

shorelines you have yet to see

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by [fiercynn](#)

Summary

“Ginny Baker,” Cara says, the same way she did that morning, after driving Ginny all the way back to San Diego, a grin in her voice that makes Ginny want to smile back. “I hear you might be in need of another night out.”

Notes

dudavocado, I hope you enjoy this! I couldn't resist bringing in Cara because, I mean, Lyndsy Fonseca. This has hints of Ginny/Cara, if that's your cup of tea, but I left it ambiguous.

Spoilers for the whole first season; set four weeks after the season finale. Title is a lyric from ["Rio"](#), by Hey Marseilles, and is probably too on-the-nose for words. Thanks to my wonderful beta!

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

Ginny mostly hasn't been taking visitors apart from the usual suspects, but when Cara from Los Angeles calls on a Thursday, something makes her pick up.

"Ginny Baker," she says, the same way she did that morning, after driving Ginny all the way back to San Diego, a grin in her voice that makes Ginny want to smile back. "I hear you might be in need of another night out."

Ginny shifts the phone to her other ear. "Hey," she says, "um. That's...really nice of you, but I don't think partying is such a good idea for me right now."

"A night out doesn't have to be shots and beer pong and doing crazy dunk stunts in swimming pools," Cara points out. "But from what I see about you in the news, you sound like you might need a break from your life. I can help with that."

"What were you thinking?"

"Come to LA for the weekend, stay with me. We can just chill, if you want, or even if we do go out, you probably won't get as swamped by fans up here. It'll be fun."

"Listen," Ginny says, and stops. She's been trying, lately, to not to make assumptions about people's motives, because that's definitely gotten her into trouble in the past, and she doesn't want to be a jerk to Cara, of all people. But – "That sounds really nice, and I appreciate the offer, but I'm having a hard time dealing with people pitying me right now. So if that's what this is, then I don't know if I can say yes. I've been struggling with lashing out about that, and I don't want to take it out on you." It's a frequent topic of discussion with her therapist, that's for sure.

Cara is silent for a moment. "There's a difference between pity and sympathy, you know? Of course I feel bad that you're going through some stuff, but I don't, like, look *down* on you for it. And believe me when I say I'm offering this because I'd enjoy it too. Look at it as me taking advantage of your lighter schedule."

Ginny would like to say she doesn't know what makes her want to agree, but that's not even remotely true. Her memories of that night in LA include both a hot burn of shame and bright blazes of joy, but Cara had been the one grounding all of it, making it feel real, not just a series of moments that could so easily wash away. If they lived in the same city, Ginny would've actually wanted to try and hang out again, in the little spare time she had before the injury; as it was, she had to settle for sporadic texts and Snapchats.

Now, like Cara says, she's got nothing *but* spare time.

"I have to be back Sunday morning," says Ginny, "but yeah, okay."

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Cara picks her up the next day around noon, against Ginny's protests that driving three hours each way is crazy, but Cara is adamant. "You don't have a car, and what are you going to do, take Amtrak? Plus I love driving, and it's beautiful out." Ginny doesn't feel up to mentioning

that she'd likely have used a car service; it seems like a moot point, and snobby as hell, in the face of Cara's stubborn generosity.

She does insist on chipping in for gas and coffee, and Cara replies, "well, *obviously*, plus I get to pick the music," which seems only fair.

"So," Cara says once they're on I-5, "what happened to your arm?"

Ginny glances at her. "I thought you said you were reading about me in the news."

Cara shrugs. "Sure, but I want to hear it from you."

"It's a stress fracture," Ginny says, "of a part of the elbow called the olecranon. It's not uncommon for pitchers, and frankly, it could be a lot worse. If it had been a ligament tear, I'd have been out of commission for a year at *best*."

"Do they have any idea how long this'll take to heal?"

"That's the problem, it's kind of just a waiting game. It could get better on its own, with rest and physical therapy, but if it doesn't make progress within six weeks, I might need surgery, and all the rehab that follows that. It's only been a month, so far." She shakes her head, looking down at her lap. "It's funny – the last time I saw you, I kept feeling jealous that your life isn't as planned out as mine. But now that everything's gone totally upside down, I hate the uncertainty of it."

Cara doesn't say anything for a moment, then clears her throat. "Listen, I promised you a break from your life, right? So I had some ideas, if you're game."

"Hit me," says Ginny, smiling.

"Tonight, hanging out with Ana – you remember her, right? With the house party and the fries? She's going through a bad breakup, and she wanted a quiet night, so I think it's just going to be us. Then tomorrow, the beach, since I'm guessing you still haven't been?"

"Nope," Ginny sighs, and Cara just laughs.

