

The Roommate Equation Bonus Epilogue

Ash

Ten years later...

My heart pounds when the front door slams. Dylan wasn't supposed to be home for another hour. He said he was working late with Sloan on a new project for Date Crashers. Since he launched the new dating app, the company has more than tripled in size, forcing him to spend more time at the office.

I flew home from New York a few hours ago, scrambling to prepare Dylan's surprise. He has no idea what I've been up to this week, and I can't wait to show him what I have been hiding from him. We married a few months after I sold the *Date Crashers* screenplay. A house on the beach was my wedding present from Dylan. We're only a few blocks from Sloan, where he now lives with his wife, Thea. My brother, a married man, who would have thought Sloan would ever settle down?

"Ash," he calls out. "Hey, babe. Where are you?"

I exit our bedroom with a gift box behind my back. Dylan bends down to kiss me, sweeping me into his strong arms.

"I missed you," he whispers. "This house is too big without you in it. I can't sleep when you're traveling."

"It's only for a few days every month."

"I'm so proud of you." He cups the side of my face and smiles. "I read the reviews. Viewers are loving *Kingdom of Ash and Smoke*. Have you read *Variety* yet?"

I shake my head.

"They're calling it the next *Game of Thrones*."

I gasp. "Shut up. No, they're not."

He scrolls through his cell phone and hands it to me.

I stare at the screen in disbelief. "The first draft of the pilot was terrible."

He strokes my jaw with his thumb and smiles. "My wife, the famous screenwriter."

"I'm not famous. I'm still me."

"You've had two major motion pictures that hit number one at the box office and a Netflix show that's in its second season with another on the way."

"You must be my lucky charm," I joke.

He smirks. "Must be."

"I have to tell you something," I confess.

"You sold another screenplay?"

"Yes," I say, beaming with delight. "But that's not the most important news."

He tilts his head to the side. "What are you hiding from me?"

I hand him the box, and his eyes widen as he looks at it.

"Am I forgetting something?"

I smile up at him.

Like Dylan would ever forget anything.

"It's not our anniversary." He scratches the dark stubble on his jaw. "And it's not my birthday."

I shove the box at his chest. "Just open it."

He takes my hand and leads me into the living room. We plop down on the couch, curled up next to each other.

Dylan kisses the top of my head. "I really missed you this week." He crushes me with a hug that practically breaks the box in his hand. "Oops... At least I know it's not breakable."

I tip my head at the box. "Stop stalling and open it."

Dylan slides his long finger beneath the pale blue paper. He opens the box, and his mouth hangs open in shock. "Are... you?"

I nod, holding up the onesie for him to read.

He laughs and then recites the words on the front of the onesie. "I'm proof that nerds get laid."

"You totally are." I chuckle. "And it's for real this time."

He lets out a sigh of relief, hugging me so tight it drains the air from my lungs.

"Ease up, Daddy. This baby needs me breathing to come into the world."

Dylan kisses my forehead, both of my cheeks and then my lips. Then, he punches the air with his fist. "Yeah, science."

"Yeah, science," I say with laughter in my tone.

"Where's Colin?"

I rest my head back on his chest. "Your mom took him to the park to give us some time to talk."

Dylan's mom is staying with us for the next few months. With both of our careers in full swing, she offered to help us out for a while. His dad passed away a few years ago, and now that she's living outside of Boston by herself, Dylan has been begging his mom to come live with us. I think she may end up staying longer than planned, especially after we tell her about the new addition to our family.

I'm hoping she stays. It will be nice to have more family in California. I would love for our kids to grow up with the same environment Dylan and I had. My parents are still living in the same house I grew up in and stuck in their old ways. My mom hates flying. My dad hates to leave the recliner in his living room. So, when my parents come to visit, they have to travel by train, which takes an eternity from New England.

"I like even numbers," I say.

"I prefer odd numbers," he counters with a challenging smile.

I kiss his cheek. "We're stopping at two."

After we got married, we tried to have kids for three years. I had another ectopic pregnancy before I delivered a healthy baby boy. Colin is our little miracle. Neither of us wanted to get our hopes up this time. Every month, we would wish for another baby, and now, six years later, I'm pregnant again.

