

## Big Emotions

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/18076058) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/18076058>.

Rating:	<a href="#">Mature</a>
Archive Warning:	<a href="#">No Archive Warnings Apply</a>
Category:	<a href="#">F/M</a>
Fandom:	<a href="#">Borderlands (Video Games)</a>
Relationship:	<a href="#">Rhys/Sasha (Borderlands)</a>
Characters:	<a href="#">Rhys (Borderlands)</a> , <a href="#">Sasha (Borderlands)</a>
Additional Tags:	<a href="#">Hurt/Comfort</a> , <a href="#">Humor</a> , <a href="#">Friends With Benefits</a> , <a href="#">Non-Explicit Sex</a> , <a href="#">Unrequited Love</a> , <a href="#">Grief/Mourning</a> , <a href="#">Consent</a> , <a href="#">Don't copy to another site</a>
Language:	English
Series:	Part 2 of <a href="#">The Contract</a>
Stats:	Published: 2019-03-11 Words: 2,517 Chapters: 1/1

# Big Emotions

by [lucyrne \(theungenue\)](#)

## Summary

Shocking news leaves Sasha confused and emotional during an encounter with Rhys, her friend with benefits.

## Notes

Incredibly brief, non-explicit sexual content. Mostly, this fic is comfort/venting with some squishy feelings on the side. Enjoy!

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

As an on-again, off-again con artist, Sasha knew a lot about fake relationships. The thing with Rhys wasn't fake, but it wasn't real either. It was the perfect balance of physical attraction, emotional support, and lack of commitment. All the perks of having a relationship *without* having a relationship. And best of all, she didn't have to lie. Unlike her marks, he was in on it, and fully willing to boot.

How could an arrangement this perfect become so complicated over the course of a single evening?

Sasha arrived at Rhys' place at the appointed time. Rhys greeted her with a bright smile and ushered her inside, all the while chattering about what he had worked on since he saw her last. She didn't really listen to what he was saying, not this time. She just couldn't focus.

They settled on a musty couch Rhys had liberated from a dumpster somewhere. Sasha suspected that their no-strings-attached arrangement had spurred him to find a place to live that wasn't his office. It must have been maddening, being stuck in the same room everyday. His new place was a piece of shit, but at least it was a private piece of shit. Sasha wistfully thought of what it might be like if she didn't share a place with her sister, only to immediately feel guilty and sick.

She lost track of Rhys' banter as she spiraled deeper and deeper into her thoughts.

"What's up with you?" Rhys finally asked, dragging her back to reality. "You seem far away today."

Okay, out with it. It's just Rhys. He's the last person who can judge you. "It's Felix," Sasha said, her voice snapping like a twig when she spoke his name. "He's dead."

Rhys' eyebrows lifted, only to scrunch back together again. "Is that...news?" he asked. "I thought he's been deceased since forever."

"Yeah, well he's not. He wasn't. He, ugh." A lump was beginning to form in her throat, and Sasha looked everywhere but at Rhys so she could focus on swallowing it down. "He's been in hiding, *playing* dead. But now he's dead for real, and all he's left behind is a cryptic message about hiding millions of dollars in the desert."

Now she had Rhys' undivided attention. "What? You mean *the Hyperion money*?"

"I know! He's been sitting on it this whole time. According to the message, he kept only a million for himself. The rest is hidden somewhere mysterious." Sasha clenched her fists and stared at the floor. "'Cause Felix can't do anything without turning it into a convoluted riddle for Fiona to solve."

Rhys was caught between hysterical happiness and homicide. "What a bastard. This whole time—our lost money! Holy shit! I can't believe it took *death* for that son of a bitch to tell you he had hidden nine million bucks in the desert. That wrinkly asshole. That old jerk. That—whoah, why are you crying?"

Sasha quickly wiped her tears off the back of her forearm. “I’m not crying and I’m not sad,” she said with a loud sniffle. “I’m just...experiencing an emotion.” She forced herself to finally meet Rhys’ eyes. “A really big one.”

Rhys looked entirely serious as he replied, “This sounds like an ice cream problem.”

He loaded up two tin mugs full of ice cream, because a CEO of a dead company naturally keeps a constant supply of ice cream in his home. They ate quietly on his couch for a time while Sasha tried to untangle the thoughts and feelings swirling in her head.

“Here’s the thing. I don’t remember my birth parents,” Sasha said, gesturing with a full spoon of vanilla bean. “When I think the word ‘dad,’ I think of Felix. When he thought of the word ‘daughter,’ Felix definitely never thought of me.”

