're actually pretty good at that. Not the photography, necessarily, but coming up with the story behind it." Amy said.

"Thanks, I honestly came up with half of the first two on the spot. It was pretty fun, though, I can't lie." Jake smiled.

"You should take classes on that type of stuff, you know? Storytelling, writing, maybe even comedy or public speaking. When you actually put thought into things, you sound pretty creative."

"Thanks, Santiago. Maybe I will."

Jake got up to get his stuff together after they wrapped up, but before he left, Amy tapped him on the shoulder.

"Hey, I just wanted to thank you for everything. I'm gonna keep my promise. I'm gonna work to quit. Finals are around the corner, and I'm so stressed just thinking about it. But I want to give you this," Amy said, holding up a finger, implying Jake should wait. She opened up her bedside drawer, and pulled out her packs of cigarettes and matches. "You can throw them out for me. This is gonna be the end of smoking for me."

"I'm proud of you, Ames. Thanks for trusting in me" Jake said before leaving her dorm.

Finals

Chapter Summary

For the sake of the plot, a lot of time is skipped through. I'll cover most of what happened at the beginning of this chapter, but just giving a warning. I hate doing the time skip but I don't want to drag the fanfic out, and it only works plot wise if I do it this way, just trust me on this.

TW: I have a LOT of anxiety about school, fortunately I no longer get as anxious as I used to. This chapter will have a lot of descriptive details about Amy's anxiety. Many, if not all, will be things I have experienced, or some I have seen others go through. I am much better now and do not do most of these things. Nothing harmful or graphic will be in this fic, I'm just warning for anybody who is maybe experiencing anxiety, know that these are not healthy coping mechanisms: Amy is a fictional character and this is a fictional story, and even so, in this story she openly has not yet sought the help she needs. Please do not assume anything mentioned is healthy for you. If you have questions about content, shoot me a dm on @wariocheats and I will happily answer any of your questions.

Amy

After their day working on Amy's project, Amy and Jake spent a few afternoons each week working on it and growing their friendships, with each of their feelings for each other growing just a bit as well. They had a pause in between, a long weekend where Jake had gone on a trip to the beach with Charles, and Amy had stayed on campus to get ahead in classes. It was now late November (maybe a month or a month and a half since chapter 10), and UBrooklyn was entering finals week.

Finals week was Amy's worst nightmare, and yet, her most exciting test. She had worked her ass off all semester, studying and reading and attending dozens of office hours. But finals week was the test of her whole semester's worth of knowledge.

Amy had one week of finals, and she had spent the past week before studying constantly. Her binder had her prepared: she had laid out her full schedule, her office hour opportunities, her sleep schedule, her meal plans (healthy body, healthy mind), and everything she needed to study as well as how confident she felt on the material going into the final. She organized her

books accordingly. Her anxiety had taken over, and she had been regretting quitting smoking. But she had promised.

Sunday was Amy's designated study day. She had a cup of coffee when she woke up, which was fairly rare for her, but she wanted the extra energy. She had turned her whole space into a library: her desk was organized with class notes, textbooks, etc., her wall was covered with inspirational quotes, she had placed a do not disturb sign on the door that Jake had only jokingly ignored maybe 3 or 4 times, and she had soundproof earbuds next to her laptop. She had a jar filled with different colored highlighters, and dozens of pens, pencils, and sharpies; next to it sat a large pack of sticky notes, hundreds of flashcards sorted by color, a stapler, a candle, a lighter, and a bag of snacks and water bottles under her desk. Amy was prepared for an intense week of studying. She was also probably equally prepared for the apocalypse.

Jake

Jake's friendship with Amy had grown a lot, but lately, he had felt she was somewhat distant. He knew it was because of finals, but it still sucked when she would ignore his knocking to the beats of songs or the occasional letter he would slide under her door. He and Charles had been studying together, and it was going well. Sure, he wasn't doing an insane nonstop study session the way Amy was, but he was studying the way he studied best, and Charles had been quizzing him nonstop.

Jake had come a long way throughout the semester. He had never had great grades, mostly due to his poor attitude and deep insecurities. He wanted to make his mom proud. He had worked hard, and he was proud of himself for how far he had come first semester. He felt like a new person. More caring, more selfless, more hardworking, more detail-oriented, and more driven. As much as he was in denial, his concussion had helped him spend more time focusing on school instead of football, and it was paying off.