"And then maybe going to my friend's gig, if you're interested – she's a jazz singer, and it's a pretty small bar, so hopefully you won't be too visible. Then we can see how it goes for the rest of Saturday night."

"Yeah, that sounds great," Ginny says, taking a sip of her latte.

"Oh, but there's one other stop that we need to make tonight, before Ana's," says Cara. There's a gleam in her eye that Ginny could very well be frightened of, but instead it just makes her intrigued.

"What's that?"

"Oh, you'll see," Cara chirps, "although you're welcome to guess."

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The stop turns out to be something Ginny would never have guessed in a million years, which is barely an exaggeration, because it's *Cara's mother's book club*.

"Well, it used to be my book club too," Cara points out as they stop at a liquor store to pick up a bottle of whiskey. "It was a mother-daughter thing that my friends and I started in middle school, only when we all went to college we mostly stopped going regularly, but the moms continued on their own. Now that I'm out of school, I like to stop in when I can."

"Don't these things usually call for wine?" Ginny says, trying to remember anything she's ever heard about *book clubs*, god.

"They're all trying to lose weight, so they switched to hard liquor recently for the calorie count. The rest of it is exactly like what you'd expect from a bunch of white ladies in their fifties, though, I promise you there will be at least four different kinds of hummus and three types of gluten-free crackers."

There are actually four types: lentil, rice, quinoa, and flaxseed. Ginny likes the lentil best, with the roasted red-pepper hummus. Even better, though, is the conversation: the moms are all excited to meet Ginny, especially Cara's mother, Louise, who says she's been following Ginny's career ever since she heard that her daughter was friends with a major-league baseball player. But the talk quickly turns to the other absent daughters, particularly the one who's decided to become a social worker and another one who's struggling through her first year in Teach for America in Seattle. Four of the six moms are teachers themselves, with varying opinions on TFA, but it's clear that those beliefs pale in comparison to the need to support one of their own.

Ginny tries to imagine doing something like this, feeling comfortable enough not only with her own mom but also her *friends*. Because her mother had always surrounded herself with people when Ginny was growing up, surrogate aunts that doted on her, but Ginny never had the time to get to know them very well individually. And after things started to go sour between her parents, it felt like another strike against her mother, that she had this army of external support and validation when Ginny's father had always been a loner, speaking even to his brother only about twice a year.

Now, Ginny thinks that maybe her mother's social nature wasn't the source of yet another problem, but a symptom, a mark of how different her parents really were.

They head out when the mothers turn to actually discussing the book (*The Night Circus*, by Erin Morgenstern) and drive to Eagle Rock.

"You guys are responsible for keeping me from drunk-texting her," Ana says as soon as she opens the door.

"I thought you weren't going to drink at all tonight," Cara says, mild, as Ana takes Ginny's coat and promptly tosses it on her couch.

“I don’t need alcohol to drunk-text,” Ana pronounces. “I am perfectly capable of getting drunk on my own *feelings*, thank you very much.”

Ginny can’t exactly disagree – she remembers Ana as being a little dramatic that night, but had chalked it up to being wasted, or possibly an aspiring actress. Not all LA clichés are true, though, because it turns out she’s a community organizer for an immigrant rights non-profit. Though, Cara tells her, organizers are apparently their own breed of performer, so maybe it does explain something.

“So your girlfriend dumped you because she got back together with her ex?” Ginny says. “Wow, that sucks, I’m sorry.”

“This is what I get for dating someone from an electoral campaign,” Ana says darkly, and Ginny doesn’t even really know what that *means*, but she still laughs.

It’s absolutely the quiet night that Cara promised – apparently among their friends, breakups call for what they’ve dubbed a No Judgment Night, where the dumpee gets to pick what to do without anyone else’s veto. What Ana wants to do, apparently, is make them watch terrible horror movies, low-budget ones so ridiculous that Ginny can’t possibly find them scary, though Cara shrieks at every moment of manufactured suspense.

It occurs to Ginny, halfway through the *House of Wax* remake, that this could make her feel really left out: Ana and Cara have that easy shared language of friends who have known each other through thick and thin, speaking in inside jokes more often than not, and constantly referring to people Ginny doesn’t know. It’s clearly not intentional, because whenever they realize they’re doing it, they immediately explain, fold Ginny into the conversation as best they can. Maybe that’s why it doesn’t hurt, because Ana seems just as generous with her life as Cara is.

But there’s something more there, and Ginny can’t quite put her finger on it. Leave it to Cara to hit on it herself, when they’re driving back to her apartment.

“Well, usually when my friends are going through a rough time, I tend to go for pampering and lots of attention,” Cara says, smirking a little. “Obviously, you saw that with Ana tonight. But I figured that what you needed was a night of focus on other people, take a little bit of the spotlight off your troubles.”

