

Electric **IMPULSE**

Book II: A Bond UnBreakable

CHAPTER 1

Love or Nah?

Present Day

February (6 Months Pregnant)

How did we get here? Him here with her?

Something inside is broken. Pieces of me have detached and dispersed. They're just . . . floating around inside, no longer with a purpose.

What's this right ventricle used for? What about this artery? Is my heart even a thing, anymore? I wish I could go back. Change all this.

I bite back the bitter taste rising in my mouth.

Side eyeing the unbelievably long weave she's wearing like an old lady clutching a raccoon fur, I wonder what she looks like without it. I'd love to snatch it off her head just to see which parts of her are real. She's a floating bobble head, glancing back at me as she flips her black wavy weave. That strain in her neck, as if she's trying to be snobby but doesn't quite know how to pull it off, reads uncomfortable.

Bitch trying too hard.

Shaking my head, I lift my champagne flute as the speaker tells the room to raise a glass.

"To many more billions in the near future, Prescott Realty!" Adam Wehr, CFO of Prescott Realty looks around the room with a huge smile on his face.

Glasses clank in celebration.

Envy never looked good on you . . .

"How about that!?" He jokes, holding out his arms, champagne in one hand and nods his head with a deep sense of self-satisfaction before taking a sip.

If you weren't so concerned with what everybody else thinks about you, it'd be you on his arm instead of this . . . uhm . . . girl woman weave or whatever.

The room breaks into laughter first, then roaring congratulations roll through the crowd.

Well, she's NOT on his arm. She's JUST standing next to him.

Right. Keep telling yourself that.

Humph!

I sip on my sparkling apple cider and smile on the outside.

All I wanted was a comfortable workplace. I don't want people thinking I got a free ride 'cause I slept the boss. Even if it is partly true.

Hell, you know it's true. He's the boss and you fucked him. Good! And the ride part is true too. Cause every time you two would get together, you got a free ride! Hahaha. Got him so good, now you're having his baby. Own it. It's about time.

There's nothing wrong with compartmentalizing things. Messy is not sexy.

Neither is hiding and denying yourself or your man. Better make it right.

Don't know how. Somehow, this is a wall I built.

Surrounded by excited executives chatting, Phoenix looks my way and locks eyes with me.

My heart blushes.

He doesn't care if anyone sees us. He stares a little too long and I begin to unfold, the heaviness lifting. There he is. My Phoenix. I fight the urge to walk over to him and kiss him right there. A flutter in my belly, reminds me of where I am.

Work function. Keep it cool.

Eager for his attention and reassurance, I smile back with eyes probably as wide as a schoolgirl.

See? I haven't lost him.

She comes back with that tiny waist and hourglass figure in that tight little crimson red bodycon bandage dress and hands him one of two vodka tonics with a lime.

That's our drink!

You're not drinking anything, any time soon, remember? Luggage on board?

Well, I prefer bun in the oven.

Same difference!

I look down at my so-called little black dress, which is really just a black mockneck sweater dress. Who am I kidding? It's not that little and it's only black to mask my growing six-month belly.

At least I'm showing a little leg.

Ha! Below the knee, grandma! Not thigh high like that little bitch in heat.

Fuck! I don't want him to spend another second with her!

She worms her way into their circle, opposite of Phoenix and intentionally steps into his line of sight, blocking me from seeing his face while ensuring he looks at hers. And she gets what she wants on both ends, because now, all I see is her backside. Standing there in that backless little dress, her toned tush, long legs, and that dry weave hanging off her head like some dead animal.

She's doing this on purpose. I know it!

He turns to the other executives and continues their conversation.

I take a deep breath, just like they teach in Lamaze class and join the conversation with my co-workers.

2 Months Ago

December 1st - 4 Months Pregnant

The man just knows and does not disappoint.

My fingers lightly trace the outline of my collar bone as I lie, barely awake in bed.

Knows how to put a smile on a girl's face. What a god of a man.