At the beginning of the semester, Jake had made loose plans with his team to go on vacation over break. He hadn't told anybody aside from Charles, but he was spending his break on campus for a mini-mester (for those who do not know, a mini-mester, or mini-semester, is offered by some schools over winter breaks, if they are long breaks, where students can take some extra classes for credits. It is a shortened version of a semester, hence the name. It's more often offered by public schools than private schools, I believe). He had decided to try some different classes to test out his interests. He was doing a storytelling 101 class, as well as a photography class and a seminar exploring the arts. He got to stay in his dorm by himself, so he would get a bigger space, which was nice. He lived close to home, but had decided he wanted time to visit his professors and meet more people. He was becoming his own definition of a nerd, but he was, in a way, owning it. Aside from the fact that, again,

Charles was the only person who knew about this. Anybody else who asked would be told he was going home to practice some more football over the break. It was an obvious lie, but Jake made it work.

Amy

Each day for Amy got harder and harder (title of somebody's sex tape?). By Sunday evening, she had drank her third cup of coffee. After her first final Monday afternoon, Amy walked straight back to her dorm to continue studying for the future finals. By Tuesday morning, Amy was noticing she was struggling to sleep; she had a hard time falling asleep since her brain was racing with anxious thoughts, and she kept waking up throughout the night. Wednesday night, she began going stir crazy. Kylie had been studying at Rosa's mostly, so Amy was constantly alone with her thoughts. The only interactions she had was texts from friends that she hadn't answered, and office hours spent with professors. When she showered, her hair was shedding a bit more than usual. She was refusing to give herself breaks from working. She would study while eating, showering, even walking to and from exams. She hardly had any nail left to bite at, her hair was getting knotty from all the twisting and twirling she did while stress, and she had broken through 18 pencils by tapping them into her desk too hard. Amy was beginning to break.

Thursday afternoon, Amy took her bio final. She sat next to Jake, who seemed calm and confident, somehow.

Jake

Jake was ready for his bio final. Truth was, he finished it super early. But he pretended to be working on it: he was monitoring Amy. He knew she didn't need some babysitter, but he was seriously worried. He had hardly heard her door open that whole week, she looked exhausted and worn out and in a constant state of stress. Throughout the test, he noticed Amy shaking, breathing rapidly, and on the verge of literal tears. Her hair was messy and her body was slouched over. She had appeared ridiculously focused, but deep down, he knew she was far from okay.

After their biology final, Jake had followed Amy back to her dorm, instead of going out to lunch like he normally would. He was certain she'd have noticed him, but she was too busy flipping through flashcards as she walked, softly whispering the answers to herself.

When Amy and Jake had finally reached the hallway of their floor, Amy tripped on her own foot, knocking a few flashcards onto the floor. Jake reached over to help pick them up, and Amy jumped when she saw him.

"Were you following me, Peralta?" Amy asked defensively.

"First of all, we came from the same final and live on the same floor right across from each other. Second of all, yes, yes I was. But before you say anything, just listen, Amy. I'm really worried about you. You don't look healthy or okay. I know you, Ames. I'm proud you aren't smoking. But whatever you're doing to cope isn't really working, and it's obvious. I'm not asking you to calm down, okay? I know finals week is a lot. But you have one more final tomorrow. I'm officially done, as are most people since you took on more classes than most. I'm not planning on heading home (lie) until tomorrow afternoon. Let me help you study for your last exam, okay? Finish the week off strong. I really think you could use the company, since I overheard that Kylie is packed up and going home. Just let me quiz you today, I'll stay focused the whole time block, from now until you fall asleep. Okay? Please just let me do this. Do *me* that favor" Jake begged as he put his hands around her upper arms.

"Okay, deal. Hurry up and get your stuff, it's gonna be a long day, Peralta" Amy said with a slight pep in her step.

Jake ran to his room and grabbed his phone, a charger, some snacks, and some random toys and stuff he had around his room. He was going to do this his way, whether Amy liked it or not. And that meant taking breaks, having actual human conversations, and trying to stay calm.