Rhys nodded along. “I’m guessing—”

“You don’t have to guess. It’s obvious who he thought of.” Sasha swallowed yet another painful lump. She knew she sounded bitter and ungrateful, but self-awareness wasn’t enough to stem the hurt leaking out of her eyes and nose. “It’s not Fiona’s fault our parents died when she was old enough to remember them and I wasn’t. It’s not her fault Felix was a crotchety jerk who played favorites. She’s done so much for me, you know, I’ve no reason to be mad at her. I should be mad at him. But I’m not. Instead I’m, I’m just—”

“Experiencing an emotion?”

She stuffed her face with a few angry spoonfuls of ice cream. Sasha hoped that by the time they melted in her mouth, she’d feel a little more calm. If only big emotions were that easy to handle.

“Yeah. It sucks ass, being attached to someone who doesn’t care about you in the same way. Because when they’re gone, you feel like you don’t even have the right to miss them. You’re just an idiot who wasted your feelings on someone who never gave a damn.” Sasha bit her lip to keep it from trembling. “Like you just conned yourself.”

“He cared a little,” Rhys offered between mouthfuls of ice cream. “He made that device that saved your life, so he must’ve given at least a *tiny* damn.”

Sasha didn’t want to be cared about a little. She wanted to be loved. No, she wanted Felix to *admit* that he loved her, to make it *real*. But that never happened, and now it never would.

Rhys set down his ice cream and rubbed Sasha’s back in a oblong circle, right between her shoulder blades. “I wish I knew what to do or say to make you feel better,” he said.

Sasha leaned her head against Rhys’ shoulder and closed her eyes. All of the tension built up over the last few hours released from her muscles in pleasant waves, but there was so much of it that it would take hours of massages for her to feel normal again. She wished she could blast it all away at once so everything could hurt a little less.

“What you’ve done so far has been great,” she said. “I really needed to stuff my face, vent a little. You’re the only person I can really talk to about this stuff.”

The admission was a little too honest for Sasha’s liking, yet she was disappointed when the gravity of it flew right over Rhys’ head. “Right, because the favoritism thing,” he said with a nod. “Speaking of, how’s Fiona?”

“We didn’t talk very long before she left to look for the money. I think she’s pretty torn up, but doesn’t want me to see it.”

“Huh, I guess it runs in the family.” Sasha pinched him for that, yet Rhys continued on. “So I get that Felix is stirring up a lot of complex feelings right now, but don’t forget he *did* leave you a massive fortune to remember him by. That counts for something. Like, nine million somethings.”

Still leaning against Rhys, Sasha screwed her eyes shut even tighter.

Sure, nine million dollars to share between her and Fiona would be nice—life-changing even—but it didn’t count for jack shit. That money was a bribe, plain and simple. It was ‘sorry I wasn’t actually a dad to you’ money, or ‘please remember me fondly despite my abandonment and betrayal’ money. Yeah, she was going to take that money and live like a queen, but that didn’t mean Sasha had to *like* it.

“I think I know what else I can do to help you feel better,” Rhys said, his voice low and inviting. “If you’re up for it.”

“I’m an emotional wreck, of course I’m up for it,” Sasha said with a laugh.

Maybe her tone was too flippant, because a shadow of doubt crossed Rhys’ eyes. “Look,” he said, “if you’re too sad and you’d rather just talk—”

“*I said I’m not sad.* And even if I was sad, sex would help me not feel that way. Don’t turn this into a thing it’s not.”

Rhys always asked her for permission when they hooked up. *Is this okay? How does this feel? Want to keep going?* At first, it drove her nuts. She was already there, naked and spread eagle, ready to go. The jig was up, had been for *months*, so why continue the considerate lover act? Now Sasha was starting to realize that it wasn’t an act; Rhys just wanted to make sure she was onboard with whatever they were about to do together.

“Okay,” Sasha amended. “Maybe I’m not in the mood to, like, *work* really hard tonight.”

He held up his hand. “Say no more. You will not have to lift a single finger.”

Rhys showed her he was dead serious by picking Sasha up and carrying her to the bedroom, bridal style. There was some stumbling in the final stretch, but they made it all the way to the bed in one giggling piece. Sasha started shimmying out of her clothes and moving to get on top of Rhys, but he shook his head.

“Nuh uh,” Rhys said, gently pushing Sasha back on the bed. “You just relax.”

“I don’t want to be babied,” she warned.

“I’m not babying you. I’m *ravishing* you.”

Sasha couldn’t help snickering; no one had ever used a word like *that* to describe having sex with her before. Only a giant nerd like Rhys would bust out the sex thesaurus at a time like this. A couple relationships ago it would’ve been a huge turn off, but now it delighted her. Figures Rhys would rub off on her in more ways than one.