Kendrick Lamar's "Love" dances lightly in the air as I stare into space letting my mind wander.

Damn. And who does he think he is? Rubbing my hips like that? The day hasn't even started yet. Still pretty dark out, but who cares about what's happening outside when there's so much going on inside this room? On this cloud of a bed? Between these soft, white organic cotton sheets?

A sigh escapes my mouth.

The tender kiss planted on the side of my neck raises the hairs on the entire right side of my body. His soft nudges gently pull me from the remnants of last night's dreams and into his arms as he rests his warm hand on my tiny baby bump.

Phoenix buries his face into my neck causing his stubble to prick and tickle and rouse me. "Morning, babe." He does his best to sing along, "We gone function. . ."

“Ohh, that high note, though.” I tease between giggles.

He laughs with me.

Yawning and stretching with everything I’ve got and shaking off the last bit of sleep, I curl back into his arms not wanting him to let me go. The heat passing from his chest to my back, is the perfect contrast to the cool crisp air in the room, keeping me grounded right where I lay. I wind my hips to the beat of the song. Tugging on the white down comforter, I seal any gaps to keep our body heat in. “Good morning, my love.” My hand is greeted with his chin stubble.

He plants another kiss on my shoulder. “You know, I can make brunch or pick it up. Anything you want. It’s up to you.”

A flutter reminds me that *someone* is hungry. “Uh, yeah. A girl needs her protein.” I point at my belly. “Let’s pull up a menu.”

“OK. I got you.” He leans back to grab his phone from the nightstand. “What about that one place, you wanted to try? You know, with the over-the-top Crème Brûlée French toast? I think it’ll be perfect for today. Bring a little sunshine.” With his chin cradled in the crevice of my neck, he stares over my shoulder and out the window. “‘Cause I doubt we’ll get any sun today.”

The flurries outside our window confirm his theory. “Yeah, let’s try that place.”

Phoenix passes me the phone. A quick search pulls up the Cracked Egg brunch menu. “Oh. They have something you’ll like, steak, eggs and hash.”

“I’m down,” he replies, rubbing the back of his low-cut fade.

I place the order and pass back his phone. “It’ll be ready in 20 minutes.”

He rubs my hips like a man with a serious sweet tooth and I just so happen to be his sweet of choice. “That gives us fifteen minutes to play? Twenty, if you’re nasty.”

Turning onto my right side to face him, his dark eyes challenge me. Dare me. I wrap my arms around him and rub the back of his head. “Well, I take that 20 minutes and see how long before you tap out.”

Our lips meet. Sensual pecks become full on French kisses as the softness of his full lips press into mine, followed by brief touches of his tongue. He brushed those perfect teeth before waking me. Minty fresh. Wonder if he can tell I snuck out of bed to do the same. I wrap my legs around his hips and mount him, getting on top. Already wet, I easily slide over his erection, even with his warm cotton pajamas on. His erection pressed against my honeypot is bold and obtrusive. I find myself going up and down on him, repeating the motion because it feels so good.

He lifts my white satin slip to find my bare bottom. The palms of his hands glide along my hips and thighs. He lifts his hips and me with him, as he slips his pajama bottoms down until they’re at his ankles.

His skin on my skin in such a delicate place sends ripples of excitement, ricocheting through my body. My nipples shrink down as I anticipate what comes next.

Staring down at him, we both know I'm in control and he is at my mercy. I glide back and forth over his manscaped shaft, making myself wetter and wetter. As if that's even possible. As I sit up, positioning myself as high above him as I can go, he looks into my eyes, open to anything I may decide to do. I like it. I want him to feel my dominance as I stare him down.

The look in his eyes says he does. And the smirk on his face says he likes it. That recognition causes my breasts to buzz with electricity.

Like a boy doing something he knows is bad, mischief gleams in his eyes. He pulls the spaghetti strap down, off my left shoulder and exposes my breast to the cool air. Tiny goosebumps surface everywhere.

He smiles contently.

Who does he think he is?