Amy

When Amy let Jake into the room, she first made him help her push Kylie's bed against hers to make more space. She grabbed her flashcards, her textbook, and her jar of writing utensils, and was ready to get to work.

"Here is how this is going to go, Peralta. I don't take studying lightly. I have a timer next to me. You are in charge of quizzing me with flashcards and timing me so I don't waste any precious time on the topic. We do this in 3 rounds, shuffling the cards each time. Next, I will take a multiple choice test out of this textbook. Here's a packet with all the answer keys. You

will grade me on them. Then I take my notebook and give a general lesson on each topic to prove I know it well enough to teach it. Then we repeat until I have finished every multiple choice and have gone through every topic. Sound good?" Amy asked.

Jake seemed almost in shock at the rapid pace of Amy's studying schedule. But she was confident and convincing.

"Or," Jake began. Amy didn't like that word too much. "You could take the multiple choice tests first to see what you need to work on." Jake suggested.

Amy wasn't one for change, but it wasn't a bad idea. "Fine. Have it your way" Amy reluctantly agreed.

Jake had spent the duration of those practice tests being helpful in the most annoying way possible. When Amy started playing with her hair, he would pull it back into a ponytail. If her breathing became more rapid, he would light candles and put on music without letting Amy put her soundproof earbuds in. The worst part for Amy was how long he took to grade her tests. He wouldn't let her move on until he graded them, which would take up to 20 minutes for him to do. Amy would be forced to take breaks, which was the last thing she wanted. But despite her frustration, Amy knew Jake was helping. Her anxiety wasn't nearly as bad while studying that day.

By 7pm, Amy had officially run through the entirety of her curriculum for her final.

"Alright, back to the top!" Amy said exhaustedly.

"Hell no, Santiago. The pizza I ordered for us will be here in like 5 minutes or less. We are taking a dinner break. Then we can start over.

Amy rolled her eyes, but she didn't say no.

Jake

Jake had already seen Amy perk up throughout the hour. When the pizza arrived, he could tell she was hungry, even if she wouldn't admit it.

When the two sat down, Jake got straight into conversation, so as to not let Amy rush through eating.

"So, what are your plans for break?" He asked.

"Boring, unfortunately. I'm gonna head home, since my parents really want me back for a bit. But I'm allowed to do independent research on campus over break, so the deal was I could spend every Monday, Wednesday, and weekends on campus. I'd be living at home still, and would just commute an hour each way on those days, since I don't want to pay for room and board for the break. What about you?" Amy asked.

"I'm, uh, I'm going home too. I'm gonna play some football with some friends from high school." Jake lied.

"You hesitated. Why do I feel like you're lying to me?" Amy asked suspiciously.

"I'm not, come on, what else would I even be doing?" Jake laughed nervously.

"Come on, Peralta. I know you well enough at this point to know you're lying. What could you possibly be doing over break that you won't tell me? Do you live a double life? Are you *fake gasps* a hooker?" Amy joked.

"Very funny. Anyway," Jake began.

"Um, I don't think so, Peralta. We are not moving past this topic until you tell me the truth!"

"Okay, fine. But you're gonna judge me. Promise not to laugh or make jokes or anything?" Jake said.

"God, now I'm dying to know what it is. I'm the most embarrassing person I know, so I can't even imagine what you'd be doing that I'd make fun of you for! But yes, of course, I promise." Amy said.

"Truth is, I took your advice from a while back. You told me to start exploring more creative interests. So I'm living on campus for the mini-mester and I'm taking some different classes to explore my interests more and see what I like. I didn't want people to judge me for taking classes. But you seem to know your whole life path, and honestly, it's made me realize that I can't just sit around and wait for the perfect career to jump at me." Jake said softly. Amy began to blush a little, and he noticed. It was cute.

"Jake, I think that's amazing. But wanna know my truth? I don't have my whole life mapped out at all. I want to do so many different things, and after college, I don't know where I'll go or what I'll do, and that scares me. You honestly inspired me to let myself live a little and not hold myself to some strict life timeline of where to go and what to do. My interests will probably change a lot. Everything is changing, I mean, it's college. But I'm glad you're doing this. I think you're gonna love it. Maybe you can help me with my project some more since I'll be on campus so often to work on it. Or you could just live a spontaneous college lifestyle. Whatever is best for you," Amy said with a light laugh.