She laid back as she was told and closed her eyes. “Alright, ravish away.”

Turns out big, intense emotions pave the way for big, intense orgasms. Rhys parked himself between her thighs and put that shit-eating, jackass mouth of his to use until Sasha was a gasping, quivering mess. By the time she had chased her end, they were both worn out and ready to drift off to sleep. Rhys scooted up the bed and curled around her while Sasha caught her breath.

“Wow. I needed that I didn’t think about Felix at all.” Sasha gasped and covered her face with her hands. “*God*, sorry, that’s such a weird thing to say.”

Rhys traced a metal finger along her collar bone. Its cool touch felt good against her skin. “For one night and one night only, I will not give you shit for saying weird ass stuff. In fact, I accept that statement as a compliment. I’m flattered. No one’s ever told me I didn’t remind them of their gross wrinkly father figure before.”

She pouted. “You’re just being nice to me because I’m sad.”

“Whatever happened to, ‘I don’t feel sadness, I just have big emotions?’”

“You’re an asshole, Rhys.”

“And you,” Rhys said, taking Sasha’s hand in his, “deserve to be cared about unconditionally and completely for yourself—not just because you’re a package deal with Fiona. Just saying.”

Sasha gaped at him, starry-eyed and speechless. She kept waiting for the punchline, waiting for Rhys to break and snicker ‘psyche!’ before ripping the rug right out from under her, but it never came. They stared at each other, Sasha’s heart hammering harder and faster with every passing moment. An emotion bigger than anything she had felt before swelled inside her, filling her up to bursting.

Rhys then leaned forward until their faces were inches apart, and Sasha held her breath in rapt anticipation.

“So, do *I* get any of the Hyperion money?” he asked. “C’mon, Vaughn and I were the ones who embezzled it fair and square. We should get a couple million each, right?”

When Sasha finally exhaled, it felt like every single twisted emotion she had felt that night flew out of her at once, leaving her empty and wanting. “You’ll have to fight Fiona for it,”

she said, leaning back onto her pillow to put some distance between them. “Maybe she’ll feel sorry enough to pay for your funeral after she’s done stomping you into the dirt.”

Rhys held up his hands in surrender as he settled beside her. Sasha laid down on her own for a while, only to snuggle against his side and laid her head on his warm chest. She felt Rhys crane his head up to plant a few soft kisses on her hairline before resting back on his pillow to fall asleep.

As she dozed, the places Rhys kissed her tingled warmly. It used to weird Sasha out when he did intimate stuff like that, but as they kept casually hooking up, she started to crave those small gestures. They made her feel, what was the word...special? Wanted?

Loved?

Sasha blinked and rolled off Rhys to stare at the ceiling. He was already fast asleep, and didn’t stir when she swore aloud.

Shit. She’d done it again. Traded one unrequited relationship for another.

Shit, shit, shit.

Felix wasn’t even cold in his goddamn grave, and *this* was what Sasha got up to. Snuggling and thinking gooey thoughts about a person who didn’t return the favor. Great. Way to go, Sash. After all that emotional hand wringing and pain, you’ve learned absolutely nothing. Fallen face first for a con of your own making. Again.

The most infuriating part was that Sasha *knew* she wasn’t supposed to get attached—Felix taught her better than this. And yet, it still happened.

This was worse than what happened with August or any of her other marks, because it went far beyond simply caring about someone disposable.

She sat up in the darkness and fiddled with the unraveled ends of her braids. The smart thing to do now was to sneak out before Rhys woke up. It wouldn’t be a big deal, because Sasha had done it before. Friends with benefits didn’t have to inform each other of their whereabouts, or their reasons for slipping into the night. And when morning came, she could send Rhys a message or something that they should halt the benefits for a while. He would understand, especially if she cited her grief over Felix.

Except it was too cold. Rhys spent an unholy amount of money keeping his new place chilled at all times, and it would be such a pain to sneak out of bed and freeze her ass off getting dressed. She drew the covers of Rhys’ bed all the way up to her chin and snuggled back down beside him. Rhys was an absolute furnace at night, even with the metal arm, and just being near him made her feel warm and comfortable.

Sasha felt her eyes grow heavy. Actually, it was better if she stayed. She had all the time in the world to figure out her emotional traumas, so what was the rush?

*Everything is under control*, she thought in her last moments of wakefulness. She was just in a weird emotional place. By morning, these *things* she was feeling would blow over and everything would go back to the way it was.



## End Notes

Thanks for reading! This is the final bit of the Contract series (which I wrote horribly out of order because of course i did). Say hi at [lucyrne.tumblr.com](https://lucyrne.tumblr.com).

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!