I take the plunge and thrust his love inside. He fills me up as he glides right in. A perfect fit. But as punishment for his mischief, for making a move without my permission, I just sit on it.

He groans with pleasure and prompts me to keep going.

"You don't get to tell me anything." I tell him.

He gulps. "Ohh, you're right, I'm sorry." He takes a deep breath. "This is your show." With his usual cool aloofness cast aside, his eyes are left unguarded. He looks vulnerable, like he's laying down his sword, like he's surrendering his will. He submits to me.

That is so sexy.

I ride him, slowly at first, up then down, and up then down. Hands on his chest, I balance myself as I drop down and pull up, squeezing and relaxing again and again.

Closing his eyes, he moans, and I'm drunk with power. With knowing that all ends and begins with me. His hands cup my hips as he presses his love upward, deeper into me.

"Oh, so you're trying to make me come?"

"I am," he challenges, biting his lip.

I ride more aggressively, getting wetter and wilder, caring less and less with each stroke. "Oh, you're trying me, now." I focus on his manhood. Picking up and dropping my bottom down fast and hard. Past his point. He's about to come. Knowing this brings me dangerously close to my own, but I can't stop. I have to let him know who's boss.

"Hmm," he moans.

He's trying to be stoic but he's losing control. He's struggling not to give in.

A moan escapes my mouth.

Am I losing control?

His hands search my body to my hips, to my waist to my breast and then my shoulders. He pulls my shoulders down.

How did he creep back into command? He's regulating my body now, telling me how to move.

"Damn, you!" I'm salivating. It feels too good to say no. I gulp. My grip is slipping, my endurance is fading.

Breathing heavily into each other's mouth, our kisses are erratic yet at the same time, constant. I hold his face close to mine to keep us in sync. His body needs mine. He needs me. His hands dig into the skin on my back as if I can't get close enough. Our bodies. They move in unison. Our movement. It's sensual, drawn out, with high heights and deep drops. It steals our breath as we chase the next depth and the next elevation. Higher and higher we go. Together. Each boosting the other to the next plateau, that's just out of reach.

We hit a peak. A place where the air is thin, and it no longer matters because that is not what's feeding us anymore. Ecstasy and angst dare to meet at a single point. He feels it coming. I feel it. He responds by trying to outrun it. Grabbing me harder, pressing himself deeper into me. I respond, embracing him with all of me, more fully. My arms around his neck and shoulders, my love around his love, my legs folding closer around his waist. One undeniable, unmistakable point of contact. There is no turning back. There is no letting go. The tension is insurmountable. One more stroke and it's over.

An innocent spark, then an explosion spreads at lightning speed from my lower region and ripples through my entire body, causing everything to slow down in its wake like a forcefield of air ripping through the atmosphere from a bomb going off. I sit on top of him, continuing to ride him, stunned.

Slowly we come to. Back to reality. We're both much more relaxed now. Our rocking back and forth gets steady, then grinds to a halt. His expression is one of deep, deep satisfaction. My tongue finds his and our lips lock in one last passionate kiss.

I collapse on top of him and lie on his chest while we wait for our breaths to calm down. He pulls the comforter over the both of us as I lie there looking out the window as the flurries fall.

Grabbing his phone on the nightstand, he touches the screen, which makes me laugh out loud.

"Does time fly or what?"

"What?" he asks, looking at the time. "Oh. The food was ready 5 minutes ago." Phoenix laughs.

"If you're nasty!" I giggle.

Phoenix lightly pats my behind, I oblige and move over to the side. He slips me a wet wipe from the nightstand as he sits up on the right side of the bed.

“Thank you, kindly, Sir.” I salute.

“No problem, Miss. It’s the least I could do,” he replies like a proper young lad.

The smirk in his voice makes me roll my eyes and smile to myself.

He gets dressed in comfy grey joggers, a hoodie and grey athletic shoes that give him a cool, yet casual sexiness. The hoodie shows just enough of his manly silhouette to let you know that underneath it all, he works out and looks damn good naked. GQ smooth. Omari Hardwick sexy. Even in sweats. God!