"I'd like that. But only if you don't go crazy over it. You owe me some time to just hang out, too, not just doing work or studying or whatever." Jake said.

The two chatted over dinner, losing track of time slowly. It was already 9:00pm.

"Shit! It's getting late, and we never even did round two!" Amy said.

"Dammit, so close to a sex tape title!" Jake teased. Amy rolled her eyes yet again. It could truthfully be a whole talent of hers, rolling her eyes. She practiced more than enough /j.

"But really, Amy, you need to leave yourself time. Plus you have hardly even started packing. We can study for another two hours, then you can crash, okay? Then tomorrow afternoon, if you can stay sane until then, I'll help you pack up all your stuff before you have to leave. That way you aren't going crazy over two things." Jake insisted. Amy agreed.

They studied until 11:00pm, and Jake left, as promised. He was happy to see Amy more relaxed. He liked helping her feel better. He enjoyed comforting her. He liked everything about her, almost too much.

Frozen

Chapter Summary

This is gonna be the final chapter of this fic! It's super long, so buckle up, and make sure to read the notes at the end! After this chapter is my drunk draft, which is technically the last chapter in the fic, but I wrote it as a chapter 7 draft. So enjoy that as well!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Amy

Friday afternoon, after Amy finished her final, when she got to her dorm, Jake had already begun packing up her books.

"Peralta! How did you get in here? And how do I know you're gonna pack things in the right boxes?" Amy asked, concerned but not super concerned.

"A magician never reveals his secrets. And don't joke around, Ames. Everybody knows there is no 'right box'" Jake said.

"Sometimes I question how we go to the same school," Amy joked.

"So, how was the final?" Jake asked.

"It went well. I felt confident, and I was less stressed for sure. Thanks for everything last night. I've got to figure out how to return all the favors next semester," Amy laughed.

"I'm glad it went well. And no need to return anything, you've been there for me this whole semester, and you've helped me change and grow for the better. That's more than enough

repayment" Jake said with a light chuckle.

"I'm so nervous to go home. My parents are more excited to see my grade reports than they are to see me." Amy said as she began to bite her nails.

"We talked about this, remember? They don't matter. Ready? Let's game plan." Jake joked as he pulled out a pen and a piece of paper.

"This is your new makeshift binder. It's a singular sheet of paper. Here's the plan," he said, writing down the steps in his messy handwriting. "Step one, you get home and unpack and whatever. Step two, when everybody is asleep, you steal your own damn picture off of that stupid piano. Step three, you replace it with a picture of everybody else in the family. Step four, you put your picture above your bed. Step five, you become a master at the piano. Step six, when your family takes their photo off the piano, which they will, you get up there and put on a show to make them feel bad for thinking the piano is a place to put pictures of least favorite children and whatever. Step seven, you vandalize their pictures in your sleep and run away to a deserted island, never to see them again!" Jake joked. Amy laughed.

"If only," Amy sighed.

Jake cranked up his speaker, and the two blasted music as they packed. They danced around the room like goofballs, smiling and laughing.

Time flew by, and before they knew it, it was already 5:00pm. Amy was leaving in a few short hours. As they continued packing, both their phones buzzed. It was an email from the school.

"Hello students and parents of the University of Brooklyn," it read. "For those of you still on campus, in case you haven't noticed, it began snowing a few hours ago. The weather channel is predicting it will quickly become a heavy storm. If you cannot leave campus and get home safely, we ask that you please stay on campus for your own safety until the blizzard ends. Thank you so much for your cooperation, please email student and residence life if you have any questions or need anything. The dining hall will remain open as an option for any students who were not planning on staying on campus for break, for no additional charge."

Amy didn't know how to feel. She was stuck, but it also meant she could delay seeing her parents. She had no plan for this. It wasn't even supposed to snow when she checked the weather app a week ago.

Jake

Jake could see Amy was getting nervous, but he wasn't super sure what to do.

"Hey, look, I can tell you're struggling, okay. It's a confusing situation. Do you wanna talk it out?" Jake asked. Amy nodded her head softly.