It’s incredibly shrewd, now that Cara says it out loud; of course that was exactly what Ginny needed. But that very fact makes her throat close up with shame. “God, you make me sound so self-centered,” she says, trying to keep her tone light, most likely failing.

Cara glances at her, sidelong, and then reaches out to touch her arm. “That’s not what I meant at all,” she says, sounding serious, for once. “I think your life forces you to be your own advocate all the time, and that requires you to focus on yourself. And I’m sure that can be really good for you sometimes, but it sounds like it makes you feel the weight of the world on your shoulders too.”

What’s left unsaid, of course, is that it also helps to be reminded that other people’s lives can be difficult too, even if they are still *full* in a way that Ginny is breathlessly envious of. Cara’s

too nice to say that part, though.

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“I absolutely insist.”

“Cara, what’s the point of having a pull-out couch if you’re not going to make your guests sleep on it?”

“It’s for when I have more than one visitor at a time,” Cara says, as if that’s obvious. “Most of the time people just sleep in my bed. I mean, I got a queen for a reason, and the mattress is amazing.”

Well, there are definitely other reasons someone would want a queen bed, but Ginny just sighs. “It won’t bother you?”

“Have you been listening at all?” Cara says, then frowns. “What, are you like a really light sleeper or something? Because if you are, then you should take the bed and I’ll take the pull-out, but if you think I’m going to make a *professional athlete* who needs to keep her body in perfect shape sleep on that cheap piece of crap, you don’t know me at all.”

“No, I sleep just fine, and my body’s hardly in perfect shape anyway,” Ginny grumbles, but it seems pointless to keep arguing.

Which is actually kind of fantastic, because instead of being awkward or uncomfortable, lying in Cara’s bed in their pajamas feels something like a *sleepover*, and there’s still a nine-year old somewhere inside Ginny that has just had her dreams come true.

“What was college like?” is the first thing that comes out of Ginny’s mouth, when they’re on their backs in the dark, the two beers Ana had pressed on her still fizzing pleasantly in her blood.

“God, what *was* college like?” Cara says. “Let’s see. Lots of pot and alcohol – more alcohol for me, getting high makes me jittery – and conversations about politics through all hours of the night, with or without help from substances. A lot of *Arrested Development*, god, I hate that show now, I’ve seen it way too much. Some frat parties, but I tried to stay away from the Greek life as much as possible, it always had the potential to be a huge shit-show. No 9am discussion sections after freshman year, ever. Dealing with those friends who switched their majors every five minutes, I had a bunch of those. Oh, and everyone came out, I mean, *everyone*, but I was the first in my group of friends, so I like to think I turned them all.”

“Uh, good job with that,” Ginny says, hoping it comes out sounding funny, casual, maybe teasing, and not just weird. It’s one of those things – everyone expects her to have a lot of gay friends, but she doesn’t play *women’s* sports, does she, and the guys she does play with have had little incentive to advertise themselves as anything but straight. She met Megan Rapinoe at an event once, but she’s not sure that counts.

“It’s hard not to just think about the final year, though, because it’s the most recent?” Cara continues, oblivious. “Which kind of sucks, because senior year was my least favorite.”

“Were you that sad to be leaving?”

“More like terrified of what was to come,” Cara says frankly. “There was all this pressure to get a job as soon as possible – it almost felt like a competition, even with my friends. There’s a reason Molly did TFA even though she doesn’t want to teach long-term: they were one of the biggest and earliest recruiters on our campus.”

“Did you consider it?”

“Briefly, but it was still pretty competitive, and I really have no interest in teaching. I’m not even that into kids, really.” Cara sips at the glass of water from her nightstand. “My attempt at securing my future was applying for grad school.”

“Oh yeah?” Ginny said, interested. “For what?”

“Sociology, if you can believe it,” Cara says, wry. “And I got in some places, too, but none of them offered me enough financial aid. In retrospect, though, it’s a good thing, because it wasn’t what I really wanted, it just would’ve been a thing to do, you know? Even if I still don’t know what I want, a year after graduating, and feel totally lost sometimes without having any career goals, and barely make my rent with the waitressing thing, and worry that I’m too reckless and impatient half the time even with those kinds of gigs - it’s still probably better than letting that stupid senior year pressure dictate my choices. Right?”

Ginny...honestly has no idea how to respond to that. *That sounds like a vacation*, she remembers saying the last time Cara expressed any kinds of fears about her own life, at not knowing if she has a reason to get up every morning, and almost winces now at how insensitive it must have sounded. Ginny’s been on “vacation” for the past few weeks, and it’s been hell. Of course, she’s still had a routine, PT and working out in all the ways that won’t aggravate her right arm, trying to keep in shape, but the sense of purpose behind it has eroded so much, even when there’s a very good chance that her future is still bright. She wouldn’t wish that level of doubt on anyone.