He steps out to pick up brunch.

CHAPTER 2

Stunning Jewel

It's Monday morning rush. I've got my peppermint mocha latte in hand and bagels and cream cheese for my cubemates. I stop at the revolving doors of the huge, all-glass skyscraper that is Prescott Realty. For some reason, Cardi B's "Up" comes to mind. At fifty-two stories and over seven hundred and forty feet, it's the tallest building in Milwaukee and a sight to marvel at. Even for a hot second. I follow the outline. Sunlight sparkles off the oversized glass windows all the way to the top, making the skyscraper seem like a stunning jewel in the middle of a bustling midwestern city. A real treasure, in and out. Especially the people. Everyone I've worked with has been awesome and welcoming. I proudly step into the grey and white marble lobby, ready to start my day.

Stefon, one of three on-duty guards, greets me with his customary compliments and flirtations. "Hello, Beautiful!" he says with a wide smile. "How are you doing, today?" he asks, setting aside his intimidating demeanor for the few moments we see each other every day. During these brief interactions, he morphs into a guy that's kind of funny and approachable. His smooth dark skin, full lips and dark eyes covered by thick, well-kempt eyebrows are enough to make any woman do a double take. But I've grown immune to his charm.

"You know me." I zing him with my pearly whites as I place my latte on the turnstile and pull my badge from my handbag.

"Well, whoever he is, he's one lucky dude." Stefon's expression is both one of appreciation and wanting.

“As long as *he* knows that I’m good.” I swipe my badge and the turnstile opens. Before walking through, I turn to him. “You know, I’ve been wondering. If I didn’t know any better, I’d say you were an army guy? You carry that vibe.” I squint, waiting for an answer.

“Not quite. Marines,” he says proudly as he seems to stand taller.

“Oh! So, I was right, or close to? So, if anything went down here,” my finger circles the lobby, “you’ve got us covered?”

He nods and smiles. “As long as I’m here, you’re safe.”

“Huh! Good to know!” I smirk as I walk through the turnstile.

The feeling of someone staring is hard to miss. Stefon’s gaze follows me. Once I’m well into the lobby, I turn back to catch a quick look. He resumes his stoic stance. Serious face. Hands folded in front. Dark grey suit with earpiece in place and identically dressed guards on either side of him.

This building is impressive. After working here for nearly four months, it still feels grand. The amazing architect, high ceilings and vibrant art make the spacious lobby a nice hangout or meeting place. Makes me feel important to have business here. I hop on the elevator and head to the thirty-second floor. Could’ve taken the private entrance and elevator meant for executives, but I value my independence. Taking the executive entrance involves arriving with Phoenix (because why else would I ride that elevator?) and enduring silent, questioning stares. No thank you!

I get off on the thirty-second floor and make a right. The sea of cubicles sprawled before me, reminds me of Phoenix’s repeated attempts to give me a corner office of my own. To which I refuse, not wanting to be singled out from my co-workers.

“Happy Monday!” Chelsea, the receptionist sitting at the entrance to marketing, greets me with her signature, over-the-top, happy-go-lucky Monday greeting. Her straight, shoulder-length black bob, wide dark eyes and rosy cheeks give her a look that’s forever fresh and glowing.

I swear, I’ve never met anyone so happy to start the work week. “Morning, Chelsea. Bagel?” I open the box for her to peek.

“Look at that. I can’t say no!” As if it even possible, her eyes get wider. Chelsea grabs an asiago cheese bagel and claps like a seal.

“My fav!”

“So glad I could kick that excitement into high gear,” I reply jokingly. I pass her a plate, plastic knife and cream cheese tub.

“Right!” Chelsea laughs as she spreads the cream cheese on her bagel. “Thanks.”

“No prob.”

Ally, head of marketing, looks up from her desk, as I walk past her oversized, corner office. She signals for me to stop by. Her strawberry blonde hair and gorgeous slightly freckled face are bright and sunny, a stark contrast against her serious all-black blouse and wide-leg pants.