Jake and Amy sat down on the combined bed, and Amy started tearing up.

"There has honestly just been so much on my mind, lately. I'm so scared to go home, but I don't want to stay here. Finals week was hell, especially when Kylie wasn't around and after she left. Just me alone with my thoughts. I've been having trouble sleeping. I've been so stressed out. I wasn't pumped to go home, but I missed being with other people and having people to keep me sane. And now that finals are over, all I can do is think about how bad it's gonna be when I get home, trying to impress my parents and shit. It's really scary. I keep getting into my head about things. I followed the binder to a tea, and yet everything is still kind of crummy. I liked college, not having to think about my home life or shit like that. Getting to share a room with a friend, stay up late and watch movies, stuff like that. My brain is just in this weird space of wanting to leave but not being ready, either." Amy said.

"Look, I get it. I was afraid to go home, too. All I have is my mom. I was so scared all semester that I would disappoint her, her only child. I'm glad I'm staying here to take classes, but I know my mom is lonely right now and misses me a ton. I was going to go home this weekend to surprise her, but my car isn't fit to drive in blizzards. It sucks, but life just throws you around sometimes, and you have to take the punches. Maybe this was meant to happen? I don't know. But you're already half packed, and your room is half empty. If you're comfortable with it, you can move your stuff into my room for the night or until this blizzard blows over, and we can watch movies or whatever stupid stuff you and Kylie did. And if you wake up in the middle of the night, you just wake me up too, and I'll keep you and your anxious thoughts company until you can fall back asleep. Does that sound okay?" Jake asked.

Amy nodded with a small smile. It was adorable, no surprise, since everything she did was adorable to Jake. She grabbed some bedding, a pillow, her toiletries, some clothes, her electronics and chargers, and, of course, her binder, since she needed to go through her first semester checklist. She dragged her stuff across the hall and put her bedding on Charles' empty bed. The snow was getting much heavier, so Jake volunteered to run out and grab food in case they got snowed into the hall for any reason. He wore so many layers he was practically unrecognizable. He walked out the door and left Amy to get comfortable.

Amy

When Amy put herself into an outside perspective, the situation seemed pretty ironic. The two had kissed in the past, and now they were sharing a room, as friends. Well, as friends if in the friendship the girl liked the guy but wouldn't do anything about it because of her own rules, and where she was in total denial, at least. She gave her parents a call to update them, even though they had received the email as well.

Amy got bored, and decided to explore Jake's room a little. She had never really taken much time to look inside, especially now that he had expanded his space with Charles gone for break. On the nightstand next to his bed, Jake had a propped up picture of him and his mom from a while back, taken at what looked like it may have been his Bar Mitzvah. He had a little tv set up with controllers on the empty dresser nearby, in which Jake had let Amy store some of her things temporarily. He had some old CDs and DVDs in his bookshelf, most likely more for decoration than anything else. The CDs were all different artist's Average albums, Amy had noticed. Jake had once told her all his favorites, so it was easy to catch the pattern. The DVDs were all the Die Hard movies in order, no surprise there.

When Jake came back, he undid his heavy layers, put them in the laundry basket neatly, then threw the food in the mini fridge after grabbing plates of food for the both of them.

"I hate to say it, but we might be here overnight at the very least. It's picking up quickly out there, and it's not looking like it's going to stop snowing any time soon. How about you pick a movie to put on Netflix while we eat?" Jake asked.

Amy was excited. She got to pick a movie for her and Jake to watch, and she wasn't going to pass up on the opportunity to totally make Jake regret his decision. She put on her favorite romcom, 10 Things I Hate About you.

At first, Jake was clearly not happy with Amy's movie selection. But after a while, it started warming up to him.

"OH MY GOD, KAT, JUST MAKE OUT WITH HIM ALREADY, WE CAN ALL TELL YOU LIKE HIM" Jake would scream at the tv. Amy truthfully wasn't even really watching the movie; she was just watching Jake watch it. It was cute how invested he got in the plot and characters. He would throw popcorn at the tv when somebody did something stupid, or he would squeeze his blanket tight if something sweet or romantic happened. When the party scene came on, Jake stood up on his bed and started copying Kat's dance moves. He tripped over and fell, but it was a good laugh for both of them, since he ended up being totally fine.