"Did you tell Colin he's going to have a brother or sister?"

"Not yet. I wanted to tell you first."

"That kid is so damn smart he probably already knows."

"Probably," I agree. "He gets that from his dad."

“He’s smarter than me,” Dylan admits. “I wasn’t as advanced as Colin at his age.”

Colin has Dylan’s freaky nerd superpowers. When he was two years old, he could solve math problems I didn’t learn until I was in middle school. It was an accident. Dylan was writing code with Colin on his lap, and somehow, he understood the basic concepts. After Dylan realized Colin was like him, he showed him more advanced math. Then, he started learning how to code. I taught him how to read and write, which was child’s play compared to what Dylan teaches him. Our son has a mind like a sponge.

The door flies open, followed by footsteps. I turn my head as Kathy and Colin take off their shoes and enter the living room.

“Hey, kiddo,” I say, pulling Colin down on the couch between us. “Did you have fun at the park?”

“He wouldn’t play with the other kids,” Kathy says. “Reminds me of someone I know.” She says the last part with a crooked grin as she looks at Dylan.

“I had Sloan,” Dylan says in his defense. “One friend was enough for me.”

“And we were very thankful for him.” She sits on the couch next to me and pats my knee. “Did you tell Dylan yet?”

I nod, and she smiles, staring down at my stomach that is nowhere near showing.

Colin removes his cell phone from his pocket. He scrolls through a few screens and then shows Dylan his notes, which looks like gibberish to me. “Daddy, look what I wrote.”

Dylan takes the phone from his tiny hand. He stares at the screen in awe, and then his eyes find mine. “This is incredible, buddy. Good work.”

I lean over, confused as hell. “What is it?”

“A recursive algorithm.”

“Yeah, I’m not even going to ask.”

Dylan laughs. “Good choice.”

“We have something to tell you, Colin.” He peeks up at me with the same big, blue eyes as Dylan, and I continue, “You’re going to have a baby brother or sister.”

“I know,” he says.

Dylan was right. Of course he was.

“How?”

“I overheard you on the phone with Aunt Willow.”

“Are you excited?”

He rolls his shoulders. “I guess.”

I swear Colin is Dylan’s twin. If it weren’t for Sloan, Dylan would have kept to himself, only speaking to people when necessary. He was so awkward and weird when he was younger. I’ve been reading a lot over the years about people with higher intelligence. They have a harder time relating to what I call normal people, aka me, which makes bonding with Colin a lot harder for me.

“Are you kids hungry?” Kathy asks as she gets off the couch. “I made lasagna. I just need to warm it up.”

“I could eat,” I say.

Dylan pats his stomach. “Thanks, Mom. I’m starved.”

“I want chicken nuggets,” Colin adds.

Kathy extends her hand, wiggling her fingers. "Come help your grandmother in the kitchen."

Colin grabs his phone from Dylan's hand and slides off the couch with a groan. Kathy escorts him into the kitchen. Colin stares down at his phone, clicking the keys, always busy with something.

I lean into Dylan's muscular chest. "I'm glad you understand him. I don't know what he's talking about most of the time."

"You're doing a great job, Ash. You love and support him, and that's exactly what he needs." He massages my shoulders. "The school called again while you were away."

"Your parents didn't let you skip grades, and you turned out okay."

"I was bored most of the time," he confesses. "You have no idea what it's like taking classes you outgrew years before everyone your age. That's how I got so good at writing code. While my classmates were learning basic math, I was working on applications."

I let out a sigh. "I don't know. Then, he won't have any kids his age to play with."

"Babe, he's not like other kids. He'll be happier in the correct grade level."

"He's five. When I was his age, I was probably eating paste."

He laughs in my ear. "Think about it, okay?"

"Do you think this is best for him?"

Dylan nods, and his chin brushes the top of my head.

"I just want what's best for him."

"I'll call his headmaster when I get to work tomorrow." Dylan rubs my stomach, making circular motions. "I can't wait until you start showing. I love seeing you with my baby in your belly."

"I'm hoping for a girl," I admit. "You have a mini version of you... and I'd like a little girl like me."

"Me too." He rests his chin on my shoulder, hugging me against his chest. "The world could use another woman like you."