“Good morning! What have we here?” she asks pointing at the box of bagels.

“Oh, you know, just a little some-some to sweeten up your Monday! Want one?” I open the box for her to choose.

“Think I will.” She reaches in and grabs a pumpkin spice walnut crunch bagel. “Tis the season, right?”

“Right you are.” I pass her a small plate, plastic knife and a small tub of cream cheese as I take a seat.

She happily spreads the cream cheese on her bagel. “Cheat day.” She looks up at me, “OK, so heads up. I’ve put you on a new project. But first, congratulations on helping make the Windsor Court project a go. Our bid for the revitalization of that 80-acre development was approved. The applications for zoning are still in progress, but once they’ve been approved, we’ll be ready to break ground.” She’s all smiles. “This is great for us and the community.”

“That was fast! Feels good to do good.” I nod in agreement.

“Sure does. The property values will rise for all homeowners in the nearby vicinity. Going from high five figures to low six once the development is complete.”

“Nice!”

“Yes, and the best news is Phoenix has a buyback plan, where he’s buying up properties while they’re low, rehabbing or in some cases rebuilding the homes, then offering the former renters the first shot at purchasing their first home,” she holds up her forefinger, “at an

affordable rate. He has a real soft spot for the people in this community. He'll be able to try out his financial education and assistance homeownership pilot program here."

"What is that exactly?" I ask, pleasantly surprised at the level of care Phoenix has put into this project.

"See, the little guy wins with us. Our aim isn't regentrification. Although that will happen, inevitably. But we can slow it down. We're not looking to displace low-income families; we're looking to give them a leg up."

Ally's excitement is contagious.

"See, we want to help as many families as we can transition into middle class. With Phoenix's pilot program, low-income families who participate in the program will learn to better manage their money, they'll get the best financing options if they choose to buy one of the available homes, and they'll also get assistance getting better pay work if they choose to work within the development. Plus, it's a nice tax write-off for us." Her eyes light up with delight.

"Oh, wow. I beginning to see the big picture. He wasn't just planning to build; he was planning to change people's lives. That's an all-around win."

Ally nods. "We're changing the face of the city *and* improving lives, one project at a time."

"Talk about changing the game." I smile. "And I had something to do with all that!" I playfully whip my flat-ironed hair.

"Have, honey!" Ally laughs. "You *have* something to do with all this. We're not through with you yet. That brings me to the project I've put you on. You're part of a smaller team of marketing and PR associates I've pooled together. You'll recognize all the faces from your last go around. We want to build up Windsor Court as the premiere place to open a business. We're looking to attract business owners in specific categories." Ally takes a bite of her pumpkin spice bagel. She frowns with surprise as she looks at it. "Yum!" she giggles.

"OK." I inch to the edge of my seat. "Which categories?"

Through a mouthful, she momentarily lifts her finger, then rests it on her lips. "Hmm. I've emailed you the details."

“OK. I’ll take a look.” Excited to get the specifics, I head for the door, shaking my head in awe.

Talk about meaningful work. I’m straight elevating people’s lives, here.

“Amazing bagels, by the way.” Ally takes another bite. “Hmm.”

I laugh. “I know, right!” I drop off the bagels and cream cheese at the communal sharing table a few cubicles away from Ally’s office.

When I get back to my cube, I find Phoenix in my DM.

“What’s up with lunch?”

“Hey, you,” I reply, trying to reconcile the philanthropic businessman I was just talking about with the incredible sex god whose bones I jump often.

“Japanese?”

“I could rock with that.”

“I know you don’t want me down there on your floor, so let’s meet there at noon?”

“Let’s go to the one that’s further out. Privacy, right?”

“Smh. Riiiiight,” he replies.

Now to this project. What categories of business was Ally talking about? Finding the email she sent, I click the pdf. “Ok. Wow.” The businesses have to agree to \$15 an hour wage. “Ok. I see you, Phoenix,” I whisper to myself in my cubicle, pretending to smack my lips and clap my hands, “taking care of the little guy.”