By the end of the movie, Jake was feeling it all. He was laughing, crying, but mostly, entertaining Amy.

"Hey, when I ran out for food earlier, I bought some ice cream. You want?" Jake asked.

"Yeah, sure, that sounds good!" Amy said. It was taking everything in her not to kiss him then and there.

Jake and Amy sat down next to each other, eating ice cream right out of the containers.

"So tell me, Santiago, what was the inspiration behind the whole binder thing?" Jake asked.

"Okay, well, I have always been big on binders and organization and notes and schedules and stuff. I had a lot of things I wanted to sort out for college, so I decided to put them all together in one place." Amy said.

"Yeah, but I mean like the rules. Why did you make them anyway, aside from the obvious?"

"Well, it was to keep me on track for my future. Things like partying and dating and stuff would consume my free time. I'd have to find a balance with everything, and it would make it harder to complete my work on time and make time to study."

"Partying I get, but why the dating stuff? That's a normal part of life, right? Finding that balance?"

"Honestly, dating is a weird subject for me. I still haven't come out to my family as bisexual, so for starters, if I don't date at all, then I don't really need to think about all that yet. But a lot of it comes from my past. In high school, I wasn't exactly a hot commodity," Amy said.

"No!" Jake jokingly gasped.

"I know, right!" Amy playfully replied. "But anyway, I got really insecure about why people weren't into me. It took me years of therapy and meditation and mantra to build up my confidence to that of a normal person's. So when it came to college, I figured it would be easier if I just didn't let myself date. I can't get rejected or feel insecure about why people wouldn't want to be with me, because I know that first and foremost it's because I don't want to date in general. I'm in a good place now, but I don't want to ruin that. Rejection and heartbreak hurt. I know that. And I don't want to start failing classes because my relationship failed and now all of a sudden I have to put myself back together while also trying to stay on top of my schoolwork. I put a lot of passion and care into the things I love, which is why I don't do casual stuff. I don't want to put myself in a position to get hurt. College is a time for me to explore my interests, but I can't really do that if all I'm thinking about is trying to land a date or whether or not my crush is going to text me back or how my parents will react when I bring somebody home when I'm already not even good enough for them, so how would my partner be good enough for them? I'm a lot to handle, and I don't want to set myself up for disaster. The world is fucking awful, and if I can avoid some of the shitty stuff it brings, maybe I can be a little more prepared to take on this crazy world."

Jake

As Amy told Jake her story, he felt more strongly for her than ever before. He wanted to give her a hug and hold her tight and make her feel like she was enough. He wanted her to know she would never get hurt by him. But he didn't want to do that. He didn't want to seem like after all that, he was just going to be a dick and immediately make a move on her. So he just sat there and squeezed her hand tight, feeling her tears drip onto his cold fingers.

"What about you, with your whole thing? What's your deal?" Amy asked gently.

"Well, like I said before, a lot is about my mom. But it's a bunch of things. I know you know I only have a mom, but I can't remember if I ever told you why. My dad is still alive, but I haven't seen him in years. He texts me drunkenly most years on New Years at 1 in the morning, but that's about it. My parents had a love that I looked up to when I was a kid. I never saw them fight, they always had dinner with me, kissed each other goodnight, made each other breakfast, you know? But then my dad left, and I realized love isn't all it was cut out to be. My dad was a real bad guy. He stopped caring about my mom and I. He broke her heart, made both of our lives difficult. I never really learned how to love. I had relationships in high school, but I had no clue what a healthy relationship looked like, and I was constantly screwing up, and I genuinely didn't understand what I was doing wrong, was the worst part. I could see the disappointment my mom felt when she saw I was wrecking my relationships the way my dad had. It stung. So I gave up on love, honestly. I was sick of disappointing my mom, sick of becoming like my dad, sick of being the toxic one in relationships. So I decided that the best way to not hurt the people around me was to never love them in the first place. Everybody always says college is the place to experiment. Naturally, I figured it would be perfect for somebody like me. But I've changed a lot over these past few months, and I'm not so sure what I was doing was any better, looking back. I was looking for the wrong answers, I think. I believed that by avoiding relationships, I'd be avoiding my fear of crumbling relationships and avoid getting myself into unhealthy situations. But what I should have been doing was learning how to make things healthier. I'm getting better at it, which I'm proud of. I've let down more walls than I would have liked to when I first came here. I don't know if that's a good thing or a bad thing, I guess only time will tell. My dad would always say to me when I was a kid that I should never show weakness. I lived by that; I wanted to be stronger than him, better than him, and I thought strength was the key to that. So I acted like a jerk and tried to be somebody I didn't want to be, because I didn't want people to know I'm not as strong as everybody believes I am. But you showed me that my being a jerk wasn't helping myself or the people around me. After that night when you were all drunk and yelling at me, I decided to start therapy. It's been helping a lot. It's helped me learn to do better. To be better. It's also how I figured out that doing shit like trying to kiss you late at night was manipulative and wrong and unfair to you. It's how I figured out that I'd be a bad friend to you if I had let you kiss me," Jake shared.