Cara laughs suddenly, breaking the silence. “What am I doing, though, talking to you about pressure? I don’t know the half of it.”

“I still like hearing about it,” Ginny offers. “I wish I had something more useful to say.”

“It’s actually just really nice to be able to say some of it out loud. You’re a surprisingly good listener.”

“So you *do* think I’m self-centered,” Ginny says, teasing this time, feeling too comfortable to really take offense.

“Well, as self-centered as any other young twentysomething trying to figure out their life, sure,” Cara laughs, and they settle back into a companionable silence.

“I have a question for you,” says Cara, eventually. “And I promise it’s not about your injury.”

Ginny watches her profile out of the corner of her eye, dappled with shadows. “Shoot.”

“When I met you, at that gala. Did you pick up on the fact that I was flirting with you?”

It’s absolutely the last question Ginny expected to hear; Cara seems to have a knack for surprising her. “I – what? No. Were you? Really?”

She can almost hear Cara’s smile even before she speaks. “Oh, most definitely. Did the words ‘you wanna get out of here?’ not make it obvious enough?”

Ginny frowns. “Then why didn’t you...”

“Make a move on you while you were having a meltdown?” Cara snorts. “Because I’m not a *dick*.”

Ginny swallows. “I’m sorry, I didn’t mean – I wasn’t trying to offend you –”

“It’s okay, Ginny,” Cara says, still sounding amused.

“Besides, I wasn’t having a *meltdown*,” Ginny says, almost as an afterthought.

“You really, really were,” Cara laughs, with a warmth in her voice which Ginny really isn’t sure she deserves, but still feels all too grateful for. “But even if you hadn’t been, it was pretty clear that you wanted a friend that night. And that worked for me too.”

She shifts a little, rustling the covers, and Ginny is suddenly all too aware of her own skin, scant inches from Cara; her body feels prickly and over-warm. It isn’t – she’s not *uncomfortable*, she’s knows that, not with Cara, but everything feels heightened, somehow.

“What about this time?” she says, hoping it doesn’t sound – she’s not even sure what she’s hoping.

“You don’t have to be crying in a bathtub to be having a meltdown,” Cara says quietly, and Ginny feels some of the tension draining out of her.

“Besides,” Cara continues, “I like you, Ginny, and that doesn’t have to mean any one thing. Frankly, I don’t know you well enough yet to know what it means at all. But I do know I want to keep hanging out with you.”

“But why do you even like me?” Ginny says, and instantly regrets it. Not only does it sound pathetic, but it’s a perfect opening for Cara to give her the kind of glowing review her fans are so fond of: that she’s strong, brave, even *fearless*.

Ginny loves her fans, and understands why they apply those attributes. Half the time, it’s what keeps her going at all, to be so aware of other people’s faith in her. But those are all the things Ginny doesn’t really feel right now, and she’s not sure she can handle hearing them from Cara, too.

“You’re...funny,” Cara says, sounding like she’s thinking about it. “You were funny, that night, and I liked that. And you’re so interested in other people, which is why I should have been less surprised that you’re a great listener. And you’re sweet. And, I don’t know, fuck, I

never know what to say when people ask me things like that, I just like you, okay? Why does anyone like anyone?"

The thing is, Ginny's been striving her whole life to be seen as a ballplayer. The celebrity thing came up on her unexpectedly, sure, and she's been chafing against it since the start – the attention, the stress, the necessary codes of conduct to maintain her image. But being an athlete has been fundamental to everyone Ginny's ever done, and for the most part, she's never regretted it. She would love to be *more* of a normal athlete, if anything, to be one of the boys, part of the team dynamic, just another rookie pitcher working her way up.

But with the injury, her future as any kind of ballplayer could be in jeopardy. And if it plays out the way Ginny's afraid of, she doesn't want to be left bare, no part of her personality that's not wrapped up in the game. It's like Skip told her: baseball can't be her everything.

Even if all of this works out, it's an overwhelming, fundamental relief to know that at least one person sees something else in her, too.

"Yeah, I know what you mean," she says, her chest feeling tight for all sorts of really nice reasons, "I like you too."

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The next morning dawns bright and clear, sunlight slanting in through the windows as Cara hands her a cup of coffee. "So, Ginny Baker," she says, with that grin that Ginny could stand to see a lot more of, "you ready for the beach?"

Ginny smiles.

End Notes

all I know about pitching injuries came from googling, so apologies if I got anything horribly wrong! Cara and Ana's lives are mined from my own when I was 24, book club lentil crackers and all.

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