They’re looking for a grocery store. Smart. Giving people access to fresh food options instead of chips and soda for dinner from a corner store.

“I love it.”

There are a few chains I think would do well, especially after the development is finished. Project calls for several restaurants. Several boutiques. Clothing. Beauty. An ice cream shop. A furniture store.

“It’s gonna be like its own self-contained city. An ecosystem that’s self-supporting.”

Stop biting your nails.

This is major shit!

Well, what did you think the man was doing?

Ha. Not this. This is. . . so . . . sexy. So generous. So . . . considerate. He never fails to surprise me.

Clasping my hands together, I prepare to dig in. “Let’s get to work, then.” Develop a plan to make people see this as the big deal that it is. Tonya, my nearest cubemate, is on the email.

I pop my head in her cube. “Hey, girl! You read up on our next project?”

Tonya swivels around in her chair to face me. Her glasses, stylish messy bun and all-black attire give her a chic, librarian look. Her clear retainer only adds to her cuteness. “Uh, yes! Been waiting for you since you got here. You try the bagels?” she asks showing off her morning spoils.

I laugh. “I know, they’re to die for. You’re welcome.”

She looks surprised. “That was you? Oh, meh God!” She takes a huge bite. “Thank *you*. And loving the pop of color with all that black,” she garbles and points, signaling how my red heels accent my black top and slacks.

With a growing belly, Ally’s all-black unofficial dress code is a smart choice. Noticing my hand resting on my belly, I jerk it away. “What? Sometimes I feel the need to break out with a little color.” I straighten my posture.

“I said, I liked it.” Tonya shoots back, then gives a suspicious glance.

“Uh. What kind did you get?” I ask, pointing at her remaining bagel half, trying to change the subject.

“Oh. This is blueberry heaven. Bursting with blueberry crumbles. So good!”

Glad for the distraction, I nod. “Wanna get some ideas brewing before the meeting this afternoon?”

Looking forward to seeing Phoenix, I discreetly leave my desk and ride the elevator down. Safely in the brand-new all-white Range Rover I traded for the BMW Phoenix got for me, I take back roads and creep to the Japanese Steakhouse.

The hostess tells me Phoenix is waiting for me. She leads me to a private room. Behind the paper-thin walls painted with cherry blossoms, his broad-shoulder silhouette looks inviting. Seated at the hibachi table, he leans forward reaching for his drink. Sake, maybe? Wide shoulders, strong arms, manly stature. Just seeing him sends signals everywhere. My body comes alive, buzzing with anticipation.

“Hey, You!” I greet him with a telling smile as he stands to welcome me.

He leads my chin to his face, kissing me as if it’s been months when it’s only been hours.

“Missed you, babe.” He bites his bottom lip.

Wish I could bite that lip.

He stands there staring. “Hungry?” he asks with a sly smirk, one hand in the pocket of his charcoal grey suit pants.

I’m hungry, alright. Wonder if he knows how wet he just made me? Well, sit me in a puddle, why don’t you?

I take his hand and sit next to him.

“Think you know what I like?” I ask casually.

“I like to think I know you pretty well by now,” he brags as he caresses my left thigh.

Sparks fly. I gulp.

Why is this man so irresistible? Is it his perfectly trimmed goatee? His clean, fresh-out-the-shower scent? That crisp tailored suit showcasing his best features? Is it how his eyes light up when he sees me? I swear he has his own soundtrack whenever he enters a room. At least in my mind he does. He’s effortless, masculine perfection. Phew.

“Know what you want?” He looks into me as if he’s seeing me. Really seeing me for who I am.

Yes, I know what I want. You.

“Um. Sure.” I look over the menu.

The chef begins setting up his cooking utensils, knives, sauces and oils. “Hello.” He stops for a moment and looks up. “Beautiful couple!”

That makes me smile. “Thank you.”