"What do you mean, if you had let me kiss you?" Amy asked.

"Oh, yeah, I forgot you never knew about this. That night of your birthday, after your party, we walked back to the hall with Kylie. We were alone in the hallway, and you were still really drunk. You tried to kiss me, but I stopped you. I didn't want either of us to have to regret something that next morning. I never told you because I didn't want to embarrass you or make things weird if you knew I knew you were into me in some form back at the time. I didn't want to ruin this all for you, Amy. Your whole plan. Your whole binder. But do you want to know what?" Jake asked.

Amy sat there in confusion as Jake ran out the dorm door. When he came back, Amy look at him weirdly, and saw he was holding her binder.

"Jake, what are you doing?" She asked.

He flipped to the last page, the page of rules.

"Here's the thing, Ames. Your binder is bullshit. You know better than to think that you can make your life perfect by stopping yourself from partying every few Tuesday nights or going on some random Tinder date that will make for a hilarious worst date story later on. You deserve happiness, no strings attached." Jake said.

He grabbed a sharpie and drew a huge X over Amy's rules page. Below it, he wrote in his hardly legible handwriting, "The Only Rule: Do what makes you happy." He sat there on the floor as he closed the sharpie as he turned the book sideways to show the page to Amy. Amy walked over to sit next to him, and before he got to say anything else, Amy put her hand on his shoulder.

"Can I kiss you, only, like, sober and awake this time?" She asked with a laugh.

"That's best type of kiss," Jake said as he giggled back. He put his hands on her cheeks and pulled her in close. Their lips brushed against each other with a smile. Jake felt butterflies all through his stomach. He pulled Amy in for a deep kiss, and she pulled him in even tighter.

"Ames, I want to be with you, if you want to be with me" Jake said as they rested their foreheads and noses against each other.

"Well, if my only rule is being happy, then I guess that means I have no choice but to say yes."

Thank you all so much for reading my fic. It means a ton! I have plans to write some oneshots of Peraltiago, and then once I get back from my beach trip in a week ish, I will probably start my sequel fic to this. The sequel fic will begin right where this fic leaves off, and will probably have more chapters and more fluff and content. It will focus on Jake and Amy's struggles to try and maintain a relationship with the stress of college, as well as with families, friends, and finding themselves. It will feature more of the characters used in this fic and will be much different than this fic, since it will be more based in the present.

Please leave comments or dm me on Twitter @wariocheats and don't hesitate to give any constructive criticism or anything like that! I really hope you liked reading this. I know I'm not the Most Unexceptional writer, but I had a blast writing this and I hope to keep writing, so I hope you can join me on my journey to improve my writing for fun lol. I couldn't have done this without you all!

Drunkk Draft

Chapter Notes

Hey guys I'm drunk I'm gonna try to write this xhPTEr i think it will be fun im too lazy to fix my eorors so we are gonna roll w it i will publish this at the end its supposed to be cha[pter 7 so this will be fun fucl what happened in cha[ter 6 shit um let me lok at my notes i wrote out what i wanted for the trst of the fic wait did i already wтите 7 i thhink i messed this up no this is 7 i just messed it up ok cool lets go i just had more wine hashtag stock up lets go

Aky

Amy felt awful about how Jake flet. She didn't know it was her fsult, but Jake had helped her fix her extracurrivulars, and she felt awful that she couldn

tt reciprocate that. he had gotten a coccussion in the football game, he was distracred or something. Amy had heard from Teddy that Jake wasn't gonna be able to play for the rest of the season. Football was Jake'/s whole life. Amy felt so bad. Oh GOD This is SO Boring. Please Kill Me im so drunk No One Cares. At All

Jake was so depressed that he culd't play football anymore. I tawas his one thing he cuold rel yon. The one thing thst made him happy. Fuke hwo di\ i make this a whole hc]a[ter long without dapping in to the plna i wrote out fothe next fchapte umm Jake wa slike really really depressed but having Amy's company made him frel a bit better. He didn't know what to so now. He had nothign. But Amy's beautfiul i]]eyes awere looking into his and everything in thr worlf gelt tihyj right there we go.

Oh no that shoudlve' been Jake's Pov crap good thing this isnt actully ona be wchapter 7.

Oj baxk ro aAmy

Amy was in bio lsb sn dit esd rven mre awkward than befoee. Reddddy qas being so weird and anonyinf.

"Hey girl, wanna go out?" he kept askinh. But Amy just said no> Amy was ot going to rbeak a rule an Teddy was starting to turn he off he was being really crreepy. Sje didn't like it that he ekpt bothering he about it why couldn't he jsut take bo gor an anserr? I dont feel nlike tfxiign my mistaekss thats too harf you will jsut have to suffer km too IZY.

WOAH I JUAR FEEL BACK ON MY BED WHY IS THIS INCAPS LOCK

iokay i fixe dit

umm what else fpr thos chapter im totally gona have to requite this in the morning oy vey htis is gonn abe so bad i cant wait to rreread it in the mornign Oh GOD This is SO Boring. Please Kill Me . i jsut fell bCK IN MY bed again oops acaps kock problem again pob posturemidner better straighyen my back anywayyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyy ooh thats like mynwe twitter buo ih right i need to edit this fic ito chabge my twitter bo im now W@wariocheats woh look i spelled it righ t and evryting. ki keep giing myself htr chills whne i drink dikd why ymm anyway oh firefighter episode of brooklyn nine nineyafun i hvs fo pee but im gonna pretedn like i dot did i already say rhat or did ii jsut twweet that idk man uh nayway whar was i wwriting about um. right so 5eddy woudl not stop hitting on Any aww mose ny dog was so cute uh anyway Teddy woudl not lwave Amy alone she was sick of ut it was gross and weird becuase catcallig adn unanted lfirting it gross and werid fukc i really wany yo [[eee prr pee yrjrty yjrtr yhrtr yhrr yjrtr yhrt i hoy uo babe i got you babe sorry rgt what was i saying this is a very fourh wall breakign fic Oh GOD This is SO Boring. Please Kill Me uh my apolgoies joked on you i fon thvse a dentist oh no not the vulture again smh im wrewaitchign brooklyn nine nine by thrwa y if you didnt allready know okay assing,ent broken frather umm tight what was i writing sbout ehy fo yhry nrrf vongrdion yhid drmdvyrt untrslidyiv got svop sohoe umm vulture stilll flirs fuvk what was i writing about umm tedddy tight umm im u fogrot my whole plan teargas no not teaegas ok brb im gonna peehb im back i wondrrhow many 2ords this is umm i cNNOT Shit oay i fixe it id cnot stay focused i want mroe wine brbbif this doesnt give me ahangover idk what will

umm rigt word sowrds words umm shit ynmm i forgot how to think umm i cant think of what else to put i feel like ive covered it all but yall desver enmore content than that oh this is the that episode kind awack how it sall frels so recent like it was i just watched it so recently but now im rewatching it and im like whaaaaat this felt way more recent than being in season one this felt like like seaosn eihgt ya know what im saying im not even loooking at my computer im ont gonna lie oh i like m y computer have i mentioned that Oh GOD This is SO Boring. Please Kill Me being druk its really enjoywable i hope yall hype htis up and hype aup all y fancaksm boh by the wy i chaned like my layout and username and all that so dint forget who i am cuz i keep doign that okay i feel like maye i should stop remind me not to publsih this tul i reelased the real chapter so i dot spoil my plans k bye

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